



# The Inner World of the Immigrant Child

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By Cristina Igoa [1995]

Synopsis by Stanley A. Lucero, February 18, 2011.

*“Native Americans, the descendants of those original inhabitants of this country who were able to survive centuries of invasion and genocide, are the only people who can rightfully claim that they are neither the product of immigration nor of forcible abduction to the United States.”* (Ada, 1995, p. vii)

*“More and more bilingual and ESL teachers, like Cristina Igoa, have begun to ask immigrant children to tell their stories, and to invite their parents to share their stories as well.”* (Ada, 1995, p. viii)

*“Cristina Igoa, with profound intuition, understood that uprooted immigrant children would not be able to truly benefit from a dialogue with their new reality until they had the opportunity to express the intricacy of their inner world. She did not allow the children’s incipient abilities with the English language to limit them: she found a medium for their expression by encouraging them first to draw the stories they wanted to tell.”* (Ada, 1995, p. ix)

*“When immigrant children leave the country that was their home – a familiar language, culture, community, and social system – they experience a variety of emotional and cognitive adjustments to the reality of life in a new country. How dry and clinical that sentence sounds! It doesn’t even begin to convey the paralyzing fear in a little boy from Afghanistan that he will never fully understand English, that he will always be on the outside, looking in. It doesn’t explain that an achievement-oriented girl from Vietnam will intentionally fail tests that might advance her in the educational system. And it*

*certainly doesn't tell all you need to know about the intense loneliness of a little girl from South America who, caught between two cultures and moved from class to class, school to school, cannot communicate easily in any language. As a teacher of immigrant children myself, I have worked with children like these for many years.*" (Igoa, *The Inner World of the Immigrant Child*, 1995, p. xi)

**If you are currently working with English Learner students in your classroom, or expect to be working with ELs in the future, I highly recommend that you read this entire book with care. Here are some of the stories that impressed me. You will need to read the book to get the rest of the stories.**

Page	Who's talking	Beginning of the story
59	Dr. Judith Barker	"Throwing a child out of the house ..."
89	Cindy from Hong Kong	"Most of my relatives do not speak any English at all."
91	Rosario	"I was lonely and alone and sad."
98	Dung, Vietnamese girl	"I didn't know which way to act."
99	Dung, Vietnamese girl	"Just talk, just talk to the student."
129	Rahima Asefi Haya	"Children really need to know that they belong inside a culture..."
140	Boy from Afghanistan, age 11	"It was so easy if you are in a study group."
147	Boy from Afghanistan, age 12	"I used a very good word..."
173	Girl from Egypt, age 11	"I enjoy being in this class. Everyone understands me..."
176	Child from Afghanistan	"We cannot wear them at school."
193	Room 9 students	Friends Forever [a class book]

*"Cristina Igoa was born in the Philippines of multicultural ancestry. She experienced life as an immigrant child first in Colombia and later in the United States. Dr. Igoa holds a doctoral degree in Multicultural Education with a minor in Educational Counseling Psychology from the University of San Francisco."*  
(Igoa, Cristinna Igoa, Ed.D - Short Biography)

## **Bibliography**

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