

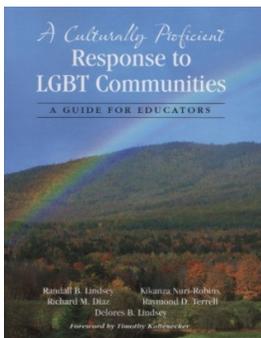
Book Review

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A Culturally Proficient Response to LGBT Communities: A Guide for Educators

Lindsey, R. B., Diaz, R. M., Nuri-Robins, K., Terrell, R. D., & Lindsey, D. B. (2013). *A culturally proficient response to LGBT communities: A guide for educators*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

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In recent years, educators are challenged to work with more diverse student population than ever before. While the benefits of diversity should never be underestimated, it is also important to acknowledge challenges created by diversity and the need of guidance to educators on how to be culturally responsive to the needs of their diverse students. *A Culturally Proficient Response to LGBT Communities* (Lindsey, Nuri-Robins, Terrell, & Lindsey, 2013) is a valuable guide for educators working with LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) students. This book is a useful resource for those who are interested in learning more about LGBT communities and becoming familiar with their needs and challenges in today's society.

Moreover, this book is also strongly recommended for international students and scholars, especially for those who come from countries where even a conversation about LGBT people is prohibited. Being in a classroom with LGBT people and not being aware of them can create issues, starting from commenting negatively about them (which happens in many countries) and finishing with unintentional harmful behaviors due to lack of awareness and cultural responsiveness. Additionally, this book would help international students and scholars to become knowledgeable about LGBT communities and to be culturally responsive to their needs.

The book consists of three parts: *Introduction*, *Westfield Unified School District*, and *Next Steps*. Part I of the book (chapters 1 through 4) helps educators understand the historical context of sexual orientation and gender identity by discussing key terms such as culture, sexual orientation, sexual identity, gender identity, homosexuals, heterosexuals, gay, lesbian, transgender, LGBTQ, heterosexism, homophobia, sexual preference, lifestyle, and internal language. A Cultural Proficiency Framework is also included in Part I which serves as a guide for educators working with LGBT communities. The framework consists of five elements/standards: assessing culture, valuing diversity, managing dynamics of difference, adapting to diversity, and institutionalizing cultural knowledge. Part I also discusses the differences of *equality* and *equity* key terms in both universal concepts and as it applies to LGBT communities, and helps readers to understand the historical perspectives of sexual orientation and gender diversity and how they influence the current practices. Overall, the Part I of the book provides fundamental knowledge on LGBT communities and provides a practical cultural proficiency model that could be very helpful to educators and administrators working in schools with diverse student populations.

Part II of the book (chapters 5 through 10) describes parameters for developing a safe space in schools for everyone and addresses the issue of bullying, which is commonly seen in schools. This part also discusses in details each of the five elements presented in the Cultural Proficiency Framework presented in Part I: Assessing Cultural Knowledge; Valuing Diversity; Managing the Dynamics of Difference, Adapting to Diversity; and Institutionalizing Cultural. What makes this part a valuable reading is the fact that the authors provide practical examples of application of the cultural proficiency framework by using case studies from the Westfield United School District. While this section could be beneficial to both international students and teachers, it is actually more beneficial to teachers because they are the ones who need practical application of knowledge and dispositions in their classrooms.

Part III of the book (chapter 11) encourages readers to summarize the content learned in previous chapters and develop an individual plan on how to move from a bystander to an ally. Authors discuss the four levels of ally involvement and believe that these levels are applicable to the tools of cultural proficiency. These levels are: awareness, knowledge/education, skills, and action. In the *awareness* level readers are encouraged to become aware of who they are. In the *knowledge/education* level, it is important to acquire knowledge about LGBT people, laws, policies, and practices. In the *skills* level, readers should make efforts in communicating the knowledge learned and acquiring new skills. The last, *action* level, is the most challenging level, according to authors. This part is perhaps what brings the most positive attitudes towards LGBT people. Detailed description of ally involvement adds value to the whole book and its purpose. The more people are aware of LGBT communities, the more accepted the LGBT people will be - something that is promoted by this book.

The authors also included a number of resources in their book. These resources include a study guide for readers on how to make use of the book as a guide, a quick glossary of commonly used terms about LGBT communities, information on community organizations dealing with LGBT needs and issues, and a list of books on cultural proficiency for educators. There are also practice questionnaires in the Resources section, which are good tools for readers to reflect on their attitudes and positions toward gender and sexual orientation issues.

A Culturally Proficient Response to LGBT Communities: A Guide for Educators is a useful resource for educators working in schools with diverse student populations. The structure of the book, topics covered and the user-friendliness of the book make it a practical guide. From reading this book, it is evident that authors made efforts to explain content/topics/terms very clearly, to ensure that readers are able not only to understand the content, but also be able to transform their knowledge to others. Thus, international students and scholars are encouraged to read this book. After reading this book, any person who had no idea about LGBT people will not only become aware of their existence in our society, but will likely become more positive towards them.

About the Reviewer:

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