

Understanding the Sociocultural Needs of Southeast Asian Students: Classroom Strategies and Recommendations



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Agenda



- Center our hearts to listen, reflect, learn and act
- Shifting from cultural competence to cultural humility
- Historical and cultural background on Southeast Asian countries, special focus on Viet Nam, Cambodia, Laos
- Where culture may play out in classroom
- Strategies and recommendations for a more inclusive classroom
- Reflection on where you are at with cultural humility and advocacy



Centering with Heart

- Are you willing and ready to be vulnerable, get out of your comfort level?
 - Are you willing and ready to learn about yourself/others?
 - Are you willing and ready to listen?
 - Are you willing and ready to make change?
- 



Cultural Competence



- Cultural competence refers to the process by which individuals and systems **respond respectfully and effectively** to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and other diversity factors in a manner *that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth* of individuals, families, and communities and **protects and preserves the dignity of each.**

(NASW National Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity, 2001)



Cultural Humility

- Goes beyond the concept of cultural competence to encourage individuals to identify their own biases and to acknowledge that those biases must be recognized.
- Acknowledges that it is impossible to be adequately knowledgeable about cultures other than one's own.
- Denote a willingness to accurately assess oneself and one's limitations
- The ability to acknowledge gaps in one's knowledge, and an openness to new ideas, contradictory information, and advice.

Southeast Asia

- Viet Nam
- Cambodia
- Laos





Unique Cultures and Experiences

- Religion
 - Vietnamese: Mahayana Buddhism
 - Cambodia and Laos: Theravada Buddhism
- Language
 - Vietnamese has Latin script, Cambodian and Laos have own ethnic script.
- Education
 - Vietnamese has more westernized, formal education system.
- Long history of conflicts internally and with each other.
- Different experiences with colonization and European contacts.



Migration to U.S.

- Vietnamese: Viet Cong
 - First Wave: Those with American connections
 - Second Wave: Boat People
 - Third Wave: Orderly Departure Program
- Cambodians: Khmer Rouge
- Laotians: Pathet Lao, Hmong (US-VN war)



Factors Impacting Education Experience

- Similarities
 - Importance of family/community/group and cultural influences
 - Ethnic minority experience in America
- Differences
 - Different migration paths, different traumas
 - Different socio-economic status
 - Different levels of exposure to formal and/or western style education



Culture and Delivery of Content

- Curriculum
 - How can you include your student's history and perspective into the current curriculum?
 - How would you address alternative version of their history and experience in the curriculum?
- Teaching Method
 - Different learning strategies
 - Different learning styles may be more pronounced for these students.
 - Community interaction
 - Respect for teacher/elders as authority
 - Instead of just having students raise their hands, do short reflection answers at table, do small group discussions
 - How do you empower students to be the expert and not stress them out by being singled out.
 - Educate parents
 - Beware of parents language capacity and time availability



Culture and Classroom Management

- Classroom Management
 - Understand different incentives/motivation for learning
 - Be mindful of what and how you communicate to parents (cultural respect for teachers as authority figure)
 - Be sensitive to heightened shame and stigma
 - Be sensitive to past traumas (Adverse Childhood Experiences)



Culture and Extracurricular Activities

- Event Planning/Classroom Activities
 - Consider religious restriction, cultural holidays, food restriction
 - New Year based on Lunar or Harvest calendars, students may take a few days off.
 - Invite diverse ethnic families to be part of event planning so that event will also reflect their culture.
 - Ex. Instead of Valentine's Day with cupids and candied hearts, explore how other cultures celebrate love.
 - Consider cultural norms and cost
 - Students may not be able to come to after school events because they have to take care of siblings.
 - PJ Day: Some students have not have different sleep clothes or it may not be in the condition that they would be proud to wear to school.
 - Funky hair/special clothes/etc. days...



Building Blocks of an Inclusive Classroom



- Set classroom culture of appreciation of and respect for differences and culture.
 - Provide more opportunity for students to attend cultural events, read/reflect about different cultural experiences.
- Intentionally apply your cultural humility lens in lesson planning, in classroom interaction.
- Reflect on and challenge your assumptions and biases.
- *Acknowledge and incorporate community/societal events and issues in classroom.* Sensitive balance.
- Role model excitement and commitment for life long learning
 - Expand your social groups; connect with those from different backgrounds.
 - Attend cultural events and activities.
 - Be an advocate for practice and policy change, question the status quo.
- Acknowledge your mistakes.



Where Are You At???

- 1. If people don't like American rules and laws, they should go back to where they came from.
- 2. This is American, everyone should speak English.
- 3. The Mexicans are taking away all of our jobs.
- 4. Asians are smart and not generally good at sports.
- 5. I treat all people the same, whether they are black, white, brown, or polka dotted. I don't see color.
- 6. We do not need affirmative actions. Everyone is equal and we needs to be judged on our own merits.
- 7. I can understand why Europeans don't like Americans.
- 8. I can see why being white or male provides some advantages over others who are from an ethnic background or female.
- 9. I would attend a religious or ethnic event to learn more about that religion or culture.
- 10. I am a white ally/male ally/etc.



Cross's 6 Stages of Cultural Competence

- Cultural competence is a developmental process that occurs along a continuum.
- Cross' six stages:
 - 1) cultural destructiveness (people should be more mainstream)
 - 2) cultural incapacity (stereotypes/biases, us/them mentality)
 - 3) cultural blindness (culture makes no difference, emphasize similarities)
 - 4) cultural pre-competence (self-aware of own shortcomings, can see impacts/effects of culture)
 - 5) cultural competency (Accepts, appreciates, and accommodate cultural differences)
 - 6) cultural proficiency (Seek out knowledge, develops skills to interact in diverse environment, become allies)

(Cross et al., 1989)



Where are you *really* at?

- When you hear...
 - a racial joke, have you said it wasn't funny and asked the person to stop?
 - someone making fun of another person accent, have you said it wasn't funny and asked the person to stop?
 - someone say that what you said was racist, sexist, etc...did you stop to consider where the person was coming from?



Where are you *really, really* at?

- When you plan an event, have you thought about...
 - offering other dietary options
 - scheduling it around other religious events?
 - translating materials in other languages?
 - inviting students/family from diverse background to be part of the planning committee?



What would you do?

- Would you...
 - join a march supporting immigration reforms?
 - vote to support educational scholarships for African Americans as reparation for slavery?
 - support changing current guidelines and policies for achievement and advancement to accommodate ethnic differences?



Statistics



- <http://www.migrationpolicy.org>
- <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/AAPI-Vietnamese-factsheet.pdf>
- <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/AAPI-Cambodian-factsheet.pdf>
- <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/AAPI-Laotian-factsheet.pdf>
- <http://www.seattle.gov/iandraffairs>
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