
Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

Conoley, Jane Close & Conoley, Collie W. (1992). *School Consultation: Practice and Training, Second Edition*. Scarborough, ON: Prentice Hall Canada Inc. 188 pp.

Reviewed by: Elaine Whitford, Elk Island Public Schools, Alberta.

One in a series of practitioner guidebooks, this revised edition presents an overview of issues and approaches related to consultation in schools. As school-based counsellors face the challenges of increasing needs and decreasing time, consultation skills may well become as essential as basic counselling skills. Conoley and Conoley state that they have written the book for a broad audience, including psychologists, special educators, school social workers, counsellors and administrators. It would be equally useful for students searching for a concise summary of consultation, and would be well-chosen as a textbook for graduate courses in school psychology or special education. Near the back of the book, Conoley and Conoley list fourteen objectives for a training program for consultants, including the skills knowledge and attitudes needed.

All the examples focus on schools. The role of the consultant is defined as working with and through others, an approach that school administrators will readily accept and identify with. The book repeatedly reminds the reader that consultants must strive to develop insights and skills in others who have more ongoing contact with the children or students, a strategy which is familiar to educators.

Readable and practical, the book uses headings, sub-headings, examples, figures and tables throughout to present and substantiate information. For example, "Twelve Easy Steps for Failure as a Mental Health Consultant" lists potential pitfalls. Each chapter ends with a summary and suggested readings. Occasionally, the reader may feel some frustration with the limited depth; an additional nine pages of references provide additional sources.

Beginning with three theories—mental health consultation, behavioural consultation and process consultation—Conoley and Conoley meld them together into an ecological theory. This approach leads to identifying: (1) supporting forces that can be used in enhancement strategies, and (2) inhibiting forces that can be used in remediation strategies. In a school setting, this would fit well with an educational framework in which teachers build on a student's strengths while working to remediate weaknesses. Six subsequent chapters deal with skills, targets, deciding how to enter and when to stay, moving from direct to indirect service, evaluation, and the consultant as trainer. Appendices provide consultation transcripts and a list of inservice options for consultants.

The section on skills and attitudes includes common sense approaches: working with a person's strengths, keeping planning simple, and believing that each person is doing the best possible under the current situation. Most useful was the segment on dealing with irrational and unconscious beliefs; it

presented three specific strategies, each with case examples. Often in other sections of the book, this reader was left wishing for more examples. Moving on to problem identification, Conoley and Conoley comment that "The process . . . is more difficult than most consultants believe" (p. 53) but then do not deal with it further, leaving one to wonder about issues, pitfalls and strategies. Another section on consulting for organizational change suggests the efficacy of teaching client groups self-analysis as a means of overcoming the ineffectiveness of a consultant trying to be both expert observer and interpreter. Perhaps this might be a skill to be used in assisting with problem identification.

Consulting for macrosystem change will be of particular interest to those working with disabled children or involved in placement decisions. The chapter begins with a child-oriented overview of the law and its interpretation, including precedents from litigation. Although obviously based on American statutes and legal processes, many of the examples will be familiar in nature to Canadians. Consultants are cautioned about the need to work within a framework of due process, and are encouraged to use their training to help people work together, to negotiate among the stakeholders, and to foster partnerships with parents.

In a time of political eulogies about "grass-roots decision making" it is interesting to read the statement, "Change, elusive as it is, proceeds more smoothly from the top down" (p. 83). Conoley and Conoley offer a straightforward presentation of the role of the consultant in facilitating organizational change. Organizational boundaries, the "focus on yesterday," and the pros and cons of internal consultants are all dealt with. Consultants are warned about being so ideologically focused that they are willing to intervene regardless of the organizational possibilities for success.

The final chapter on the consultant as trainer recognizes that training is unlikely to be influential unless it is accompanied by follow-up consultation, a statement that is pragmatic but that could be perceived as somewhat self-serving when made by a consultant seeking a contract.

School Consultation: Practice and Training, Second Edition provides a concise overview of the topic. Excellent as a textbook or "first read," the book may be found somewhat limited by practitioners who have a good grasp of the essentials of working with various groups in a school setting. As such, it still offers useful reminders; often those of us in the field can become so focused on outcomes that we neglect to apply the process knowledge we have as counsellors.

Kvale, Steinar (ed.). (1992). *Psychology and Postmodernism*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE. (Softcover) 223 pp.

Reviewed by: R. Vance Peavy, University of Victoria.

This is a book of thirteen chapters, nine of which originated at a 1989 symposium on Postmodernism and psychology held in Denmark at Aarhus