

Pushing Boundaries: Language and Culture in a Mexicano Community

Olga A. Vasquez, Lucinda Pease-Alvarez, and Sheila Shannon

"This book deepens our understanding of the complexities of language use and socialization in a culturally and linguistically diverse society and raises important questions about the relations among intercultural transactions, language socialization and schooling." Beth Warren, Technology and Education Research Center

"This book is sure to explode stereotypes with its convincing account of individual and family differences within a culture. . . also a vivid illustration of the potential for collaboration in research and school reform projects." Shirley Brice Heath, Stanford University

Pushing Boundaries searches for the substance at the elastic limit of racial, social, environmental, and linguistic borders. Olga A. Vasquez, Lucinda Pease-Alvarez, and Sheila Shannon have melded their experiences of research in the Mexicano community of Eastside, California with theoretical interpretations of how these daily life experiences shed light on the relationship between language socialization and bilingualism.

Their exploration results in a fascinating account that considers language learnign and socialization in the context of real, problematic, important activities in peoples' lives. The authors describe ways in which bilingual children and their families actively and innovatively use the linguistic and cultural resources available to them. Children are seen using the language of the home, shcool, and community settings separately or in combination. In collaboration with those around them, children learn to derive meaning from a written or oral text and to use their first language and cultural knowledge as a critical component for leanriing their second language and its underlying cultural norms.

The authors show that the resources these Mexicano children have acquired in their homes and communities are a natural developmental basis from which to plan and build their formal education. They discuss ways educators can capitalize upon these resources in classroom settings.

Educators, pyschologists, public policy advocates, and scholars of sociolinguistics and urban studies will find this text insightful and useful.

Contents:

- Foreword by Luis C. Mol
- Preface
- 1 Introduction
- 2 Eastside: A Mexicano Community
- 3 Home and School Contexts for language Learning
- 4 Bilingual Children Crossing Cultural Borders
- 5 Negotiating Culture and Language in the Home

- 6 Moving Toward a Recognition Perspective
 - 7 Meeting the Challenges of Diversity.
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