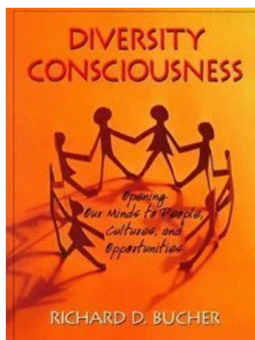


Professional Book Review

Bucher, D., R. (2000). *Diversity Consciousness: Opening Our Minds to People, Cultures, and Opportunities (4th Eds)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall Press. 288 pp., ISBN: 13- 978-0321919069. \$ 45.72

Reviewed by Fadime Damgaci, Curriculum and Instruction, Yildiz Technical University, Turkey.



This book has been written to enable the students to develop a mental and cognitive diversity consciousness in order to help them become successful in their personal and professional lives and to increase their sensitivity on diversity. Therefore, the target audience of the book is students. The author offers perspectives through the interviews he had with students, examples from previous studies and analyses on real-life events to achieve his goal. The book is presented in the scope of multicultural education, and more specifically, under the title of diversity consciousness. A product of an empirical study, the book touches on notions such as racial and ethnical relations, cultural diversity, multiculturalism, social media, communication, leadership, social work, empathy, social equality, social justice, democracy, assimilation, pluralism, teacher training courses, professional development, conflict, cooperation, problems in workplace, group dynamics and personal development. The author includes many concepts related to diversity with examples and definitions. Since the book targets students, it's written in a non-academic, plain and comprehensible language. The author occasionally adopts a descriptive and analytic approach to the subject of diversity consciousness. The book comprises seven chapters, namely: Diversity: An Overview, Diversity Skills and Success, Personal and Social Barriers to Success, Developing Diversity Consciousness, Communication in a Diverse World, Teamwork and, Conclusion. In the chapters that are directly related to diversity consciousness, the author treats the subjects on diversity consciousness in a detailed manner. Also, each chapter starts with the objectives of the chapter, contains questions encouraging the reader to think and ends with studies on the subject. Additionally explanatory tables and illustrations and entertaining photographs shared in the book are to be remarked.

Culture is a phenomenon contributing to the richness of the world's societies (Bucher 2000). Thanks to multicultural education, it has been appreciated that cultures are richness and culture started to receive the attention it deserves (Aydın, 2013). Written from the point of view that cultures are richness, the book encourages people from different cultures to be proud of their culture and thus increases their self-confidence. Bucher (2000) asserts in his book that students with increased self-confidence shall be more successful academically. Similarly, Banks (2008) is of the opinion that, in an unprejudiced educational system, self-confidence and empathy shall develop and thereby academic success shall improve. For this reason, the book has an important position among other research books written on the subject of multicultural education. Studies similar to this one made in the U.S. need to be done in Turkey too.

In the chapter "Diversity: An Overview", the author defines diversity as all manners in which people are different from one another and consciousness as the ensemble of our mental activities and cognitions. He points out the common misunderstandings with the question "What diversity consciousness isn't". He answers this question with statements like "It's not a phenomenon that is only important for some people", "It's not ignoring differences", "It's not treating everyone in the same way", "It's not only being prudent" and "It's not a passing fad". After these discussions, the author addresses the concepts of assimilation and pluralism. The author states that assimilation promotes a structure where people lose their own cultural characteristics and blend in with the culture they live with whereas pluralism promotes a structure where cultural differences are accepted and preserved. This chapter, which includes occasional perspectives from students, is best summarized with the comment "Being different is not a burden, but a blessing" made by one student.

The chapter "Diversity Skills and Success" starts with a general definition of success as the objectives of the individual. It's followed by the sociocultural theory. According to this theory, people around us influence us in positive or negative ways and they play an important role in shaping our personalities. Some behaviors, characters, information and other personal qualities can only be understood by taking social interactions in consideration. Another point the chapter stresses is the notion of communication. Communication, team spirit and self-evaluation are the key components of diversity consciousness. Diversity consciousness is actually being aware of differences. Our diversity

skills manifest based on the development of our awareness and understanding. Similarly, the development of our diversity skills further increases our awareness and understanding. The author also explains three interrelated components of diversity consciousness: awareness, understanding and diversity skills. The component most accentuated here is, without a doubt, diversity skills. The author presents diversity skills as the ability to think flexibly, the ability of appreciating and being proud of one's background and culture, the ability to communicate with everyone and to learn something from everyone, the ability to tackle obstacles effectively and, the ability to maintain the balance between "being oneself" and "being adaptable".

In the chapter "Personal and Social Barriers to Success", the author defines social obstacles to success as the social phenomena that manifest beyond ones control and hampers one success. He identifies the six obstacles to success as limited perception, belief in the superiority of one's group to the others, stereotyping, prejudice, powers increasing prejudice and, discrimination. The author concludes the chapter with suggestions on how to surpass diversity obstacles and how to accept diversity.

In the chapter "Developing Diversity Consciousness", the author states that diversity consciousness enhances abilities like interpersonal relations and communication, self-evaluation, pluralist leadership, conflict management and, critical thinking and that it is very important because it opens up one's horizon and strengthens one's social networks. In the chapter that includes the notion of social isolation, the said notion is defined as isolating oneself from the society because of one's different opinions or characteristics. The author also discusses the six domains of development of diversity consciousness and strategies for developing diversity consciousness and concludes with some opportunity suggestions for diversity consciousness education.

The chapter "Communication in a Diverse World" treats the notions of electronic communication and communication and culture. Apart from the contribution of communication skills in the virtual world, the oft-discussed notion of communication expressing interpersonal relations still maintains its importance today. By recounting how companies wish to hire people with good communication skills and how they stress it before recruitment, the author tries to make the students understand the importance of communication for their careers. He also shares his opinions on the obstacles to communication and ways to communicate well.

The "Teamwork" chapter starts with the Arab proverb "*You can't clap with only one hand*". The author identifies the necessary skills for managing the difficulties of diversity as communication, conflict management, empathy, self-evaluation and, leadership. He continues by sharing the nine strategies to form high-performance teams, obstacles to teamwork, approaches to conflict management and the ten principles of conflict management.

In the concluding chapter of the book, the author tries to summarize the value of diversity consciousness. In his opinion, diversity consciousness prepares a person for the real life and helps in achieving success. A person with diversity consciousness also possesses diversity skills and it helps him in obtaining a very good profession. Diversity consciousness also empowers the person and people around him or her. Additionally, diversity consciousness changes one's perspective towards differences. It enables one to understand and be aware of differences.

This book recommends individuals to accept diversity with tolerance and to increase their knowledge on diversity. The author convincingly makes his case about how prejudice against diversity and stereotyping impedes one's success with real-life examples. Many studies demonstrated that the members of the society coming from a different culture than the dominant culture feel under pressure (Banks, 2008). Many of these people feel the need to hide their cultural identity. A student who can't be himself/herself in school may hesitate in participating in class. This may reflect negatively on his/her success. Bucher analyses this exact situation and offers solution suggestions in his book. Every individual belonging to different cultures in every country of the world have to survive together. For this reason, it is only natural that the problems mentioned are experienced everywhere. Even if this study performed in the U.S. was made on the students receiving education in the U.S. is of importance for the entire world because it offers perspectives from students coming from many different cultures. Due to its universal point of view, one can deduce that the suggestions of the book are for all cultures, therefore, for all human beings. In addition to this success, the inclusive and uniting style of the book sets an example. In Turkey, 36 different ethnicities live together (KONDA, 2011). For this reason, programs increasing the sensitivity towards diversity have to be implemented in schools and the teachers have to develop an attitude supporting the diversity. The studies on diversity and multiculturalism in Turkey are, however, insufficient. Consequently studies similar to Bucher (2000) should be done and the negative outcomes of experiencing one's culture should be demonstrated scientifically.

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