



A VOLUME IN LITERACY, LANGUAGE, AND LEARNING

Views From Inside

Languages, Cultures,
and Schooling for K–12 Educators

Edited by Joy Egbert and Gisela Ernst-Slavit

Views From Inside

**Languages, Cultures, and Schooling
for K–12 Educators**

A Volume in
Literacy, Language, and Learning

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Views From Inside

**Languages, Cultures, and Schooling
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Edited by

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DEDICATIONS

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PREFACE

Joy Egbert

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The goal of this text is to help readers understand the importance of students' cultures, languages, and previous schooling to curriculum development, assessment, and student achievement. Readers will learn about aspects of specific cultures and language that are important to their understanding of diverse students, and they will discover that cultures that are often considered similar (or different) may not be so (and why). Overall, the text focuses on how educators can address languages and cultures in classrooms and schools and how they might account for students' backgrounds and funds of knowledge.

We developed this book because we saw a need for our pre- and inservice teachers, administrators, and faculty in higher education (particularly those in teacher education programs) across the United States to have a resource that provided information about cultures and languages from those who have lived within them. There is a lack of texts for educators in this area that present the information in ways that are accessible, useful, and engaging. We believe that this text fills this need. This book can also be used for teacher development programs, teacher education classes, book groups, and other communities of practice. Because the text is not discipline-specific, it can be tapped across content areas. Educators may also be interested in sharing this book with parents as a resource text.

The text starts with an introduction chapter that presents definitions, describes contexts, and explains why learning about cultures, languages, and schooling matters. The main body of the book comprises 25 chapters written by natives from the languages and cultures under discussion who also have experience in U.S. schools and with U.S. culture. All of the

authors are in some way experts in education, whether through advanced study or extensive experience, and the information they include in each section was chosen by them. As we edited this book, we tried to honor both the language and the style of the authors, revising only for clarity; any atypical word uses or grammatical constructions are those of the authors and help to share their insider status. We also worked as a group to try to avoid paternalism/prescription (i.e., saying what teachers *should* or *must* do), but all of the authors in this book are passionate about meeting the needs of diverse children, so sometimes this tone comes through.

Each chapter starts with a school scenario that actually occurred in a U.S. school. The purpose of this scenario is to help readers understand the contexts and challenges that students from the title culture may experience as they participate in education in the United States. The chapter then presents information that can help educators address these challenges. To do so, the second part of each chapter includes background data on the country, which, according to the authors' perceptions of what U.S. educators should know, may include demographics, geography, and historical events and other foundational aspects that may have an impact on immigrant students and their families. Each chapter also includes a section on the culture(s) of the nation(s), which may include famous people, contributions to the world, personal characteristics, important religious information, focal customs, family relations, and other aspects that are important to the cultural insiders who wrote the chapter. The language and literacy section in each chapter may address how the language relates to the culture, a number of words that teachers can learn, how it is different from *and* similar to English, and what those differences and similarities might mean for English language learners from that culture. In this section, words foreign to U.S. English are italicized (e.g., *maestro* ["teacher" in Spanish]), and capital letters are used to show word stress in transliterations (e.g., ma-EH-stro). Some of the authors have used symbols from the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to help readers understand exact pronunciations of unfamiliar words; Table P.1 shows some of the IPA symbols and related sounds for reference. The final part of each chapter comprises advice, resources, and ideas for educators (for example, if it is an oral culture, the teacher might consider working with students on oral storytelling before transitioning to written stories, or incorporate both using technology). Each chapter also contains additional recommended resources and short tasks for teachers that extend the chapter information. We hope that readers will carefully explore each chapter not only for what is included, but for what the authors have left out, as this omission may also provide a glimpse into the culture(s) being addressed.

Table P.1. Some IPA Symbols and Sounds

<i>Consonants</i>		<i>Vowels</i>	
<i>IPA</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>IPA</i>	<i>Examples</i>
b	buy, cab	ʌ	cup, gun, luck
d	did, Dad, do	ɑ:	arm, father
ð	this, breathe, father	æ	tap, cat, black
dʒ	giant, bridge, major	ɛ	met, dress, men
f	fan, fish, phi	ə	other, comma
g	game, bag	ɪ	hit, sit, inch
h	help, ahead	i:	see, neat
hw	why	ɒ	hot, rock
j	yes, hallelujah	ɔ:	call, hawk
k	sky, crack	ʊ	put, book
l	lip, slip, grill	u:	soup, food
m	my, smile, come	aɪ	five, eye
n	night, snoop, can	aʊ	now, owl
ŋ	sing, sink, stinger	eɪ	pay, eight
θ	think, math	oʊ	go, know
p	pin, spy, mop	ɔɪ	boy, joint
r	rip, trap, very		
s	sight, miss		
ʃ	ship, rash, potion		
t	tip, stop, pit, atoll		
tʃ	china, patch		
v	vest, cave		
w	went, swore		
z	zip, has		
ʒ	equation, measure, vision		
x	ugh, loch, Chanukah		
ʔ	Glottal stop (a release of air after a full stop) as in “uh-oh” [ˈʌʔoʊ]. In some American dialects, words like kitten will have a stop instead of the “tt” sound (e.g., kʔn)		

Readers of this text should understand that each chapter provides the perceptions and ideas of its authors, and that other members of the culture might choose to provide different information; the authors might also disagree with information written in other chapters. Therefore, the chapter information can be considered a starting point for cultural and linguistic understandings, and educators are encouraged to make their own decisions about what to do with this information and how to extend their own and their students' knowledge.