

student writing. Yes, increasingly there are students who need help with these academic literacy skills, not just ELLs, but the authors rightly point out that there is an assumption in many ELA classes that the ELLs are former ELLs, meaning they know enough English now to be successful. It is not always the case, however. Many ELLs test out of the language-support program but struggle with general education classes. They in fact need additional support even after they have exited the ESL or bilingual program. Chapter 9 addresses this issue with concrete guidance for teachers of English language arts.

Moreover, this book is not just about who these learners are and how classroom instruction can improve. The book also addresses the broader programmatic issues. It tackles ELL scheduling, for example, which is often a conundrum for secondary schools. It gives tips for securing graduation credits for students who have been schooled in other countries or who can demonstrate proficiency in their native language. It discusses the professional development of guidance counselors, a necessary task but not one that many schools regularly undertake. Excellent guidelines for enhancing the knowledge base of counselors with regard to ELLs are offered along with practical advice for doing their job better—covering a wide range of issues from evaluating student transcripts to assigning ELLs to classes with highly trained teachers to putting the ELLs on a track to their postsecondary goals. Other support services, such as ways to extend learning time before and after school, as well as fostering more family involvement, are addressed as well. The authors recognize that schools need to identify and promote the “cultural brokers and language facilitators” among their staff.

A phrase in Chapter 9 sums up the perspective of the authors distinctly: “learning does not take place in a sociocultural vacuum.” Indeed, that is a major strength of this book. The authors recognize that learning a second language and learning through a second language for secondary-level students is not just about rote memorization, grammar drills, learning 3,000 words per year, or mastering a five-paragraph essay. Learning a language—first or second or third—also involves social interaction, trial and error, motivation, and understanding of the cultural norms and nuances for using the language. For adolescents, identity is also wrapped up with learning. What language you speak says much about who you are and who you want to be. Students from linguistic and cultural backgrounds that are not prevalent in their schools need to negotiate the differences and find their place. Their teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators should help them and can do so successfully with the strategies and resources delineated in this book.

Deborah J. Short

References

- Alliance for Excellent Education. (2008). *From No Child Left Behind to every child a graduate*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Wright, W. (2006). A catch-22 for language learners. *Educational Leadership*, 64(3).
- Zehr, M. A. (2009, September 8). ELL graduation rates often a mystery. *Education Week*, 29(3). Retrieved online September 9, 2009, at www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/09/04/03ellgrads.h29.html.