

# Context:

## Southeast Asians in California

Volume 10, Number 83, May-June, 1990

Folsom Cordova Unified School District  
2460 Cordova Lane,  
Rancho Cordova CA 95670  
(916) 635-6815  
Judy Lewis, Editor

\*Number 79 was mistakenly skipped over.

### *The Boat People and Achievement in America: A Study of Family Life, Hard Work, and Cultural Values*

Nathan Caplan, John K. Whitmore, Marcella H. Choy  
Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989

Do Indochinese refugees succeed in school? Are Indochinese refugees self-sufficient or dependent on welfare? When this study began in 1981, there were many opinions, but little evidence. This two-part study looked for answers to those questions, and for factors related to achievement. The researchers found that the groups of Indochinese refugees under study did succeed in school and in the workplace, and that it was the family's structure, values, and behaviors that were correlated with successful children.

#### *Who, when, and where?*

The study looked at ethnic Vietnamese, Chinese, and Lao who arrived in the United States as political and ethnic refugees in either the 1975 "first wave", or in the post-1978 "second wave". (Although the samples were balanced for the numbers of first and second wave refugees, it was not stated how many were from each group). The first survey, in 1981, included 1,384 households in five urban sites: Seattle, Orange County, Chicago, Houston, and Boston. The second interviews, in 1984, included 200 families that had participated in the earlier study, selected for the presence of school children. In addition, ninety of the secondary school children completed questionnaires.

The study group was 50% Vietnamese, born in South Vietnam, 20% Chinese born in China or North Vietnam, and 30% Lao—about a third from the Vientiane area and nearly half from the southern provinces of Laos. The Vietnamese and Chinese were primarily Mahayana Buddhists, and the Lao Theravada Buddhists. 75% of all the people were from the city (Chinese: 87%; Vietnamese 83%; and Lao: 62%). The Vietnamese had the highest levels of education and the Lao the lowest (79% of Lao, 57% of the Chinese and 36% of the Vietnamese had up to six years of school. Two-thirds of the Vietnamese, half the Chinese, and only a quarter of the Lao had attended high school. The Chinese were fairly representative of the society they left behind; the Lao were the least representative, in that the Lao population was six times more likely to be of rural origin. The Vietnamese in the sample were also more urban than was the general Vietnamese society they left behind. The Vietnamese were the most likely to understand and speak some English when they arrived in the U.S.

The households in the study were described primarily as *nuclear* (53%) and *extended* (32%). The Vietnamese household averaged 4.7 persons, the Chinese 4.5 persons, and the Lao 5.5 persons. The Lao

(go to next page)

households had the highest percentage of children at 40%. Only 15% of the sample had left their place of initial resettlement; 29% of those in Orange County had moved whereas in Boston only 8% had moved.

## Outcomes

### *In the workplace*

It took the refugees an average of 11 months to land their first job in the U.S., and in 30% of the cases, it was a friend who helped them locate a job. For persons in the U.S. for 4 months, 88% were unemployed, but after 40 months, only 28% were unemployed. Almost 75% of the working individuals were employed either as craftsmen, as operatives, or in service industries (21% in factories, 12% in restaurants, 17% as janitors/maids, and 4% as machine operators); in their home countries, only 14% were employed in similar occupations. The Lao showed slightly higher employment (60%) than did the Vietnamese (57%) and Chinese (55%), but they held the lowest paying jobs (average \$4.76/hr); the Vietnamese earned an average \$5.26/hr and the Chinese \$4.98/hr.

There were no major differences between ethnic groups in the percentage below the poverty level or length of time on public assistance. For families in the U.S. for four months, 95% received some sort of welfare or refugee cash assistance, but after 40 months, less than 50% depended on government-supplied income. However, the study looked at the kinds of income in a household, and over three years in the U.S. the income mix shifted from primarily government-supplied to primarily self-earned. However, 12% of those who were "self-sufficient" were still below the poverty line.

Self-sufficiency was defined as \$800 for a family of 4 (1982 standard). At that time, the percentage of American families below the poverty line averaged 15% (white: 12%; black: 36%; Hispanic: 30%). The poverty rates for newly arrived refugee families in the study was 80%; at 40 months the poverty rate was 30%. Those families with one working adult had poverty rates of 32% while only 7% of the families with two workers were below the poverty line.

### *In the schools*

Achievement was measured by GPA (grade point average) and scores on the CAT (*California Achievement Test*). Even though GPA's may be subject to grade inflation or increase through the sheer number of extra credit points earned, most of the comparative statements were based on grades rather than achievement on an objective measure. In general the CAT performance showed more students than would be expected in the upper quartile for math (49%) and spelling (45%), but only 16% in the upper quartile for reading and language. (A *quartile* is expected to have 25% of the scores.)

There were differences in average GPA's between the three groups. The Vietnamese averaged 3.17, the Chinese 2.99 and the Lao 2.63. However, the groups' average performance on the nationally normed CAT test did not show significant differences by ethnic group. When the GPA's were compared over religions, it was the Confucians who were tops at 3.37; the Mahayana Buddhists were second at 3.13, followed by "no religious affiliation" at 3.05, Catholics at 3.03, Protestants at 2.94, and Theravada Buddhists at 2.47. When compared by sex, there was no difference in either GPA or CAT averages.

Surprisingly, there was no significant correlation between the socioeconomic status of either the parents or grandparents and GPA of the children. Likewise neither the GPA's nor CAT's were correlated with the parents' ability to read and write English (although keep in mind that between half and three-quarters of the parents had received enough education to be at least functionally literate in their own language. Native language literacy is a strong predictor of English literacy).

Children of parents who read to them performed better in school than did children of parents who did not read to them. It made no difference whether the parents read to them in English or in their native language. In fact, the children whose parents read to them in the native language had higher GPA's than those who read to them in English, although the difference was small enough that it may have been due to chance.

Coming from large families was not correlated with lower GPA's. Once the only-child families were removed from the sample, the children with 3, 4 or 5 siblings

did as well as those with one or two siblings. One strategy in large families was to pair up children—an older sib was responsible for the homework time of a younger sib.

Parental discipline was correlated with higher GPA's. The parents were asked what kinds of discipline they used with their children, and they responded as follows:

- Use family honor and pride to urge the children (87%)
- Tell them they can do well (71%)
- Give them rewards for good performance (57%)
- Shame them when performance falls (55%)
- Grant special privileges (47%)
- Take away privileges (37%)
- Spank (7%)

Parents of children with higher GPA's were active in ensuring the children did their homework. They did not tutor or direct the work, but they made sure there was a time and place to study, and gave homework a high priority in the family routine. The average amount of time spent on homework was between *two and three hours per weekday*, even for young children.

The belief that they were in control of their own futures was correlated with higher school achievement. When asked what caused high school achievement, both parents and children answered:

	Percentage who agree	
	Parents	Children
love of learning	99	91
hard work	97	93
perseverance	94	89
excellent teachers	89	92
intelligence	86	67
excellent schools	86	88
luck	56	37
fate	46	41

The three ethnic groups—despite differences in language, religion, and premigration and migration experiences—were remarkably similar in core cultural values. From a list of 26 values, 98% chose these three as the most important:

- Education and achievement*
- Cohesive family*
- Hard work*

Two items that were uniformly least important were *Fun and excitement* and *Material possessions*; these were also the two items they thought most of their non-refugee neighbors would rank at the top.

*All in all—*

Overall, the refugee children showed an unexpected and unexplained amount of progress in school achievement in a short period of time. The positive employment findings could be explained by the levels of English proficiency at entry and the number of working adults in a household. The surprising academic progress could not be attributed to differences in schooling, but to the cultural values and behavior patterns of the family.

(Keep in mind that a person's behavioral choices are driven by priorities, which are in turn driven by values, which are tied to beliefs that are transmitted from parents to children during the process of enculturation.)

The findings of the study cannot be generalized to other groups of Indochinese—Hmong, Mien, rural Chinese fishermen, and so on. The Indochinese in the study included first and second wave ethnic Vietnamese, Chinese, and Lao who arrived before 1981—those most likely to succeed. However, focusing on the family as the key to academic success has broad implications for school-home interactions in general.

*“In short, these families placed education and achievement at the center of their lives, and homework was a family activity that occupied every evening from dinner to bedtime.”*

What can parents learn from the results of this study?

- Place a high priority on school achievement, with emphasis on hard work and sacrifice (delay of gratification).
- Use both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards for performance, along with disapproval and removal of privileges for lack of performance; emphasize family honor and pride.
- When there are several children, assign each younger sib to an older brother or sister for homework.
- Have a schedule for meals, bedtime, TV and homework; be consistent.
- Make homework a family affair; everyone in the house studies.
- Realize that the successful children in this study (and in Japan) study for two to three hours per weeknight.
- Assign regular chores and see that they are done; this builds a sense of control over external events and task completion.
- Read to young children, either in the native language or English.
- Make reading a part of the home routine; have plenty of reading material in the home.
- Help children see that education is the key to a successful future.
- Help children see that achievement is more a matter of hard work than intelligence, good teachers or luck.

Adapted from a brochure produced by:  
Bilingual Access Line, Hawaii  
(808) 521-4566

## Using interpreters

- Schedule a face-to-face pre-session.
- Schedule plenty of time for the client session.
- Schedule a short post-session.
- Arrange for the same interpreter to attend all the sessions with the same client.

*Before the client arrives—*

- Discuss confidentiality.
- Tell the interpreter the about the context of the session, along with the goal of the session.
- Learn how to pronounce the client's names.
- Plan the seating arrangement.
- Discuss the interpretation style: paraphrase or word-for-word?
- How much can be said before stopping for interpretation?
- Discuss how much background information the interpreter should be permitted to fill in for clarification.
- Let the interpreter know that even unpleasant or insulting comments should be given in English.
- Discuss technical vocabulary that will be encountered.
- Find out if there are sensitive topics—sex, religion, politics, personal finances, etc.—that will be difficult for the interpreter to verbalize.
- Let the interpreter know if it is appropriate to make observations about interactions—nonverbal cues, tone, cultural background information, etc.

*During the session—*

- Take time for introductions and explain the purpose of the session.
- Speak to the person as though s/he understands English; let the interpreter fill in the words.
- Use simple English, and avoid questions that are buried in paragraphs of speech.
- Avoid discussing the client with the interpreter during the session.
- Avoid non-verbal behavior that indicates impatience with the amount of time that interpretation requires.

*After the session—*

- Discuss issues that were not adequately covered.
- Ask the interpreter for impressions of the client.
- If appropriate, discuss conclusions—see if the interpreter has alternate explanations or can add clarifying information.

# IDEAS

New  
at the

# South east Asia

## Community Resource Center

- CAM2197 *Samsara* (video)  
CAM2179 *Stay Alive My Son*  
ESL2312-20 *Newcomers to America*  
(videos)  
GEN2351 *Career Development for  
Indochinese: A Curriculum*  
GEN2361 *Coming Across* (video)  
KHMU2194 *Kmmu-English Dictionary*  
(Lindell...)  
LAO2180 *North Vietnam and  
the Pathet Lao*  
LAO2178 *Grammar of Lahu*  
REF2352 *Homeland Around the  
World* (video)  
REF2353 *Affects of War* (video)  
VN2219 *Life: 17 hours that de  
stroyed Diem*  
VN2221 *Life: Little war, far away—  
and very ugly.*  
VN2301 *Life: Battle for VN*  
VN2203 *Life: Bold French get the  
jump on Vietminh*  
VN2283 *Life: Crisis for Nixon*  
VN2225 *Life: Exploding power of  
he Buddhists*  
VN2266 *Life: Fight for the embassy*  
VN2199 *Life: The saddest war*  
VN2297 *Life: US pulls out*  
VN2292 *Life: War in Laos*  
VN2359 *Vietnam: Hearts of Sorrow*  
VN2188 *Intact!*  
VN2344 *Old Stories from Vietnam*  
VN2329 *My Village*  
VN2332 *Beggar in the Blanket and  
Other Stories*  
VN2335 *The Land I Lost*  
VN2182 *Vietnam: The Land We  
Never Knew*

...plus many more

Summer hours: Tuesday, Thursday  
8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Message  
recorder 916 635-6815.

# Music and Dance of Cambodia

Performed by  
**Sam-ang Sam, Chan Moly,**  
and their daughters, *Laksmi and Malene.*

**August 1, 1990**  
*Trustees' Auditorium,  
Asian Art Museum,  
Golden Gate Park,  
San Francisco*

Sam-ang Sam is a specialist in Khmer music as well as an ethnomusicologist and composer and his wife Chan Moly is a specialist in Khmer court and folk dance performance and history. He graduated from the University of Arts, Phnom Penh in the early 1970's. In the United States they carry on traditions, teach about Khmer music and dance, publish books and records. Khmer music is a family affair with two daughters who dance, and a newborn son who began his musical training in the womb. This is an experience not to miss...

**10:15 a.m.**

**Traditional Cambodian music**—demonstration of and performance on a variety of instruments.

**7:30 p.m.**

**Ensembles**—*Pin Peat* (wind and percussion), *Pleng Khmer* (wedding), and *Mohori* (entertainment). Performed by Sam-ang Sam and his associates.

**Khmer Court Dance**—Chan Moly, Laksmi and Malene Sam.



The family: (left to right) Malene Sam, Sam-ang Sam holding their new son, Laksmi Sam, and Chan Moly Sam.

**Laksmi Sam,** oldest daughter of Sam-ang Sam and Chan Moly, performing Cambodian dance.

Contact  
Mitchell Clark,  
Outreach and  
Public Programs  
Office,  
415 668-6404.

## A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE



### Soviet Refugees

In January there were about 45,000 Soviet refugees in processing centers in Rome. Approximately 3,000 of those were Pentacostals and Baptists, half of whom were assigned to Sacramento as a primary place of resettlement. According to World Relief, most of those should have left Rome by mid-April. There have been relatively few Soviet Jews resettling in Sacramento, so the bulk of the refugees in Rome have little impact for local areas (unless, of course, secondary migration brings groups to Sacramento!)

On October 1, 1989, the rules changed, and persons still in the Soviet Union had to apply for direct exit; these people will become part of the quotas for the next fiscal year and beyond. However, 900 families (6,000 persons) were caught between policies. They had already surrendered passports, given up jobs and homes, and became "non-persons" in the USSR. The National Association of Evangelicals and the World Relief have written to President Bush, appealing for assistance on their behalf.

These 900 families *may* benefit from an increase in the funding for refugee assistance and an increase in the quotas for the current fiscal year. The quotas were 110,000—50,000 from the USSR—and this increase allows an additional 24,000 Soviets to enter the U.S. In addition, there are slots for 2,000 additional Amerasians and 1,000 Africans. Ambassador Lyman, director of the Bureau for Refugee Programs, testified before Congress that the supplemental numbers would be directed towards clearing the Rome/Vienna pipeline. He estimated that the last of the Soviets would be out of Rome and Vienna by the end of

M. J. (Refugee Reports, 4/27/90)

Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and an alliance of community agencies and the schools...

A campaign to combat pervasive prejudice, this program was developed in Boston in 1985. World of Difference is an established prejudice awareness and reduction project that is designed to be used in schools and by the media. Its aim is to strikingly—and measurably—reduce a given community's racial, ethnic, and religious friction. World of Difference is supported by an alliance of educators, media, community leadership coalitions and underwriters in the community where it is implemented. With the help of ADL, these alliances develop educational materials and programs to constructively deal with prejudice-related issues. Since 1985, World of Difference has been sponsored in twenty metropolitan areas, reaching half the countries households; by 1991 they hope to reach 70%.

#### School component

A World of Difference teacher training program that upgrades skills and provides lesson designs and materials for classroom use. Teacher/Student Resource Guide given in free voluntary training sessions.

San Juan and Sacramento Unified School Districts have been heavily involved in this program during the past year. The Sacramento Bureau of Resources in Education department has developed a teacher's guide and a student "tab" supplement to the daily paper. KCRA has also promoted the program through public service messages.

## RESOURCES

### *Sacramento numbers*

(January 18, 1990; April 30, 1990\*) for non-Southeast Asian refugees receiving public assistance:

Afghan	90
Armenian	7
Ethiopian	22
Iranian	237
Iraqi	17
Polish	55
Soviets	*1,885
other E. Europe	669

Source: Hach Yasamura, Sac Co Dept Soc Serv

# INFO

## Demographics Language needs in Sacramento County

*Note on data*—the information below is based on data compiled by Hach Yasamura of Sacramento County Dept of Social Services, and interpreted in a GAIN program document (March 6, 1990).

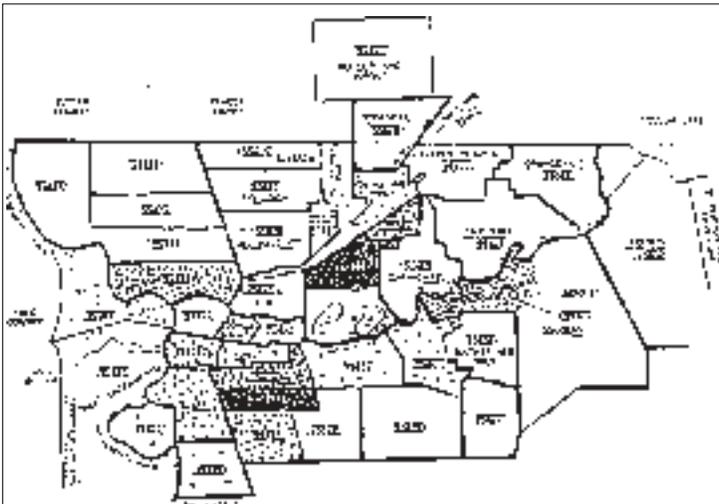
The Southeast Asian numbers date from December 1988, and the non-SEAsian refugee figures are January 1990, except for the Soviets figures, which are dated April 30, 1990. It is everyone's "best guess" that the Southeast Asian groups have remained more-or-less the same since December, 1988, given the comings and goings.

Different groups show different rates of public assistance, and these numbers show *refugees on public assistance* only. Conclusion? This is not a census of ethnicity by zip code. This does not show the distribution of immigrants and illegals. The data is fairly old. *But*, if we assume that those who are receiving public assistance are the least proficient in English, then this is an indicator of where language needs exist.

[Thanks to Hossein Mofakhar,  
Old Marshall School]

### Vietnamese (6,138)

Zip	#persons
95828	1,035
95823	984
95824	968
95818	599
95670	408
95822	335
95826	268



Population distribution of Soviet refugees on public assistance April 30, 1990. Each dot represents 3 persons (1,885)  
Hach Yasamura, Sacramento County Dept of Social Services.

95817	174
95841	170
95814	155
95827	118

### Hmong (5,059)

Zip	# persons
95824	873
95820	705
95832	676
95838	635
95822	554
95815	480
95823	301
95817	286
95660	121
95670	106

### Cantonese (from Vietnam) (3,630)

Zip	# persons
95824	1,504
95818	632
95828	439
95823	319
95670	240
95820	130

### Lao (2,657)

Zip	# persons
95815	777
95838	428
95820	277
95824	274
95823	181
95818	140

### Mien (1,629)

Zip	# persons
95817	539
95820	462
95660	390

### Cambodian (448)

Zip	# persons
95823	246
95815	32
95820	31

### Soviet (1,885)

Zip	# persons
95821	379
95670	331
95824	266
95833	240
95820	149
95823	135

# INFO

## Multilingual Cross Cultural Summer Language Institute

June 25-July 20, 1990  
California State University Sacramento

### **Survival Language Component**

*Vietnamese*  
*Cantonese*  
*Russian*  
*Hmong*  
*Spanish*  
*Mien*  
*Lao*

### **English Language Component**

(brush up on English skills)

Both components will include cultural awareness training and methodology in English as a Second Language. Up to 6 units may be earned; tuition is \$580.

**Registration deadline: June 2, 1990**

Contact:  
*Dr. Rene Merino*, BCCE Program, CSUS,  
6000 J Street, Sacramento CA 95819. (916)  
929-3708.  
OR  
*Dr. Armando Ayala*, Placer COE, 360  
Nevada St., Auburn CA 95603. (916) 889-  
8020 X6720.

Sponsored by: Sacramento City USD, Grant Union  
High SD, Placer Co Office of Education, CSUS, Cross  
Cultural Resource Center, Davis USD, Washington  
USD. Applicants from these districts may be eligible  
for stipends and/or tuition.

## Southeast Asia Community Resource Center Hmong 2

**June 18-July 7, 1990** (excluding July 3, 4)  
**12:30-3:30** (air conditioned building!)

**Instructor:** Lue Vang

**Credits:** 4.5 CEU (continuing education  
units thru CSUS Extension Office,  
equivalent to 3.0 semester units)

**Cost:** \$80 tuition, plus \$60 credit cost.

**Prerequisite:** **Hmong 1** or Survival Hmong  
from the Summer Language Institute (past  
years) or its equivalent or permission of the  
instructor.

*Hmong 2* will use the basic knowledge of  
sounds, tones, syntax, and vocabulary  
learned in *Hmong 1* in lessons focusing on  
communication about a different aspect of  
Hmong life each day (outside the house;  
inside the house; clothing; rice; weapons  
and tools; embroidery, etc.)

## Hmong 1

**will be repeated** in the late summer and fall,  
if there is sufficient interest. The classes will  
be held on the following days:

Wednesday, Sept 5, 6-9 p.m.  
Saturday, Sept 8, 8:30-11:30 a.m.  
Wednesday, Sept 12, 6-9 p.m.  
Saturday, Sept 15, 8:30-11:30 a.m.  
Wednesday, Sept 19, 6-9 p.m.  
Saturday, Sept 22, 8:30-11:30 a.m.  
Wednesday, Sept 26, 6-9 p.m.  
Saturday, Sept 29, 8:30-11:30 a.m.  
Wednesday, Oct 3, 6-9 p.m.  
Saturday, Oct 6, 8:30-11:30 a.m.  
Wednesday, Oct 10, 6-9 p.m.  
Saturday, Oct 13, 8:30-11:30 a.m.  
Wednesday, Oct 17, 6-9 p.m.  
Saturday, Oct 20, 8:30-11:30 a.m.  
Wednesday, Oct 24, 6-9 p.m.

The class earns 4.5 CEU's and costs \$140 for  
both tuition and credit (\$80 tuition, \$60  
credit).

Contact Lue Vang, SEA Community Re-  
source Center, (916) 635-6815.

# INFO

Najda: Women Concerned About the Middle East  
**The Arab World  
 Notebook**

for the **Secondary School Level**

Audrey Shabbas, Ayad Al-Qazzaz, editors

- 460 loose-leaf pages in a binder; all the teaching materials needed for teaching about the Arab World; blackline masters—maps, readings, lesson plans, activities.

- 21 subjects; country-by-country profiles and maps; hundreds of film and video resources, annotated.

\$9.95 plus \$4.00 shipping. Make checks payable to Wadsworth, 1400 Shattuck Ave., Suite 1, Berkeley, CA 94709.

# RESOURCES

*Little Hoover Commission Report*  
**“K-12 Education in  
 California: A Look at  
 Some Policy Issues”**

“The Little Hoover Commission’s report cited one particular instance regarding the bilingual education program, where the State Department of Education issued advisories that local education agencies perceived as new requirements. [Nathan] Shapell [chairman of the commission] noted in the report, “Not only are districts concerned that the department issued new requirements at all, but they believe that the new requirements are more stringent than the requirements established by the original statute.” He added, “Since the date Bilingual Education was sunsetted, the department has issued several program advisories and other documents relating to requirements for the program. These advisories identified the statutorily defined general purposes of the program, the federal legal requirements to provide services, the minimum services that must be provided post-sunset, elements of the program no longer required, the method of funding the program, and some general advice.”

[From CAASFEF Newsletter Vol 5, No 3, March 1990].

For a copy of the report, send \$2.75 to the Little Hoover Commission, 1303 J

*Education Week,  
 Vol IX, No. 32, May 2, 1990*

## Five-year study of LEP students’ progress

“English proficiency plays a minor role in the assignment of LEP pupils to services, but mostly in the earlier grade levels,” according to the summary of the study’s findings. Rather than a student’s ability to understand and speak, read and write English, it is the size of the population in a class or a school, or the number of LEP pupils already enrolled.

Procedures to place children in programs were followed haphazardly, with wide variations between schools within a district. 78% of the LEP pupils studied in this national study were Spanish speaking, and they were far more likely to receive instruction in their native language (72% of 1st graders and 59% of 3rd graders for Spanish, compared to 16% and 11% for all other language groups.)

97% of districts with K-6 LEP students provided services to them; no surprise, as this \$6 million study was funded by OBLEMA, the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Affairs. The study began with 5,800 1st graders and 4,500 3rd graders from 86 schools in 10 states. The final year study was reduced to 1,768 1st graders and 1,423 3rd graders.

In looking at student achievement in language arts and math, the researchers found that gains could be attributed to no single teaching method, but rather to a variety of approaches that took students’ levels of English proficiency into account. Students with a fairly high level of English proficiency benefit from English instruction in language arts and other subject areas. Students with low English proficiency and strong native language skills do best when the native language is used to facilitate English acquisition and development.

*“gains could be attributed to no single teaching method, but rather to a variety of approaches that took students’ levels of English proficiency into account”*

# INFO

## TALES FROM THE MIEN PEOPLE OF LAOS



40 page, 8"x5.5" book, with black and white illustrations.

Four tales, collected from Mien refugee women now living in California.

90 minute cassette—tales in Mien on one side, in English on the other. \$6.00 each, or both for \$10.95 (plus tax and \$1.50 s/h).

Make check to *Laotian Handcraft Center*,  
1579 Solano Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94707.  
(415) 526-4458.

### *Also available from the Laotian Handcraft Center:*

Mien embroidered pants	\$125.00
Mien embroidered pants panel	60-65.00
Mien sash, turban ends	25-35.00
Mien baby hats	45-60.00
Mien woman's long coat	75-125.00
Mien man's sash	60-80.00
Hmong pleated skirt	80-150.00
Hmong baby carrier	40-50.00
Hmong traditional apron	80-100.00
Tai Dam head scarf	25-35.00
Khene (musical pipe)	25.00
Karen, Mien drums	35-50.00
Karen guitar	25.00
Lisu lute	25.00
Gongs	15-90.00
Shoulder bags (Mien, Lisu Karen, Akha, Lahu)	10-60.00
Wallets (Hmong, Mien)	16-20.00
Hmong story cloths	25-250.00
Hmong applique squares	
Unfinished (7-10")	7-10.00
Finished (15-18")	20-30.00
Larger sizes	40-320.00
Cross-stitch squares	6-450.00
Hmong batik squares	10-20.00
Lao shoulder shawls	80-120.00
Baskets	7-3.005
Wooden cow bells	10-12.00

### **Books:**

<i>Peoples of the Golden Triangle</i>	\$35.00
<i>Hmong Art, Tradition &amp; Change</i>	35.00
<i>Creating PaNdau</i>	15.00
<i>Yao Design</i>	18.00
<i>Hmong Folk Tales</i>	.50
<i>Grandmother's Path...</i>	15.00
<i>Hmong Batik</i>	11.50
<i>The Iu-Mien, Tradition &amp; Change</i>	7.00
<i>Hmong Embroidered Story Cloths</i>	19.00

# RESOURCES

## New Soviet Refugee Students in the Schools

*Last June Sacramento area schools had very few, if any, refugees from the Soviet Union. Beginning in September, new Ukrainian students began to arrive and schools have been scrambling to provide appropriate services to this new language group and others that have been coming from the Soviet Union.*

Very early on, a bilingual aide who had left the Soviet Union as a political refugee ten years ago said to me, "You think that all the people in the Soviet Union like the communist government...?! It wasn't chosen by popular vote.." Of course, I thought, but in the public mind, the difference between Soviets, Russians, and communists is not too clear.

These newcomers, entering the U.S. today as religious refugees would have qualified as both political and ethnic refugees at any time during the past sixty or seventy years, had there been a way to escape. They bear the marks not only of a communist system but also of persecution of a group of people who identify themselves as Evangelicals and as non-Russian ethnic groups. To identify themselves as such invited persecution, and each act must have reinforced their identity and resistance. That they view government agencies, including schools, with suspicion is understandable.

This may, in part, explain the problems that teachers are reporting with these new students throughout Sacramento County—in Grant Joint Union High School District, Sacramento City Unified School District, and Folsom Cordova Unified School District. Generally, the older students resist the teachers' authority, and seem less than willing to do school work. Students refuse to come into class; walk out of the room without permission; leave class early; come to class late; talk while the teacher talks; disrupt the class activities.

Why are these things happening? How can we use past experiences with Vietnamese, Chinese, Lao, Hmong, and Mien refugee students to better understand these new Soviet refugee students? What can educators do to ease the transition for both students and teachers?

### *The family's cultural core values*

The Caplan, Whitmore and Choy study points to the family and their core of cultural values as the determining factors in the success of the first and second wave Vietnamese, Chinese, and Lao students in U.S. schools. We should, then, look to the family and the cultural core to find answers to questions about students' school behavior.

The cultural core for most of the recently arrived Soviet families (mostly but not exclusively Ukrainian) is based on membership in their religious group, and religion is the primary focus of family activity, rather than "school and achievement" as with the Indochinese refugees in the Caplan study. Soviet families spend evenings in church-related activity. I would like to look into a teen-agers' Bible study group; are our students disruptive and resistant in that setting? Do they talk and laugh during the sermons in church? What are these youth good at? What do they take pride in? What do they want to be recognized for? What motivates their behavior? How is inappropriate behavior handled within the group?

### *Living under a communist regime*

For most of us in this area, life under a communist regime has no reality. Watching a recent PBS series, "Inside Gorbachev's Russia", I can see that people who have lived under communist rule are different from mainstream Americans in terms of "locus of control". The people seem not to believe that what they do can make a difference in their lives. Someone else controls access to automobiles, housing, food, material goods—everything. There's no intrinsic or extrinsic reason to work hard when the only reward is "serving the people". There was no connection between effort and results. This is similar to the situation in Vietnam after 1975 (and in North Vietnam after 1954), in which persons who were suspect (or of a minority group) were denied access to higher education and careers. The difference is that the Vietnamese parents knew from personal experience that accomplishment in school was a route to upward mobility and family pride. For the Soviet, the parents did not and parents have lived under the communist regime; there is no meritocracy or education as a vehicle for social or economic progress for

This, unlike usual context pieces, is an opinion—comments, questions and views of the editor. Read it with that in mind. It is meant to suggest possibilities; I'm not an expert on the new refugees from the Soviet Union. If you have ideas and responses, I'd be glad to hear from you. Past history with other groups of refugees helps us know what kinds of questions to ask, but we're at a point where inadequate information will lead us to stereotyping answers.

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the family.

### *Assimilation*

In addition, in the Soviet Union, as in the U.S., a chief function of the schools is to pass on the dominant culture and language. The Soviet refugees who are here are mostly members of non-Russian groups—Ukrainians, Uzbeks, Armenians. Their lands became part of the Soviet Union not by choice but by force, and adoption of the Russian language and culture became mandatory. Thus, schools were seen as government agencies that imposed an unasked-for language and culture, in addition to the party philosophy. My experience with the early arrivals is that all but the youngest children understand and speak Russian, and most parents realize that knowledge of a nation's language of business is necessary. However, recognizing that people also have their own language is appreciated—I've found out that family names ending with *uk* are Ukrainian.

### *Disillusionment*

We have no way of knowing what picture of American life was beamed into the Soviet Union in the religious broadcasts, or even what expectations people held about life in the U.S. Most newcomer groups, however, are disillusioned when they find out that life in America is not what they hoped it would be. The period of disillusionment typically is the most severe after about six months in this country, and will last anywhere from six months to eighteen months. With increased competence comes new, more realistic, hope.

In addition to unreal expectations, the newcomers from the Soviet Union have been subjected to propaganda about the West. Reports tell that the Soviet media is fond of showing racial unrest and bias, homeless people, and drug addiction. Certainly the Soviets have personal experience with cultural and racial diversity in the Soviet Union, but, I suspect that blacks are a rarity.

### *Freedom.*

In the Soviet Union, there was little choice. To buy soap flakes in the U.S. is a stressful experience, with rows of different products in different sizes and different formulas: *so many* choices.

Mainstream students learn about how and when choices are appropriate gradually. We do not routinely offer newcomers a crash course in "Choice-Making IA".

Choice also implies consequences. With freedom comes responsibility: one choice brings favorable consequences and another choice brings unfavorable consequences. This was an issue with some of the Indochinese new arrivals, who thought that *freedom* meant doing as one pleases all the time. We found out that the earliest school situations teach about choice and consequence. We often did not hold students responsible, either for school work or behavior, because of the language and cultural barrier. Rather, we found out through experience that it is better to make sure students understand the expectations and consequences, and then see that they bear responsibility for the choices they make. For example, if a mainstream student is tardy, it means a trip to the office for a tardy slip, and then a hierarchy of consequences begins. New students need to follow the same rules, but school personnel need to make sure students have understood the situation before they make their choices. Also, the teacher has to be confident that the student will make it to the office and back to class again; currently, this does not always happen—students leave and go home. Obviously, bilingual staff who understand the school's operating procedures are vital to the process of learning about choice and responsibility.

For mainstream students, the hierarchy of consequences involves parent contact. Often the language barrier makes it easy to exclude non-English speaking parents, yet if the Caplan study tells us anything, it is that the family is the key to student success.

### *"Here's an offer you can't refuse..."*

In some cases, the students may make what they consider to be coerced choices. For example, students over the age of 16 have to be enrolled in school or their portion of the AFDC grant is cut. Students over 18 years can continue on assistance until the end of the year or semester, but not past age 19. The refugee cash assistance program, which now uses sanctions during the first four months in the U.S., has its own set of rules. Further, the GAIN program, which is phased in gradually

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across the welfare population, has another set of rules. All of these programs assume that 16-year olds are employable and that compulsory school attendance ends at age 16. However, high schools are geared to preventing drop-outs and most allow attendance for as long as necessary to complete a high school diploma program.

Soviet students finish high school at age 16, so many may be entering high school here with less than an eager attitude. Furthermore, mixing levels in a newcomers' center may make students uncomfortable—a student who has completed basic math doing the same work as a student who has finished higher algebra. Learning English in the USSR was a matter of textbook study—the grammar translation methods. Current California methodology stressing the learning of English through communication about something (math, safety rules, pictures, or whatever) is confused with being demoted to low levels.

We need to have intake assessment that looks at prior school achievement, even without access to transcripts. We had a similar problem with the Vietnamese, but eventually Vietnamese educators wrote out a detailed description of the national curriculum, and counselors—with bilingual assistance—could find out how much of the national curriculum each student has completed. We also need to be able to explain a whole range of educational alternatives for the students over the age of 16. They need to be in school so that the family continues to receive assistance, and they won't be eligible for the community college programs until they are 18.

If students have their previous experience evaluated, and the current system of unit accumulation explained, they will be able to see that the school officials recognize that some are further along than others.

We can either prescribe a series of courses for students and assume that they will acquiesce, or we can provide information so that they can see where they are, where they have to be, and what their choices are. We can guess that these students will not trustingly accept the school's direction, so providing adequate information is the only realistic alternative.

### *In the classroom....*

What strategies seem to help the situation? In addition to regular access to bilingual staff, especially in the first days,

and a clear understanding of the schools' rules (both written and unwritten), consequences, and course of study, there are teacher behaviors that create conditions for success. Having a predictable routine, one that seems even boring by contemporary standards, helps students understand the English that flows around them. Teachers, overwhelmed with a thousand demands, may not appear friendly and accepting to new students. Five minutes of teacher-student interaction on videotape can reveal nonverbal messages that create barriers to trust. (In addition, such videotape can be used to show students what kinds of behavior are expected.) Basic human emotions are communicated non-verbally, understood across languages and cultures: interest, distress, disgust, joy, anger, surprise, shame, fear, contempt, and guilt. Building trust begins at the the beginning, and is reciprocated.

Communication is often considered to be impossible, when in fact it is merely difficult. A community volunteer recently told me that she can make herself understood when visiting Soviet families in the apartment houses—she takes a dictionary, paper and pencil, and uses written words when spoken words do not communicate. The key, however, is that she *expects* to understand and be understood, and keeps at it. Not only does the message get across, but the parents feel more competent.

Recently in a secondary ESL class, I was observing a group of six Soviet students involved in a lesson about current events. By using photographs of the giant African frogs brought in for the jumping contest, the students were using words from previous lessons—*large, small, frog*, and so on. When the teacher asked, "*Is this frog large or small?*", a student said but one word: "*Chernobyl*". His joke communicated—both the teacher and I laughed, along with the other students. The student, with one word, demonstrated knowledge of the previous lesson, understanding of the teacher's question, cleverness, and an ironic sense of humor: competence.

Teachers are the ultimate models for how to solve problems and how to communicate across languages and cultures. By using a regular process, teachers demonstrate to students how to solve problems that arise between themselves and others. The fear, misunderstanding, and conflict are understood as persecution; even the

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young children expect to be mistreated because of being Christian or Ukrainian—here glossed as “Russian”.

Having bilingual staff and teachers attend training classes for peer counselors, natural helpers, “conflict busters”, and the like, will teach current practices in conflict resolution. Translating from one language to another is only half the battle; believing what you hear is the other half. For the bilingual aide or teacher to be able to explain a process, they need to understand what it is and how it differs from that in the native culture.

### *Coping with acculturative stress*

Of course, the students may well be encountering the predictable course of acculturation. As one culture encounters another there is stress, often called “culture shock”. Sometime after the euphoria of escape and entry into the U.S., refugees and immigrants alike go through a period that is similar to grief—there is great longing for the familiar and predictable world of the past, and resentment towards the new. Most likely adolescents did not make the decision for the family to move, so there could be resentment and bitterness that they have been thrust into an unfamiliar and uncomfortable world. Plus, there are very few models to show these newcomers what can be expected after one, two, three years.

One thing schools can do in newcomers’ programs is to incorporate a curriculum of Americana—what we do, how we do it, why we do it, etc.—along with an awareness of the steps involved in the process of acculturation (much like we do now for students going through grief). Other important elements of a newcomers program are health and hygiene, street and bike safety, child care expectations, etc.

Newcomers are often overcome by the sheer diversity of ethnic groups in U.S. neighborhoods, and newcomers’ programs should incorporate information on the various ethnic groups in America, along with aspects of their history. This should lead to direct instruction and modeling of how to resolve intercultural conflicts—

—especially when one side does not understand the other. (A simple process might look like this:—define the current problem—brainstorm all possible solutions—go over each idea’s pro’s and con’s,

whittling the list to three or four alternatives.

—compromise until both agree on one course of action or settlement.

### *Connections...*

There are many Russian bilingual mainstream Americans in this area. They are a crucial part of this early effort, understanding both languages and both cultures, able to explain the students to us, and Americans to the students and parents. The church leaders are another important resource for educators, both for understanding the backgrounds of Evangelical refugees and for identifying influential people in the community. The resettlement personnel are also a key piece of the puzzle, but they, like the church leaders, are inundated with overwhelming needs. American church groups are active in sponsoring and helping new families; they have built trust, and can help families understand Americans and US schools. Area colleges offer programs in Russian, and there are many students of Russian, as well as people who received Russian-language training through the Defense Department. Finally, there are also a few individuals who share a common background with those who arrived during the past year, and they have sufficient English to link us to the student and parent community. Each offers different skills to the schools and the students; keep in mind their most valuable contribution is in terms of language and culture, not teaching English. It is up to the schools to forge links to these various community resources.

Last week I attended an evening program at a local church designed to let mainstream Americans learn more about their new Soviet Christian neighbors. A family group came to sing, and I noticed a few things...

- The church is a safe environment, and people were smiling *a lot*.
- The family consisted of a grandfather and grandmother, along with 6 brothers and 5 sisters and their spouses and children. The family’s children attend school in Folsom Cordova, Sacramento City, San Juan, North Sacramento and Grant.
- For this family, at least, music is a strong

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part of their cultural core. Children as young as three sang with the others, and older siblings reined them in when necessary. Two girls—11-yrs old and 12-yrs old—played piano to accompany. One of the brothers acted as “music director”—singing with more joy and pride than anyone I’ve seen—and another brother acted as spokesman.

- A performance like this generated enthusiastic interaction in English afterwards. I recognized mothers and fathers of children I enrolled in October, and marveled at their progress in English and acculturation, and at the clarity of the children’s English.

- Schools may be overlooking the great musical talent in this new community. Parents I talked to are eager to have their students in music programs, and this is obviously an area in which the students can gain recognition for competence.

- The family recently performed for teachers in San Juan, and brought in Ukrainian food to eat. The women I talked to enjoyed it hugely, and would be willing to repeat it at their other children’s schools. Here is a way for school communities to learn about their new neighbors, as long as schools don’t balk at the Christian subject matter of the songs (all in Russian or Ukrainian).

## Resources

for acculturation, Americana, conflict resolution, designed for ESL students.

From ESL 1990-91 Resource Catalog  
Delta Systems Co., Inc. 800 323-8270

AMERICA FROM A TO Z: An alphabetical Introduction to the United States and Its Language.

(Parlato). Reproducible book, 26 original essays, 600 concepts. Activities are fact-based writing exercises and feelings-based oral discussion. \$14.95. No proficiency level listed.

Living in the U.S.A. (Lanier).  
\$10.95. No proficiency level given; looks like text-format.

Settling In  
2-volumes, 65 lessons for U.S. Cultural Orientation (this is the series used in overseas refugee processing centers). Includes cultural-adjustment skills; includes factual cultural information, also develops student skills in the areas of problem identification and resolution, cultural observation, classification skills, goal setting. Each lesson has a pre-test, an activity in which the student’s old and new values are compared, practice activities. Can be taught in either native language or in English. Book 1: \$19.95; Book 2: \$19.95.

From Far and Near (Sharfstein, Leung)  
Holiday workbook. 20 multicultural celebrations that provide the basis for linguistic and TPR exercises. Std book: \$7.95; Flashcards: \$3.95; Holiday Calendar: \$3.95; complete set: \$13.95.

Living In...(Japan, Italy, U.S....)  
First steps (food, transportation, money, safety); Customs and Values; Country Facts  
\$2.50.

How to Survive in the USA: English for Travelers and Newcomers (Church, Moss).  
Intermediate level. 10 units, practice exercises. Arrival, communicating by phone, getting around, money, something to eat, etc. Std Book: \$8.95, cassette: \$13.95.

Americana Articles (Ruffner)  
2-volumes. High interest, news-based readings on life-styles, work styles, socio-economics, minorities, communication. Book 1 (intermediate): \$11.95; Book 2 (high intermediate): \$11.95.

What’s So Funny? (Claire)  
200 jokes stressing insight into American culture. How to tell a joke, 400-word glossary. Intermediate/advanced; college, high school, adult programs. Std book: \$8.95.

Making It (Wheeler)  
Classroom activities from a survival skills teacher. These activities are designed for newcomers who have weak native language literacy skills. Std book: \$7.95; Charts \$4.45; Flashcards: \$4.45; Tchr’s edition: \$4.95; Complete set: \$20.95.

### Programs and other resources...

Irvine High School, Irvine USD.  
Videotape series  
Experiences and conflicts facing immigrant and ethnic minority students. Upperclassmen use the videos in freshmen orientation classes, following up with discussions for increasing awareness of what it is like to be an immigrant and an ethnic minority. \$80/tape. Bruce Baron, Irvine USD 5050 Barranca Parkway, Irvine, CA 92714. (714) 651-0444.

San Diego USD Intergroup Relations program  
Includes staff development and a race/human relations/conflict resolution curriculum infused into the social studies program at all levels. Francine Williams, Community Relations and Integration Services, San Diego City Schools, 4520 Pochahontas Ave., San Diego, CA 92117-3710. (619) 483-3925.

The New Bridges Program  
Center for Human Development and National Conference of Christians and Jews. Summer intensive camp designed to increase awareness of ethnic and cultural diversity, to find new ways to build bridges between people, and to find ways to make the experience part of their schools and communities.  
Pre-test, Sherover-Marcuse, Hugh Vasquez 2729 N. Dahl Blvd. Suite 214, Lafayette CA 94549. (415) 883-3101.  
Children of War 25 S. Oxford St., Brooklyn NY 11217-1118 858-6882. Bay area: 4031 Ardley Ave, Oakland CA 94602 415 482-0650. LA area: 548 S. Spring St., Rm 302, Los Angeles CA 90013, 213 891-1213. (go to page 16)

**RESOURCES**

7th annual  
**Southeast Asia  
Education Faire  
March 2, 1991**

Mark your calendars now!  
The event will be held in Sacramento, but the exact location will be determined in September. Price of the tickets will be the same, unless the location creates additional overhead.

In addition to the usual strands of workshops, we will add a strand for "newcomers"—refugees from the Soviet Union, recent immigrant groups, etc. The primary focus will remain on issues related to Southeast Asians.

The *Refugee Educators' Network* appreciates your support at this event. Ultimately, your response makes the work worthwhile.

*Network* meetings next year will be on the third Thursday of the months of September, November, January, March, and May, from 9:00-11:30 a.m. at the Southeast Asia Community Resource Center.

***Reminder: The old subscription list ends with this issue. Send in \$5.00 for next year's issues.***

(from page 15)  
Green Circle Program Nat'l Conference of Christians and Jews, 635 So. Harvard Blvd., Suite 224, Santa Monica CA 90003, 213 458-2772. Trained facilitators lead children through problem-solving methods, models for funder-standing feelings and attitudes, and activities to enhance self-esteem.

Paired Classes Lincoln High School, Lincoln USD, 6844 Alexandria Place, Stockton CA 95207, 209 473-5539. ESL classes are paired with regular English classes for monthly activities based on cooperative learning.

Conciliation Forums of Oakland Student Panels Project, 672 13th St., Oakland CA 94612, 415 763-2117. Teaches conflict resolution to high school students.

New Faces of Liberty Curriculum Guides San Francisco Study Center, 1095 Market St #601, San Francisco CA 94103. Grades 5-8, guides: \$10.00. Workshops for teachers and administrators.

Coming Across (video, guide). The Right Channel, 21 ozone Ave, No. 5, Venice CA 90291, 213 392-1785.

Worldwind student journal, twice a year. Center for Studies in English as a Second Language, Boulder High School, Boulder CO 80302. \$5 subscription.

Center for Teaching International Relations Press Graduate School of International Studies, University of Denver, Denver CO 80208. Catalog: 303 871-3106.

Stanford Program on International and Crosscultural Education (SPICE), Lou Henry Hoover Bldg Rm 210, Stanford University, Stanford CA 94305, 415 723-1114.

[From Crossing the Schoolhouse Borders  
California Tomorrow. Many other immigration and intercultural resources. Fort Mason Center, Bldg B, San Francisco CA 94123, 415 441-7631].

Office and SEACRC Location: 2460 Cordova Lane, Rancho Cordova CA 95670. Take US 50 East towards Placerville; Zinfandel exit; left to Cordova Lane stop sign; white portable on the right.

Context:  
*Southeast Asians in California*  
Folsom Cordova Unified School District  
**Transitional English Programs Office/SEACRC**  
125 East Bidwell, Folsom CA 95630

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