

**Hmong History and Cultural Studies Model Curriculum**  
**California Department of Education**  
**Intergenerational Trauma & Healing**  
**Grade(s): 7–8, 9–10**

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**Area of Study:** Community Building, Home-making & Empowerment

**Compelling Question:** How do Hmong people build and sustain community and belonging?

**Lesson Questions (Supporting Questions):**

- How has Hmong American history influenced intergenerational trauma within the community, and what are the key historical events that have contributed to the lasting psychological and social impacts on successive generations?
- How has the Hmong community engaged in healing practices to address and mitigate the psychological and social impacts of intergenerational trauma within their community?
- What connections can be drawn between the Hmong communities' intergenerational trauma and healing practices and those of other marginalized communities in present-day society?

**Lesson Materials:**

- **Supplies:**
  - Facing History - Socratic Seminar
  - Access to personal laptop device
- **Readings:**
  - “The Home in My Heart Stands Still: Letters of Strength to Young Hmong Generations from Navigations”
  - “Hmong Mental Health”
  - “Shamanism: The Healing Tradition of Hmong People,” pages five through seven
  - “Introduction to Keeping Hmong Traditions”
- **Videos:**
  - Excerpt from Twin Cities PBS's documentary “Minnesota Remembers Vietnam: America's Secret War”

- **Handout:**

- Hmong American Historical Events Quotes (*Hmong Oral Story Project*)
- Link to handout:  
<https://ucdavis.box.com/s/4fuowqhcxhecbp1p6aydpc8877d7fmgh>

**Lesson Objective:** Students will be able to analyze and articulate how Hmong American history has influenced and contributed to intergenerational trauma within the Hmong community, and they will critically examine the long-term impacts on successive generations. Students will also be able to identify how the Hmong community has engaged in healing practices as a response to coping with the trauma and make connections with present-day society and their own lives in a Socratic Seminar discussion.

**Ethnic Studies Theme:**

This lesson connects to the ethnic studies theme of *reclamation and joy* from the Asian American Studies Curriculum Framework (Asian American Research Initiative, 2022). Students explore the ways that communities reclaim histories through art, cultural expression, and counternarratives. Students must understand intergenerational trauma in order to identify healing practices.

For additional guidance around ethnic studies implementation, refer to the *Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum* (2021) <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/esmc.asp>.

**Historical Thinking Skill:**

This lesson will facilitate student proficiency in *historical significance*, one of Seixas' historical thinking skills (Seixas & Morton, 2013). Students make personal decisions about what is historically significant, and then consider the criteria they use to make those decisions. That is, they had deep consequences, for many people, over a long period of time. Students consider that events, people, or developments have historical significance if they resulted in change.

**Standards Addressed:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6–8.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

*Note: This lesson can be modified for a high school classroom.*

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9–10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9–10.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9–10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**Lesson Assessment:** Students will articulate their understanding of how Hmong history has played a role in intergenerational trauma within the Hmong community while drawing connections to other communities in present-day society by participating in a Socratic Seminar discussion.

Alternatively, students could observe and report to the teacher about the use of evidence, analysis, or responses to one another.

**Suggested Amount of Time:** 60–70 minutes

**Lesson Background:** This lesson will introduce the concept of intergenerational trauma to students. By the end of this lesson, students will understand how traumatic experiences in Hmong American history can be manifested today in different forms. Much of the existing mental health concerns and signs of trauma in the Hmong community today stem from past events related to persecution, forced migration, and adapting to new homes. It would be best for students to have an understanding of the Secret War and/or Vietnam War prior to this lesson.

Teacher note: It may be beneficial to define mental health as our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. The concept of mental health may be foreign to some students, as this phrase may not exist in some languages.

This lesson contains content that may be sensitive for some students. Teachers should exercise discretion in evaluating whether the resources are suitable for their class and provide a content warning to their students at the beginning of the lesson.

**Lesson Procedures:**

- a. Cultural Energizer (10 minutes)
  - i. Display the following quote on the board for students:
    1. “Pain runs like water being held through the cupping of our human hands. We try to hold its strain together, yet the matter still seeps through the crevices we cannot mend. Out, open, bare. Pain stains me like a drip from the dried plum on the summer skin. In many

ways it breeds bittersweet fruit we do not get to taste until we come to a fork of choosing” (Lee, 2017).

- a. First Read: Have students silently read it to themselves.
  - b. Second Read: The teacher reads it out loud to students.
- ii. After the two reads, give students a moment to do a five-minute quick write. Ask them to write down what they think this quote means, how it makes them feel, what it makes them think of, or any words that come to mind. Advise them that the quickwrite is meant to serve as an authentic response to the quote and there is no one correct way to respond to the quote.
  - iii. Have students turn to a partner and do a pair-share. Each student will share their response reflection with their partner.
    1. Ask for volunteers to share their responses with the whole class.
  - iv. The teacher provides insight and informs students that this quote is referring to the author’s (Hmong woman, Star B. Lee) understanding of (intergenerational) trauma.
    1. If time permits or if students are interested, they can read the whole article, “The Home in my Heart...” (<https://medium.com/@starscript/the-home-in-my-heart-stands-still-a-letter-of-strength-to-a-young-hmong-generation-from-e6f88a08c7fc>).
  - v. Display the following definition of intergenerational trauma for students: “Intergenerational trauma means passing down difficult experiences, like pain or challenges, from one generation to the next within a family or community. It’s like carrying the effects of tough times through the years.”
  - vi. Now would be a good time for teachers to provide the following content warning language: This lesson will be talking about traumatic events and the impacts of trauma. This lesson will discuss topics that may trigger an emotional response. Emphasize that having an emotional reaction is more than okay, and if at any time during the lesson, they may step out of class to process what they are learning or hearing.
- b. Shared Learning (30 minutes)
    - i. Inform students of the lesson objectives and lesson questions.

- ii. Watch the following video with students to provide a brief introduction to Hmong history (1:33 minutes)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sjs1tcnMpFo>
  1. Pose the question: “How has Hmong American history influenced intergenerational trauma within the community, and what are the key historical events that have contributed to the lasting psychological and social impacts on successive generations?” to get students thinking about the objective.
    - a. From the short clip, students should be able to identify the Secret War as playing a pivotal role in intergenerational trauma.
- iii. Students will be preparing for a Socratic Seminar addressing the lesson questions. To prepare for the discussion, they must first research Hmong American historical events and healing practices.
  1. Inform students that they will be given time to explore resources and gather information on the following categories:
    - a. Key Historical Events
      - i. Consider what historical events have contributed to lasting psychological and social impacts. Include details of the events such as name, date, events that unfolded, impacts.
    - b. Key Healing Practices
      - i. Consider ways that the Hmong American community has engaged in healing practices to mitigate the impacts of intergenerational trauma.
    - c. Evidence of Intergenerational Trauma
      - i. What does trauma look like in the Hmong American community? Include names of mental health challenges and socio-emotional impacts.
- iv. Provide the list of resources and handouts to students.
  1. Task: In groups of two to three, have students read the resources together as they take notes on each of the categories listed above.

- a. Refer to the following for “Key Historical Events” and “Evidence of Intergenerational Trauma”:
  - i. Handout: “Hmong American Historical Events Quotes”  
(<https://ucdavis.box.com/s/4fuowqhcxhecbp1p6aydpc8877d7fmgh>)
  - ii. Video: Excerpt from Twin Cities PBS's documentary Minnesota Remembers Vietnam: America's Secret War (1:33 minutes)  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEaiXeFgP9o&t=33s>)
  - iii. “Hmong Mental Health”  
(<https://ucdavis.box.com/s/flkh8hybhhs1jg1zfamq2kr833cd0voz>)
- b. Refer to the following for “Key Healing Practices”
  - i. “Shamanism: The Healing Tradition of Hmong People,” 5–7  
(<https://ucdavis.box.com/s/giyh17strrkjlab4i6jr9fvyo02tdwso>)
  - ii. “Introduction to Keeping Traditions”  
(<https://wtlc.csumc.wisc.edu/hmong-tour/hmong-cultural-tour-themes/keeping-traditions/>)
- c. Socratic Seminar Assessment (25 minutes)
  - i. If educators have never conducted a Socratic Seminar, the following resource on Facing History has step-by-step instructions:  
(<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/socratic-seminar>)
    1. There will be two rounds of discussion - split the class in half to see who gets to start in the inner versus outer circle.
      - a. Each round will be given 12 minutes of talking time.
  - ii. Students should be prepared to answer the three lesson questions after reading the provided sources.
    1. How has Hmong American history influenced intergenerational trauma within the community, and what are the key historical

events that have contributed to the lasting psychological and social impacts on successive generations?

2. How has the Hmong community engaged in healing practices to address and mitigate the psychological and social impacts of intergenerational trauma within their community?
  3. What connections can be drawn between the Hmong communities' intergenerational trauma and healing practices and that of other marginalized communities in present-day society?
- iii. Have each student also create three open-ended questions of their own to contribute to the academic discussion.
  - iv. During the Socratic Seminar, allow students to have their notes with them to refer to their reading while discussing.
- d. Closing Reflection (5 minutes)
- i. After the Socratic Seminar is complete, go around the room and have each student share one word to describe their takeaway from their discussion. (For example: empowered, calm, loved, connected, etc.)
    1. Additional potential reflection questions:
      - a. What was something that stood out to you from today's conversation?
      - b. How would you rate your participation in today's discussion?
      - c. What have you learned from our discussion today and how will you apply it to your personal life?

### Scaffolding:

- **Engagement:** Consider the following method to support lesson engagement:
  - Create an accepting and supportive classroom climate
  - Create expectations for group work (e.g., rubrics, norms, etc.)
- **Representation:** Consider the following method to support multiple means of representation:
  - Anchor instruction by linking to and activating relevant prior knowledge (e.g., using visual imagery, concept anchoring, or concept mastery routines)

- **Action and Expression:** Consider the following method to support in presenting their learning in multiple ways:
  - Provide guides and checklists for scaffolding goal-setting
  - Provide graphic organizers and templates for data collection and organizing information

For additional ideas to support your students, check out the UDL Guidelines at CAST (2018) <http://udlguidelines.cast.org>.

### **Multilingual Learner Supports:**

- **Emerging:** Consider the following method to support emerging students:
  - Speaking: Provide sentence frames for pair interactions
    - In response to a prompt, the teacher offers a sentence frame orally and/or in writing to support the expression of student thinking. Frames are adjusted based upon specific grammatical structure, key vocabulary, content learning, and language proficiency level descriptors, etc. Frames are temporary scaffolds that require modification.
- **Expanding:** Consider the following method to support expanding students:
  - Speaking: Prompt for academic language output
    - In partner and group discussions, students use conversation moves to extend academic talk. Conversation moves help students add to or challenge what a partner says, question, clarify, paraphrase, support thinking with examples, synthesize conversation points, etc.
- **Bridging:** Consider the following method to support with bridging students:
  - Speaking: Require full-sentence responses by asking open-ended questions
    - In response to a prompt, the teacher offers a sentence frame orally and/or in writing to support the expression of student thinking. Frames are adjusted based upon specific grammatical structure, key vocabulary, content learning, and language proficiency level descriptors, etc. Frames are temporary scaffolds that require modification.

For additional guidance around scaffolding for multilingual learners, please consult the following resources:

- *English Learner Toolkit of Strategies*  
<https://ucdavis.box.com/s/ujkdc2xp1dqjzrlq55czph50c3sq1ngu>
- *Providing Appropriate Scaffolding*  
<https://www.sdcoe.net/educators/multilingual-education-and-global-achievement/oracy-to>

[olkit/providing-appropriate-scaffolding#scaffolding](#)

- *Strategies for ELD*  
<https://ucdavis.box.com/s/dcp15ymah51uwizpmmt2vys5zr2r5reu>
- *ELA / ELD Framework*  
<https://www.caeducatorstogether.org/resources/6537/ela-eld-framework>
- *California ELD Standards*  
<https://ucdavis.box.com/s/vqn43cd632z22p8mfzn2h7pntc71kb02>

### Enrichment Opportunities:

1. “Hmonglish Podcast” Exploring Trauma and Mental Health in the Hmong Community (<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/exploring-trauma-and-mental-health-in-the-hmong-community/id1623076086?i=1000566465797>) - Students can listen to the following podcast to hear from more Hmong American individuals about the impact of trauma and mental health in their lived experiences. Following the audio listen, students can write a reflection or even create their own podcast episode and record a talk about how mental health has played a role in their lives.
2. Healing Board - Students can tap into their creativity and create a healing board, which is a play on a vision board or mood board. On that healing board (digital or physical), students can include a collage of images, quotes, ideas that illustrate ways the students themselves deal with healing or socioemotional/mental health wellness. If time permits, students can share their healing board with their peers.

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### **Supplementary Sources:**

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