

Book Review

Atkins-Sayre, W. & Yook, E. L. (Eds.). (2015). *Communicating Advice: Peer Tutoring and Communication Practice*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Inc. (328 pp., paper \$40.95).

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There are many volumes on the value of peer tutoring, methods for tutor training, and various problems that arise in the process of tutoring as well as administering a peer tutoring center of any kind—from writing centers to academic success centers. But there are fewer texts about the specific issues of communication tutoring. Wendy Atkins-Sayre and Eunhyoung L. Yook's *Communicating Advice: Peer Tutoring and Communication Practice* collected volume, offers the rare communication theory based advice for peer tutoring in disciplines beyond communication. Atkins-Sayre and Yook co-edited, a volume on communication centers, *Communication Centers and Oral Communication Programs in Higher Education: Advantages, Challenges, and New Directions*. Atkins-Sayre and Yook's volume presents a selection of chapters discussing the details of communication theories in the practice of tutoring, and accounts from peer tutoring center directors detailing processes of training, research, and problem solving using theories in their own centers. *Communicating Advice*, ultimately, identifies and begins critical conversations that need to continue through ongoing research and cross-campus collaborations, and emerges as a practical text for including communication theories in peer tutoring across the disciplines.

Communicating Advice opens with a foreword that presents a compelling argument for inclusion of communication theory in peer tutoring for any academic

center: effective communication, after all, is the key to successful tutoring. For example, Atkins-Sayre and Yook point out that educating tutors in conflict resolution theories can help navigate difficult situations with resistant clients, and educating tutors on interpersonal communication can help build a more successful team. The volume sets out to bridge the gap between the communication theoreticians, directors of communication centers, as well as writing centers, and other academic subject tutoring centers. To anyone in the peer tutoring realm, this is not only interesting, but also an enticing proposition. In short, peer tutoring professionals recognize the value of diversifying theoretical offerings for tutor training, and *Communicating Advice* is an appealing addition to the training repertoire. Tutoring center directors can draw on this volume to build a strong staff (Part I), teach tutors how to understand student needs (Part II), and build a supportive tutoring environment (Part III). But *Communicating Advice* does something even more powerful: it identifies aspects of communication theory that directors need to understand themselves in the course of their own work, be it research, administration, or collaboration.

The remaining chapters build, develop, and strengthen the case for placing communication study researchers, or centers (where available) at the helm of training peer tutors in all disciplines. At the heart of the volume is the argument that tutors in any discipline will be better equipped to perform

their duties if they are educated in communication theories. From intercultural communication, to active listening skills, communication theories can help tutors navigate issues in the workplace and tutoring sessions. The early part of the volume also helps to establish how sidelined the work of communication centers has been. Chapter 2, in particular, demonstrates the layers of marginalization, and shows the growing pains of the discipline. Turner and Sheckles discuss the lack of venues to feature communication center research, and point out the need to publish in order to strengthen the field of communication centers in academia. In this light, it is commendable that *Communicating Advice* presents a solid space from which to build further work that bridges the gap between communication peer tutoring and peer tutoring in other disciplines.

Most strikingly, the volume creates a space where center directors can speak directly to the readers about their work. “Theory into Practice” segments at the end of each section offer evidence-based examples of actionable advice that administrators can use to inform their own center administration and training. These sections are particularly attractive to any center director looking to include specific ideas into tutor training. Additionally, the reflections of the directors show that many centers share similar problems, like dealing with conflicts among staff members or not understanding student needs clearly. Each essay in the “Theory into Practice” sections helps to deliver on Atkins-Sayre and Yook’s early promise that communication theory has a great deal to offer to the theory and practice of peer tutoring.

Overall, *Communicating Advice* provides compelling reasons for including communication center theory and practice in developing a peer tutoring center regardless of the discipline. The wide number of voices

included is in itself a great achievement and a delivery on the promise of inclusion and empowerment of the various types of professionals who work in the field. The volume is thus a valuable addition to any director’s reading list.