College: Craven Community College

Instructor: Dr. Terri Colón

Class: EDU 288 Advanced Issues in Early Childhood Education

Module: Refugees in Our Midst  I would use the word refugees throughout and then tell the difference between them and immigrants as you do below.

Focus: A current issue in education in our county, Craven, as well as many other NC counties is the issue of refugees in our community childcare centers and school systems. This module was created to generate a cultural awareness of the refugees in our area. Although most people are both welcoming and tolerant of refugees, creating a greater awareness is always helpful in understanding our unique differences as well as our commonalities. In Craven County, we have seen an influx of Karen refugees. Over the past 10 years, this area has welcomed approximately 1,000 Karen refugees. This course module is significant to this course also because it is the course that is taken along side of the practicum. It is likely that students doing their practicum will encounter Karen children. Although the focus of this module is on Karen refugees, Craven County has welcomed other refugees from Burma who are of other ethnicities – Mon, Shan, Arakan, Chin, Burmese, and Karenni. Still others are from Vietnam and Iraq. In other areas there are refugees from Africa as well as from Colombia and Cuba. It is important to be aware that not all Asian children are one ethnicity.

Course Description: This course covers advanced topics and issues in early childhood. Emphasis is placed on current advocacy issues, emerging technology, professional growth experiences, and other related topics. Upon completion, students should be able to list, discuss, and explain advanced current topics and issues in early childhood education.

Objective: Students will understand what defines the term “refugee”

Students will understand the particular reasons why the refugees in our area have resettled here and the processes in which they must go through in order to come to America. Students will also understand how past trauma affects present ability to learn and integrate.

Students will learn about some of the customs of the refugees in our area.

Assignment Prior to Class: Open the chart and fill out what you think you know about refugees. Bring it with you to class and during class fill in what you have learned that you didn’t already know. After class we will evaluate what you knew, what you learned, and address any misconceptions you might have had about refugees.

*Chart is below the references

Methodology: Guest speaker from Refugee Services in Craven County and the Craven County refugee school liaison. Look for Refugee Services in your area.

Guest speaker: Students at Craven who are Karen and currently enrolled in the Early Childhood Program.
Forum: The forum is used as the on line portion of the class and will be used after the class has met, had the guest speaker and has finished reading about the history and culture of the Karen people.

The forum topic selections are as follows:

1) After listening to our guest speaker and completing the reading assignment, how has your knowledge about refugees changed? What have you learned and has your perspective changed? If so, discuss what has changed.
2) What can preschool programs do to assist refugee children in their language acquisition and resettlement process?

*This topic applies only to school age programs

3) Considering No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the pressure that schools are under to meet annual yearly progress (AYP), what can schools do to assist refugees in preparing to take the end of grade (EOG) test, which must be administered in English after the first year of resettlement?

Evaluation: This course is designed to have weekly discussion in class and a related topic online with online discussions in a forum. It is currently a hybrid course, but could easily be adapted to either fully seated or on line. Currently the course uses, attendance, participation in discussion in class, and on line participation. Attached is a rubric for on line discussion evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Post</th>
<th>Post addresses the content but does not advance the discussion with new insight. Post does not address all aspects of the discussion topic.</th>
<th>Post is engaged in content, advances discussion with new insight and demonstrates thoughtful reflection. Post addresses most aspects of the discussion topic</th>
<th>Post is engaged in content, advances discussion with new insight and demonstrates thoughtful reflection. Post thoroughly addresses all aspects of the discussion topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>Your Responses</td>
<td>Reflection is not evident. Student does not add their own ideas to the response. Student addresses few aspects of the response</td>
<td>Reflection is evident. Student adds their own ideas to the response. Student addresses most aspects of the response</td>
<td>Thoughtful reflection is evident. Student adds their own ideas to the response. Student thoroughly addresses all aspects of the response</td>
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Instructor may add the point value to each category to meet the grading standards of their college.

**Service Learning Project:** Students will accompany Interfaith Refugee Ministry on one of their arrival of immigrants. Students will participate in greeting and welcoming the new family to the community.

**Lecture Notes:**

**What is a Refugee?**

Any person who is outside any country of such person's nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of, that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

Lectlaw.com  [http://www.lectlaw.com/def2/q023.htm](http://www.lectlaw.com/def2/q023.htm)

**The refugees in our area say they are Karen. Who are the Karen people and where do they come from?**

Karen is a state, just like Ohio or North Carolina. They live in the area formerly known as Burma and now called Myanmar. To learn more about them, read the following:

Culture Profile no.21, June 2007: Refugees From Burma: Refugees and Refugee Experiences

[http://www.cal.org/co/pdffiles/refugeesfromburma.pdf](http://www.cal.org/co/pdffiles/refugeesfromburma.pdf)

Pg 28-40: Read about the history, and daily life and culture of the Karen people.

**Why are they settling in this area?**

Refugees settle in various areas of the United States as well as other countries. Refugees apply for asylum to go to another country and live so they are free from persecution. There are various refugee agencies (see a list in resource #5?) in America that assist refugees in resettling. Diocese of East Carolina Interfaith Refugee Ministry in our Craven County assists the Karen people as well as people from other areas. There have been about 1000 refugees in our area that have resettled here from the area formerly known as Burma. These refugees live and work, and have children that go to school just like us.
What is the difference between a refugee and an immigrant?

A REFUGEE is one who is fleeing from their country because of persecution. Refugees are here legally at the invitation of the U.S. government.

An IMMIGRANT is one who comes to another country for reasons other than persecution. An immigrant might resettle in another country for purposes of obtaining a better life through employment, being near family, obtaining an education, or a multitude of other reasons, BUT NOT for reasons of persecution. Fleeing from persecution defines a refugee.

Immigrants who come to this country through legal means through the immigration service are referred to as DOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS OR DOCUMENTED CITIZENS.

Immigrants who come to this country not using legal means are referred to as UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS OR UNDOCUMENTED CITIZENS.

Do refugees pay taxes?

When refugees resettle here and obtain jobs, they pay taxes just like any American citizen. They also contribute to our economy by purchasing items in stores because anyone who purchases items in stores pays sales tax. If a refugee buys property, they pay property tax such as on a car, or a piece of land.

What is the culture of the Karen people?

The Karen people are no different from you and I in that they work for a living, have families and want a good education for their children. The homes they lived in and how they earned a living might look a little different than our homes and jobs here in America, but we are all the same in that we work to make a living. They live in families just like us. They place a high value on education. Karen refugees are more rural than urban; and value community rather than individuality.

Just as in America, we have various religions, the Karen people do as well. Many are Buddhist or Christian. Often, refugee resettlement agencies are faith based agencies, but they do not require their refugees to be of the same religion in order to assist them. You can read more
about their culture in resource #3 Culture Profile no.21, June 2007: Refugees from Burma: Refugees and Refugee Experiences

Resources: cut and paste the URL into the address bar

1. In this link, read about The Karen People of Myanmar and Persecution of Karen People: Significance of Religion

You may also view a map of the area that the Karen people come from.

http://www.alsintl.com/resources/languages/Karen/

2. Cultural Orientation Resource Center video about the Karen people’s experience in America after resettling as a refugee to America

http://www.cal.org/co/videos/Burmese/Refugees_from_Burma-WMV_format.html

Questions you might have that are answered in this document: Cultural Orientation Resource Center (use the link below):

Questions you might have about refugees such as:

Who is considered a refugee?

Who decides who is a refugee?

Which refugees are eligible for U.S. resettlement?

Which family members may accompany a refugee to the United States?

How can a person find out if he or she is eligible for U.S. resettlement?

How are refugees processed for U.S. resettlement?

Where do refugees live in the United States and who helps them?

What is expected of refugees when they arrive in the United States?

What kind of an experience can refugees expect to have in the United States?
3. Culture Profile no.21, June 2007: Refugees From Burma: Refugees and Refugee Experiences

Pg 28–40: Read about the history, and daily life and culture of the Karen people.

http://www.cal.org/co/pdffiles/refugeesfromburma.pdf

4. This is the local organization that assists refugees in relocation to Craven County:

Diocese of East Carolina
INTERFAITH REFUGEE MINISTRY
An Affiliate of Episcopal Migration Ministries, New York City

http://www.helpingrefugees.org/facts.html

5. NC Refugee Service Providers
This link lists agencies throughout NC that assist in resettling refugees. Look for the one that is closest to your county and contact them to request a guest speaker.

http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/80/chg/RAXB.pdf

6. For more information on refugees around the world see The United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees  www.unhcr.org

7. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Office of Refugee Resettlement
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/

8. U.S. Department of State: Refugee Admissions
http://www.state.gov/j/prm/ra/index.htm
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<th>What I think I know about refugees</th>
<th>What I learned in class about refugees</th>
<th>My misconceptions about refugees</th>
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