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Vang, Christopher Thao. (2010). *An Educational Psychology of Methods in Multicultural Education*. NY: Peter Lang

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Vang's book illustrates issues of diverse students' learning and their language deficits. By discussing these issues he provides guidance for teachers who work in the multicultural classroom. This book also offers sufficient examples so that readers may understand different aspects of multiculturalism and multicultural education. These examples help to change stereotypical thinking regarding certain cultural assumptions that educators may make. The book consists of five parts – (1) The Multicultural Education Domain, (2) The Student Diversity Domain, (3) The At-Risk Students' Domain, (4) The School Curricular Domain, and (5) The Family and School Partnership Domain.

Part One: The Multicultural Education Domain

Part one is composed of three chapters regarding dimensions of multiculturalism, student diversity and

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teacher education. Chapter 1, *The Psycho-Social Dimensions of Multicultural Education*, distinguishes different notions of multilingual and multicultural education that could be indistinguishable for some educators. By discussing the misconceptions and misperceptions about multicultural education, and by illustrating statements about multicultural education, this chapter suggests ways educators may be more productive with and responsible for English Language Learners. It is helpful to clarify readers' understanding of concepts about cultural diversity. Chapter 2, *The Dimensions of Student Diversity*, presents the major dimensions of cultural diversity, concepts, and paradigms. In this chapter, each concept and paradigm is well explained, particularly with respect to cultural diversity. In particular, four different paradigms related to multiculturalism are presented to help readers understand the differences among each paradigm. However, sufficient examples are not presented to support the definitions of these paradigms. Chapter 3, *Becoming Multicultural Educators*, illustrates the history of bilingual education and the processes of socialization. Sequences of socialization process are introduced, along with bilingual education program models. Vang stresses that multicultural educators should understand the importance of socialization processes. Additionally, the author suggests ways of embracing cultural diversity in the classroom.

Part Two: The Student Diversity Domain

Part two consists of seven chapters related to student diversity, including children from European, Hispanic, African, Arab, Asian, Southeast Asian, and Native American cultures. Each chapter presents students' cultural values, social formalities, religious adherence, cultural etiquette, and societal and social hierarchies. People often make judgments about other people based on their appearance rather than attempting to understand from the perspective of their cultural backgrounds. Vang raises his voice about the importance of understanding each individual's value and social customs in order to provide better education for these multicultural students. Part two shows in-depth understanding of the cultural characteristics of students from different nations. Without understanding what challenges each student faces, the

multicultural approach toward an academic curriculum would not benefit students of all cultures.

Part Three: The At-Risk Student's Domain

Chapter 11 discusses minority language students' learning in public schools. Vang points out issues of acquiring academic language, providing proper assessment, and defining the term *at-risk* for diverse learners. ELLs (English Language Learners) are lacking in academic language proficiency because most of them are from different countries or speak languages other than English. Vang lists issues that educators should focus on in order to accommodate ELL's educational achievement, such as providing better placement tests for ELL and re-designation of LEP students. He provides new approaches to working with diverse students by sharing various examples of lesson plans, and suggests Goodman and Olivares' (2004) framework for overcoming academic deficits and enhancing educators' roles and methods to reframe current educational practices. Multicultural teachers seem to require more concrete examples or guidance to provide better instruction to students *at-risk*. This chapter examines critical issues of students *at-risk*; however, although Vang illustrates these issues he does not discuss them deeply. For example, an ELL placement test is only briefly discussed, yet the impact of testing on students, teachers and the states in which they live is enormous, and unfortunately, not given sufficient attention by the author. Critiques and implications of ELL assessments are absent from this chapter.

Part Four: The School Curricular Domain

In part three, Vang raises issues regarding at-risk students in educational settings. In chapter 12 he provides challenges in approaches in teaching, learning, and testing with respect to culturally diverse students. Also, he illustrates hegemonic issues in curricula and negative effects on education. These negative effects on education are based on students' race, ethnicity, SES, religion, gender, culture, and language. In chapter 13 Vang explores multicultural instructional practices that contain teaching and learning contexts and multicultural applications. He explains the process of instructional practice and multicultural instructional practice by comparing various

instructional approaches. Furthermore, different teaching methodologies are briefly discussed, and theorists and their theoretical principles are compared to enhance multicultural teaching context. Several suggestions are given in order to provide suitable instruction for diverse students. This chapter emphasizes the importance of the teacher's role, a variety of instructional practices, and an emphasis of the quality of teaching from the perspective of the multicultural approach.

Part Five: The Family and School Partnership Domain

The final chapter addresses issues of the multicultural family and the relationship between the family and school. Vang suggests ways of recognizing cultural diversity in the classrooms by communicating effectively with parents of diverse students. It is important to understand the effects of different family characteristics and participation levels of parents in order for them to help their children's level of academic achievement. Teacher-parent communication is crucial for helping children's cognitive development, social behaviors, and changes in behavioral patterns. However, this communication could be tremendously difficult to affect between multicultural parents due to various factors, such as language and cross-cultural issues. Vang points out that educators should provide more appropriate services to better engage with parents and understand cultural differences and linguistically diverse parents and families.

Vang's book touches on various issues of multicultural education, including students' values, social status, and language. Although the author does not provide extensive examples of methods for enacting multicultural studies, he does discuss fundamental issues throughout the book. Deeper discussion of No Child Left Behind (NCLB, the 2001 reenactment of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act), ELL assessments, and English Language Proficiency Standards would be helpful for educators to understand relevant policy and educational issues, and to aid them in implementing effective multiculturally-based curricula.

About the Reviewer

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