

Educator Empowerment: Faculty Development for Change

Book Review

Nicole Elmasry 

Prince Mohammad bin Fahd University
nicollena@gmail.com

Sara B. Ewell, Joan Giblin and Joe McNabb (Editors): *Faculty Development: Achieving Change Through Action Research*. Information Age Pub Inc, 2023. 146 pp. Paperback: \$52.99. ISBN 979-8-88730-381-9

Faculty development is a critical aspect of enhancing the educational landscape, and *Faculty Development: Achieving Change through Action Research* seeks to address the most essential gaps in professional development in academia today. The book's overarching themes are: integrating technology from using rubrics effectively to building online communities and enhancing the preservice teacher experience, relationship building between educator and student using feedback, effective assessment strategies incorporating formative assessments, gaps in faculty development that occur in community colleges and part-time employment, and preparing students for success. Authored by doctoral students and experts in the field, this book delves into the multifaceted aspects of faculty development, focusing on practical strategies and action research to bring about positive change and encourage equity and social justice. This book offers a comprehensive guide to addressing these challenges and fostering growth in higher education. As the introduction suggests, "While critics of higher education have remarked on glacially slow pace of change in higher education, it remains true that glaciers do, in fact, move. And when glaciers move, they make a profound impact on the world around them. The question for those of us in higher education, who care about the quality and purpose of higher education, is how do we change in the most responsible and ethical way possible?" (pp. x)

The book is organized into eight chapters, each addressing a specific aspect of faculty development. The organization of each chapter allows readers to delve into various relevant issues while maintaining a cohesive focus on improving higher education through action research and social justice. Readers will appreciate being able to flip quickly through chapters and the poignant summary and suggestions each contributes, offering tangible relatability only a qualitative approach can offer. Topics range from digital assessments and relationship-building to career development and strategic inquiry. The primary authors provide a range of experience and background from K-12 educators, faculty members, and a variety of administrators within higher education. Readers will enjoy the boots-on-the-ground approach that only educators in the field can offer through authentic experience. While specific details about the chapter authors are not provided, the collective expertise of the contributors suggests a wealth of experience in academia and

research.

The first chapter in the book, "Digital Formative Assessments in Higher Education," presents faculty recommendations that lend a practical and experiential touch for educators motivated to adapt to the digital age while overcoming resistance and barriers faculty face implementing formative assessments in higher education. For example, the author, Craig, offers insight into formative assessments through his action research project. Craig, who works as a faculty member at a top-tier business school offers the insider perspective of a faculty member who is experiencing the problem of practice but an outsider since they do not share the barriers faculty illustrated at their organization.

"Building Relationships for Success," the second chapter, explores the experiences of students and faculty in postsecondary developmental English courses. As the number of students enrolled in these courses grows, examining and building connections becomes more relevant for student success.

As an increase in part-time educators becomes part of the ever-changing landscape of higher education, the third chapter, "One Educator's Growth" explores ways that part-time educators can harness technology to create professional development opportunities while addressing the barriers many part-time faculty face. The author, Donner, delves into the growing underrepresented phenomenon of part-time faculty in higher education. It showcases the narrative of an educator's growth, providing insights into the potential benefits of building a digital community in the increasingly dynamic educational landscape.

The fourth chapter "Closing the Feedback Loop on Rubrics" offers a comprehensive exploration of the rubric design process to create meaningful assessments and provide effective student feedback.

Connecting theoretical coursework to practical fieldwork is a critical factor in teacher education, and the fifth chapter, "Enhancing Clinical Experiences Through Action Research" addresses this gap. This chapter suggests a framework that connects pre-service teachers, university educators, and school-based teachers to better prepare early childhood educators for the field.

The sixth chapter "Not Just a March to Tenure and Promotion"



New articles in this journal are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 United States License.



This journal is published by Pitt Open Library Publishing.



This journal is supported by the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate: A Knowledge Forum on the EdD (CPED) cpedinitiative.org

impactinged.pitt.edu
Vol.9 No.4 (2024)

ISSN 2472-5889 (online)
DOI 10.5195/ie.2024.448

offers a refreshing perspective on faculty careers at community colleges as it acknowledges the barriers these faculty face while offering strategies and opportunities for creating a scholarly identity and attaining tenure. The author, Hoffman, works as an administrator at a community college and offers an insider perspective of what they observe in the faculty but an outsider as an administrator who is not living the experiences of the tenure track experience.

"Strategic Inquiry for Improving Learning and Teaching," the seventh chapter, explores the use of inquiry to enhance interprofessional education through continuous assessment processes in health science foundation programs.

The final chapter, "Creating and Using a Career Development Course," acknowledges the gap between life science students and their knowledge of possible STEM-based careers. Through a career development course, students can acquire the skills and knowledge to make better-informed decisions regarding their prospective career choices, an often-overlooked aspect of education where careers in STEM may not yet exist or students may lack the cultural capital to understand what options their future could hold.

The intended audience for this book includes educators, administrators, and researchers in higher education seeking practical insights and strategies for enhancing faculty development. This book would be particularly useful for those involved in educational policymaking, curriculum development, and the improvement of teaching and learning experiences in higher education settings. This book addresses underlying obstacles that educators in higher education face, ranging from obtaining tenure to meeting rising standards for part-time faculty.

Compared to other works on faculty development, this book stands out for its comprehensive approach, covering a wide array of topics within a single volume. The focus on action research distinguishes it from purely theoretical works, providing tangible strategies for educators. Other books on faculty development tend to have more extended discussions on the methodology or changes made at the individual level, like *The PD Book: 7 Habits that Transform Professional Development* by Elena Aguilar and co-author Lori Cohen (2022). This book serves as a shorter read with practical, research-based suggestions that educators can implement in their classrooms or institutions today. This book is for higher education, in the way that *The First Days of School* (Wong & Wong, 2005) is for K-12.

The book makes significant contributions by providing practical insight and strategies for faculty development. For those working in a community college, there are tools to facilitate and support career advancement. Educators assisting students to navigate career choices can use some of the opportunities outlined in chapter eight. Preservice educators can use the framework for enhancing clinical experiences by connecting pre-service teachers, university educators, and school-based teachers, thereby preparing future educators more effectively. Strengths of the book include its practical orientation, diverse coverage, and the inclusion of actionable recommendations while focusing on relevant issues of equity and social justice. However, the lack of individual author backgrounds may be a weakness for readers seeking to understand the specific expertise of contributors. Additionally, more explicit connections between chapters could enhance coherence, and a more thorough discussion of the existing literature could further strengthen its scholarly impact. Although this book is beneficial for educators,

administrators, and researchers interested in actionable approaches to enhancing higher education, this book looks beyond those with power and seeks to give a path to success for those who have none, for those who feel stuck and trapped, and for those who still have hope.

REFERENCES

- Aguilar, E. & Cohen, L. (2022). *The PD Book: 7 Habits that Transform Professional Development*. Jossey-Bass.
- Wong, H. K., & Wong, R. T. (2005). *The First Days of School: How to be an Effective Teacher* ([Version 3]). Harry K. Wong Publications.