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Implementing the Hmong Culture into Classrooms

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Tiger Bite: Implementing the Hmong Culture into Classrooms

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Author Note

I would like to sincerely acknowledge Professor Patricia Whang and Professor Paoze Thao for being my professors and mentors. You both have taught me well and have made me realized the true love I have for my Hmong people. Your encouragement and guidance for me during the course of this project are greatly appreciated. In addition, I want to thank the teachers, professor and Hmong students for your time and willingness to participate in this project. I am very thankful for their contribution, time and information.

I owe a great gratitude to my father Cher Shoua Moua and my mother Lou Yang for their love. Your word of wisdom echo in my head and I cannot thank you both enough for supporting me through good times and hard times. Without you both, I would not be here today. I also want to thank all of my siblings: Lo, Tommy, See, Dao, Teng, Blong, Nou and their significant others for their mental, financial and social support. You all have been great role models and I could not have done it without each and every one of you. Lastly, I would like to thank Tony Vang for his unconditional love. Thank you for your patience, love and support. You have been my number 1 supporter with my family being so far away. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

Abstract

The purpose of this capstone was to raise awareness of the importance of implementing the Hmong culture into classrooms, especially due to many Hmong students' lack of academic performance in schools. Hmong students have suffered tremendously in school due to language barriers and culture shock. The research involved interviewing a sample of Fresno County teachers and students. Fresno has the largest population of Hmong people in California. The results suggest that creating a diverse and comfortable environment for Hmong students requires incorporating their culture into classrooms by using icebreakers or teaching a whole unit about the Hmong people. This will help make Hmong students feel more connected and comfortable with their peers and teachers and thus be more likely to continue coming to school to learn. A brochure was created with information about the Hmong people, the issues they are facing and what we can do as teachers, future teachers, or parents to help implement the culture into classrooms. The brochure contained information about lesson plans and icebreakers and how they are significant when it comes to creating a comfortable learning environment for Hmong students.

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Setting the Stage

My parents had always mentioned to me while I was growing up that after the Chinese took over, the Hmong migrated to Southern Asia. Both of my parents were born, raised and married in Laos. When the Vietnam War started, my grandfather was a part of the military which made it dangerous for my parents and my two older brothers during that time. They hid for months in the jungles of Laos and ran from the communist. They finally arrived in Thailand in 1974 and came to the U.S in 1975.

I grew up in a big city call San Diego, CA. My parents and grandparents were the first generation here in the United States. I was born into a big family with 4 brothers and three sisters which make me the 4th girl and the youngest of the family. English was not my first language. My parents lack the English skill; therefore they were never involved in my education or were able to help me with my homework. When I struggled in school, some teachers never take the time to understand my need, instead they assumed and move on. My siblings tried helping me with my homework but this didn't help with the low-self-esteem during school.

I remember how much I used to love school when I was younger. During that time, my family was living in the lower income part of San Diego call City Heights. My school, Hamilton Elementary school, contained was approximately an estimation of 60% Hispanic, 20% Asians, 10% African American, 5% White and 5% Others. I felt that a lot of the teachers were bilingual as well and seems to understand me a little more. I remember having so many friends that were accepting and understanding. They didn't make fun of me or bully me because of the culture or religion differences.

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At the age of 11, my family moved to a town call Mira Mesa. Although it was still San Diego county, it was completely different. It was a middle class community with a huge population of White and Filipinos. I remember starting sixth grade at a new school with new people and I hated it. Everyone there was so judgmental and I remember coming home crying every day telling my parents that I wanted to go back to my old school.

During that time, with my help of my brothers we were able to buy a nice house but that didn't mean that I fit in. I didn't have any friends in school and people would laugh when I tell them I was Hmong. The first thing they ask me is "What is Hmong" and "Are you Mongolian?" and after responding "no" they don't care to any further.

Throughout school, I was quite embarrassed to be Hmong and sometimes even lie about my nationality. I stopped speaking my language and stop believing in my religion. No one knew who we were so why try explaining to people or believing in our religion when others really don't care. My teachers were never interested in my culture or my religion and always assumed I was Chinese.

I remember in my 6th grade English class, I pronounced "Jesse" as "Jesus" and my teacher got upset. He yelled at the classroom and said "you need to pay attention or you will mispronounce like Chee." Everyone giggled and I was left to be embarrassed. He never took the time to understand my difficulties or why I couldn't pronounce correctly. He never helped me or took the time to teach me. Instead he assumed I should be as fluent in English like other American students. After the incident, I didn't want to go to his class anymore and would sometime sleep in on purpose so that I would miss his class in the morning. My parents would yell at me for not waking up but I was too afraid to tell them what was really happening in school.

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When I was a sophomore in high school, I took a human development class. I remember struggling with this class. The teacher wasn't quite clear with our assignments and unorganized. We had quizzes every week and I was slowly failing. I didn't understand the readings and I didn't understand the assignments. Due to my quietness and shyness, I finally gather my courage and went up to ask for help.

I remember approaching her and asking if she could help me because I was confused with her assignments and that I was not doing so well with her quizzes. The answer and the help that I was hoping for was not granted. Instead she turned to me and said she think I may have a disability. She told me that if I was her daughter she would take me to check up. She also stated that as a sophomore in high school, her assignments should be as easy as A, B, C. I remember turning red and wanting to cry. I walked away and never ask her for help again. I stopped attending her classes and stopped taking her quizzes. I failed on purpose in hope that I would have another teacher the next year.

All throughout grade school, it was full of humiliation, put downs and low-self-esteem. Teachers were never aware of how sensitive and hard it was for us Hmong students in school. We were being exposed to a world we were unfamiliar with. We didn't receive the support and the help from our families and schools like other students did. People didn't know anything about our culture or our language. They assumed we were Chinese or Vietnamese and never once took the time to talk or ask about our nationality. Why should we go to school and go through 12 years of humiliation and feeling outcast? Therefore, Hmong students stop attending school, they get married at young age or some joined gangs.

When I got to college, everything was different. I never once felt so proud of my people, my language and my culture. The professors and students here at California State University of

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Monterey Bay were so diverse, friendly and accepting. I joined a newly found club call Asian Pacific Islander Association. We all got to express and share our culture with each other. We host cultural dance classes for anyone who was interested and got to dress up in our traditional clothing. We got to sing traditional songs at showcases and just exchange our culture, religion and language with everyone. It felt so good to know that someone cares and wants to learn about my people and my culture.

After my first semester, I met a few Hmong students here and was notified that there was a Hmong professor here by the name of Professor Tee. Professor Tee recruited 5 Hmong students and taught us how to read and write fluently in Hmong. Although there were only 5 of us, he took so much time to create this class and made it possible. He taught me the history of our people, the story behind our religion and lastly, he taught me to be proud of whom I am. It doesn't matter if my dialect was green or white and it doesn't matter if my religion is Shaman or Christianity because at the end of the day we are still Hmong.

Asian Pacific Islander Association and Professor Tee have taught me so much during my college career. Who will acknowledge you and respect you if you can't respect your own culture, religion and people. Therefore, I want to "implement Hmong culture into classrooms." I want all teachers to be exposed to the Hmong culture and implement the culture into classrooms to make all Hmong students feel warm and welcome. I want teachers to understand the difficulties of Hmong students and instead of humiliation or put down, they should make Hmong students feel comfortable and acknowledged. Implementing Hmong culture into classroom is not just for teachers but also for other students. I want students to respect each other no matter how weird or different their language, religion and culture is. Last but not least, I want Hmong students to be

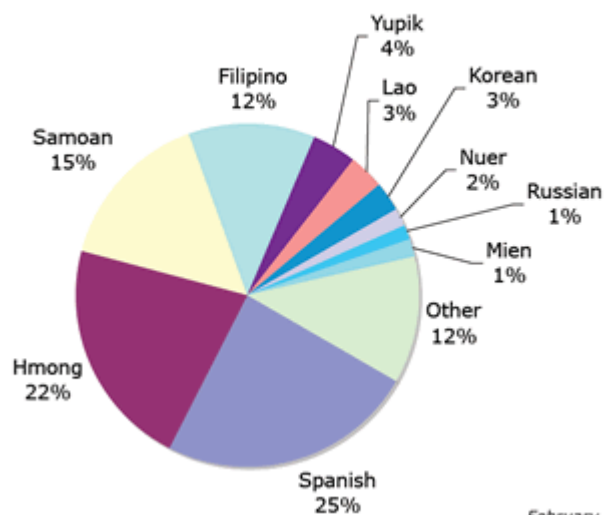
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proud of their own culture and be proud of who they are. I want to try the best to my ability to make sure we Hmong student have a voice. We are not stupid, we are just divergent.

Hmong children tend to have and live with their biological parents with more than 3 siblings. Hmong parents seem to be older and did not receive any formal educational when they were in Laos and Thailand (Mueller, 1996). The author also stated that Hmong parents were unable to help their child learn and develop the English language since them too, were struggling to master the English language with no knowledge and little education. Since they have little skills or knowledge in English it was hard for them to be employed as well. In 1999 only 35% Hmong people were employed according to the statistics in Fresno (Vang, 2005). Moreover, although 90% Hmong students finished high school, only 5-10% was accepted into universities.

Today, Hmong-American students are still facing these challenges. Although much research has been done on bilingual students, little has been done on the Hmong- American students (Vang, 2005). The author stated that when the Hmong people first came to America in 1975, they lacked academic backgrounds in the English language. Public schools were having difficulties since they did not know what to do or how to teach Hmong student to master the

**Top ten languages spoken at home
by students receiving ELL Program services**



English Language.

February 2009

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Figure 1 Percentage of Hmong students in ELL Program Services

The more Hmong people came to the United State the more difficulties public schools were having. During 1975, there were very little or no Hmong teachers' available. Therefore, Hmong students had no help and Hmong parents could not support their children due to lack of translation and communication (Cerbasi, 2012). The author mentioned that the public school then decided they were going to place all Hmong students into ESL classes to develop their English skills as a solution to help Hmong students. According to figure 1, about 20% of Hmong students are placed into English Language Learners because they only speak Hmong or if Hmong was their first language.

English as a second language was created to teach English to other colonies in the 15th century so they can trade and communicate overseas effectively (Kouakou, 2014). ESL is a normal class setting with an instructor to instruct, but in this case most of the student don't speak English or English was their second language. Although some students may know more of English than the others, they still don't fully grasp the language (Cerbasi, 2012). ESL helps students achieve their fluency in English and prepare them for higher education for their future. ESL students are working double the amount of regular students to achieve their goals. Cerbasi also stated that "The main skill ESL class teaches their students are grammar, speaking, writing, and reading." It has helped Hmong students become better learners and speakers when it comes to the English language.

Methods

One way we could help Hmong students' low-self-esteem and low academic performances in school is by implementing the Hmong Culture into Classrooms. By implementing the culture into classrooms this will make Hmong students feel comfortable and encourage them onto higher education.

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Context

Tyson Middle School is located in Autumn, California. The school serves seventh and eighth grades and contains 810 students all together with 434 seventh grader and 376 eighth graders. The school is made up of 64% Hispanics, 14% Asian, 13% Black, 7% White, 1% American Indian and 1% of two or more races. There is about 94% of students that are eligible for either reduced or free lunch and 18% of students are English language learners (Great Schools, 2011). The school has a large open grass field for sports and other extra curricula for students to participate in. On the other side of the open field is the school campus which is mostly made up of blacktop, buildings and bungalows.

Ocean University is located in Chula Vista, California. The university serves undergraduate and graduate students. The three biggest major at this university is Business, Psychology and Kinesiology. There is a total enrollment of 5,732 students with 62% female and 38% male. This university is very diverse with 39% White, 34% Hispanics, 6% Asian, 7% African American, 1% Pacific Islander, 1% Native American, 7% two or more races and 5% other/decline to state (CSU Monterey Bay, 2014). The campus is very spread out with many trees and nature surrounding the buildings. The campus was once a military base therefore the campus is filled with abandon buildings and abandon barracks.

Participants and Participant Selection

Researcher. I am a Hmong-American student who was born and raised in the U.S. I want to make a difference in the Hmong community and I want to make sure that all Hmong students feel comfortable and welcome in their classrooms. I feel that in order to make the Hmong students feel welcome and comfortable in their classrooms we must incorporate and implement the Hmong culture. We must make sure that they are familiar with some of

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knowledge are being taught in classrooms. We must also make sure that they are accepted by teachers and peers despite their language, culture or religion.

I am Hmong and went through difficult times in grade school. I experienced many discrimination due to my culture, religion and language. I felt that if only my culture was implemented when I was in grade school, teachers and peers would had understood how I felt and would had learned to accept my needs and flaws in school. If only the Hmong culture was taught in school, I may have been accepted and this may had boost my self-esteem and academic performances in grade school. One thing that can be a problem about choosing this topic is personal bias. I believe that Hmong culture should be implemented into classrooms with no exceptions because I know and understand how it feels to be confused and disliked due to my differences in the American community.

Informants. Tim Lee is a Hmong professor at Ocean University. He has been teaching here since 1995 and is one of the Pioneer Faculty and a Professor of Linguistic and Education for the Liberal Studies Department. He has a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from Loyola University of Chicago; an M.A. in Applied Linguistics from Northeastern Illinois University and work in Therapeutical Communications from Governors State University, Forest Park, Illinois; and a B.Ed. from Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand (CSU Monterey Bay, 2010). He is an author of 5 books about cultural variation within the Southeast Asian American families. Professor Lee is an educated individual and he is very knowledgeable and has personal experiences when it comes to the Hmong community. He will be the perfect interviewee to interview and ask questions.

Essy Kay is a teacher at Colonial Elementary School. Colonial Elementary is located in the Central Valley and Ms. Kay has been teaching for 4 years. She is very familiar with the

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Hmong students and had a classroom of 10 Hmong students last years. Colonial Elementary is the first school that she has taught at and was hired after her undergraduate degree and credential at Fresno State University.

Steven Morse is a teacher at Colonial Elementary School as well. He has been teaching for 10 years and has had many Hmong students in his classrooms. Morse received his undergraduate degree from Northridge University and has been enjoying his teaching career since 2004. He enjoys his Hmong students and the Hmong culture that he was introduced to since his teaching career at Colonial Elementary.

Stephanie Williams and Nancy Eng are Hmong students from Colonial Elementary School. They are 5th graders and they are both the youngest of 6 children. Hmong was their first language therefore English was hard for them to grasp. They both hope to continue school and get into college in the near future. Both of their parents are still very traditional and are Shamanism.

Semi-Structured Interview and Survey Questions

1. What are your experiences with Hmong culture? And what do you know about Hmong culture?
2. How should teachers implement Hmong Culture into classrooms to help Hmong students succeed in their education?
3. What do you see as the benefits of implementing Hmong culture into classrooms?
4. What do you see as the challenge of implementing Hmong culture into classrooms; or what are you concerned about when it comes to implementing Hmong culture into classrooms?

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5. What is currently being done about implementing Hmong culture into classrooms - by whom - and how effective are those efforts? Why?

6. Is there anything else that you would like to say about implementing Hmong culture into classrooms and/or doing something about implementing Hmong culture into classrooms?

Procedure

I will be contacting the Fresno Unified School District to find teachers to interview. I will be looking at schools with the largest population of Hmong students. I feel that by doing this, my research will be more efficient because the teachers will be more familiar with the culture and more familiar with how Hmong students perform in school. I will be going over their confidential rights before starting the interview and I will also be asking for their permission to allow me to record our interview. I will be asking the question one by one and after the interview is finished, I will be using these information as resources for my research topic.

I will be contacting Professor Tim Lee and setting up an appointment to meet him. When I meet him, I will be discussing about my topic and why it is significant to me and the Hmong community. I will be discussing about his confidential rights and rather it is okay for me to record our interview. I will be reading off the questions one by one as he answers the questions. After the interview is over, I will be gathering up his information and using it as resources for research topic as well.

I will also be contacting Essy Kay and Steven Morse to set up appointments to meet them in the Central Valley. I hope to be assigned to two Hmong students to be able to interview them and get a better understanding of how school is going for them and rather they believe that implementing the culture will be beneficial for them.

Data Analysis

I will be analyzing the collected data and answers that were provided by the informants for emergent themes. After I identify the themes, I will be gathering ideas provided by the informants to create an action and in hope that I will be able raise an awareness to implement the Hmong culture into classrooms.

Results

It took me about 2 weeks to contact all of my informants and set up interviews. I was able to travel to Fresno to interview teachers and students as well an interview with a professor near home. The main stakeholders were teachers from the Fresno district because there is a large population of Hmong people there. Multiple interviews were done and more efficiently most of those interviews were with Hmong teachers and students and they provided very good information regarding the implementation of the Hmong culture. After multiple interviews and a week of collecting data and transcribing my pre-recorded interviews, I was able to separate and group them into different sections and themes. Three of the themes I found most common is “First Generation,” “Uniqueness of Hmong Culture” and “Effectiveness.”

First Generation

The first theme that I emerged from my analysis was “First Generation.” There were quite a few students and teachers that mentioned about themselves, or their students being the first generation here in the U.S. Because they were the first generation here in the U.S, many of them are still very traditional and still very religious when it comes to the Shaman religion.

The students that I interviewed mentioned that their parents are very traditional and still practice the funeral rituals, New Year celebration and still believes that men are more powerful than women when it comes to human rights. One of the teacher that I interviewed mentions that

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he was one of the first generation here in the U.S and came to the U.S in the 1970's. He said that although his family converted to Christianity, he still applies the Hmong culture to his everyday life and lives in a very cross cultural setting. This is a very important theme because it gave me a clear understanding to how traditional Hmong parents are and why it must have been difficult for Hmong students in school.

Uniqueness of Culture

The second theme that I identified was “Uniqueness of Hmong Culture.” All of my interviewees mentioned that one of the main challenges of implementing the Hmong culture into classrooms will be the uniqueness of the culture. For example, the funeral rituals; the people in charge of the funeral must provide the dead person with sacrificed animals and funeral songs or the dead will not rest in peace. One teacher mentioned that as future educators, we must not only learn about the culture through media, or social network but the natives themselves. Due to the uniqueness of the culture we must have a good perspective of the Hmong culture and do not take on others' view.

The teacher also mentioned that the language and culture is the only two things that remain for the Hmong people. Therefore we must carry on and teach our fellow Hmong students and other race the uniqueness of our culture. One student mentioned that due to the uniqueness of our culture, she think it is important to implement the culture so other students will understand our religion and not see our religion as black magic due to the rituals that are performed. This theme is very important because this is one of the obstacles that my stakeholders and I will face when trying to implement the culture into classrooms.

Effectiveness

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The third theme that I gathered was “Effectiveness,” multiple teachers and students talk about the results and how effective it will be to implement the Hmong culture into classrooms. One student mentioned that by implementing the culture into classrooms, this may increase the respect for elders as it had decreased in the last decade for the Hmong community. She also mentioned that implementing the culture does not only benefit the Hmong students but all race and may help gather all students to start a non-profit organization to help the poor Hmong people back in Lao and Thailand. One teacher said that implementing is important and it is a way to show how diverse the world is. Also it shows that there is no exclusion when it comes to teaching and implementing cultures in classrooms. Another student mentioned that implementing is a great idea. This may help the younger generation understand and have a better grasp of their own culture. If only the Hmong culture was implemented when I was younger, I would have had a better connection with my peers and teachers, that is why effectiveness is very important.

The collected data has given me a better overview of how others’ feel about implementing the Hmong culture into classrooms, whether they were Hmong or not. I was able to emerge different themes of similar concepts. The teachers and students did not only help me with my research but has increased my hopes and dreams of becoming a future educator. They had provided me with great data for my research and great data to help guide me to become an inspiring teacher for my future students. It has been a pleasure to have been able to meet and interviewed so many inspiring teachers and wonderful students.

In the past century, there has been a tremendous amount of Hmong students dropping out or getting married at a young age (Xiong, 2012). Some Hmong students were so Americanized that they have forgotten the Hmong Culture as well. Therefore due to the increasing Hmong

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population in the U.S, the Hmong Culture should be implemented into classrooms. I believe that by implementing the culture into classrooms may help with the culture shock, language barrier and increase of Hmong students' academic performances to help them continue onto higher education.

Identification of Action Options

To implement the Hmong Culture into classrooms, stakeholders must be willing to incorporate the culture into classes. The three options that were identified in order to pursue the implementation are workshops for stakeholders, presenting at the SCTA meeting (current or future teachers of CSUMB) or create pamphlets for stakeholders. The workshop should contain information about the Hmong people and the current issues regarding Hmong Students' academic performances in the U.S. The second option is presenting and providing icebreaker handouts at the SCTA meeting at California State University, Monterey Bay. Most of the club members are future teachers. I believe that by presenting the reason as to why implementing the Hmong Culture is useful and how it could be beneficial will help stakeholders in their future career. Also providing them with icebreakers handouts could help them use these activities in classrooms to create a comfortable environment for all students of all culture including Hmong students. Last but not least, the third option is creating pamphlets with information about the culture, and things that stakeholders can do to help Hmong Students increase their academic performances in schools.

Evaluation of Action Options

In order to select and decide which of these actions option will be most suitable for my topic, a rubric was created with three criteria. In order to better evaluate the options, the three criteria included time, impact and effectiveness. Time involves the amount of time that it

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will take to gather information and complete the action. Impact is how many stakeholder this action will affect and influence to want to implement the culture into their classrooms and/or schools. Effectiveness includes how effective it was at the end of the action and if it was completed at the end of the semester. The low-high options depend on how little time to how much times it takes to guarantee the action.

Table 1.1	Time	Impact	Effectiveness
ACTION OPTION 1: Workshop for teachers and students	Medium	Medium	Medium
ACTION OPTION 2: Present to stakeholder at SCTA (current or future teachers)	Low	Medium	Medium
ACTION OPTION 3: Create pamphlet for stakeholder w/ icebreaker handouts provided	Low	Medium	Medium

The first option involves workshop for stakeholders to be aware of the low academic performances of Hmong Students in the Central Valley. In order to make this workshop possible, it will take a medium amount of time to set up a workshop and create a PowerPoint that will be presented to the stakeholders. Once the preparation is done, it will take a medium amount of time for impact and effectiveness as well.

In order to present at the Student California Teachers Association, it will take a low amount of time, and medium amount of impact and effectiveness to create handouts for my stakeholders. I will be talking to them in individually or in groups about the current issue of Hmong students and what they can do to help Hmong students achieve more and better in

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school. This is very beneficial because most SCTA members will be staff, teachers or future teachers and this can really help the implementation of the Hmong culture in classrooms.

The third option will be creating a pamphlet and passing it out to all stakeholders. This will take a low amount of time to create the pamphlet and medium amount of impact and effectiveness to make this action possible. This pamphlet will be passed out to teachers, parents and students about implementing the Hmong Culture into classrooms. The pamphlet will have three different sections. The first will be the “history” section for all readers whether they are Hmong or not. The second section will be the “issue” section. It will provide the stakeholder with the current issues that Hmong students are facing. The third section will be on how they can use icebreakers and lesson plans to implement the culture in class to create a comfortable environment and create a better connection with the teachers.

Evaluation of Evidence

<http://www.htmlpublish.com/convert-pdf-to-html/success.aspx?zip=DocStorage/5285a7ef8fa0466dbf09b7cadb2c6e94/Brochure%20Chee%20Vang.zip&app=pdf2word#> (Brochure)

While evaluating the options it was found that icebreakers are great way help implement the Hmong culture. It creates a comfortable environment for Hmong students to open up and participate more in schools. Hmong students like hands on activities and are visual learners, therefore providing handouts of icebreakers to teachers will be a great way for them to incorporate it into classrooms and get Hmong students to raise their hand or volunteer in classrooms (Alexandrowicz, 2014).

Author Alexandrowicz also stated that Hmong students don't do well in front of crowds and would often laugh. When they laugh it is not because they are being rude but instead they are

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embarrassed and can also be that they don't understand what their teachers are saying (Alexandrowicz, 2014). This can be a great idea for creating a pamphlet therefore teachers can read the brochure and have a grasp of the history, issues and how they can implement the culture in class.

Workshops are also great opportunities to gather stakeholders from all over (Personal Communication with Tim Lee, October 16, 2014). Workshop can be for stakeholders of all ages and this may become an ongoing action that can be done in areas where there are big Hmong populations like Fresno, Sacramento to as far as the Midwest. The more workshops, the bigger the project becomes and more stakeholders will be able to help implement the culture in class.

Decision Making

After discussing and weighing the different options, it was decided that the primary action for implementing the Hmong culture into classrooms will be creating pamphlets for the stakeholders. In order for teachers, parents and students to be more aware of implementing the culture into classrooms, pamphlets will be a great way to provide them with information and ideas. On the pamphlet there will be two main ideas, which are icebreakers and lesson plans and how they can incorporate that in their classrooms to help Hmong students. These pamphlets will be passed out to future teachers at the Student California Teacher meeting.

A pamphlet can be easily overlooked and thrown away but is very beneficial as well because it can be sent to or passes on to stakeholders all over California or even all over the world. It will also be a good thing because it can be given to future teachers who are unfamiliar with the culture and in hope of teaching along the Central Valley. There will be also be pictures, graph and many other information to provide the stakeholders with a good grasp on how important it is to implement the culture into classrooms.

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The other options were great and can be used as a future action, in hope that this project will continue on. The workshop was a great idea but was time consuming, especially with such little time to put together an action. Also with such little time, there will not be enough time to create a workshop in hope that teachers from the Central Valley can come over here or teachers from here can go over there. The other option was presenting to SCTA who are teachers and future teachers. The goal was to present to them in hope that they will implement it in their classrooms or future classrooms but with so little time, it was not possible.

Conclusions and Related Outcomes

I felt that creating and handing out pamphlets to stakeholders will be a great and beneficial way to inform them that it is important to implement the Hmong culture into classrooms. This will create a better and more comfortable environment for Hmong students to learn and express themselves. This will also be a great idea to create a connection between the teachers, peers and the Hmong students. In order for a Hmong student to succeed they must feel comfortable and accepted by their teachers and peers, therefore a pamphlet will be the best and most effective way to take a step forward when it comes to implementing the Hmong culture into classrooms.

Action Documentation

After weeks of preparing for the action, I started out by creating my pamphlet. I sectioned the pamphlet into three sections. The sections contained history of the Hmong people and why they came to the U.S. It also contained information about the current issues that they are facing such as dropout rates, marriage at early ages and low academic performances. The last section contained information and solutions on how teachers can help implement the Hmong culture into classrooms. Teachers can create lesson plans regarding the culture and have the

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students do an activity such as a cultural potluck, or bringing in cultural gowns to share with classmates. One thing that teachers can also do to help implement the Hmong culture is creating and performing icebreakers in class. Icebreakers are a great way to create a comfortable environment for all students and also it helps them open up to their peers and teacher about their religion, culture and language.

In order to make this action possible, I attended the Student California Teachers Association after all. I realized that although I will not be presenting in front of everyone, the club will still be a great way to pass down information to future teachers. When I got there, I started recruiting little groups and talking to them about the project that I am currently working on. I gave them a brief history of the Hmong people and how they can help Hmong students who are currently facing the problems that I listed on the brochure. I then gave each person handouts of icebreakers that they can use in their future classrooms, or even their service learning classrooms that they will be participating in next semester.

As I was introducing myself and my topic, I asked most people if they knew who the Hmong people were before giving them information. I was quite surprised that a few people did know who the Hmong people were. They mentioned that they were either from the Central Valley or that they had taken classes with Professor Tee and that he had mention to them he was Hmong. Many people were very interested in this topic and even talked to me about their personal experienced in classrooms. One person mentioned that after she realized her teacher didn't like her because she was Mexican, she didn't want to go to class anymore and ended up failing the class. It made me realized that not only Hmong people but so many other students are going through similar situation.

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This project has been a roller-coaster ride. I am glad that I was able to do my project on Implementing the Hmong culture into classrooms. This is a very important and personal topic that I can personally relate to. I have learned so much with all the research and time I put into this project. I hope that this can be an ongoing project. I may be one of hundreds of Hmong students hoping that our Hmong community can increase their academic performances in school, which is why I chose this topic in hope that it will continue on. In the future I hope to even set up workshops and creating customized lesson plans that I can distribute to schools all over the Central Valley that contains Hmong students. I hope to attend meetings and conferences in Fresno where they talk about our fellow Hmong students and how we can help them just not mentally but socially, physically and financially.

Action Documentation and Reflection

After analyzing and evaluating the best and most appropriate action for my project, I decided that creating a pamphlet would be most suitable. Due to a limited amount of time and the distance from Fresno to Monterey Bay, it was best to create and send over pamphlets, rather than to create a workshop which could be difficult for stakeholders from Fresno to attend with limited time.

I started out by brainstorming and coming up with ideas on what I should and should not put on the pamphlet. I decided to include a history section of the Hmong people because most people do not know who or what Hmong people are and where they are from. I also included a section of issues that Hmong student are facing. On the back side of my pamphlet were solutions on how the stakeholders can help implement the culture into classrooms. This pamphlet was not only created for teachers and staff, but for anyone out there who are in the educational field that can help our fellow Hmong students as well.

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After creating the pamphlets and suggesting the stakeholders to perform icebreakers and create lesson plans on the Hmong culture, I decided that I should provide my stakeholders with a handout of icebreakers. I felt that by providing them with icebreakers, they could use them their classrooms and they can become examples that they can share with other teachers and staff.

As I was passing out the pamphlets to future students and teachers, I was quite surprised that some people knew who Hmong people were. Most of those who were familiar with the Hmong people were from the Central Valley and went to school with Hmong students. I was also quite surprised on how important multicultural education is to people and how supportive they were knowing that I am pursuing this research to help my own people.

I feel that in research and in life, the more you know the less you know. The more research I did on Hmong students' academic performances and how we can implement the Hmong culture into classrooms, the more I was notified by informants that most Hmong students no longer know the Hmong language and Hmong culture. One informant told me that her nieces and nephews no longer speak the language or practice the religion. It really saddens me and I wish that I was able to create something similar in the past to help our fellow Hmong students.

My love for Hmong people does not end here. I want to continue this implementation and I want to make sure that not only Hmong students in California are being helped, but also Hmong student all over the world. I want them to know that there are people out here who are willing to help them.

Critical Reflection

Lessons Learned

This project made me thought about how tough it was for me growing up as a Hmong-American. Writing and reading was never my best friend, even now I still have such a

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tough time with writing and reading. This project has open a door for me. I never really took the time to research or understand my fellow Hmong students and their hardships, because I thought I was the only one who was facing such discrimination and hardship in school. At one point, I really thought I was stupid. Everyone seemed to understand, write and read so well expect for me.

After researching, I realized I was wrong. I am not the only victim that was having difficulties in schools. I feel that with the disconnection we had with our teachers, we never wanted to participate or try in school.

All throughout school, I never learned about multicultural education. I was not aware of diversity and most of the teachers I had throughout grade school were white teachers that never cared to ask what my nationality was. Ever since I came to CSU Monterey Bay, I had learned so much about diversity and multicultural education. I feel that our school involves so many ice breakers and implementing all culture into classes that I feel so comfortable. I never spoke in front of classes or to my teachers as much as I do now in college.

I hope to teach kindergarten one day. I believe that 5 year old may be too young to know what segregation is but I am sure that they will be aware of it. I have a 3 year old niece and she refuses to buy black dolls. This proves that at an early age they are already aware of the different skin colors and different languages that are spoken in public. In my future classroom, no matter what age, I will incorporate all cultures into the content. We will start with an icebreaker every day. Ice breakers are very important to me because they have helped me opened up to my teachers and peers and I hope they will also be beneficial for my future students. I want to post artifacts made by the students all over my room and just create a nice, comfortable and diverse environment for them.

Synthesis and Integration

According to the themes of the Liberal Studies Department and the mission statement, we will be prepared for our future careers and become educated individuals. The department will provide us with knowledge to incorporate multicultural education, diversity and social justice in our future classrooms. These are some of the very important themes that stood out to me. The professors and staff of the Liberal Studies Department have accomplished their duties and have filled me with more knowledge than I had expected. I had grown to become an educated individual and never thought I would be here at this moment writing this paper. The professors were not just my professors but my mentors and even my friends at time. They had influenced and inspired me to become a well-shaped woman in hope to teach and become as inspiring as they had been for me. I would not have done it without the help and support they had given me. I hope to become a teacher, a mentor and a friend to my future students as well. I hope to educate them in a diverse classroom setting and shape them to become an educated individuals like what my professors has done for me.

After receiving my Bachelor Degree, I will be continuing with school in hope to receive my Master Degree in the near future. I also want to go back to school to get my credential in order to start teaching kindergarten or first grade, but my main goal is to open a daycare. I am very honored to have had the opportunity to come to such a well-shaped school and majored in such a great and organized department. I can't imagine choosing any other major to fulfill my love to teach children. I hope to get into a Master Program with great and inspiring professors and staff like I did for my undergraduate degree.

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