

THE HMONG JOURNEY – A CHILDREN'S BOOK ON
HMONG HISTORY: CULTURAL CURRICULUM
FOR FIRST GRADE TEACHERS

A Project
Presented
to the Faculty of
California State University, Chico

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education

by
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DEDICATION

To my Dad, Mom, Brothers and Sisters, Colleagues, and Friends for all of your years of self-sacrifices, struggle, love, and support. Without you, I would not be here today.

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ABSTRACT

THE HMONG JOURNEY – A CHILDREN'S BOOK ON
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Culture is a powerful influence and literature is a powerful medium. Together they form an exciting dual which offers a variety of possibilities in the classroom. The purpose of this project is to develop a picture book depicting the Hmong journey to America and cultural curriculum lessons for first grade teachers which will provide information, ideas and strategies for the sharing of Hmong cultural literature in the classroom. This curriculum will have an emphasis on one particular culture—the Hmong.

Ever since 1975, the Hmong have found it difficult to remain on their native soil. The Secret War resulted in the largest mass emigration of the Hmong people in recorded history. Today, emigration is still very much part of Hmong life. It is especially

likely in the United States to meet those who claim to be Hmong or to have “Hmong roots.” However, despite the presence of thousands of Hmong refugees, the Hmong in the United States receive little known attention as an Asian ethnic group. This is due to the intentional spread of the Hmong around the country.

In the 21st century where the differences between groups must be tolerated rather than destroyed and diversity is more common, recognition of all cultures is essential. This curriculum serves as a mirror for establishing more authentic cultural links between the Hmong of Laos/Thailand and those living in the United States. It also opens a window on teaching K-2 students about a specific culture in our nation/community. This connection will be formed through children’s literature. The creation of the picture book *The Hmong Journey* and existing literature by Hmong authors and Hmong American authors will be included so that children in United States may appreciate the rich Hmong heritage.

The purpose of this project is to produce a children’s picture book and cultural curriculum lessons that introduces and exposes Hmong American culture in children’s literature for first grade teachers. In order to create a picture book and curriculum, a knowledge base had to be established in the literature review. This base consists of Hmong history, Hmong culture, Hmong cultural traditions, oral traditions/storytelling, multicultural literature, and Hmong American children’s literature. Each section in Chapter II of this project signifies the need for more children’s books to be written about the Hmong American culture and implementation in the school curriculum.

Through the background established in the review of the literature, the creation of the picture book *The Hmong Journey* was created. The book is intended to add to the limited numbers of children's picture books that shares the Hmong story. A curriculum was created to encourage first grade teachers to implement cultural lessons in their classroom. Many researchers agree that in today's multicultural society, it is essential for educators to be knowledgeable at facilitating the learning of all children and welcome and embrace the diversity of children and families. It also serves to scaffold the readers to a better understanding of the Hmong history and culture. The picture book and lessons are recommended by the author to be used together in the first grade classroom. In addition, lists of additional Hmong stories are included to enrich the cultural experience in the classroom.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The idea for this project came from my childhood experience as an immigrant. I do not remember much because I came to the United States when I was five-years-old. I do remember the many stories my grandma and my parents would share with me as I grew up and as we were traveling back to Laos and Thailand. I am a first-generation Hmong American woman and I can remember how different I was from everybody else. I was able to say that I was American and from America but I looked different, spoke differently, and had different values and traditions. Hmong students can utilize it as a mirror to see themselves and their experiences. Non-Hmong students can use it as a window into the culture and experience. A quote from the movie about CS Lewis in the movie *Shadowlands* says, “We read to know we’re not alone.” We read to connect to others. It also gives us a sense of identity and belonging.

The creation of my book developed from my first year of teaching first grade. My students know that I am their teacher but they didn’t know who I really was or where I came from. Many students do not know how to pronounce my name “Thao” correctly. One of my students actually had mistaken me for being “Mexican.” It was a cute story but I also realized how little my students knew me. My first grade colleagues also expressed how little they knew about my culture after four years of working together. I do a mini-culture lesson on the Hmong people every year, but it’s not formally part of the

curriculum. From that point on, I realized that I needed to teach my colleagues and students about my history and culture through my own family journey and history.

The understanding of ethnic experience has become an important issue in the society of today. Current trend in education suggests the development of cultural curriculum materials which will strengthen students' own personal identity and will assist them in learning about the heritage of other citizens. Students maintain their cultural values at home but education also plays a large part in the preservation of the cultural patterns of various ethnic groups. The school environment should promote a culture of tolerance and acceptance. It is through recognizing the identity of others that we begin to recognize ourselves.

Today, there are numerous conversations from scholars, such as Banks, Gay, Nieto, Sleeter and Grant, about diverse and exciting ways to integrate multicultural awareness into the classroom. Gay (2003) claimed that multicultural education makes schooling more meaningful, relevant, and effective for Latino American, Native American, Asian American, and Native Hawaiian students as well. There is greater student success at all levels when there is a connection and balance between cultural background and school experiences, such as interest, effort, academic achievement, and sense of ability and responsibility. Literature in which the author has expressed himself/herself in such a way that we can identify with the characters and live the experiences gives us a closer inside feeling and look for what is going on in another culture.

Literature offers children mirrors through which they will not only see but feel how life really is and was for someone else. This project provides first grade teachers in the U.S. with a rationale for the acknowledgement of the Hmong emigrant in the U.S. The

picture book and curriculum will offer the classroom teacher ideas and strategies for the examination and celebration of Hmong culture through literature.

Purpose of the Project

Children gravitate towards books with which they can identify. As adults, we tend to do the same. When reading, we look towards characters which are similar to ourselves. It is literature such as this, literature written by those who know and understand the culture, which should be used to portray the Hmong realistically in classrooms.

The purpose of this project, therefore, is to develop a picture book and accompanying curriculum which will provide the first grade teacher with a quality literature and lessons dealing with the Hmong. It may be adapted for older student use. This will include three sequential units, source list of Hmong literature, and references for teacher use. This project is designed to offer the teacher a number of different instructional approaches for the use of Hmong cultural literature in the classroom. Theoretical ideas regarding the impact of literature on the child, the rationale for recognition of the Hmong culture in the U.S., along with practical ideas for the implementation of cultural literature will be combined into an applicable curriculum that will be beneficial to both teachers and students.

Significance of the Project

Literature has the power to change a reader. Reading more means less ignorance. It makes us more human, gives us the gift of empathy. Through poetry and story, children may step into the characters of others very similar or different from themselves. It is for this reason that literature provides the perfect vehicle for multicultural education. The project will

provide teachers with two resources to support their inclusion of Hmong children's literature and curriculum: an original picture book and cultural units. This will address a void in the current body of children's literature. The instructional strategies suggested will encourage in-depth, critical examination of text, so that the quality of the literature is fully utilized.

Limitations

One limitation of this project is there is a limited amount of children's literature dealing specifically with the Hmong people in the U.S. Research on Hmong literature was scarce as compared to research on literature for other cultural groups such as African American or Latino. The project focuses only on the Hmong people.

Definition of Terms

- Anglo-American is any person that is not Latino, Asian, Native American, or Black (Kibler, 1996).
- Common Core State Standards have been adopted since 2010 to prepare students to be college and career ready in literacy by the end of high school, provide a vision of what it means to be a literate person in the twenty-first century, and develop the skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening that are foundational for any creative and purposeful expression in language (Sacramento County Office of Education, personal communication, November 7, 2012).
- Culture is defined by Peregoy and Boyle (2001) as the shared beliefs, values, and behavior of a group. It comprises of what people know, believe, do, and what they make and use to fit in.

- Hmong and Mong are interchangeable and both refer to an Asian ethnic group in the mountainous regions of southern China. Hmong is commonly used in the White dialect and Mong is used more in the Green dialect (Y. Thao, personal communication, November 1, 2013).

- Multicultural Children's Literature is defined by Gopalakrishnan (2011) as ". . . literature that is of the mainstream in the United States" (p. 5). Gopalakrishnan (2011) further explains that multicultural children's literature is about the sociocultural experiences of previously underrepresented groups. It validates these groups' experiences because of differences in language, race, gender, ethnicity, identity, and sexual orientation. Multicultural children's literature is by and about diverse populations and includes different perspectives.

- Oral Tradition is the exchanges that takes place in everyday conversations and are traditions that are handed down from generation to generation (Thao, 2006, p. 14).

- Picture books come in many genre and take many forms. They use illustrations and text to tell the story and teach the content (Tunnell & Jacobs, 2000).

Proposed Methodology and/or Approach

The creation of the picture book will showcase the Hmong journey from Laos/Thailand to the United States. Along with the picture book, cultural curriculum lessons will suggest ways to utilize the book in the classroom. California Common Core Standards and various teaching strategies will be used to develop and design my lessons. Ideas from focus groups of Hmong educators will help determine which aspect of the Hmong culture is critical to address in the curriculum.

The curriculum will be broken down into three units: Unit 1: Hmong History, Unit 2: Hmong Cultural Traditions, and Unit 3: Hmong Oral Traditions. Each unit will have four lessons. Before each unit, a brief introduction will give the first grade teacher a little background on the focus of the unit. Each lesson will focus on objective(s), standard(s), and end with assessment(s). The curriculum ends with a culminating project to learn and celebrate all cultures.

Several teaching/project methods were implemented to create the curriculum. Teaching methods involve direct and indirect instruction. Project methods consist of field test, interviews, and critiques/previews. A source list of existing Hmong children's literature will be attached to the end to suggest supplemental readings. A reference list will also suggest useful resources and websites for teachers to access additional information about the Hmong people.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

As the classroom and schools become more diverse, the role of multicultural literature needs to be addressed to validate the children's experience. Gopalakrishnan (2011) states that multicultural children's literature is about the sociocultural experiences of previously underrepresented groups and validates these groups' experiences because of differences in language, race, gender, ethnicity, identity, and sexual orientation. Multicultural children's literature is about diverse populations, therefore providing a variety of perspectives.

Children's literature was not always as diverse. It used to exist in the genre of folktales and fairytales. It was not until the latter part of the 20th century that we saw the variety of genres, including realistic fiction, historical fiction, poetry, picture books, modern fantasy, science fiction, etc. Books then became more of a teaching aid for children to learn about the world and began to play a role in the school setting. With so much material to teach and cover, teachers have to be selective in their choice of literature. Gopalakrishnan (2011) claims that, while many classrooms use only children's books that are written specifically to teach certain lessons, multicultural literature is mainly used for children's free choice of reading, entertainment, or specific preassigned times. She advocates that multicultural literature must be used throughout the school year, in all lessons, and at all times. This will enrich the students' learning experience and help them appreciate the

multicultural author and literature (Gopalakrishnan, 2011). This includes a more inclusive approach.

The focus of this literature review is two-fold. The first part gives a background to multicultural education and multicultural literature for children. The second part will focus on the Hmong history and culture, which provides the background of why we need more quality literature for children about the Hmong people in the United States.

Multicultural Education

Educators and theorists have long debated how 'multicultural' is defined and what it means for schools. Multicultural education developed from the values of the freedom, justice, and equality for all people. The origin of multicultural education can be traced back to the Civil Rights Movement. African American scholars and educators led the multicultural education movement as the fight for freedom, political power, and economic integration (Sleeter & McLaren, 2000). It was the bridge between racial and ethnic groups. It started to include gender and diversity as well. Many other movements are closely tied to multicultural education. The women's right movement impacted schools with the passage IX in 1972 linking struggles against racism versus sexism. Bilingual education advanced with the Cubans fleeing Castro's revolution in the 1950s. This led to advanced bilingual education legislation, theory, and practice. Ethnic studies and women's studies surfaced in the university level. With the demographic data report in 1985, it was obvious that multicultural education needed to be addressed. Workshops and supplemental cultural lessons started appearing in the curriculum. With the tourist conception of multicultural education, the promise of the Civil Rights Movement and

multiculturalism faded (Sleeter & McLaren, 2000). There was a need for multicultural schools to address the interest and needs of their communities of color.

Demographics in the United States have been changing to be increasingly diverse. In response, scholars and policy makers called for reform in education to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse student population. The need for a different approach to education was one that recognized and embraced the values and complexities of racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and historical differences, while seeking to achieve academic success for all students (Howard, 2010). The purpose of multicultural education is to promote and provide equitable access to rigorous academic achievement for all students and to encourage students to work towards social change, challenge oppression and bias, and to appreciate the multiple identities students bring to the classroom learning.

Scholars have provided a range of definition to the term “multicultural education.” Banks (2004) summarizes multicultural education in five dimensions: content, integration, knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture and social structure.

Content integration allows various culture, ethnicities, and identities to be included in the curriculum. The knowledge construction process provides students the opportunities to look into the windows of other groups and critique the knowledge that is presented. Prejudice reduction promotes lessons and activities that teachers can access to instill positive representations of ethnic groups and bridge the gap between the groups. Equity pedagogy intends to meet the academic achievement of all students through modified teaching styles. Empowering school culture takes a look at the school culture and school

staff to evaluate and restructure current practices and create equal access for all groups (Banks, 2004). Banks (2004) asserts that multicultural education provided educators a framework to teach diverse learners. The goal was to create critical, lifelong learners, who will be able to function in a democratic society.

Another scholar in the field is Sonia Nieto. She has similar frameworks and focuses on seven characteristics of multicultural education. They are antiracist, basic, important for all students, pervasive, education for social justice, a process and critical pedagogy (Nieto & Bode, 2008). Antiracist education teaches antidiscrimination in the curriculum and provides students the skills to avoid racism and oppression. Basic education gives students the right to participate in the core classroom and acquire the social and intellectual skills to function in a diverse society (Nieto & Bode, 2008). Students learn to be twenty-first century learners.

Multicultural education is important for all students. All students deserve and need an education that is inclusive and rigorous. The pervasive nature of multicultural education revolves around the entire educational experience - school climate, physical environment, curriculum, and relationships. In education for social justice teachers and students work to put their learning into action. Students learn to be agent of change in a democratic society. Multicultural education as a process highlights the ongoing development of individuals and educational communities. The process involves relationships among people, student's achievement, expectation and learning preferences, learning environments, and cultural variables that influence the educational experience. Critical pedagogy draws upon experiences of students through various forms of knowledge including cultural,

linguistic, familial, academic, and artistic (Nieto & Bode, 2008). This pedagogy allows students to be active and critical thinkers of the society.

Two other leading scholars are Christine Sleeter and Carl Grant. They built upon multicultural education with their five approaches. The first approach is the Teaching Exceptional and the Culturally Different. The goal is to equip students with the academic skills. The second approach is the Human Relations with a goal to develop positive relationships and develop unity among diverse groups while fighting off stereotypes. It has a risk of simplifying cultures and being soft on academics. Single-group studies is the third approach with an effort to be more inclusive and create greater access to power. This is done by educating about the history, experiences with oppression, and resistance to that oppression of groups. Multicultural education is the fourth approach. It serves to promote a range of goals, such as the value of cultural diversity, human rights, respect for differences, alternative life choices, social justice, equal opportunity, and equitable distribution of power. The fifth approach is Education that is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist to encourage a redesign of an educational program. This calls for addressing diverse student needs and challenging students to speak out. Sleeter and Grant (1987, 2006), voice that when all groups are given a voice; then common concerns can be addressed.

Multicultural education embraces the home and school communities to promote a more equitable, global, and multicultural society. It works to break that inequality and oppression in the low academic achievement among students of diverse backgrounds. It is a school reform movement that should be implemented in school curriculum and cultures. Recognizing the importance of race, culture, language, and gender allows the teacher to

teach with a cultural lens and better support culturally diverse students. This will support academic success and allow voices to be heard through literature and discussions.

Multicultural Children's Literature

Multicultural children's literature falls under the genre "multiculturalism" because it is inclusive and serves as a mean to social justice. All underrepresented groups fit into multiculturalism. Multiculturalism in children's literature has evolved from denying differences to emphasizing similarities (Trites, 2003). There is the hope that all children can join hands to understand and appreciate culture and diversity.

Gopalakrishnan (2011) lists the four phases of multiculturalism. Phase one is "Ethnic Studies" where the history and cultures of ethnic minority groups are learned. Phase two is "Equality and Equity" in which there is a push for equality and equity in education. Phase three is "Equity for all previously underrepresented groups." Ethnic groups previously disadvantaged by the system demanded that their histories and cultures also be included in multicultural education. Lastly phase four is the "Theory, research, and practice of multicultural education." This is the development of theory, research, and practice that connects race, class, & gender (Gopalakrishnan, 2011). Multiculturalism and multicultural children's literature helps children from different ethnic backgrounds relate to the characters or events in the story and see themselves mirrored in books.

Multicultural literature opens the world to all children. "Reading to young children from culturally diverse, family-centered literature benefits children of all backgrounds" (Brinson, 2012, p. 30). Glazier and Seo (2005) define multicultural literature as literature of the omitted voices - in order to promote cultural diversity and awareness,

cultural voices must also be examined and encouraged. In multicultural literature, there are two types of books – “mirror” books and “window” books. “Mirror” books are those that reflect and expand upon the culture of the child reading the book, thus reinforcing the culture of that child. “Window” books, in contrast, offer the child an opportunity to learn about other cultures by providing a window into new experiences (Brinson, 2012). Children need to be able to see themselves in the literature they read and be open to reading about their fellow classmates. “Multicultural literature helps children identify with their own culture, exposes children to other cultures, and opens the dialogue on issues regarding diversity” (Colby & Lyon, 2004, p. 24). This builds a sense of community among all ethnic groups.

Anglo-American characters are more common in children’s books. Brinson (2012) believes that there are many more mirror books for Anglo-American children than for children of color. This has an effect and impact on Anglo-American children when they find themselves portrayed so often and have few opportunities to take a glance into the windows of other cultures. They feel as if they have nothing else to share. It also impacts children of diverse backgrounds. Multicultural literature has a positive influence on children from diverse backgrounds. Brinson (2012) expands on the fact that children’s books that focus on their own culture help African-American children flourish in print-rich experiences. Culturally specific children’s literature can acknowledge and highlight the diversity of Asian-Americans and give insight into distinctive customs. This can avoid the stereotypical “chopsticks and dragon” view of Asians (Brinson, 2012). Hispanic literature can introduce young children to a broad and rich literature by Latino authors, encouraging self-acceptance among Latino children, and facilitate an understanding of the many ethnic groups within the overall Latino culture, including bilingual children’s books (Brinson, 2012). Brinson (2012)

asserts that the silenced voices of the Native-American culture have to be addressed. The best educational practice is to foster respect for and counter misassumptions and stereotypes. Glazier and Seo (2005) suggest that “hot lava” topics, such as class, culture, race, politics, and religion should be explored. It is critical for young children to develop accurate, well-balanced perspectives.

James Bank is known for his four levels of multiculturalism. Level one is the first and simplest level of approaching curriculum. This is the “Contributions approach, tourist approach, or food and festivals approach.” Books of different cultures are introduced on certain holidays and months giving a sense of visiting different cultures and ethnicities. Level two is the “Additive” approach where the content is added without changing or evaluating the basic feature, involving reading folktales from around the world, guest speakers or authors. Level three is the “Transformation” approach that turns the fundamental curriculum around to help "students view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the perspective of diverse ethnic and cultural groups, "against the grains." Level four is the “Social Action” approach that involves students in not only the curriculum but also social action, speaking out against injustice, engaging with power structures using real accounts of famous historical events (Gopalakrishnan, 2011). This encourages students to become democratic citizens and critical thinkers.

Multicultural children’s literature is by and about diverse groups with different perspectives and can fall into three categories: Melting Pot Books, Socially Conscious Books, and Culturally Conscious Books (Gopalakrishnan, 2011). Like the name suggest, melting pot means “. . . a fusion of many cultures, ethnicities, and experiences” (Gopalakrishnan, 2011, p. 29). This term was coined in the 1960s and 1970s in reaction to

the multicultural movement to promote the idea that all people are the same equally. She further explains that this idea suggests that we must not discriminate on cultural and ethnic differences due to the fact that everyone has similar experiences and shows the “normalcy” in all people. These books are known as “culturally generic” or “universally themed.” She suggests that many books in the classroom would fall under this category due to its universality and marginally multicultural taking on the contributions or additive approach (Gopalakrishnan, 2011). These books are easy to come with no controversy and easy implementation into the classroom.

Social conscious books on the other hand are about exposing one cultural group’s unique experience to the mainstream or larger group. The intention is to bring out empathy and sympathy and promote tolerance and for social desegregation or integration (Gopalakrishnan, 2011). Empathy and sympathy are aimed towards a group having a common social experience, such as poverty, war, urban experience, etc. These books are culturally generic because they also include people from various backgrounds, color, race, or ethnicity. It becomes multicultural because they experience similar unique social experiences.

Culturally conscious books are defined by Gopalakrishnan (2011) as “. . . those that depicts cultural traditions, languages, ethnicities of certain groups’ experiences in an authentic voice, most often from an insider’s perspective” (p. 32). These books are also termed “culturally specific” and do not appear universally. The stories are from an insider’s perspectives that teach about the cultural conflict that engages readers in dialogue (Gopalakrishnan, 2011). These books allow the reader to develop an awareness of and sensitivity to the thoughts and feelings of others.

Gopalakrishnan (2011) claims that there is a significant need for multicultural children's literature in the classroom to prepare the children for the outside world. "Multicultural children's literature, especially authentic accounts from an insider's perspective, offers multiple ways of intersecting with students' experiences and their learning" (Gopalakrishnan, 2011, p. 34). Equal representation and validation and cultural authenticity are the two major reasons why multicultural children's literature should be integrated into the curriculum. Multicultural children's literature allows for the silenced voice to see them represented in literature. Gopalakrishnan (2011) summarizes cultural authenticity as the level of success in which the author can portray the cultural perspective of the people s/he is writing about and is able to persuade the inside readers that s/he knows what's going on.

Multicultural books enrich readers' appreciation of persons of various cultures and help them overcome stereotypical views (Brinson, 2012). A variety of literature is a critical part of the classroom. Multicultural literature in the school curriculum will reinforce a sense of community and enhance young children's understanding of and identification with diverse cultures and families (Brinson, 2012). He asserts that using culturally and linguistically diverse literature facilitates reading comprehension, helps address phonological awareness gaps, and contributes to improved fluency. Children should be given opportunities to process literature through individualized expressions that boost self-confidence. Literature creates life-long learners and gives students a tap into the lives and language of the authors and their surroundings (Brinson, 2012). Dong (2005) supports that multicultural literature is that step toward curriculum transformation and self-improvement. This calls for transformation of curriculum and pedagogy, in which students read and engage in open

dialogue (Glazier & Seo, 2005). This is necessary as the population in the United States is getting more diverse.

The push for multiculturalism is important, especially in the United States with its increasingly diverse population from all over the globe. School libraries and classroom libraries need to incorporate our diverse population. It is necessary to balance the practices of individuals having lifelong experiences with literature that provide windows through which to view others and lifelong experiences with literature that provide mirrors in which to see those who are like themselves and their loved ones (Brinson, 2012). According to Gopalakrishnan (2011), the criteria for selecting and evaluating multicultural children's literature are based on four areas: Author and Illustrator's Perspective, Multidimensionality, Stereotyping, and Authentic Language. As a democratic society, we work to seek unity through education: learning about one another, challenging ourselves to open our minds and eyes to new ideas, seeing history from different points of views, and hearing untold stories.

Cultural Influences

Children learn to communicate in context of their home culture. They use their home language and cultural communication skills to connect and build relationships (Parlakian & Sanchez, 2006). It is important for educators to build the relationships between the children and families. Being aware of the home culture and connections will help the teacher better understand the strengths and culture of every child in their classroom. This also gives teachers the information they need to support the language development and literacy needs of their students (Parlakian & Sanchez, 2006). As teachers build a diverse and welcoming environment, children can become successful, lifelong learners.

How we view the world is shaped by our families. Culture shapes our expectations. There are five knowledge bases for teaching in a diverse classroom: self-knowledge, cultural knowledge, linguistic knowledge, culturally informed teaching knowledge, and knowledge of multicultural materials and literacy methods (Parlakian & Sanchez, 2006). Self-knowledge is understanding one's cultural roots and group affiliation. In order to understand other cultures, we need to be aware of our own culture practices and beliefs. As teachers reflect on their own cultural practices and what they bring into the classroom, they can then address the stereotypes or bias that make it difficult to teach, accept, and understand their students (Parlakian & Sanchez, 2006). Teachers can view their students' behavior and skills from a cultural lens.

Culture knowledge refers to the importance of culture in the role of shaping children's behavior, learning, values, and self-esteem, and perception. Children's home culture – language, literacy, and values – can help teachers better support their students. Making those home-school connections allows teachers to individualize the curriculum making it meaningful and relevant to the student. Linguistic knowledge emphasizes how young child's communication style and dialects affect their learning. Teachers can gain linguistic knowledge by listening to their students, conversing with the parents, or observing parent-child interactions. Teachers can pick up cultural differences in these interactions and build up their strengths. Culturally informed teaching knowledge includes the information and access to information teachers have to create a welcoming environment from their students of diverse backgrounds. This strategy also helps individualize learning experiences based on students' needs (Parlakian & Sanchez, 2006). Teacher's expectations influence their students' behavior and success.

Knowledge of multicultural materials and literacy methods involves implementing multicultural literature in the classroom curriculum to reduce stereotypes. Select books that honor children's cultures and values diversity. These books can elicit discussions about human differences, diversity, and cultural beliefs and practices. Knowledge of home-school relationships is the last knowledge base. This strategy explores the relationship between families and teachers working together to promote students' learning and success. Involving and engaging the families allow for true collaboration to occur. The five knowledge bases work together to support teachers in creating a welcoming, respectful, and culturally-sensitive environment for children and families from all cultures. "It is by being willing to explore our own beliefs, family stories, attitudes, family history, and early memories that the recognition and acceptance we all have a culture begins to emerge" (Parlakian & Sanchez, 2006, p. 6). Each person has a unique culture that impacts their interactions with others and allows them to be aware of their own cultural perspective.

Hmong Cultural Traditions

The Hmong are rich in their cultural traditions and history is passed through the generations orally. Hmong literature, however, is expressed through their *pa ndau* story or handmade flower cloth. Before 1965, *pa ndau* were textile arts created by Hmong women for clothing worn in Laos, Thailand, or the United States. The voices of Hmong women has finally been able to be heard through *pa ndau* (pronounced pon dow) (McCall, 1999). Cha and Livo (2000) suggest that embroidered story cloths reference Hmong myths, family history, animals and village life, war and death, emigration and life in a new land. Each cloth is unique and tells its own story. It can tell the story of the traditional Hmong life in Laos, the

lives as refugees in Thailand, or as an immigrant to the United States. There are also story cloths of old folktales passed down from generation to generation. The embroidery serves a practical and ritual purpose in decorations of baby carriers, bags, clothing, and everyday objects (Chiu, 2004). Between 1965 and 1975, these items were sold to foreigners. Like in the western culture, the story cloth functions as a record of the past such as a photograph album.

Pa ndau is a complex form of textile art. It involves appliqué, reverse appliqué, cross stitch, batik, and embroidery (Chiu, 2004). Textile artists use several layers of cloths and incorporate several signs to represent cultural beliefs, important symbols, the physical environment, and geometric patterns (Chiu, 2004). Mothers would teach their daughters and pass it down. Girls as young as three could learn to sew. They spend years learning different patterns and developing various sewing skills to make clothing for the family by hand. Each clothing item has some type of design on it. It is made for everyday wear and for embracing various events, including the Hmong New Year.

Hmong embroidery is known for its various symbolic patterns and traditional designs based on Hmong beliefs. There are various patterns and designs. Textile art is used for many purposes. McCall (1999) indicated that the *pa ndau* on the girls' clothing let their prospective parents-in-law evaluate their character, creativity, and industriousness through the needlework's quality. *Pa ndau* designs also appear on baby carriers, burial clothing, and small needlework squares for wedding gifts (McCall, 1999). One can learn many things from the story cloth, for example, the fighting and destruction of the Vietnam War and the Hmong's escape to Thailand (McCall, 1999). *Pa ndau dab neej* (flower cloths of the people, customs, and traditions) are used to show the everyday life in Laos. Stitched pictures on

cloths originated from the Hmong refugees living in Thailand. They portrayed Hmong women, men, and children in their traditional clothing near typical houses performing daily tasks (McCall, 1999). These tasks include working together growing and harvesting different foods, preparing food for eating, using tools for farming and preparing food, and raising animals (McCall, 1999). This tells the daily life of the Hmong refugees.

Hmong refugee life was a struggle. The camps were crowded and unsanitized with limited food and opportunities to earn income. The textile art was a source of income. Sewing became a job and economic survival. Hmong textile artists even began to integrate traditional designs on western products, such as bedspreads, pillow covers, book marks, and wall hangings (McCall, 1999). It wasn't until the 1970s that Hmong began to implement story cloths with embroidered figures, animals, and scenery that depicted aspects of Hmong history and culture.

Hmong culture and history were recorded in and shared through threads including daily life in Laos. These tasks included growing, harvesting, and preparing food; religious or social ceremonies such as Hmong New Year; plants and animals native to Laos; folk tales, myths, and legends; and the effects of the Vietnam War on Hmong people along with their escape from Laos and immigration to Thailand and other countries (McCall, 1999). Men and women worked together to create story cloths. Women came together to sew and talk. The story cloths were valuable nonwritten text to portray the lives and struggles of Hmong people to other audiences. McCall (1999) asserts that it serves as an advocacy art and artistic response to oppression and an act of standing up for themselves against domination. *Pandau* was the preserver of storytelling traditions of cultural displacement and historical migrations, and commercial enterprise (Chiu, 2004). It maintained the identity of the Hmong.

As Hmong immigrated to the United States in the 1980s, cultural conflicts began to rise between the first generation and later generation Hmong. Hmong textile artists helped to preserve Hmong culture by sewing *pa ndau* to wear and sell. The demands to support their families has caused many Hmong to start going to school and getting jobs. Many textile artists in the United States have been able to make a living creating and selling *pa ndau*. The unique textile art seems to be a dying art because young women are sewing less. Cha and Livo (2000) suggest that the symbolic meanings have been lost and misinterpreted. Some Hmong women are also sewing less as their children develop dislike and embarrassment for the wearing of traditional Hmong clothes. Some are still teaching their daughters to create *pa ndau* because it's important to pass it on to the next generation (McCall, 1999). Traditions are fading, and the *pa ndau* serves as a bridge between the generations and as a mode of communication with the outside world. *Pa ndau* story cloths are the form of expressions of storytelling from the Hmong people with a rich oral tradition.

Oral Traditions and Storytelling

The Hmong culture is based on oral traditions. Hmong Americans value their oral tradition and they have a strong oral culture (Thao, 2006). Hmong express their own voices through oral traditions. "As language is the shrine of a people's soul, even so, oral folk literature expresses the collective unconscious of a culture" (Johnson & Yang, 2010, p. vi). Hmong children learn from watching their parents and elders (Yang, 2012) Hmong transitioned from an oral to written culture without given a cause. The Hmong are not literate in their first language and their native language had no written form. Hmong literature did not begin to emerge until the 1980s (Yang, 2012). The American and French missionaries

used the Romanized popular alphabet system to record Hmong (McCall, 1999). The books found on Hmong were usually written by American and French Christian missionary workers in the 1950s.

Hmong oral literature are classified into several genres: . . . "soul calling, baby naming ceremonies, marriage rituals, funeral rites, songs of love and complaint, blessings and prayers for the New Year and for veneration of the ancestors" (Johnson & Yang, 2010, p. v). The stories adapted and varied to conditions and situations where Hmong lived. Hmong culture along with Hmong literature had to defend itself from being oppressed and abandoned. Hmong traditions crossed political boundaries and settled in Northern Laos, where they were preserved and handed down from generation to generation (Johnson & Yang, 2010). Hmong stories are original storytelling. “. . . Hmong stories retain the unsanitized richness of the culture” (Cha & Livo, 2000, p. 29). The stories are told like it really is; it’s real.

Hmong traditions are learned orally. This consists of story circle times and simply just observing the elders. Hmong songs are typically poems or set speeches. They fall into the category of *kwv txhiaj*, which are “. . . songs of love, separation, war, orphanage, homelessness, and more” (Thao, 2006, p. 58). Hmong songs don’t serve the same purpose as lullabies because they are sung to express personal hardship, physical life and beauty, and for courtship (Thao, 2006). Thao (2006) also asserts that these songs are sung during courting to engage in romantic relationships or for accompaniment while traveling to and fro the plantations.

The elders added that people sing songs to release personal stress (*kiv nyuaj sab*), about being lonely (*kiv khua sab*), to remember their loved one (*kiv sib ncu txug tug*

hlub, *phooj ywg los yog kwvtij*), and to *tau luag*, meaning not being afraid while being alone. (Thao, 2006, p. 58)

Young people learn these songs to prepare and use at New Year celebrations. Young couples engage in a ball-tossing game called *swb pob*. If one loses the ball and has nothing to exchange, then s/he can pay with a love song called *kwv txhiaj plees* (Cha & Livo, 2000). These songs cover all aspects of love, relationships, or broken hearts. This is a good opportunity for young men and women to meet and build relationships or find a marriage partner.

People, such as orphans, also sing songs to express personal feelings. These *kwv txiaj ntsuag* are about children who have lost their parents (Cha & Livo, 2000). They use these songs to reflect on their orphanhood and struggles in life (Thao, 2006). These songs can include losing a spouse. It helps them cope with their difficulties. There are also songs about missing loved ones. Thao (2006) asserted that many Hmong songs are sad but serve the purpose of providing comfort for war separation, attracting potential marriage partners, and educating others about life hardships, and entertainment.

Sacred chanting songs are sung only at religious ceremonies. The important chanting songs are the . . . Shaman's chanting (*qhua hab nkauj neeb*), funeral songs (*txwv xaiv, nkauj hab kiv nyiav*, wedding songs (*zaaj tshoob*), and soul calling (*hu plig*)" (Thao, 2006, p. 61). Sacred chanting songs are difficult to learn and one must know the appropriate song to conduct an offering for the spirits. This can be done through spiritual guidance. One can become a Shaman by being selected by the shaman spirits. They use the sacred chanting songs to communicate with the spirit world or battle the evil spirits. Thao (2006) suggest that the chants include Mandarin Chinese due to their China origin and brotherhood.

Funeral and wedding songs are very important to the Hmong. The elders believed that the dead value life just as the living. A dead person's soul is still living and must be appropriately accompanied through songs (*kwv txiaj tuag*) while the ritual is going (Cha & Livo, 2000). Family members and loved ones will sing mournful songs (*quaj hab nyiav*) to show grief (Thao, 2006). People are selected to sing *nkauj* (songs) to accompany the dead and greet the guest. Thao (2006) further explains that they also recruit a *txiv qeej* who will blow the bamboo reed pipe (*qeej*) to communicate with the souls of the dead. It is almost a language of its own to communicate with the souls. It helps send the soul to depart to the ancestor's world.

There are numerous *qeej* chanting songs played during the mortuary rite: *qeej tshais* (breakfast), *qeej su* (lunch), *qeej mo* (dinner), *qeej sawv kiv* (lead the souls to the burial site), and *qeej civ neeg* (lead souls to the stretcher) (Thao, 2006). Another person present at a funeral is the *tub coj xai* who sings the *twwv xaiv* (funeral songs). They are carefully selected due to their beautiful voice to draw in people to stay up and listen. They sing of teaching people how to live a happy life. This usually occurs on the last night before the burial. This last night is called *mo has xwm* (Thao, 2006). It is believed that this person passes on the luck and blessings of the deceased to their loved ones.

Hmong heritage was brought to America with 60,000 Hmong refugees who resettled since the fleeing of the Communist take-over in Vientiane (Johnson & Yang, 2010). Unlike the ideal socio-cultural settings of the Hmong mountain village in Laos, industrialized American cities don't allow for oral traditions. In the past, Hmong families would spend long evenings around the fireplace with the elders telling the young the traditional tales of the Hmong culture, such as the world's creation and the great flood,

Hmong shamans, orphans and princess, etc. With technology, Hmong children have other things to explore, so Hmong oral literature are slowly disappearing in passing time (Johnson & Yang, 2010). With this, traditions and the Hmong language are fading.

Oral traditions are being replaced by written society. The concept of school culture creates a major tension between Hmong elders and their grandchildren and a major cultural conflict exist within the Hmong tradition. The move into a literate culture leads to a loss of oral tradition customs, language and culture, and religion values (Thao, 2006). Hmong children in the United States are assimilating into the dominant western culture and are either resistant or rejecting their parents' culture.

Parents and grandparents have had difficulty communicating with their children because they are simply not interested in Hmong traditional values. This creates an identity crisis and leads to legal problem with the American justice system. Hmong youth turn to gang affiliation or internal/external conflicts with their parents (Thao, 2006). The elders feel that they are in a prison themselves. They feel as if they are not important to this literate society because there is no support for their traditional cultural conservation. Thao's (2006) research supports the elders' voice of understanding the Hmong values and removing the negative stereotypes on the way the Hmong perform their customary tradition.

Stories and music are a way to order chaos. Oral culture consists of "...stories, folktales, legends, plays, songs, chants, oratory and other forms of nonverbal communication" (Thao, 2006, p. 6). Singing songs, sung poetry and playing musical instruments are important tools in Hmong courtship. Stories help us see beyond our skin. It shows us the past in order to understand the present (Cha & Livo, 2000). The oral culture traditions help preserve the culture and connect the generations.

Customary traditions can be passed through storytelling. In Laos, Hmong stories are told at night by the fireplace before bedtime. These stories were originally told in rhymed verse and told to anyone who wished to listen (Cha & Livo, 2000). Hmong stories have deep meanings and are windows into the Hmong worldview. Cha and Livo (2000) stated that the more knowledge one has about the Hmong oral literacy, the more meanings the listener can find in the stories. Stories tell the history and origin of the Hmong people.

Storytelling is an essential tool for Hmong families and serves as an enriching cultural experience in the classroom. There are many benefits to storytelling. Sanchez (2009) asserts that teachers can learn about students' culture and language through family stories. She believes that teachers should be familiar with students' backgrounds and experiences. Family stories can help develop and enrich students' literacy skills through a culturally and linguistically relevant approach (Sanchez, 2009). This leads to effective teaching practices. Family identity is constructed through storytelling and helpful in understanding the family's norms, values, and goals (Sanchez, 2009). St. Amour (2003) stated that "When children share stories about special occasions in their home/family life, it strengthens social ties" (p. 48). It brings everyone together for a shared experience (Cha & Livo, 2000). Storytelling plays several other critical roles in the classroom.

Lenox (2000) believes that "Storytelling can also be a fun-filled way to inspire an interest in learning while expanding awareness and knowledge of today's diverse environment" (p. 97). It helps to build bridges between cultures. Storytelling brings heightened awareness to the listener, in the sense of wonder, mystery, and reverence (Cha & Livo, 2000). "The story hour becomes the platform for preparing children for life and to live

in harmony with others in this dynamic world” (Lenox, 2000, p. 97). It allows readers to understand themselves and others and the story itself.

St. Amour (2003) describes the three basic story types: the Known, the Remembered, and the Imagined. The Known is “a body of verifiable facts that we carry around regarding a certain subject” (St. Amour, 2003, p. 48). The Remembered is “everything that recollection and memory can recall about a topic” (St. Amour, 2003, p. 48). The Imagined is “all that the imagination can create to develop to a concept” (St. Amour, 2003, p. 48). All of these story types attend to an individual child’s creative abilities and build on diverse cultural backgrounds.

The first important dimension of storytelling is selecting the appropriate stories, whether it’s fiction, folktales, myths, legends, or other narratives. It needs to appeal to the teller and bring the story to life. There are stories of all kinds that may appeal to the child reader: genuine or fiction, happy or sad, funny or terrifying. There are also children’s stories, true life tales, folk tales from around the world, “documentary” storytelling, stories from the imagination of our tellers and so much more. This brings out the creativity of the child.

Storytelling and story reading has been researched to have positive effects on students’ literacy success. Reading books aloud increases students’ reading achievement scores along with their listening and speaking abilities. Research done by Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer, and Lowrence (2004) suggest that storytelling and story reading influence the language development of and story comprehension of 3-5 year-old children. They both produce positive gains in oral language. During the first five year of children’s life, they are capable of building up an enormous vocabulary and understand more than they can speak. The study shows that storytelling improved vocabulary acquisition, story comprehension,

fluency, and retelling. Story reading improves language complexity. It benefits children in two ways in the area of language acquisition and literacy (Isbell et al., 2004). “Not only do children acquire language and literacy skills, but they also experience vocabulary growth, knowledge of handling books, and many other skills” (Isbell et al., 2004, p. 158). Students come with different background knowledge and experiences, so they can construct their own meaning to the text (Glazier & Seo, 2005). Both approaches require interaction and make the experience more personal and unique.

Storytelling plays such a critical role in young children’s development and it serves to connect the children to their family and school environment. It stimulates the imagination and mental visualization (Cha & Livo, 2000). Unfortunately, with changing expectations and curriculum, storytelling is slowly fading out of the classroom. Ever since formal education has been introduced to the Hmong people in the United States and in western countries after 1976, written literacy has started to replace the sacred knowledge and oral traditions of the Hmong people. This is all they have to pass on their stories to their children. Hmong elders in the United States hope that the continuation of oral tradition practices will help Hmong children maintain their oral culture, kinship, family values, and respect for their elders. Storytelling not only enhances a child’s education; it ties us all together as one community. Storytelling leads children to a rich knowledge of literature, broadening their choices on books and stories to read. In order to understand a group of people, you need to explore their past. The Hmong people have such a rich history, but it doesn’t exist in the existing literature.

Brief Overview of Hmong History

The histories of several Asian groups, such as Chinese and Japanese have been introduced to the western world, but where did the Hmong (pronounced mung) people originate from? The Hmong has been literally translated as “the free man” or “the free people” for years. Yang (2012) states that the Hmong does not necessarily mean free or free people because they don’t have a country to call their own. They have had to adapt and assimilate into other countries and lived along other people for ages. They never integrated with the societies around them, choosing to remain free and independent. The terms Hmong and Mong are interchangeable and both refer to an Asian ethnic group in the mountainous regions of southern China. Beginning in the 18th-century, Hmong people began a gradual mass migration to Southeast Asia for political and economic reasons. Many are currently living in several countries in Southeast Asia.

There are four theories regarding the origin of the Hmong people. Thao (2006) identified the first theory as the “Theory of Mesopotamian Origin” developed by French Catholic missionary Father F.M. Savina. Mesopotamia was where western civilization began. He claimed that Hmong ancestry came from the Turanians; they were being forced out by the Aryans of Iran. The Hmong people immigrated from Iran to Siberia. This theory claims that Hmong are a Caucasoid race, resembling European traits, such as facial features and no epicanthic eyelid fold (Thao, 2006). Savina supports his theory of Hmong migration by their physical appearance. He argues that the Hmong race is a mix between the white and yellow races due to their pale yellow complexion, light or dark brown hair and sometimes even red or cornsilk blond, and few with blue eyes (Cha & Livo, 2000). They are said to be the most Caucasian population in Southeast Asia.

Moua (2002) claims that no one knows the true origin of the Hmong people, but Hmong has been found in four-five thousand year old documents. Another popular theory is the “Theory of China Origin.” It is collectively agreed upon by Mottin, Bernatzik, Graham, Linh Yeuh-Wah, and Geddes. They claim that Hmong originally lived in southern China on the basin of the Yellow River present-day Yunnan, Kweichow, and Kwangsi, China (Thao, 2006). Cha and Livo (2000) supports this theory claiming that the Hmong was the first people to settle along the Yellow River in China with the Han Chinese until there were conflicts and uprisings. The “Theory of Ultimate Southern Origin” is developed by Eickstedt claiming that Hmong migrated to China from the India and Myanmar (Thao, 2006). Finally, the “Theory of the Russian Origin” is developed from Largeguy claiming that Hmong migrated to China from Russia (Thao, 2006). These four theories are ambiguous, which has a big impact on the Hmong origination and identity. They fall into the category of a population without a nation.

The Hmong peoples’ origin goes back 3,000 in China (Pfeifer, 2003). Most sources date the Hmong from between 2700 and 2300 B.C. in the Yellow and Yangtze River regions of China supporting the “Theory of China Origin.” McCall (1999) indicates that the Hmong originally lived in Siberia and then immigrated to northern China in the 2500 B.C. The Hmong belonged to a group of people called the “Man” in early Chinese history. They were able to live in peace with the Han Chinese for 2,000 years until natural resources became scarce, population grew, and fertile land depleted. Conflicts developed with the Chinese dispersing the Hmong into different regions or assimilation into the Chinese cultures (Cha & Livo, 2000). The last royal Hmong family was executed in Beijing in the 1700s. Persecution in China led many Hmong families to escape to Vietnam, Thailand, and Laos in

the mid-1880s (McCall, 1999). They settled in the uninhabited highlands and felt they could live in peace. The persecution and fleeing didn't stop.

Even after immigrating to new countries, the Hmong people faced conflicts with their new neighbors. When the French colonized Southeast Asia, they penetrated Hmong territories and led to a rebellion which lasted until 1921 with the capture of the Hmong leader Pa Chai Vue (Cha & Livo, 2000). They did not get along very well with the Lao because of religious and agricultural differences, so they partnered with the French to gain allies and power (McCall, 1999). The French control of Indochina collapsed in 1954. The Vietnamese celebrated the end of "colonialism" and the start of "Communist aggression" (McCall, 1999). McCall (1999) reported that the Pathet Lao partnered itself with the North Vietnamese to transfer supplies through Laos to South Vietnam along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. President Eisenhower ordered the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to recruit covert soldiers known as the CIA's "secret army." Operating against the Communists, the Hmong were to cut off the supply line. Lao Hmong soldiers, led by General Vang Pao, participated in the secret army ambushing Communist supplies, rescued the injured pilots, and protected American military installations as part of the fight to rid the region of communism (Harvey, 2009). Chan and Livo (1990) claim that the Hmong soldiers were doing the bulk of the American fighting.

After the Americans withdrew from Vietnam in 1975, the Hmong who allied with the US feared that they would be punished. Between 1975-1992, over 100,000 Hmong escaped to Thailand by crossing the Mekong River. They were living in temporary refugee camps until it was safe to return to Laos or fled to remote mountainous regions of Thailand. Many still remain in these areas while some resettled in other countries, such as France,

French Guyana, Australia, Canada, or the United States (McCall, 1999). Some escaped the camps and lived among the Thai villages and became Thai citizens (Cha & Livo, 2000). In July of 1975, General Vang Pao was one of the first Hmong to migrate to America and France.

The resettlement led many to tragic events. Harvey (2009) reported that Thailand has allowed resettlement of 100,000 Hmong in the past, mainly to the US. Since 2004, Thailand has been reluctant to help resettle any more (Harvey, 2009). The policy has been to voluntarily send the Hmong back to Laos. The Hmong have claimed to suffer from threats, beatings, and intimidation until they agree to return (Harvey, 2009). Since 2007, over 2,000 Hmong has been sent back to Laos by Thai authorities against their will (Harvey, 2009). The Hmong were not resettled even after returning to Laos. Many are still in hiding in fear for their life. Enduring these hardships, the Hmong felt trapped with no country call their own or to return to.

To many, America is the land of the free and opportunity. In 1980 alone, more than 20,000 Hmong came to the United States (Chan & Livo, 1990). Many Hmong immigrated over to the US for a new start or a better future for their family. To some, America isn't quite free. Life in America is a hard transition for some Hmong. The young Hmong have been forced to adapt to western culture, seeking education and employment (Cha & Livo, 2000). The transition for Hmong women was much easier than for Hmong men. Women quickly adjusted into the society and went off to college. They were then able to raise their families. Hmong men had a difficult time due to pride and political reasons. Some went against the American justice system and ended up in jail.

Vang Pao was made General of the Royal Lao Army in 1964 and has been the leader of the Hmong community ever since his people have stepped foot on America soil. In June 2007, Federal agents invaded homes and offices, under the Operation Tarnished Eagle, and arrested Vang Pao and ten others. “They are accused of violating the US Neutrality Act by allegedly trying to purchase machine guns, grenades and stinger missiles to overthrow the communist government of Laos” (Harvey, 1999, p. 26). In October of 2009, the case was put forward. The case was dismissed but the larger Hmong community felt a slap in the face. They felt abandoned and betrayed by the very US people, who they had helped in the Secret War of 1975.

The history of the Hmong is characterized by a succession of migrations and wars to maintain their identity. Hmong are the newest immigrants to the United States. Their arrival dated in the 1970s and 1980s (McCall, 1999). Today, a significant Hmong population exists in the United States. McCall (1999) reminds us how little American citizens know about the Hmong history, culture, and events that led to their migration. Because the history of the Hmong is a part of the American Secret War, their voice and culture should be heard. Understanding the history of the Hmong people allows us to look deeper in their culture and customs.

Hmong Customs

Patrilineal, clans, dialect, and agriculture sum up the Hmong culture. Hmong are close-knit communities and everyone is related in the society. “Mong society centers on a kinship system and operates through communal lifestyles” (Thao, 2006, p. 31). Men are the head of families and leaders of villages. They are the decision-makers. The Hmong practice

is a type of patrilineal decent group formation. Descent is traced through the male line, but women who marry in are associated with their husband's lineage because they are entitled to ancestral rights in this group. She retains her father's name because she is physically a part of the clan she was born into even though she belongs to the spiritual world of her husband. Social organization is based around several gradations of kinship.

Hmong people are identified based on their clan. Thao (2006) identified twelve original clans in the Hmong society. The exogamous patriclan (*Xeem*) is the most all-encompassing level of organization. Patriclan members share the same last name. According to the Western studies, there are eighteen Hmong clans: Chang/Cha, Chue, Cheng, Fang, Her, Hang, Khang, Kong, Lee/Ly, Kue, Lor, Moua, Pha, Thao, Vang, Vue, Xiong, Yang. Lineage organization is comprised of all descendants of a historical male ancestor, often a well-known political leader who lived five or more generations ago (Thao, 2006). Each clan is associated with a sacred ritual name, which accurately represents the origin of each clan (Thao, 2006). The clan system maintains unity and relationships between related clan and provides support to one another (Thao, 2006). Hmong speech illustrates the primary importance of kinship as relational terms replace proper names. Hmong kinship terms distinguish father and mother's siblings.

The cultural identity of Hmong is distinguished by the dialect they speak. The two principal dialects in Laos are *Moob Leeg* (Green Hmong) and *Hmoob Dawb* (White Hmong). Other dialects are spoken and mutually intelligible. The *Moob Leeg* is sometimes called *Moob Ntsuab* (Green or Blue Hmong) by the socially and more politically dominant *Hmoob Dawb*. *Moob Leeg* means “vein,” which carries the life blood of all Hmong, and the White Hmong is named after the ceremonial skirts of the White Hmong female. The colors

in these names represent the colors used in the traditional women's costumes of different groups.

Each group dresses differently. *Moob Leeg* females wear only skirts and blouses. The skirts are made in thick cross-stitch embroidery, batik-designed, and bright colors (Thao, 2006). White Hmong is divided into subdivisions. Females wear skirts, pants, and striped cloths. Pants are solid black and skirts are solid white. The artworks on the clothing are based on the region. They have special costumes for religious celebrations. The ornamental designs on the outfits also serve to protect them from evil spirits (Thao, 2006). The language and costumes are only one aspect of the Hmong culture.

Cultivation, parenting, conserving rituals and customary traditional values are part of the Hmong daily cultural practices. Hmong are very animistic and live in a world full of spirits (Chan & Livo, 1990). They believe that everything has a spirit and must be honored (Thao, 2006). The spirits are known as *da* used to describe the dead or passed away spirits that needs to be free or *plih* for the spirit of someone living (Chan & Livo, 1990). Thao (2006) further stressed that there is no separation between humans and the environment. Hmong people are very conscious of their surroundings because spirits are everywhere. Certain settings/locations, such as the home, field, forest are sacred and carefully selected.

It is believed that everything exists in nature and is associated and governed by a spirit. Chan and Livo (1990) assert that there are even spirit trees in which the Hmong string white cloth over them to identify them. “The Elders stated that it is important for one to recognize and understand that the world is inhabited with a variety of spirits. There are good or “tame” and evil or “wild” spirits” (Thao, 2006, p. 42). In order to live happily and in good health, humans must respect and consult with the spirit before making decisions or moving

environments. If the spirit is disturbed, then this could cause the person to *poob plig* or lose his/her soul and lead to illness or death. If this was to occur, a Shaman must perform the ritual *ua neeb thib vij swv vij npug* to get the evil spirits out of the house to avoid harm to the family (Thao, 2006). Spirits affect Hmong conduct in many ways, so all spirits are respected.

A person's body is governed by the souls of his/her ancestors who helps keep the evil spirits away. The Hmong seek the advice of these ancestors through the common ritual of *siab yiag*, where two chickens are sacrificed to the spirits to foretell the omen of the upcoming journey (Thao, 2006). Spirits reside in the homes as well. There are two well-respected spirits of the house – spirit of the front door and the spirit of the altar *suka* (Chan & Livo, 1990). Thao (2006) described that the house must be securely protected to keep out evil spirits, wild animals, or harmful creatures away. It is also believed to be the central universe. The location of a house is carefully selected because it will maintain the balance of health, harmony, and prosperity of the family.

Thao (2006) expanded on this belief with burial sites as also critical environments to the Hmong. A proper funeral and burial location makes the soul of the dead happy, debt-free in the next life, and a prosperous life in the afterworld (Thao, 2006). This leads to good fortune for the family members. If a bad location was selected, then the soul will not be able to find a way to reincarnate and a bad curse will fall upon the family. A Shaman will have to perform a ritual to repair the grave site and properly send the soul to its proper destination to reincarnate (Thao, 2006). This explains the choice in their agricultural lifestyle.

Hmong families have lived in the mountainous areas of Laos. Farming is an important memory for the Hmong life in Southeast Asia. They produce the necessary food, clothing, housing, and tools needed to survive (Thao, 2006). They value large families

because of their agricultural lifestyle. Agriculture was the primary adaptive strategy for Hmong living in Laos. Crops included rice, corn, and vegetables for subsistence and opium for medicinal use and sale. Rice makes up the Hmong diet. Chicken and pigs are the main source of protein. Chan and Livo (1990) add that the Hmong eats all kinds of green vegetables, such as cabbage, lettuce, bok choy, green mustard, pumpkin vines, and black nightshade. Hmong families lived a migratory lifestyle due to their slash-and-burn farming methods. Everyone had a role and contributed to the family. Hmong people value hard work and cooperation (McCall, 1999). Children started learning at a young age watching their family members work in the fields.

Parenting is an important part of the Hmong daily practice. Family units are very close. They take care of each other in order to ensure a prosperous and healthy family (Thao, 2006). Boys and girls learn parenting skills as one of their first life lessons. They prepare how to be mothers and fathers. Hmong men and females each play their own role. The father makes sure that children “fulfill the obligations to maintain their kinship and family rituals” (Thao, 2006, p. 27). The mother’s role is to make sure the children understand how to respect the elders, learn basic working skills, and acquire solid working habits (Thao, 2006). The Hmong men teach the boys how to sing songs, poetry, riddles, proverbs, rituals, and religious secret language (Thao, 2006). Hmong women do the same for the girls. Men are responsible for heavier work, such as clearing the fields, economic producers, and maintaining the relationship between family and outside clans, and bringing subsistence needs to their family (Thao, 2006). Hmong women maintain the responsibility of giving birth, raising children, and teaching children to work. This help preserve the continuation of the Hmong culture.

Rituals and customary traditional values are also significant to Hmong oral culture. Parents must ensure that their children can carry on the traditions. Men take responsibility for teaching the boys Hmong ritualistic sacred language, chants, and songs (Thao, 2006). “Also, the knowledge about family ancestor ritual performances must be possessed by the males in order to honor the house’s spirits and ancestor’s spirits” (Thao, 2006, p. 28). Women are expected to make sure Hmong children maintain their customary traditional values. They must learn to be good citizens, hard workers, good listeners, respectful, and capable of performing tasks around the house and plantations (Thao, 2006). Children are taught to recognize the roles of and status of family members. Everyone knows how to address each other and carry their role and behavior. Hmong daughters are taught to be hard workers and always kept busy. Hmong sons are taught to take on their father’s role. When seeking a soul mate, one seeks a hard worker, respectful of/to the elders, and has a good reputation (Thao, 2006). Soul mates can be found at social gatherings.

The social gathering that brings the Hmong families together is the New Year Festival. It is the highlight and most anticipated event of the year. Cha and Livo (2000) inform us that it is organized by the heads of clans. Each village plans their own festival at different times, so that villagers can attend one another’s celebrations. Every year, the Hmong celebrate their hard work from the harvest of the crop by putting on their New Year celebration. It is a time to “. . . remember the beauty of their traditional culture that has been preserved for many centuries” (Thao, 2006, p. 49). It is a time for family, friends, and relatives to visit one another.

At this event, different Hmong subgroups (White Hmong and Blue/Green Hmong) from separate villages gather together to maintain cultural traditions, such as

sharing food and playing games and musical instruments (Thao, 2006). They wear their finest embroidered clothes and silver jewelry to start off the new year as a good and rich one (Cha & Livo, 2000). This also provided opportunities for boys and girls from different clans to become acquainted as possible life mates. Hmong men and women pair off to engage in a ball-tossing game. This is the start to courtship and then culminates into marriage. Other important gathering occasions are funerals, weddings, and other ritual services.

The Hmong maintains their traditional wedding ceremony to keep their kinship ties and allow the younger generation to maintain the unique custom. Thao (2006) describes a marriage as the gap between the two bridges or the tying of the two clans to become a *neej tsab* (relatives). This helps them to recognize their grandparents and parents side of the family. Hmong marriage is often misunderstood or misinterpreted with the custom of *nqe tshoob* (bride price). Thao (2006) explains that the dowry serves as a security deposit and often misinterpreted as parents selling their daughter. If the marriage goes well, then the parents may keep the dowry. Likewise, if the marriage ends in the divorce, then the dowry may be returned. The household gifts donated are meant to help the bride start her new life. “Traditional marriage customs help the married couple to have a strong marriage because they maintain a tie to families and clans” (Thao, 2006, p. 77). Hmong marriage is for life. You live with that person until you die.

Hmong method of marriage consists of two types of marriage arrangement. The first is *nqeg tsev yuav* where the groom and his family enter the bride’s home to bargain for her hand in marriage with her parents (Thao, 2006). This method shows the groom giving respect to the bride and her family. The bride also has the greatest honor in this way and shows good faith in the marriage life. The other method is the bride going with the groom

without letting the parents know, known as *yuav ntsau los yog qaab kiv pob* (Thao, 2006). This simple arrangement can cause the bride and parents to lose face and cost a lesser dowry. Usually two elders from each of the families would meet to negotiate the bride price (Cha & Livo, 2000). This price is paid by the groom's family followed by a feast to acknowledge and celebrate the official marriage. Hmong can also have polygamous marriage when the men take on two or more wives. Men do this for various reasons: a larger family means more resources and more work in the household or plantation. Men also take on their deceased brother's wife to keep the children in the family clan (Thao, 2006).

The Hmong people maintain and share their cultural traditions through their stories and storytelling. Moua (2002) calls the Hmong "the undocumented people." There is no earlier tradition of written Hmong literature until the 1950s. Without the written text, Hmong have been overlooked in Asian American studies and American history. Hmong history and culture must be provided before having a conversation about Hmong literature.

Hmong American Children's Literature

According to the Hmong American Partnership, in 2010, the Hmong population in California was 91,224 and 260,076 in the United States. With such a big Hmong population in California, there is very little research that comes up on Hmong American children's literature. This is due to the Hmong being such a new immigrant group and their nonwritten history. Chiu (2004) points out that this marginalized group enters the modern world where their history vanishes and their destiny and future is dominated by western culture and technology advances. Regardless of where they may go, Hmong cling on to their traditional pasts and neither resist or yield to the new.

There are very few books written about and by Hmong authors for a children's audience. This leads to a lack of curriculum in the classroom to teach about the Hmong. Literature in the classrooms is starting to become more diverse depicting other ethnic groups in a more positive light. However, there is little to no books or curriculum on the Hmong in the state of California. Hmong children need an opportunity to relate themselves to the characters and the experiences in the stories they are reading.

The Hmong and communities of color have started to express themselves. Very often, minorities have images already painted for them. Even so, very few literatures about the Hmong culture exist. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* published in 1997 and *Bamboo Among the Oaks* published in 2002 were among some of the first Hmong American literature. *Paj Ntaub* (story cloth) *Voice* came to be a new category of Hmong American literature – literary arts journal. Some picture books have been created for young Hmong children. *Dia's Story Cloth* by Dia Cha is one such example. Dia Cha's story is about the Hmong Americans who made a long journey to freedom. The story cloth stitched by her aunt and uncle described the Hmong people's long and dangerous journey. The story cloths represent the bridge between past and present. It was the search for freedom that many Hmong children can relate to. This story can also enrich the experience of other minority cultural groups in the classroom. This also opens the minds of our Anglo-American audiences to cultural differences and appreciation.

Conclusion

American has taken in more immigrants than any other nation on this earth. In the past, “multicultural education” often attempted to assimilate new groups into a single

American culture. Today, however, the whole idea of cultural pluralism is dominating. Various cultural stories can be shared in the classroom whether through cultural traditions or oral traditions. The silenced voices can be told and heard.

Hmong immigrant voices are starting to be heard. Textile art in the classroom can encourage students to understand and empathize with the hardships the Hmong experienced. It can help the students appreciate the complexity of Hmong culture, ways of life, values, beliefs, and how the intricate textile art were integral to the survival of the Hmong. It can also serve to help students understand the importance of textile art in providing a significant representation of Hmong history and culture.

Oral traditions are sacredly passed on from generation to generation. It serves as the bridge between family members and cultures. Since it's such an oral culture, minimal literature sources exist for the Hmong or American audience. Several novels have been published on the Hmong, but the targeted audience has been for adults. Many Hmong American children have assimilated to the written western culture and are missing out on oral cultural traditions. A greater awareness of the teaching and learning possibilities in the field of Hmong literature needs to be developed in the primary schools. This calls for the need of Hmong children's literature and cultural lessons.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The idea and inspiration behind the picture book, *The Hmong Journey*, came through my personal experience. The story tells about my family's experience of leaving our native home to come to the United States for a safe and better future. *The Hmong Journey* is an account of my experience as a Hmong American first grade teacher dealing with two cultures and two worlds. The story guides the reader through the journey my people took to escape death and adapt to a new life in America. The purpose is to give the readers an insight into the Hmong history, culture, and life. The illustrations are in the form of *pa ndau*, story cloths, to tell the story. It is meant as a read aloud. It focuses on the child's interest at grade one.

This picture book is accompanied by cultural curriculum lessons. The purpose is to provide first grade teachers a curriculum they can augment using the book. The unit addresses cultural topics that are addressed in the story. The curriculum helps young learners to learn about and empathize with a culture different from their own or to connect more deeply with their culture if they are Hmong. The lessons implement the new California Common Core State Standards for first grade but can but can be modified for younger or older students. The lessons can be adapted to fit the needs of the individual classroom.

The creation of *The Hmong Journey* showcases the Hmong journey from Laos/Thailand to the United States. Along with the picture book, cultural curriculum lessons suggested ways to utilize the book in the classroom. The curriculum is broken down into three units: Unit 1: Hmong History, Unit 2: Hmong Cultural Traditions, and Unit 3: Hmong Oral Traditions. Each unit has four lessons. Before each unit, there is a brief introduction to give the first grade teacher a little background on the focus of the unit. Each lesson focuses on an objective, standard(s), and end with assessments. The last lesson is a culminating project to wrap up the curriculum and promote a sense of acceptance and tolerance of all cultures.

The Hmong Journey is the basis for the curriculum. Every lesson refers back to one small part of the book. A source list of existing Hmong children's literature is attached to the end to suggest supplemental readings. A list of reference follows to provide additional resources for educators to learn more about the Hmong people.

Instructional Methods

Teachers use various instructional strategies to meet and achieve learning objectives. The instructional methods contribute to the learning environment and specify the learning interaction between the teacher and student during the lesson. Students learn in various ways, but what they learn depends on the way it is presented. California Common Core Standards and various teaching strategies were used to develop and design the curriculum.

All units follow the lesson template, developed by Deborah Short (Short, 1991). Each lesson includes lesson topic, objective, content (standards), language (listening,

speaking, reading, and writing), key vocabulary, literature, materials, warm-up, presentation, practice/application, and review/assessment. Activities and worksheets follow the lessons. The lessons are intended to serve as examples of possible topics to engage with children during and after reading the story. The following is Deborah's short detailed lesson plan format:

Sample Lesson Format

Lesson Subject

Learner's Grade Level

Pacing

Lesson Topic

Materials

Teacher Background

Rationale

Common Core Standard(s)

ELD Standards

Learning Objectives

Formal and Informal Assessments

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks to Support Student Learning

Introduction

Activity Sequence

Closure

References

To ensure active and meaningful participation, I utilized various teaching strategies that I found successful in the classroom, such as modeling and guided practice. Direct instruction and indirect instruction have various techniques. The suggested methods of teaching the curriculum lessons include both direct and indirect instructions.

Direct instruction is the most commonly used strategy. It is teacher-directed, where the teacher is the lecturer or leader. The purpose is knowledge construction. It is most effective for providing information or giving step-by-step directions. Some of the direct methods implemented in the curriculum are structured overview, explicit teaching, drill and practice, compare and contrast, didactic questions, demonstrations, and guided and shared readings (Berezowski et al., 2009). In an elementary setting, the teacher does a lot of modeling, presenting the information, and posing the questions.

Indirect teaching seeks student-involvement. It seeks student involvement in observing, investigating, problem solving, etc. The teacher's role shifts to a facilitator and support/resource person. Indirect methods implemented in the curriculum are problem solving, case studies, reading for meaning, inquiry, reflective discussions, and writing to inform (Berezowski et al., 2009). Much of the content in this unit will be new to students, so several lessons allow the students to inquire and reflect on their new learning. Students can choose their own source and medium on various individual and group projects.

Project Methods

Ideas from focus groups of educators helped determine which aspects of the Hmong culture were critical to address in the cultural curriculum. Several methods were

implemented to create the curriculum: field test, teacher interviews, and colleague critiques/previews.

The first method project method was field testing. As a first grade teacher of three years, I've used my knowledge of the first grade standards and interest of my first graders to inform the teaching methods implemented in this unit. I implemented lessons already created and taught in the classroom regarding the Hmong culture.

The second method was the use of focus groups and interviews. When selecting the big categories for the three units, I decided to focus on three big aspects of the Hmong people. I presented them to fellow Hmong colleagues for their opinions. I received a lot of the same or similar ideas. I interviewed several educators in the field for their suggestions on what critical aspects to include in the curriculum, so that teachers and students will get a nice well-rounded perspective of the Hmong culture. Hmong educators in the field were able to give me suggestions on what areas to dive deeper into, such as education and culture clashes. Non-Hmong educators were able to give me an outsider's perspective on what they would like to know more about the Hmong, for example immigrants and misconceptions.

The third method was critiques and previews from several areas of expertise. I asked Hmong colleagues to critique and review the picture book and curriculum to confirm and verify the information on the Hmong culture. Feedback was also given to me by a professor in the multicultural children's literature field. The elements in multicultural literature were sought for in the picture book. I was also able to get an outsider's perspective on the historical and cultural information presented in the picture book and cultural curriculum. This allowed for a complete, well-rounded project.

Assessments

Assessments are essential to determine student learning. It provides teachers the information they need to ensure the success of their students. Students should be evaluated on their experience and involvement in the process. There are many assessment techniques such as journals. Evaluation can also simply occur through dialogue in whole class or small group discussions.

After every lesson, I implemented some type of assessment to check for students' understanding. The results of the assessments are meant to direct the teacher to either go back and reteach or move on to the next lesson. My assessment methods involve task/worksheet completions or participation through informal observations, rubrics, check lists, and quick writes. The rubrics evaluate the students' performance on assigned tasks. The quick writes involve an exit ticket or handprint writing of five facts learned. Finally, assessments can be managed through dialogue and observations with the students. This can be done through individual, small-groups, or whole class setting. This provides the teacher with insight into the students' level of understanding. The variety of assessments accommodates for all learners.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Since 1975, the United States has been enriched and influenced by the new and unique Hmong people. They speak their own language and practice their own traditions and culture (Bliatout, Downing, Lewis, & Yang, 1988). They also have a desire to share and contribute to the multicultural society. The Hmong people are one of the most ancient peoples in Asia, but their language had never been written until the 20th century. Historically, they have rarely experienced problems of assimilation into the dominant culture due to their peaceful attitudes. At a time when there is a flourish of ethnic studies, the Hmong received minimal attention. However, there is a vast growing population in the United States. Therefore, there is an increasing need for the understanding of Hmong ethnicity.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS, 2010) asserts that social studies programs should provide experiences that augment studies of cultures and culture diversity. It should also support experiences that teach about the past and its legacy. This is apparent in NCSS Standard One: Culture and Standard Two: Time, Continuity, and Change (2010). Children should learn about how the past affected today. This can happen through quality literature. Instead of reading about the Secret War of 1975, children can become a part of it through characters of a story. While there is a plethora of multicultural children's literature, there is little dealing with the Hmong heritage. In the Hmong culture, the

emphasis has been oral skills without a writing system to fall back on (Bliatout et al., 1988). There is a need for the cultural literature and curriculum that establish valuable cultural links between the Hmong students and non-Hmong students. Hmong children need to see themselves mirrored in literature and non-Hmong students need a window into the Hmong culture.

Conclusions

More Hmong children's literature needs to be published and implemented in the classroom. Books by and about people of color are very limited. This applies to the Hmong American population. The need for more Hmong literature for Hmong American children led to the creation of the children's picture book. *The Hmong Journey* is intended to provide exposure of the Hmong history and culture. In order to produce this picture book, a foundation needed to be explored: multicultural education, multicultural children's literature, Hmong history, cultural traditions, oral traditions/storytelling, and Hmong American children's literature. A Hmong children's picture book and cultural curriculum lessons are included to provide educators with ways to implement the book into their classroom. Picture books are powerful medium to step into the lives of other characters and cultures.

Unfortunately Hmong American students do not see themselves depicted in the literature currently available. Children can only make sense of their identity when they can relate to other people like them. Creation and exposure to literature about the Hmong American culture can provide a positive mirror of themselves and their culture. This leads to respecting and understanding other ethnic groups and cultures as well. This project is not intended to provide a complete view of the Hmong American culture in this story because

“no single story” or “one story” can capture the Hmong experience. It is recommended that this picture book be supplemented by other literature of Hmong American culture in order to provide students with a window into the multidimensional view of the Hmong people. Glazier and Seo (2005) assert that multicultural literature must serve as both mirror and windows in order to be sufficient. The project is created to help students and teachers become more ethnically literate regarding the Hmong.

Recommendations

All parts of this project are intended to be used with additional resources to expose the Hmong American culture. The children’s picture book and cultural curriculum are recommended by the author to be used together as three units for first grade students. It is recommended for teachers to use supplementary literature in order to develop a multidimensional scope of the Hmong American culture.

Having reviewed the literature, there appears to be a number of areas where further research is required. Much has been written about how to improve cross-cultural communication, how to develop effective ethnic studies program. The following are recommendations made so that the Hmong immigrants will be remembered and accounted for in the classroom. It is also intended for researchers and teachers exploring the field of multicultural literature with an emphasis on the Hmong culture.

1. The curriculum developed in this project provides direction for the inclusion of Hmong cultural literature in multicultural literature programs in the United States education system.

2. It is recommended that the literature used is free from stereotypes, omissions and distortions so that the images of the Hmong portrayed are objective, realistic, and within context.

3. Continuous introduction of up-to-date material by contemporary Hmong and Hmong-American writers, as well as use of classical and historical works, is necessary if the Hmong are to be portrayed in an accurate manner.

4. Teacher education or university courses should provide an in-service course addressing multicultural literature and its possibilities. This course would make teachers more aware of the multicultural nature of all societies and of the way in which literature can help to create a more peaceful and tolerant society.

5. Hmong society is gradually becoming more diverse. Literature mirrors society. Children's literature programs in teacher training colleges should deal with changing multicultural literature.

6. Literature can be integrated across the curriculum. Educators are encouraged to incorporate a plethora of multicultural literature consistently in their classrooms.

7. Develop a survey for teachers to determine what multicultural literature they use and why.

8. Collaborate with other teachers to explore different pedagogies and ways to implement multicultural literature in the classroom.

9. There is an obvious lack of quality Hmong children's literature in the United States. With the continuous influx of Hmong emigrants, publishing companies ought to include books by Hmong authors in their multicultural lists.

10. Educators are encouraged to use the picture book *The Hmong Journey* and cultural curriculum to learn and teach an overview of the Hmong history and culture.

11. Create or seek additional picture books and cultural curriculum to give a more multidimensional view of the Hmong American culture.

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APPENDIX A

THE HMONG JOURNEY

WRITTEN BY GER THAO

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JESSICA ANDERSON



One – Ib



My Grandma, Wang Chang, would put me to bed and tell me stories. The stories were of her people, the Hmong, back in the day. This is her story: “The Hmong Journey.”

Two – Ob

Once upon a time, in the mountains of Xieng Khouang of Laos lived a small village of twenty Hmong families. The jungle was full of green and wildlife. Life was simple and peaceful.

Three – Peb



The wise man, Nao Tua Vang, was the leader of the village. He had a beautiful wife named Wang Chang, two handsome sons - Tao and Cha Tong, and two beautiful daughters - Mai Song and Mai Khou.

Four – Plaub



Each family lived in a tiny hut with a roof made of sturdy grass stitched together into a thatch. The walls were made of split bamboo slats tied together. Each hut could house 4-10 people.

Five – Tsib



The females of the village wore black tops with embroidery along the front side and on the hem along with a plain white skirt tied together with red and green sashes around their waist. The males wore a plain black top and long pants tied with a red sash.

Six – Rau



The families lived off of rice and green vegetables. Nao Tua and the men of the village would hunt for small animals: birds, squirrels, and hogs of the jungle. They knew which herbs and spices to use for medicines.

Seven – Xya



Every morning, each family would get up before the sun rose to prepare for the long walk to their garden. Mommy Wang would pack rice, salt, and ginger in bamboo leaves. Mai Song and Mai Khou would each wear a basket on their back. Tao and Cha Tong would each carry a hoe and an ax.

Eight – Yim



Once they got to the garden, they set down their baskets into their hand-built tiny hut and headed off to the field to start working. They used their hoe to start digging away the roots and harvesting wheat with their sickle. They spent the whole day pulling weeds and planting seeds with their bare hands.

Nine – Cuaj



At noon, Mommy Wang would unwrap the food from the bamboo leaves and everyone would grab a handful of rice. Ginger dipped in salt, they ate to ease their hunger. Once lunch was over, it was time to get back to work before it got dark.

Ten – Kaum



The girls gathered some vegetables and roots from the garden to cook for dinner and fresh plants to feed the animals at home. The boys took their ax into the jungle to gather some wood. Just as the sun was just about to set, the family gathered their things to start the long walk home.

Eleven – Kaum Ib

Once they got home, Mai Song and Mai Khou made a fire and prepared dinner. Tao and Cha Tong fed the pigs and chickens. After a long day, it was then time for bed to rest for the next day.

Twelve – Kaum Ob



The next morning, Mai Song was very sick. Daddy Nao Tua and Mommy Wang called the Shaman, Uncle Ntsuab (Green), to perform a healing ritual to help cure Mai Song. The Shaman carried his magical tools into the spirit world to bring back her spirit and help her get better. He also blessed and tied a string around her hand to keep the evil spirits away.

Thirteen – Kaum Peb



The Hmong people followed the agricultural cycle. November passed and the end of the harvest season was here. The villagers had already gathered most of their rice grains to make fresh new warm rice. It was finally time to rest and celebrate. Families prepared a chicken feast and invited all of their relatives to come eat, drink, and celebrate with them.

Fourteen – Kaum Plaub



The New Year Festival took place in the heart of the village. Mommy Wang and her daughters prepared their pretty traditional outfits decorated with embroidered fabric called *pa ndau* lined with coins, flower printed skirts tied with red and green sashes, a deep purple turban wrapped around their hair, and a silver necklace around their necks. Daddy Nao Tua and his sons dressed in their best black pants and embroidered-coined jackets.

Fifteen – Kaum Tsib



At the New Year Celebration, young boys and girls stood in two rows across from each other and tossed balls back and forth to get to know each other. Couples sang riddles to each other. Boys performed their *qeej*, a huge bamboo instrument.

Sixteen – Kaum Rau



One day, there was news that war and danger was moving toward the village. The bad men, North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao soldiers, of the jungle of Laos, wanted to get rid of all the Hmong people who had helped the Americans in the Secret War. They had helped the American soldiers fight off the enemy. When Nao Tua heard of this, he decided that he had to move his village away from here.

Seventeen – Kaum Xya



The safe plan was to journey into the jungle and cross the dangerous Mekong River to take safety in Thailand. This would be a risky trip because a new little one, Xiong had just joined the family. Nao Tua knew he had to do what was best for his family and his people.

Eighteen – Kaum Yim



The brave men of the village started packing their families and personal items. Before sunrise, the village started the long and dangerous trip through the jungle. They had to be quiet and careful.

Nineteen – Kaum Cuaj



The bad men were everywhere. Hungry scared children were crying. Exhausted elders were holding onto their strength. Several people got hurt or killed along the way and had to be left behind.

Twenty – Neesnkaum



After ten days walk, they finally made it to the bank of the Mekong River. The big danger now was getting to the other side. Nao Tua and the men had to build bamboo rafts and wait for the right time to cross.

Twenty-Two – Neesnkaum-Ob



The survivors traveled deeper into Nongkhai, Thailand. Along the way, they met some friendly Thai soldiers who led them to safety. They were given a place to stay and food to eat in the refugee camp.

Twenty-Three – Neesnkaum-Peb



Two weeks later, the Vang family and other families had to be transferred to a new camp. The bus arrived to take them to the Ban Vinai Refugee Camp. Every morning Daddy Nao Tua went to receive food for the family. During this time, Mommy Wang, had given birth to Nkauj Hli.

Chapter Twenty-Four – Neesnkaum-Plaub



Mommy Wang and the females kept themselves occupied by sewing *pa ndau* story cloths to remind them of home. The short time of peace did not last very long; Thai officials were going to close the camp down. Nao Tua knew that he had to register his family for the chance to go to America.

Twenty-Five – Neeskaum-Tsib



Within a week, the Vang family had been selected to go to America. The children were excited with joy. Daddy Nao Tua and Mommy Wang were sad that they had to leave their birth place behind.

Twenty-Six – Neeskaum-Rau



The Vang family started packing. They rode the orange bus with all of the other selected families to get to the Phanat Nikhom Transition Camp to prepare for America. It was a place to practice the English language and skills they would need in America. During this time, Mommy Wang gave birth to the newest member of the family, Doua.

Twenty-Seven – Neesnkaum-Xya



Once the paperwork was cleared, the selected families were taken to the Bangkok International Airport. They saw that this big metal bird was going to take them away to America. The Hmong people believed that babies came from the cloud. They were returning to the clouds where they first came from.

Twenty-Eight – Neesnkaum-Yim



After thirteen long hours, they finally landed in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It was a strange new land with strange new faces. Nao Tua's family was picked up by their relatives who came to the United States several years before. Sponsor families picked up other families who had just arrived.

Chapter Twenty-Nine – Neesnkaum-Cuaj

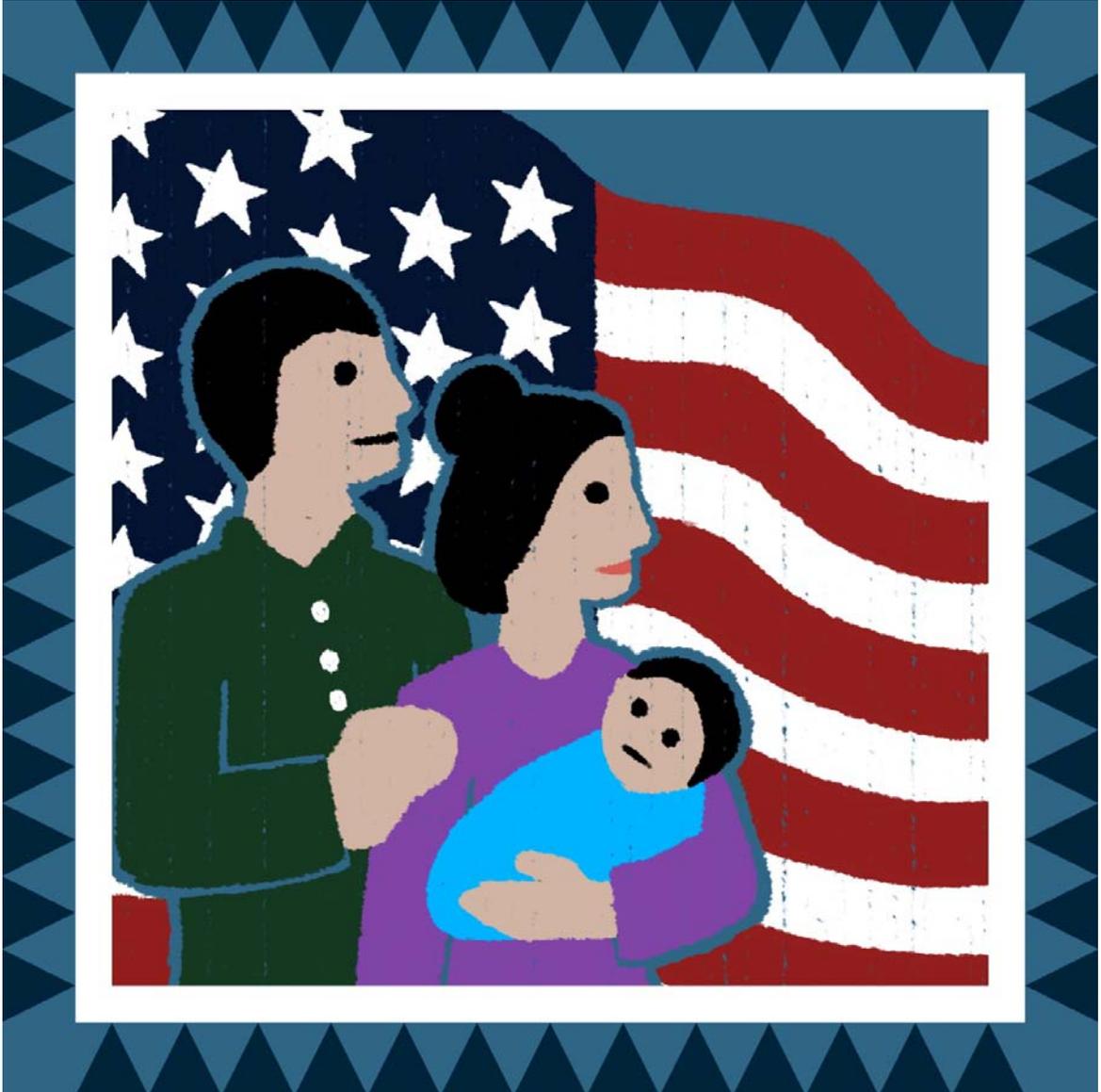


The Vang family was taken to their new home in St. Paul. The aunts and uncles taught them how to use the appliances in the house. They received government aid to help them start their new life.

Thirty – Pebcaug



Nao Tua learned how to drive and got a job. Mommy Wang learned to cook using the new appliances. The kids were signed up to go to school. Two years later, Mommy Wang gave birth to two more sons, Chris and Jimmy.

Thirty-One – Pebcaug-lb

After two years in America, they all became American citizens. To Tao, Mai Song, Mai Khou, Cha Tong, Xiong, Nkauj Hli, and Doua, Chris, and Jimmy; America was the land of freedom and opportunity. Nao Tua and Wang were filled with joy for their children but their hearts were not in America.

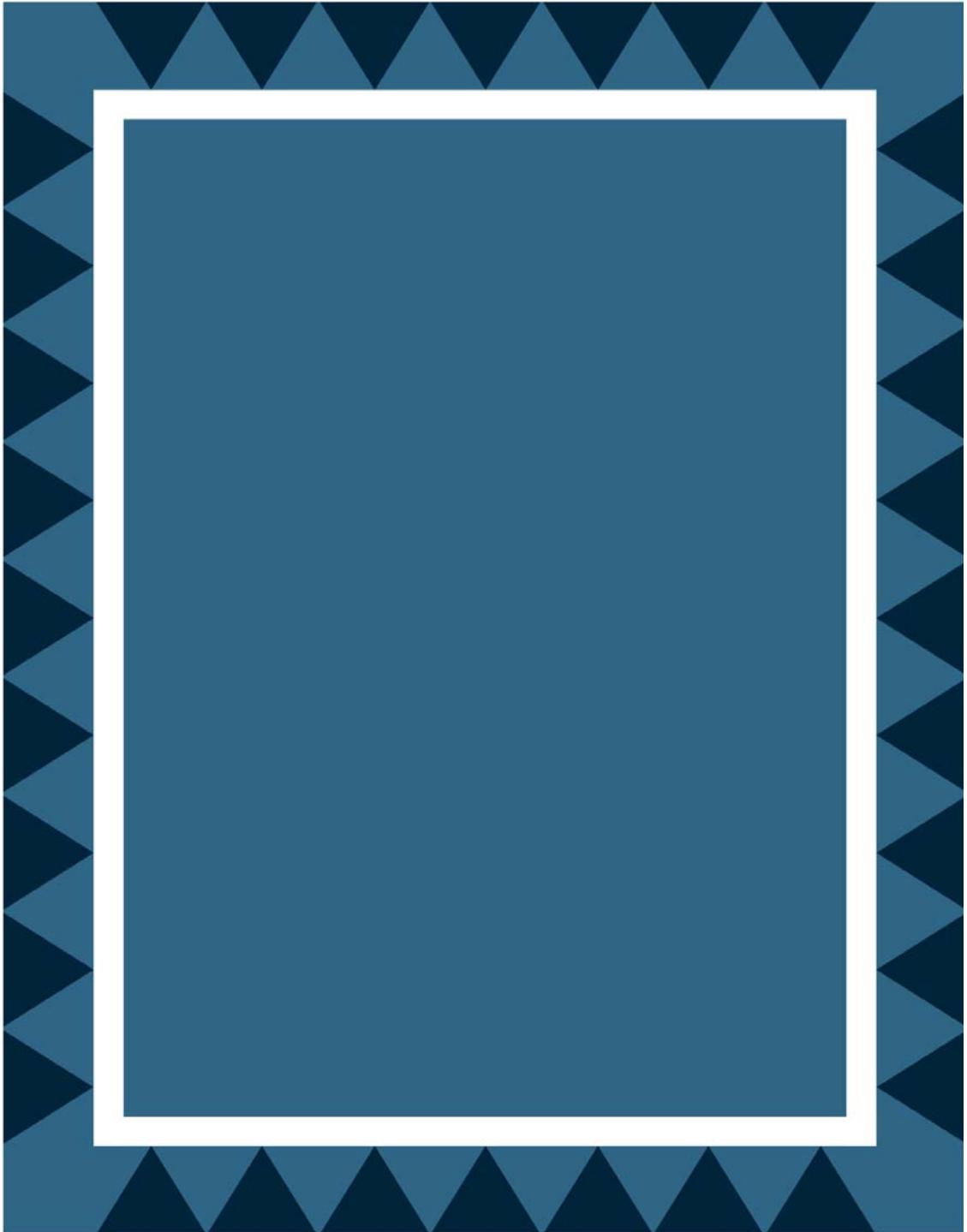
Thirty-Two – Pebcaug-Ob



My Grandma Wang's heart to this day still longs for her home in the jungle of Laos. She still tells me her stories to this day. They remind her of home. I, too, one day will be able to pass these stories on to my own children.

The End

Illustrations by Jessica L. Anderson. Reproduced with permission.



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APPENDIX B

**THE HMONG JOURNEY – A CHILDREN'S BOOK ON HMONG
HISTORY: CULTURAL CURRICULUM FOR FIRST GRADE
TEACHERS**

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INTRODUCTION

The Hmong people have been traced back to southern China. There are significant populations in Southeast Asia, the United States, in addition to their homeland China. With their anti-Communist role in the Vietnam War and involvement in the Central Intelligence Agency Secret War, Hmong people were persecuted, tortured, killed, or forced to flee to the mountains of Laos or Thailand. The Hmong people were promised protection and this led to repatriation to the United States and other countries. Today, many live in California, Minnesota, Wisconsin, as well as in France and French Guyana. Those in Laos and Thailand often continue to suffer persecution.

The picture book *The Hmong Journey* was written to offer children an exciting way to discover a culture. The units and lessons presented in this project have been designed to share the culture and history of the Hmong people. It provides a mirror for Hmong students to see themselves being reflected in the curriculum and as a window for non-Hmong students to gain insight and experience the journey of the Hmong experience. The numbers at the top teaches the reader how to count in Hmong.

Literature helps us connect with the mysteries and wonders of the human experience. The literature created and the lessons presented reflects the experience of one particular culture—the Hmong. This picture book is a historical fiction based on the author’s family’s journey from Laos to America. The curriculum covers three big aspects of the Hmong culture: Hmong History, Hmong Cultural Traditions, and Hmong Oral Traditions. These three components provide the framework in which the lessons fit.

After reviewing the literature, it is obvious that there is a need for greater recognition of the Hmong as an ethnic group in the United States. With the Hmong population on the rise in California, Minnesota, and Wisconsin over the last decade, it is clear that school districts should create and implement curriculum to teach history and culture of the Hmong.

PART I HISTORY

UNIT I: Hmong History

Chronology of Events

Background of Hmong History

Lesson 1 The Hmong in Laos

Passport to Laos, Asia

Lesson 2 Refugee Camps in Thailand

Life of a Refugee

Lesson 3 Hmong Resettlement in the United States

Hmong Immigrants

Lesson 4 Hmong Americans

Hmong American: Then and Now

Chronology of Events

- 2700 B.C. Hmong, or 'Miao', originally inhabit Yellow River Valley in northeast China.
- 1854-73 'Miao Rebellion' in Guizhou, China, leads to persecution and mass exodus of Hmong to the mountains of present day Vietnam, Laos and Thailand.
- 1893 The French colonize Laos and establish a protectorate.
- 1947 Laos Constitution recognizes Hmong people as part of the Lao nation.
- 1954 French defeated at Dien Bien Phu in northwest Vietnam. Laos gains full independence as a constitutional monarchy and joins the UN. Civil war breaks out between Royalists and Pathet Lao Communists.
- 1961-73 The 'Secret War' in Laos, part of the US's broader war against communist forces in southeast Asia, goes into full swing. Hmong, led by General Vang Pao, recruited to fight the Pathet Lao, ally of the North Vietnamese. Laos subject to extensive aerial bombing by the US. It's estimated that more bombs dropped on Laos than were used during the whole War World Two.
- 1964 Vang Pao made General of the Royal Lao Army.
- 1973 (January) The Paris Peace Accords are signed. The US agrees to end its involvement in the Vietnam War.
- 1975 (April) Saigon falls to North Vietnamese forces. Pathet Lao take control of Laos, forcing many Hmong to flee to Thailand.

- 1975 (May) Birth of Hmong resistance movement led by Sayshoua Yang. Insurgents live in the jungles of Laos supported by Hmong in Thailand and overseas.
- 1975 (June) General Vang Pao leaves Thailand for the US. First Hmong migrate to America and France.
- 1975-97 100,000 Hmong resettled in the US.
- 1992-95 10,000 Hmong refugees escape from refugee camps to Thai Buddhist temple 'Wat Tham Krabok' and Hmong villages in northern Thailand rather than be repatriated to Laos.
- 1995 Thai refugee camps closed. Thousands of Hmong are returned to Laos despite continuing reports of torture and persecution.
- 1997 (May) After over 20 years of denial, the US under the Clinton Administration acknowledges its role in the 'Secret War' in Laos in the 1960s and 1970s.
- 2003 (December) US agrees to accept 15,000 Hmong refugees from Wat Tham Krabok camp in Thailand.
- 2004 New wave of Lao Hmong flee to Thailand to join those at Wat Tham Krabok awaiting resettlement. Many are moved to Huay Nam Khao camp in Phetchabun province in the North of Thailand.

- 2006 (November) 194 Hmong (152 from Laos and 42 from Vietnam) are rounded up in Bangkok despite having been awarded refugee status by UNHCR. Hmong from Vietnam are resettled in the US. Lao Hmong are transferred to Nong Khai detention centre in the north of Thailand where they remain to this day.
- 2007 (June) General Vang Pao and 10 others are arrested in the US for allegedly plotting to overthrow the communist government of Laos.
- 2008 (June) Approximately 5,000 refugees march from refugee camp in Phetchabun to raise awareness of their plight. Thai military stop the demonstrators several kilometres from the camp. More than 800 refugees forcibly repatriated to Laos.
- 2009 (January) Thai Government announces its intention to send all Hmong refugees back to Laos by the end of the year.
- 2009 (May) Trial of Vang Pao and co-defendants in the US put forward to October.
- 2009 (June) Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), the sole international presence in Huay Nam Khao camp, withdraws, citing restrictions by Thai authorities. MSF publicly appeals for Thai and Lao governments to stop forced repatriation of Hmong refugees.
- 2009 (January) Thai Government announces its intention to send all Hmong refugees back to Laos by the end of the year.

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-Nick Harvey, *Jungle orphans*, 2009, pp. 24-26

Background of Hmong History

The Hmong has been literally translated as “the free man” or “the free people” for years. The terms Hmong and Mong are interchangeable and both refer to an Asian ethnic group in the mountainous regions of southern China. Beginning in the 18th-century, Hmong people began a gradual mass migration to Southeast Asia for political and economic reasons. Many are currently living in several countries in Southeast Asia.

Most sources date the Hmong from between 2700 and 2300 B.C. in the Yellow and Yangtze River regions of China supporting the “Theory of China Origin.” McCall (1999) indicated that the Hmong originally lived in Siberia and then immigrated to northern China in the 2500 B.C. The Hmong belonged to a group of people called the “Man” in early Chinese history. They were able to live in peace with the Han Chinese for 2,000 years until natural resources became scarce, population grew, and fertile land depleted. Conflicts developed with the Chinese dispersing the Hmong into different regions or assimilation into the Chinese cultures (Cha & Livo, 2000). The last royal Hmong family was executed in Beijing in the 1700s. Persecution in China led many Hmong families to escape to Vietnam, Thailand, and Laos in the mid-1880s (McCall, 1999). They settled in the uninhabited highlands and felt they could live in peace.

Bliatout, Downing, Lewis, & Yang (1988) claimed that the first Hmong groups entered northeastern Laos around 1810-1820. Laos was covered with mountains forests, sparse human population, and rich with animals. They built their houses with wood and bamboo and covered them with elephant grass or palm leaves. The Hmong people had to adopt the slash-and-burn method of farming. They would burn an area of the forest and then set it on fire. The soil was fertilized by the ashes and aided in the production of successive crops of rice, corn, and a variety of vegetables. They raised chickens, pigs, oxen, and horses. They also grew opium as cash crop for trade or for medicinal use (Bliatout et al., 1988). They developed good ties with the Lao and other ethnic groups. Their involvement in the “Secret War” (1961-1973) forced them to flee Laos as political refugees. (LESSON 1)

Even after immigrating to new countries, the Hmong people faced conflicts with their new neighbors. When the French colonized Southeast Asia, they invaded Hmong territories and led to a rebellion, which lasted until 1921, with the capture of the Hmong leader Pa Chai Vue (Cha & Livo, 2000). They did not get along very well with the Lao because of religious and agricultural differences, so they partnered with the French to gain allies and power (McCall, 1999). The French control of Indochina collapsed in 1954. The Vietnamese celebrated the end of “colonialism” and the start of “Communist aggression” (McCall, 1999). McCall (1999) reported that the Pathet Lao partnered itself with the North Vietnamese to transfer supplies through Laos to South Vietnam along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. President Eisenhower ordered the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to recruit covert soldiers known as the CIA’s “secret army.” Operating against the

Communists, the Hmong were to cut off the supply line. Lao Hmong soldiers, led by General Vang Pao, participated in the secret army ambushing Communist supplies, rescued the injured pilots, and protected American military installations as part of the fight to rid the region of communism (Harvey, 2009). Chan and Livo (1990) claimed that they were doing the bulk of the American fighting.

After the Americans withdrew from Vietnam in 1975, the Hmong who allied with the US feared that they would be punished. Between 1975-1992, over 100,000 Hmong escaped to Thailand by crossing the Mekong River. They were living in temporary refugee camps until it was safe to return to Laos or fled to remote mountainous regions of Thailand. Many still remain in these areas while some resettled in other countries, such as France, French Guyana, Australia, Canada, or the United States (McCall, 1999). Some escaped the camps and lived among the Thai villages and became Thai citizens (Cha & Livo, 2000).

The Hmong were the first refugee groups to arrive in Thailand in May 1975. Several camps were created in the Thai territory to accommodate the fugitives from Laos. Namphong was the first Hmong refugee center. It was a former military camp, surrounded by barbed wire in the northeast of Thailand. It opened on May 10, 1975 and housed about 12,500 refugees. Early in 1976, the center was relocated to Ban Vinai close to the Lao border. In 1986, it expanded to nine centers, spread out over 400 acres, and sheltered about 45,000 Hmong refugees. Faced with an influx of people coming from all parts of Laos, the Thai Government was forced to open new refugee camps along the Thai and Lao border. In March 1976, Nong khai, located at the Thai border, opened up to accommodate 8,000 Lao and 10,500 Hmong. Many more camps opened up since then to support refugees (Bliatout et al., 1988). (LESSON 2)

In January 1976, about 150 Hmong families numbering about 750 people formed the first group of Hmong contingents to come from the Thai refugee camps to the United States. Their involvement in the Secret War of Laos had given them special privileges of immigrating to America. The resettlement was made possible by the help of churches, non-profit organizations, or individual sponsors (Bliatout et al., 1988).

To many, America is the land of the free and opportunity. In 1980 alone, more than 20,000 Hmong came to the United States (Chan & Livo, 1990). Many Hmong immigrated over to the US for a new start or a better future for their family. To some, America wasn't quite free. Life in America was a hard transition for some Hmong. The young Hmong have been forced to adapt to western culture, seeking education and employment (Cha & Livo, 2000). The transition for Hmong women was much easier than for Hmong men. Women quickly adjusted into the society and went off to college. They were then able to raise their families. Hmong men had a difficult time due to pride and political reasons. (LESSON 3)

The history of the Hmong is characterized by a succession of migrations and wars to maintain their identity. Hmong are the newest immigrants to the United States. Their arrival dated in the 1970s and 1980s (McCall, 1999). Today, a significant Hmong population exists in the United States. McCall (1999) reminds

us how little American citizens know about the Hmong history, culture, and events that led to their migration. Because the history of the Hmong is a part of the American Secret War, their voice and culture should be heard. Understanding the history of the Hmong people allows us to look deeper in their culture.

Vang Pao was made General of the Royal Lao Army in 1964 and has been the leader of the Hmong community ever since his people have stepped foot on America soil. In June 2007, Federal agents invaded homes and offices, because of Operation Tarnished Eagle, and arrested Vang Pao and ten others. "They are accused of violating the US Neutrality Act by allegedly trying to purchase machine guns, grenades and stinger missiles to overthrow the communist government of Laos" (Harvey, 2009, p. 26). In October of 2009, the case was put forward. The case was dismissed, but the larger Hmong community felt a slap in the face. They felt abandoned and betrayed by the very US people, who they had helped in the Secret War of 1975. (LESSON 4)

Unit 1: Hmong History

Lesson 1: The Hmong in Laos

Lesson Subject(s): English Language Arts and History Social Studies

Learners' Grade Level: 1st

Pacing: 45 minutes – 1 hour

Lesson Topic: Passport to Laos, Asia

Materials:

The Hmong Journey by Ger Thao

K-W-L Chart

Globe and Map

Flag of Laos

Passport, Boarding ticket, and Luggage templates

Laos cultural items: pictures or realia of clothing items, homes, food items, activities/games

Four table with labeled stations: Station 1, Station 2, Station 3, Station 4

Desks and chairs (set up like an airplane simulation)

Laptop and whiteboard

Snacks and drinks

Teacher Background:

The Hmong has been literally translated as “the free man” or “the free people” for years. The terms Hmong and Mong are interchangeable and both refer to an Asian ethnic group in the mountainous regions of southern China. Beginning in the 18th-century, Hmong people began a gradual mass migration to Southeast Asia for political and economic reasons. Many are currently living in several countries in Southeast Asia.

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Rationale:

Today’s students live in a global society of diverse cultures and customs. Their understanding of these cultures is limited to 30-second news clips they see on television or what they hear from their surroundings. Though students realize the importance of understanding other cultures, few of them actually have the exposure or opportunity to explore other countries or cultures. When we learn the language, music, food, and history of other cultures, we broaden our lives exponentially. Travel is one of the best ways to learn about the world and to learn about oneself.

The first 10-15 minutes of the lesson will be dedicated to **Know-Want to Know-Learned (KWL)** chart on the Hmong in Laos and what is required to travel. The children will also participate in a simulation of traveling to Laos. There will be four cultural stations to prompt oral discussions on the country of Laos: showing where it is on the map/globe, what the Laos flag looks like, and the Hmong people’s life in Laos. This simulation will give the students background knowledge to where the Hmong journey began.

Common Core State Standards:

R.1.7 Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, settings, or events.

W.1.8 With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

SL.1.2 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

English Language Development (ELD) Standards:

Specifically designed academic instruction (SDAIE) is one strategy used to meet the needs of English Learners (EL).

Define new vocabulary word in both verbal and visual manner in the simplest terms.

Use visuals and realia, such as globes, maps, and various cultural items and pictures.

Use gestures and body language.

Write key words or ideas down.

Use collaborative activities – pairs or small groups.

Reading Standards for Informational Text 6. Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.

Speaking and Listening 3. Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to orally contribute to conversations about life of the Hmong people in Laos.

Students will be able to accurately answer questions about the Hmong culture.

Formal and Informal Assessments:

Students will be able to orally share what they learned about the Hmong in Laos.

Students will show culture competence by completing their passport about their learning.

Assessment Rubric

4	Child actively participates in classroom activities and discussions. Working independently, the child completes all sections of the passport.
3	Child actively participates in classroom activities and discussions. With direction, the child completes all sections of the passport.
2	Child participates in classroom activities and discussions, when encouraged. With assistance, the child completes most sections of the passport.
1	Child participates in classroom activities and discussions, when encouraged. With assistance, the child completes at least one section of the passport.

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks to Support Student Learning:

Introduction:

Start at the carpet or story corner. Ask: “Raise your hand if you know or have heard about ‘Hmong’ or ‘Laos’.” Allow students who raised their hands to share what they know. Read and show the cover *The Hmong Journey*. Inform students that this book will allow them to learn about the Hmong history and culture. (Read pages 9-14 of *The Hmong Journey*)

Before dismissing students back to their seat, say to the class: “Mr./Ms. _____ (your name) went on an adventurous trip to Laos. I had a wonderful time and learned so much that I want to take you with me. We are going on a class trip to Laos located in the continent of Asia. Before we travel, what do we need to prepare for our trip? (Allow students time to share responses) That’s right – we need our passports, airplane tickets, and luggage.”

Activity Sequence:

1. Ask student what they **K**now (first section on the K-W-L chart) about the Hmong in the country of Laos. Jot down their responses.
2. Ask students about **W**hat they want to learn about the Hmong in Laos (second section on K-W-L chart). Jot down their responses and let them know that we will be coming back to check our learning.
3. Go over and pass out passports and flight tickets. Let students draw a self-picture on the cover of their passport. Have students draw the items they will need to bring along in their luggage template and then go to the airport (go out backdoor of classroom and enter through front door).
4. Have students check in their flight ticket and luggage and get on the plane with their assigned seats.
5. Turn on the YouTube “Delta’s In-Flight Safety Video”: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgpzUo_kbFY.
6. As the flight attendant, you welcome them on board, pass out snacks and drinks, and escort them out of the plane.
7. Once the plane land in Laos, you pick them up and become their tour guide (the plane becomes a bus). Explain to the kids that you will be visiting the famous “Museum of Laos.” There will be four cultural stations displayed. Take the class on a 5-10 minutes tour of each station.

Station 1 – Show the flag of the country of Laos. Can you find Laos on the globe and map? Place a pin on the country of China and then place a pin on Laos. On the world map, trace the migration of the Hmong from China to Laos. Have a discussion on what the Hmong might have experienced on migrating from one country to another. Read the excerpt on the station label for further learning and discussions.

Station 2 – Show the pictures and/or realia items of Hmong outfits and houses. Have a discussion on “How are the clothes and homes different from yours?” Read the excerpt on the station label for further learning and discussions.

Station 3 – Show the pictures and/or different food, vegetables, and fruits of Laos: rice grains, taro, mango, lychee, etc. Asked students if they have ever seen or tasted any of these fruits before? (Alternative: Have a taste test to see which fruits they like best.) Read the excerpt on the station label for further learning and discussions.

Station 4 – Show the pictures and/or realia of farming tools, musical instruments, and games/activities from the Hmong culture. (Extension: You may try the game of ball-tossing with a tennis ball) Read the excerpt on the station label for further learning and discussions.

8. Have students watch a traditional Hmong performance live or either on YouTube: Suab Hmong News: Hmong Dancer Group Nkauj Hmoob Hnub <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QvM92uujqoU>.
9. Have them complete their passport.
10. Once they are done, they will pack get back on the plane and fly home. Repeat steps 4-6.

Closure:

Complete the last section of the KWL. Jot down what they’ve Learned on the trip to Laos.

KWL CHART – HMONG PEOPLE IN LAOS

KNOW	WANT TO KNOW	LEARNED

PASSPORT TEMPLATE – FRONT



PASSPORT TEMPLATE – BACK

Date:	
Country:	
I read:	
Author:	
Number of Pages:	Genre:
3 things I learned:	
(1)	
(2)	
(3)	
I made:	
3 things I learned:	
(1)	
(2)	
(3)	
I tasted:	
3 things I learned:	
(1)	
(2)	
(3)	

I saw:	
3 things I learned:	
(1)	
(2)	
(3)	
I visited:	
3 things I learned:	
(1)	
(2)	
(3)	
I played or did:	
3 things I learned:	
(1)	
(2)	
(3)	
Also	

BOARDING TICKET TEMPLATE

<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>HMONG airlines</p> <p>Boarding Pass</p> </div> </div> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Flight: Type: Destination:</p> <p>Departure Gate:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Boarding Pass</p> <p>Flight:</p> <p>Type:</p> <p>Destination:</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;">  <p>HMONG</p> </div>
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>HMONG airlines</p> <p>Boarding Pass</p> </div> </div> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Flight: Type: Destination:</p> <p>Departure Gate:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Boarding Pass</p> <p>Flight:</p> <p>Type:</p> <p>Destination:</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;">  <p>HMONG</p> </div>

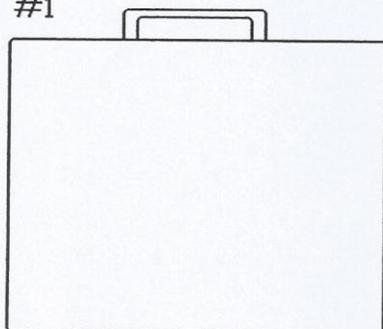
LUGGAGE TEMPLATE

Draw Four Items You Would Pack in a Suitcase

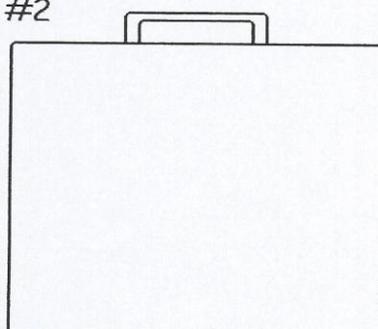
Name _____

Below each object, write its name.

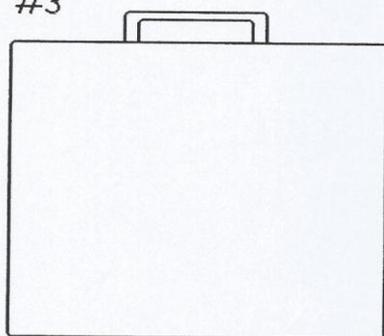
#1



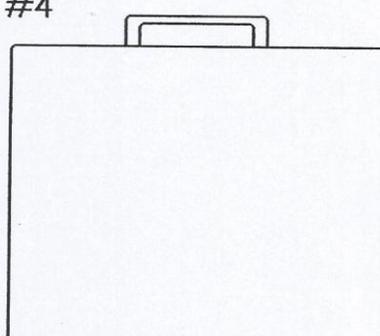
#2

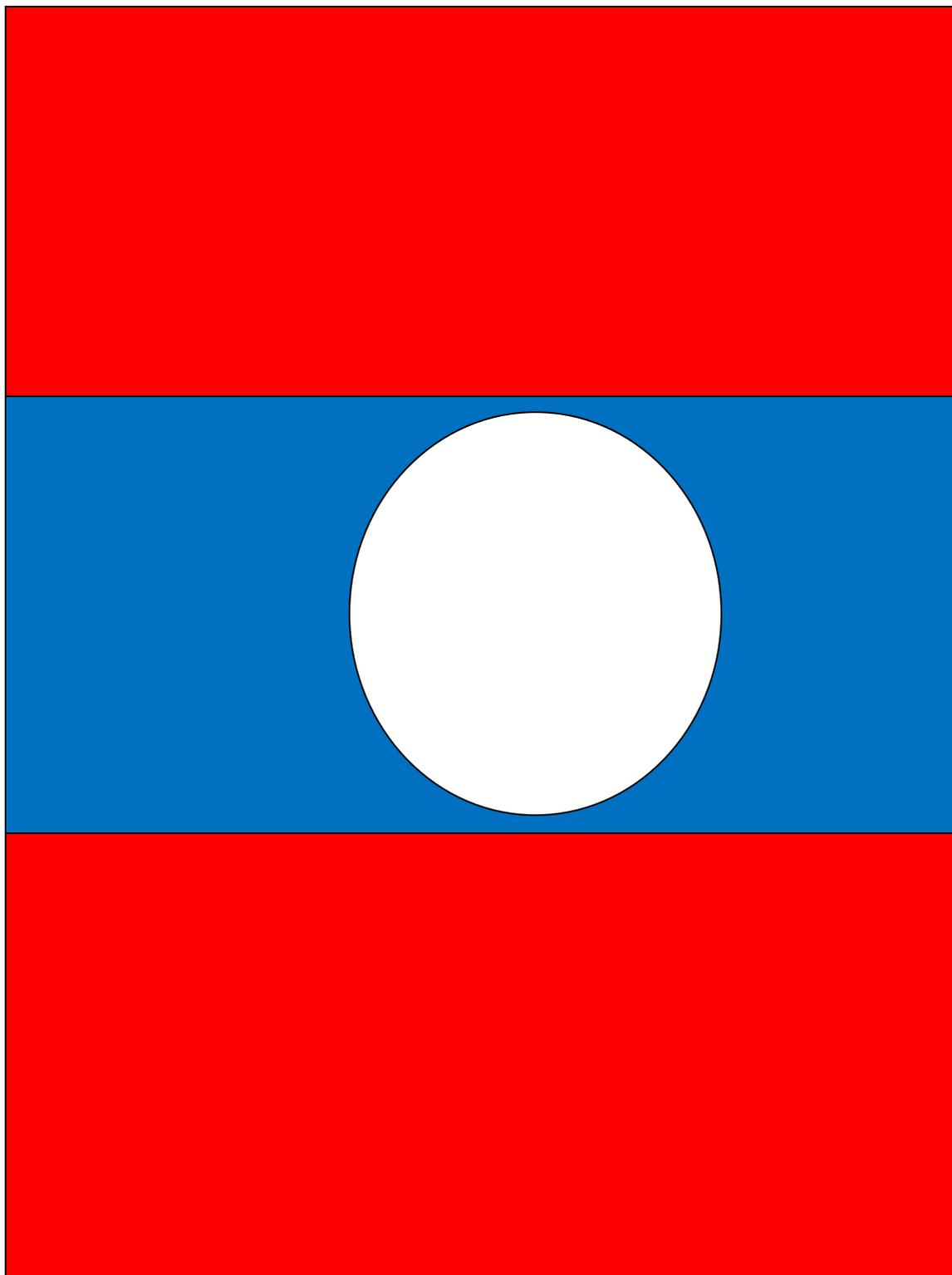


#3



#4



FLAG OF LAOS

STATION 1 – LAOS ON A GLOBE/MAP

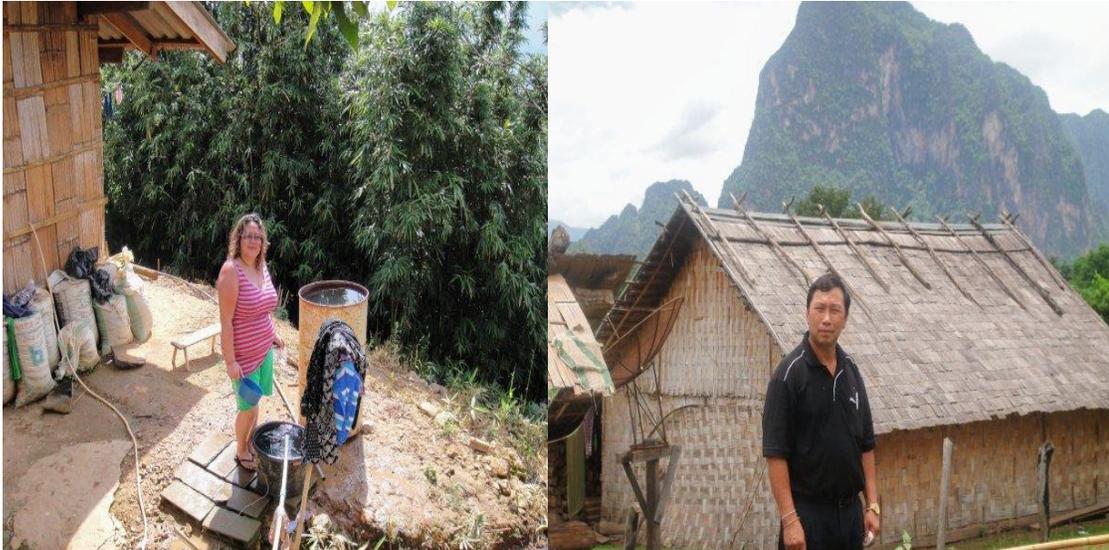


Excerpt 1:

The Hmong lived on the Central Plain of China as early as the 2300 B.C. Later they became known as the Miao and were pushed to the southern borderlands of China. In the mid-19th century, the Hmong began moving further southward and settled the highland fringes of Indochina and Burma (Cha, 1996).

The first Hmong groups entered northeastern Laos around 1810-1820. By 1972, the Hmong population had reached 300,000 people. They scattered through 10 provinces of northern and central Laos: Phongsali, Houakong, Luang Prabang, Sayaboury, Vangvieng, Vientiane, Borikhane, and Khammouane (Bliatout et al., 1988).

STATION 2 – HMONG LIFE IN LAOS



Excerpt 2:

The Hmong made their houses out of wood and bamboo on mountains. They covered them with elephant grass or palm leaves. The houses were see-through. The floor was just dirt (Bliatout et. al, 1988).

Hmong people wore outfits combining green, pink, black, dark blue, and white, heavy with embroidery and appliqué. There were Green Hmong (sometimes called Blue Hmong) and White Hmong. Green Hmong women wore dark blue, pleated and embroidered skirts while White Hmong women wore unadorned white pleated skirts, or black pants for everyday. Hmong men wore loose-fitting black pants, a sash and short jacket, with embroidered panels (Cha, 1996).

STATION 3 – FOOD/FRUITS OF LAOS



Excerpt 3:

For 100 years the Hmong grew crops, such as rice, corn, and a variety of vegetables: cabbage, lettuce, bok choy, green mustard, pumpkin vines, black nightshade, and other crops: green beans, turnips, squashes, pumpkins, cucumbers, bamboo shoots, and wild mushrooms (Cha & Livo, 2000). They raised pigs, chickens, oxen, and horses. Rice was their main diet. They also grew hemp to make clothing for the family and opium poppies as a cash crop for trade and medicinal needs. Their fruit sources were mango, pineapples, and lychee (Bliatout et al., 1988).

STATION 4 – ACTIVITIES OF LAOS



Excerpt 4:

The Hmong are known for their exquisite needlework. These “flower cloths” or *pa ndau* (pon-dow in English) tell the stories of the Hmong history, culture, and daily life. The embroidery and appliqué designs were added to clothing items. At the age of four, Hmong daughters watched and learned the needlework of their mother (Cha, 1996).

The Hmong people live an agricultural lifestyle. They produce the necessary food, clothing, housing, and tools needed to survive (Thao, 2006). They use tools such as the hoe and sickle to plant and harvest crops.

In November-December, the Hmong people celebrated their harvest with the New Year Festival. Everybody would dress up in their new or nicest outfit. Couples would engage in singing, performing musical instruments, such as the *qeej* and flute, and *poj pob* (ball-tossing game). It was a time to unite with old friends and meet new friends (Cha, 1996).

Unit 1: Hmong History

Lesson 2: Refugee Camps in Thailand

Lesson Subject(s): English Language Arts and History Social Studies

Learners' Grade Level: 1st

Pacing: 45 minutes – 1 hour

Lesson Topic: Life of a Refugee

Materials:

The Hmong Journey by Ger Thao

Books & printed information/visuals on Namphong, Ban Vinai, & Nongkhai refugee camps

Input/Discussion/Output worksheet

Presentation boards

Chart paper

Markers

Computers and internet service

Teacher Background:

Even after immigrating to new countries, the Hmong people faced conflicts with their new neighbors. When the French colonized Southeast Asia, they invaded Hmong territories and led to a rebellion, which lasted until 1921, with the capture of the Hmong leader Pa Chai Vue (Cha & Livo, 2000). They did not get along very well with the Lao because of religious and agricultural differences, so they partnered with the French to gain allies and power (McCall, 1999). The French control of Indochina collapsed in 1954. The Vietnamese celebrated the end of “colonialism” and the start of “Communist aggression” (McCall, 1999). McCall (1999) reported that the Pathet Lao partnered itself with the North Vietnamese to transfer supplies through Laos to South Vietnam along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. President Eisenhower ordered the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to recruit covert soldiers known as the CIA’s “secret army.” Operating against the Communists, the Hmong were to cut off the supply line. Lao Hmong soldiers, led by General Vang Pao, participated in the secret army ambushing Communist supplies, rescued the injured pilots, and protected American military installations as part of the fight to rid the region of communism (Harvey, 2009). Chan and Livo (1990) claimed that they were doing the bulk of the American fighting.

After the Americans withdrew from Vietnam in 1975, the Hmong who allied with the US feared that they would be punished. Between 1975-1992, over 100,000 Hmong escaped to Thailand by crossing the Mekong River. They were living in temporary refugee camps until it was safe to return to Laos or fled to remote mountainous regions of

Thailand. Many still remain in these areas while some resettled in other countries, such as France, French Guyana, Australia, Canada, or the United States (McCall, 1999). Some escaped the camps and lived among the Thai villages and became Thai citizens (Cha & Livo, 2000).

The Hmong were the first refugee groups to arrive in Thailand in May 1975. Several camps were created in the Thai territory to accommodate the fugitives from Laos. Namphong was the first Hmong refugee center. It was a former military camp, surrounded by barbed wire in the northeast of Thailand. It was opened on May 10, 1975 and housed about 12,500 refugees. Early in 1976, the center was relocated to Ban Vinai close to the Lao border. In 1986, it expanded to nine centers, spread out over 400 acres, and sheltered about 45,000 Hmong refugees. Faced with an influx of people coming from all parts of Laos, the Thai Government was forced to open new refugee camps along the Thai and Lao border. In March 1976, Nong khai, located at the Thai border, opened up to accommodate 8,000 Lao and 10,500 Hmong. Many more camps opened up since then to support refugees (Bliatout et al., 1988).

Rationale:

Life in America is filled with opportunities and freedom. We have a home to call our own. We have easy access to food, clean water, and medical care. Children grew up in sheltered homes and are able to go to school. Families don't have to worry about war or being kicked out of our houses.

Students in America have no idea how fortunate they are to live in a country where they can grow up in peace and have a future. The Hmong people back in Laos and Thailand did not have such opportunity. They had to make the best of their living situations in the refugee camps of Thailand. Food, water, and medical care were hard to come by. Young children born in Thailand grew up in a crowding environment, poor sanitation, idleness, authoritarian, and dependency. It is important for students to understand the life of experience of other ethnic groups different from theirs.

Common Core State Standards:

W.1.7 Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of "how-to" books on a given topic and use them to write a sequence of instructions).

SL.1.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

SL.1.4 Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.

English Language Development (ELD) Standards:

Specifically designed academic instruction (SDAIE) is one strategy used to meet the needs of English Learners (EL).

Define new vocabulary word in both verbal and visual manner in the simplest terms.

Use visuals and realia, such as globes, maps, and various cultural items and pictures.

Use gestures and body language.

Write key words or ideas down.

Use collaborative activities – pairs or small groups.

Reading Standards for Informational Text 7. Use the illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas.

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to orally contribute to conversations about life of the Hmong people in refugee camps in Thailand.

Groups will be able to present their findings of their assigned refugee camps through a group presentation using a media of their choice.

Formal and Informal Assessments:

Students will be able to orally share what they learned about the life of the Hmong people in refugee camps in Thailand using their Input/Discussion/Output worksheets.

Groups will show understanding of their assigned refugee camp by presenting detailed information about their learning by using a media of their choice.

Assessment Rubric

4	Child actively participates in classroom activities and discussions. Working collaboratively, the group presents detailed information about their assigned refugee camp.
3	Child actively participates in classroom activities and discussions. With direction, the group presents information about their assigned refugee camp.
2	Child participates in classroom activities and discussions, when encouraged. With assistance, the group presents some information about their assigned refugee camp.
1	Child participates in classroom activities and discussions, when encouraged. With assistance, the group presents at least one fact about their assigned refugee camp.

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks to Support Student Learning:

Introduction:

Start at the carpet or story corner. Ask: “What is a refugee camp?” Allow students who raised their hands to share what they know. Define “refugee camps” as places to take shelter where basic rice, water rations, medical care, and schooling are provided. Read and show the cover *The Hmong Journey*. Inform students that this section of book will allow them to learn about the Hmong fleeing Laos as political refugees living in refugee camps in Thailand. (Read pages 24-32 of *The Hmong Journey*)

Before dismissing students back to their seat, say to the class: “After the Hmong were forced to leave the jungles of Laos, they escaped by crossing the Mekong River to Thailand. They were put into refugee camps. You will be split up into three groups. As you read and work as a group, fill out the Input/Discussion/Output worksheet and hold onto for sharing at the end. Each group will be assigned a refugee camp and will be responsible for putting together a presentation about their camp.”

Activity Sequence:

1. Split students into three groups evenly. Explain that they will become experts of a camp by learning and researching about the camps. They will be creating a group presentation to share with the rest of the class. Their presentation must include detailed information about life in the camp. They may use whatever media they would like; for example, a poster, powerpoint, play, etc.
2. Assign each group a camp:
Camp 1 – Namphong
Camp 2 – Ban Vinai
Camp 3 – Nongkhai
3. Hand out the printed information on the camps to each group. Allow access to computer for additional research. Have out markers, poster boards, etc. for groups to use.
4. Allows groups to practice presentation.

Closure:

Have each group present their presentation. Using their filled-out Input/Discussion/Output worksheet, have a whole-group discussion on new learnings and/or similarities/differences amongst each camp.

Camp 1 – Namphong

“Namphong was the first Hmong refugee center. It was a former military camp, surrounded by barbed wire, and was located in the northeast of Thailand in an isolated area in the middle of the forest. Opened on May 10, 1975, it sheltered about 12,500 refugees by the end of that year” (Bliatout et al., 1988, p. 6).

The Hmong were not allowed to leave. There were wild dogs that lived in the surrounding woods. It was boring living in the refugee camps. Hmong women busied themselves with traditional needlework called *pa ndau*. Men sat around talking to each other or helped with baby-sitting. There was a small building designated as a primary school (Cha & Livo, 2000).

Camp 2 – Ban Vinai

“Early in 1976, the Namphong center was relocated to Ban Vinai, in a hilly region close to the Lao border. This camp was built by the refugees themselves, with the U.S. Government funds, under the supervision of the Royal Thai government. It was about 200 acres in size and was divided into five centers, each with its own center staff. Despite an increasing number of departures to third countries, Ban Vinai continued to expand with new arrivals and the transfer of refugee populations from other camps. In 1986, Ban Vinai extended over nine centers, spread out over 400 acres, and sheltered about 45,000 Hmong refugees” (Bliatout, 1988, p. 6).

This camp was bigger and had more open space. The Hmong were allowed to leave the camp to make small gardens or find work with the Thai villagers. Leaving the camp was a big risk because there was no protection outside of the center, so they traveled in large groups (Cha & Livo, 2000).

Camp 3 – Nongkhai

“In March, 1976, Nongkhai, located at the Thai border, opposite Vientiane, the capital of Laos, counted about 8,000 Lao and 10,500 Hmong, living in two separate communities” (Bliatout et al., 1988, p. 6).

This camp was just across the Mekong River from Laos. Their home was an arc tent that looked like a covered wagon. They sat and slept on plastic. There was no school in the camp. Rice was distributed every two weeks. The people received about a pound of meat and a pound of vegetables per person each week (Cha & Livo, 2000).

INPUT/DISCUSSION/OUTPUT

Input
(What did you learn?)



Discussion
(What did your group learn?)



Input
(Why is this important to you?)

Unit 1: Hmong History

Lesson 3: Hmong Resettlement in the United States

Lesson Subject(s): English Language Arts and History Social Studies

Learners' Grade Level: 1st

Pacing: 45 minutes

Lesson Topic: Hmong Immigrants

Materials:

Poster or butcher paper for Graffiti Wall activity

The Hmong Journey by Ger Thao

Hmong Immigrants worksheet

Teacher Background:

In January 1976, about 150 Hmong families numbering about 750 people formed the first group of Hmong contingents to come from the Thai refugee camps to the United States. Their involvement in the Secret War of Laos had given them special privileges of immigrating to America. The resettlement was made possible by the help of churches, non-profit organizations, or individual sponsors (Bliatout et al., 1988).

To many, America is the land of the free and opportunity. In 1980 alone, more than 20,000 Hmong came to the United States (Chan & Livo, 1990). Many Hmong immigrated over to the US for a new start or a better future for their family. To some, America wasn't quite free. Life in America was a hard transition for some Hmong. The young Hmong have been forced to adapt to western culture, seeking education and employment (Cha & Livo, 2000). The transition for Hmong women was much easier than for Hmong men. Women quickly adjusted into the society and went off to college. They were then able to raise their families. Hmong men had a difficult time due to pride and political reasons.

Rationale:

The history of the Hmong is characterized by a succession of migrations and wars to maintain their identity. Hmong are new immigrants to the United States. Their arrival dated in the 1970s and 1980s (McCall, 1999). Today, a significant Hmong population exists in the United States. McCall (1999) reminds us how little American citizens know about the Hmong history, culture, and events that led to their migration. Because the history of the Hmong is a part of the American Secret War, their voice and culture should be heard. Understanding the history of the Hmong people allows us to look deeper in their culture.

Common Core State Standards:

SL.1.5 Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

SL.1.6 Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation.

L.1.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

L.1.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

English Language Development (ELD) Standards:

Specifically designed academic instruction (SDAIE) is one strategy used to meet the needs of English Learners (EL).

Define new vocabulary word in both verbal and visual manner in the simplest terms.

Use visuals and realia, such as globes, maps, and various cultural items and pictures.

Use gestures and body language.

Write key words or ideas down.

Use collaborative activities – pairs or small groups.

Language Standards 1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to define an immigrant and explain the experience of the Hmong immigrant.

Formal and Informal Assessments:

Student will write two sentences about an immigrant and Hmong immigrant and draw a picture of the Hmong immigrant.

Assessment Rubric

4	The child's sentences are exceptionally clear and focused. The sentence begins with a capital letter, ends with the correct punctuation, and includes spaces between words. The writer includes an accurate picture of the Hmong immigrant.
3	The child's sentences are clear. The sentences begin with a capital, ends with the correct punctuation, and include some spaces between words. The writer includes an accurate picture of the Hmong immigrant.
2	The child's sentences are incomplete. The writing reveals an emerging awareness of capital letters and punctuation and includes few spaces between words. The writer includes a picture of the Hmong immigrant.
1	The child dictates a sentence. The child draws a picture.

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks to Support Student Learning:**Introduction:**

Start at the carpet or story corner. Ask: "What is an immigrant?" Point to the poster paper on the wall. Explain that this is called a 'Graffiti Wall.' Student volunteers will share what they know about immigrants by writing their thoughts on the poster (text or pictures). Once done, read all of their responses and then define "immigrant" as a person who enters another country to live. Read and show the cover *The Hmong Journey*. Inform students that this section of book will allow them to learn about the Hmong refugees from the Thai camps settling into America. (Read pages 32-37 of *The Hmong Journey*)

Before dismissing students back to their seat, say to the class: "In 1975, Hmong refugees from the Thai camps began to resettle in any Western country that would provide them with a home. The Hmong are spread all over the world today. About 200,000 Hmong came to the United States. At that time, the Hmong did not know anything about American culture, food, beliefs, and values. Americans knew nothing about the Hmong."

*Invite a Hmong guest speaker to come in and talk to the class about his/her experience as an immigrant coming to US.

*Alternative: Put on a documentary of the Hmong's journey coming to the US: Hmong history of time line <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIEQjb-R4H0>.

Activity Sequence:

1. Allow students to ask the guest questions.
2. Have students share out with the class what they learned about Hmong immigrants.
3. Have students complete the Hmong Immigrant activity.

Closure:

Have students share out if they have immigrants in their family.

Hmong Immigrants

1. Write about an immigrant.

2. Draw a picture to show the Hmong immigrant coming to the United States.



3. Write about what it was like to be a Hmong immigrant going to another country.

Unit 1: Hmong History

Lesson 4: Hmong American

Lesson Subject(s): English Language Arts and History Social Studies

Learners' Grade Level: 1st

Pacing: 45 minutes

Lesson Topic: Hmong American: Then & Now

Materials:

The Hmong Journey by Ger Thao

Grandfather's Story Cloth by Linda Gerdner and Sarah Langford

Hmong Americans: Then & Now worksheet

Teacher Background:

The history of the Hmong is characterized by a succession of migrations and wars to maintain their identity. Hmong are the newest immigrants to the United States. Their arrival dated in the 1970s and 1980s (McCall, 1999). Today, a significant Hmong population exists in the United States. McCall (1999) reminds us how little American citizens know about the Hmong history, culture, and events that led to their migration. Because the history of the Hmong is a part of the American Secret War, their voice and culture should be heard. Understanding the history of the Hmong people allows us to look deeper in their culture.

Vang Pao was made General of the Royal Lao Army in 1964 and has been the leader of the Hmong community ever since his people have stepped foot on America soil. In June 2007, Federal agents raided homes and offices due to Operation Tarnished Eagle, arresting Vang Pao and ten others. "They are accused of violating the US Neutrality Act by allegedly trying to purchase machine guns, grenades and stinger missiles to overthrow the communist government of Laos" (Harvey, 1999, p. 26). In October of 2009, the case was put forward. The case was dismissed but the larger Hmong community felt a slap in the face. They felt abandoned and betrayed by the very US people, who they had helped in the Secret War of 1975.

Rationale:

The Hmong communities in the United States are faced with many issues. Different generations are facing different struggles. The great great-grandparents were faced with maintaining cultural traditions and identity. The parents of today's youth were faced with war and escaping and living as refugees. The new generations of Hmong are faced with education, nontraditional roles, marriage choices, and collisions between two cultures and expectations. The Hmong have struggled, accepted, and succeeded in life in the United States. The Hmong culture is adapting and changing. We need to learn about the past to understand the present and future.

Common Core State Standards:

W.1.1. Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the statement, and provide some sense of closure.

SL.1.6 Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation.

L.1.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

L.1.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

English Language Development (ELD) Standards:

Specifically designed academic instruction (SDAIE) is one strategy used to meet the needs of English Learners (EL).

Define new vocabulary word in both verbal and visual manner in the simplest terms.

Use visuals and realia, such as globes, maps, and various cultural items and pictures.

Use gestures and body language.

Write key words or ideas down.

Use collaborative activities – pairs or small groups.

Writing Standards 1. Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the statement, and provide some sense of closure.

Language Standards 1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to differentiate the difference between the Hmong and Hmong Americans.

Students will be able to write an opinion sentence about one challenge the Hmong Americans might face in the future.

Formal and Informal Assessments:

Student will complete the “Now” statements about Hmong Americans.

Student will compose a complete opinion sentence about one challenge the Hmong Americans might face in the future.

Assessment Rubric

4	The child completes all of the statements accurately. The sentence states an opinion, begins with a capital letter, ends with the correct punctuation, and includes spaces between words.
3	The child completes mostly all of the statements accurately. The sentence states an opinion, begins with a capital, ends with the correct punctuation, and include some spaces between words.
2	The child completes half of the statements correctly. The sentence is not a complete thought, reveals an emerging awareness of capital letters and punctuation and includes few spaces between words.
1	The child completes the statements inaccurately. The child dictates a sentence.

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks to Support Student Learning:**Introduction:**

Start at the carpet or story corner. Ask: “What is an American?” Allow students who raised their hands to share what they know. Define “American” as a citizen of America. Now define a “Hmong American”: Hmong who have immigrated to or born in America and became American citizens. Read and show the cover *The Hmong Journey*. Inform students that this section of book will allow them to learn about the Hmong living in America and the changes they had to make (Read pages 38-40 of *The Hmong Journey*)

Before dismissing students back to their seat, say to the class: “How many of you have ever been new to a country? How did it feel? What did you have to do? Like some of you, the Hmong Americans have two sets of everything: language, culture, beliefs, etc. They had to learn and make some changes. You already learned a lot about the Hmong in Laos and Thailand. Pay attention as I read the book about Hmong Americans because we will compare and contrast them.”

Activity Sequence:

1. Read the book *Grandfather’s Story Cloth* by Linda Gardner and Sarah Langford.
2. Have a class discussion on facts the students learned about the Hmong and Hmong Americans from *The Hmong Journey* and *Grandfather’s Story Cloth*.
3. Have students complete the Hmong Americans: Then & Now activity.

Closure:

Discuss the last question as a class: What is one challenge the Hmong people will face in the future?

Hmong Americans: Then & Now

Key:	
respect	later
friends	outside
English	Christianity
doctors	college degrees

Directions: Read the ‘Then’ statements about the Hmong back in Laos and Thailand. Choose a word to complete the statements for the ‘Now’ section. Use each word only once.

Then	Now
There was respect for the elderly and parents.	There is a lack of _____ respect for the elderly and parents.
Hmong couples married young.	Hmong couples are marrying _____.
Hmong youth listened to their parents and family members.	Hmong youth listen more to their _____.
Hmong women only worked in the home.	Hmong women are working _____ the home.
Hmong spoke only Hmong.	Many have learned to speak _____.
Hmong believed in animist religion.	Some have converted to _____.
Hmong preferred Shamans.	Some prefer medical _____.
Hmong did not read or write.	Many are getting _____.

What is one challenge the Hmong people will face in the future? _____

PART II CULTURAL TRADITIONS

UNIT II: Hmong Cultural Traditions

Background of Hmong Cultural Traditions

Lesson 1 Family and Clans
Hmong Clan Name

Lesson 2 Language and Clothing
White Hmong vs. Green/Blue Hmong

Lesson 3 Agriculture and Food
Hmong Market & How-to-Raise Rice

Lesson 4 Festivities and Customs
Hmong New Year & Hmong Wedding

Background of Hmong Cultural Traditions

Hmong are close-knit communities and everyone is related in the society. “Mong society centers on a kinship system and operates through communal lifestyles” (Thao, 2006, p. 31). Men are the head of families and leaders of villages. They are the decision-makers. The Hmong practice is a type of patrilineal decent group formation. Descent is traced through the male line, but women who marry in are associated with their husband's lineage because they are entitled to ancestral rights in this group. A married woman keeps her father's name because she is physically a part of the clan she was born into even though she belongs to the spiritual world of her husband. Social organization is based around several gradations of kinship.

Hmong people are identified based on their clan. Thao (2006) identified twelve original clans in the Hmong society. The exogamous patriclan (*Xeem*) is the most all-encompassing level of organization. Patriclan members share the same last name. According to the Western studies, there are eighteen Hmong clans: Chang/Cha, Chue, Cheng, Fang, Her, Hang, Khang, Kong, Lee//Ly, Kue, Lor, Moua, Pha, Thao, Vang, Vue, Xiong, Yang. Lineage organization is comprised of all descendants of a historical male ancestor, often a well-known political leader who lived five or more generations ago (Thao, 2006). Each clan is associated with a sacred ritual name, which accurately represents the origin of each clan (Thao, 2006). The clan system maintains unity and relationships between related clan and provides support to one another (Thao, 2006). Hmong speech illustrates the primary importance of kinship as relational terms replace proper names. Hmong kinship terms distinguish father and mother's siblings. (LESSON 1)

The cultural identity of Hmong is distinguished by the dialect they speak. The two principal dialects in Laos are Hmong Leng (Green/Blue Hmong) and Hmong Der (White Hmong). Other dialects are spoken and mutually intelligible. The Hmong Leng is called *Hmoob Ntsuab* (Green or Blue Hmong) by the socially and more politically dominant Hmong Der. Hmong Leng means “vein,” which carries the life blood of all Hmong, and the White Hmong is named after the ceremonial skirts of the White Hmong female. The colors in these names represent the colors used in the traditional women's costumes of different groups.

Each group dresses differently. Hmong Leng females wear only skirts and blouses. The skirts are made in thick cross-stitch embroidery, batik-designed, and bright colors (Thao, 2006). White Hmong is divided into subdivisions. Females wear skirts, pants, and striped cloths. Pants are solid black and skirts are solid white. The artworks on the clothing are based on the region. They have special costumes for religious celebrations. The ornamental designs on the outfits also serve to protect them from evil spirits (Thao, 2006). The language and costumes are only one aspect of the Hmong culture. (LESSON 2)

Hmong families have lived in the mountainous areas of Laos. Farming is an important memory for the Hmong life in Southeast Asia. They produce the necessary food, clothing, housing, and tools needed to survive (Thao, 2006). They value large families because of their agricultural lifestyle. Agriculture was the primary adaptive strategy for Hmong living in Laos. Crops included rice, corn, and vegetables for subsistence and opium for medicinal use and sale. Rice makes up the Hmong diet. Chicken and pigs are

the main source of protein. Chan and Livo (1990) add that the Hmong eats all kinds of green vegetables, such as cabbage, lettuce, bok choy, green mustard, pumpkin vines, and black nightshade. Hmong families lived a migratory lifestyle due to their slash-and-burn farming methods. Everyone had a role and contributed to the family. Hmong people value hard work and cooperation (McCall, 1999). Children started learning at a young age watching their family members work in the fields. (LESSON 3)

The social gathering that brings the Hmong families together is the New Year Festival. It is the highlight and most anticipated event of the year. Cha and Livo (2000) inform us that it is organized by the heads of clans. Each village plans their own festival at different times, so that villagers can attend one another's celebrations. Every year, the Hmong celebrate their hard work from the harvest of the crop by putting on their New Year celebration. It is a time to "...remember the beauty of their traditional culture that has been preserved for many centuries" (Thao, 2006, p. 49). It is a time for family, friends, and relatives to visit one another.

At this event, different Hmong subgroups (White Hmong and Blue/Green Hmong) from separate villages gather together to maintain cultural traditions, such as sharing food and playing games and musical instruments (Thao, 2006). They wear their finest embroidered clothes and silver jewelry to start off the new year as a good and rich one (Cha & Livo, 2000). This also provided opportunities for boys and girls from different clans to become acquainted as possible life mates. Hmong men and women pair off to engage in a ball-tossing game. This is the start to courtship and then culminates into marriage.

The Hmong maintains their traditional wedding ceremony to keep their kinship ties and allow the younger generation to maintain the unique custom. Thao (2006) describes a marriage as the gap between the two bridges or the tying of the two clans to become a *neej tsab* (relatives). This helps them to recognize their grandparents and parents side of the family. Hmong marriage is often misunderstood or misinterpreted with the custom of *nqe tshoob* (bride price). Thao (2006) explains that the dowry serves as a security deposit and often misinterpreted as parents selling their daughter. If the marriage goes well, then the parents may keep the dowry. Likewise, if the marriage ends in the divorce, then the dowry may be returned. The household gifts donated are meant to help the bride start her new life. "Traditional marriage customs help the married couple to have a strong marriage because they maintain a tie to families and clans" (Thao, 2006, p. 77). Hmong marriage is for life. You live with that person until you die.

Hmong method of marriage consists of two types of marriage arrangement. The first is *nqeg tsev yuav* where the groom and his family enter the bride's home to bargain for her hand in marriage with her parents (Thao, 2006). This method shows the groom giving respect to the bride and her family. The bride also has the greatest honor in this way and shows good faith in the marriage life. The other method is the bride going with the groom without letting the parents know, known as *yuav ntsau los yog qaab kiv pob* (Thao, 2006) This simple arrangement can cause the bride and parents to lose face and cost a lesser dowry. Usually two elders from each of the families would meet to negotiate the bride price (Cha & Livo, 2000). This price is paid by the groom's family followed by a feast to acknowledge and celebrate the official marriage. The wedding is followed by a *baci* ceremony, in which strings are tied around the wrists of the young couples to bless them with good wishes. (LESSON 4)

Unit 2: Hmong Cultural Traditions

Lesson 1: Family & Clan Names

Lesson Subject(s): English Language Arts and History Social Studies

Learners' Grade Level: 1st

Pacing: 45-50 minutes

Lesson Topic: Hmong Clan Name

Materials:

The Hmong Journey by Ger Thao

Hmong Clan Name worksheet (reproduce on chart paper)

Markers

Teacher Background:

Hmong are close-knit communities and everyone is related in the society. “Mong society centers on a kinship system and operates through communal lifestyles” (Thao, 2006, p. 31). Men are the head of families and leaders of villages. They are the decision-makers. The Hmong practice is a type of patrilineal decent group formation. Descent is traced through the male line, but women who marry in are associated with their husband's lineage because they are entitled to ancestral rights in this group. A married woman keeps her father's name because she is physically a part of the clan she was born into even though she belongs to the spiritual world of her husband. Social organization is based around several gradations of kinship.

Hmong people are identified based on their clan. Thao (2006) identified twelve original clans in the Hmong society. The exogamous patriclan (*Xeem*) is the most all-encompassing level of organization. Patriclan members share the same last name. According to the Western studies, there are eighteen Hmong clans: Chang/Cha, Chue, Cheng, Fang, Her, Hang, Khang, Kong, Lee//Ly, Kue, Lor, Moua, Pha, Thao, Vang, Vue, Xiong, Yang. Lineage organization is comprised of all descendants of a historical male ancestor, often a well-known political leader who lived five or more generations ago (Thao, 2006). Each clan is associated with a sacred ritual name, which accurately represents the origin of each clan (Thao, 2006). The clan system maintains unity and relationships between related clan and provides support to one another (Thao, 2006). Hmong speech illustrates the primary importance of kinship as relational terms replace proper names. Hmong kinship terms distinguish father and mother's siblings.

Rationale:

Every family is different, but the family serves as the unit of production, consumption, socialization, social control, and mutual assistance. Just like in the US,

every family member plays an important role. In America, we are fortunate to have equality in gender roles. In the Hmong patriarchal system, the family is under the authority of the oldest male in the household. Both boys and girls learn from their parents. Boys learn to be effective leaders and girls learn to be a wife, mother, and masters of household skills. Students need to appreciate their opportunity to be anything they dream of.

In America, children show respect for their elders by forms of address. A child would address an older gentleman as “mister” and older lady as “miss” or “missus.” Hmong society is divided into two kinds of people: clanmates (*kwv tij*) and in-laws (*neej tsa*). There is a specific form of address for each relationship.

Common Core State Standards:

W.1.8. With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

SL.1.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

English Language Development (ELD) Standards:

Specifically designed academic instruction (SDAIE) is one strategy used to meet the needs of English Learners (EL).

Define new vocabulary word in both verbal and visual manner in the simplest terms.

Use visuals and realia, such as globes, maps, and various cultural items and pictures.

Use gestures and body language.

Write key words or ideas down.

Use collaborative activities – pairs or small groups.

Speaking and Listening Standards 3. Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to understand the importance of family units and create their own clan names.

Formal and Informal Assessments:

Students will work together to create the group’s ‘Hmong Clan Name’ poster.

Assessment Checklist

Sections	+(complete) √(partially complete) - (incomplete)
Clan Name	
Head of Household	
Hmong Names	
Interesting Facts	

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks to Support Student Learning:

Introduction:

Start at the carpet or story corner. Ask: “What is a family?” Allow students who raised their hands to share what they know. Define “family” as a group of people who love, care, and support each other. They may or may not live in the same house. Now define a clan: families that have the same last name. Read and show the cover *The Hmong Journey*. Inform students that this section of book will allow them to learn about the Hmong families. (Read pages 10-12 of *The Hmong Journey*)

Before dismissing students back to their seat, say to the class: Hmong people are very group-oriented. Every member plays an important role in the group. The individual always think about the interest of the group first. A Hmong person belongs to a family, the family belongs to a clan, and the clan belongs to the Hmong people. In English, Hmong people will often utilize the term “we” when referring to their family, clan, or identity as a people. In Hmong, they will usually say *peb tsev neeg* (our family), *peb lub xeem* (our clan), or *peb Hmoob* (our Hmong people). The family is the basic social unit in the traditional Hmong society. A household may vary in size from a couple to more than 20 people consisting of extended family made up of many generations (Duffy, Harmon, Ranard, Thao, & Yang, 2004).

There are about nineteen Hmong clans in Laos: Cha or Chang, Cheng, Chu, Fang, Hang, Her, Khang, Kong, Kue, Lor or Lo, Lee or Ly, Moua, Phang, Tang, Thao, Vang, Vue, Xiong, and Yang. Within the clans, there might be subclans. Clan membership is obtained by birth, marriage for women, and adoption. Members of a clan call each other clan brothers or clan sisters. They help each other and greet other (Duffy et al., 2004).

Activity Sequence:

1. Go over the different 19 clan names.
2. Go over the common boy name – Tub and girl name – Maiv.
3. Also go over the birth order names.
4. Do some examples of changing students’ names into Hmong names.
 - a. John – Tub John
 - b. Jane – Maiv Jane
5. Go over the four sections of the group poster assignment.
6. Write five of the clan names (Thao, Vang, Her, Lee, Yang) on index cards. Pass out to 5 students to stand up and read their clan name.

7. Have the volunteers pick 4-5 more members to be a part of their clan.
8. Have each clan designate a head of household who will be the leader.
9. Have each clan create a poster to represent their clan. They must decide on the roles of each member of their clan:
 - a. Leader
 - b. Supply
 - c. Author
 - d. Illustrator
 - e. Presenter
10. Have students work together to complete their poster and prepare to present to the class.

Closure:

Have each clan group present their poster.

Hmong Names

Tub	son, boy
Maiv	daughter, girl
Los Tuam	first son
Los Lwm	second son
Los Xab	third son
Los Vws	fourth son
Los Lwj	fifth son
Los Txhij	sixth son
Los Puaj	seventh son
Los Caw	eighth son
Los Sij	ninth son

Hmong Clan Name Poster

Clan Name	Head of Household - Leader
Hmong Names	Interesting Facts

Unit 2: Hmong Cultural Traditions

Lesson 2: Language and Clothing

Lesson Subject(s): English Language Arts and History Social Studies

Learners' Grade Level: 1st

Pacing: 45 minutes – 1 hour

Lesson Topic: White Hmong vs. Green/Blue Hmong

Materials:

Intro to Hmong Language / Hmong Venn Diagram worksheet
Books, printed information, and visuals on White Hmong
Books, printed information, and visuals on Green/Blue Hmong
Computers/Internet service

Teacher Background:

The cultural identity of Hmong is distinguished by the dialect they speak. The two principal dialects in Laos are Hmong Leng (Green/Blue Hmong) and Hmong Der (White Hmong). Other dialects are spoken and mutually intelligible. The Hmong Leng is called *Hmoob Ntsuab* (Green or Blue Hmong) by the socially and more politically dominant Hmong Der. Hmong Leng means “vein,” which carries the life blood of all Hmong, and the White Hmong is named after the ceremonial skirts of the White Hmong female. The colors in these names represent the colors used in the traditional women's costumes of different groups.

Each group dresses differently. Hmong Leng females wear only skirts and blouses. The skirts are made in thick cross-stitch embroidery, batik-designed, and bright colors (Thao, 2006). White Hmong is divided into subdivisions. Females wear skirts, pants, and striped cloths. Pants are solid black and skirts are solid white. The artworks on the clothing are based on the region. They have special costumes for religious celebrations. The ornamental designs on the outfits also serve to protect them from evil spirits (Thao, 2006). The language and costumes are only one aspect of the Hmong culture.

Rationale:

Both the White Hmong and the Green Hmong dialects are spoken by Hmong people living in California. Both will be found among students in the same classroom. For this reason, the existence of two distinct dialects of Hmong should be kept in mind when working with Hmong students. Instructions in Hmong may be difficult when the student does not share the same dialect. The same Hmong word may not have the same or slightly different meanings for speakers of the two dialects. Unlike English where a

standard written form shows dialectal differences, written materials in Hmong may reflect the pronunciation and vocabulary of one dialect but less accessible or acceptable to the other dialect (Bliatout, Downing, Lewis, & Yang, 1988).

Common Core State Standards:

RF.1.2 Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).

RI.1.9 Identify basic similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic (e.g., in illustrations, descriptions, or procedures).

English Language Development (ELD) Standards:

Specifically designed academic instruction (SDAIE) is one strategy used to meet the needs of English Learners (EL).

Define new vocabulary word in both verbal and visual manner in the simplest terms.

Use visuals and realia, such as globes, maps, and various cultural items and pictures.

Use gestures and body language.

Write key words or ideas down.

Use collaborative activities – pairs or small groups.

Reading Standards for Informational Text 9. Identify basic similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic (e.g., in illustrations, descriptions, or procedures).

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to speak simple Hmong words and phrases.

Students will be able to compare and contrast the White Hmong and Green/Blue Hmong.

Formal and Informal Assessments:

Student will orally say “hello, please, thank you, and count from 1-5” in Hmong.

Students will complete the Hmong Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting the White Hmong and Green/Blue Hmong.

Assessment Checklist

<i>English</i>	<i>Hmong</i>	+(yes) -(no)
Hello/Hi	Nyob zoo	
Please	Thov	
Thank you	Ua tsaug	
Numbers 1-5	Ib, ob, peb, plaub, tsib	

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks to Support Student Learning:

Introduction:

Start at the carpet or story corner. Ask: “Does anybody speak a second language; for example Spanish, Punjabi, etc.?” Have students share how to say ‘hello’ in different languages; for example ‘Hola’ in Spanish, ‘Aloha’ in Hawaiian, ‘Bonjour’ in French, etc. Today we are going to learn another language: Hmong. The Hmong people have two different dialects: Green and White. Some words are spoken the same but some are spoken slightly different.”

Pass out and go over the Hmong Language: Common Words, Phrases, and Sayings worksheet. Model how to pronounce these words. Have students practice saying these terms to each other. Send students back to their seats for the next activity. (For reference, show

YouTube video Lesson 5 – Hmong Numbers:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3zO24_WW9E)

Activity Sequence:

1. Pass out the books, printed information sheets, and visuals on the White Hmong and Green/Blue Hmong. Have students read the text and look at the pictures to learn about the two groups. They will be looking for how they are the same and how they are different.
2. Refer them to the Hmong Venn Diagram. Model for the students how to fill out the diagram. Put differences on each circle and the similarities in the middle.
3. Have students work with a partner to complete their Hmong Venn Diagram.
4. Share out similarities and differences from Hmong Venn Diagram to create a class diagram.

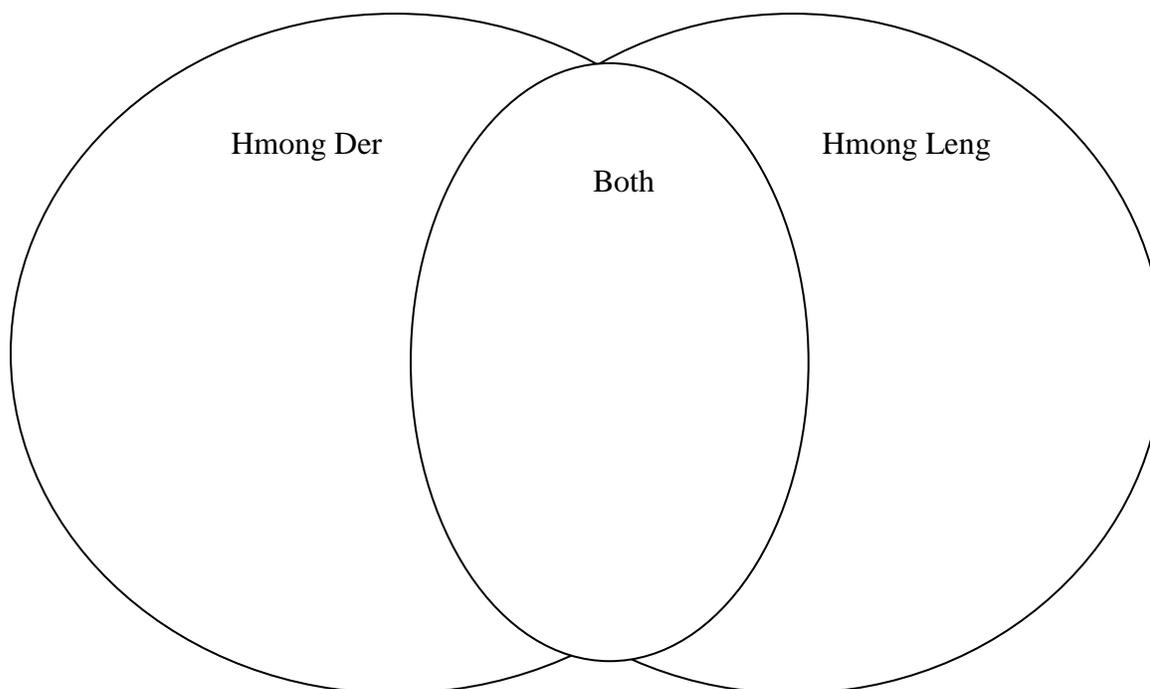
Closure:

Have students explore Hmong clothing through the interactive “Dressing Game”:
<http://library.thinkquest.org/07aug/00346/pages/home.htm>.

Intro to Hmong Language
Common Words, Phrases, and Sayings

Hmong Der	Hmong Leng	English
ib	ib	one
ob	ob	two
peb	peb	three
plaub	plaub	four
tsib	tsib	five
nyob zoo	nyob zoo	hello
ua tsaug	ua tsaug	thank you
thov	thov	please
<i>niam</i>	<i>nam</i>	<i>mom</i>
txiv	txiv	dad
yawg	yawm	<i>grandfather</i>
pog	puj	<i>grandmother</i>

Hmong Venn Diagram



Unit 2: Hmong Cultural Traditions

Lesson 3: Agriculture and Food

Lesson Subject(s): English Language Arts and History Social Studies

Learners' Grade Level: 1st

Pacing: 45 minutes – 1 hour

Lesson Topic: Hmong Market & How-to Raise Rice

Materials:

The Hmong Journey by Ger Thao

“Raising Rice” from *Teaching with Folk Stories of the Hmong: An Activity Book*
by Dia Cha & Norma Livo

Table for Hmong Market set-up with labels of food items

Various pictures or sample of food items: rice grains, herb, spices, fruits, vegetables: bamboo shoots, mushroom, green beans, squash, pumpkin, cabbage, lettuce, etc., meat: pork, beef, chicken, etc.

How-to Raise Rice worksheet

Cooked rice, cup, spoon

Teacher Background:

Hmong families have lived in the mountainous areas of Laos. Farming is an important memory for the Hmong life in Southeast Asia. They produce the necessary food, clothing, housing, and tools needed to survive (Thao, 2006). They value large families because of their agricultural lifestyle. Agriculture was the primary adaptive strategy for Hmong living in Laos. Crops included rice, corn, and vegetables for subsistence and opium for medicinal use and sale. Rice makes up the Hmong diet. Chicken and pigs are the main source of protein. Chan and Livo (1990) add that the Hmong eats all kinds of green vegetables, such as cabbage, lettuce, bok choy, green mustard, pumpkin vines, and black nightshade. Hmong families lived a migratory lifestyle due to their slash-and-burn farming methods. Everyone had a role and contributed to the family. Hmong people value hard work and cooperation (McCall, 1999). Children started learning at a young age watching their family members work in the fields.

Rationale:

Hmong students come from a background of agriculture. An important aspect of the Hmong life back in Southeast Asia involves farming. Whether back in Laos or Thailand, or here in the US, Hmong children have grown up learning and watching their

parents farm and tend the garden. As acculturated as some Hmong may be, rice has been and is still the major crop and diet. Rice, vegetables, and meat are available in Laos but are also eaten daily in the United States.

Common Core State Standards:

RI.1.7 Use the illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas.

W.1.3 Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event orders, and provide some sense of closure.

L.1.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

L.1.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

English Language Development (ELD) Standards:

Specifically designed academic instruction (SDAIE) is one strategy used to meet the needs of English Learners (EL).

Define new vocabulary word in both verbal and visual manner in the simplest terms.

Use visuals and realia, such as globes, maps, and various cultural items and pictures.

Use gestures and body language.

Write key words or ideas down.

Use collaborative activities – pairs or small groups.

Language Standards 1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to identify Hmong food items.

Students will be able to explain the process of raising rice.

Formal and Informal Assessments:

Students will draw and label pictures of three Hmong food items.

Students will explain the process of raising rice in a how-to writing task.

Assessment Rubric

4	The child writes and illustrates all of the steps accurately. Each sentence begins with a capital letter, ends with the correct punctuation, and includes spaces between words.
3	The child writes and illustrates mostly all of the steps accurately. Each sentence begins with a capital, ends with the correct punctuation, and includes some spaces between words.
2	The child writes and illustrates half of the steps correctly. The sentences are not complete thoughts, reveal an emerging awareness of capital letters and punctuation and include few spaces between words.
1	The child writes and illustrates the steps inaccurately.

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks to Support Student Learning:**Introduction:**

Start at the carpet or story corner. Ask: “Where do we get our food from and how?” Call on volunteers to share their responses. Read and show the cover *The Hmong Journey*. Inform students that this section of book will briefly give them a little background on what the Hmong people do to get their food. (Read pages 14-18 of *The Hmong Journey*)

Before dismissing students back to their seat, have a brief discussion on food items they heard about from the story that they are familiar with or similar to what we eat here in America. Say, “We are going to visit a Hmong Market today to learn about some more food items that the Hmong people grow and eat daily. After visiting the market, you will be drawing/labeling me three food items that you like.” Dismiss students to the Hmong Market table.

Activity Sequence:

1. You will act as the vendor advertising your food items – go over the different food items.
2. Hand out the Hmong Food worksheet and have students draw, color, and label three food items that they like or learned about.
3. Give each student a copy of the story “Raising Rice” and read the story chorally.
4. Have a class discussion on the steps of raising rice.
5. Pass out the How-To Raise Rice worksheet and have students draw and write a complete sentence to describe how to grow and cook rice.

Closure:

Hand each student a cup of cooked rice to taste.

HMONG FOOD

Directions: Draw and color three Hmong food items that you saw at the Hmong Market and then write the name of the item on the line below.

HMONG FOOD

Directions: Draw and color three Hmong food items that you saw at the Hmong Market and then write the name of the item on the line below.

Raising Rice

Before we plant the rice we must clear the fields. We use an ax or knife to cut the trees. We use a shovel to clear the land and make it smooth. We let the trees dry in the sun for several months. Then we burn the trees that we have cut.

After we plant the rice seeds, we check on the rice every day.

There is an insect called the *kooj*, or grasshopper, that eats the rice. We have to catch the grasshopper. We catch the grasshoppers at night with a light and put them in a bamboo basket with a top. We also spray the fields.

When the rice is tall, the birds eat it, so the men use a *hneev*, crossbow, to kill the birds that eat the rice.

When the top of the rice plant curves down, the rice is ready to cut. We cut the tops off of the plants. The men and women shake a flat bamboo basket. The leaves fall on the ground and the rice stays on the flat basket.

The rice is stored in a big bamboo storage bin. When the family needs rice to cook for food, they get rice from the bamboo bin.

The women put the rice seeds in a big round wooden barrel. The barrel has a long pole on one side. The women step on one end and make it move like a hammer. The hammer hits the rice seed and knocks the rice off of the shell, and then it is ready to cook.

How-To Raise Rice

Directions: Using the story “Raising Rice,” explain and illustrate the four main steps how to raise rice.

<p>Step 1:</p> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Step 2:</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Step 3:</p> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Step 4:</p> <hr/> <hr/>

Unit 2: Hmong Cultural Traditions

Lesson 4: Festivities and Customs

Lesson Subject(s): English Language Arts and History Social Studies

Learners' Grade Level: 1st

Pacing: 45-50 minutes

Lesson Topic: Hmong New Year Festival & Hmong Wedding

Materials:

- The Hmong Journey* by Ger Thao
- Tennis balls
- Strings or yarn cut into strips
- Paper and pencil
- Computer/Internet service

Teacher Background:

The social gathering that brings the Hmong families together is the New Year Festival. It is the highlight and most anticipated event of the year. Cha and Livo (2000) inform us that it is organized by the heads of clans. Each village plans their own festival at different times, so that villagers can attend one another's celebrations. Every year, the Hmong celebrate their hard work from the harvest of the crop by putting on their New Year celebration. It is a time to "...remember the beauty of their traditional culture that has been preserved for many centuries" (Thao, 2006, p. 49). It is a time for family, friends, and relatives to visit one another.

At this event, different Hmong subgroups (White Hmong and Blue/Green Hmong) from separate villages gather together to maintain cultural traditions, such as sharing food and playing games and musical instruments (Thao, 2006). They wear their finest embroidered clothes and silver jewelry to start off the new year as a good and rich one (Cha & Livo, 2000). This also provided opportunities for boys and girls from different clans to become acquainted as possible life mates. Hmong men and women pair off to engage in a ball-tossing game. This is the start to courtship and then culminates into marriage.

The Hmong maintains their traditional wedding ceremony to keep their kinship ties and allow the younger generation to maintain the unique custom. Thao (2006) describes a marriage as the gap between the two bridges or the tying of the two clans to become a *neej tsab* (relatives). This helps them to recognize their grandparents and parents side of the family. Hmong marriage is often misunderstood or misinterpreted with the custom of *nqe tshoob* (bride price). Thao (2006) explains that the dowry serves as a security deposit and often misinterpreted as parents selling their daughter. If the marriage goes well, then the parents may keep the dowry. Likewise, if the marriage ends in the divorce, then the dowry may be returned. The household gifts donated are meant to help the bride start her

new life. “Traditional marriage customs help the married couple to have a strong marriage because they maintain a tie to families and clans” (Thao, 2006, p. 77). Hmong marriage is for life. You live with that person until you die.

Hmong method of marriage consists of two types of marriage arrangement. The first is *nqeg tsev yuav* where the groom and his family enter the bride’s home to bargain for her hand in marriage with her parents (Thao, 2006). This method shows the groom giving respect to the bride and her family. The bride also has the greatest honor in this way and shows good faith in the marriage life. The other method is the bride going with the groom without letting the parents know, known as *yuav ntsau los yog qaab kiv pob* (Thao, 2006) This simple arrangement can cause the bride and parents to lose face and cost a lesser dowry. Usually two elders from each of the families would meet to negotiate the bride price (Cha & Livo, 2000). This price is paid by the groom’s family followed by a feast to acknowledge and celebrate the official marriage. The wedding is followed by a baci ceremony, in which strings are tied around the wrists of the young couples to bless them with good wishes.

Rationale:

The New Year is the highlight of the Hmong village life and is anticipated all year. Even though the festival has changed in presentation, the purpose behind still remains the same. This is a time to come together to celebrate their hard work and welcome the new year. Each person dresses up in their new and finest clothes to show that the new year will be a good, rich one. It can be compared to getting new clothes for Easter celebration. The two holidays are timed for the new growing season.

It is also similar to the Vietnamese and Chinese New Years. It is held at the 12th lunar calendar month and the beginning of the first lunar calendar month. It shares the traditions of serving food, dressing in the best clothes, and taking a break from work. Following the new years, couples get married. The wedding ceremony is multiple steps: bride price negotiations, wedding feast, and a baci hand-tying ceremony. The Hmong culture has very unique traditions that can be shared with everyone.

Common Core State Standards:

RL.1.4 Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.

English Language Development (ELD) Standards:

Specifically designed academic instruction (SDAIE) is one strategy used to meet the needs of English Learners (EL).

Define new vocabulary word in both verbal and visual manner in the simplest terms.

Use visuals and realia, such as globes, maps, and various cultural items and pictures.

Use gestures and body language.

Write key words or ideas down.

Use collaborative activities – pairs or small groups.

Reading Standards for Literature 4. Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to understand the custom of the Hmong New Year celebrations and participate in the ball-tossing game.

Students will be able to understand the custom of Hmong weddings and participate in the baci hand-tying ceremony.

Formal and Informal Assessments:

Students will understand and play the Hmong New Year ball-tossing game by creating either a song or poem to recite if the ball is dropped.

Students will understand and engage in a class baci ceremony by creating blessings and wishes for their classmates.

Assessment:

Handprint: Have students trace their handprint on a piece of paper. In each finger, write one thing they learned today.

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks to Support Student Learning:

Introduction:

Start at the carpet or story corner. Ask: “What do you usually do for the New Year?” Call on volunteers to share their responses. Read and show the cover *The Hmong Journey*. Inform students that this section of book will briefly give them a little background on the Hmong New Year Festival (Read pages 19-21 of *The Hmong Journey*)

Before dismissing students back to their seat, say “A traditional activity that occurs at the New Year celebration is the ball-throwing game called ‘pov pob.’” Boys and girls line up across from one another and toss balls back and forth. Some even sing traditional courting songs. They get to know each other and form relationships that may lead to marriage (Duffy, Harmon, Ranard, Thao, Yang, & Her, 2004). We’re going to be part of a Hmong New Year Festival and wedding ceremony today.”

Activity Sequence:

1. Put on a YouTube video of a Hmong New Year Festival: Hmong new year festival Thailand <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2RqXkug9Go>.
2. Explain the rules of the ball-throwing game:
 - a. Form two lines that face each other – one with boys and one with girls.
 - b. The students should toss the ball back and forth to the people across from them.
 - c. If the ball is dropped, the person who dropped it has to recite a song or poem.
3. Have students create a song or poem to say if they drop the ball.
4. Go outside, pass out tennis balls and have students play the game. Have them recite their poem or song to their partner if they drop the ball.
5. Put on a YouTube video of a Hmong Wedding Ceremony: traditional hmong wedding 1of3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4UyPmLqn3g>.
6. Explain the custom of the baci hand-tying ceremony.
 - a. Tie a string around the wrist of the person being celebrated. As you tie the string around the wrist, you offer a blessing.
 - b. Here's a traditional Hmong blessing translated in English:

I tie you with this string,
The life string,
The immortal string.
May you have merit,
May you be live well,
May you be strong.
If you look for silver,
May you get it.
If you look for gold,
May you get it.
May these strings protect you from all sickness.

-Cha & Norma, *Teaching with Folk Stories of the Hmong: An Activity Book*, p. 63

- c. Two examples of quick blessings are: “May your life be filled with health and wealth” and “May you live happily together and forever.”
7. Ask students to discuss what blessings and wishes they would make for a good friend. Have them write it down to use for the class baci ceremony.

Closure:

Pass out five white (colored is fine too) to each student. Have students go up to five classmates and tie a string around their classmates' hand reciting their blessing while tying the string.

Pass out a piece of white paper to each student, have them trace their hand, and in each finger have them write one thing they've learned today,

PART III Oral Traditions

UNIT III: Hmong Oral Traditions

Background of Hmong Oral Traditions

Lesson 1 Stories
 The Secret War

Lesson 2 Storytelling
 Folk Stories of the Hmong

Lesson 3 *Pa Ndau* (Story cloths)
 Pa Ndau Storytelling

Lesson 4 Music and Instruments
 Hmong Music & Musical Instruments

Background of Hmong Oral Traditions

Even after immigrating to new countries, the Hmong people faced conflicts with their new neighbors. When the French colonized Southeast Asia, they penetrated Hmong territories and led to a rebellion which lasted until 1921 with the capture of the Hmong leader Pa Chai Vue (Cha & Livo, 2000). They did not get along very well with the Lao because of religious and agricultural differences, so they partnered with the French to gain allies and power (McCall, 1999). The French control of Indochina collapsed in 1954. The Vietnamese celebrated the end of “colonialism” and the start of “Communist aggression” (McCall, 1999). McCall (1999) reported that the Pathet Lao partnered itself with the North Vietnamese to transfer supplies through Laos to South Vietnam along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. President Eisenhower ordered the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to recruit covert soldiers known as the CIA’s “secret army.” Operating against the Communists, the Hmong were to cut off the supply line. Lao Hmong soldiers, led by General Vang Pao, participated in the secret army ambushing Communist supplies, rescued the injured or downed pilots, and protected American military installations as part of the fight to rid the region of communism (Hmong Timeline, 2009). Chan and Livo (1990) claimed that they were doing the bulk of the American fighting.

After the Americans withdrew from Vietnam in 1975, the Hmong who allied with the US feared that they would be sought for revenge. Between 1975-1992, over 100,000 Hmong escaped to Thailand by crossing the Mekong River. They were living in temporary refugee camps until it was safe to return to Laos or fled to remote mountainous regions of Thailand. Many still remain in these areas while some resettled in other countries, such as France, French Guyana, Australia, Canada, or the United States (McCall, 1999). Some escaped the camps and lived among the Thai villages and became Thai citizens (Cha & Livo, 2000). In July of 1975, General Vang Pao was one of the first Hmong to migrate to America and France. (LESSON 1)

The Hmong are rich in their oral traditions. In Laos, stories were told beside the fireplace before bedtime. This was way before books were printed. The Hmong told their stories in rhymed verses and for anyone who wish to listen to them. They believed that it’s not good to reveal everything, so listeners start to catch on to the deeper meanings. These stories are windows into the Hmong’s rich culture and worldviews. (LESSON 2)

Hmong culture and history were recorded in threads including everyday life in Laos. These tasks included growing, harvesting, and preparing food; religious or social ceremonies such as Hmong New Year; plants and animals native to Laos; folk tales, myths, and legends that were part of the oral tradition of Hmong culture; and the effects of the Vietnam War on Hmong people along with their escape from Laos and immigration to other countries (McCall, 1999). Men and women worked together to create story cloths. Women came together to sew and talk. The story cloths were valuable nonwritten text to portray the lives and struggles of Hmong people to other audiences. McCall (1999) asserts that it serves as an advocacy art and artistic response to oppression and an act of standing up for themselves against domination. *Pa ndau* was the preserver of storytelling traditions of cultural displacement and historical migrations, commercial enterprise, and the identity of the Hmong (Chiu, 2004). (LESSON 3)

Music, singing, playing, and dancing are part of pretty much every culture. Hmong traditions are learned orally. Music is a big part of the Hmong life. Hmong songs are typically poems or set speeches. They fall into the category of *kwv txhiaj*, which are "...songs of love, separation, war, orphanage, homelessness, and more" (Thao, 2006, p. 58). Hmong songs don't serve the same purpose as lullabies because they are sung to express personal hardship, physical life and beauty, and for courtship (Thao, 2006). Thao (2006) also asserts that these songs are sung during courting to engage in romantic relationships or for accompaniment while traveling to and fro the plantations. The musical instruments are made from available materials, such as bamboo. (LESSON 4)

Unit 3: Hmong Oral Traditions

Lesson 1: Stories

Lesson Subject(s): English Language Arts and History Social Studies

Learners' Grade Level: 1st

Pacing: 45 minutes

Lesson Topic: The Secret War

Materials:

The Hmong Journey by Ger Thao

The Terrible Journey by Cha Yah

Story Element worksheet

Teacher Background:

Even after immigrating to new countries, the Hmong people faced conflicts with their new neighbors. When the French colonized Southeast Asia, they penetrated Hmong territories and led to a rebellion which lasted until 1921 with the capture of the Hmong leader Pa Chai Vue (Cha & Livo, 2000). They did not get along very well with the Lao because of religious and agricultural differences, so they partnered with the French to gain allies and power (McCall, 1999). The French control of Indochina collapsed in 1954. The Vietnamese celebrated the end of “colonialism” and the start of “Communist aggression” (McCall, 1999). McCall (1999) reported that the Pathet Lao partnered itself with the North Vietnamese to transfer supplies through Laos to South Vietnam along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. President Eisenhower ordered the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to recruit covert soldiers known as the CIA’s “secret army.” Operating against the Communists, the Hmong were to cut off the supply line. Lao Hmong soldiers, led by General Vang Pao, participated in the secret army ambushing Communist supplies, rescued the injured or downed pilots, and protected American military installations as part of the fight to rid the region of communism (Hmong Timeline, 2009). Chan and Livo (1990) claimed that they were doing the bulk of the American fighting.

After the Americans withdrew from Vietnam in 1975, the Hmong who allied with the US feared that they would be sought for revenge. Between 1975-1992, over 100,000 Hmong escaped to Thailand by crossing the Mekong River. They were living in temporary refugee camps until it was safe to return to Laos or fled to remote mountainous regions of Thailand. Many still remain in these areas while some resettled in other countries, such as France, French Guyana, Australia, Canada, or the United States (McCall, 1999). Some escaped the camps and lived among the Thai villages and became Thai citizens (Cha & Livo, 2000). In July of 1975, General Vang Pao was one of the first Hmong to migrate to America and France.

Rationale:

The stories adapted and varied to conditions and situations where Hmong lived. Hmong culture along with Hmong literature had to defend itself from being oppressed and abandoned. Hmong traditions crossed political boundaries and settled in Northern Laos, where they were preserved and handed down from generation to generation (Johnson & Yang, 2010). Hmong stories are original storytelling. "...Hmong stories retain the unsanitized richness of the culture" (Cha & Livo, 2000, p. 29). The stories are told like it really is; it's real. Stories bring people together. They allow us to see the world beyond our own.

Common Core State Standards:

RL.1.1 Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of the central message or lesson.

RL.1.3 Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

English Language Development (ELD) Standards:

Specifically designed academic instruction (SDAIE) is one strategy used to meet the needs of English Learners (EL).

Define new vocabulary word in both verbal and visual manner in the simplest terms.

Use visuals and realia, such as globes, maps, and various cultural items and pictures.

Use gestures and body language.

Write key words or ideas down.

Use collaborative activities – pairs or small groups.

Reading Standards for Literature 5. Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types.

Reading Standards for Informational Text 7. Use the illustrations and details in a text to discuss its key ideas.

Reading Standards for Informational Text 9. Identify basic similarities and differences between two texts on the same topic (e.g., illustrations, descriptions, or procedures).

Speaking and Listening Standards 3. Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to use elements of a story to retell the story *The Terrible Journey*.

Formal and Informal Assessments:

Students will retell the story *The Terrible Journey* using four of the nine elements of a story.

Assessment Rubric

4	Student retold the story using four out of the nine elements of a story.
3	Student retold the story using three out of the nine elements of a story.
2	Student retold the story using two out of the nine elements of a story.
1	Student retold the story using only one out of the nine elements of a story.

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks to Support Student Learning:**Introduction:**

Start at the carpet or story corner. Ask: “What makes a good story? What are elements of a story?” Call on volunteers to share their responses. Students should come with responses like characters, plot, etc. Read and show the cover *The Hmong Journey*. Inform students that this section of book will briefly give them a little background on the Secret War and why the Hmong had to move away from their home. (Read pages 21-27 of *The Hmong Journey*)

Before dismissing students back to their seat, say “I am going to model how to use the Story Elements to retell the story *The Hmong Journey*. The characters of the story are Nao Tua, Wang Chang, and their children. For the plot, in the beginning, a group of

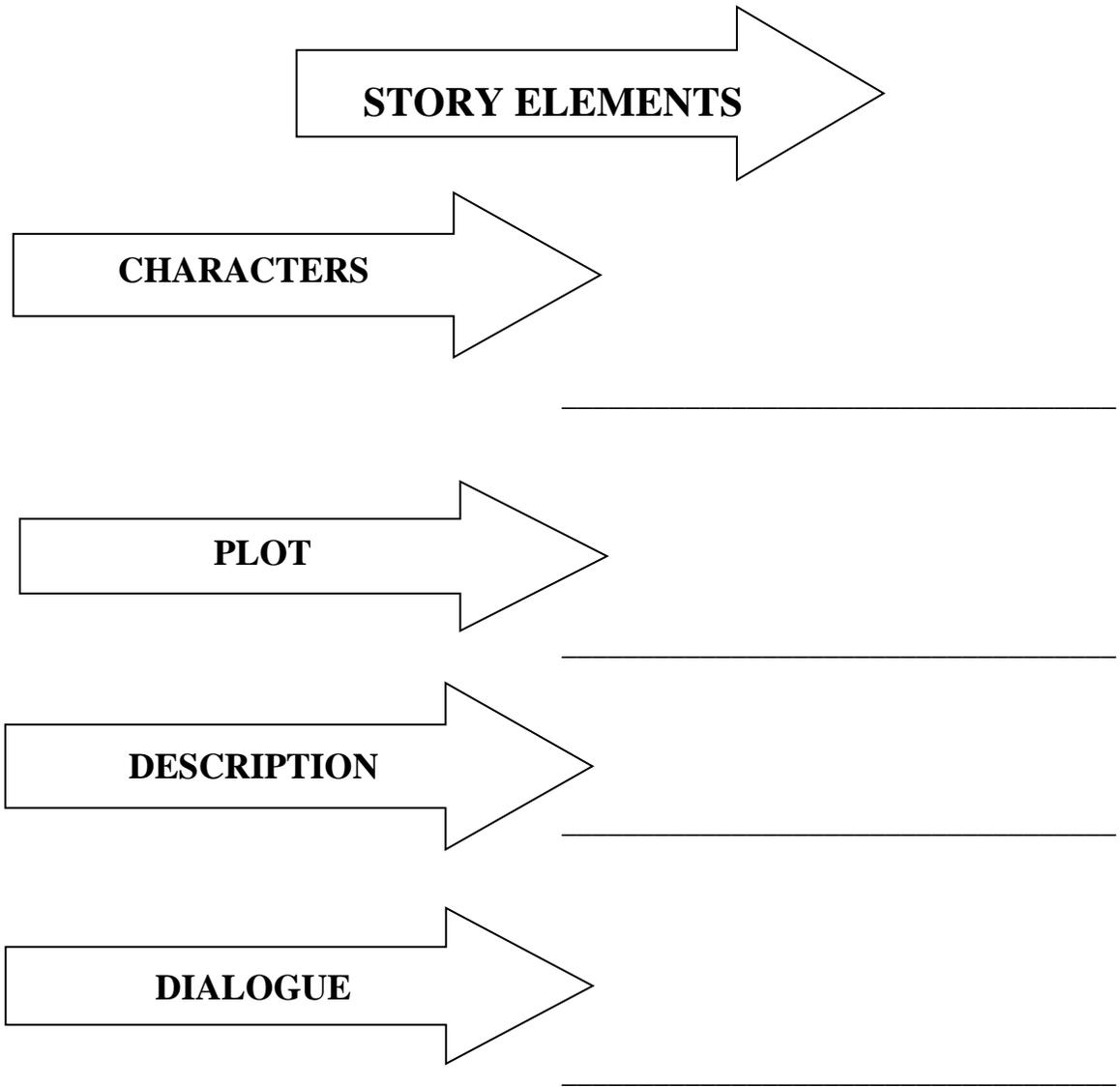
Hmong villagers lived in the mountains of Xieng Khouang making a living through farming and hunting. In the middle, they had to cross the Mekong River to escape the bad men and ended up living in refugee camps in Thailand. At the end, many Hmong families got to fly to America for a better life.”

Activity Sequence:

1. Pass out a Story Element worksheet to each student. Go over each element and write one or two words on the line to define it.
 - a. Explain that we will be using these elements to retell another Hmong story.
2. Dismiss students back to the carpet and show the cover *The Terrible Journey*.
 - a. Have students pay attention to the title and the cover to make a prediction about what they think the book will be about.
3. Read the story and remind students to pay attention to the story elements in the story.
4. Once the story is over, have students sit next to a partner, and practice retelling each other the character(s), beginning, middle, and end of the story.
 - a. Have volunteers share their retelling.
 - b. Dismiss students back to their seat.
5. Have students take out their Story Elements sheet and choose at least two other elements to retell the story.

Closure:

As a class, go over all nine elements of the story *The Terrible Journey*.



THEME



MOTIVATION



CONFLICT



RESOLUTION



CONCLUSION



Unit 3: Hmong Oral Traditions

Lesson 2: Storytelling

Lesson Subject(s): English Language Arts and History Social Studies

Learners' Grade Level: 1st

Pacing: 45 minutes

Lesson Topic: Folk Stories of the Hmong

Materials:

“The Orphan Boy and His Wife” / *Txiv Nraug Ntsuag thiab Nia Gao Zhua Pa*
story
Milk and cookies
Storytelling set-up: fireplace or campfire

Teacher Background:

The Hmong are rich in their oral traditions. In Laos, stories were told beside the fireplace before bedtime. This was way before books were printed. The Hmong told their stories in rhymed verses and for anyone who wish to listen to them. They believed that it's not good to reveal everything, so listeners start to catch on to the deeper meanings. These stories are windows into the Hmong's rich culture and worldviews.

Rationale:

Storytelling is an essential tool for families and schools to use. Storytelling has many benefits. It allows for students of all ages to interact and share a personal experience. It gives the listener an opportunity to think and feel what the teller is trying to get across. The storyteller is able to get immediate feedback from the audience. Both sides are actively engaged.

Storytelling is a great mental exercise for the brain. As the storyteller is creative with words, the listener is creates visuals in his/her mind of the story characters and events. This shared experience allows us to connect as one. It enhances the child's education through oral language and builds upon the child's choice of books and stories to read.

Common Core State Standards:

SL.1.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

SL.1.2 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

SL.1.5 Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

SL.1.6 Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation.

English Language Development (ELD) Standards:

Specifically designed academic instruction (SDAIE) is one strategy used to meet the needs of English Learners (EL).

Define new vocabulary word in both verbal and visual manner in the simplest terms.

Use visuals and realia, such as globes, maps, and various cultural items and pictures.

Use gestures and body language.

Write key words or ideas down.

Use collaborative activities – pairs or small groups.

Speaking and Listening Standards 3. Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to engage in a storytelling session and create illustrations for the folktale “The Orphan Boy and His Wife” / *Txiv Nraug Ntsuag thiab Nia Gao Zhua Pa*.

Formal and Informal Assessments:

Students will illustrate one section of the folk story “The Orphan Boy and His Wife” / *Txiv Nraug Ntsuag thiab Nia Gao Zhua Pa* to be compiled into a class book.

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks to Support Student Learning:**Introduction:**

Start at the carpet or story corner. Ask: “What does it mean to be a storyteller? What kinds of stories do you tell or can you tell?” Have volunteers share their responses. Tell students that we are going to be part of a “Milk and Cookies Storytelling” show. *Milk and Cookies* Storytelling isn’t just for writers and performers – it’s for anyone who has a tale to tell, or wants to hear a story told well, to have a warm, relaxed environment to do just that. A place with tea, cushions, cookies and friends.

Before dismissing students back to their seat, say “I am going to be the storyteller for this first show. I am going to tell a folk story of the Hmong. Folk story is a story that has been told and passed on. The story of “The Orphan Boy and His Wife” is about an orphan boy.”

Activity Sequence:

1. Have students sit around the storytelling set-up.
2. Pass out milk and cookies.
3. Tell the story of “The Orphan Boy and His Wife.”
4. Once the story is over, have a discussion on how the Hmong value intelligence, courage, patience, family, loyalty, respect for parents, keeping a promise, kindness to the weak and disadvantaged, honesty, and integrity. Which one of these did you hear in the story?
5. Give each student a section of the story to illustrate.
6. Compile the pictures into book. Share the complete book.

Closure:

Have everyone sit in a circle. Instruct someone to start a story. Have that student then stop, toss a ball, and say, “And then what happened?” The second person must continue the story from the point where the first teller quit. The story can continue like this until someone officially ends it.

The Orphan Boy and His Wife
Txiv Nraug Ntsuag thiab Nia Gao Zhua Pa

Long ago, there was a young man whose parents had both died, leaving him an orphan boy. He had nothing to eat, and nothing to wear but tatters and rags. Every day, he would go into the forest and cut firewood; then when night fell, he would bring wood and build a roaring fire to relax himself so that he could go to sleep. (1)

One day while the Orphan Boy was cutting wood, an old female spirit who lived in the forest called out, “Who is cutting wood down there? Is it a man or a spirit?” The Orphan Boy answered, “I am a man, and I am an orphan.” Then he asked, “And you, are you human or a spirit?” (2)

The old woman replied, “I too am a person,” then added, “Orphan, my boy, I am very old. I live deep in that forest there, and I have no son to help me cut firewood. Come with me, up to my home, and cut firewood for me.” (3)

So the Orphan Boy went home with the old woman and she kept him for three days, gathering wild natural cereal grain for him to eat. The old woman said to an orphan, “I’m sorry your mother and father are dead. You need a wife.” The orphan boy said, “I can’t marry anyone. I don’t have any clothes. I don’t have a house. I don’t have any money.” (4)

The old woman said, “You can marry a wife. Go sit by the road and watch. All kinds of people will come by. Some will be dressed very elegantly and look very nice. You should not bother with those people. When you see three sisters riding on thin, sickly, dirty horses with dry manure all over them, the one you want is the youngest sister, who will be riding on the last horse. Speak to the three sisters. You should grab the tail of the youngest sister’s horse and never let go of it no matter what happens.” (5)

So the orphan sat by the road and watched. There were so many people coming by on the road. Some were dressed in silk and silvery clothes and were very attractive. Then he saw three sisters riding dirty horses. He grabbed the last horse’s tail and held on to it. Nia Ngao Zhua Pa looked at him and said, “Please let go of my horse’s tail. I am in a hurry.” (6)

He didn’t do as she asked. Her oldest sister said, “Nia Ngao Zhua Pa, why argue with this orphan? He may be the husband fortune sent to you.” (7)

Nia Ngao Zhua Pa tried to ruffle herself up to scare him, like a hen does with her feathers. He just said, “Oh, that doesn’t scare me a bit.” (8)

After a while, she went with him and she married him. First, Nia Ngao Zhua Pa took some leaves and changed them into a beautiful house. Then she took off her ring and changed it into a rice pot. Then she took off her bracelet and changed it into a stove. She took half a grain of rice. He thought it was too little. “How can it be enough for both of us to eat?” he asked. (9)

“Don’t worry,” she said. “There will be plenty. If there is not enough, you may eat it all and I won’t have any.” She changed it into a pot full of rice. Then she took a flower and changed it into cooked chicken. The orphan was surprised and knew he had a good wife. He was happy and rich. (10)

But after a long time of watching their happiness, a neighbor girl, Nia Ngao Kou Kaw, said, “The orphan and his wife are rich. I’m poor. I want to be rich, too.” (11)

She was jealous. She thought, “I will hurt the orphan’s wife.” Then she said to the orphan, “Your wife is a bad woman. She drank dragon’s blood. She drank nine bowl’s of dragon’s blood. Tell your wife to go away. I will marry you.” (12)

So the orphan said to his wife, Nia Ngao Zhua Pa, “A beautiful young girl wants to marry me.” Many days of this went on, and finally one day he told his wife to go away, but his wife didn’t want to go away. She said, “I want to live with you.” The orphan began to tell her regularly to go away. (13)

“I want to marry a beautiful young girl. I don’t want you here.” So the orphan’s wife went to the lake. She walked into it. She said, “Please, my husband, tell me to come back.” (14)

But the husband didn’t say anything. The wife said, “Please, my husband. The water is up to my knees. Tell me to come back.” (15)

But the husband didn’t say anything. The wife said, “Please, my husband. The water is up to my waist. Tell me to come back.” (16)

But the husband didn’t say anything. The wife implored, “Please, my husband. The water is up to my neck. Tell me to come back.” (17)

But the husband didn’t say anything. And then the water was over his wife’s head. She was gone. The orphan went home, but his house was gone, and only the leaves were in its place. He said, “Where is my beautiful house?” He married the neighbor girl, Nia Ngao Kou Kaw, but he was not happy. He took to regularly visiting the lake where his wife was. He sat down by the lake and he cried, “I want to see Nia Ngao Zhua Pa.” (18)

A frog that happened to be nearby heard him and said, “I can drink the water. I can drink all the water. Then you can see Nia Ngao Zhua Pa. But, don’t laugh! You must not laugh.” So the frog drank and drank. He drank half the water and his stomach got very big. The orphan laughed, “Ha, ha, ha!” and the frog’s stomach burst open, *poosh!* (19)

The water went back into the lake-*swoosh!* The orphan looked at the lake. He said, “What can I do? I want to see Nia Ngao Zhua Pa. I want to tell her to come back! Who can help me? I know, I’ll go to the shoa. He knows everything. He will tell me what

to do.” And so the orphan went to see the shoa. The shoa gave him advice. “Go and beg the frog again. Sew his stomach back up.” (20)

The orphan did as he was instructed. He begged the frog to try again. The frog finally agreed. “Remember, you must not laugh. If you do I’ll never do it again for you.” So the orphan promised and sewed the frog’s stomach back up. The frog drank and drank the water again, and this time the orphan didn’t laugh. (21)

When the water was gone he saw his wife at the bottom of the lake, making needlework, sewing beautiful *pa ndau*. He looked back at the frog, who looked ridiculous, and, forgetting his promise, he laughed. This time the frog was furious. “If you were really sad you wouldn’t laugh at me no matter how silly I look. I am not going to help you again.” (22)

The orphan cried and cried and begged the frog, but the frog refused to drink the water. The orphan sadly dragged himself home. The next day he came back to the lake. He sat on the shore and cried, and cried, and cried. The frog wandered by and heard him crying. (23)

The orphan saw the frog and started to beg him to drink the water. He begged, pleaded, and cried. The frog felt sorry for the orphan, so he drank the water again and this time the orphan didn’t laugh. After a while he saw his wife at the bottom of the lake, and he jumped in with her. He grabbed her by the arm and spoke to her. (24)

“You wanted to marry a young girl,” she reminded him. “You have a black heart and are very bad. Why are you still following me?” The orphan begged her to forgive him. He told her, “I had been tempted so many times I became weak. I am sorry. Please, please, please forgive me.” Finally she relented, and today they are living at the bottom of the lake-married forever. (25)

The End!

-Cha & Livo, *Teaching with Folk Stories of the Hmong: An Activity Book*, 2000, p. 31-34

Unit 3: Hmong Oral Traditions

Lesson 3: *Pa N dau* (Story cloth)

Lesson Subject(s): English Language Arts and History Social Studies

Learners' Grade Level: 1st

Pacing: 45 minutes – 1 hour

Lesson Topic: *Pa N dau* Storytelling

Materials:

The Hmong Journey by Ger Thao

Dia's Storycloth by Dia Cha

Hmong Textile Designs by Anthony Chan & Norma Livo

Pa ndau samples

Pa ndau paper patterns

9"x12" cardstock paper

Media for illustrations: paint, scraps of colored paper, tissue paper, stencils, crayon scrubbings, finger printing, leaves, shells, feathers, fabrics, etc.

Teacher Background:

Hmong culture and history were recorded in threads including everyday life in Laos. These tasks included growing, harvesting, and preparing food; religious or social ceremonies such as Hmong New Year; plants and animals native to Laos; folk tales, myths, and legends that were part of the oral tradition of Hmong culture; and the effects of the Vietnam War on Hmong people along with their escape from Laos and immigration to other countries (McCall, 1999). Men and women worked together to create story cloths. Women came together to sew and talk. The story cloths were valuable nonwritten text to portray the lives and struggles of Hmong people to other audiences. McCall (1999) asserts that it serves as an advocacy art and artistic response to oppression and an act of standing up for themselves against domination. *Pa ndau* was the preserver of storytelling traditions of cultural displacement and historical migrations, commercial enterprise, and the identity of the Hmong (Chiu, 2004).

Rationale:

Hmong textile artists helped to preserve Hmong culture by sewing *pa ndau* to wear and sell. The demands to support their families has caused many Hmong to start going to school and getting jobs. Many textile artists in the US have been able to make a living creating and selling *pa ndau*. The unique textile art seems to be a dying art because young women are sewing less. Cha and Livo (2000) suggest that the symbolic meanings have been lost and misinterpreted. Some Hmong women are also sewing less as their

children develop dislike and embarrassment for the wearing of traditional Hmong clothes. Some are still teaching their daughters to create *pa ndau* because it's important to pass it on to the next generation (McCall, 1999). Traditions are fading, and the *pa ndau* served as a bridge between the generations and as a mode of communication with the outside world. *Pa ndau* story cloths are the form of expressions of storytelling from the Hmong people with a rich oral tradition.

Common Core State Standards:

SL.1.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

SL.1.2 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

SL.1.5 Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

SL.1.6 Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation.

English Language Development (ELD) Standards:

Specifically designed academic instruction (SDAIE) is one strategy used to meet the needs of English Learners (EL).

Define new vocabulary word in both verbal and visual manner in the simplest terms.

Use visuals and realia, such as globes, maps, and various cultural items and pictures.

Use gestures and body language.

Write key words or ideas down.

Use collaborative activities – pairs or small groups.

Speaking and Listening Standards 3. Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to interpret Hmong history and culture through *Dia's Story Cloth*, *Hmong Textile Designs*, and sample *pa ndau* story cloths.

Students will be able to create a story cloth and share their story

Formal and Informal Assessments:

Students will use *Dia's Story Cloth*, *Hmong Textile Designs*, and *pa ndau* story cloths to answer questions about the Hmong history and culture.

Students will share their story through the creation of a story cloth using the media of their choice.

Assessment:

Exit Ticket - Each student will be given a blank sheet of paper as an exit ticket to complete before leaving the room. They will jot down answers to these questions: What is the most important thing I learned today? What questions do I still have?

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks to Support Student Learning:**Introduction:**

Start at the carpet or story corner. Ask: "What is a quilt? What do we use quilts for?" Have volunteers share their responses. Tell students that we are going to learn about the Hmong's people form of quilt, called *pa ndau* (pronounced pon dow). The Hmong tell their stories through *pa ndau* story cloths. They show their illustrations using stitchery and batik as their media. (Refer back to the story *The Hmong Journey* and read page 29) You will learn about the Hmong history and culture through *Dia's Story Cloth* and *Hmong Textile Designs*.

Activity Sequence:

1. Show the cover *Dia's Story Cloth*. Have children use the title and look at the illustrations to make a prediction about what they think the story is going to be about.
2. Read the story.
3. Once the story is over, have a discussion on what the students learned about the Hmong history through the story?
4. Next have a discussion on what the students learned about the Hmong culture from the story?
5. Show several examples of Hmong *pa ndau* (if you don't have real sample, use the visuals provided or search the web for some). Use the *Hmong Textile Design* book to show additional samples.
6. Each *pa ndau* design had symbolic patterns, which stood for something or had a specific meaning. Point out the various patterns and symbols on the two sample.
7. Explain that most story cloths have illustrations to show the daily lives of the Hmong people or tell a story, but some cloths have stories and words stitched on them (show and read the example).
8. Put students into groups of four and give each group a story cloth. Have them work together to come up with an oral story using their story cloth.
9. Give each group two minutes to present their story to the class.

Closure:

Remind students that the Hmong made *pa ndau* as a way to tell their story. Explain that students had made interpretations of the Hmong through their story cloths. Now they are going to get the chance to create their own story cloth to tell their story. They will be given a 9"x12' background but be able to use any media or materials to create their story cloth. These story cloths will be posted in the classroom.

Hand each student an index card or stickie note. Tell them this is their Exit Ticket. Have them write on the card one thing they've learned today and any questions they still have.

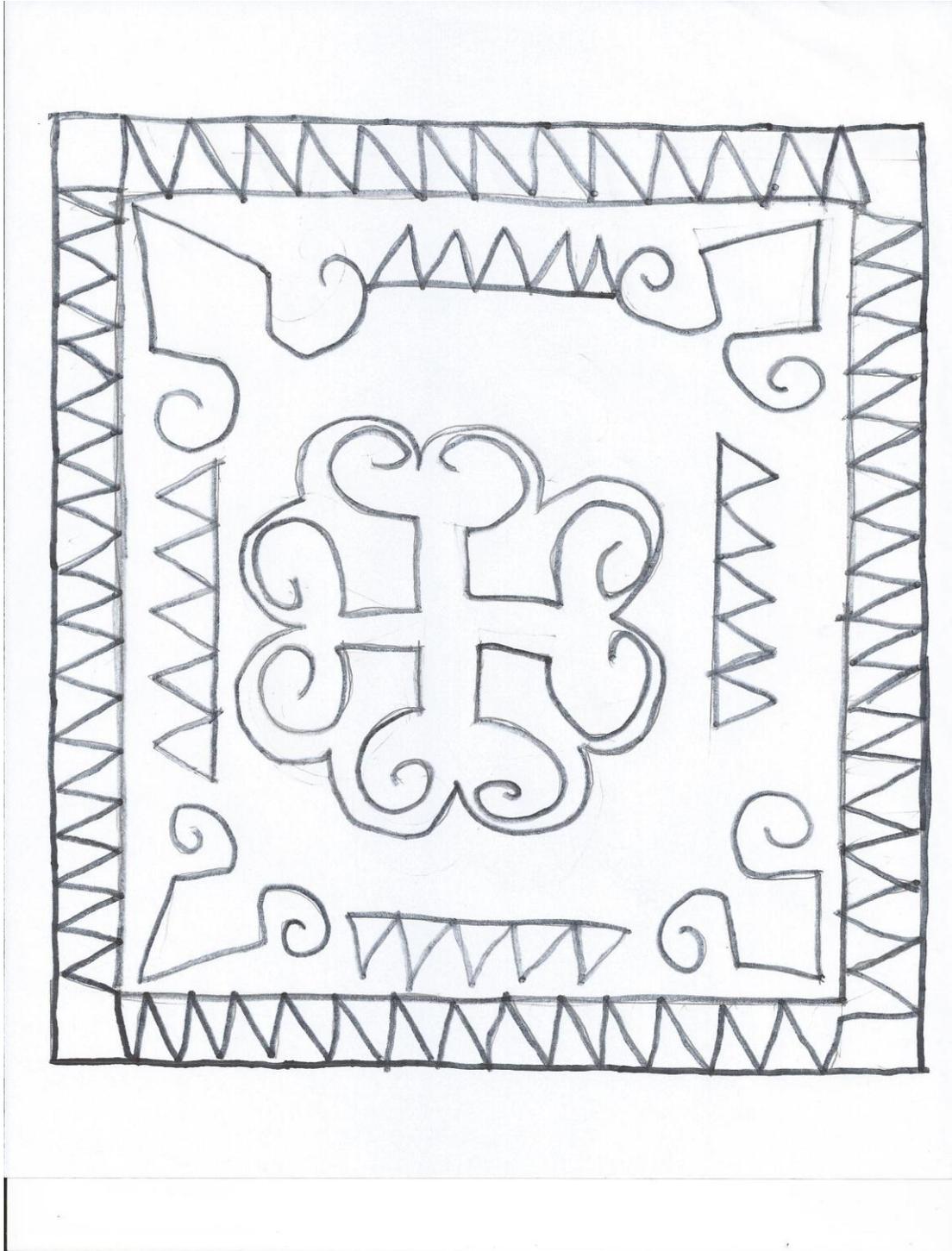
Hmong Large *Pa Ndau*: Hmong Daily Life



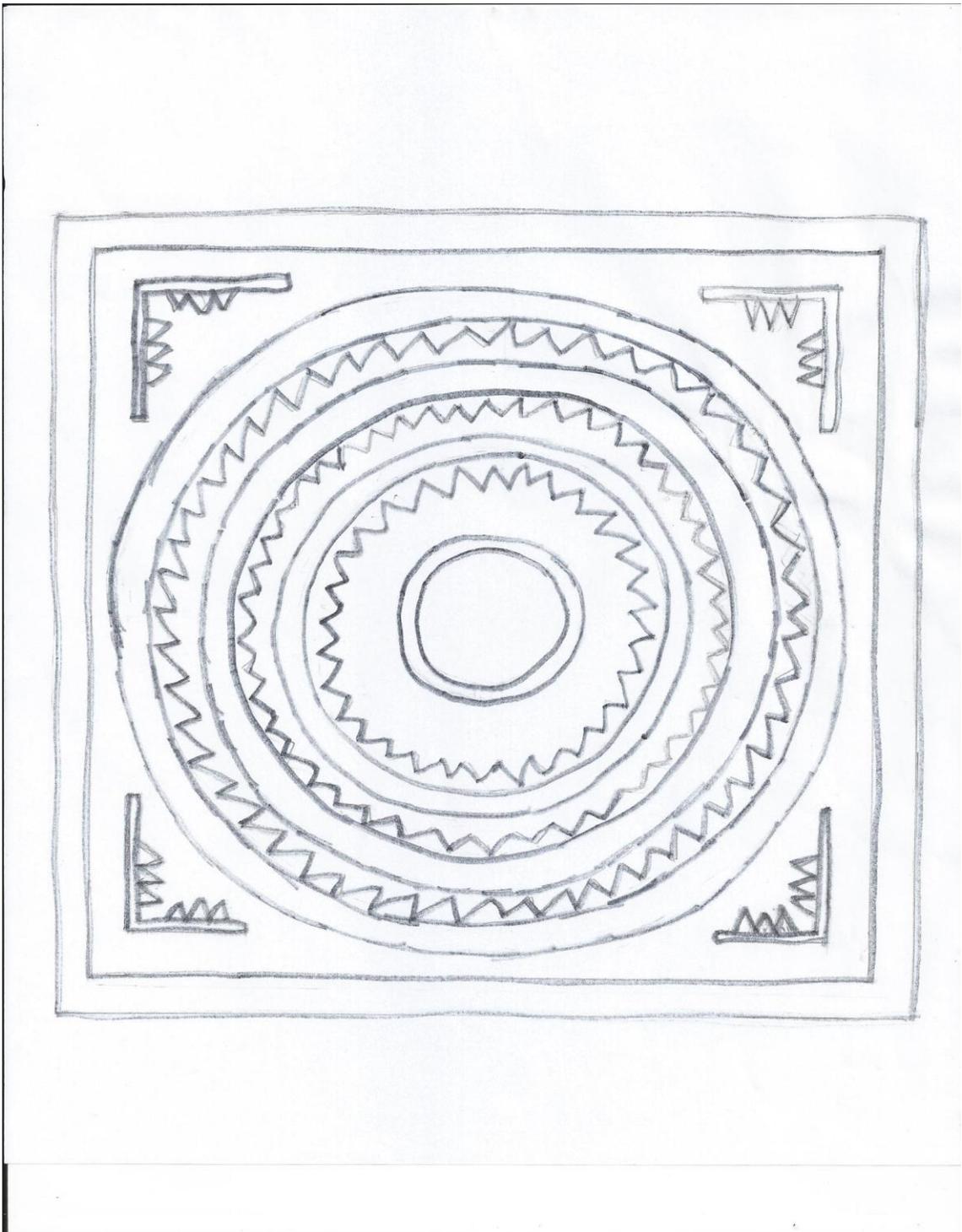
Hmong Small Pa Ndau



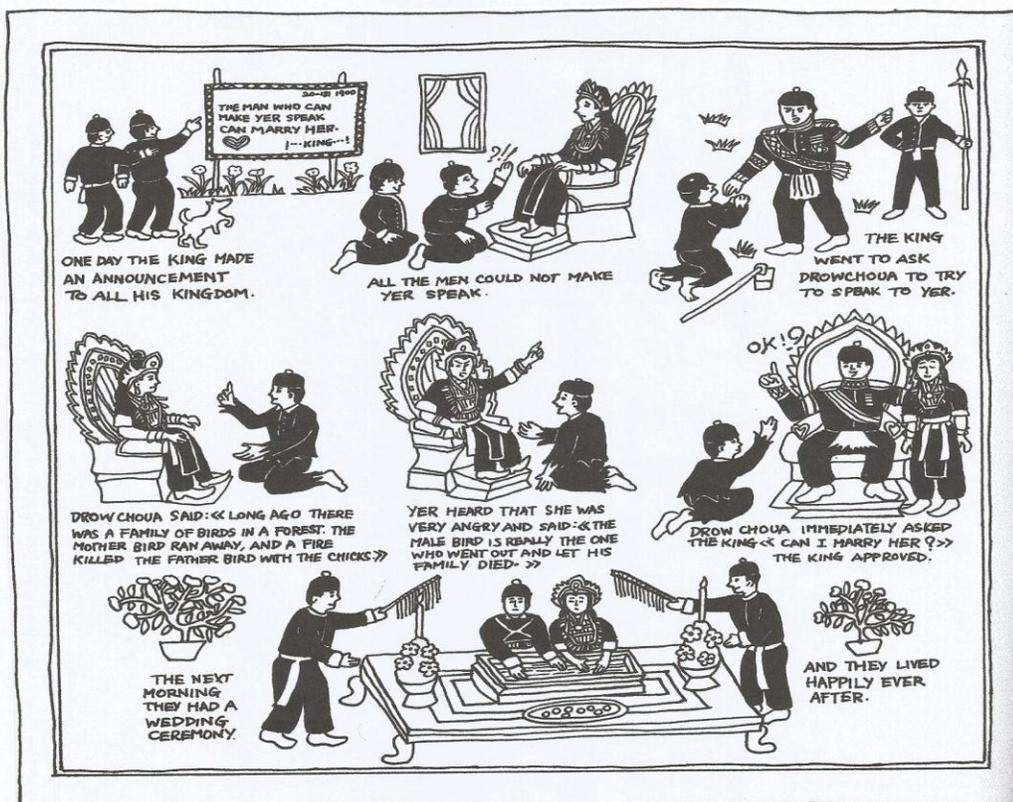
Pa Ndau Pattern 1



Pa Ndau Pattern 2



Pa Ndau with Story Text



Story Cloth Sample 1



Story Cloth Sample 2



Unit 3: Hmong Oral Traditions

Lesson 4: Music and Instruments

Lesson Subject(s): English Language Arts and History Social Studies

Learners' Grade Level: 1st

Pacing: 45 minutes – 1 hour

Lesson Topic: Hmong Music and Musical Instruments

Materials:

The Hmong Journey by Ger Thao

Real or visuals of Hmong instruments: Keng, Mouth Harp, Leaf, Violin, Flute, Hmong songs

Materials for making instruments: sticks, pipes, bottles, cans, tubes, seeds, macaroni, etc.

Internet

Teacher Background:

Music, singing, playing, and dancing are part of pretty much every culture. Hmong traditions are learned orally. Music is a big part of the Hmong life. Hmong songs are typically poems or set speeches. They fall into the category of *kwv txhiaj*, which are "...songs of love, separation, war, orphanage, homelessness, and more" (Thao, 2006, p. 58). Hmong songs don't serve the same purpose as lullabies because they are sung to express personal hardship, physical life and beauty, and for courtship (Thao, 2006). Thao (2006) also asserts that these songs are sung during courting to engage in romantic relationships or for accompaniment while traveling to and fro the plantations. The musical instruments are made from available materials, such as bamboo.

Rationale:

Music has been in existence forever. Music carries messages. Everyone has their own interpretation and use for music. Music serves many purposes. With technology, Hmong American children have other things to explore, so Hmong oral literature is slowly disappearing in passing time (Johnson & Yang, 2010). With this, traditions and the Hmong language are fading. Today, Hmong youth play all sorts of Western instruments: guitar, piano, drum, etc. They also listen to more of American music and contemporary Hmong music than traditional Hmong music. Even though music choices may have changed or differ according to regions, music can help us connect with other cultures and maintain our own.

Common Core State Standards:

SL.1.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

SL.1.2 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

SL.1.5 Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

SL.1.6 Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation.

English Language Development (ELD) Standards:

Specifically designed academic instruction (SDAIE) is one strategy used to meet the needs of English Learners (EL).

Define new vocabulary word in both verbal and visual manner in the simplest terms.

Use visuals and realia, such as globes, maps, and various cultural items and pictures.

Use gestures and body language.

Write key words or ideas down.

Use collaborative activities – pairs or small groups.

Speaking and Listening Standards 3. Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to explore the traditional Hmong musical instruments and understand the purpose of each instrument.

Students will be able to make musical instruments from common materials.

Formal and Informal Assessments:

Students will show understanding of the traditional Hmong musical instruments by completing 3 out of 6 instruments on the “Traditional Hmong Music and Musical Instruments” worksheet.

Students will make a musical instrument and present it to the class.

Assessment Rubric

4	Child actively participates in classroom activities and discussions. Working independently, the child completes 3 out of 6 Hmong musical instruments. Child's presentation is well-rehearsed.
3	Child actively participates in classroom activities and discussions. With directions, the child completes 3 out of 6 Hmong musical instruments. Child's presentation is well-rehearsed.
2	Child participates in classroom activities and discussions, when encouraged. With direction, the child completes 2 out of 6 Hmong musical instruments. Child's presents instruments.
1	Child participates in classroom activities and discussions, when encouraged. With assistance, the child completes at least musical instrument. Child's presents instruments when encouraged.

Instructional Strategies and Learning Tasks to Support Student Learning:**Introduction:**

Start at the carpet or story corner. Ask: "What is music? How do we make music?" Have volunteers share their responses. Tell students that we are going to learn about the Hmong music and different musical instruments. (Refer back to the *The Hmong Journey* page 20 to remind them of one musical instrument we've already read about)

Activity Sequence:

1. Have students walk back to their seat with traditional Hmong music playing in the background.
2. Pass out the "Hmong Music and Musical Instruments" worksheet and read directions together.
3. Explain that they will be looking at real Hmong instruments and learning about how to play them and what they are used for.
4. Remind students to pay attention because they will choose three of the instruments to draw a picture of and write an interesting fact about.
5. Go through and explain the purpose and how to play each instrument (use YouTube video if actual instruments are not available).
6. Assign students into groups of four and start at different stations. Allow them five minutes at each station to explore the instruments if available.

7. Have students go back to their seat to fill out their “Hmong Music and Musical Instruments” worksheet. Collect when done.
8. Explain that Hmong people’s musical instruments are made from materials that are readily available. We are going to each make our very own instruments today with materials available in our class.
9. Have a table set up with all sorts of materials for students to select to make their instruments.

Closure:

Have students come up and present their instrument invention to the class.

- 1) Name of the instruments
- 2) Materials used
- 3) Sound(s) it makes
- 4) Use or purpose of instrument

Hand out a 3-2-1 handout and have students write down 3 things they have learned, 2 things they can apply to their life, and 1 question or comment.

Traditional Hmong Music and Musical Instruments

Direction: Choose 3 instruments, draw a picture on the left, and write one interesting fact on the right.

Keng	
Mouth Harp	
Leaf Blowing	
Violin	
Flute	
Songs	

Instrument 1: Keng

The keng (*kleng* or *qeej*) is commonly used during Hmong funerals. It is a free-reed multiple pipe musical instrument or bamboo mouth organ. Only men and boys play this instrument. It is a solo instrument played during social events, New Year Festival, and leisure time. It is played horizontally and is about two to five feet in length. It's the only traditional Hmong musical instrument that can be played while dancing.



Keng Long Yang: Hmoob Qeej (Hmong Voices):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BsfztCraAcs>

Instrument 2: Mouth Harp

The mouth harp has romantic and courting purposes. It functions as a kind of love letter. It is played by both males and females during courtship at night. They are made to produce a variety of different notes and sounds by changing the size and shape of the mouth. It has a flexible blade. The person playing it moves his mouth to create different overtones. These bamboo are made out of a single piece of bamboo.



DÚC MINH plays the Hmong Jew's harp in the Hmong style:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1p5z2AXMNE>

Instrument 3: Leaf Blowing

Leaf blowing is a blade of grass or plant leaf held between the thumbs. It is used by both males and females. They leaf blow during their leisure time or when they travel on the road. Leaf blowing is done during the day to express feelings.

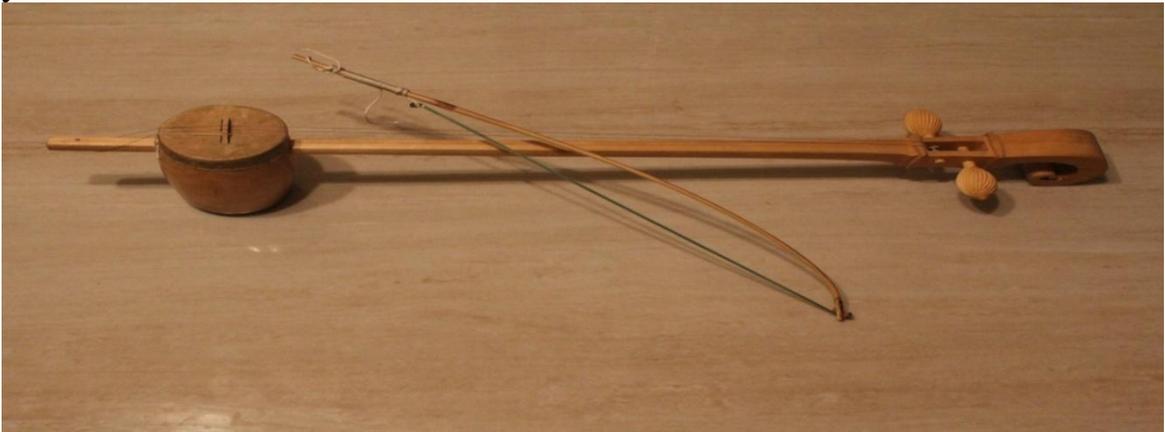


Playing the Leaf - Tshuab Nplooj:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzIfki3pTzE>

Instrument 4: Violin

The one-string violin (*xim xaus*) is played mostly by men and boys during courtship, New Year Festivals, or leisure time. Very few Hmong in the United States know how to play this instrument. It can be seen played once a year at the New Year Celebration.



Hmong Two String Violin Song (First Song):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KeA7LtIDYTU>

Instrument 5: Flutes

There are three types of Hmong flutes: reed flute (*daj nplaim*), leaf flute (*daj plooj*), and bamboo flute (*daj plooj liv*). Both men and women played these flutes during leisure and courtship time. Some would play them coming home from or to the fields. This beautiful music is usually accompanied by singing birds and insects. In the United States, the flute is only played at parties or inside the home.



Hmong girls Flute สาวมั่งเป่าขลุ่ย:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1aQz9dxyBU>

Instrument 6: Traditional Hmong Song

Traditional folk songs are sung during the New Year Festival, leisure time, traveling between home and the fields, or a request. Folk songs come in many different topics: process of becoming a daughter-in-law (*kwv txhiaj ua nyab*), love songs (*kwv txhiaj plees*), orphan songs (*kwv txhiaj ntsuag*), and death songs (*kwv txhiaj tuag*).



Kwv Txhiaj (traditional Hmong song):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nFVQpG5ZfvQ>



3 things you learned

--	--	--

2 things you can use in your life

--	--

1 question or comment

--

**Culminating Project:
How Do We Learn About Others?**

Ancestor

Tradition

Culture

Immigrant

Custom



Culminating Project: How Do We Learn About Others?

Description: Children will make a class book of family customs or ceremonies.

Pacing: 45 minutes

Materials: Family Custom Letter / My Family Custom Handout

Standard: W.1.8 With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

Build Background

Activate Prior Knowledge: Ask children to describe some of the occasions they celebrate such as birthdays, holidays, or other special days. Encourage them to name something they do at these events such as eat birthday cake, watch fireworks, decorate, or listen to special music.

Introduce Vocabulary: Preview the lesson vocabulary word: custom. Ask: What are customs? How do we learn about customs? Have you ever read a book that told you about the customs of other people? Define custom as “an old or popular way to do something.” We can learn custom from families and from books.

Teach

Introduce Activity: Explain to children that they will be asking their family for help. What kind of customs and ceremonies does their family have?

Activity Steps:

In a class discussion, help children list on the board some customs and ceremonies that takes place in their community. Next, have children describe some customs and ceremonies that take place in their families.

*Give children the Family Custom Letter / My Family Custom Handout. Tell them to take the handouts home and complete the assignment. When the assignments come back to the class, combine them into a classroom scrapbook.

Assess and Extend:

Assess: Have the children share their scrapbook page and tell about the custom or ceremony that is shown.

Lesson Assessment: How Do We Learn About Other? Assessment

Extend: Have children share their scrapbook page with another first grade class.

Dear Family,

All families have customs or ceremonies that are a part of their traditions. They are important because they help us celebrate and share who we are. They help us remember our heritage and culture.

As part of our Cultural Curriculum, we have been learning about the Hmong customs, traditions, and ceremonies. Please help your child complete the attached assignment *My Family Custom*. As you work with your child to design this page, keep in mind that it will become part of our class book. This page will not be returned to you, so choose items for the page carefully.

The Assignment:

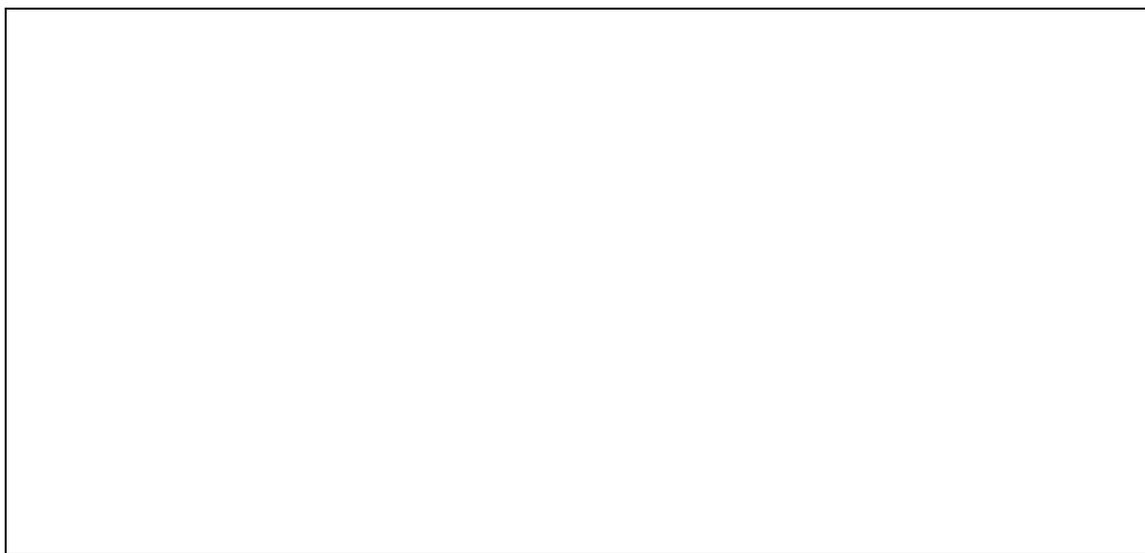
- i. Select a favorite family custom or ceremony.
- ii. Using the attached page, help your child complete the sentences describing the custom or ceremony. Then, in the space provided, have your child illustrate the custom or ceremony they selected.
- iii. Discuss with your child which information they will share with the class.
- iv. Your child should return this project

Sincerely,

My Family Custom

Our family custom is _____

We _____



How Do We Learn About Others? Assessment

1. Write about what we learned.

2. Circle a word to complete the sentence.

We learn about customs from _____.

maps

groups

family

3. Write

Instructions: 1. Have children write to retell one custom they learned about in this lesson. 2. Tell children to think about people they could learn customs from. Have children circle the word that best completes the sentence. 3. Ask children to describe a special celebration they remember.

A SOURCE LIST OF HMONG CHILDREN'S BOOKS

HmongABC Bookstore – www.hmongabc.com

Books



[The Terrible Journey: A Hmong Child's True Story of His Escape From Laos to Thailand \(Txoj Kev Txaus Ntshai: Ib Tus Me Nyuam Hmoob Zaj Keeb Kwm Tseeb Khiav Nplog Teb Rau Thaib Teb\)](#) by Cha Yah



[Grandma's Hmong New Year Celebration](#) by Maiker Vang



[The Hmong \(Celebrating the Peoples and Civilizations of Southeast Asia\)](#) by Dolly Brittan



[Hmong Textile Designs](#) by Anthony Chan and Norma Livo



[Ka's Garden \(Kab Lub Vaj\): A Bilingual Children's Book](#) by Maggie Lee McHugh, Bee Lo, and Vong Lao



[Hmong Americans](#) by Nichol Bryan



[Grandfather's Story Cloth \(Yawg Daim Paj Ntaub Dab Neeg\)](#) by Linda Gerdner and Sarah Langford



[Finding Me](#) by Jean Haslin



[Tangled Threads: A Hmong Girl's Story](#) by Pegi Deitz Shea



[Teaching with Folk Stories of the Hmong: An Activity Book](#) by Dia Cha and Norma Livo



[Hmoob Noj Tsiab](#) by Nob Thoj



[My Family Is Special to Me \(Kuv Tsev Neeg Zoo Tshwj Xeeb Rau Kuv\)](#) by Bao Xiong

Books

[Dia's Story Cloth: the Hmong People's Journey of Freedom](#) by Dia Cha



[The Whispering Cloth: A Refugee's Story](#) by Pegi Deitz Shea

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APPENDIX C

Further Reading Hmong Books

- Cha, D. (2003). *Hmong American concepts of health, healing and conventional medicine*. New York, NY: Routledge.
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- Hillmer, P. (2009). *A people's history of the Hmong*. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press.
- Miyarees, I. M. (1998). *The Hmong refugees experience in the United States: Crossing the river*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Symonds, P. V. (2005). *Calling in the soul: Gender and the cycle of life in a Hmong village*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
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