

Students Helping Students: A Guide for Peer Educators on College Campuses

By S. Ender and F. Newton

San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000, 254 pages

Reviewed by
Jennifer G. Cain

Ender and Newton's book, *Students Helping Students*, is a valuable resource for training peer educators. Not only is this text geared to the traditional peer mentors who work with individual students, but also to students being trained to work with student groups.

The chapters cover a wide range of issues of which student mentors must be knowledgeable in order to be effective. The first two chapters encompass the importance of peer educators on higher education campuses and their roles in assisting other students. The third chapter discusses working with diverse cultures, while the fourth through seventh chapters instruct peer educators on how to work effectively with individuals and with groups. Chapter eight covers methods that can be used to improve academically for both the mentor and the mentee, and the final two chapters deal with how and when to give referrals and the ethical conduct guidelines for those training to become mentors.

Each chapter not only describes how to accomplish the various roles of student mentors, but also introduces the peer educator to student development theories. Although these theories are not treated in an exhaustive manner, the authors introduced the student mentor to the basics of student development theories and provided a foundation for the student mentor. The book also included a bibliography if the reader desires to research student development theories more extensively.

Students Helping Students stressed the necessity of the student mentor to work on self-evaluation and self-improvement in order to become more effective. Since mentors need to establish credibility with their mentees, they themselves must be model students. The text developed this self-exploration through reflection and exercise sections throughout the chapters by asking mentors to explore their own lives regarding various issues that are related to the mentoring process. The mentors-in-training analyze personal situations using the information they have learned in the chapter, thus creating a hands-on experience for mentors. The authors accomplished this by using Borton's process and reflection model, which asks questions "what?" "so what?," and "now what?" so that they can integrate what they have learned into real life situations. This

Jennifer G. Cain is a Master's degree student in Higher Education at the University of North Texas.

enables mentors to take an active approach in the different reflections throughout the chapter and help them to explore ways that they can improve.

This text would be extremely useful in training workshops for peer educators since some of the reflection points and projects could be done individually or in a group. This book could also be a useful resource for leadership workshops, especially the two chapters that focused on group dynamics and how to lead groups. Since others usually look up to students in these roles, they also become informed mentors and would benefit from other sections in this text, especially the sections that focus on working with individuals.

Overall, *Students Helping Students* is a wonderful text for mentors and others, especially when used in conjunction with training sessions. This book is also a valuable tool for self-exploration for mentors so that they can realize their limitations and improve them, thus becoming more successful mentors.