

Book Reviews

Editor's note: As of this issue our very able book review editor Christine Taylor is stepping down from this position. She has done an outstanding job for many years. Many thanks, Christine, for your hard work and contributions to the journal. Fortunately, the journal found a successor. As of the next issue the new book review editor will be Professor Marlene Viljoen, Dean of Nursing at the University of the Orange Free State in South Africa.

Education of Health Professionals in Latin America, Theory and Practice in a Movement for Change: A Critical Look

MARCIO ALMEIDA, LAURA FEUERWERKER & MANUEL LLANOS C.
Network Publications, Maastricht (2001)
218 pp., ISBN 90-73026-16-4

This richly textured and at times baroque opus delivers an in-depth review of the significant contributions made by the Kellogg Foundation UNI Program: *A New Initiative for the Education of Health Professionals: Union with the Community*. The UNI Program is built upon lessons learned in the 1990s and from the three previous decades. The authors and editors of this book document the development, implementation and evaluation of the 23 UNI projects in 11 Latin American countries.

The goal of the UNI Program “is to produce synchronous changes in the universities, health services and communities and their relationship to each other”; this elegant and simple statement forms the core concept and unifying thread in the *UNI ideario*. Difficult to translate from the Spanish and Portuguese the *UNI ideario* symbolizes the process of change.

Education of Health Professionals in Latin America is written for serious international students of health professions education, public health planning and theoreticians for social change and equity in a world of unequal access to education, health care and the basic elements of a dignified existence. The question of social equity in Latin America is the most compelling and most promising for economically “marginated” communities serviced by all 11 UNI Programs. The book is written both as historical narrative and theoretical text for maximizing the tripartite mission of the UNI Program. It is divided into two broad sections of background and practice of the *UNI ideario*.

The education of health professionals in Latin America can serve as a template for the training of community-based health professionals world-

wide. The presence of learners in the community validates the need for accessible health care services to communities and allows communities to make their concerns known to the academic and government sectors in ways that go far beyond our conceptualization of health care and extend to areas of quality of life: air, housing, education and human dignity. Chapter 5a, “Preliminary evaluation on the UNI Program”, an external evaluation of the UNI Programs, is eloquent in its description of the assessment of the positive community empowerment of the UNI Programs. Yet all is not a garden of roses as an endeavor. As complex as the *UNI ideario* is in the “reorientation of the training and provision of services, in concordance with the needs, it would be easiest if the community, the services and academia worked cooperatively”. However, as the authors point out, partners are not equal, some academic components dominate, partners still have their own agenda, and there is still resistance among some to the philosophy of the project and its objectives.

In summary, *Education of Health Professionals in Latin America, Theory and Practice in a Movement for Change: A Critical Look* is a well organized, researched and scholarly work on a critically important and innovative methodology for social change in Latin America, the UNI Programs. This book will serve the next generation of educators, planners and community activists. Some readers will find the whole work easy reading; however, Chapter 3, “The development of new academic model for health care and social participation”, will require the reader to brew an extra pot of coffee as the narrative is at times so theoretical as to obfuscate.

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Health Care Teamwork—Interdisciplinary Practice and Teaching

THERESA J.K. DRINKA & PHILLIP G. CLARK

Auburn House, Westport, CT (2000)

196 pp., ISBN 0-86569-297-1, \$24.95

ISBN 0-86569-298-X (pbk)

Theresa Drinka and Phillip Clark have created in *Health Care Teamwork—Interdisciplinary Practice and Teaching* a user-friendly and comprehensive text that explores relationships among various health care providers. The authors’ years of personal and professional experience in interdisciplinary health care teams (IHCT) and careful research are evident in the way they

are able to separate fact from fiction in this growing field of knowledge and practice.

In an era of specialized and technical health care, the use of teams to enhance patient care has grown phenomenally because it provides a way to accomplish intricate tasks that go beyond the performance capacity of one individual or profession. While most of the teaming models were developed in business settings, use of these models in health care has not always been effective. Drinka and Clark do a nice job of looking at team structure as used in business and pointing out the pitfalls of using the accepted business models in the health care setting. The chapters in the book are ordered logically and content flows in a natural sequence that will aid the learner. To supplement written material, the authors use figures and tables effectively.

Examination of the relationship between various health care professions is a strength of this book. Because each profession teaches a value system unique to that profession, very few health care providers understand how or why another professional reacts in the way each does to a given situation. The authors astutely discuss problems encountered when members of different professions react in varying ways to a particular problem or situation, and offer useful suggestions to help preclude potential misunderstandings.

Individuals functioning at several levels will find this book useful. Administrators who are considering the use of interdisciplinary health care teams as a means to improve patient care will be interested in this book as it provides realistic reflections on expectations and goals for teamwork that are appropriate and attainable. They will also see how they can best support the efforts of the team. It is comprehensive enough to be helpful from the conceptualization of the team, throughout the team's life cycle. Members of IHCTs will find this an invaluable tool in the teamwork process. Team members will find help in understanding team development and maintenance, communication as a cornerstone in teamwork, team leadership and power issues, and practical ways to handle the inevitable problems and conflicts that arise in teamwork situations. Finally, this book is an ideal text for those teaching the mechanics of IHCT. More than just a "how to" manual, this book speaks to the philosophy and cultural milieu needed for effective health care teams. It should be on the shelf of every health professional.

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Promoting Health through Organizational Change

HARVEY A. SKINNER

Benjamin Cummings, San Francisco, CA (2001)

228 pp., ISBN 0-205341594, \$55.33

The author's aim is "to help practitioners learn about new approaches for addressing patient resistance and building activation for health behavior change". What emerges is more an interactive tool for education that is constantly seeking to activate both teacher and student than a usual textbook.

Forged as part of a graduate course, it is designed like a series of illustrated lectures, with outlines, lists, tables and action plans. The internet is part of the book's program; so are a variety of instruments for evaluation and progress-monitoring. As it stands, the book is a complete syllabus ready for student use, with study plans, exercises, and bibliography.

The type of organization that is the target of this book is not always clear. Generically, the concern is a health care facility, ranging from family practice clinic, or community project, to hospitals. In general, the focus appears to be on primary care facilities. For example, the Group Health Cooperative (GHC) of Puget Sound in Seattle is described in detail, but the approach is illustrative more than descriptive. That is, those aspects of GHC are pointed out that fit the book's model. The reader is told what to look for. Missing from the description is a case study of the type where a reality situation is fully described before value judgments are made. Certainly, nowhere is a case provided in order to give the reader an opportunity to reflect about its strengths and weaknesses. This text virtually always leads the reader and points the way.

Conversely, the author covers a lot of ground in very clear, articulate language. The basic data available about health behaviors are extensive and up-to-date. For health educators, this book is strongly recommended. As a sourcebook, it should be useful for all types of health personnel. As a guide to organizational change, for this reviewer, the value is not as clear. My bias is to challenge by questioning and analysis more than with framework and knowledge-digests that point out directions for change rather than to challenge with problems in all their complexity. Certainly, this is a book that is highly relevant to a broad range of health providers, and is a gold mine of valuable information for the health educator.

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