

FOREWORD BY **JOHN N. GARDNER**

**FRED B. NEWTON • STEVEN C. ENDER**

# STUDENTS HELPING STUDENTS

*A Guide for Peer Educators  
on College Campuses*



**Appropriate for  
Paraprofessionals**

**SECOND EDITION**



# Students Helping Students



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on College Campuses

Second Edition

Fred B. Newton, Steven C. Ender

*Foreword by John N. Gardner*

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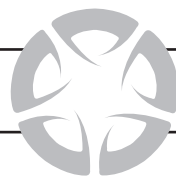




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## FOREWORD

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In my four decades as a higher educator the full realization of “students helping students” has been dawning on me gradually, but powerfully and persuasively. And now, in what my friend Betty Siegel calls the “wintering into wisdom” phase of my life, I can safely posit that I believe the most important generic strategy that colleges and universities can adopt to increase student success is one that greatly increases intentional efforts for “students helping students.” How did I come upon this position?

For me, this epiphany began when I was in college. I wrote about this in November of 2009 in a blog entitled “Power to the Peers.” I insert this now in this foreword to Fred Newton’s and Steven Ender’s important second edition of *Students Helping Students* to serve as my foundational introductory comments on this important work.

### Power to the Peers!

The ring of the header above has to reveal that I am a child of the 60s with its evocation of “power to the people.” I confess: I am. That was the period in which I acquired my idealism which drives me still. I was inspired by President Kennedy, Martin Luther King, the early feminist thinkers and leaders, the Civil Rights and Women’s Rights movements and the anti-war movement, in which I participated after I completed my own tour of military service, honorably and with gratitude. Anyway, to the point of this blog: students have always had power.

Decades of good research has determined that the single greatest influence on college student decision making during the college years is the influence of other students. This is one of those things like the students working in college phenomena. We can't beat it. Why not join it? This is to say, once you recognize the enormous influence of students on students, the logical conclusion should be we need to try to influence this by putting the students we want to influence other students into positions of influence to do just that.

Inspired by uses of "peer mentors" in first-year seminars that I saw at such places as Baldwin-Wallace College (Ohio) and Kean University of New Jersey, I decided in 1991, when I was the Executive Director of University 101 at the University of South Carolina, to personally be the first 101 instructor to use a "peer mentor" as a test case. It was a wonderful experience. I am indebted to my peer leader, Ms. Lisa Huttinger, for giving me and my students such a wonderful experience. And then I became even more indebted to my Co-director of University 101, Professor Dan Berman for picking up the ball and creating our powerful peer leader program at USC. Today, over 175 sections of the course annually have a peer leader.

I say "even more indebted" because my colleague, Dan Berman, had been a sophomore at Marietta College in 1961, when I was a floundering first-year student also at Marietta. And it was his spontaneous and generous reaching out to influence me, by showing me how to take lecture notes, and select really engaging professors, that I attribute more than anything else to getting me off academic probation. I often think were it not for my own "peer leader" I would never have been able to stay in college, and then go on to help other college students. So, by all means: Power to the peers!

Newton and Ender have provided us with a new manual that can tell both us and our students everything we needed to know about why students should be empowered to help students by being placed in official positions of institutional influence, and then how to influence students positively and realize concomitant personal growth and learnings themselves. This work reaffirms my own learnings on my journey that has led me to conclude that an intentional strategy for students helping students should be the foundation of institutionalized efforts to improve student success.

As indicated in my blog above, this learning journey for me began with my own college experience with that life transforming, serendipitous encounter with an upperclass student who literally “saved” me, a failing first-year student.

It was later, in my senior year in college, that I learned the next two lessons about students helping students. The first came when a fellow student shared with me an all time best-seller book, Erich Fromm’s *The Art of Loving*. Reading the manuscript of *Students Helping Students* reminds me of this lesson because of the pedagogical emphasis that Newton and Ender put on the idea that students must first know themselves before they can fulfill their potential to help others, particularly their strengths and weaknesses, and how those are revealed in interactional contexts with other students. Comparably, Fromm argued influentially that before any person (e.g., college student) can “love” another, she or he must first have attained sufficient self-esteem to have developed the capacity for self-love and respect.

My second lesson that senior year was my experience as a student government leader, the founding chair of a student judicial system that aspired to root out academic dishonesty and raise academic standards. This was, I sincerely believed, in the name of students helping students. And I found that of all my experiences in college, this was by far the most powerful. Student government

interactions gave me a relatively risk-free laboratory to apply most all the skills I had been learning in my liberal arts courses: critical thinking, problem solving, persuasive writing and speaking, and more.

Several years later, I really had the opportunity to see an analog to “students helping students” when I had the good fortune to be drafted during my own graduate school education, into the U.S. armed forces. It was during the military that I saw as I never had before the learning and personal growth value that derives from giving the lowest-status members of the organization (young, entering troops = first-year students) *responsibility*. I saw the transformative power of giving and taking responsibility, literally responsibility for the lives of others and millions of dollars worth of property. And after my military service, that is exactly what I have seen for students whom we place in official positions of authority to help other students: responsibility is the most powerful teacher.

I have to ask, but don’t have time in this brief foreword to answer: why don’t we give students more responsibility? *Students Helping Students* gives us plenty of answers for why and how we should. One fine thinker I discovered on my own professional journey is my namesake but no relation, Phillip Gardner, who leads the Collegiate Employment Research Institute at Michigan State University. Phillip Gardner is a foremost researcher on what happens to recent college graduates in positions of employment. He has even studied why some recent college graduates lose their first job after college. The most common reason: “failure to take initiative.” I believe that if we included more deliberate learning experiences for students from “students helping students” that we could produce more graduates who definitely know how to take initiative.

Another very influential thinker, and practitioner, that I have discovered in my career is a scholar and teacher whom I fondly



refer to as the “guru of service learning”: Professor of English Edward Zlotkowski of Bentley University. It was Edward and his writing and speaking about the transformative educational influence of service learning who really got me to realize that the root of this influence on student development must rest in what Zlotkowski calls “reflection.” This is identical to the case that Newton and Ender make for an essential component of peer leader training to be what they call “reflection.” This argues for the necessity of having students reflect on their own learnings from the challenges they have faced in college and how those have been connected to personal learning, growth, and change. That reflection process becomes inextricably connected to the introspection process that the authors also argue is an essential part of the peer leader training component. I believe that the more we teach, encourage, insist, that students practice reflection and introspection, the higher their level of engagement will be in their remaining college courses and career.

I had been in my career for over twenty years, working on the so-called “first-year experience” reform movement, when I launched another Don Quixote crusade for what I called “the senior year experience,” which was also the title of a 1998 Jossey-Bass book. In the process of editing that work I discovered another fine scholar, Professor Ed Holton of Louisiana State University. Holton enlightened me by his persuasive analysis of how the cultures of most postcollege work environments are different from, and in many ways not compatible with, the cultures of most colleges and universities, which prepare students to enter those postcollege environments. In college students are not required to exercise nearly the same levels and extent of responsibility that they must exhibit immediately after college. In college they are told precisely what they must do, when, and how. This is frequently not the case in the world of employment, where there is much more ambiguity and space for personal differences in

initiative. *Students Helping Students* appeals to me because I think we educators must do a better job of giving students more meaningful responsibilities, through helping and leading others, before they leave college for the real world of work. In that sense, college could also become the “real world of work.”

As I write this foreword, I do so living near a small North Carolina town, Swannanoa, which is the location of one of the very few remaining “work colleges,” as they are known in American higher education: Warren Wilson College. Here the students do virtually everything to keep the college operating and fellow students nourished: they grow and prepare the food, maintain the grounds and physical plant, and far more. Each student has an academic and a work curriculum and both are regarded as equally important. There is a chief academic officer and a “dean of work.” This is the ultimate attainment of “students helping students.” It occurs to me that a fallout from the Great Recession may be to encourage more institutions to return to more of the practices of the work college, an environment where *all* students help *all* students. Just think of the combined cost savings and learning outcomes with real-life transfer values. *Students Helping Students* could show the way.

Well, this is surely enough of my reflection and introspection on why colleges ought to invest more intentional educational energies into placing more students in more positions of authority to help other students; and why we should provide the intentional training and support to accomplish this. I am persuaded that this could truly leverage and increase student success. Students helping students is a process to fulfill the potential for college as both a time and context for students to explore and develop their potential for helping themselves, others, our communities, and society. Now you just need to experience Fred Newton’s and Steven Ender’s *Students Helping Students* for yourself.

The use of this book by our students could truly be individually and institutionally life transformative. Best wishes on your own higher education journey of which students helping students is such a fundamental part.

*John N. Gardner*



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## PREFACE

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The world was still celebrating the new millennium when *Students Helping Students* was released in the first edition. We were anticipating that higher education was entering an exciting era of new technology, increasingly diverse students, and expanded opportunities for connecting people with common interests all across the globe. We knew that peer educators were going to be an important part of our colleges and universities entering the new age. Who would be better prepared to deal with change and adjust to new challenges than those in the generation of change?

During the past ten years many milestones have occurred: the tragedy of 9/11 and the shock of vulnerability, followed by war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Mark Zuckerman introduced Facebook and within months millions of students joined the new social networking club. Our libraries became 90 percent accessible from a student's room two thousand miles away during a semester abroad. Tuition costs more than doubled at many institutions, an African American became president, tragic violent events occurred on major college campuses, and student demographics grew to represent more diversity than at any time in history. As we predicted, the decade was filled with change, even if we did not anticipate the specific changes that occurred.

Has change also taken place with peer educator roles and responsibilities on campus? The first task of our revision was to investigate the changes taking place for students serving in helping and educating roles with their fellow students. Data were readily

accessible from our own campus, from colleagues around the country, and from students, the Internet, and current journals. A Google search turned up over 500 descriptions of peer education programs in nearly every service or academic unit possible on a college campus. A colleague working in Residence Life indicated that over 10 percent of residents served in peer educator positions. At another institution an estimate was made that over 30 percent of the students had actively participated in service projects during an academic year. Three trends were identified: the proliferation of peer educators in a wide range of service duties; the expansion of service delivery methods to include not only direct contacts but also electronic blogs and social networking and interactive Web sites; and the growth of peer leadership into social consciousness movements, such as matters of campus safety, advocacy for sound ecology, and responsible community. These trends are discussed further in Chapter One.

## **ADDITIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THIS EDITION**

Updating for current trends and reporting new information and research were major reasons for revision. Feedback and experience from the first edition indicated that we could make some key improvements. Students today are active learners wanting more examples of real situations and more engagement through activities; also, conceptual maps are helpful when there is a need to explain the big picture. This edition has included many new examples, mostly collected from students in peer educator classes who have offered their stories as a part of training. A number of activities have been added as well so that you, the reader, can make your own story part of the learning. Each chapter now contains figures and graphs that illustrate many of the key points in

that section of the book. We want the experience offered in the book to be engaging and an enjoyable part of your training. Another addition is a new chapter that provides several examples of peer educator programs in a variety of service areas. These are used as illustrations of the breadth of possibilities for peer educator service.

## USE OF THE BOOK

*Students Helping Students* may function as a training manual and also as a resource guide for those in preservice or in-service preparation as peer educators. We have found that it may also be used as part of training for leadership classes training for service learning, or for paraprofessional or entry level staff training in staff positions that do not have formal specialized training in a social service or student service field.

The book is designed to utilize what is described as a *reflection* model, at work when you see the terms *what*, *so what*, and *now what*. You will go through the steps of explaining the basic principles of a concept (*what*), reflecting upon what this means to you and the situation of concern (*so what*), and anticipating how to apply and utilize the *what* in a real life situation (*now what*). Each chapter provides opportunity to go through this reflection process.

## STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The book comprises eleven chapters. The first four provide the core helping foundation and personal knowledge that we believe are necessary for later skill development. As we have said, competent helping people first know themselves and the personal

strengths and weaknesses they bring to the helping relationship. With this concept in mind, the first four chapters require you to be somewhat introspective in regard to yourself, the world around you, and your communication skills as a helping person.

In Chapter One, “Peer Educators on the College Campus,” we present an overview of the role you are taking up. We review the extent to which peer interventions are used on college campuses and how peer programs have been effective. We introduce the model of training and ask you to reflect upon how this experience will impact your own life.

As a peer educator, you will be assisting other students who are facing personal challenges of all types. In Chapter Two, “Student Maturation and the Impact of Peers,” we explore the types of personal changes and challenges most college-aged students experience. We explore the concept of challenge-and-response dynamics as it relates to and stimulates personal change. In this chapter, we encourage you to reflect on your own development and maturation level, assess your strengths, and consider strategies to improve areas that you note for improvement.

Chapter Three, “Enhancing Cultural Proficiency,” is extremely important to the understanding of culture and diversity of cultures and their impact on our interactions and very existence. We are a multicultural society to which people bring their various worldviews. It is important that we know and understand ourselves as cultural beings in order to understand and respect the many issues of diversity.

In Chapter Four, “Interpersonal Communication Skills: Creating the Helping Interaction,” we explore the significance of effective listening and responding skills, emphasizing both verbal and nonverbal communication patterns. Core helping areas of empathy, respect, and warmth are defined. Basic responses in helping interactions are explained with specific examples.



Most important, you will learn that helping others with personal concerns is accomplished by being a competent, empathic, nonjudgmental listener.

In Chapter Five, “Problem Solving with Individuals,” we cover the topic of assisting others through the use of active problem-solving approaches. We also present the integration of communication skills with a problem-solving model, as well as other specific problem-solving techniques.

We present an overview of how groups develop and function in Chapter Six, “Understanding Group Process.” In this chapter we challenge you to heighten your awareness and subsequent attention to group communication patterns, normative behavior, decision processes, cohesion, and individual coordination toward group task. Attention to group process is a major ingredient in improving the functioning level of a group.

In Chapter Seven, “Leading Groups Effectively,” we look at the necessary characteristics of being an effective leader, as well as covering the very practical nuts and bolts of conducting productive group meetings and making group presentations. We also explore skills and methods for organizing, facilitating, and solving problems.

We provide examples of applying the peer intervention model to academic success in Chapter Eight, “Strategies for Academic Success.” This is the only chapter that demonstrates an in-depth application of how peers may offer service toward a specific area of outcome. The chapter serves as an example of implementation, using as a topic academic success, which is a goal common to all students.

In “Using Campus Resources and Referral Techniques,” Chapter Nine, we offer an overview of the process for helping students locate resources and making appropriate referrals to these resources. Among the discussed resources are physical support services and Internet and electronic resources.

In Chapter Ten, “Ethics and Strategies for Good Practice,” we introduce the need for standards of ethical behavior and discuss the issues of conduct that a peer educator might encounter.

As noted previously, we added Chapter Eleven, “Examples of Peer Education Programs in Higher Education,” to present a range of examples of how peer educators function in a variety of services. This edition also provides a glossary as a resource aid.

As you begin the process of learning effective helping skills we encourage you to explore yourself and your potential for the future. It is the same exploration and encouragement that you will give others on a daily basis in your role of peer educator. We hope you find both training and serving others to be as exciting and personally relevant as we have in our own lives. You are in a position to make a difference in the life experience of others. We challenge you to make the most of the exciting life experience. Enjoy the ride!

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

There are many who contributed to this revised work. We feel gratitude to them for their contributions of time and effort and, most important, for their willingness to share very forthright suggestions.

First, we greatly appreciate important inputs from the Jossey-Bass editor, Erin Null. She provided excellent suggestions with input from reviewers on how to make significant improvements in this edition. Her suggestions nudged and challenged us to open our minds to some new ways of presenting material. And this was done with the right amount of encouragement and support.

Next, we received a lot of informational inputs directly and indirectly from a number of professionals that were supervising and organizing peer educator programs. Direct inputs came from several professionals who offered interviews and described the details of their peer programs. We thank Mary Tolar, Carol Kennedy, Dianna Schalles, Sarah Tedford, Camilla Roberts, and John O'Connell for these inputs. Informally, we reviewed online descriptions from more programs than we can enumerate in a paragraph. This is another benefit of the Internet: providing "show and tell" access to the world.

Another valuable experience was visiting over a dozen classes where peer educators were being trained and receiving their ideas through open discussion. These students tried out many of the activities from the book and provided very candid feedback. Students not only helped students but they were also invaluable help to the authors. Special thanks to students Rebecca Steinert, Tammy Osborn, and Tammy Sonnentag for research and editorial inputs from students' perspectives.

I want to especially thank those who participated in the production of this book by offering suggestions, editing, research, and assistance with many of the details that made the final product possible. Eunhee Kim served as assistant in charge of research and made inputs with the chapter on student success. John O'Connell, a long time friend and colleague, served as a consultant on content for chapters on the college student and facilitative communication. Brenda Schoendaller managed to protect, organize, and make sure the detailed tasks were completed on time.

Extremely valuable contributions were made by two consultants serving as proof editors to read, correct, suggest, and improve drafts of this book. Shalin Hai Jew supported the completion of the first draft of the book. Both her expertise on technology and her writing skills were great assets. Katherine Harder, with

only a couple of weeks notice, was able to help us polish the final draft. She was indeed a gift to find at the crunch time of preparation.

Last but certainly not least I want to recognize Ata Karim for contributing the initial writing of Chapter Three on “Enhancing Cultural Proficiency” and sharing his expertise in that area, and Rita Ross for adapting the concepts of culture and competence into practical applications for peer education training. She has also been a great source of personal support over the year of production.

We also want to recognize the authors who were the first to create an early version of *Students Helping Students* in 1979. Theodore K. Miller and Sue Saunders were pioneers in this effort, along with Steven Ender, coauthor of this book. We are grateful to these authors for releasing the copyright to us and letting their original text be updated and expanded. You will note sections that contain a reference to their work.

*Fred B. Newton*  
*Steven C. Ender*

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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**Fred B. Newton** is director of counseling services and professor of counseling and educational psychology at Kansas State University. At the University of Missouri-Columbia he received an EPDA (Education Professions Development Act) fellowship while completing a doctorate in counseling psychology. He also has a master's degree in student personnel services from Ohio State University.

Dr. Newton's early career included teaching and coaching in the public schools, serving as director of a community recreation program, and directing the student activities program at a community college. He has held a faculty position in the Department of Counseling and Human Development at the University of Georgia and was coordinator of career counseling and associate professor of education at Duke University.

He has been active as an author and researcher, having contributed chapters to seventeen professional books and written over sixty articles for professional journals. Other professional contributions include over a hundred presentations to professional and other public audiences. He has been involved internationally with presentations in Europe and Asia and has publications that have been printed in Japan and Australia.

Over the past twenty years, Dr. Newton has served as a training consultant to students and staff in over fifty college settings, including colleges in the United Kingdom, Portugal, Romania, Taiwan, and Japan. He has helped establish workshops

and training programs in areas of leadership, organizational development, and peer counseling. He has been involved with the implementation of six grant programs sponsored by foundations and federal government programs. Currently, he is director of Kansas State Comprehensive Assessment Tool, Inc., a nonprofit corporation that develops and distributes assessment instruments for measuring input and outcome variables on student success.

Dr. Newton has been recognized for excellence in his teaching and service contributions to professional associations. He received the Annuity Coepris Award from the American College Personnel Association, the Walter Morrison Service contribution finalist by the Kansas State Foundation, and Emerging Entrepreneurs finalist by Commercialization Leadership Council of Kansas State Research Foundation.

**Steven C. Ender** became the ninth president of Grand Rapids Community College in May 2009. During his more than thirty years in higher education, Dr. Ender has held numerous teaching, counseling, and administrative positions and has published extensively in refereed journals as well as textbooks. His most recent professional position prior to the GRCC presidency was serving as president of Westmoreland Community College. A Richmond, Virginia, native, Dr. Ender holds a bachelor's degree in business management from Virginia Commonwealth University; master's and doctoral degrees in education from the University of Georgia; and has completed post-doctoral studies at The Snowmass Institute in Snowmass, Colorado, and Harvard University.

Among his honors and achievements, in 2002 Dr. Ender was named to the National Advisory Board for "Helping Teens Succeed," a college transition program. He received the Pennsylvania Association for Developmental Educators Award for Research and Publication in 1998, and the Award for Excellence