MODULE TWO: Southeast Asian Students

Learning Objectives:
1. Students will gain an introductory understanding of the social, political, historical background of Southeast Asian immigration to the U.S.
2. Students will familiarize themselves with common issues faced by students of Southeast Asian ancestry
3. Students will be able to distinguish commonly held myths about Asian Americans from the real experiences and social issues that Southeast Asian communities face

Procedure:
I. Warm-Up
   • Have students write down a list of obstacles that deter students from being successful in the classroom and what helps students become successful. Have them reflect on their own educational experiences from K-12 and in college
   • Share out and create a class list of helpful and deterring factors.

II. Introduction
   • Have students identify Southeast Asia on a world map in small groups.
     - Identify as a whole class:
       - Myanmar (Burma)
       - Thailand
       - Philippine Islands
       - Indonesia
       - Cambodia
       - Laos
       - Vietnam
       - Singapore
       - Malaysia
       - Papua New Guinea
     - Explain that for the purposes of Asian American History and this lesson, we will focus on the history and experiences of students from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, who ended up in the U.S. because of the Vietnam War.

III. Presentation
   • Show the “Southeast Asian American” section of the DVD
     - Have students jot notes on the types of issues Southeast Asian students face
     - Issues are:
       - Learning English
       - Bullying and being made fun of
       - No supervision or ability to help with HW b/c adults work, language barrier
       - Responsibility of translating
       - Poverty
       - Gangs
       - Generation gap
       - Cultural difference – pull between two cultures – second gen didn’t accept where they come from b/c of stereotypes
       - Pressure to succeed (good education = good job) and carry the family financially
       - Assumptions by teachers that they are quiet and smart – learning issues overlooked b/c of the model minority myth
       - Expectation to go into STEM fields by family and society
       - How pride in culture/ethnicity helps their educational experience
   • Share a more in-depth historical timeline on the following countries. A more focused timeline can be found under resources:
     - Vietnam (http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-16568035)
     - Laos (http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-15355605)
     - Cambodia (http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13006828)
IV. **Activity 1 - Video debrief:**
- Have students discuss in small groups the following:
  - What are the issues that Southeast Asian students face?
  - What about Southeast Asian history was surprising or new information for you?
  - How has the model minority myth affected the educational experience of this group of students?
- Share-out in a whole class what was discussed in small groups
- Come up with a list of resources or support services that might help tackle the issues Southeast Asian students face

V. **Activity 2 - “Separation and Loss”**
- This activity will allow students to somewhat experience what Southeast Asian refugees might have experienced during the process of leaving their homeland.
- First, have the class think about what the terms “separation” and “lost” mean to them
- Then have them list the 10 most important people or things in their lives. Things or people they absolutely cannot live without.
- Ask them to eliminate 2 from the list. They must think carefully because they will not get to see or touch these ever again.
- Continue having them cross out two until they have only two left. Have them reflect in pairs or small groups, then share out, what this process has been like. Some students might protest. Let them know, if they are unwilling to let go of the items on the list, they risk their own lives.
- Ask them to then cross out the last two items on their list
- Debrief the activity. What were the most challenging aspects of this activity? How did they feel during this process? Ask students why we did this activity. It is to let them experience the decisions that Southeast Asia refugees had to make in order to survive. Remind them that some separations of the most challenging type, like separation between parents and their children was the lived reality of many refugees.
- Have students write a reflection of the whole process and whether they have developed new insight on the experiences of Southeast Asian refugees

VI. **Extension Activities:**
1. Have students interview a member of their own family to determine how they first immigrated to the United States. Invite them to share their findings, along with any appropriate visual aids (pictures, a drawing of their family tree, letters or diary accounts, etc.) with the class.
2. Have students write a poem or short reflection essay on their cultural/ethnic identity

VII. **Resources:**
- [http://www.learnabouthmong.net/](http://www.learnabouthmong.net/)
- Film:
  - *Refugee* by Mike Siv and Spencer Nakasako
  - *Sea Of Memory - A Vietnamese Boat Refugee Documentary Film* - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNe897ereaQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNe897ereaQ)
  - *Dandiggity: Cornershop Poet* - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-5kzudoVvQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-5kzudoVvQ)
  - *Daughter from Danang* by Gail Dolgin and Vicente Franco
  - *Catfish in Black Bean Sauce* by Chi Muoi Lo
  - *A.K.A. Don Bonus* by Spencer Nakasako and Sokly Ny
- Books:
  - *I Love Yous are for White People* by Lac Su
  - *The Latehomecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir* By Kao Kalia Yang