

## **BOOK REVIEW**

**Review of Torres, V., Howard-Hamilton, M.F., & Cooper, D.L. (2003). *Identity development of diverse populations: Implications for teaching and administration in higher education*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, 29 (6). Jossey-Bass. San Francisco.**

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Higher education has evolved from an exclusionary system serving the needs of only a small portion of the population into a common enterprise now available to the most diverse portions of the population. This text calls attention to the need for faculty and administrators to take into account the diverse array of students now enrolled in higher education. It is also noted that the diversity of the students is not necessarily reflected in the faculty or administration of most institutions. With this in mind readers are directed to address how a lack of understanding can be compounding when staff are unaware of the role diversity plays in identity development. If student differences and needs based on ethnicity can be intentionally addressed, institutional services and the campus culture can in turn develop into a true community of learners.

The authors begin by providing a context from which to interpret the text. Additionally, they acknowledge that some readers may experience a level of discomfort in dealing with this difficult subject. The authors express hope that personal growth and change will be an outcome through the dissonance. The text is divided into six sections, with a supplemental case study and other items to consider on the issue. The layout of the text effectively provides a level of understanding from which any reader can expand.

The initial section poses the question of why higher education should be concerned with the identity development of diverse students. The authors provide an overview of identity development and they assert that a lack of research has caused many administrators and faculty to incorrectly apply their current understanding of related theories to all students. This theoretical misapplication can be the cause of misunderstanding on many college campuses. Readers are challenged to recognize that a level of knowledge of one's own culture and race is required before understanding difference can occur. Race, ethnicity, culture, acculturation, and social group are operationally defined to frame the remainder of the text.

The second section outlines the foundational theories of identity development. Erickson's (1964) work on ego development, Marcia's (1966) model of identity development through crisis or exploration, Josselson's (1987) work on women's identity development, and Chickering (1963) and Chickering & Reisser's (1993) work on college student development are all defined as the theoretical base for understanding identity development. The tenets of the theories are provided to indicate that much of current practice is based upon them. The foundational theories are then evaluated as to how they do not fully consider diverse populations.

Section three addresses societal oppression and the dominant culture's impact on identity development of diverse populations. The theoretical guide for oppression and social identity development provide a deeper understanding of how difficult healthy identity development can be for diverse populations. It concludes with an analysis of the repercussions of how oppression impacts the majority class. White identity theories are listed to show how the existence of oppression impacts how all identity is formed,

whether majority or minority. The unearned privileges associated with non-minority status can determine how a person constructs his or her worldview. White identity development is critical to how students define themselves and engage in cross-cultural communication.

The next section details identity development theories for several diverse populations, based on the premise that distinct cultural heritages cause variation in how identities are formed. The Atkinson, Morton, & Sue model of minority identity development, Phinney's model of ethnic identity development and the optimal theory applied to identity development by Myers and colleagues are used as the foundation for minority identity development. In addition to the foundational theories, racial and ethnic identity development for African American and Native Americans are discussed.

Latino/Latina and Asian American identity development are discussed in terms of the concept of acculturation. The authors assert that the process of acculturation places added stress on college students when faced with the notion of having to choose between their culture or origin and the dominant culture. The historical role of immigration laws on acculturation is also discussed. Implications of multi- or bi-racial identity development are provided. This section views identity development in a singular capacity. The remainder of the section, however, addresses the interrelationship of having multiple identities. Multiple identities allowing for holistic development includes consideration of such things as gender, sexual orientation, race, culture, etc. The notion that these layers of self must operate in harmony to facilitate a positive identity development process challenges the way students may be currently viewed. The implications for the myriad of factors surrounding identity development assert that

educators must remain current on trends and research to fully understand the issues students may tackle.

The final section seeks to integrate theory into practice by providing tacit examples and implications for practice. The authors indicate the need for professionals to operate with a level of genuine concern for students as they seek alter campus culture. The campus culture and what it communicates to diverse populations can be seen as a form of continual oppression. Specific examples of how to assess and modify campus culture are listed. Implications for both faculty and administrators describe how each group can be effective in the change process. The recommendations outlined for each group challenge them to actively engage in the discussions to bring about change. Recommendations for faculty are far more detailed than those for administrators. They do, however, provide faculty who may not be familiar with student development or identity development theory with a base level of knowledge and a method of evaluating their instruction.

In closing, the authors provide the case study of “Reflective College” to allow readers to practically apply the information and process how changes can be made. The text closes with a list of questions to guide personal exploration on the issues raised in text. The questions encourage both reflective and critical thinking to address the role of identity development in higher education administration.

The text does a wonderful job of encouraging thinking on this critical issue facing higher education. The size of the text also lends itself to easy use for faculty or staff development. The authors lay a solid theoretical foundation, provide practical application, and effectively challenge the reader to grow.