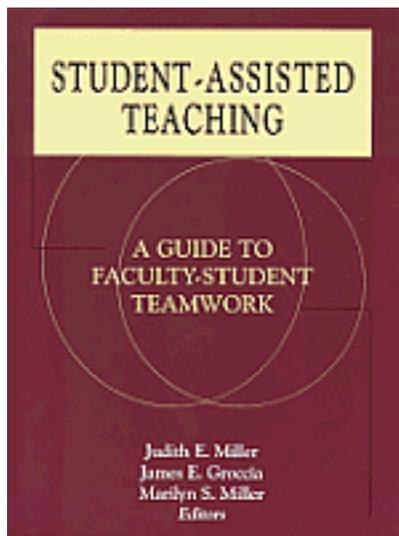# PEER RESOURCES Papers

Student-Assisted Teaching: A Guide to Faculty-Student Teamwork

Reviewed by
Rey A. Carr, Ph.D.

While peer assistance is typically associated with students helping students in elementary and secondary schools, peer programs in colleges and universities have become substantially connected to peers helping peers. Although the growth of peer work in post-secondary education can be attributed to increasing enrollments and decreases in funding, the majority of peer assisted programs have been initiated to make learning more student-centered, more effective, and more responsive to student needs and concerns.

An excellent new book, *Student-Assisted Teaching: A Guide to Faculty-Student Teamwork,* edited by Judith Miller, James Groccia, and Marilyn Miller, not only documents the extensive growth of post-secondary peer assisted learning, but also provides details about 31 different ways students can help each other. Ranging from peer support for first-year students to peer tutoring in difficult classes and peer education for special groups, the types of programs detailed in this book are both innovative and practical.

Each chapter in the book reports on a different peer assisted program and is organized around four themes: implementation, evidence of effectiveness and learning benefits, analysis of time and financial costs, and ideas on how to replicate the program. The common theme structure allows the reader to easily follow each description and eagerly anticipate how other chapter authors will deal with the various issues.

This book has a number of excellent features including the extensive number of concrete program details, inclusion of programs with varying contexts, diverse examples of faculty and student cooperation, and even a plethora of forms, curricula, and aids for selection, training and evaluation. To further stress a learning approach the editors have included program descriptions that did not yield the results the developers had wanted. Readers can easily benefit from learning about the rocky path followed by others.

The editors are all actively involved in peer assistance and clearly understand what it takes to mount a viable peer program. In addition they have correctly anticipated what readers might want to know about peer assisted programs and have required each contributor to provide details about key issues. University and college administrators as well as student service personnel and academic faculty will truly benefit from reading this work. Not only does it clearly show how to involve students in powerful peer-assisted learning programs, but it also provides a blue-

print for replication and the kind of research-based support that many academia may need to lend their approval to formally involving students in helping each other.

The book is listed is available for purchase from the Top Books and Videos on Peer Assistance <www.peer.ca/toperbooks.html> section of the Peer Resources web site. A link provides a direct connection to the publisher, Anker Publishing <www.ankerpub.com>, at present the only source for the book. By mentioning Peer Resources, Peer Network members interested in purchasing this book will receive a 5 percent discount off the $31.95(US) price. (Note that this is a US-based publisher and all orders under $50US must be prepaid.)