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# Book Review. One size does not fit all: Traditional and innovative models of student affairs practice

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education. Further, it suggests that there are a wide array of possibilities for future thinking about and structuring of education faculties. This is particularly relevant in the present intellectual climate where educational research is largely defined as scientific and, as the book's final chapter explains, accountability standards or standardization of aims tend to be dominant pursuits.

Fraser's book on the history of teacher preparation in the United States represents a fecund educational resource and a source of hope. As a student of educational history, I can admit to be anxious. In Ontario, the history of education is not required coursework for undergraduate or graduate students, and has been increasingly marginalized over the last century. That said, Fraser's ambitious effort to represent more than two centuries of teacher education in less than three hundred pages resulted in an interesting scholarly book and a happy read. This book demonstrates educational history's utility in addressing current debates and future goals.

I have concerns, however, with the author's view that universities have been unwelcoming of teacher education because they embody a hierarchy that posits theoretical knowledge above practical know-how. Fraser's claim does not explore the multifaceted dimension of the divide between what is often referred to as the theory-practice divide in teacher education. This divide falsely dichotomizes what is perceived to be directly applicable in classrooms (say, methods instruction and practice teaching) with what appears not to be immediately relevant (history or philosophy of education). This divide, one may argue, has been increased due to an emphasis on "what works" and on accountability. As the last chapter describes, governmental and institutional demands for accountability as means to secure funding are escalating.

The book provides a comprehensive and badly needed history of teacher education. It is well researched innovative in its approach, and futuristic in tone. I think that this historical study generates a space where theory and practice, as well as the present, past, and future, intersect and meet dynamically. ♣

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Manning, K., Kinzie, J., & Schuh, K. (2006). *One size does not fit all: Traditional and innovative models of student affairs practice*. New York: Routledge. Pages: 187. Price: \$29.95. USD (paper).

**Reviewed by Jason Laker, Associate Vice-Principal (Academic) and Dean of Student Affairs, Queen's University.**

This book was unexpectedly difficult to read and review. At first blush, it is an unassuming and fairly succinct (under 200 pages) text with a straightforward title, and its contents are laid out in a logical and understandable fashion. The difficulty, it turned out, had to do with two competing stand points: my mind as an American, a Chief Student Affairs Officer in Canada, and my role as a Women's Studies instructor given to critical theory. Thus, this review intends to inform the reader about what the text is, and to discuss what the text is not.

From a practical and functionalist perspective, the book is an excellent primer on the history and evolution of the Student Affairs profession – particularly in the United States. The authors provide information and reflection on this history, including the relevance of key documents and viewpoints developed by some of the professional organizations in the field. Moreover, the book invokes this history to construct a taxonomy of organizational structures and approaches along with suggested strengths and weaknesses of each. It offers particular institutional examples (some with pseudonyms, and some identified) of these different structures, so the reader can consider the possible suitability of the featured approaches for their particular institutions.

In addition to the historical analysis, the first section of the book also situates important developments and changes in the field within the context of the political and financial environments of each decade. For instance, there is brief discussion about the influence of the 1960s rights movements on the role that Student Affairs divisions should or could play on a university campus. The authors discuss various organizational structures (e.g. reporting lines, departments and services included), though they are noncommittal about which ones may be more desirable, which is attributed to the need to evaluate that question in the institutional context.

In the preface, Kathleen Manning shares an experience from 1997 in which a staff member at a selective, private liberal arts college in the U.S. asserted that Student Affairs graduate program faculty are preparing their students as if all institutional settings [where they will work after graduation] are the same. This turned out to be an important experience for her, and formative of her approach to a study that she and the other two authors conducted in 2003. The study is entitled “DEEP,” which is an acronym for Documenting Effective Educational Practices. It received financial support from three U.S.-based organizations: an educational foundation, a think tank at a small private liberal arts college, and a consortium of higher education institutions.

The DEEP study involved in-depth examination of 20 US colleges and universities whose levels of graduation and student engagement as measured by NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) was unusually high with respect to the students’ entering characteristics. As NSSE is growing in popularity in Canada, the DEEP study and this book are quite timely. The high-scoring institutions varied considerably in type, size, location, and mission. So, the authors sought to identify the variables (policies and practices) that informed their outstanding performance on the NSSE instrument. This book provides an overview, but a more extensive description and discussion of the particular practices can be found in the book, *Student Success in College* (Kuh, et al., 2005).

The programs examined included such things as programs that allow first-generation students to work on their campus to earn money for tuition (a more successful approach than having them work off-campus or obtain loans); peer mentoring and connection programs; more thorough orientation programs; first-year seminars; undergraduate research programs; and student and aca-

ademic affairs collaborations. The authors point out that many of the practices that achieved success exist in some form on most other campuses, so refinements rather than new initiatives could offer great potential. In reading about the various programs and practices, I found that seamlessness of students' experiences and shared commitment across organizational lines were important variables to explain the success of programs that may exist elsewhere.

Whereas the first half of the book includes historical information and descriptions of what is referred to as "traditional" organizational models, the second half discusses what is referred to as "innovative" models with respect to the DEEP research. Referring again to the functionalist lens, there is an accessible discussion about models of Student Affairs practice that involve a "student-centered" approach, along with the assertion that the profession has always been "student-centered." I had some difficulty understanding how "student-centered" was being defined. In this section, there was another set of distinctions, in this case between "Student-Centered Ethic of Care Models," "Student-Driven Model," and "Student Agency Model." The distinctions seemed to relate to how involved students are in governance and management of student services, ranging from being the beneficiary of services, to running some of them, to being entirely responsible for them.

Then, the authors turn to comparisons between organizational structures that vary in levels of collaboration between academic and student affairs. The authors discuss the prevalence of such collaborations at DEEP institutions, and their importance in fostering student success. There are discussions at various points in the book about to whom student services report (e.g., a Vice-President reporting to the President; a Vice-President reporting to the Chief Academic Officer, etc.), but in general these are seen to be cultural and institution-specific and not in and of themselves relevant to the DEEP success stories. There is also discussion about the importance of Student Affairs staff, regardless of their placement in the organizational chart, contributions to the academic mission, and learning outcomes for students.

The last chapter of the book turns its attention to bringing the various sections together and discussing implications for the future. The impacts of technology and globalization are addressed, as well as the importance of Student Affairs remembering its roots in leading diversity commitments. There is also attention to emerging commitments such as sustainability. The authors comment on strategies for transforming higher education institutions and structures such that they come to enact the approaches highlighted in the DEEP study. From a functionalist and practical framework, this is a handy sourcebook for Student Affairs. Graduate students and more senior practitioners alike will find useful material for reflection.

The reader has by now likely inferred that the critical theorist in me was not happy at all. To begin, the text consistently reinforced a subordinate position for Student Affairs with respect to academic affairs. While there was rich discussion about contributions that Student Affairs can make, it is still just that

– a contribution to something that belongs to someone else. I am not interested in rustling faculty feathers. However, I would like to suggest the need for a more extensive discussion about the role that Student Affairs might play in a successful future of Higher Education, particularly in terms of the success measures being promulgated by external forces such as government calls for accountability. It is likely that the authors, all three of whom are respected and prolific scholars, would disagree on several grounds. In fairness, there are examples in the book in which Student Affairs is quite involved with course-related or other mission-critical work. However, there is not a strand in the book that speaks to how Student Affairs divisions may have been instrumental – even central to transforming their institutions; or how they can be. For instance, there are ways in which students can and are engaged by Student Affairs in such a way that it changes their engagement in the classroom. This type of engagement can have great influence on the work of faculty and their pedagogical stance.

Next, there are a myriad of ways in which students' lives before university impact how they come to school. There was no substantive discussion about how the identity politics on any of the DEEP campuses shaped engagement; or about how schools who performed very “poorly” offer significant opportunities to learn about student engagement or success; or about external influences (e.g. funding issues, political environment, economic conditions) which may have limited or undermined possibilities for success. As well, there are likely thousands of students who had profoundly diminishing experiences before or at university, yet persisted and graduated in spite of the institution's engagement rather than because of it. It is my contention that discussing the university's programs without similar engagement of the student side of the equation could be misleading or incomplete to readers who wish to emulate the success stories in the book.

With the exception of a profile of Evergreen State College in Washington State, U.S., (not radical, but certainly hopeful in terms of dismantling power relations between students, staff, and faculty) there is little to offer in terms of different models for constructing colleges and universities or their programs beyond the traditional milieu. Even focusing on innovative tuition models, such as that of colleges which offer students the opportunity to entirely fund their education through service or on-campus work, would have provided a useful analysis of the relative impact of students' financial stability on their ultimate success. The authors invoke private sector evaluation principles early in the book, so it also would have arguably fit to include some online, for-profit, or also newer institutional forms for comparison. It would have been appropriate to include a discussion on single-sex institutions, Tribal colleges, and institutions with historical service to students of particular racial/ethnic groups.

This book was about the subset of institutions identified by their performance in the NSSE and aims at capturing important variables for students' success, yet the book is almost celebrative rather than critical. There is no discussion of any limitations to NSSE (there is even a reference to another book that has even more in-depth discussion of high-performers).

From a critical perspective, this book is illustrative of two things: the influence of financial support on what does and does not get researched (or for that matter, how it gets researched); and the ways in which instruments like NSSE (and this is not a critique of NSSE) can become the brass standard for determining success and in so doing, make it difficult to identify other considerations which are not captured by any one measure or instrument. Already, Canadian institutions are being told by Provincial officials that funding will be tied at least in part to performance on the NSSE, which is of course a distinctly American instrument. I have no quibble with NSSE, but am greatly concerned at the ways in which such measures for success evolve without more robust debate, and that flow of capital is so heavily determined nonetheless.

Whether the reader favours a functionalist or a critical worldview, both perspectives are particularly relevant in Canada. In Canada, there are a relatively small number of colleges and universities, and fewer types as compared to the U.S. Thus, any variables that transcend size and type offer hopeful opportunities here. For the more critical-minded among us, the opportunity to see the influence of the NSSE instrument and how and when it is invoked in the U.S. provides a foreshadowing of things to come – or has the train already left the station? There may still be agency and choice in current developments in Canadian higher education in general, and Student Affairs in particular – or at least a more intimate higher education community willing to engage in introspection and collaboration. I would like to close with two questions: How will the experiences of U.S. higher education and its concomitant definitions of success inform those in Canada, and to what extent should they do so? ♣

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