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Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield.**

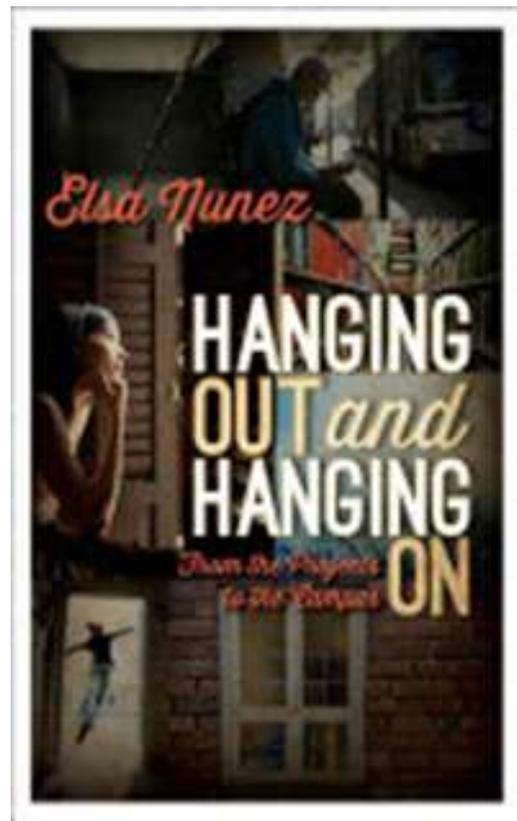
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You might call Elsa Núñez's book, *Hanging out and hanging on: From the projects to the campus*, a collection of personal accounts about immigrant experiences of education or a narrative ethnography of a Dual College Enrollment Program (DCEP) at Eastern Connecticut State University. The author contextualizes voices of immigrants in a historical and social milieu to provide a richer understanding of cultural, social, and economic challenges that impact immigrants' lives and education in Connecticut, a state with the one of the largest achievement gaps (The Editorial Board, 2015). Through the personal journeys of six inner-city minority students from Hartford or Manchester, who have benefitted from DCEP, the book chronicles a partnership between a multitude of professionals ranging from educators, a guidance counselor, and members from local organizations and businesses to promote access to education, by providing financial, and moral support to minority students who might not have access to education otherwise.

As Jeffrey Bartlett explains in the Foreword section, concerns over the lack of progress in providing quality education to low-income minority students in Hartford,



Connecticut have mobilized local community members to establish in 2008 the DCEP partnership between a high school, community college, and university, to create alternative opportunities to students from disadvantaged backgrounds to continue their education. Originally, a volunteer at Hartford Public High School and currently a college specialist, Bartlett advocates for a more nuanced approach to examining low-income, disadvantaged students' educational opportunities, arguing that existing norms in public education system marginalize such students. Compared to white students, minority students' failure in school intersects with a web of social, cultural, and economic factors, such as linguistic challenges, peer pressure, and working full time to provide for family, and other factors. Therefore, it is essential to understand students' stories and the relationships between these factors to better guide these students in gaining access to equitable education.

The book features eleven chapters: the first two chapters document the journey of Núñez, a native of Puerto Rico, chapters four and five address the life of minorities in Connecticut, including Latino immigrants and African-Americans; chapter five provides an in-depth examination of the DCEP program; the next six chapters feature personal stories of immigrant students in the DCEP program, and the final chapter discusses the DCEP initiative as a model for advancing education for minority students.

To better understand her DCEP students' perspectives and the value of the program, the author reflects on her own experiences with immigration then describes students' perspectives in relation to the historical and contemporary contexts of immigration and education. In Chapters one and two, Núñez, a native of Puerto Rico, currently a president at Eastern Connecticut State University, links her memories of her grandmother, Ramona, who migrated to El Fanguito, a humid slum in San Juan Bay to provide her eight children a better life with

her own experiences with immigration. As a newcomer in Newark, New Jersey, Núñez recalls her struggle as a non-native English speaker elementary school student who did not receive instruction for one year. Encouraged by father to continue her education, Núñez is able to challenge the "student who doesn't care label" and reposition herself as a competent student in high school and college.

To provide a holistic picture of the factors that impact DCEP students' academic journeys, the author provides a historical perspective on the Latino and African-American communities in Hartford and Willimantic, CT. In the 1930s, people with low literacy and English language skills migrated from Puerto Rico migrated to work on tobacco and mushroom farms and a rifle factory, and lived with meager working and living conditions and discrimination until the 1970s, when the economy dwindled and crime increased.

Chapter four addresses how, in addition to the economic disparities, the lack of bilingual teachers, single family homes, street violence, and literacy and linguistic challenges further widened the educational achievement gap between minority students and white students. Possible solutions include increasing support for magnet and charter schools, incentives for teachers to teach at low-performing schools, and increased seat times in class. Alternative programs, including the Miami-Dade Schools Parent Academy and the Latino Scholarship Fund in the Greater Danbury Area are also briefly presented as initiatives to bridge the home-school gap, build community, and support family-engagement in certain communities.

Continuing the discussion for alternative programs, in Chapter five, Edward Osborn provides a detailed description of the DCEP program, including goals, recruitment efforts, and support system. Compared to other dual programs that focus on high-achiever students, DCEP recruits low-achieving high school students to live on

campus while they study. Using excerpts from interviews with recruiting personnel, college specialist, and guidance counselor, Osborn illustrates the concerted effort to connect with the most-fit prospective candidates and work with them over an extended time.

Later chapters are compilations of six life stories of DCEP minority students at Eastern Connecticut State University: Federica Bucca, Ismael Garcia, Whitley Mingo, Todd Aviles, Maria Burgos-Jiménez, and Eshwar Gulcharran, who share their insights about the program and their challenges to break away from the cycles of poverty and low-expectations. The stories highlight the complexities of identity negotiations and their struggles to survive, continue their education, succeed, and their desires to become a contributing member in their community. For example, in chapter six, Federica, initially, an undocumented immigrant from Argentina, chronicles the challenges she faced in her new country, including being bullied in school and how she overcame her linguistic barriers when encouraged and mentored by Mr. Hunt, a scholarship donor and volunteer at her school. After the passing of her mentor, when Federica lost her scholarship, she worked at a restaurant to make ends meet, while going to school and volunteering. As a DCEP student, she continued to mentor students in middle school and currently is pursuing her master's program in education.

In Chapter twelve, Núñez reflects on key aspects of DCEP, a program unique in purpose that seeks to motivate at-risk inner-city minority students to attend college who might not have otherwise such opportunity. As expressed by Quinebaug Valley Community College's Robert Fernandez, the program creates transformative learning opportunities: "through their experiences, these students stop seeing poverty as an excuse. They see they have the ability to compete and to complete school with kids from more privileged backgrounds than

theirs" (p. 159). Núñez argues that community effort and key aspects of the program, including respecting students' cultural heritage, combining cohort based learning and on-campus residency, mediating classes at community college, as well as mentoring, tutoring, and professional development opportunities contributed to a successful program within six years.

This book makes a valuable contribution to the immigrant literature by integrating relevant research studies, minority students' personal accounts, and an examples of alternative initiatives to advocate for improving the quality of public education for minority students in the US. As a reader, I appreciate the author's acknowledgement of her role in the development of the program and her immigration journey at the beginning of the book. I also found her discussion about the definitions and uses of "Hispanic" and "Latino" labels noteworthy as these labels tend to homogenize the immigrant community.

Through personal narratives written by students, the author captures individual voices. The vivid vignettes encapsulate a wide range of students' voices that came from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds and benefitted from this program. The inclusion of their voices makes this book a gem for policymakers, educators, community leaders, and students.

In the immigrant narratives provided in this book, the individual is positioned as a relational being. Núñez begins her book by sharing her experiences with immigration. Through rich sensory descriptions, such as the taste of the chicken soup by Núñez's grandmother, the author repositions her immigrant self in relation to her grandmother and parents. Within the historical, social, economic, and cultural layers of information, she then expands her narrative to stories penned by DCEP students and collaborators to illustrate that these stories are interconnected.

Themes that connect these stories include resilience, the importance of having a role model and supportive learning environment, feeling strange or in between, and overcoming obstacles, such as linguistic barriers. For example, in chapter ten, Maria Burgos-Jiménez, a girl from the outskirts of Santiago in the Dominican Republic, chronicles her challenges of learning English in a bilingual class:

Most of the time, both English and Spanish were spoken in class, and I also had an English class just to focus on the language. Going back and forth from one language to the other was confusing at first, but it helped me interact with other Latino students who were facing the same situation...It was also very hard to go to school to learn English and then come home to speak only Spanish with my mother. (p. 123)

Descriptions like the one mentioned above demonstrate the struggle to negotiate one's identity in a target community and provide an authentic and reflective writing style.

A notable shortcoming of the book is that the research conducted about the program remains under discussed. Though there is a brief mention about a research project related to the program, as a reader, I would have liked to read about the project

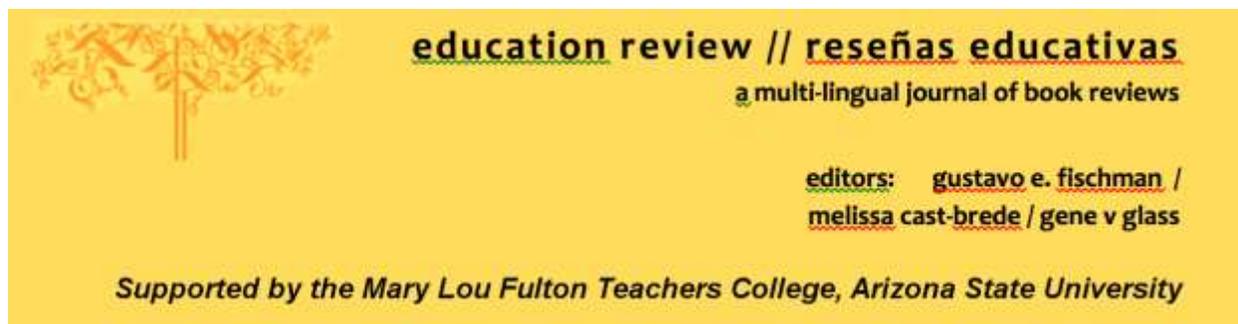
more in-depth, including the theoretical and methodological frameworks that guided the study. Another shortcoming is the non-inclusion of non-minority stakeholders' voices. Perhaps an inclusive approach to dialogue would provide access to other perspectives. Finally, the book does not follow participants over an extended time to reveal how the program might benefit students after they graduate. A longitudinal study could provide richer insights of the influence of the program. Despite these shortcomings, Núñez's book furthers understanding of the experiences of minority students by including marginalized students' voices in the conversation about providing equitable education and closing the education gap for minority students.

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About the Reviewer

Andrea Lypka is a PhD candidate in the Second Language Acquisition and Instructional Technology (SLA/IT) program at the University of South Florida (USF). Her research interests include learner identity, discourse analysis, narrative, and visual communication.



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