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Kanno, Yasuko & Harklau, Linda. (Eds.) (2012) *Linguistic Minority Students Go to College: Preparation, Access, and Persistence*. New York & London: Routledge.

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Reviewed by Holly Hansen-Thomas

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Linguistic Minority Students Go to College: Preparation, Access, and Persistence is a timely volume that shines light on a set of highly important issues—the challenges faced by linguistic minority students in the academic pipeline. Until very recently, these issues have not been given adequate attention. However, Kanno and Harklau's contribution to the literature begins to fill the gap in the literature by addressing a number of the myriad factors that impede college-going and college completion by linguistic minority (LM) students.

It is known that language (or linguistic) minority students have some of the lowest rates of college attendance (Kanno & Cromley, 2011). One can speculate that this is due to these students' lack of proficiency in English;

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however, as is clearly pointed out by Kanno and Harklau in the introductory chapter of the text, many LM students are in fact fully proficient in English. Interestingly, the LM label is one that is difficult to apply. Since many U.S. LM students were either born in the U.S., or immigrated as young children or adolescents, this population exhibits tremendous diversity in terms of language proficiency, background, education, and other social factors. While we still lack sufficient information regarding LM students in the college pipeline, we do know that many of these students have experienced common issues that have played (positive or negative) roles in their access to higher education. These shared issues include their socioeconomic status (SES); access to intervention programs (such as international baccalaureate (IB); ESL placement in high school, content course taking (such as high level mathematics and science); and involvement in sports and other extracurricular activities. Not surprisingly, many LM students hail from lower SES levels; many find that special intervention programs are difficult to access; and some are relegated to the 'ESL ghetto' (Valdes, 1998), in which those enrolled in such courses seem never to be exited. When LM students are compelled to take multiple ESL courses, a typical consequence is that they have no room in their schedules for higher-level mathematics, science and other college prep classes, nor can they enroll in many school-based extracurricular activities such as sports or music. As a result, LM students lack some of the rich opportunities that promote college-going.

Many of these factors are fleshed out in the first of three sections in the edited text. Divided into three parts, the book includes the following sections: (I) College preparation in high school; (II) Access to college; and (III) College experiences and persistence. Within each of these sections, we learn of both group and individual challenges faced by language minority students in their route to higher education. The first section includes well-written contributions by important researchers in the field. In chapter one, Rebecca Callahan and co-author Dara Schifer describe results of a meta-analysis of Callahan's earlier work to reveal the effects of ESL placement on LM students' achievement. In the following chapter, Eduardo Mosqueda examines how academic tracking affects the achievement of both Latino and Asian high school

students in math, and ultimately, their participation in college. Anyisia Mayer then shows how an IB program in California provided a positive, equal opportunity learning experience for immigrant students. In the final contribution to this section, Linda Harklau and Shelly McClanahan paints a rich description of a Latino LM college student named Paola, and highlights how her experience as an involved, determined student with a supportive family helped her be successful in high school, and later, in college.

Part II is dedicated to the notion of access to college. The first chapter in Part II describes the top ten percent program that has, until recently, allowed many (including LM) students to gain entrance to state public universities in Texas. In this chapter, Cristóbal Rodríguez explains that the top ten percent program has not only benefitted a good number of LM students, but that it has also worked to increase diversity on state campuses. In the following chapter, Anne-Marie Nuñez and P. Johnelle Sparks describe a population of LM students drawn from first year students in college, in an effort to clearly illuminate who LM students are in higher education in the U.S. Following this chapter, text author Kanno, and Sarah Arva Grosik highlight some of the most common challenges to access in college that they found. Comparing two public universities in the U.S., the authors discovered that the most salient challenges faced by English Learners (ELs) transitioning to college included difficulties with academic English; financial issues; and the problem of not having taken high level academic courses in high school, as we learned about in the first section of the edited volume. The final chapter takes a case study approach and unpacks the ways in which one LM student's notion of agency played out in the arena of higher education. Here, Manka Varghese "sheds significant light on the discourses that college-going linguistic minority students see as being available to them and why they draw on these discourses as they construct narratives of college going and college persistence." (p. 249)

Carrying on with the notion of persistence that Varghese and others introduced in the earlier sections, part III addresses successful practices for matriculation and retention for LM students in community college and throughout higher education. This section begins with a

discussion of ‘open access’ community colleges. Here, George C. Bunch and Ann K. Endris explain how, as a result of spotty information dissemination, the testing and placement policies in community colleges in California can provide a barrier to true open access for LM students.

Continuing in the community college context, Cate Almon describes results from a quantitative study examining the roles of retention patterns, persistence, program completion, and GPA by ESL students at one community college. Despite citing numerous research limitations, one salient finding revealed that many of the ESL students in the study had high GPAs, but low rates of program completion. Somewhat more promising findings were presented in the following chapter by Melissa Holmes, Cristina Fanning, Amanda Morales, Pedro Espinoza, and Socorro Herrera. Their study highlights a successful scholarship program called BESITOS in which university level bilingual students’ identity and background worked to promote agency and voice for the future bilingual teachers. In the penultimate chapter, Ronald Fuentes describes the case of one LM university student named Nasim who, despite feelings of isolation and rejection within the university culture, persisted and succeeded. Finally, like some of the aforementioned contributions, the final chapter examines how institutional culture can negatively affect the participation and persistence of LM students. Focusing on five key participants, Shawna Shapiro found that institutional culture resulted in many of their LM students feeling like aliens, rather than citizens.

Each of the 14 chapters addresses important issues related to college going by LM students. The volume is well balanced with both large and smaller scale quantitative and qualitative studies that reveal how individuals experience higher education, as well as their experiences on the path to it. In this way, it makes a rich and important contribution to the literature on LM students in the college pipeline. This collection effectively paves the way for further research on many of the important issues related to LM students and college. For those researchers and educators with ELs and LM students in secondary and higher education contexts, this ground-breaking volume is insightful and highly useful.

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About the Reviewer

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