



Higher Education Access and Choice for Latino Students: Critical Findings and Theoretical Perspectives

Perez, Patricia; and Ceja, Miguel, eds.
Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015

Book Review

Tags: diversity | Latino@ teaching | student diversity

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Patricia Pérez and Miguel Ceja published *Higher Education Access and Choice for Latino Students* as part of the *Routledge Research in Higher Education* series. Grounded in sociological studies of Latino students and their educational choices, the book's essays highlight the multitude of challenges that confront Latino students in trying to successfully complete higher education.

The essays are split into three sections. The first is "Home, Elementary, and Secondary Context", part two is "Political Context and Postsecondary Choice," and part three is "Model College Access and Transition Programs." This structure allows the reader to see how a variety of issues contribute to how and why Latinos make specific choices in higher education. The first section focuses on essays that examine cultural and familial context. In "Sixth-Grade Teacher's Perceptions of the College-Bound Student" the essay's authors point to how teachers' perceptions of what constitutes a "college-bound" student and an emphasis on "good behavior" heavily shapes whether a Latino student is deemed to be worthy of being on the college prep track or not. In the essay "Constructing College Choice" the authors examine how Latino Catholic high school students are coached to understand their "worth" in terms of potential scholarship money, and the pitfalls as well as benefits of this approach.

In the second section, the essays focus on political issues affecting Latino college choice such as gender norms and expectations in "Latino/a Students' College Destinations" and the issues that block access for undocumented students in "Rising Voices." In the third and final section, the focus is on college access and programs that promote it, such as summer bridge programs for Latino students as described in "Supporting the College Transition Process and Early

Academic Success” and in “Community Cultural Wealth and The Latino/a College Choice.” There are fourteen essays in the book; only a few are mentioned here to highlight some of the main themes.

The essays cover a wide range of issues regarding Latino student college access, and each section builds upon the previous section, starting with home life and ending with bridge programs at college itself. Overall, the essays are fairly technical, based in sociological research, and this may make it hard for some readers outside the discipline to get through them all. Yet they provide a wide-angle lens on a huge variety of issues that face Latino students in trying to even consider going to college, let alone applying to one. This book is clearly geared towards those who work in the academic field of sociology and who are exploring issues around Latino college choice, and as it is expensive, is recommended for library collections. It is an informative book for educators as it gives them a varied and broad view on all the obstacles that Latino students in higher education face and offers ideas as how to overcome those obstacles in order help more Latino students achieve success.

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