

***Equity Partnerships: A Culturally Proficient Guide to Family, School, and Community Engagement.* Angela Clark-Louque, Randall B. Lindsey, Reyes L. Quezada and Cynthia L. Jew. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin. 2019. 155 pages. ISBN # 978-1544324159 (paper) \$29.95.**

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Equity Partnerships: A Culturally Proficient Guide to Family, School, and Community Engagement is a text that seeks to offer a conceptual framework alongside strategies to support schools in engaging parents and community members. The title adequately captures the purpose of the text, with the first word *Equity* in large caps on the book cover, as an indication that this work is heavily concerned with equity. This book is very reader friendly, as it is broken into four parts that address different aspects of family and community engagement with schools, that can also be read in any sequence. The first part of the text aims to address general information on cultural proficiency and engagement. The second part of the book then delves deeper into engagement through the exploration of historical frameworks for stakeholder engagement and a more recent framework grounded in equitable and inclusive practices. The third section of this text uses vignettes to illustrate the obstacles and successes that can occur with improving family, community, and school partnerships. The final section of this work includes templates to help develop or assess current school, family, and community engagement practices, as well as provide resources that can be used to improve these partnerships. Each chapter of the text also includes reflection questions, chapter summaries, and brief descriptions of what the next chapter will cover. Ultimately, this work is very resourceful and can be used as a quick guide toward improving family, school, and community partnerships.

The first chapter of the book addresses the Culturally Proficient Framework and the *tools* that the framework is composed of. The authors express that the *tools* are intended to “inform, not to indict”, which prepares their audience for the intense, yet needed work the tools require (p.7). The first tool of the framework is *Overcoming Barriers*. This first *tool* requires that school and systemic inequities be identified. The barriers listed are *Systemic Oppression*, *Sense of Entitlement*, *Unawareness of the Need to Adapt*, and *Resistance to Change*. Each of the barriers are thoroughly explained and this section of the chapter ends with a reflection question related to the recognition of the barriers described. The structure of the text aligns to the theme of engagement and aims to draw participation from their audience through the included opportunity for reflection. The rest of the chapter lists and explains two other *tools* that are part of the framework, which are *The Guiding Principles of Cultural Proficiency* and *The Culturally Proficiency Continuum*. The Guiding Principles are *tools* to apply in overcoming the barriers, whereas the Continuum is a scale that can be used to determine the educator’s behavior in relation toward achieving cultural proficiency. Reflection questions continue to be included after every *tool* is explained, which again supports the theme of engagement that is required for this work. The decision to describe the *tools* of the framework at the very beginning of the text was strategic and presents to the audience that the authors are committed to supporting them in this work from beginning to end.

The second chapter of this text transitions into *the why* or the reason for the work of engaging families and community members. The chapter begins with a vignette that hooks the reader to the topic that will be discussed in the chapter. The authors then list out different types of family, school, and community partnerships with detailed explanations of each of these partnerships. This is beneficial to readers, as it debunks potential myths that the readers may have about these partnerships or shifts how they may have previously determined what these partnerships were meant to be. The third chapter included in this first section of the text, delves into the legal and political contexts of the need for increased engagement with the stakeholders of interest. The combination of these three chapters allows for the first section of the book to paint a

clear statement of need for improving school, family, and community partnerships.

The second part of the text addresses the quality of engagement between the stakeholders that has occurred. The fourth chapter provides a clear rationale of the intersections of Cultural Proficiency and family engagement. The alignment between Cultural Proficiency and family engagement is illustrated through the explanations and graphics blending the conceptual frameworks as established by Epstein (2011), Constantino (2015), and Mapp and Kuttner (2013). Clark-Loque, Lindsey, Quezada, and Jew (2020) craftily connect the different perspectives regarding family engagement to reveal how each authors' framework aligns to the Cultural Proficiency Framework. Thus, the fourth chapters of the text aims to reveal how family and community engagement frameworks have aspects of Cultural Proficiency that emphasize equity and inclusion. The next chapter in this section moves away from the "what" of family, community, and school engagement to the "how". Chapter five introduces a new conceptual model, the 7 C's of Engagement that can be used to access and reflect on current engagement practices while also serving as approaches to improving these partnerships. Overall, this section benefits all stakeholders involved in family, school, and community partnerships by adequately addressing how these partnerships have expanded over time, along with a framework built on the necessary components for Culturally Proficient partnerships between families and schools.

In the third part of the text, the shift from exclusion toward inclusive partnerships is addressed. The first two *tools*, *Barriers* and *The Guiding Principles of Cultural Proficiency*, are revisited through the analyses of anecdotes that reflect both layers of the Cultural Proficiency Framework. These sections are concise and offer real world examples of these *tools* from theory to practice. Although these *tools* were analyzed in the first chapter of the text, the examples and analyses make these components of the *tool* more practical. The third section of the book is a smooth segue to the fourth and final section of this text. Chapter eight addresses the "final C", which is to "Commit to Action". This chapter serves as the final content chapter of the text, as the ninth chapter serves as a compilation of resources toward building Culturally Proficient partnerships. Chapter eight emphasizes the planning stages of building partnerships that are Culturally Proficient. Multiple planning templates are presented in this chapter, as well as a self-assessment that can be used to determine a school district's current family engagement status. The call to action presented, is the implementation of a Culturally Proficient Family, School, and Community Engagement Plan.

This text is extremely beneficial to educators, school administrators, and families of school aged children. The authors thoroughly address the need for Culturally Proficient partnerships between schools, community, and families. The title of the text indicates that this work can be used as a guide to build these partnerships and it adequately delivers resources and frameworks that can be used to achieve this goal. Specifically, school administrators benefit from diving deeply into the barriers that have led to failed family and community initiatives, then to solutions toward these failures. Educators benefit from this text to gain a better understanding of these barriers and to be empowered to lead these initiatives in their schools. Lastly, parents and guardians benefit from reading this text to better understand why these partnerships are still important to initiate, despite failed attempts in the past. The strengths of this text are the reflection opportunities embedded throughout, resources provided, and the effective use of anecdotes that make this text more relatable. The only weakness to this text is that it is a bit framework heavy, as various conceptual frameworks are analyzed and discussed at different points. While having a framework for this work is useful, the explanation of the different aspects to each framework or the graphics for each framework can be overwhelming at times. Ultimately, this is a significant contribution toward research in equity partnerships and is a recommended read for parents, community members, and school personnel.

References

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