

**Vietnamese American Experiences Model Curriculum**  
**California Department of Education**  
**LGBTQ+ Communities and Organizing**  
**Grade Level: 11–12**

**Author:** Mai Trần

**Area of Study:** Vietnamese Resettlement and Community Building

**Compelling Question:** What is Vietnamese America?

**Lesson Question (Supporting Question):**

- How do LGBTQ+ youth negotiate their Vietnamese identity with their family, parents, and community contexts?
- What challenges did Vietnamese American LGBTQ+ youth face in their families and communities, and how did they navigate them?

**Lesson Materials:**

- Supplies:
  - GLSEN Safe Space Kit
  - Oral History with David Vũ, timestamp 0:00 – 6:59
  - Video discussion sharing Application (i.e: Flipgrid or Padlet)
- Readings:
  - A Hard Silence to Break: LGBT Vietnamese Struggle for Understanding

**Lesson Objective:** Students will explore various LGBTQ+ Vietnamese American experiences, intersectionalities of their identities, and legislation against LGBTQ+ communities in the US by analyzing interviews and creating a video reflection.

**Ethnic Studies Themes:** This lesson connects to the ethnic studies theme of *community and solidarity* from the Asian American Studies Curriculum Framework (Asian American Research Initiative, 2022). Students analyze community resistance and alliances between communities, as well as the complexities within these experiences. Students explore the emergence of community groups and LGBTQ+ organizations in empowering the queer community.

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 Skills:** This lesson will facilitate student proficiency in *historical perspectives*, one of Seixas' historical thinking skills (Seixas & Morton, 2013). To demonstrate the use of evidence to write historical fiction that accurately conveys the beliefs, values, and motivations of historical actors. Students consider how different historical actors have diverse perspectives on the events in which they are involved. Exploring these is key to understanding historical events.

**Standards Addressed:**

HSS-11.10 Students analyze the development of federal civil rights and voting rights.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11–12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11–12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively

**Lesson Assessment:** Students will analyze interviews and demonstrate an understanding of the LGBTQ+ Vietnamese American experiences, challenges they faced, how they organized, and intersecting identities by creating a short video reflection.

**Suggested Amount of Time:** 50–75 minutes

**Lesson Background:**

In most traditional Vietnamese family units, there exist gender roles and expectations. As Vietnamese American youth grow up with these pressures, they may face prejudice and discrimination within the family and Vietnamese community. Some challenges include family relationships that are already strained by war trauma, language barriers, and cultural rifts. Religion can act as a significant barrier for youth to communicate and to be accepted and/or loved by their parents who practice Catholicism. There also exists a myth that queerness is a Western phenomenon and Vietnamese LGBTQ+ people are non-existent. This subsequently impacts the rates of homelessness, migration, and mental health. Historically, there already exists prejudice and discrimination in queer spaces. In the '90s, LGBTQ+ organizations were overwhelmingly white and upheld normative beauty standards. There was a lack of culturally sensitive support for LGBTQ+ Vietnamese people. Overtime, there came the emergence of LGBTQ+ Vietnamese Community Groups such as: Gay Vietnamese Alliance (GVA), Ô-Môi, Viet Rainbow of Orange County, and VietQ to name a few.

**Lesson Procedures:**

- a. Introduction: Teachers can begin by displaying the word ‘ally’ on the board. Have students discuss with a peer their understanding of what it means to be an ally. Then have a whole class discussion. (5–10 minutes)
  - i. For support on how to create a safe space classroom, teachers can review: GLSEN Safe Space Kit at <https://ucdavis.box.com/s/mabgmtbrcw0rxhesshcexg57qz8e2poq> or original source: <https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/GLSEN%20Safe%20Space%20Kit.pdf>
    1. Teacher to provide content warnings for homophobia, language, and mental health.
- b. Teachers should start off by defining key terms and identities and introduce lesson objectives to class. It would be helpful to have these terms displayed on the board or on notes for students.
  - i. LGBT or LGBTQ: An umbrella term referring to people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender. Sometimes the acronym is written as LGBTQ, with the Q referring to those who identify as queer and/or questioning. The acronym can also include additional letters, in reference to other identities that do not conform to dominant societal norms around sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.
  - ii. Queer: An umbrella term used to describe a sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression that does not conform to dominant societal norms. While it is used as a neutral or positive term today, historically queer was used as a derogatory slur.
  - iii. Heterosexism: A system of oppression that benefits straight/heterosexual people at the expense of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Heterosexism may take the form of homophobia or biphobia, bias and discrimination towards lesbian, gay and bisexual people.
  - iv. Homophobia or Transphobia: This can take many different forms, including negative attitudes and beliefs about, aversion to, or prejudice against bisexual, lesbian, gay and transgender people. It’s often based in irrational fear and misunderstanding. Some people’s homophobia or transphobia may be rooted in conservative religious beliefs. People may hold homophobic and transphobic beliefs if they were taught them by parents and families.
  - v. Mainstream: The ideas, attitudes or activities that are regarded as normal or conventional.
- c. Interaction with first source: “A Hard Silence to Break: LGBT Vietnamese Struggle for Understanding” Hiếu Như Nguyễn (<https://voiceofoc.org/2016/02/a-hard-silence-to-break-lgbt-vietnamese-struggle-for-understanding/>) (15 minutes)

- i. This article should be read together as a class and teacher to lead in modeling how to address the lesson questions.
  - ii. Have students log observations and consider intersecting identities within the family and community contexts according to the guiding prompts.
  - iii. Additional Guiding Prompts (suggested for students to record responses):
    1. How did the subject of the interview negotiate their Vietnamese identity with their family, parents, and community contexts?
    2. What challenges did this individual face in their families and communities, and how did they navigate them?
  - iv. Teacher to prompt for class discussion
- d. Interaction with second source: David Vu (0:00–6:59). (<https://digital.sandiego.edu/vietnamese-american-oral-histories/1/>) Written transcript available here: <https://ucdavis.box.com/s/ocomzjrws0bkrsgf6kcqky191y7aezp> (15 minutes)
- i. Have students log observations and consider intersecting identities within the family and community contexts according to the lesson questions and additional guiding prompts.
    1. How did David Vu negotiate his Vietnamese identity with his family, parents, and community contexts?
    2. What challenges did David Vu have with his family and communities, and how did he navigate them?
  - ii. This interview can be a pair-share task, or students can complete independently.
  - iii. Teacher to prompt for class discussion
- e. Community Collaboration - Venn Diagram Compare and Contrast (15–20 minutes)
- i. In small groups, have students create venn diagrams comparing and contrasting the stories and experiences from Hieu Nguyen and David Vu.
  - ii. Encourage students to identify a minimum of four contrasting or comparison details.
  - iii. Once complete, the teacher has students share details from the venn diagram.
- f. Synthesize: Discuss with students the family and community contexts and impacts. (5–10 minutes)

- i. What were the motivations for both men to become involved in organizing and advocacy?
  - ii. How are LGBTQ+ and refugee struggles connected? How does this impact migration patterns?
- g. Cultural Production: Video Reflection (15 minutes)
- i. After students have compared the interviews, students will create a one to three minute video reflection with their takeaways. (Suggested software: Flipgrid or Padlet) The video reflection should connect to their takeaways from the lesson questions.
    1. Alternatively, students can share reflections in a written or visual narrative.
  - ii. Additional possible prompts for students to choose from for their reflection video:
    1. What intersecting identities do you hold, and how do they motivate your actions?
    2. What new learnings did you have after listening to the interviews?
    3. What can you do to support LGBTQ+ communities? Think about scale: from your family to your school, neighborhood, state, country, or globally.
  - iii. Once students complete their video reflections, have them watch two to three peers' reflections and respond.
    1. Possible prompts for responding to peers:
      - a. "Something that resonated with me from your reflection was..."
      - b. "Your video reflection makes me wonder/curious about..."
      - c. "A follow-up question I have to your reflection is..."

**Scaffolding:**

- **Engagement:** Consider the following method to support with lesson engagement:
  - Create school-wide programs of positive behavior support with differentiated objectives and supports
- **Representation:** Consider the following method to support with multiple means of representation:

- Provide written transcripts for videos or auditory clips
- **Action and Expression:** Consider the following method to support in presenting their learning in multiple ways:
  - Use outlines, graphic organizers, unit organizer routines, concept organizer routines, and concept mastery routines to emphasize key ideas and relationships
  - Provide interactive models that guide exploration and new understandings
  - Use social media and interactive web tools (e.g., discussion forums, chats, web design, annotation tools, storyboards, comic strips, animation presentations)

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 with 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 expression of student thinking. Frames are adjusted based upon specific grammatical structure, key vocabulary, content learning, and language proficiency level descriptors, etc. Frames are a temporary scaffold that require modification.
- **Expanding:** Consider the following method to support with expanding students:
  - Speaking: Prompt for academic language output
    - When posing a question for discussion and writing, the teacher offers a coordinated response frame to support the use of particular grammatical structures and vocabulary.
- **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 expression of student thinking. Frames are adjusted based upon specific grammatical structure, key vocabulary, content learning, and language proficiency level descriptors, etc. Frames are a temporary scaffold 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-toolkits/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. Supplementary Sources Video Clips - Have students choose one of the video sources provided under “Supplementary Sources” to view. (“Like Mother, Like Daughter”, “On (Not) Forgiving My Mother”, or “Coming Out to Your Non-English-Speaking Mom” (time stamp: 1:49–3:40 and content warning: suicide). After viewing one or all of the clips, encourage students to write a reflection and/or discuss with peers their takeaways, wonderings, and connections with the videos.
2. Local LGBTQ+ Organizations: If an existing GSA/LGBTQ+ (or equivalent) organization exists on school campus, encourage students to become involved by attending a meeting, learning more about the organization, or supporting their events and philanthropy. If such an organization does not exist on campus, encourage students to look into other schools that have the club and brainstorm ways to bring that to their campus. This will allow for students to practice civic engagement and build a more inclusive school culture. Students can also research local events that advocate for the LGBTQ+ community and they can learn how they can become an ally themselves.

### **Works Cited:**

- American Initiative. 2022. *Asian American Studies K-12 Framework*.  
<https://asianamericanresearchinitiative.org/asian-american-studies-curriculum-framework/>
- Britt, K. 2020, May 11. *English learner toolkit of strategies*. California County Superintendents.  
<https://cacountysupts.org/english-learner-toolkit-of-strategies/>
- California Department of Education. 2021. *Ethnic studies model curriculum*.  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/esmc.asp>

- California Department of Education & English Learner Support Division. 2012. *California English Language Development standards (Electronic Edition) kindergarten through grade 12* (F. Ong & J. McLean, Eds.). California Department of Education. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/documents/eldstndpublication14.pdf>
- California Educators Together. (n.d.). *ELA / ELD framework*. <https://www.caeducatorstogether.org/resources/6537/ela-eld-framework>
- CAST. 2018. *The UDL guidelines*. <http://udlguidelines.cast.org>
- GLSEN. 2019. *Safe Space Kit: A Guide to Supporting Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender, and Queer Students in Your School*. GLSEN. <https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/GLSEN%20English%20SafeSpace%20Book%20Text%20Updated%202019.pdf>
- Nguyễn, J. (Interviewer). 2020. *Oral History with David Vũ* [Interview]. <https://digital.sandiego.edu/vietnamese-american-oral-histories/1/>
- Oral History of Hiếu Như Nguyễn. (n.d.). Calisphere. Retrieved September 19, 2023. <https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/81235/d8x55x/?order=0>
- San Diego County Office of Education. (n.d.). *Providing appropriate scaffolding*. <https://www.sdcoe.net/educators/multilingual-education-and-global-achievement/oracy-to-olkit/providing-appropriate-scaffolding#scaffolding>
- Sexias, P. & Morton, T. 2013. *The big six: Historical thinking concepts*. Nelson Education.
- Tulare County Office of Education. (n.d.). *Strategies for ELD*. <https://commoncore.tcoe.org/Content/Public/doc/Alpha-CollectionofELDStrategies.pdf>
- Supplementary Sources:**
- LGBTQIA Resource Center. 2014. LGBTQIA Resource Center Glossary | LGBTQIA Resource Center. Ucdavis.edu. <https://lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu/educated/glossary>
- Tết (New Year) | Short Film. (n.d.). Wwww.youtube.com. Retrieved September 19, 2023, from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynkpltpw\\_Dg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynkpltpw_Dg)
- Chrysanthemum. 2017. *On (Not) Forgiving My Mother* [Spoken Word and Performance Poetry]. Button Poetry. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-snsLLr7nQ>
- Gina Masequesmay. 2003. Emergence of Queer Vietnamese America, *Amerasia Journal*, 29:1, 116-134, DOI. <https://www.csun.edu/~gm61310/publications/queeringVA.pdf>



- Hồ, Kelley Thu (Interviewer). 2019, February 15. Oral History of Hiếu Như Nguyễn [Interview]. Viet Stories: Vietnamese American Oral History project. <https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/81235/d8x55x/?order=0> (Listen to: Part 1 18:35-51:55, Part 2 10:45-22:00)
- Huỳnh, J. 2022. Family Is the Beginning but Not the End: Intergenerational LGBTQ Chosen Family, Social Support, and Health in a Vietnamese American Community Organization. *Journal of Homosexuality*. DOI: 10.1080/00918369.2021.2018879 [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/600a8d658cf6793b2f15372a/t/6217fe0cf336f37ec499d762/1645739533649/10.1080\\_00918369.2021.2018879.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/600a8d658cf6793b2f15372a/t/6217fe0cf336f37ec499d762/1645739533649/10.1080_00918369.2021.2018879.pdf)
- Lê, K. (Director). 2018. *Like Mother, Like Daughter* [Documentary film]. <https://vimeo.com/301514942>
- Masequesmay, G. 2003. Emergence of Queer Vietnamese America. *Amerasia Journal*, 29(1), 116-134. DOI. <https://www.csun.edu/~gm61310/publications/queeringVA.pdf>
- Miyabayashi, Hana (Interviewer). 2019, February 8. *Oral History of Thuận Phước Nguyễn* [Interview]. Viet Stories: Vietnamese American Oral History project. <https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/81235/d81v98/?order=0>
- Nguyễn, Vy Linh. 2021, March 2. Being Vietnamese Now. In Looking Back: The Refugee Experience Through the Eyes of a Child [Interview]. Another War Memorial. <https://anotherwarmemorial.com/vy-linh-nguyen/>
- Nguyễn Mang, T. (Founder & Chief Storyteller). 2022, June 14. Live Episode! The Magic Fish (#41) [Audio podcast episode]. *The Vietnamese Boat People*. <https://www.vietnameseboatpeople.org/podcast/episode/b07c4ec9/41-live-episode-the-magic-fish>
- Phạm, P. (Director). 2015. *Tết* (New Year) [Documentary film]. Available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynkpItpw\\_Dg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynkpItpw_Dg)
- Tôn-Nữ, T. 2020, December 2. You Are Loved: Profile of VietQ. *diaCRITICS*. <https://dvan.org/2020/12/you-are-loved-vietq/>
- Trần, R. 2022, March 3. *Coming Out to Your Non-English-Speaking Mom* [Stand-up Comedy]. Comedy Central. <https://youtu.be/i0w0q-eu2Hk?t=109>

Viet Stories: Vietnamese American Oral History Project (VAOHP). (n.d.). *Oral History of Hiếu Như Nguyễn*. UCI Southeast Asian Archive.

<https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/81235/d8x55x/?order=0>

Võ, T. 2016, February 8. A Hard Silence to Break: LGBT Vietnamese Struggle for Understanding. *Voice of OC*.

<https://voiceofoc.org/2016/02/a-hard-silence-to-break-lgbt-vietnamese-struggle-for-understanding/>