

University of Montana

ScholarWorks at University of Montana

Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, &
Professional Papers

Graduate School

2001

"Middle" generation Hmong students' perceptions of their college experiences at the University of Montana: A phenomenological analysis

Eloise K. Thompson
The University of Montana

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd>

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Thompson, Eloise K., "'Middle" generation Hmong students' perceptions of their college experiences at the University of Montana: A phenomenological analysis" (2001). *Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers*. 9400.
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/9400>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

ProQuest Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

UMI[®]



Maureen and Mike
MANSFIELD LIBRARY

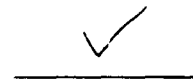
The University of

Montana

Permission is granted by the author to reproduce this material in its entirety, provided that this material is used for scholarly purposes and is properly cited in published works and reports.

****Please check "Yes" or "No" and provide signature****

Yes, I grant permission



No, I do not grant permission



Author's Signature: Elise K Thompson

Date: 04-24-01

Any copying for commercial purposes or financial gain may be undertaken only with the author's explicit consent.

MS Thesis Mansfield Library Permission

“MIDDLE” GENERATION HMONG STUDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF
THEIR COLLEGE EXPERIENCES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

By

Eloise K. Thompson

B.A. Knox College, 1964

M.A., University of Montana, 1980

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Education Doctorate

The University of Montana

March 2001

Approved by


Chair, Dissertation Committee


Dean, Graduate School

4-25-01

Date

UMI Number: 3012242

Copyright 2001 by
Thompson, Eloise Kehaulani

All rights reserved.

UMI[®]

UMI Microform 3012242

Copyright 2001 by Bell & Howell Information and Learning Company.
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

Bell & Howell Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

“Middle” Generation Hmong Students’ Perceptions of their College Experiences at The University of Montana: A Phenomenological Analysis

Director: Catherine Jenni, PhD 

This study investigated the perceptions of six “middle” generation Hmong refugee students who were matriculating at The University of Montana during the late 1990s to shed some light on their perspectives of the college experience. The researcher selected a qualitative, phenomenological/psychological methodology developed by Amedeo Giorgi to access, analyze, and explicate the subjective and psychological dimensions of the phenomenon.

The results of the analysis revealed that the subjects felt apprehensive, lonely, overwhelmed and frustrated in the college setting but were, nevertheless, highly motivated to persevere. The themes of hope, courage, resilience, and tenacity emerged as important strategies used by the students to counter the adversities they experienced. While their problems were situated in the college setting, their motivations to endure those situations appeared to come from outside campus—from their cultural traditions, their history of migration, and from the leadership role they have assumed for the perpetuation of their cultural group in the United States.

The study hoped to benefit the subjects themselves, by providing a forum in which they could express, examine, and understand their own experiences. The study has implications for college retention program developers, educators, and school counselors interested in improving the quality of experience for students considered “at risk” for success in higher education.

Table of Contents

Chapter One:	Introduction	1
	Background of the Problem	2
	Statement of the Problem	4
	Rationale for the Study	5
	Design of the Study	6
	Discussion of Terms	8
	“Middle” Generation Hmong Students	8
	College Experience	8
	The University of Montana in the late 1990s	9
	Phenomenological Analysis	9
Chapter Two:	Review of the Literature	10
	Phenomenological/Psychological Research	10
	The Migration Experience	11
	Immigration	11
	Acculturation	13
	Hmong Migration History	14
	Hmong Resettlement in the United States	17
	Hmong Resettlement in Missoula, Montana	17
	Hmong College Students at The University of Montana	19
	The College Experience	20
	College Experiences of Hmong Students	21
	College Retention Programs	22
	Multiculturalism	25
	Internalized Culture	25
	Multiple Cultures	26
	Paulo Freire and Multiculturalism	27
Chapter Three:	Methodology	29
	The Phenomenological/Psychological Method	29
	The Subjects	30
	Ethnographic Variables	31
	Demographic Variables	32
	Status Variables	32
	Affiliation Variables	33
	Interviews	34
	Limitations	35
	Migration Patterns	35
	Descriptive Research	36
	Choice of the “Middle” Generation	36
	Prior Relationship of the Researcher	36

	and Subjects	37
	English as a Second Language Speakers	37
	Gender	38
	Delimitations	38
Chapter Four:	Data Analysis and Results	40
	The Data	40
	The Phenomenological/Psychological Reduction	41
	Level One: Verbatim Transcriptions	42
	Level Two: Spontaneous Meaning Units	43
	Level Three: Emergent Themes	44
	Level Four: Transformations	45
	Level Four for all Six Subjects	47
	Subject One (S1)	47
	Subject Two (S2)	50
	Subject Three (S3)	52
	Subject Four (S4)	54
	Subject Five (S5)	57
	Subject Six (S6)	59
	Level Five: Fundamental Description	61
	Level Six: Essential Description	62
Chapter Five:	Discussion	64
	Feeling Apprehensive	65
	Feeling Lonely	70
	Feeling Overwhelmed	74
	Feeling Frustrated	76
	Being Courageous	80
	Being Resilient and Tenacious	82
	Being Hopeful	84
Chapter Six:	Implications	86
	Implications for the Subjects	86
	Implications for College Retention Programs	88
	References	93
	Appendices A-C, Forms for Interviews	101
	Appendix A, Explanation of Research to the Subjects	102
	Appendix B, Research Study Consent Form	103
	Appendix C, Outline for the Interview, Part I: Demographic Information	105
	Appendices D-I, Data Analyses, Levels One-Three	107
	Appendix D, Subject 1 (S1) Levels One-Three	108
	Appendix E, Subject 2 (S2) Levels One-Three	142

Appendix F, Subject 3 (S3)	Levels One-Three	168
Appendix G, Subject 4 (S4)	Levels One-Three	206
Appendix H, Subject 5 (S5)	Levels One-Three	244
Appendix I, Subject 6 (S6)	Levels One-Three	269

Chapter One

Introduction

In December, 2000, some 250 members of the Hmong community of Missoula, Montana and nearly the same number of their non-Hmong friends gathered together for their traditional New Year's celebration in the Hellgate Elementary School gymnasium. The masters of ceremony were two recent college graduates; a young man and a young woman, who switched glibly between Hmong and English as they announced the performances, made jokes, told stories, and generally kept the program moving along.

As the festivities began, the audience, satiated by the delicious Hmong dinner they had just finished in the adjacent school cafeteria, continued visiting with each other, took videos of the program, chased the children or babies around the room, or sat quietly watching the program of traditional dances, performances, and games. One of the musicians, playing the traditional Hmong harp, was wearing a tall ten-gallon cowboy hat in addition to his highly-embroidered traditional Hmong vest and trousers. One of the features of the program was a power-point slide show presented by several Hmong college students from The University of Montana. In the next room, someone had contrived a way to keep the eight to ten year old kids busy—they had set up a Mexican piñata filled with candies.

It was very cold in Missoula that evening, with some snow on the ground, hardly resembling any homes in which the Hmong may have lived in the past; in China, Laos, or Thailand. Yet their traditional food, their ornate costumes, their music, their dances, their chatter in their own language, their families, and the annual gathering of the entire Hmong community of Missoula allowed them to relive, remember, and display the

traditions that they have carried with them throughout their many migrations. Their New Year's celebration may be their only forum, a special occasion where all generations of the Hmong community can affirm for themselves and explain to their new friends that they are Hmong at heart, no matter where in the world they may live.

Background of the Problem

Simply put, a demographic imperative is at work, the result of renewed immigration to the United States from 1965 onward, with most new immigrants coming from Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Once in this country, they swelled the ranks of Americans covered by the diversity rubric and aggressively pursued education as the single most effective means to mobility and integration into U.S. society (Hu-DeHart, 2000, p. 40).

By the end of the 1990s the number of foreign-born in America had risen to an unprecedented 26.4 million, nearly one-tenth of the total population, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. More than half of this number (which included legal immigrants, temporary non-immigrants, and refugees) had origins in Latin America and more than one quarter had come from Asia, dramatically changing the demographic mixture in America (Brittingham, 2000). By 2056, according to many projections, most Americans will trace their origins to "Africa, Asia, the Hispanic world, the Pacific Islands, Arabia—almost anywhere but white Europe" (Takaki, 1993, p. 2).

Concurrent with the opening of America's doors to non-Europeans with the Immigration Act of 1965 were the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, the ethnic power and multiculturalism movements of the 1970s, the protests against American involvement in the Vietnam War, and the "hippie" counter-culture movement that awakened minorities and the majority alike to a new activism supporting diversity. The America into which its newest immigrants arrived had begun to feel the effects of the

changes in the nation that began in the late 1960s.

Although their population of 10 million represents only 4 percent of the American population, Asian/Pacific Islander Americans have the distinction of become the fastest-growing ethnic minority group in the nation, increasing three-fold since the 1970s (Takaki, 1989; Walsh, 1993; Zia, 2000). Asian Americans in particular, have pursued higher education as a means to economic success, parlaying a “cultural emphasis on education and hard work” (Walsh, 1993, p. 55) into brilliant successes in the arts, sciences, business, finances, and technology. Their overachievement has earned them the double-sided “model minority” stereotype, resulting in an anti-Asian backlash that has included envy, suspicion, harassment and sometimes, violence (Walsh, 1993; Zia, 2000).

The educational and economic successes of some Asians have obscured the problems of a small minority of others within the group, including more than one million Southeast Asian refugees, who have arrived from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos since the late 1970s. Unlike the first wave of powerful and wealthy refugees who arrived in the 1970s, those who arrived in the 1980s and later had little personal property, minimal English skills and almost no marketable job skills. Most refugees, especially those who arrived in the latter group, continue to experience poverty and the adjustments of living in a highly technological new country (Chan, 1994; Robbins, 1995; Takaki, 1989; Walsh, 1993; Zia, 2000).

There are presently between 150,000 and 200,000 first, “middle,” and second-generation Hmong refugees from the Southeast Asian country of Laos living in the United States. The older first generation of grandparents and parents who were born in Laos have, according to many accounts, had the most difficulty adjusting to life in

America (Bliatout, 1980; Chan, 1994; Fadiman, 1997; Faderman, 1998; Robbins, 1995). They rely on their “older children”(Thao, 1999), alternatively called the “middle” generation (Faderman, 1998) or “1.5” generation (Zia, 2000), who were born in Laos but who immigrated as children or adolescents, to assume the task of helping their group acculturate to America. As one first generation Hmong parent in Missoula explained:

Today we wait for our older children to see if they can make something of themselves so we can all help each other... Right now the only thing that makes us happy and makes us have something to look forward to is our children. We see that they are trying to get a good education and (are) working hard to do as well as they can and it makes us proud (Thao, 1999, p. 26).

A second generation of American-born Hmong is now growing in numbers, with problems of adjustment that differ vastly from the first and the “middle” generations. Their propensity for gang involvement and their lack of interest in higher education is the concern of both the first and the “middle” generation (Ascher, 1997; Faderman, 1998; Leeson, 2000; Low, 2000; Zia, 2000).

Statement of the Problem

Vang (1998) reports that in 1998, 5000 Hmong students were matriculating in undergraduate schools across the nation. The anomalous presence of a small cohort of some twenty-five Hmong students attending The University of Montana in Missoula, Montana during the late 1990s provided an ephemeral and unique opportunity to investigate the phenomenon of acculturation of the Hmong to America through higher education from the perspective of those who were experiencing it first-hand.

According to Rogler (1994), little research has been directed toward the psychological dimensions of the adaptations that occur during migrations. Apfelbaum

(2000) stresses that psychologists need to examine the experiences of people who have been uprooted because of genocide, ethnocide, or other unspeakable tragedies they have experienced. She wonders how people rebuild their lives after experiencing such traumas. In the case of the Hmong, Chan (1994) has noted that although the migration and acculturation of the Hmong to America has received much coverage in research and in the press, very little has been written from their own perspectives.

This study investigated the college experience for “middle” generation Hmong students from their own perspectives by accessing and analyzing their reflections about their experiences. This research was interested in the subjective, the perspectival, and the psychological dimensions of their own experiences. The study asked the questions: How have “middle” generation Hmong refugee students perceived their lived experiences at The University of Montana? The results of this study may extend to other questions, such as: What can the subjects learn by expressing and examining their own stories? Who else can benefit from the study? How? How can others help the subjects improve their college experience?

Rationale for the Study

The impetus for this study occurred during the 1997-98 academic year during the course of the researcher’s supervision of a then twenty-year old female Hmong college student who worked as a student assistant and math tutor at the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), a federally-funded student support service at The University of Montana (UM). Through her assistant, the researcher began to learn about the history, culture, language, traditions, and present day experiences of Hmong college students. The researcher also began to learn about the emotions, thoughts, and feelings that the

assistant experienced in response to everyday experiences in college. By interacting with the student, the researcher began to see some of the unique motivations and resources that Hmong students used to cope with their experiences within the college setting. An insight into the hopes and dreams of the student were revealed when she received a prestigious scholarship aimed at encouraging low-income, first generation college students to apply to graduate school. The significance of the scholarship, according to the student, was that it could show others that despite their impoverished educational background, the Hmong have the ability to succeed in college. She hoped that her accomplishment would inspire others. In acknowledgement of her scholarship, the student said:

I want to be able to let everyone, Hmong and others, see that even though our history has included little educational experience, that we can make a change for the better and encourage later generations to pursue their dreams and goals (Thao, 1998, p. 3).

The researcher hopes that the study will benefit Hmong students directly, by providing an opportunity for them to express, examine and validate their own experiences and indirectly, by discovering information that will improve services provided to them by developmental educators, school counselors, and other college retention professionals.

Design of the Study

A proposal to conduct a qualitative, phenomenological/psychological study that would access, analyze, and explicate the present-day experiences of “middle” generation Hmong refugee students’ perspectives on their college experiences at The University of Montana in the late 1990s was presented in 1998, and the research project began soon

thereafter.

In **Chapter Two**, the researcher provides a review of the relevant literature that was conducted to learn what was already known about this topic. The research literature on 1) the migration experience, 2) the college experience and 3) multiculturalism was examined. In keeping with the phenomenological methodology that was chosen for the investigation, the information acquired during the literature review was “bracketed” or “set aside” during the data collection and analysis and was recalled for use during the discussion of results.

Chapter Three describes the qualitative, phenomenological/psychological research methodology developed by Amedeo Giorgi that would provide a means to analyze the reflections of others by examining their self-reported experience of relevant events. The methodology, the selection of subjects, and the procedure used to collect the narrative data are described. The phenomenological reduction procedure used in the analysis is also included in this chapter.

Chapter Four presents the results of the data analysis that reveal the subjects’ perceptions of the phenomenon. The transformations of the individual protocols to reveal their psychological meanings (Level Four) are presented, as are the Fundamental Description of persistent psychological themes (Level Five) that consolidates the protocols and the Essential Description or core of the experience, (Level Six) that is the ultimate achievement of the analysis.

In **Chapter Five**, the subjects’ perceptions are verified by “triangulating” the themes that emerged from the data with the perspectives of other migrants and other college students as described in the formerly “bracketed” review of literature and, when

relevant, from the researcher's personal and professional experience. Benefits and implications of the research for the subjects, for educators, and for counselors working in the field of college retention are explored in **Chapter Six**. An **Afterward** is presented, followed by a complete list of **References**. The interview forms, complete verbatim transcriptions, spontaneous meaning units, and the narratives based on emergent themes for Subjects 1-6 are included in the **Appendices**.

Discussion of Terms

"Middle" Generation Hmong Students

Hmong refugees were granted asylum in the United States beginning in 1975 to escape reprisals from the communist government in their homeland in Laos, in Southeast Asia. Their connection to the United States is a result of their involvement as soldiers, recruited by the American CIA, in a clandestine war called the "Secret War in Laos." The terms "middle" generation (Faderman, 1998) or "1.5" generation (Zia, 2000) have been applied to the generation of refugees who arrived as older children, adolescents, or young adults and have therefore personally experienced both old and new cultures. "Middle" generation, bi-cultural, bi-lingual immigrants have also been referred to as the "bridge" generation that "straddles" two cultures (Faderman, 1998; Thompson, 1997; Walsh, 1993; Zia, 2000).

College Experience

The researcher hoped to discover what six "middle" generation Hmong students have to say about their own experiences of college matriculation. The researcher was further interested in the students' perceptions of those experiences and in the psychological dimensions of those perceptions. The subjects were encouraged to describe

concrete life situations they had experienced in college and to explore what meanings those situations had for them. Through a phenomenological analysis process, the researcher expected to discover the psychological dimensions of their experiences.

The University of Montana in the late 1990s

The University of Montana, a mid-sized (12,000 students), isolated, university with a predominantly white student body (87%) has taken several institutional measures to promote cultural diversity. While the task of attending to the needs of ethnic minority students has been distributed among the Native American Studies Office, the Educational Opportunity Program, and the Multicultural Advising Office, the Foreign Students Services Office is charged with meeting the needs of international students. No specific services for Hmong college students exist at present (Carlisle, 2000; Dennison, 2000; Diversity Advisory Council, 1992).

Phenomenological Analysis

A phenomenological philosophical approach adapted for psychological research by Amedeo Giorgi was selected for use in this study. The procedure included a six-leveled methodical reduction of the descriptive, personal narratives obtained, by interview, from the subjects. An explication, or understanding and explanation of the implicit, subjective meanings that accompanied the descriptions of the phenomenon, resulted in the form of a composite, essential protocol, containing the core of the experience (Giorgi, 1985; Kvale, 1994; Nelson & Poulin, 1997).

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

A qualitative analysis of descriptions can yield psychological insight of a value at least equal to what quantitative approaches yield, although different in character and style (Nelson & Poulin, 1997, p.158).

Phenomenological/Psychological Research

The qualitative, phenomenological methodology developed by Amedeo Giorgi, who adapted the philosophical phenomenological approach to psychological studies, was chosen for its ability to derive psychological insight from descriptions of experience (Giorgi, 1985; Kruger, 1979, 1981; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Nelson & Poulin, 1997; Roseth & Brendryen, 2000), rather than from external observations (Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1992; Spindler & Hammond, 2000). Giorgi's method was chosen for its potential to access, analyze, and explicate the phenomenon under investigation, with the intrusion of as few presuppositions of "others" as possible.

In the phenomenological/psychological method, the researcher is encouraged to remain open to what might emerge from the investigation and to maintain a "naïve position" regarding the problem so as to bias the data collection or the analysis as little as possible. Instead of attempting to prove or disprove a hypothesis based on prior investigation, the researcher is hoping that unexpected, novel, or new information will emerge to extend, confirm or disprove existing knowledge. The research is not primarily limited, therefore, by the researcher's presuppositions.

In order to develop a "theoretical sensitivity" (Nelson & Poulin, 1997) to the perceptions of "middle" generation Hmong refugee students of their college experiences at The University of Montana, the literature on three relevant topics was reviewed,

including: 1) the migration experience, 2) the college experience, and 3) multiculturalism.

During the data collection and analysis, the information gleaned from the review of literature was “bracketed” or set aside so as not to influence those procedures. After the analysis was completed, the researcher augmented the literature review, adding material that would illuminate issues that emerged during the analysis. All of the material presented below will be recalled for use in the discussion or “triangulation” of the data..

The Migration Experience

There are as many reasons for moving as there are migrants. A particular set of reasons, involving persecution and the lack of national protection, distinguishes the refugee from other migrants (United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 1993, p. 13).

Immigration

This research is, in part, being conducted in an effort to better understand the international migration process, a topic of great concern in North America, which at present is grappling with social, economic, and political implications of an unprecedented rise in Latino and Asian immigration and with its contribution to the changing face of the nation. More specifically, the study is interested in the experiences of refugees, a particular category of migrants, who are forced to migrate for reasons of personal safety. Rogler (1994), a psychologist who has done extensive work on migrations and mental health, suggests a useful framework for studying the migration experience. His model, “International Migrations: Context of the Society of Origin and Host Society, Age and Gender, and the Migration Experience” emphasizes the influences of the contexts of the migrant’s original society and the receiving society in an effort to

account for the changes in social networks, economic status, and acculturation that occur for all migrants.

For the Hmong, Rogler's framework would include consideration of their origins as the disparaged "Miao" ethnic minority of China (Lebar, 1964; Schein, 2000) and their flight to Laos in the early 1800s (Chan, 1994; Lebar, 1964). It would also include recognition of their lives as agrarian hill tribe members, their involvement as clandestine soldiers recruited by the American CIA during the Vietnam War (Hamilton-Merritt; 1993, 1999; Robbins, 1995; Warner, 1996), their move to the American military headquarters on the plains of Laos (Garrett, 1974), and their escape to refugee camps in Thailand to avoid the retributions of the communist Pathet Lao government when the war ended in 1975 (Chan, 1994; Hamilton-Merritt, 1993, 1999; Lee, 1998; Quincy, 1988, 1995).

Rogler's model can also be used to understand the resettlement and acculturation of Hmong refugees in the United States (Beck, 1994; Chan, 1994; Faderman, 1998; Fadiman, 1997) and in Missoula, Montana in particular (Bessac & Rainbolt, 1979; Miller et. al., 1992-93; Otake, 1995). Within Rogler's model of the migration experience, changes affecting the Hmong including problems of housing, transportation, unemployment, welfare assistance, mental and physical health, language proficiency, taking care of their elders, and dealing with their bicultural children and adolescents would be taken into account (Bessac & Rainbolt, 1979; Leeson, 2000; Miller et. al., 1992-1993; Perkins, 2000; Schmid, 1998).

Hmong immigrants are more particularly refugees, whose adjustment, according to Mahmoudi (1992), may be influenced by the non-voluntary nature of their migration,

and by the danger, trauma, and upheaval that usually surrounds their experiences.

Apfelbaum (2000) makes a particularly strong plea for the necessity, on the part of psychologists, to try to understand the particular circumstances that cause “uprootedness” and “dislocation” for refugees and other victims of ethnocide or genocide. She focuses on the experience of the Jews and the holocaust of World War II to examine how it is that the survivors have been able to rebuild their lives. Apfelbaum attributes some of the problems that they faced to the incredulity and disbelief or ignorance of the American public about the horrors of the holocaust. The Hmong have experienced a similar ignorance regarding the Secret War in Laos, which remained highly classified until the mid-1990s.

Acculturation

Psychological studies of acculturation are particularly relevant at the current time and in a variety of cultures. International migration, major refugee upheavals, and the painful process of decolonization have all increased intercultural contact... Previously culturally isolated and homogeneous peoples now rub shoulders on a daily basis with persons, ideas, and products from scattered parts of the globe, setting afoot a process of cultural and psychological adaptation to their new circumstances. How individuals negotiate their course through this process of acculturation is the focus of this (author)... (Berry, 1994, p. 323).

The study of individual acculturation to a new society, according to Berry (1994), has fallen to cross-cultural psychologists, while anthropologists, sociologists, economists, and political scientists may be more interested in group processes and the institutions that surround the experience. A number of accounts of the Hmong perspective about their own migration and acculturation experiences are available in the literature including a detailed history and collection of personal narratives translated by Hmong college

students in Chan's (1994) seminal collection, Hmong Means Free, Life in Laos and America; Fadiman's (1997) moving account of the story of a young Hmong child stricken with epilepsy and the cross-cultural problems involved in her care, The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down; and Faderman's (1998) collection that draws parallels between the Jewish and Hmong experience in I Begin My Life All Over Again, the Hmong and the American Immigrant Experience.

The Hmong acculturation experience in Missoula has also received excellent coverage by Bessac and Rainbolt (1979), who chronicled the early days of Hmong relocation, with the resettlement of General Vang Pao and his extended family in the Bitterroot Valley. Miller, et. al. (1992-93) updated the history of the Hmong in Missoula with interviews that were included in a catalogue that accompanied an exhibit of Hmong folk art. A masters degree thesis by journalist Otake (1995) further documented their acculturation process through the mid-1990s. Otake's suggestion that the Hmong of Missoula were reaching another "turning point" in their history, provided an impetus for the present research.

Hmong Migration History

The Hmong have been faced with many challenges throughout their history. They are a strong group of people who have been forced from country to country and suffered many ordeals, yet to this day still have the strength to go on (Thao, 1999, p. 31).

The Hmong are experienced migrants. Over a period of 2,000 years they have relocated within countries, moved from one country to another, and in the aftermath of the Vietnam War, have been forced to make the seemingly biggest leap of all—by crossing oceans to resettle in France, Australia, Canada, French Guiana, or The United

States (Robbins, 1995; Chan, 1994).

Despite centuries of oppression and disruption, the Miao (Hmong) continue to demonstrate a love of independence and an ability to organize for military action. Epic tales are handed down, perpetuated by traditional singers, of uprising against the Chinese and of Miao (Hmong) heroism in battle. Most observers agree that the Miao (Hmong) are remarkable among all the hill tribes of Southeast Asia for their strong sense of independence, demonstrated organizational ability, enterprise and initiative, and adaptability (Lebar, 1964, p. 63).

Despite the chaos and trauma of a move that took them nearly halfway around the world, their diaspora following the end of the Secret War in Laos was not the first in the history of the Hmong. As an ethnic minority whose origins are in China (their origins may even be from farther north, in Mongolia or even Siberia) it was another in a long series of migrations for them.

Pressured by skirmishes with the Chinese, they moved continuously southward from northern China beginning over 2,000 years ago. They lived in and around the southwestern Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, and Guizhou for many centuries where they gained a reputation as “independent-minded and rebellious highlanders” (Mayhew and Huhti, 1998, p. 280). After the Miao (as the Hmong are called in China) Rebellion between 1840 and 1870, some of the Hmong were again pressured to flee to neighboring Southeast Asian countries of Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand (Chan, 1994; Garrett, 1974; Lebar, 1964; Schein, 2000).

The group in Laos has rejected the name Miao (Meo in Laotian) and call themselves Hmong instead, which means either “a free people” or “those who must have their freedom and independence.” The Hmong in Laos maintained their freedom by occupying the mountainous regions of those countries where they lived in relative

isolation as hunters and “slash-and-burn” farmers, providing their own food and also growing opium poppies as a cash crop. They did not mix socially or politically with the lowland Laotians and maintained their own dress, language, religious and cultural traditions (Chan, 1994; Garrett, 1974; Hamilton-Merritt, 1993, 1999;Thao, 1999).

With the advent of the American CIA’s involvement in the Vietnam War in the 1960s, however, the lives of the Hmong in Laos were forever changed. The “Secret War in Laos” which took place in their mountainous villages directly involved the Hmong in the war. Hmong men were recruited as soldiers in an American-supported clandestine army under the leadership of the charismatic General Vang Pao, one of the few of the Hmong minority to have entered the Royal Laotian Army.

During this period, the Hmong were moved from their mountain villages to American military headquarters at Long Chieng on the plains of Laos where they lived until the Fall of Saigon ended the war for the Americans (and their Hmong allies) in 1975. All able-bodied Hmong men and young boys were pressed into service where they distinguished themselves as fighters. As the Hmong were now removed from their farms and hunting areas, the Americans provided rations and supplies by air (Chan, 1994; Garrett, 1974; Hamilton-Merritt, 1993, 1999; Robbins, 1995; Warner, 1996).

In the chaotic and dangerous days at the end of the war, around 1,000 Hmong leaders were evacuated by air while others fled on foot to neighboring Thailand where refugee camps were set up for their initial safety. Conditions in Laos, which had been taken over by the communist Pathet Lao government, were very dangerous for those who had sided with the Americans. Many Hmong had to hide in the jungles until they could make their way to the refugee camps (including the large camp at Ban Vinai, Thailand),

where “they endured harsh conditions for months and, in many instances, years before being resettled in a third country” (Chan, 1994, p. 48). In 1992, repatriation to Laos was offered to the Hmong and the refugee camps in Thailand were closed. By that time, most Hmong allies had relocated in other countries, including the United States.

Hmong Resettlement in the United States

In 1998, the Hmong population in the United States was estimated at between 150,000 and 200,000 (Hamilton-Merritt, 1993, 1999; Vang, 1998). Included in this number were first generation grandparents and parents, “middle” generation children and adolescents (Faderman, 1998; Zia, 2000) who emigrated from Laos (some by way of refugee camps in Thailand) and second generation Hmong children who were born in America.

While most Hmong were originally settled in a number of states across the nation, a secondary migration within the United States has resulted in the establishment of large Hmong enclaves in the central valley region of California and the twin cities of Minneapolis/St. Paul in Minnesota. Large groups of Hmong have also resettled in Wisconsin, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and a number of other locations, possibly for political, social, economic, and cultural reasons. Some have speculated that the phenomenon may be “a direct parallel ... (to) the Hmong tradition of moving from one place to another either in response to adverse conditions or to find more fertile land” (Chan, 1994, p. 59).

Hmong Resettlement in Missoula, Montana

Jerry was not only our advisor but our friend as well. He dedicated more than twenty years of his life to us and we grew to know him well, not only

in name, but in spirit too. I guess we love Jerry so much because we always knew that he honestly cared for us.

(Eulogy by General Vang Pao at Jerry Daniel's funeral in Missoula, Montana, May 8, 1982, Hamilton-Merritt, 1993,1999, p. 463)

A small but influential group that included the most important Hmong leader of the Secret War in Laos, General Vang Pao and his family, were the first to be relocated in America. Through a friendship with Jerry Daniels, an American CIA officer, the general and a number of his military aides arrived, in 1976, in the American's hometown of Missoula, Montana. With the help of Daniel's family and friends, a number of religious and peace groups, and of other interested citizens, the Hmong began to rebuild their lives in Missoula. Although General Vang Pao initially established a large farm near Missoula and a self-help organization called the Lao Family Corporation (later reorganized as the Refugee Assistance Corporation and more recently, the Montana Asian American Center), most Hmong relied on public assistance to survive during their early years in America (Bessac & Rainbolt, 1979; Miller et. al., 1992-93; Robbins, 1995; Thao, 1999).

While Hmong adults worked to establish themselves economically through gardening and selling their vegetables in the local Farmer's Market, by securing some jobs in local lumber mills and other workplaces, by establishing some businesses of their own, and by selling their traditional embroideries at arts and crafts fairs (Miller, et. al., 1992-93), the children were sent to the public schools. The younger children were able to progress through grades K-12 with the help of a Bilingual Education Program that helped integrate both English and Hmong language and culture. The "middle generation" of older children, adolescents, and young adults received no American grade or middle school education, and were taught mostly in English as a Second Language

classes, with minimal mainstreaming as they were placed abruptly into high school classes according to their ages (Miller et. al., 1992-1993). Because of the Hmong tradition of early marriage, some of the Hmong high school students, including some of the subjects in this study, were already married, with children, while they were in high school.

Hmong College Students at The University of Montana

Missoula, Montana is the home of The University of Montana, a mid-sized state university with a liberal admissions policy that admits nearly all graduates of Montana high schools. Although Hmong refugees did not arrive, as a group, until after 1976, four Hmong students including two of General Vang Pao's sons are known to have come to Montana to study in the early 1970s before the end of the Vietnam War (Miller, et. al, 1992-93). Informal records show that throughout the 1980s, a number of Hmong students participated in the Upward Bound high school-to-college transition program and one or two students are thought to have graduated from the university.

By the early 1990s, however, a growing number of Hmong of the "middle" generation who had arrived as older children or adolescents and had graduated from Missoula high schools and began to enter college as non-traditional-aged students. Although the Hmong are relative newcomers to the world of higher education (Chan, 1994; Faderman, 1998; Walsh, 1993; Zia, 2000), their numbers have been increasing in colleges across the nation.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s the enrollment of Hmong students at The University of Montana began to rise, through recruitment by the Upward Bound program, through recommendations from high school teachers and counselors, outreach

efforts of the university's multicultural advising office in conjunction with the Missoula Refugee Assistance Corporation (Chavarria, 1992), or through their own volition. The presence of a small cohort of "middle" generation Hmong refugees who were students at The University of Montana during the 1998-99 school year and who shared a similar cultural, migration, resettlement, and educational history made this research project viable.

The College Experience

In the 1980s 'diversity' became a buzzword in the academy, representing a movement advocating the appreciation and celebration of difference—in culture, ethnicity, gender, race, and sexual orientation—and, at the same time, a critique of the dominance of Western tradition in the undergraduate curriculum (Baez, 2000, p. 43).

The college retention work of Noel, Levitz, and Saluri (1987) as reported in Longman and Atkinson (1994) has provided useful background information for understanding the forces that once affected the typical college student. In their "Force Field Analysis of College Persistence," they identify positive external forces (parental pressure, peer/friend pressures, cultural values, information about college, community exposure to college educated persons, teachers, counselors, and information about financial aid) and negative external forces (lack of money, housing/roommate problems, transportation problems, academic skills, work demands and conflicts, social demands, discrimination, rejection, family obligations) at work on the typical student. College requirements such as bureaucratic procedures, courses of study, reading assignments, tests and exams, research papers and other written assignments, labs, and other assignments are necessarily identified as forces affecting all students.

Noel, Levitz, and Saluri also identify some positive internal forces (academic skills, achievement motives, personal interests, career aspirations, enjoyment of learning, self confidence, college oriented values, identification with college educated persons) and negative forces (procrastination, loneliness, not asserting needs and problems, self-doubt, fears of failure, success or rejection, value conflicts, career indecision, and boredom), which are responses and resources a college student might have within him or herself. Noel, Levitz, and Saluri's guidelines will provide a baseline of experiences and responses against which to check the results of this research.

More recent work by Strage (2000) has identified a "new" student that more closely resembles the Hmong students in this study. She discovered that college students in the late 1990s are more likely to be older and may be attending college only part-time because of family and work responsibilities. Closely related to this type of college student are the low-income, first generation, academically underprepared "at risk" students served by the federally funded TRIO programs, named for three services they provide: the Upward Bound, Educational Opportunity Program, and McNair Scholars program at The University of Montana. Ethnic minorities who are underrepresented in higher education are also eligible for TRIO services.

College Experiences of Hmong Students

Despite their poverty, limited facility with the English language, and few transferable academic skills, the Hmong have made remarkable progress in education. In 1998 some 5,000 Hmong students were reportedly enrolled in college. By that year, 2,000 had already earned bachelor's degrees, 200 had earned master's degrees and 118 had received doctorates or other professional degrees (Vang, 1998).

A number of doctoral dissertations have addressed issues concerning the Hmong college student including Fendya (1996) and Reavill (1996), who report on the experiences of female Hmong college students, and Taniguchi (1996), who provides information on Hmong students and their use of student services on a college campus. Issues of individuality, interdependence, self-reliance, kinship, gender roles, English language proficiency, help-seeking practices, and of being role models, have been identified by those authors, as being important to Hmong college students. The Hmong college experience as reported in the literature will be used to inform the present study. Very little is known, from an institutional perspective, about Hmong college students, who are relative newcomers to the world of higher education (Vang, 1998). While colleges have come to recognize the importance of acknowledging diversity on their campuses (Tierney, 1993), very little is known about the needs of immigrants and of Hmong refugees in particular. Hidden within the overachieving Asian Americans ethnic group that has achieved notoriety as the “model minority” (Walsh, 1993; Zia, 2000), the needs of the Hmong have been overlooked (Reavill, 1996).

A few Hmong students were known to have matriculated at The University of Montana during the 1980s, according to the director of the Upward Bound, high school-to-college transition program (personal communication). Two Hmong students entered The University of Montana in 1992 (Chavarria, 1992). The number steadily increased to a high of twenty seven in 1997. Twenty-three Hmong students were enrolled in the 1998-99 school year, when the data was collected for this study.

College Retention Programs

Without some form of support a large number of students, especially those

who are academically underprepared, will not succeed. As a result, schools across the nation have been working hard to provide services and programs to ensure the success of their students, particularly those who have been historically underrepresented. The problem is not limited to community colleges or urban schools but includes the major research and state universities (Kluepfel and Roberts, 1994, p.2-3).

An important retention intervention, in existence since the early 1970s, has been a network of initially three federally funded educational opportunity services called TRIO programs, whose mission is to provide academic and personal support to educationally and financially disadvantaged students. The author's experience has been with one of the TRIO programs--the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) at The University of Montana-Missoula, which provides retention interventions designed to meet the needs of eligible students including academic advising, study skills instruction, career information, tutoring, financial aid advice, and community and campus referrals. The program serves approximately 500 first-generation, low-income, disabled, or underrepresented ethnic minority students per year (Carlisle, 2000). All of the current cohort of Hmong students are eligible for the academic support services of the federally funded Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) because of their first generation college student, low-income sociocultural profile (EOP, 2000).

While students who qualify for EOP services are already considered "at risk" for college success; their refugee status, history of the trauma of the Vietnam War, English language deficiencies, and underrepresented ethnic minority status make "middle" generation Hmong refugee students additionally vulnerable (Go, 1999;Thompson, 1997,1993,1994). Hmong students, however, may also possess a number of positive assets and strengths such as a strong motivation to improve their socioeconomic status, a

belief in education as a vehicle to reaching the “American Dream,” valuing education for its own sake, and a resourcefulness and resiliency gained from adversity (Taniguchi, 1996; Karpatkin, 1998; Zia, 2000).

Facilitating college adjustment and success for “at risk” students is the concern of student support services personnel (Carlisle, 2000; Dennison, 2000), guidance counselors (Forster, 1997), and developmental educators (College Reading & Learning Association, 2000; Kluepfel and Roberts, 1994; National Association for Developmental Education, 2000; Upton, 1999) who are interested, not only in college retention rates, but with the maximization of the potential of all college students. English as a Second Language teachers are also interested in improving their services to second language speakers (Fu, 1995; Celce-Muria, 1997).

George Dennison, President of The University of Montana, has consistently affirmed his commitment to improving the campus climate in terms of cultural diversity (Dennison, 2000). In 1992, a Diversity Advisory Council was established and charged with designing interventions to increase the diversity on its campus. Many of its institutional goals have been met since that time, with efforts mainly directed at improving the persistence of Native American Indian students, the largest minority group on campus and in Montana (Diversity Advisory Council, 1992).

Little attention at The University of Montana has been directed toward Hmong students, possibly because of the small size and the seeming “invisibility” of the group (Schmid, 1998). At present, no needs assessment or special interventions have been developed for Hmong students.

Multiculturalism

One of the most important implications of the term 'multiple modernities' is that modernity and Westernization are not identical; Western patterns of modernity are not the only 'authentic' modernities, though they enjoy historical precedence and continue to be a basic reference point for others (Eisenstadt, 2000, p. 3).

Multiculturalism, which implies a multiplicity of cultures, also implies that one culture does not have hegemony over another. Smaller voices and perspectives are taking their place among louder and more powerful ones, demanding too, to be heard and respected.

Internalized Culture

Culture is not something outside ourselves, but, rather, an internalized perspective that combines the teachings of every significant person or group we have experienced, read about, or heard about and from whom we have learned something (Pedersen and Ivey, 1993, p. 1).

Pedersen (1991), an early advocate of Multiculturalism as a fourth force in counseling psychology (in addition to the established schools of psychoanalysis, behaviorism, and humanism), has provided a useful way to understand how the many sociocultural variables in our environment can combine "within" us to provide each person with a unique world view.

Pedersen's model, "The Intrapersonal Cultural Grid" (1994), suggests a number of ethnographic (nationality, ethnicity, religion, language), demographic (age, gender, affectional orientation, physical abilities), status (social, economic, political, educational) and affiliation (formal, informal) variables as a starting point for understanding how external, contextual factors are internalized in each person. Pedersen suggests that these variables combine "within" the individual to produce a personal orientation toward life,

which then affects behavior, expectations, and values.

Pedersen suggests that each person would have a unique perspective toward a situation based on these variables. In interactions, therefore, there might be agreements or disagreements, understandings or misunderstandings depending on the similarities or differences of the variables involved. His “Interpersonal Cultural Grid” operationalizes the possible combinations of interactions.

Multiple Cultures

The individual is faced with the task of living multiple lives with alternative selves, within the space of what used to be considered a single life. Helping the individual to continue developing creatively with this multiplicity is a common object of constructivist practice (Goncalves, 1997, p. xi).

Change is pervasive in today’s America. Geographical changes, job changes, marital changes, changes in lifestyles—multiplicity is a way of life. Changes involve transitions, which according to Goncalves, a counseling psychologist, is an important focus for those in the helping professions. Migrants, by definition, have experienced at least one change—a geographical one. This study is interested in investigating the internal and subjective changes that have occurred for “middle” generation Hmong refugees who have migrated from Laos, to Thailand, and to the United States and who are now experiencing college.

The multicultural paradigm recognizes that the contemporary world is made up of a multiplicity of cultural programs (Eisenstadt, 2000, p. 2). The study of “cultures,” once the province of the discipline of anthropology (Brumann, 1999; Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Eller, 1997; Lee, 1959; Zechetner, 1997), has been adopted by the disciplines of sociology (Eisenstadt, 2000) and psychology (Brislin, 1993), and the related applied

professions of education (Spindler and Hammond, 2000) and counseling (Ivey , 1994; Pedersen, 1991; Sue and Sue, 1990).

While the multicultural paradigm simply acknowledges the multiplicities of our modern world, multiculturalism, on the other hand, is a political stance that advances a position of cultural relativity in which the dominance of the Eurocentric approach is challenged (Eller, 1997). Multiculturalists worry that "certain constituencies in the American population are excluded from such important cultural domains as knowledge and scholarship, arts, and politics" (Ibid, p. 249).

Paulo Freire and Multiculturalism

Paulo Freire was awarded the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Prize for Education in 1986, a testimony to his international reputation. He had been arrested, jailed, and eventually exiled from his native Brazil in 1964 during a military coup. At that time he was leading an ambitious literacy effort in Brazil made up of "culture circles"-- groups of peasants learning to read, write, and make sense of their political and social realities. During his exile he traveled to Chile and to the United States, where he worked as a consultant at Harvard University's School of Education. Freire's ideas have been adopted by American educators and by some counselors. According to Shaul (in Freire, 1970, 1992):

In this country, we are gradually becoming aware of the work of Paulo Freire, but thus far we have thought of it primarily in terms of its contribution to the education of illiterate adults in the Third World. If, however, we take a closer look, we may discover that his methodology as well as his educational philosophy are as important for us as for the dispossessed in Latin America. (p. 9-10)

Freire had great confidence in the ability of all people, even those who were

impoverished or “silenced” by their circumstances, to be able to identify the problems and possibly the solutions that might improve their conditions. A concept that he calls *conscientizacao*, or critical consciousness, has inspired a number of educators in the public schools (Clay, 1998; McLaren, 1998; Rose, 1989), counselors (Ivey, 1994), and administrators in higher education (Purpel, 1989; Tierney, 1993).

As Rose (1989) suggests, there is an obvious parallel to be found in contemporary American society to the oppressed of Freire’s third world... and that population is made up of our own minorities, who in the twenty-first century are likely to become the numerical majority. In keeping with Freirian thought, new Latino and Asian immigrants, including the Hmong, will need to establish and create their own voices, with educational and counseling settings providing an important role in the process. According to Rose (1989):

We are in the middle of an extraordinary social experiment: the attempt to provide education for all members of a vast pluralistic democracy... to have any prayer of success, we’ll need many conceptual blessings: A philosophy of language and literacy that affirms the diverse sources of linguistic competence and deepens our understanding of the ways class and culture blind us to the richness of those sources. A perspective on failure that lays open the logic of error. An orientation toward the interaction of poverty and ability that undercuts simple polarities, that enables us to see simultaneously the play within those constraints... finally, we’ll need a revised store of images of educational excellence, ones closer to egalitarian ideals... At heart, we’ll need a guiding set of principles... (that) move us closer to, an understanding of the rich mix of speech and ritual and story that is America (1989, p. 238).

Chapter Three

Methodology

The Phenomenological/Psychological Method

The purpose of the method... is to do justice to the lived aspects of human phenomena, and to do so, one first has to know how someone actually experienced what has been lived. This means that a description becomes necessary when it is possible to get one... phenomenology is but one theory of treating descriptions (Giorgi, 1985, pp. 1, 2).

A search for an appropriate method to explicate the inner, subjective meanings of the college experiences of the small cohort of Hmong students at The University of Montana led the researcher to consider the merits of qualitative, rather than quantitative, research methods for this study (Nelson & Poulin, 1997; Polkinghorne, 1989). The phenomenological/psychological paradigm developed by Amedeo Giorgi (1985) was selected for its rigorous yet sensitive approach to accessing the inner, subjective, and affective dimensions of the human experience.

The phenomenological philosophers Brentano, Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty inspired Giorgi's approach. Some important concepts embraced by phenomenologists are an emphasis on examining pure experience, an attempt to personalize the experience by making meaning of it through the filter of existing mental structures, and an accounting of how each person exists in a social world.

Merleau-Ponty's view that language and experience were inextricable, has influenced this researcher to examine personal narratives provided by the subjects. Merleau-Ponty suggests four components of a phenomenological inquiry, including 1) a naïve description of the experience, 2) a reduction or summary without including the

viewpoint of the researcher, 3) a search for essences or essential structure through reflection and consideration of all possibilities, and 4) use of intentionality, in which the researcher looks for psychological meanings in the data (Nelson & Poulin, 1997).

Giorgi applies phenomenological thought to psychological research by emphasizing the necessity of being faithful to the phenomenon. He says that “the essential phenomenon as it is lived and experienced by man (sic) must be captured, otherwise the research lose much of its value” (Giorgi, 1985, p. ix). He encourages the researcher to take a “nonmeasurement perspective” and to tap the experiences of the subject, in order to account psychologically for his or her first-hand perceptions.

In keeping with Giorgi’s adaptation of Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological approach, this research observed the following procedures. Each step is described in detail:

- 1) Subjects were recruited, selected and interviewed,
- 2) Interviews were audio-taped and transcribed, word for word,
- 3) A phenomenological/psychological analysis was applied,
- 4) Results were triangulated with the research literature and the researcher’s professional experience.
- 5) A discussion is offered.

The Subjects

Cultural systems describe the network of relationships among individuals and the groups of people with whom they share a particular perspective (Pedersen & Ivey, 1993, p. 30).

Subjects were recruited and selected who had similar migration and college experiences. Prior to selecting the subjects, the researcher had written three research

papers (Thompson, 1997, 1993, 1994) that focused on language difficulties of two “middle” generation male Hmong students at The University of Montana. In addition, the researcher had conducted several informal interviews with M., the “middle” generation female Hmong student assistant described in Chapter One, with a “middle” generation male graduate and with a number of second generation American-born male and female Hmong students, trying to decide on the selection criteria that would produce the desired information.

After conducting the initial literature review, the researcher decided that being a member of the “middle” generation of bi-cultural and bi-lingual Hmong refugees who had personal experiences and vivid memories of both cultures would be the primary basis on which the selection of subjects would be made. The researcher would make an effort to include both males and females if they also fit the “middle” generation criterion. A variety of ages and differences in the length of time each had lived in this country would also help to validate the perspectives across subjects.

Using an enrollment list published by the university, and by word of mouth through Hmong students already known to the researcher, eight subjects were identified, contacted, recruited, and interviewed. Of the eight interviews, two were not used because of recording difficulties. Interviews with five males and one female were eventually selected. The sociocultural variables, which, according to Pedersen’s Cultural Grids (1994), are applicable to the subjects, are included below.

Ethnographic variables

All of the subjects had ancestors whose origins were in China and who had migrated to Laos sometime during the 1880s. The subjects were born in Laos, had

experienced the “Secret War in Laos” as children or young adults, had fled to a refugee camp in Thailand and were eventually reunited with their relatives in Missoula, Montana in the United States. All subjects were bicultural/bilingual or multicultural/ multilingual, with Hmong and English being two of their languages. While some of the subjects were of mixed Hmong and Laotian ethnicities, most were pure Hmong. All of the subjects ascribed to traditional Hmong religious beliefs.

Demographic Variables

In order to capture the migration experience as well as the college experience, the “middle” generation (Faderman, 1998) ethnic Hmong refugees who were born in Laos or Thailand and immigrated to Missoula, Montana as adolescents or young adults were selected as subjects. Although mixture of genders and ages was attempted, the pool of “middle” generation students included more males than females, hence one female and five males were interviewed. Age was controlled by the generational factor so that all subjects were between the ages of 22 and 35 years old.

Status variables

While the Hmong had traditionally been hunters and farmers, their social organization was changed with the advent of the “Secret War in Laos” that began in 1961 and lasted until 1975. All of the subjects were refugees because of their parents’ involvement as soldiers who aided the American CIA during the war. As children, the subjects moved with their parents. Because their fathers were fighting the war, most of the subjects lived with their mothers in in-country military camps near the secret American base at Long Chieng near the Plain of Jars in Laos. When the Hmong were initially evacuated, some of the important Hmong military officers and their families

were among the first group to be relocated in the United States. All of the subjects spent a number of years in Thai refugee camps, waiting to be granted asylum in The United States, France, Australia, or Canada. Almost all Hmong families, including those of the subjects, relied on public assistance when they first relocated (Thao, 1999).

Education in Laos and Thailand was intermittent, at best, because of the disruptions of the war and because of the poor conditions at the refugee camps (Chan, 1994). Some of the students learned English that was usually limited to “street English.” Because the subjects arrived in the United States as adolescents or young adults, they were placed directly into local high schools. Their low levels of English skills, their lack of any academic preparation, their unfamiliarity with American teen age culture, and the concomitant school system’s lack of knowledge about the Hmong conspired to make their high school experience a negative one (Go, 1999).

Affiliation variables

Because of the Hmong tradition of early marriage (girls were traditionally married by the age of 14) and of valuing large families (especially boys), most of the Hmong subjects in this study were married with children. All except one subject were married and the number of children they each had ranged from one to seven. This research was undertaken to learn about the informal values, which Pedersen describes as a shared idea or value of this particular group of subjects and about how those values are provoked or called upon in the college setting.

Subjects were selected according to Van Kaam’s (1959) suggestions that they are able to express themselves verbally (and in English, for purposes of this research), have experienced the phenomenon under investigation, and have an interest in the topic.

Careful selection of the subjects was, therefore, an important part of this study.

Interviews

The guiding theme of phenomenology is to go 'back to the things themselves' (Husserl, 1970/1900, p. 252) and for a phenomenological psychologist one interpretation of that expression means to go to the everyday world where people are living through various phenomena in actual situations (Giorgi, 1985, p. 9).

Each subject was scheduled for an approximately ninety minute private interview with the researcher. The interviews took place at 153 Corbin Hall, in the researcher's office at The University of Montana. Privacy was assured during the interview, which was audio-taped. Before beginning the interview, the researcher read an "Explanation of the Research" (found in the Appendix) to the participant. The researcher then explained the "Research Consent Form" (found in the Appendix) to the participant, and both signed in agreement. The interview then began with an oral ten-minute demographic questionnaire, (found in the Appendix) which was, in turn, followed by a sixty to eighty minute interview (verbatim transcriptions are found in the Appendix).

The interviews each began with the open-ended question, "Would you please describe some important situations which you have experienced in college?" According to guidelines by Kvale (1994), the researcher assumed a naïve attitude toward the interview and "bracketed" any personal, professional, or research-based presuppositions she might have about the subject. The researcher encouraged the subject to be open and forthcoming and intervened mainly to help the subject clarify, focus, situate, illustrate, or elaborate on his or her descriptions.

When the time was nearly up, the researcher thanked the subject for participating and expressed her intentions to be as true as possible to what was reported. The

researcher asked if the subject would agree to read the transcription of the interview at a later date to check for accuracy and anonymity.

Limitations

Some of the limitations of the study that concerned the researcher prior to the study are included below. The significance of each limitation that emerged as the study progressed is also discussed.

Migration Patterns

Prior to conducting the study, the researcher was concerned that the specifics of the migration and acculturation patterns of this particular cohort of Hmong college students may have made their college experience different than of Hmong college students from larger Hmong enclaves in California, Minnesota, or Wisconsin and that the security of Missoula's small-town environment may give the subjects a different attitude toward the United States than that of their urban relatives. While the "middle" generation subjects of this study shared a migration experience with others of their generation that included birth in Laos, childhood and adolescence in refugee camps in Thailand and relocation to America as teenagers or young adults, their acculturation patterns may be different depending on whether they relocated to a rural or urban setting. The longevity of Missoula's Hmong community (they were the first group to arrive in America), the rural character of the area, and the presence of several generations of the subjects' families in the town may be reflected in the subjects' focus on the importance of cultural continuity and their dismay at the crime and gang involvement that takes place among Hmong in larger cities. As the interviews indicated, however, the subjects of this study, while valuing the relative safety of the Missoula environment, were not exempt

from negative experiences that included harassment, discrimination, and misunderstandings experienced by Hmong in other parts of the country.

Descriptive Research

The descriptive and exploratory nature of the research, which gives a deep, but site-specific explanation of the phenomenon may prevent the findings from being generalizable. The findings may at least be applicable to “middle” generation college students at other universities. The results of this study resonate with Taniguchi’s (1996) study, “Student Services and Academic Support Needs of Hmong Students at California State University, Sacramento: A Case Study,” that shows that Hmong students on the California State University campus felt uncomfortable, unaccepted, detached, and not part of their campus community.

Choice of the “Middle” Generation

The generation-specific focus on the “middle” generation of bi-cultural subjects prevents generalization to other generations, particularly the second generation of American-born Hmong college students presently in college. Two pilot studies conducted by the researcher prior to beginning the research with one, a “middle” generation college student who had immigrated at the age of two, and another, with a “middle” generation college student who had immigrated at the age of twelve, pointed out the differences in language skills and academic preparation, but not in attitude, between the two.

Interviews with second-generation Hmong college students showed a vast difference in background (this generation was born in America and has little knowledge or interest in their parents’ memory of Laos or Thailand), English language competency

(this generation is bi-lingual and some are more fluent in English than they are in Hmong), and in education (this generation has attended the Headstart Program, and K-12th grade in America). Their attitudes toward education appeared to more closely resemble those of the typical American college freshman than did those of the subjects.

Since the researcher was interested in the perspectives of college students who had experienced the transition from one culture to another, first-hand, she decided to select the older “middle” generation Hmong students for the study.

Prior Relationship of the Researcher and Subjects

Prior relationship (as mentor, teacher, advisor, friend, Asian American, student services provider) that the researcher had with some of the subjects may have affected the responses of the subjects. Prior positive relationships that the researcher had with the subjects allowed ready access to willing subjects. The subjects and others of the Hmong community who were not directly involved in the study were more than generous in sharing their time, their stories, and copies of papers they had written about themselves for other college assignments.

The subjects were also generous in inviting the researcher to both Hmong New Years and graduation ceremonies in 1999, which gave the researcher added insight into their cultural traditions and family relationships. A possible limitation of this relationship could be the reticence of the subjects to criticize the program that the researcher represents.

English as a Second Language Speakers

The language limitations of the students may prevent the subjects from adequately describing their own experiences and may prevent the researcher from

understanding their descriptions fully. All of the subjects were conversant in everyday English, forthcoming with their stories and animated in their use of body language. The researcher felt that language was not a barrier to the telling or reception of their stories. As the interviews were audio-taped and translated verbatim by the researcher, she had many occasions to go over and over the material, understanding it more deeply with each listening and reading. One pilot interview, however, was rejected for use because the subject was not very responsive, providing too little data. The use of video-tape or of other forms of transcription markings could potentially add emphasis to some of the descriptions.

Gender

The uneven representation of males (5) and females (1) was a potential limitation. A decision to study the bi-cultural and bi-lingual effects of older “middle” generation Hmong students at The University of Montana during the late 1990s limited the pool of subjects available. The one female in the study fit all of the other criteria and was included because many of her perspectives were similar to those of the male subjects. She experienced the fears, loneliness, insecurities, and frustrations that they did and also used strategies of courage, hope, resilience, and tenacity as did the male subjects. Topics covered by the female subject that were specific to the Hmong female college students as suggested by Chan, 1994; Fendya, 1995; Reavill, 1996 were not included in this study.

Delimitations

Because of the nature of phenomenological research, the researcher situated the target experience for the subject in the college setting, but looked for the subjects’ own consciousness of the meaning of the experience for themselves. It was difficult, before

conducting the research, to predict the course of the description. In fact, it was the very newness and freshness of the subjects' perspectives that the researcher hoped to capture.

To develop a "theoretical sensitivity" to the topic, the author consulted the literature on 1) the migration experience, which, according to Rogler (1994)'s "International Migrations: Context of the Society of Origin and Host Society, Age and Gender, and the Migration Experience," needs to consider the influence of the contexts of both the sending and receiving societies, age, and gender, 2) the college experience as described by Noel, Levitz, and Saluri (1987), whose "Force Field Analysis of College Persistence" contextualized the typical college student in the college setting, whose identification of external and internal forces that affect the typical college student was thought to be potentially useful, and 3) a definition of culture, as described by Pedersen's (1994) "Intrapersonal Cultural Grid," that internalized the ethnographic, demographic, status, and affiliation variables within each person.

The researcher needed to remain open, however, for the possibility of new lines of thought, depending on the themes that the subjects presented. An example of a new line of thought that suggested itself after the interviews and the analysis were completed was the significance of the secrecy that surrounded the trauma that the subjects had lived through in Laos and its impact on their acculturation. Apfelbaum (2000) and Hoffman (1989) presented insights that seemed applicable to the newly discovered themes for survivors of ethnocide.

Chapter Four

Data Analysis and Results

To be true to phenomenology I decided that I have to be sure that there was a reduction, that it was a descriptive approach, and that some essential findings came out. To be true to science I claimed that the knowledge that I get is systematic, methodological, critical and general. And I make the claim that it is vulnerable to replication... (Roseth & Brendryen, 2000, p. 1).

The Data

The data for this phenomenological/psychological study consisted of individual interviews conducted by the researcher with six “middle” generation Hmong college students during the 1998-99 school year. Each subject (S1-S6) was given a single directive, “Would you please describe some important college situations that you have experienced?” The directive was intended to elicit responses to the research question—What are “middle” generation Hmong refugee students perceptions of their college experiences at The University of Montana in the late 1990s?

In the interviews, the subjects were encouraged to respond to the open-ended directive without the imposition of specific questions by the researcher-interviewer. The subjects were encouraged to look within themselves and to talk about whatever was meaningful and important to them in regard to their own college experiences. While excerpts from the interviews and analyses are included in this chapter, as are Levels Four, Five, and Six in their entirety, the reader is encouraged to consult the Appendices for the complete set of verbatim transcriptions of the interviews (Level One), for spontaneous meaning units (Level Two) and for narratives based on emergent themes (Level Three).

A schematic of the phenomenological/psychological reduction (analysis

procedure) adapted for this study from Jenni (1990), is included below. A description of each level, with illustrations, will follow.

The Phenomenological/Psychological Reduction

Level One: Verbatim Transcriptions (Individual Protocols)

Verbatim transcriptions of individual interview protocols are read and re-read to get a general sense of the interview.

Level Two: Spontaneous Meaning Units (Individual Protocols)

Spontaneous meaning units of each verbatim transcription (Level One) are identified according to shifts in the focus of attention and meaning in the description of the experience. The researcher identifies and examines all meaning units, and restates them in the third person, retaining the subject's original language.

Level Three: Emergent Themes (Individual Protocols)

Meaning units (Level Two) revealing each subject's experience of being a college student at The University of Montana are grouped by theme, reorganized according to topic, and presented in narrative form. Original language is retained. Meaning Units not addressing the phenomenon are discarded after careful consideration.

Level Four: Transformation (Individual Protocols)

Meaning units (Level Three) are transformed into language expressing the psychological meanings of the Hmong refugee's experience of being a college student at The University of Montana. The researcher's understandings elucidate the meanings of the subject's descriptions.

Level Five: Fundamental Description (Combined Protocols)

The fundamental description is a narrative that results from reflection on the combined Transformations (Level Four) in which the persistent psychological aspects of the phenomenon are included. Perspectives that represent only one or two subjects are discarded.

Level Six: Essential Description (Combined Protocols)

The essential description is the final level of the Phenomenological Reduction in which the situated aspects of the Fundamental Description (Level Five) recede to allow articulation of essential structural features of the phenomenon.

The Phenomenological Reduction is illustrated below by using a single excerpt taken from an interview with Subject One (S1) to illustrate the first four levels of the procedure.

Level One: Verbatim Transcriptions (Individual Protocols)

Verbatim Transcriptions of individual interview protocols are read and re-read to get a general sense of the interview.

Level One of the phenomenological reduction consisted of several readings of a printed copy of the each of audio-taped interviews transcribed verbatim by the researcher-interviewer. The positive value of the laborious process of transcribing the entire interview verbatim surprised the researcher. The researcher listened to the interview over and over for clarity and also to “get a sense of the whole” of what the speaker was conveying about his/her experience of college. What was the story that the subject was telling? What types of experiences did the subject choose to tell about? What was the global impression that was conveyed? Level one provided the basic data on which the remainder of the analysis is based.

The following passage from one of the transcriptions is a description of a concrete situation that was memorable for S1.

An Example of Level One (Verbatim Transcription)

S1: Well, you know, when I first started I was really afraid...I felt uncomfortable...

Interviewer: This was back when you were thinking about coming, but...

S1: Yeah, and then when I came here I had my, I first had my ID. my student ID...I was so happy to get that card. It was a big deal for me. Ah! I'm a student now...at The University of Montana! I was really afraid because in high

school, I had been through a really hard time. Coming to college, I was afraid that that the students probably would treat me the same way.

Level Two: Spontaneous Meaning Units (Individual Protocols)

Spontaneous Meaning Units of each Verbatim Transcription (Level One) are identified according to shifts in the focus of attention and meaning in the description of the experience. The researcher identifies and examines all meaning units, and restates them in the third person, retaining the subject's original language.

In Level Two, spontaneous meaning units of each verbatim transcription (Level One) were identified according to shifts in the focus of attention in the description of the experience. The researcher identified and examined all the meaning units and numbered them for easier accessibility and examination. At this point, the researcher restated the meaning units in the third person to allow the researcher to report on what the subject has said, retaining the subject's original language.

Because little structure was externally imposed on the original interview in order to allow the subject's and not the researcher's perceptions to be expressed, the researcher now searched the entirety of the transcription in order to identify the meaning units within the subject's statements. At Level Two, all statements, even seemingly meaningless remarks, were retained.

As an example of what occurs at Level Two, the same passage quoted above is broken into meaning units and restated in the third person, retaining the subject's original language.

An Example of Level Two (Spontaneous Meaning Units)

(Verbatim Transcription)

S1: 4. /Well, you know, when I first started I was really afraid...I felt uncomfortable.../

This was back when you were thinking about coming, but...

S1: 5. /Yeah, and then when I came here I had my, I first had my ID, my student ID...I was so happy to get that card. It was a big deal for me. Ah! I'm a student now...at The University of Montana!/ 6. I was really afraid because in high school, I had been through a really hard time...coming to college, I was afraid that the students probably would treat me the same way."

(Meaning Units)

4. At first S1 was really afraid and felt uncomfortable in college.

5. S1 was also really happy and excited about being a student for the first time. S1's student ID was a really big really big deal, signifying that she was actually a college student at last!

6. Because S1 had experienced a hard time in high school, she was fearful that college students would treat her the same way.

Level Three: Emergent Themes (Individual Protocols)

Meaning Units (Level Two) revealing each subject's experience of being a college student at The University of Montana are grouped by theme, reorganized according to topic and presented in narrative form. Original language is retained. Meaning Units not addressing the phenomenon are discarded after careful consideration.

In Level Three, the restated meaning units from throughout the transcription, which were identified in Level Two were examined and re-grouped according to themes that may have recurred at different points in the open-ended and unstructured interview.

The themes were rewritten, for the first time, in narrative form. The subject's original language was still retained, but meaning units not clearly addressing the phenomenon of the Hmong refugee student's experience of college, were discarded after careful consideration.

The narrative below illustrates how the dual themes of expectations and apprehensions about entering college emerged from meaning units #4, #5 and #6 (along with several other meaning units from other parts of this subject's interview) of Level Two.

An Example of Level Three (Narrative based on emergent themes)

Coming to college in the first place, however, was a wish that was not to be fulfilled for five years after she finished high school. High school was such a bad experience for her and other Hmong students, with American students spitting on them and telling them to go back to their own country. Even if going to college meant she could get a good job, S1 was afraid and reluctant to come because she was afraid that the same things that happened in high school would recur.

After five years she had rebuilt her confidence to where she decided she would apply to college. She was really excited about actually being a student. Getting her student ID was a big deal for her. Her ID made it seem real. She was so excited and scared for her first day as a college student that she could barely sleep the night before.

Level Four: Transformations (Individual Protocols)

Meaning units (Level Three) were transformed into language expressing the psychological meanings of the Hmong refugee's experience of being a college student at The University of Montana. The researcher's understandings elucidated the meanings of the subject's descriptions.

At Level Four, the situated experiences receded slightly and the researcher's understanding of the underlying psychological constructs assumed a more important role. A major transformation of the meaning units occurred, in which the researcher tried to

elucidate the psychological underpinnings of the subject's descriptions. In our example, the specific illustrations have receded and the underlying psychological constructs of fear, anxiety, excitement, and hope are identified.

For the first time the researcher's perceptions are allowed to interact with and to illuminate the data. This is one of the most difficult levels of the analysis. The researcher must consider and reflect on the situated descriptions and must attempt to understand the emotional and psychological values and assumptions that underlie each situation. The researcher gives new psychological labels to the situated details used by the subject. At this level, material from various parts of the interview may be combined if these concern the same psychological structure.

The following example illustrates how S1's description has been transformed by the researcher to reveal underlying emotions. Fear and anxiety, for example, were detected in S1's high school experiences of overt harassment. Hope and excitement, in addition, were emotions that seem to accompany S1's receipt of her first student ID.

An Example of Level Four

S1 began college with a mixture of emotions including: fear, based on the traumas of harassment she had previously experienced in a school setting; hope and excitement about learning, growing, and eventually reaching her dream; anxiety about being in a totally unfamiliar setting.

Narrative descriptions of the background information provided by the subjects through a brief oral questionnaire (see questions in the Interview, Part I: Demographic Information located in the Appendix) are included, followed by the Transformations for each subject.

Level Four for all Six Subjects

Subject One (S1)

Background Information

S1 is a 32 year old female who was born in Laos. She lived in two different refugee camps in Thailand before migrating to the United States in 1979. S1 arrived in the United States when she was 12 years old and has lived here for 20 years. She lived in Arkansas, Minnesota and Iowa before moving to Missoula in 1982 when she was 16. She is married and had 4 daughters when she was interviewed in 1998. She has since had two other children, a boy and a girl. S1 has 4 brothers and 4 sisters. Her parents live in Minnesota. Her spouse's mother lives with them. She describes her religion as traditional Hmong.

S1 had a 1st and 2nd grade education in Thailand where she learned Thai and French in addition to her own Hmong language. In the United States she attended 6th grade in Little Rock, Arkansas, 8th grade in Minnesota, and 9th grade in Iowa. She entered Hellgate High School in Missoula when she was in the 10th grade and graduated in 1986. She had English as a Second Language classes in high school and one semester of ESL in college.

Between high school and college she worked as a seamstress at a factory in Missoula, was a bilingual consultant with the public schools, and, with her husband and some other Hmong partners, presently owns a restaurant. She has helped translate interviews with Hmong elders for an art exhibit of Hmong arts and crafts and culture and its accompanying catalogue. S1 entered UM in 1991-92 when she was 26 years old. She was a senior when interviewed and graduated that spring with the Class of 1999. Her

Grade Point Average was 2.7 and she majored in Elementary Education. She aspired to be a 1st or 2nd grade teacher.

Level Four: Transformation

Memories of frustrating personal experiences S1 and her parents experienced as new refugees in America motivated S1 to get a college degree and teaching certification so that she can help bridge the cultural and language divide that existed for her family and continues to exist for other Hmong families as they try to access the American education system. As a teacher she wants to be a role model for Hmong children so they can turn their dreams into reality. S1 feels that she is part of a transitional generation that must help her parents and grandparents fulfill their dreams to make it in America. She feels a responsibility to both the older and the younger generations.

Fearful of the recurrence of isolation, overt racial discrimination, and harassment that she experienced in high school, S1 was reluctant to begin her dream of going to college, opting instead to work at a factory job. Through volunteer work in the public library and in the grade schools, she gradually gained new competence and self-confidence in her language skills and in herself. She never lost her interest in her goal. The passage of time and support from her supervisors eventually gave her the courage to enter college.

S1 began college with a mixture of emotions including: fear, based on the traumas of harassment she had previously experienced in a school setting, hope and excitement about learning, growing, and eventually reaching her dream; and anxiety about being in a totally unfamiliar setting. Fortunately, she had some help in the transition, from an American friend who literally “opened the door” to college for her

and from staff members of a student services office on campus that provided security, support, mentoring, advising, and some measure of connection to the university. Without their help she might have given up.

For the next years, S1 experienced a hard time academically because of the sophisticated levels of language necessary for college success. As she struggled in school, her self-confidence and self-esteem wavered, and she felt uncomfortable and frustrated. Instead of growing and gaining in college, she was now feeling very bad and insecure about herself. Her inability to understand the subtleties of the English language, and her fear of not being able to speak “perfect English”, prevented S1 from allowing her “true self” to emerge in the classroom. She also felt insecure about her language abilities in her interactions with other college students and also as a student teacher in the public schools. She was largely unable to participate orally and this diminished her confidence in herself. She felt silenced and devastated by the experience. She endured this situation, however, and persevered, nevertheless.

Despite her difficulties in college, S1 is still looking forward to the day that she can fulfill her dreams of becoming a classroom teacher and a cultural mediator or broker, improving communications between Hmong parents and their children’s schools. The differing world views that she could bring together were reinforced for her through her continuing work with the grade schools. She continues to be positively reinforced for her success with parents, teachers, and administrators. The positive reinforcement she receives outside of school balances her negative academic experiences.

Although S1 feels that she has learned a lot while in college, more pervasive are the feelings of regret, frustration, impotence, and disappointment that have damaged

rather than bolstered her self-confidence about her own capabilities. S1 is determined to graduate, however, because of her perception that her parents and their generation are depending on her generation to help the group survive in America. They are the only ones who can be the “bridge” between the old and new cultures.

Subject Two (S2)

Background Information

S2 is a 35 year old male who has been in the United States for 10 years. He was born in Laos. He immigrated to Missoula when he was 25 years old from a refugee camp in Thailand where he had lived for six years. S2 arrived in Missoula on November 30, 1987 with his wife and several of his children. He now has 7 children. His religious beliefs are traditional Hmong.

S2 attended high school in Laos, and in Thailand he worked at a hospital in the camp, where he learned English. His English proficiency level (self-rated) is that his conversational English is good but his academic reading is not very good. In Thailand he learned English as a Second Language (ESL) through the government and in college he did not take any ESL classes but has completed the university’s English Composition requirements. (ENEX100 and 101.)

Between high school and college, S2 worked at a grocery store, and since 1990, he has worked as a Bilingual Tutor with the public schools. He entered UM in 1990 for one semester, then stopped out and returned in 1995. He is presently a junior majoring in pre-education and is also enrolled at the College of Technology in the Medical Lab Technician program. He aspires to work in a hospital as a medical lab technician.

Level Four: Transformation

Despite overwhelming financial and parental responsibilities, a lack of adequate academic preparation, and insecurities about his English language skills, S2 is highly motivated to succeed in college. As a leader in the Hmong community and the head of a large household, S2 is determined to be a positive role model for the next generation of Hmong youth to emulate.

Starting college, however, was a 'nightmare' for S2. The unfamiliar demands of the new setting stymied the normally garrulous S2 into a self-imposed isolation. Ever resourceful, he adjusted his family and work responsibilities to allow himself more study time, he reached out for academic help, and he began to develop friendships with other students. As he became "a better communicator," his connection with the college setting improved and he began to feel much more comfortable as a student.

His academic performance improved after the initial shock of being in college subsided, but as the level of his classes becomes more difficult, S2 continues to struggle with the material and the pace of the classes. S2's greatest barrier to success is the inordinate amount of time it takes him to read and comprehend the language used in his upper level classes. Although some of his professors have been generous and cooperative in allowing him more time to take their tests, others have been less flexible. S2 reacts with anger and frustration to perceived institutional racism exhibited by some of his professors. He reacts strongly to the insinuation by professors he considers uninformed who believe that his problems the result of a "learning disability" rather than a problem of differences in language and cultural knowledge. Feelings of being seriously misunderstood, of helplessness at not being able to demonstrate his true abilities in the

college setting are in great contrast to the positive and empowering experiences he continues to have as a bilingual consultant with the public schools. The confidence accorded him by the Hmong community, by his job, and by his family have inspired him to dream of improving the college experience for himself and for others like himself. S2 is an activist, a “do-er” and a cultural spokesman, who is designing ways to educate others about Hmong culture and language.

As S2 continues to work his way through the difficult and unfamiliar American college setting, he has gradually regained some of his original confidence in himself and in his own capabilities and has begun to dream of how he might be able to take action within his new environment in the near future.

Subject Three (S3)

Background Information

S3 is a 22 year old male who immigrated four years ago when he was 18. He was born in Laos and lived in three different refugee camps in five years, between the ages of 12 and 18. His parents, grandparents, and 5 siblings live in Missoula and one still lives in Laos. S3 is married and has two boys. His religion is traditional Hmong.

In Laos, S3 had no education and in the refugee camps in Thailand, his education was spotty. He learned some English by helping American missionaries. When he came to the United States he entered Hellgate High School where he did the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades. He rates his English proficiency as average. He had 2 years of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes in high school, and English Composition (ENEX 100 and 101) classes in college.

Between high school and college, S3 worked as a bilingual tutor in the public schools and presently works at the Forest Service office as an intern. S3 started at UM in 1997 when he was 20 years old. He is currently a sophomore with a 2.5 gpa. His major is Computer Science. When he graduates, he would like to work in the computers field.

Level Four: Transformation

S3 experiences encouragement, support, but also pressure from his parents and others of their generation, who believe that the only hope for economic survival of Hmong refugees in this country is through the professions rather than by being relegated to menial work. S3 feels a responsibility to succeed in college so that he can eventually support himself and his extended family.

At first everything about college seemed very difficult and confusing to S3. He felt overwhelmed by the size of the campus, by the classes, and by most of the coursework. He felt that he did not understand most of the lecturers. S3, however, is very proud of his successes of his first semester. He and his parents felt hopeful that he was going to be able to handle the demands of college life. One of his assets, he feels, is his ability to make friends with students, staff, and teachers on campus. He thinks that friendships with other students are crucial to college success. A “real friend” is someone who gives him useful academic advice, who persists in talking with him despite his limited English, and who helps him find help when he needs it. In addition, he prizes the relationships he has cultivated with two particular teachers who showed an interest in him as a student and as a person. The conversations that he has had with them have been invaluable to his identity as a student. He feels that those people know him multidimensionally.

When his classes got tougher in his next semesters, he tried a number of learning strategies with varying degrees of success. He maintains a positive attitude and feels that he is doing fine despite some setbacks. S3 feels that his difficulties are the result of his limited English and also from the way that some classes are structured. Most of his low grades are in classes that he considers superfluous because they are courses outside his major. In the end, however, he feels that Hmong college students need to be self-motivated, persistent, and not easily discouraged in order to succeed in college.

Although there are other Hmong students on campus, S3 regrets that they are either too shy or too embarrassed about being Hmong to acknowledge him or to speak to him in Hmong language. He strongly defends his identity as Hmong.

Subject Four (S4)

Background Information

S4 is a 23 year old male who immigrated twelve years ago at the age of 11. He was born in Laos of a Laotian mother and Hmong father. He lived in three different refugee camps in Thailand before arriving in Missoula in April, 1987. He lives with his parents, two sisters and three brothers in Missoula. Since the interview he has married a college-educated Hmong woman and the couple continues to live with his family. S4 and S5 are brothers living in the same household. His religion is traditional Hmong. S4 had a 2nd grade education in Laos and none in Thailand. When he arrived in the United States, he attended sixth through eighth grade at Hellgate Elementary School and then went to Hellgate high school where he studied English as a Second Language (ESL) through the 11th grade and was then mainstreamed. He took ESL 450 in college and has completed two English Composition classes (ENEX 100 and 101).

Between high school and college he worked as a Bilingual Tutor with the public schools, with a Forest Service Fire Crew, and in retail. He entered UM in 1994 when he was 18. The summer before he entered, he was enrolled in the Upward Bound summer transition program. He is presently a junior with a 2.0 gpa. He is currently a general studies student and hopes eventually to become a Computer Science major. He hopes to get a good job in the computer field, following in the footsteps of another Hmong graduate of UM.

Level Four: Transformation

S4 reports that he is motivated to graduate from college by the job opportunities he expects will become open to him. In addition he feels pressured by his parents, who place a high value on education, especially since they were not able to get a higher education and also by his peer group of young Hmong males who have already graduated from college and are now in high-paying professions.

Even though S4 completed a summer college transition course before he started his first year, he experienced a rather rough beginning in which he felt afraid, shaky, uncomfortable, scared, and quite unable to get the help he felt he needed. By overcoming his own shyness, by becoming familiar with the campus, with the help of the staff of his transition program, with the help of tutors, he eventually began to feel more comfortable as a college student.

S4 perceived the campus as being very impersonal. He was perturbed by the bureaucratic run-around he experienced during the registration period. He was overwhelmed by the enormity of the campus and the size of each class, especially when compared to his high school. He was also shaken by how essential computer skills

seemed to be, a skill that he did not have, at first. In time he has overcome some of these initial transitional changes and has begun to feel comfortable on campus.

S4 experienced several academic barriers, several of which involved his English language proficiency. One daunting experience for S4 was his first English composition class. Frustrated in his search for writing help on campus, he resorted to doing everything on his own, which he found to be extremely unproductive. He feels, in retrospect, that he would have saved a lot of time if he had found some help. Another academic problem he has found frustrating had to do with trying to do well in a lecture class when he couldn't understand the speaker and was also unfamiliar with the material being presented.

S4, who sees himself as a basically very shy person, had been reticent to participate in classroom discussions or to seek help from professors. He is proud of himself for overcoming his fears somewhat and has gradually begun to feel more comfortable talking in class and going to the office of his professors.

Working as an ESL tutor in the high schools while he is a college student has had the unexpected benefit of increasing his awareness of the tutor-tutee relationship. Being knowledgeable and being thorough are qualities that he tries to develop as a tutor to high school students and in turn are what he values in the tutoring he receives as a college student. He believes in the importance of being a tutor who is knowledgeable and thorough, but also who is open and comfortable to be with.

S4 feels that he is experiencing a recent awakening of cultural pride. He has noticed the increasing number of Hmong students on campus but is concerned that they, and even he, may not be perpetuating their own Hmong history, language, and culture as

they should. He cites the failure of a one-time Hmong student club to stir up much interest or participation and is searching for another venue to revive interest in the Hmong culture, history and language, possibly as a way of uniting the two parts of himself—the Hmong self and the Hmong college student.

Subject Five (S5)

Background Information

S5 is a 27 year old male who has lived in the United States for six years. He arrived in Missoula on Dec. 4, 1992 from Laos. He did not live in a refugee camp. He lives with his parents, two sisters, three brothers and sister in law. His mother is Laotian and his father is Hmong. His mother's religion is Buddhist, and his father's is traditional Hmong. S5 and S4 are brothers living in the same household. S5 graduated from a business school in Vientiane, majoring in accounting.

He worked as an accountant in Thailand before emigrating. Before applying to college, S5 worked as a cook in a restaurant, and for the US Forest Service. He entered UM in 1995 when he was 24 years old. He is presently a sophomore. Before entering he took English classes at Willard Adult School for 2 ½ years. Upon enrolling at UM he took English as a Second Language (ENSL 250) and English Composition (ENEX 101.) His present grade point average is 2.00, and he hopes to major in Computer Science. He, like his brother and several of his peers, hopes to work in the computer field.

Level Four: Transformation

After getting off to what he considered a tough start in college, S5 gradually adjusted, so that by now, two years later, he feels comfortable about being a student at UM. Initial orientation problems that were compounded by his poor English skills at the

time were mitigated by taking English as a Second Language classes and a Study Skills class (C&I 160). These classes also helped him with his most perplexing problem in college—the problem of how to make American friends.

In his former life as a college student in Laos, S5 considered himself a very sociable and friendly person. S5 has vivid memories of the comraderie and the friendships he shared with all of the students in the college he attended there. He likes people and likes to be surrounded by many friends. He loved talking over ideas and talking about what had gone on in his classes. He misses those lively discussions and the friendships that grew from them. S5 has not figured out how to recreate such friendships for himself on the UM campus. S5 feels overwhelmed by the large number of students at UM and by the impression that all of the many students on campus seem in a hurry to get somewhere. The pace of student life seems very harried to him. Several supposed freedoms, including being able to change where he sits each day, and the individualization of schedules conspire to make it very hard for him to make friends.

S5 would like to be more connected with his professors, with what is being taught, and with other students in his classes. He does not find that just listening to the professor and taking notes without discussing the material is very satisfactory. He feels disappointed, sad, and very lonely because of these lack of connections to other people and to the material he his trying to learn.

As time has gone by, he has overcome some of his shyness and is able to ask questions in the classroom and of the professors. He has made some American friends and feels a lot better than when he started. He studies quite a lot, mostly in the library, and has seen an improvement in his academic skills. Right now, his most pressing goal is

to decide on a course of study that will lead him to a good job with good pay. Although he is not necessarily responsible for supporting his parents, he definitely feels a responsibility to support himself.

Subject Six (S6)

Background Information

S6 is a 26 year old male who has lived in this country for 9 years. S6 was born in Laos. He lived in a refugee camp in Thailand between the ages of 6 and 15. He was orphaned in Thailand and immigrated on February 2, 1990 when he was 15 years old. He lived in California for a short time before coming to Missoula through the sponsorship of an uncle, later in 1990. He is married and lives with his wife (an Indonesian) and their baby. Since the interview, they have had another baby. He was a Christian for a short time.

S6 had no education in Laos and some in Thailand. He went to high school in California, for a short time, then entered Hellgate High School in Missoula for his freshman-senior years. Between high school and college he worked at a number of businesses in Missoula.

He rates his English as average and upon entering UM in 1998, took English as a Second Language classes (ENSL 250 and 251). He attends college part-time, taking 7-9 credits per semester. He is presently a freshman and carries a gpa of 3.0. He thinks he might major in Business and aspires to be a pilot or a police officer.

Level Four: Transformation

S6 came to college with some very painful memories of overt harassment that he and his other Hmong friends had experienced in high school. He recalls that, because of

their limited English at the time, they were unable to retaliate verbally to the spitting, teasing, and taunting that they experienced. S6 and his friends felt powerless to defend themselves. S6 still feels a mixture of anger and sadness at the treatment they received by American high school students.

As his English improved, he was able to make some American friends and was able to try to explain his understanding of the circumstances that brought him to this country. Although he felt that his explanations were accepted by some, he sensed that most of the students thought he was lying or making his story up. He has since given up on trying to explain himself and anymore, will only do so when he is required to by the government or some other official source. If pressed to a physical fight, he would respond, but he presently ignores verbal taunts, realizing that his attempts at explaining himself have not been very effective. His strategy for dealing with such harassment is now to look to the present and the future, rather than the past. He believes that if he “does what he needs to do,” in his case, to succeed in college, that people will eventually get to know who he is.

S6 is determined to succeed in college even if it has been very difficult so far. He has found the registration procedure, the choosing of classes, the choice of a major, and the coursework itself, very demanding. In addition, S6 has found that it is very difficult to make friends with American students in college. He speculates that communication problems or ethnic or racial differences could be the cause of this problem.

S6 is in college because he really wants to improve his life. In his value system education is paramount, as is the good job and security that he believes will follow from

a good education. A good job and economic security will allow him to have a nice family life, which is also important to him.

S6 is determined to complete college despite some serious misgivings about his English and math skills. Although he started college without any idea what was expected or demanded of college students, he soon realized that he could do the work if he tried hard enough and if he wasn't lazy. He is not easily discouraged and is willing to work very hard. He has also been inspired by some role models who have finished college and is willing to keep trying until he finishes. It is imperative to his future that he persevere.

Level Five: Fundamental Description (Combined Protocols)

The fundamental description is a narrative that results from the reflection on the combined Transformations (Level Four) in which the persistent psychological aspects, across subjects, of the phenomenon are included. Perspectives that represent only one or two subjects are discarded.

The subject, S., felt isolated and misunderstood in American academic settings prior to college. S. recalls several incidents of overt harassment and racial prejudice that have left indelible scars that are difficult to erase. S. felt powerless then, to retaliate verbally, resulting in negative feelings of sadness, anger, and fear.

The effects of negative situations were mitigated by positive work experiences after high school and during college. In those settings, S. enjoyed opportunities to improve English skills, get more exposure to American culture, become better able to communicate with others and make some American friends. Those experiences as a cross-cultural interpreter, translator and mediator between the two cultures boosted S.'s courage to apply to college.

Even with the help of a few American friends and student services program staff members, starting school seemed like "a nightmare" for S. S. presently feels uncomfortable, lost, afraid, disoriented and lonely because S. feels overwhelmed by the scale of the campus, the number of students, the individualized schedules and the seemingly frenetic pace maintained by the other students.

S. finds it very difficult to connect with others, especially American students, although S. is eager to establish friendships. Even more "Americanized" Hmong students are perceived as wanting to distance themselves from the subject. As a married

commuter student with a family, S. feels quite unconnected to campus life. On campus S.'s life is quite solitary, limited primarily to attending classes and studying in the library.

There seems to be little opportunity to communicate meaningfully with other students or professors. S. feels lonely and alienated from the other students, unable to know them or be known by them. S. wants to share something about S.'s personality, talents, skills, insights and worldviews and has welcomed the few opportunities that have occurred through writing or speaking assignments. Over time S. has become a "better communicator" and has developed some strategies for overcoming the language barrier.

S. feels eager to learn new things, although S. feels insecure, because of language limitations, about the feasibility of academic success. Difficulties with learning unfamiliar material, getting good grades, and choosing an appropriate major reflect the concern that S. feels that "there is something I can do in there but I don't know what."

S. believes that limited English skills have been a major disadvantage, making it very hard to understand the teachers' lectures, comprehend texts, write papers and understand the conversations of other students. It also prevents S. from speaking out, participating and contributing as much to the class sessions as S. would like. S. worries that others will mistake S.'s silence as sloth or ignorance.

S. has endured many difficulties and setbacks and maintains an optimism and resolve to persevere and, hopefully, to do well. S. believes that diligence, hard work and seeking help from others are the main resources available at the time. S. is determined to make the sacrifices needed to complete college and to reach the professional jobs that S. anticipates will follow.

S. is motivated to succeed in college because of responsibility the subject has accepted for the survival and well-being of both the previous and the future generations of Hmong refugees. As members of a transitional generation of Hmong who have experienced life in Southeast Asia and the United States, S. has stepped up to the challenge of ensuring the survival and success of S.'s extended family in America.

Despite limited English skills and minimal and fragmented educational backgrounds, S. is drawn to the opportunity of getting a college degree and the possibility of reaching the ultimate goal of a professional job. S. is hopeful that the job will provide economic security that will enable S. and S.'s family to survive and thrive.

S. also believes that a college degree will make S. a positive role model for the second generation of American-born Hmong. S.'s identity is staunchly Hmong, which for S. means being a member of a self-contained, independent ethnic group that has successfully maintained its distinct cultural identity despite many migrations to different countries. S. is proud of the history, language and culture of the group.

Level Six: Essential Description (Combined Protocols)

The Essential Description is the final level of the Phenomenological Reduction in which the situated aspects of the Fundamental Description (Level Five) recede to allow articulation of essential structural features of the phenomenon.

“Middle” generation Hmong refugee students approached college with mixed feelings of apprehension and excitement based on prior experiences. Despite some positive campus connections the students presently experience college as a lonely, isolating, and intimidating setting. Since beginning college, the students have felt overwhelmed, not only by seemingly unattainable academic demands but also by difficulties experienced in communicating with others.

College is experienced as an environment that magnifies their weaknesses and minimizes their strengths. The pride and capability that the students feel in other arenas of their lives have been diminished in the college setting by experiences the students have interpreted as belittling or disparaging. The students’ inability to right negatively perceived situations have caused feelings of disappointment, frustration and occasionally, anger.

Hmong students are highly motivated to endure perceived hardships because of the responsibilities the students have assumed for the survival and well-being of their extended families in America. The students believe that a college degree is the most expedient means to fulfilling their roles. The students are resilient, sustained by pride in their Hmong history of surviving extreme hardships and migrations. The students are hopeful that their group will persevere in this country with its college-educated members as role models for the next generation

Chapter Five

Discussion

Hope becomes the redeemed discourse, a fleeting image of freedom and possibility, one that is often dismissed by many educators as that which is unverifiable and, thus, unknowable. Hope in this sense, is both the language of uncertainty and the precondition for action; it offers neither prescriptions nor recipes... Instead it points to the value of a discourse whose value lies in what it suggests about the stirring of imagination, the possibilities that are often felt and deeply experienced in the need to struggle against all odds (Giroux, in Tierney, 1993, p. xi).

Hope emerges as a pervasive underlying psychological theme for the subjects. It is a general theme that motivates the subjects of this research to persevere despite the many adversities they perceive in their lived experience of college. In the college setting, the subjects feel **apprehensive, lonely, overwhelmed, and frustrated** in response to their experiences. Motivated by **hope** that a college education will eventually be beneficial to them and to their families, they have summoned up a great deal of **courage, resilience, and tenacity** in order to persevere.

Each of the essential psychological themes identified in Level Six of the analyses will be discussed in a dialogue, or “triangulation” with the relevant literature on multiculturalism, on the migration experience, or about the college experience that until now has been withheld or “bracketed” (in Chapter Two) so as not to restrict the subjects’ fullest descriptions of their own experiences or the researcher’s analysis of the data. The reader is reminded that while an attempt is made to discuss each theme in isolation, in reality, several themes are usually at work at the same time. The researcher will attempt to indicate overlapping themes.

Feeling Apprehensive

"Middle" generation Hmong refugee students approach college with mixed feelings of apprehension and excitement based on prior experiences. (Level Six)

The subjects report feeling previously isolated, misunderstood, or harassed in what appeared to them to be hostile and intimidating American academic settings (middle school or high school) that all but one of them had attended prior to college. (Go, 1999) Some of the subjects experienced incidents that they perceived as overt harassment and racial prejudice that have left indelible scars that are difficult to erase. Those experiences of being bullied, predisposed them to feeling apprehensive and fearful about the possible recurrence of the same types of experiences in college. S1 remembers, ruefully:

... in high school, the students, uh, we were very isolated from American students... they were treating us in a bad way, they spit on us, tell us to go back to our country... it was a bad experience (S1).

The effects of negative situations were mitigated somewhat, for several of the subjects, by positive work experiences after high school. Several of the subjects were hired by a school-sponsored bilingual education program as tutors, translators, interpreters, or mediators after high school and during college. Others worked at jobs in the community. In some of those settings, the subjects enjoyed opportunities to share their expertise, use their knowledge of their own language and culture, improve English skills, become more exposed to American culture, become better able to communicate with others, and make some American friends. Those experiences gave the subjects a sense of being valued and boosted their courage to apply to college. S1 reports:

I did some volunteer jobs at the schools and then there was a Bilingual tutor position that opened, and I had learned English so, I got the job and I've been working in the school district as a teacher so I can teach the Hmong students, and tutored them, but also I learned from the teachers... I really learned (S1).

The confidence that the subjects built in these settings was responsible, in part, for motivating them to apply to college and for sustaining them through difficult times while in college. Despite the fears that the subjects felt about entering college, they were also excited and hopeful for the opportunity, creating a persistent ambivalence. While some of the subjects had the help of American friends, a college transition program (Upward Bound), or a student services program (Educational Opportunity Program) that tried to ease their subjects' transition to college, they remained apprehensive, nevertheless. S1 recalls the ambivalence that she felt on her first day:

It's really hard... when I came here, my first day, I was so scared... L., she is my friend, she knew that I was really scared and she said, do you want me to walk with you to the classroom? She walked me to my classroom and she opened the door and I... it was like she opened the door so I could get into... school... I was so relieved! I stayed up all night, I couldn't sleep... I kept thinking, tomorrow I'm going to go to college! I was scared so she came with me, she opened the door, I walked right in... it was a big classroom (S1).

In addition to their negative memories from high school, the subjects were painfully self-conscious of their English language limitations, their lack of much academic preparation, their newness to America, and their lack of familiarity with the college setting. Says S2, who had only one year of high school in America:

For me, the first semester that I started college was like a nightmare... cause I knew nothing coming into college... after graduating from an American high school after just one year... it was such a struggle (S2).

Even S4, who had immigrated during his middle school years, felt afraid and insecure:

Yeah, I feel quite uncomfortable and kind of afraid... scared... you didn't know what it's going to be like and you kinda shaky and you don't know where to go and you have this question ... and you don't know who to go to (S4).

The collective Hmong feeling of fear and apprehension that resulted from their experiences as refugees fleeing the trauma of the Secret War in Laos and the recriminations and ethnocide that followed can be likened to the experiences of other refugees, as described in the literature. Apfelbaum (2000), whose studies of the "uprooted" has focused on the experiences of Jewish survivors of the Holocaust in Europe, advocates listening carefully to the narratives of the dislocated. She says:

Uprootedness has become a major sociopolitical reality... Political catastrophes, as well as economic necessities, have driven increasing numbers of people away from their home places, forcing them into an uncertain journey with little more than a suitcase filled with the artifacts of a stranded past... We have much to gain from listening to the narratives and past experiences of those who have suffered dislocation (p. 1009).

For the Hmong, there is little debate about the tragedy of the genocide that they experienced. Robbins (1995), reports:

The fate of the Hmong is nothing less than tragic. The years of war, and the numerous dislocations throughout it, followed by an active policy of extermination and genocide by the new communist government, have virtually destroyed them as a significant ethnic group in Laos. No one knows the precise number of Hmong who have died, but a figure around 100,000 is probable (p.337).

In 1974, as the war was coming to a chaotic end and the Americans fled for home, a long-time American sympathizer of the Hmong who had lived in Laos since the 1960s, Edgar (Pop) Buell, observed, sadly:

Runnin' and dyin', runnin' and dyin'... that's all the Hmong have known.
And now there's no place left to run (Garrett, 1974, p. 78).

For their part in helping the Americans during the war, the Hmong “traitors,” as they were called by the communist victors, were targeted for recriminations, prison, or death. They hid in the jungles, fled for their lives by perilous crossings of the Mekong River, to refugee camps in Thailand and awaited evacuation to asylum in western countries including the United States. Many researchers, including Chan (1994), Robbins (1995), and Hamilton-Merritt (1993, 1999), agree that the Hmong suffered immeasurably because of their alliance with the Americans.

In addition to fearing for their lives, the Hmong were additionally apprehensive about their ability to survive in the countries that eventually offered them asylum. The future was filled with uncertainty, and they wondered whether they would be able to adjust to their new lives, despite their long history of having survived migrations in the past. The Hmong clung desperately to the promises of the American CIA who promised them that if the Americans lost the war, they would be protected and cared for in America. While some Hmong were lucky enough to receive early asylum in the late 1970s, thousands languished in the refugee camps in Thailand throughout the 1980s, fearing that their hopes of relocation might not come true. Gradually, however, asylum was offered to those who could prove that they or their parents had been allies of the Americans during the war.

The Hmong have remained forever grateful for the help of a number of loyal American CIA members, who helped them when they feared for their lives. In the chaotic days of 1975, a number of Americans, including Jerry Daniels, a CIA liaison

from Missoula, Montana, and others, helped evacuate Hmong leader, General Vang Pao to Missoula, thus starting the evacuation (by air) of other Hmong to the United States. The initial fears and apprehensions that the Hmong may have had about leaving their homeland and coming to America were mitigated by their trust in Jerry Daniels and the promises that they would be taken care of because of their sacrifices during the war.

Despite the welcome that was given to the Hmong by Daniel's family and friends, by peace groups, religious groups, and with the help of public assistance, the Hmong received a mixed reception in an America that was deeply divided by anti-Vietnam War sentiments. Hildebrand (1998) comments on the complicated feelings of some Americans in Wisconsin toward the Hmong:

The Third Ward is where I live, a university neighborhood where the Vietnam War is still a tricky topic and mere mention of the CIA, no matter how distant the connection, brings an involuntary shudder. Where (JB, a Hmong refugee)'s service was a campaign plus or a liability depended upon the larger question of whether the Hmong were our forgotten allies or hired mercenaries engaged in an illegal war. Either way, the Hmong presence in this country is inextricably bound up with the war, and their cool reception here may reflect the lack of magnanimity one feels toward partners in a failed venture who showed up, years later, as reminders of the loss (p. 79).

Additionally, a great deal of secrecy had surrounded the war in Laos, resulting in a lack of acknowledgment of any American involvement even for the American pilots (known as Ravens) who fought there. (Hamilton-Merritt, 1993, 1999; Robbins, 1995) In the United States, the Hmong faced multiple problems of anonymity, secrecy, intrigue and of association with an unpopular cause.

The subjects of this study were children during the last days of the war and spent their youth and early adolescence in the refugee camps in Thailand, hoping to join family

members who had arrived earlier in Missoula, Montana. They experienced fear firsthand. The memories of their experiences are still very fresh in their minds, as it is for their parents and their grandparents, who have fled to America. The older Hmong, discouraged by their own inability to fully adapt to America, have put their faith in their children. Their children, the “middle” generation subjects of this study, are attempting, as many immigrants have before them, to adapt through higher education. (Karpatkin, 1998)

Feeling Lonely

Despite some positive campus connections, the students experience college as a lonely, isolating, and intimidating setting. Since beginning college, the students feel overwhelmed, not only by seemingly unattainable academic demands but also by the difficulties experienced in communicating with others.

As mentioned in the previous section on feeling apprehensive, the subjects feel intimidated by the scale of the campus, the number of students, the individualized schedules and the seemingly frenetic pace maintained by the American students despite the help of some American friends and of a number of student support services. The subjects find it very difficult to connect with others, especially American students, although the subjects are eager to make friends. As non-traditional aged, married commuter students with families, the subjects feel quite unconnected to campus life. Even more “Americanized” second-generation Hmong students are perceived as wanting to distance themselves from the subjects. On campus their lives are essentially solitary and lonely, limited primarily to attending classes and studying in the library.

S6 suspects that cultural differences (or racial prejudices) may prevent friendships with American students. He says:

No, it's very hard to make American friends. I don't know if because... it's the language, skin color, or what. It's very hard, I don't know about somebody else... it's very hard to make a friend of American students. Maybe the way we talk... is not, we don't understand each other... or the way I look or they way they look, I don't understand (S6).

Even subjects who feel that they are basically shy, say that they would like to have friends. S5 describes the conundrum:

But sometimes you have to (force yourself to be more outgoing) because you don't know anybody... if you don't know anybody and you're shy, because you sit far away from the teacher, far away from other students... sometimes you feel sad and because you feel like you don't have any friends... if you have friends, if you feel like you can study together... but... (S5).

Over time most of the subjects have become "better communicators" (S2) and have developed some strategies for making a few new American friends. There seems to be little opportunity, however, to communicate meaningfully with other students or with professors. The subjects feel lonely and isolated from the other students, unable to know them or be known by them. The subjects want to share something about their personalities, talents, skills, insights, culture, history, and worldviews and have welcomed the few opportunities that have occurred through writing or speaking assignments.

The subjects find that few Americans know anything about Hmong history, culture, or identity, and they are more than willing to explain. The subjects have a very strong sense of cultural identity, which for them is Hmong, their ethnic group. They are especially proud of the self-sufficiency of the Hmong in having been able to keep their customs and identity intact despite having moved from country to country over centuries.

S3 eloquently expresses a theme of ethnic identity that was found in all of the subjects' stories:

To me, I'm feeling, I'm Hmong... definitely. I can't change myself, I can't change my hair, I can't change my nose, I can't change my skin. Everybody asks me, where are you from? Who are you? I always tell them I'm Hmong. They say, some Americans they ask, what? Where's Hmong? Where's Hmong country? And I told them, I'm Hmong. But Hmong just traditional... our clothes, our language, that's Hmong. But we don't have any country. We lived back in Laos. Laos is Laotian and they don't know that Hmong is in Laos. Why you from Laos and you're not Lao, you're Hmong? We are not Lao, we are Hmong and we are part of Laos. We are a small group of people. We have our own language, we have our own traditional customs. So that's Hmong, so we are Hmong (S3).

Despite efforts to explain their presence in America, the subjects and other Hmong have discovered that Americans know or care little about the ways in which the Vietnam war upset their lives forever. The subjects believe that eventually, their Hmong identity and their reasons for being in America will become known to others. They believe that they will eventually get the acknowledgment that is their due. S6 says, hopefully:

And no one can help us, you know... and I was thinking about, it's OK. Someday... they will understand who we are... if we don't give up, and if we try to do what we have to do... and, to prove who we are and where we come from (S6).

Apfelbaum (2000) suggests that the irreversibility of their migration, the severing of all connections with the past, and most interestingly, the secrecy surrounding the horrors of their reasons for migrating as possible sources of distress for survivors of horrible traumas. She asks how anyone can keep on living, can rebuild their lives in the face of such tragedy?

Uprootings involve a separation—often an irreversible one, as in the case of genocide—from one's original personal, social, and historical groundings (connections). One is cut off not only from former family and social ties, but also from public historical accounts of the traumatic circumstances surrounding the uprooting (Apfelbaum, 2000, p. 1009).

While Apfelbaum's discussion uses the experiences of the Jews and the holocaust of World War II, a parallel is found with the experiences of the Hmong in Laos.

Faderman (1998) makes a similar observation, in her book, I Begin My Life All Over Again, the Hmong and the American Immigrant Experience, comparing the Jewish migration experience with that of the Hmong.

Apfelbaum (2000) and Mahmoudi (1992) point out the unique experiences that distinguish refugees (non-voluntary immigrants who risk persecution in their own countries because of religious, political, or other reasons) from other immigrants. While the most common relocation occurrence for refugees involves finding refuge in neighboring countries, the political alliance of the Hmong with America and France has resulted in their relocation in countries that are diametrically different from their own in political, social, economic, and cultural terms. Refugees who have lost all connection to their past and who have nothing familiar with which to touch base in their new location, may suffer an extreme form of culture shock (Winkelman, 1993). Loneliness and homesickness may result. In the early days that followed their relocation, the dislocated Hmong suffered greatly. Robbins (1995) tells of unexplainable deaths reported during the 1980s:

But there is evidence of other, equally mysterious deaths throughout the Hmong refugee community in America. Thirty-four of them have died from unknown causes in recent years, mostly in their sleep... Each case defies western logic, and has left doctors, psychologists, and police investigators baffled. The federal Centers for Disease Control, responsible for investigating such deaths, say they have not ruled out 'emotional triggers' caused by stress, and it has been suggested that the unfortunate Hmong have succumbed to severe cultural shock, an extreme form of the psychologist's 'trauma syndrome,' which is all to say, no one knows why the Hmong are dying (pg.352).

Few people can fathom the depth of the loneliness, of loss, and of homesickness that people feel—for a homeland that they might never be able to return to, for friends and relatives that they may never see again, for a way of life that has vanished forever.

The Hmong in America have countered the loneliness that they have felt by engaging in what Chan (1994) calls “secondary migration” that has resulted in Hmong families moving together in large enclaves in California, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, among other states. There they are able to live together, perpetuate Hmong cultural traditions, speak their language and socialize. Unfortunately, Hmong youth in large urban areas have turned to gang involvement, a big concern of their parents and their older siblings, including the subjects of this study (Ascher, 1993; Low, 2000). Hmong college students, scattered as they are throughout the country, maintain an active internet and e-mail exchange with each other, communicating in both English and Hmong. Hmong college clubs have also arisen to improve communications (Mouacheupao, 1998).

Feeling Overwhelmed

Since beginning college, the subjects feel overwhelmed, not only by seemingly unattainable academic demands, but also by difficulties experienced in communicating with others.

The subjects feel overwhelmed by the academic demands and expectations of college. Difficulties with learning unfamiliar material, getting good grades and choosing an appropriate major reflect the concerns of S6, for example, who says, “there is something I can do in there but I don’t know what.” The subjects believe that limited English skills have been a major disadvantage, making it very hard to understand the

teachers' lectures, comprehend texts, write papers and understand the conversations of other students. Although the subjects feel that they can get along colloquially, they are concerned about academic language demands. S2 says:

Well, you know, some kids say... oh its easy, you know... English is easy... Yes, if you are just verbally just communication, you just cannot... we call street talking... then yes, I can talk that way...But what about being academically... you know, lecture and everything... its still very hard for me... and I found this, that I still have a little bit of language barrier, so in some classes, I still ask for help (S2).

Objective tests were perceived as being particularly difficult:

Yeah, how they word... it's just the multiple choice... and it's one chapter's questions... but then there would be two answers that are alike, you know, but they just change how they word it... differently... but in English, I can't really choose... it looks like that... I don't really know which one to choose... so it... (S1)

Feeling overwhelmed by the demands of college is a perception that other Hmong college students have experienced, according to the literature. They attribute these feelings mainly to their limited English language skills, to their spotty record of formal education in the English, Laotian, Thai, or Hmong languages, and to the recency of the transcription of Hmong oral language into written form (Chan, 1993; Faderman, 1998; Fu, 1995.. In previous studies by the researcher (Thompson, 1997, 1993, 1994), other "middle" generation Hmong students at The University of Montana have indicated their difficulties in understanding academic language and using it to communicate in class. The problems of acquiring the vast pool of presupposed knowledge and of understanding the complicated inferences that are used in higher education seems an enormous challenge, not only to "middle" generation Hmong college students but to the academic community that tries to include them (Thompson, 1997).

Because their language had not been written in western form until the 1950s, a common misconception exists about the richness of their history and culture. As Bessac and Rainbolt (1979) point out:

In their long history of ethnocide, small troupes of Hmong were repeatedly forced to flee, leaving valuables behind... In their wanderings they lost more than valuables. Hmong learned leaders were the first to be killed or taken captive. With them died reading and writing skills... People who knew the Hmong as swidden farmers on steep hillsides, as impoverished tenant farmers in pre-communist china, or in refugee camps, often perceive them as primitive hill tribes awaiting the blessings of civilization. A more accurate view is that here are the remnants of a proud and vigorous people who believe their culture might well have become the culture of China, if they had not lost to the Han (the dominant majority group in China) (p. 17).

Not only are their language skills not transferable, but neither are many of their past experiences or the survival or cultural skills they may have used in the past. As Zia (2000) points out—poverty, a lack of English language skills, and few transferable job skills have made adjustment to life in the United States particularly difficult for the Hmong. In her powerful and touching account of the problems a Hmong family has had in reconciling Hmong and American differences regarding health care, Fadiman (1997) observes:

I was thinking that when she (mother) said she was stupid, what she really meant was that none of her former skills were transferable to the United States (p. 105).

Feeling Frustrated

College is experienced as an environment that magnifies their weaknesses and minimizes their strengths. The pride and capability that the students feel in other arenas of their lives have been diminished in the college setting by experiences the students have interpreted as belittling or disparaging. The students' inabilities to right negatively

perceived situations have caused feelings of disappointment, frustration, and occasionally, anger.

College is experienced, therefore, as an environment that appears to magnify the subjects' weaknesses including their poor English language skills, their academic underpreparedness, and their lack of exposure to American culture. At the same time the setting appears to minimize the skills they have developed to have survived the horrors of war, to have escaped from the retributions following the war, and made the journey to a completely different land. The competence that they feel in their lives outside of the college setting has been undermined within. Whereas the subjects are quite confident in other settings, especially as cultural brokers, they feel inadequate in the college setting. The subjects feel diminished, quieted, and silent. S1 describes her feelings and her behavior:

See... there's times when I just feel like, ah... I thought that I was going to college and I'm going to gain more... and now I feel so bad about myself... but whenever I go right back to the school that comes back... so I thought I still have this feeling... but I... what is happening in college... why can't I use this? But coming to college I feel like I'm losing a lot of my confidence... yeah, I mean, I don't feel like I'm gaining... I find myself being silent (S1).

Language insecurities have prevented the subjects from speaking out, participating and contributing as much to the class sessions as they would like. The subjects worry that others will mistake silences as sloth or ignorance. The subjects report that the inability to participate fully and show what is really known, has resulted in feelings of frustration and inadequacy. The subjects' powerlessness in the college setting provokes disappointment or anger.

S2, for example, was completely horrified at the professor's underestimation of S2's knowledge. S2 wanted to retaliate by asking the professor to take a test in Hmong language so that the professor would understand the nature of S2's request for more time when taking a test:

And then I went to him and talk to him and he refer me to the disabilities program...and it shocked me... because, why he considered me as a disability student?...oh, I just feel like, oh, my god, this is not why... that really made me feel that uhm, my language is not good enough... No, no, NO! In my side, in my language, I'm the strongest one, you know...I would really ask him if he could take my course, I can lecture him... I can make a test that he can't pass... (S2).

S6 expresses frustration at being unable to retaliate verbally to the taunts of students. He says:

Oh... I feel sad and angry that I feel sad... I don't have a good education and I can't speak English, and I can't talk back to them and I feel angry because they did that to us (S6).

Asian immigrants to America have suffered a long history of harassment, intimidation, exclusion, and discrimination, ranging from verbal defamation to physical harm and, at a number of historical junctures, have included laws of exclusion, as in the Chinese exclusion acts of the late 1800s (Zia, 2000; Takaki, 1989). Until recently Asians have chosen to sidestep confrontation, preferring instead to prevail by excelling in almost every arena of American life. The path they have chosen has earned them the double-edged reputation as the "model minority," where overachievement has on one hand appeared laudable and yet has engendered envy, suspicion, and distrust. In addition, Walsh (1993) reminds us that:

The image of Asians as immigrant role models has also disguised the enduring poverty of some, as well as the political feebleness of the minority as a whole (p. 55).

As recent refugees from Asia, the Hmong have been grouped (for census purposes) with their ethnic and national relatives, as Asians. Historically, however, the Hmong have retained a distinct cultural separateness from others in Asia, maintaining a separate language, religious beliefs, cultural customs, traditions. The Hmong were persecuted by the Chinese, looked down upon by the Laotians, and most recently, were targeted for extermination by the communist Laotian government because of their ethnicity and their affiliation with the American CIA. While Americans may see the Hmong as Asians, they see themselves as a distinct cultural group—as Hmong.

The Hmong, however, have held a number of national Hmong conferences at which the topics of cultural continuity, education, jobs, and family roles are discussed by leaders from the older and also from the “middle” generation. At colleges, a number of Hmong student clubs have been organized to fulfill social, political, and support roles for Hmong students. Some Hmong college students in Minnesota have recently begun to react to the abuses they perceive that they have experienced:

Out of frustration with how their culture was being ridiculed, Hmong Americans, especially youth and college students of the 1.5 and 2.0 generations, came together in a loose coalition called Community Action Against Racism (CAAR) (Zia, 2000, p. 259).

They have received some support from a growing pan-Asian movement of college students who, through the increased use of the internet, e-mail, and other forms of communication, have begun to support each other nation-wide (Zia, 2000; UWSP, 1999).

Being Courageous

Among students are highly motivated to endure perceived hardships because of the responsibilities the students have assumed for the survival and well-being of their extended families in America. The students believe that a college degree is the most expedient means to fulfilling their roles.

The subjects are courageously resolved and determined to face the hardships that they experienced. As members of the “transition” generation, they feel pressured by their parents to provide financially, to assure cultural continuity, and to become role models of biculturalism for the next generation. The subjects see themselves as key players at an important turning point in their own history. They see that through a college education they will be fulfilling their responsibilities not only to their parents but also to their children. They can look both ways: S3 and S4 speak about parental pressure that they have internalized:

They really encourage me. They believe that, without any education we won't be able to survive. Like the other people who got here, they're older... they can't go to school... that's one thing. But me, my age is still good enough to go to school and they really encourage me (S3).

Yeah, that's the big deal... my parents put the big pressure on me... but at the same time, I put the pressure on myself to finish... if I do I'll be the first one in my family... yeah (S4).

S6 speaks to being able to provide for his family by getting a college degree:

Yeah... so, I want to prove... myself, I came from a poor family, but I want to be, want to have a nice family, a high education, so I can help my little brother or sister or my cousin, whatever, and I also think that education in the United States is the top... so if you have no education you have no job and you don't have no money, no car, nothing, no family, everything so money... so first thing is education, then money, then family, that's the most important (S6).

S2 speaks of how responsibilities that he feels for the future of their group motivates him:

It's very hard... and for me, pushing myself through college... its one of the hopes for me that, I really, really want to accomplish, so I could be one of the role models for the youngsters, for the younger generation. So I could be one of their history you know, if he can do it, we can do it... if he can go through college, we can...(S2).

Davidson (1993) asks about the Hmong and other “endangered peoples”:

How does a culture come undone? Sometimes a single tragedy is the decisive turning point... But more often than not, a host of factors, some obvious and others quite subtle, press and pull a (group) one way or another, until it, and the individuals that make it up, becomes something quite different from what it was (p. 10, 11).

As Chan, 1994; Fadiman, 1997; Miller, 1992-93; Otake, 1995 have pointed out, the Hmong have been at risk of “coming undone” at many junctures in history. Yet, The subjects of this study are determined to perpetuate their culture. S4 and others recognize the need to be bi-cultural— to learn to live in two environments. He says:

I think that, to a point, we should keep our traditions... it's tough living in two environments at the same time but I believe that it's possible. I think we should... family and friends (S4).

As the generation that has come of age during the 1990s, “middle” generation Hmong are willing to assume the leadership that they feel their group needs at this turning point in their history. Tou Ger Xiong, a recent Hmong graduate of Carleton College speaks about the responsibility that his generation has accepted. They are ready to help with the transition... the acculturation. They are committed to holding on to some of the old traditions and of letting some go. He says:

‘This is the story of all Americans, not just the Hmong’... ‘Every cultural group has been through the same thing. But right now it's our time in history to go through the acculturation—letting go of some things and

holding on to others' (Zia, 2000, p. 256).

Historically, the Hmong are survivors. Known for their love of freedom and independence, for their heroism, for being “scrappy” fighters, for their courage and their bravery in battle, the Hmong have managed to perpetuate their group for centuries (Chan, 1994; Lee, 1996).

Being Resilient and Tenacious

The students are resilient, sustained by pride in their Hmong history of surviving extreme hardships and migrations.

Resilience, the ability to recover readily, and tenacity, the ability to hold on and to persevere, are strategies that the subjects have used, sometimes together, to survive in the college setting. The subjects have endured many frustrations, difficulties and setbacks and maintain an optimism and resolve to persevere and, hopefully, to do well. The subjects believe that diligence, hard work and seeking help from others are the main resources available at the time. About a class that she has repeated several times, S1 laments:

I didn't pass again, I thought oh well, the third time I would try again... and then I got really frustrated... it's like, I'm doing this over and over and over and I'm not going to make it (S1).

While S3 is philosophical about his approach to problem classes:

I still take courses. I had to do it... I was determined to do it... yeah, no matter what. And when I don't pass one course, it doesn't affect my other courses. That is just one and it's over. So it's over... just keep going (S3).

The subjects' approach to the overwhelming academic and language demands that they perceive in college has mainly been to repeat courses, study long hours, and to keep on going. They are resilient in their ability to spring back from failure, and they are

tenacious in not giving up.

The literature reminds us that the remarkable achievements of Asians in America and their characterization as the “model minority” has masked the difficulties that Southeast Asian refugees (including the Hmong) have experienced. Recent data (Leeson, 1998; Vang, 1998; Wisconsin, 1999) has shown that the Hmong have begun to improve, not only in their college enrollment, persistence and graduation rates, but also in the performance of their children in the elementary and high schools. Remarkable improvements have already occurred in their short tenure in this country in addition to the already noted problems of poverty, few English language skills and academic underpreparedness are examples of the determination, resilience, and tenacity of the group. As one Hmong college student in Pennsylvania says:

I am always telling myself that I cannot give up. I'm not a quitter. I've got to fight. You know, fight is the key word that'll make me a success... school is still hard for me, but I know I'll do it, even if it takes a long time (Faderman, 1998, p. 233).

The Hmong are fighters. Their approach to college is similar to their approach to other aspects of life. Their history has included many skirmishes, rebellions, and wars, beginning north of China, into China, and the 1960-1975 Secret War in Laos that resulted in their relocation to Missoula, Montana and other cities in the United States. As Quincy (1988, 1995) points out:

Indeed, the involvement of the Hmong in the Laotian war was only a single historical incident in the long saga of the Hmong as a people (p. x).

Their history is the story of a resilient and tenacious people, whose main strategy for survival was fighting and then fleeing. As Fadiman (1997) says:

The most widespread Hmong response to the terrors of postwar Laos,

however, was migration. The same problem-solving strategy that had moved them around China for more than three millenia and then, starting at the beginning of the nineteenth century, had brought them to Laos (p. 127).

Being Hopeful

The students are hopeful that their group will persevere in this country with its college-educated members as role models for the next generation.

(The scholarship) gave me the greatest opportunity of all. I learned so much from my research because I was given the opportunity to take the researching trips to meet people I otherwise would not have met if I wasn't doing a research. It made me understand more about the Hmong in other states, not just Montana. Being in (the scholarship program), I not only focused on my education and the field of Business, but was able to focus on other issues such as welfare reform. It gave me the courage to go seek what I want, to do things I never thought I could (Thao, 1999, personal communication).

Hope, rooted in the past but looking toward the future, is the underlying theme that motivated “middle” generation Hmong refugee students to apply to college, to persevere despite all odds, and to be able to dream about the future. **Hope** is reflected in the qualities of **courage, resilience, and tenacity** that have characterized all of the subjects' inner and subjective responses to their lived experiences of **apprehension** and **fear, loneliness, feeling overwhelmed, and frustration** in the college setting. **Hope** is the quality that will enable the students to rebuild their lives in the United States.

The responsibility of identifying which cultural traditions to maintain ultimately falls on the generation that grows up straddling the traditional (Hmong) and the American cultures (Zia, 2000; p. 262).

The “middle” generation Hmong college students in this study have assumed the responsibility of helping rebuild and reconsolidate their ethnic group in America. They are hopeful that getting a college education will help them with that task. Indeed, a

college education is a central feature of this hope. Through this study we learned how the internal and subjective resources of hope, courage, resilience, tenacity that the subjects had gained through their past experiences have influenced their responses to the apprehensions, loneliness, feelings of being overwhelmed, and frustrations they have experienced in the college setting.

As several of our subjects have emphasized, this cohort feels staunchly and adamantly Hmong, who want to maintain as much of their cultural traditions, language, and beliefs as possible, while, at the same time, surviving economically in America. The subjects in this group appear to believe in maintaining a bi-cultural and bi-lingual status, and appear to want remain Hmong in America, rather than Hmong-American or simply generic American. They are hoping to develop a bi-cultural identity in which they can be successful, both as Hmong and as American—an identity that they hope will be emulated by the next generation of American-born Hmong and as which they will be known by others in the United States of America.

Chapter Six

Implications

And no one can help us, you know... and I was thinking about it... it's OK. Someday... they will understand who we are... if we don't give up, and if we try to do what we have to do... and, to prove who we are and where we come from (S6).

Implications for the Subjects

S6's words express the hope, courage, resilience, and tenacity that "middle" generation Hmong students at The University of Montana during the late 1990s are employing to counter the apprehensions, loneliness, frustrations, and feelings of being overwhelmed by academic and language demands that they have experienced. What are the implications of this study? Who can help the subjects? How can the subjects help themselves?

The subjects may have benefited directly by having participated in the phenomenological/psychological research itself. The researcher observed, in the months following the interviews, that some of the subjects became more outwardly expressive about problems and began to seek remedies, including advising and tutoring, through the Educational Opportunity Program. The ideas of Paulo Freire may be applicable to at least some of the subjects. Freire (1970, 1992) believed:

... that every human being, no matter how 'ignorant' or submerged in the 'culture of silence' he (or she) may be, is capable of looking critically at his world in a dialogical encounter with others. Provided with the proper tools for such encounter, he can gradually perceive his personal and social reality as well as the contradictions in it, become conscious of his own perception of that reality, and deal critically with it (p. 13).

Freire, and his followers in the field of education (Igoa, 1994; McLaren, 1998; Rangel, 1992; Rose, 1989; Shor, 1987; Tierney, 1993;), in counseling (Ivey, 1994) and in

college retention (Purpel, 1989; Thompson, 1992, 1995, Tierney, 1993) in America, are concerned with creating opportunities for becoming conscious and critical (Freire's concept of *conscientizacao*) of their own reality. Additionally, Apfelbaum (2000), a psychologist, suggests that being able to tell their collective story is very important in the healing process for refugees and for others who have experienced traumatic events. She refers to the experience of the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust:

Because there was no general collective forum willing to hear what they had to tell and thus allowing them to make sense of the traumatic events they had lived through... those who survived exist in a no-person's land of silence in which the experiences of the past receive no legitimation... In such circumstances, recollecting or memorializing personal traumatic events can be done only in private... more often, though, the memories are deeply buried and induce a sort of dissociation between the individual's private and public lives (Apfelbaum, 2000, p. 1010).

While the horrors of the war and of the ethnocide that followed are extremely vivid to Hmong refugees in America, including our subjects, their stories have found few outlets, possibly because of the clandestine nature of their participation. The sacrifices that they made, their pride in the bravery of their fathers and grandfathers who served as guerilla soldiers for the American CIA, their homesickness for the homeland that they lost, and their fears that their culture and language might be coming "un-done" in this country, are not understood or appreciated by anyone but they themselves. In dedicating her book, Tragic Mountains, The Hmong, The Americans, and The Secret Wars for Laos, 1942-1992, Hamilton-Merritt (1999) says:

It is true that the identity of the Hmong people is not yet fully established among all U.S. policymakers, and that the American public remains largely uninformed. It is my hope that this book... will continue to contribute to establishing Hmong identity and ease the pain of noble, but broken and sad hearts. (p. xxvi)

The Hmong need to begin to heal the wounds of the past and to begin to rebuild their future. They must be provided with a venue through which they can begin to make sense of their past, in a setting that is sympathetic to their restricted English. Tan (1998), in recalling richness that her mother's "broken" or "fractured" English belies, reminds us that this is possible. She says, of her mother's English:

Her language, as I hear it, is vivid, direct, full of observation and imagery. That was the language that helped shape the way I saw things, expressed things, made sense of the world. (Tan, 1998, p. 1)

A forum, as suggested by Apfelbaum (2000), in which the Hmong can tell their story to others, would be a starting point in the Freirian process of making sense of their history and their present situation, and of rebuilding their future. Seeking every opportunity to examine the connections between their past, present, and future-- through conversations with students, staff, and faculty members, through writing assignments, speaking assignments, through classroom discussions, research papers, or presentations to groups would benefit Hmong students greatly. While a number of writers cited in this dissertation (Chan, 1994; Faderman, 1998; Miller et. al., 1992-93) have helped to present Hmong narratives or have attempted to speak for them, more Hmong voices need to be encouraged to speak so they can make sense of their present experiences.

Implications for College Retention Programs

Demographic projections make it clear that the American citizenry—including potential college-goers—will be more racially and ethnically diverse in the future. The higher education community must lead the way in embracing and celebrating diversity in order to promote the development of the future workforce and the maintenance of an inclusive, democratic society (American Council on Education, 2001, p. 4).

As Taniguchi (1996) has pointed out, however, the special needs of Hmong students, as members of the Asian "model minority" that is overrepresented in higher education, have gone unrecognized by university administrators, faculty, and staff. The present study reinforces her suggestions that college retention programs need to consider the specific historical circumstances that differentiate the Hmong from other Asian American groups and should not neglect their needs.

A number of services that may be able to help Hmong students are already available on college campuses across the nation. Three resources available nation-wide and at The University of Montana include the Upward Bound Program, the Educational Opportunity Program and the McNair Scholars program, collectively known as TRIO programs (Council for Opportunity in Education, 2000). The programs target academically underprepared, low-income, first generation college students and students from under-represented minority groups. An imagined program designed specifically for improving the college experience of "middle" generation Hmong students at The University of Montana would focus on encouraging the students utilize the full range of already existing services provided, including the Upward Bound transition-to-college summer program, the Educational Opportunity Program's learning strategies, academic advising, financial aid, tutoring, career advising, and referral services and the McNair Scholars Program's graduate school preparation scholarships.

Hmong students would be encouraged to engage more fully with other campus organizations, including the Phoenix program for older students, sponsored by the university's student association, intramural sports, or other activities in which they might

have a personal interest. Students would be encouraged to make as many connections with other students and faculty members as possible.

Through careful academic advising, Hmong students would be encouraged to select classes and majors wisely based on their English language skill levels and their background in the subjects that they are considering. Students would be encouraged to use the free tutoring services available through the Educational Opportunity Program and to get as much help from their professors as possible. English language problems may be alleviated by taking a sequence of English as a Second Language classes, English composition classes, and by enrolling in smaller interactive classes, including an Orientation to the United States class that provides opportunities for speaking and communicating with both international and American students.

Despite the availability of services offered above, several remaining un-met needs of this cohort of “middle” generation Hmong students emerged from the study, including their perception that they need to improve their English language skills, would like to make more friends, would like to be able to voice their frustrations, and as importantly, would like for their cultural identity and historical reasons for being in this country to be known to others. Hmong students need to find outlets through which they can vent their feelings of frustration, anxiety, loneliness, and of being overwhelmed. Although a counseling center is available for personal and mental health problems, Hmong students (and other ethnic minority students) have typically not utilized those services. While the Montana Asian American Center and the Refugee Assistance Corporation are available to assist Hmong refugees in the community with cultural adjustment and family issues, and the Bilingual Program has helped Hmong students at

the grade school and high schools, no counseling or advising program is available that specifically addresses the needs of Hmong college students.

In imagining new possibilities that might help the subjects improve their own experiences as college students, the researcher looks to the work of Apfelbaum (2001), a psychologist who has focused on the experiences of other survivors of “unspeakable tragedies,” who suggests the potentially healing effects that a forum, a gathering, or a group might provide. Apfelbaum’s suggestions are echoed in Tan’s (1989) novel, The Joy Luck Club, that was loosely based on the stories of her own mother and her friends, who had experienced tragedies in China, and who met regularly to visit and to reminisce:

My mother could sense that the women of these families also had unspeakable tragedies they had left behind... and hopes they couldn’t begin to express in their fragile English. Or at least, my mother recognized the numbness in these women’s faces. And she saw how quickly their eyes moved when she told them her idea for the Joy Luck Club (p. 6-7).

Similarly, Freire provided a forum in the form of “culture circles,” or groups of people learning to read, write, and make sense of their political and social realities. The most powerful aspect of Freire’s (1970, 1992) philosophy is his belief that there are:

... various ways in which human beings construct their own voices and validate their contradictory experiences within specific historical settings and constraints (p. xvi).

American educators (McLaren, 1999) and some counselors interested in multicultural counseling (Ivey, 1994) have strongly advocated the adaptation of Freire’s ideas for the third world to the disenfranchised of contemporary America. New refugees and immigrants, including the “middle” generation Hmong refugees college students in this study, may benefit by the creative development of any occasion for a forum, from

engaging in a simple conversation or dialogue (a conversation with a friend, a fellow student, a staff member, a tutor, an advisor, a faculty member, a counselor), joining an organized activity (a club, a class group activity, a study group of students, a speech in class, a paper or research project), to making formal presentations (Martin Luther King Day, Diversity Advisory Council activities, cultural presentations at the International Food and Culture Festival).

The researcher encourages educators, counselors, and college retention program members to be inventive, creative, and opportunistic in devising forums in which the subjects can “give voice,” not only to their history and to their past, but also to their hopes and their dreams. Providing a forum would be one step that college faculty, staff, and administrators could take toward helping the subjects and other immigrants and refugees who have experienced dizzying changes within a very short time, to deal with the consequences of their past, the realities of the present, and the reconstruction of their future.

References

American Council on Education. (2001). 21st Century Perspectives on Diversity. Shaping Public Policy with New Leaders. Preliminary Program for 83rd Annual Meeting, February 17-20, Washington, DC, 4.

Apfelbaum, E. (2000). And Now What, After Such Tribulations? American Psychologist, 55, 1008-1013.

Ascher, C. (1989). Southeast Asian Adolescents: Identity and Adjustment. New York: Eric Clearinghouse on Urban Education.

Baez, B. (2000). Diversity and its Contradictions, Academe, 86, 43-47.

Beck, R. (1994). The Ordeal of Immigration in Wausau. The Atlantic Monthly, April, 84-97.

Berry, J. W. (1994). Psychology of Acculturation. In Brislin, R. (Ed.), Applied Cross-Cultural Psychology (pp. 232-252). Newberry Park, CA: Sage.

Bessac, S. & Rainbolt, J. (1979). Notes on Traditional Hmong Culture from Montana Hmong Recollections. Missoula, MT: UM Printing Services.

Bliatout, B. (1980). The Hmong From Laos. In McDermott, J. F., Tseng, W-S., Marezki, T. W. (Eds.) People and Cultures of Hawaii (pp.217-224). Honolulu, HI: John Burns School of Medicine and the University of Hawaii Press.

Brislin, R.(1993). Understanding Culture's Influence on Behavior. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Brittingham, A. (2000). The Foreign-Born Population in the United States. Current Population Report, March, 1999. Washington, DC: US Census Bureau.

Brumann, C. (1999). Writing for Culture, Why a Successful Concept Should Not be Discarded. Current Anthropology, 40, SI-S25.

Carlisle, R. (2000). Value Diversity. Educational Opportunity Program Newsletter, 5, 3.

Celce-Muria, M. (1991). (Ed.). Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language, Second Edition. Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

Chan, S. (1994). Hmong Means Free, Life in Laos and America. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Chavarria, J. (1992). Social Work Competency Examination. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Social Work, The University of Montana at Missoula.

Clay, M. (1998). By Different Paths to Common Outcomes. New York: Stenhouse.

Clifford, J. and Marcus, G. E. (1986). Writing Culture. Berkeley, CA: The University of California Press.

Council for Opportunity in Education. (2000). Professional Development Seminars (Announcement of seminars funded under TRIO grants). Washington, DC: US Department of Education.

College Reading & Learning Association. (2000). Research, Practice, Reflection for a New Generation. (Call to 33rd Annual Conference, November 8-11, 2000, Reno, Nevada). Auburn, CA.

Davidson, A. (1993). Endangered Peoples. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.

Dennison, G. (2000). Letter to U.S. Department of Education in support of TRIO programs. Letter from the Office of the President at The University of Montana at Missoula.

Diversity Advisory Council. (1992). Cultural Diversity at the University of Montana, A Progress Report. Unpublished report presented at The University of Montana at Missoula.

Eisenstadt, S. N. (2000). Multiple Modernities, Daedalus, 129, 1-29.

Eller, J. (1997). Anti-Anti-Multiculturalism. American Anthropologist, 99, 249-260.

Faderman, L. (1998). I Begin My Life All Over, The Hmong and the American Immigrant Experience. Boston: Beacon Press.

Fadiman, A. (1997). The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Fendya, J. (1996). Being a Hmong Woman in America: A Phenomenological Study of Female Hmong College Students (Kinship). (Doctoral Dissertation, California School of Professional Psychology, 1996). Dissertation Abstracts International, 56, 10B, 5833.

Forster, J. R. (1997). Reframing Guidance and Counseling in the Schools with a Constructivist Perspective. In Sexton, T.L. and Griffin, B.L. (Eds.), Constructivist

Thinking in Counseling Practice, Research, and Training. (pp. 141-156). New York: Teachers College Press.

Freire, P. (1970, 1992). Pedagogy of the Oppressed. New York: Continuum.

Fu, D. (1995). My Trouble is My English, Asian Students and the American Dream. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook.

Garrett, W. E. (1974). The Hmong of Laos, No Place to Run. National Geographic, 145, 78-111.

Giorgi, A., (Ed). (1985). Phenomenology and Psychological Research. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.

Go, S.K. (1999). Laotian student flees past perils. Montana Kaimin, 97, 5.

Goncalves, O. (1997). Foreward. In Sexton T. L. & Griffin, B. L. (Eds.). Constructivist Thinking in Counseling Practice, Research, and Training. (pp. xi-xvii). New York: Teachers College Press.

Hamilton-Merritt, J. (1993, 1999). The Tragic Mountains, The Hmong, The Americans, and the Secret Wars for Laos, 1942-1992. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. (1992). Ethnography Principles in Practice. London: Routledge.

Hildebrand, J. (1998). Coming Home, Hunting squirrels and tigers with the Hmong. Harper's Magazine, (October), 72-80.

Hoffman, E. (1989). Lost in Translation, A Life in a New Language. New York: Penguin.

Hu-De-Hart, E. (2000). The Diversity Project, Institutionalizing Multiculturalism or Managing Differences. Academe, (September-October), 39-42.

Igoa, C. (1994). The Inner World of the Immigrant Child. New York: St. Martins.

Ivey, A. E. (1994). Psychotherapy as Liberation: Toward Specific Skills and Strategies in Multicultural Counseling and Therapy. (Second draft of a chapter in press for J. Ponterotto, and others, Handbook of Multicultural Counseling and Therapy, presented at the American Counseling Association Conference, Denver, April 26, 1995.

Ivey, M. B. and Ivey, A. E. (1995). Multicultural Implications of Development Counseling and Therapy. Paper presented to American Counseling Association conference, Denver, April 26, 1995.

Jenni, C.nC. (1990). Men's Perceptions of Their Former Wives in the Joint Custody Family: A Phenomenological Analysis. (Doctoral dissertation, Saybrook Institute.) University Microfilms, Inc. DAO 64793, copyright registration number 3 019 875.

Karpatkin, R. H. (1998). The American Dream, 1998. Consumer Reports, August 7.

Kluepfel, G. & Roberts, G. (1994). Introduction, Special Issue on Retention Programs. Journal of Developmental Education, 17, 2,3.

Kruger, D. (1979). An Introduction to Phenomenological Psychology. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press.

Kvale, S. (1994). Ten Standard Objections to Qualitative Research Interviews. Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 25, 147-173.

Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980). Metaphors We Live By. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Lebar, F. M., Hickey, G. C., Margrave, J. K. (1964). Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia. New Haven, CT: Human Relations Area Files Press.

Lee, D. (1959). Freedom and Culture. Boston, USA: A Spectrum Book, Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Lee, G. Y. (1996). Cultural Identity in Post-Modern Society: Reflections on What is a Hmong? Hmong Studies Journal, 1, 1-13.

Lee, G. Y. (1998). Minority Policies and the Hmong in Laos. www.stolaf.edu. 1-14.

Leeson, F. (2000). Success with a Smile, Sarah Xiong finds acceptance at Roosevelt High, then works and studies her way to a full scholarship at OSU. The Oregonian, June 14, D2.

Longman, D. G. & Atkinson, R. H. (1994). Study Methods and Reading Techniques. Minneapolis/St. Paul: West Publishing Company.

Low, M. (2000). The Hmong Community: Families seek solutions as teenagers rebel and join violent groups. www.Freep.com., 1-5.

Mahmoudi, K. M. (1992). Refugee Cross Cultural Adjustment: Tibetans in India. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 16, 17-32.

Mayhew, B. and Huhti, T. (1998). South-West China. Hawthorne, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications.

McLaren, P. (1998). Life in Schools, An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education, 3rd. ed. New York: Longmans.

Miller, S. L., Kiatoukaysy, B, & Yang, T. (Eds.). (1992-93). Hmong Voices in Montana. Missoula, MT: Museum of the Arts Foundation.

National Association for Developmental Education. (2000). NADE 2000, Meeting the Challenges and Serving as a Beacon for the 21st Century (Registration and Program Information). Raymond, MS.

Nelson, M. L. & Poulin, K. (1997). Methods of Constructivist Inquiry in Sexton, T. L. & Griffin, B. L., (Eds.). Constructivist Thinking in Counseling Practice, Research, and Training. (pp. 157-173). New York: Teachers College Press.

Noel, L., Levitz, R., & Saluri, D. (1987). Increasing Student Retention. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Otake, T. (1995). Tradition and Transformation: A Profile of the Hmong Community in Missoula, Montana. Unpublished master's dissertation. The School of Journalism at The University of Montana School at Missoula.

Pedersen, P.B. (1991). Multiculturalism as a Generic Approach to Counseling. Journal of Counseling and Development, 70, 6-12.

Pedersen, P. B. (1994). A Handbook for Developing Multicultural Awareness, 2nd Ed. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Pedersen, P. B. & Ivey, A. (1993). Culture-Centered Counseling and Interviewing Skills, A Practical Guide. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Perkins, D. (2000). RAC helps recent immigrants find home in Missoula. We're all in this together: A special report on racial and ethnic diversity in the Missoula Area. The Montana Kaimin, 5.

Polkinghorne, D. E. (1989). Phenomenological Research Methods. In Valle, R. and Halling, S. Existential-Phenomenological Perspectives in Psychology: Exploring the breadth of human experience. (pp. 41-59). New York: Plenum Press.

- Purpel, D. E. (1989). The Moral & Spiritual Crisis in Education. New York: Bergin & Garvey.
- Quincy, K. (1988,1995). Hmong, History of a People. Cheney, WA: Eastern Washington University Press.
- Rangel, A. T. (1992). Paulo Freire's Proposal of Liberatory Education. Unpublished manuscript.
- Reavill, L. K. (1996). Promise and Paradox: The Experience of Hmong Women in College. (Doctoral Dissertation, University of St. Thomas, 1996). Dissertation Abstracts International, 57, 03A, 1050.
- Robbins, C. (1995). The Ravens. New York: Crown Publishers.
- Rogler, L. H. (1994). International Migrations, A Framework for Directing Research. American Psychologist, 49, 701-708.
- Rose, M. (1989). Lives on the Boundary, A Moving Account of the Struggles and Achievement of America's Educational Underclass. New York: Penguin Books.
- Roseth, I. & Brendryen, H. (2000). Phenomenological Psychology, the lonely path of truth, Interview with Dr. Amedeo Giorgi. In Impuls. Tidsskrift for Psykologi, no. 2. Oslo, Norway.
- Schein, L. (2000). Minority Rules. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Schmid, S. (1998). An Invisible Counterculture. Missoula Independent, 9, 14-15.
- Shor, I. & Freire, P. (1987). A Pedagogy for Liberation; Dialogues on Transforming Education. Boston: Bergin & Garvey.
- Spindler, G. & Hammond, L. (2000). The Use of Anthropological Methods in Educational Research: Two Perspectives. Harvard Educational Review, 70, 39-59.
- Strage, A. A. (2000). Social and Academic Integration and College Success: Similarities and Differences as a Function of Ethnicity and Family Educational Background. College Student Journal, 198-204.
- Sue, D. W. & Sue, D. L. (1990). Counseling the Culturally Different, Theory and Practice, 2nd ed., New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Takaki, R. (1989). Strangers from a Different Shore, A History of Asian Americans. Boston: Little, Brown & Company.

Takaki, R. (1993). A Different Mirror, A History of Multicultural America. Boston: Little, Brown & Company.

Tan, A. (1980). The Joy Luck Club. New York: Ivy Books.

Tan, A. (1998). Mother Tongue. www.people.virginia.edu/~pmc4b/spring98/readings/mother.

Taniguchi, H. (1996). Student Services and Academic Support Needs of Hmong Students at California State University, Sacramento: A Case Study. (Doctoral dissertation, University of the Pacific, 1996). Dissertation Abstracts International, 57, 04A,1521.

Thao, M. (1999). Impact of Welfare Reform of 1996 on the Hmong: Three Case Studies from Missoula, Montana. Unpublished manuscript, McNair Scholars Program, The University of Montana at Missoula.

Thao, M. (1998). Researching Welfare Reform and the Hmong Community McNair Scholars Program Newsletter, 2, 3.

Thompson, E. (1992). The Implications of the Works of Paulo Friere for American Education. Unpublished manuscript.

Thompson, E. (1993). The Intercultural Therapeutic Interview. Unpublished manuscript.

Thompson, E. (1994). "Tell Me a Little About Yourself." Contextualizing the Cross-Cultural Counseling Intake Interview. Unpublished manuscript.

Thompson, E. (1995). Relating Paulo Freire's Ideas to College Retention in the United States. Unpublished manuscript

Thompson, E. (1997). Language Difficulties of a Recently In-Migrated Hmong College Student: A Case Study. Unpublished manuscript.

Tierney, W. G. (1993). Building Communities of Difference, Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (1993). The State of the World's Refugees, 1993. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books.

Upton, T. A. (1999). Designing and Evaluating a Transitional Academic Program. Journal of College Reading and Learning, 29, 180-194.

Van Kaam, A. L. (1959). Phenomenological Analysis: Exemplified by a Study of the Experience of "Really Feeling Understood", Journal of Individual Psychology, 15, 66-72.

Vang, P. (1998). 1998 Hmong National Population and Education Data in the United States. Eau Claire, WI: Lao Human Rights Council. www.home.earthlink.net.

Walsh, J. (1993). The Perils of Success. Time, Fall, 55, 56.

Warner, R. (1996). Shooting at the Moon, The Story of America's Clandestine War in Laos. South Royalton: Stenforth Press.

Winkelman, M. (1994). Cultural Shock and Adaptation. Journal of Counseling and Development, 73, 21-126.

Zechenter, E. M. (1997). In the Name of Culture: Cultural Relativism an the Abuse of the Individual. Journal of Anthropological Research, 53, 319-347.

Zia, H. (2000). Asian American Dreams, the Emergence of an American People. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Appendices A-C
Forms for Interviews

Appendix A

EXPLANATION OF RESEARCH TO THE SUBJECTS

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research study. The purpose of the study is to try to understand what it is like for Hmong students to be at The University of Montana. I am trying to learn what you experience inside, rather than outside. I am interested in which college experiences are meaningful or important to you, either in a positive or a negative way.

I will begin the interview by asking you some background questions about yourself. We will then begin the research interview, which will be audiotaped. I will later transcribe the interview, word-for-word, and will then analyze it to identify some important themes that are important in your experience.

I will be interviewing six Hmong college students and will eventually put the themes from your interviews together to see if there are some experiences that all of you have had despite differences in age, gender, or other factors.

I will ask you to sign a consent form, which I will explain.

Appendix B

Counselor Education Program, The University of Montana

Research Study Consent Form

This form indicates consent to participate in a research project that will examine the educational experience of Southeast Asian Hmong students at The University of Montana. Once the experience has been analyzed and an essential structure has been identified, the conclusions will be compared to the descriptions of other Asian American immigrant educational experiences as reported in the current literature. Understanding of the following facts is necessary prior to participation in the project:

1. Interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed in their entirety, with the exception of identifying information. To insure confidentiality, each participant will be provided with a copy of the completed transcript and invited to review it and make any changes or corrections deemed necessary for anonymity. Any or all parts of this interview may be quoted in published reports of this research.
2. The transcription will be combined with others to examine the similarities of the experiences of college matriculation for Hmong college students. The conclusions will be compared to findings in the current literature.
3. Benefits of this research may include a deeper understanding of the college experience for Hmong college students with possible ramifications for the fields of counseling and education.
4. If the researcher suspects danger or harm to self or others, she is required by the ethics of her profession and by law to report such information.
5. Depending upon the content the participant chooses to discuss, participation in this study may be disturbing to some individuals. Should this happen please consult the Student Health Services at The University of Montana, (406) 243-2122.
6. In the event that you are injured as a result of this research you should seek appropriate medical treatment. If the injury is caused by the negligence of the University or any of its employees, you may be entitled to reimbursement or compensation pursuant to the Comprehensive State Insurance Plan established by the Department of Administration under the authority of M.C.A., Title 2, Chapter 9. In the event of a claim for such injury, further information may be obtained from the University's Claims Representative or University Legal Counsel.

7. Inquiries concerning the methods or outcomes of this procedure may be addressed to Eloise Thompson, Counselor Education Program, 724 Eddy Street, Missoula, MT 59812. Telephone (406) 243-5252.
8. Participants are free to withdraw consent or to discontinue participation from this project at any time.

Your signature indicates an understanding of the above statements and intent to participate in the research project

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Signature

Date

Appendix C

OUTLINE FOR THE INTERVIEW

The individual interviews will last approximately 90 minutes. They will take place in the researcher's office at 153 Corbin Hall, on The University of Montana campus. Total privacy will be assured. A tape-recorder will be used to record the interview, which will proceed as follows:

Part I: Demographic Information

In the first ten minutes, collect the following demographic information, which will not be used directly in the data analysis. This information will be "bracketed," or set aside, during the interview so as not to bias the study and will be used to "triangulate" the protocols during the analysis.

1. Name: (Initials only)
2. Age:
3. Gender:
4. Age at immigration:
5. Home country and town:
6. Refugee camp location:
7. First American city of relocation:
8. Date of arrival in America: in Missoula:
9. Current Family members: Number, Ages, Gender, etc.
10. Employment:
11. Religion:
12. Educational Background:
13. Highest school level in Laos? Thailand? US?

14. Language proficiency (self-rated):
15. Language instruction:
16. When did you enter UM?
17. Age at entrance:
18. Present year in school:
19. GPA:
20. Major:
21. Career Aspirations:
22. Other:

Appendices D-I
Data Analyses, Levels One-Three

Appendix D

S1, Levels One-Three

S1, Level One (Verbatim Transcript)

12/21/98

approx. 45 min.

If you could please describe some important college situations that you have experienced while you have been here...

S1: I, ah...well, I feel that I've learned a lot, you know. But ah, it's also really hard and I kind of struggle through...well, really, instead of choosing specific things to talk about, could we just talk about the whole experience?

Yeah, just tell me...just talk about whatever comes to your mind about being a college student...yeah, that's fine.

S1: Well, you know, when I first started I was really afraid...I felt uncomfortable...

This was back when you were thinking about coming, but...

S1: Yeah, and then when I came here I had my, I first had my ID, my student ID...I was so happy to get that card. It was a big deal for me. Ah! I'm a student now...at the University of Montana! I was really afraid because in high school, I had been through a really hard time. Coming to college, I was afraid that the students probably would treat me the same way.

Could you kind of go over some of that. What do you mean by...how was it tough in high school?

S1: In high school, the students...uh, we were very isolated from American students. They were treating us in a bad way. They spit on us, tell us to go back to our country. It was such a bad experience. So coming from that...and then after I finished high school I thought that I don't want to go to school, that these things would keep happening even if I thought I go on to college to get a good job. If people don't like me like this then it's not worth it to go and get a degree just to have a good job so I decided not to. I didn't feel comfortable about myself so I gave up and went to work for five years.

Oh, you did? So there was a break of five years between high school and college...

S1: Yeah, about five years working at SMS (a local sewing factory) I went every

day for three years and then after that I just worked at a volunteer job at the school and then I worked at the Library, checked books to read because I really wanted to improve my English.

Did you do this at the public library?

S1: Uhhuh. I read children's books and so I felt better about my English. And then I did some volunteer jobs at the schools and then there was a Bilingual Tutor position opened and I had learned English so I got the job and I've been working in the school district as a teacher so I can teach the Hmong students and tutored them. But I also learned from the teachers...I really learned.

At the same time, right...

S1: I worked there for about six years.

Was B. the head teacher?

S1: She was the director.

The director. So you worked more specifically with the teacher?

S1: Yeah, so five years, three years at SMS and five years at the District before I came to the University. And when I came to the University here, I was at ED (grade school) teaching the...I taught a computer class...

To Hmong students?

S1: To all students...Russians, Americans, Hmong students from first grade up to fifth grade.

How was that as an experience?

S1: Good! I'm good at that. I taught the first grade and...and teach them how to read and write. So I was full time. It was too difficult to teach at the school and be a full time student.

Can I back up a little and could you tell me what inspired you to come to college? What made you say...I'm going to college?

S1: I have a lot of things that motivate me. The first thing is that when we came to this country and I saw how hard it was for my dad to really get an education...and he wanted my sisters and me to get a good education. And I remember that...how much he wanted to be a part of our education and he couldn't because he didn't know English and it was really hard for mom and him to be a part

of that. And when I first starting working in the district I realize that all the Hmong people or at least a lot of Hmong people were in the same situation as my dad was, like that they felt uncomfortable with their kid's school and they can't come to talk with the teacher. I really...

And you saw that when you worked at the teaching and you saw that the parents...

S1: My philosophy is that I want to be able to help both the teachers and the parents, not just Hmong parents but all parents as much as I can for example, if someday I have a classroom of my own. And the American teachers who have the Hmong students in the class...I want to help her to be able to communicate with the Hmong parents. To be able to help the teacher and the parents communicate. I want to be a role model for the Hmong children. I just feel that if they don't see any teachers who have the same color as them, well how can they see themselves becoming a teacher? I hope to get a job where there are a lot of Hmong kids. And coming here, it's really hard. I remember when I first came here...when I came here, my first day, I was so scared...

Were you by yourself?

S1: And I had...Yeah, I was so scared I thought I was going...L., she is my friend. She knew that I was really scared and she said "do you want me to walk with you to the classroom?" I said "oh yeah, you know"...She walked me to my classroom and she opened the door and I...it was like she opened the door so I could get into...SCHOOL...I was so relieved! I stayed up all night...I couldn't sleep. I kept thinking, tomorrow I'm going to go to college! I was so scared so she came with me, she opened the door, I walked right in...it was a big classroom! And then, the first three years I was not comfortable at all.

Even though you did know a few people?

S1: Yeah, I did know a few people but my instructors especially...do you remember when I first came to see you?

I remember!

S1: I was so happy because usually American people they always have you make an appointment to come and see you...and you didn't ask me to make an appointment.

Really, I don't remember that...

S1: You just talked to me you know. I felt like, finally, she understands me and I don't have to make an appointment. I just felt like I can go there whenever I need help. But you were there on year and then you left.

Yeah, I went on a leave of absence...

S1: Yeah, I was really sad to hear that you weren't going to be there...you were gone.

Well you had S. here...

S1: Yeah, it was when you were gone I talked to S. It was like this building, you know, every time I would come and see this building I walked in here, there was light...

That's good to know. It's important, it sounds like, to have...

S1: Oh yeah, and then Q. Do you remember Q.?

Yes! He comes back, you know, every now and then. You liked him...

S1: He did some things to really help. He did a really good thing for me. I always remember, I remember it is really hard for me to call, drop, add. He helped me go through, get all the signatures. He took me to the Lodge and then he called the other teacher and the other...that really...for me to have to go through all of that. Q. just provided that model for me of how to help. It's not that I want him to do all of that for me. It was just something that I was afraid...I had never done that. For him to do that for me...it really helped me.

...to see how to do that...

S1: Yeah, there's a lot of time I felt that I wanted to give up. I remember one time that they kept sending me from place to place. It was when we used to register in the ballroom. I hated that. I felt that just one day I'm not even going to...They kept sending me to here and there. I just feel like, I'm not going to go through all of this, I'm just going to give up. I almost did it so many times. I'm sure that without this EOP you know, I totally would have given up.

Well we're glad you stayed! Well, just keep thinking of things. These are perfect, exactly what I was hoping you would remember...these experiences from your point of view.

S1: And then when I took Psychology you know, it was really hard for me...

Uhhumm, is that one of your lowest times?

S1: Yeah, it really threw me off!

Do you know how it made you feel...I mean...

S1: I was really frustrated because the first time I didn't pass I thought, oh well, maybe I didn't know the information and that's why so it's ok for me. But to go through the second time I didn't pass again, I thought, oh well. The third time I would try again and then I got really frustrated. It's like, I'm doing this over and over and over and I'm not going to make it even the third time. I took my first test, I saw the same problem and I thought...I'm not going to make it.

Uhumm, so what finally came out of that?

S1: S. and I studied together and I went to talk to the...actually S. helped me talk to the dean and if they gave me an oral test. So they agreed with that.

And did you do that...an oral test?

S1: Yeah, we did an oral test.

And how did it turn out then?

Si: Then it was great. I got A out of the class.

Great! And do you think that if, if they had thought of that solution earlier, that you could have passed the class earlier?

S1: Yeah, I'm sure.

Isn't that something!

S1: Yeah, how they word...it's just the multiple choice. And it's one chapter's questions. But then there would be two answers that are alike you know. But they just change how they word it ...differently. But in English I can't really choose. It looks like that. I don't really know which one to choose, so it...

Right...did it do anything to your...the way you felt about yourself?

S1: Yeah, I really felt like...like I'm not good enough. It's too hard. I felt very low. I think that if they didn't let me go on, they just wanting me to take this class...it was hard. I don't know what. I know that like...I had no idea. I can't figure out condition, un-condition. It was really difficult for me. I can't really see how it's worded. And, uhm at the Education Department, education program, I learned so much, so much. Science class, I learned a lot.

This is good. I want to know what things were positive too...

S1: Like I always think of, for me to learn about children's mental models...like how children view the world differently than scientific view of the world and I think

for myself that, that coming from a different culture, I view the world differently too, like through our legends and through our ...?...This earth you know, I thought that we were living inside the earth. You know, I wrote so many papers and I said that we were living in the earth, not on the earth, this earth. And people who edited my papers always cross *in* and put *on*, but I don't think they ever thought that...

You really meant it. That you meant in. They thought you were just using the wrong word...

S1: Yeah, we had never talked about that.

And when did you discover, or when did they discover...?

S1: When I took the science course, I realized that they talked about. When I took my Science 250 class they talked about all the layers...I asked the teacher, what layer did we live in? And he said, this is the core of the earth and we're not living in the earth, we live on the first layer...on the earth. And that's when I finally understand that, oh, we live *on* the earth *not inside* the earth. Well, looking at the sky...well, the sky comes right down to meet the mountain so it's just like we live inside the earth...!

Yeah, with the sky up above you...

S1: So I didn't think that we live on the earth and when I took the science class the teacher told me that and I didn't understand. And for me to think that children or people from other cultures understand...yeah, how they perceive the world...and that you need to know how they understand the world so that we can understand. So that the people learn and the way we teach, we need to understand each other. And I feel like, if my teacher understand why I keep saying that the reason we live in the earth is because I thought we live in the earth...and if the teacher understands that then she probably will have a better way of explaining...

To you...

S1: To me. And if like, for her, for the science teacher to tell me...she can just show me the thing, globe, you know. Here, you can see that here's the sky and the whole universe, then I can understand. It took me a long time to figure out why they kept saying *on the earth*, and ever since then...

So, would you say that that experience makes you conscious that children, or anybody else for that matter, could have a total different perception of the earth...and not just earth, but life?

S1: Yeah, not just the earth.

Just for you it happened to be the earth. That was the experience that made you...

S1: Yeah...

Wow!

S1: Uhhumm...another example that's really off the school...

That's all right.

S1: We have a Hmong student that's in the school, the grade school, and she has palate, you know, problem. And she has, when she talk, it doesn't come out, kind of comes from her nose. So the teacher and the principal, they didn't have a very good conversation with the parents. And the principal was not very happy with the parents because the mother talk really loud, and she was not angry but the way she talks, she talks really loud...and some people thought the mother was angry with the principal. And I went in and talked with her and I got the feeling that the principal did not really like the mother, so I went in and they told me that everything...the child...they gave her an intelligence test and it was really low and her skills were not at a very good level. All kinds of stuff about this little girl. And the principal she really listened to me and what I had to say about the culture and I just felt that if you want me to and if you want to work with me...so I told them, ok, I have to do some observation with the child and have to go and talk to the parents and then go back to you.

And this was because of being bilingual...

S1: Yeah, so I took this case and I went to talk with the parents and they were really nice people. They want so much for the children and they want to be a part of the children's education but they just couldn't. So I made arrangements for the test. And the psychologist came and I sat there and they gave this child...ok, a spoon, a bowl, a knife, a fork, and a toothbrush. And they said, asked the child to circle the one that does not belong to the group. And this child circled the toothbrush and the knife and so she got this wrong. And I said, you know, this child, when she eats at home, she has never used a knife to cut her food. She used the spoon, she used fork, she used bowl, but she has never used a knife.

So, to her...

S1: Yeah, it doesn't go in that group.

That's because at home they use the knife to cut the food, but they don't put it on the table?

S1: No, they don't use the knife to eat, only for cooking. And then, there's

another...this child, she was born in a traditional home, very traditional. And there was a picture, and there was a picture of a little girl who went to the barbershop to have her hair cut. And the teacher would point and this girl had a cape on. And the teacher would say, what do they use this for? And this little girl could not answer because she had never had her hair cut and she didn't even know what that was for. So this girl got another one wrong. And the other part is that her mother is very short. I'm very short but her mother probably comes up to my shoulders, very short. And then the teacher asks this little girl, is this girl tall or short? And the Hmong girl says, this girl is tall. Of course she was tall compared to her mom and everybody else, so she got another problem wrong. And another problem was she had to say two dresses. And in Hmong language you don't say two dresses, you say two dress. So this child got another problem wrong because she didn't say dresses, she left the -es off. So I had to explain to them. And these are the kind of problems that we have in college too.

Oh... it, so... it's almost as if these... you can maybe predict problems are going to show up... but others, you never know... when you're taking a test, when you're listening to a lecture...

S1: Well, some teachers say...well, you know, she speaks really good English. Or she just doesn't know a few words. Not true, they can speak English socially, but...

When it comes down to those fine little details...

S1: Yeah, and a lot of Hmong students, they can decode really well, but they don't know what it means. I can read well enough, but I can't translate it word for word. You know that written language is different from oral language. It's really hard to make sense out of the written word. So that's a lot of problems that I have in college. And after all of these years, even our children who were born in this country, they still have a lot of problems.

Well, I'm interested in that whole thing. Even in doing this research, I tried to decide, am I going to interview people like yourself who were born outside of this country... well, I did limit it to that, definitely. And I am trying not to interview the students who were born here, but now as you speak, I realize, that of course, even though the younger ones have gone through the educational system, their parents are still very traditional. So going home, living in two worlds... I think...

S1: Even my kids, you know, I think that they still are doing really well, but I still see some things. I found myself, you know, for some reason I think that when I work at the school district, I have given speeches, I give presentations, and I do a lot. I feel good about myself and I think that I want to go to college to build more confidence. But coming to college I feel like I'm losing a lot of my confidence.

Oh really?

S1: Yeah, I mean, I don't feel like I'm gaining. I find myself being silent...

Really, in what ways? Do you think there's not enough opportunities to express yourself?

S1: No...

Or, why do you feel yourself silent?

S1: Uncomfortable, you just feel like you're in college and you have to use the language that...Oh, you know, she's in college but she still using...she's not using the language in an educated way.

That's very interesting. And, so, it's not so much that you couldn't express yourself, it's just that you're worried that...and would this be so among students, among teachers? Who?

S1: Among students and classmates. I feel really comfortable with my teachers, giving presentations and giving speeches in the school district or administrators or teachers.

That's easy...?

S1: Yes, because it's just that I feel that they know that I'm from...and that English is my second language. And, but in here, I know that my classmates know that English is my second language too. But if I'm from here, they're going to expect, they probably think that I should know more. It's really hard to express, it's really hard to say it.

And would this be in a formal classroom setting or would it be just one to one students?

S1: Classroom.

And is that so even when you get to these higher level education classes where the classes, I imagine, are a little bit smaller. Do you feel that you can speak in those?

S1: No, I feel uncomfortable and somehow I got very frustrated because like when we get into groups, you know, I wanted to contribute into the group but I couldn't. I cannot contribute enough and somehow I'm afraid that the others would think that I had not contributed enough. Which at times, it happens too. Because sometimes, I'm afraid that they're going to think that I'm lazy, that I didn't do anything to contribute, which is very hard for me.

Hard to speak out...

S1: Yeah and sometimes students, they don't know much about our culture, so if I say something from my point of view, they don't understand.

Really, like... can you think of any specific examples...

S1: Well, I can't remember any...

But you have gotten that... you do feel that way because it's actually happened to you. Are they usually rude, or are they... just go blank?

S1: Just blank. Or lots of times I go back to school and I'm usually looking at the children. After I, I just can't wait to be a teacher...

Now this semester did you work in the schools? So tell me more about that.

S1: Yes, we are teaching whole units in the class that you work with. We have to go with a partner so we split the teaching evenly.

So tell me what about it made you feel like you would be a very good teacher...

S1: I worry too much. I worry so much about speaking perfect English.

Uh-huh. So that makes you sort of stiff and not really you?"

S1: Uhhumm...I felt that I want it to come from my heart and I speak from my heart, I can be a more efficient teacher. But I'm actually worried that the teacher, my advisor. And I have heard that they will judge me on how I speak. But I try to make it too perfect, even for a teacher.

Trying too hard...

S1: I like to...I think I came to the realization that for me, for people who judge me by how I speak in English, it really is better for them to think of how much I can give the children. I can give them the gift of my knowledge if they see it comes from my heart. And if I can't imitate perfect English, then so much love and compassion will be lost.

It disappears...

S1: Yeah, and I have so much love and compassion. And I want to give that to children. It should come from me. It should not seem as if it's coming from somebody else. But English will always be my problem. I don't know how to be a perfect-speaking...

Is there any other experience that you have had...?

S1: There's just one thing...I feel that the...like, for example, in the community I always act as the leader. But in here, I can't do that because the American students have...I don't feel it...instead of jumping in and doing it first, I always wait for them to do it...

Whereas in every other aspect of your life, you're kind of like the leader, you...

S1: Take over.

Take over or take charge, or organize. And people look to you and you haven't found that here. There's no...there's been no way for you to use that part of yourself...

S1: I keep waiting, that oh, maybe I don't know more things, I can't do that...

And it hasn't shown itself and now that you're about ready to leave...

S1: I haven't shown...I hope that will change as I go back to the schools.

Right, perhaps in that setting, as a teacher, maybe the chance will show itself...

S1: See, there's times when I just feel like...ah, I thought that I was going to college, and I'm going to gain more...And now, I feel so bad about myself. But whenever I go right back to the school that comes back. So I thought, I still have this feeling, but L..what is happening in college? Why can't I use this? See, like in this case, this Hmong case, L. the little Hmong kid...I'm going right back and I hope the principal and the teacher solve all these problems. And everything went great! I can handle these things.

And you were able to handle everything. You got something done, you took control and you did something. But that hasn't shown itself in college. You've never been able to do that here. Do you have any ideas about how it could have been. What ways could have opened up? I don't know...I'm casting about...

S1: Well, I think...I'm usually...

Can you think of any ways that it could have been? I'm thinking back to the Hmong club...could that have been a way? It never went very far...

S1: I don't know. I think after you go into a class, the minority...Americans...too overwhelming...because I talked to some other Hmong students...

Have you talked to them about this?

S1: Not really, they don't really want to speak out.

And do you feel as if your real self...

S1: No, other parts that I'm learning, lots of things. I'm learning how to make lesson plans and I learned how to make a unit and other subject areas...

S1, Level Two (Spontaneous Meaning Units)

If you could please describe some important college situations that you have experienced while you have been here...

S1: 1. I, ah...well, I feel that I've learned a lot, you know./ 2. But ah, it's also really hard and I kind of struggle through.../ 3. well, really, instead of choosing specific things to talk about, could we just talk about the whole experience?/

1. S1 has learned a lot in college.
2. But actually, college has been "really hard" and has been "a struggle."
3. S1 would rather talk about the whole experience.

Yeah, just tell me...just talk about whatever comes to your mind about being a college student...yeah, that's fine.

S1: 4. Well, you know, when I first started I was really afraid...I felt uncomfortable.../

4. At first, S1 was really afraid and felt uncomfortable in college.

This was back when you were thinking about coming, but...

S1: 5. Yeah, and then when I came here I had my, I first had my ID, my student ID...I was so happy to get that card. It was a big deal for me. Ah! I'm a student now...at the University of Montana!/ 6. I was really afraid because in high school, I had been through a really hard time. Coming to college, I was afraid that the students probably would treat me the same way./

5. S1 was also really happy and excited about being a student for the first time. S1's student ID was a really big deal, signifying that she was actually a college student at last.
6. Because S1 had experienced a hard time in high school, she was fearful that college students would treat her in the same horrible way.

Could you kind of go over some of that. What do you mean by...how was it tough in high school?

S1: 7. In high school, the students...uh, we were very isolated from American students. They were

7. In high school, S1 and other Hmong students were "very isolated" from American students. They were treated

treating us in a bad way. They spit on us, tell us to go back to our country. It was such a bad experience./ 8. So coming from that...and then after I finished high school I thought that I don't want to go to school, that these things would keep happening even if I thought I go on to college to get a good job. If people don't like me like this then it's not worth it to go and get a degree just to have a good job so I decided not to. I didn't feel comfortable about myself so I gave up and went to work for five years./

Oh, you did? So there was a break of five years between high school and college...

S1: 9. Yeah, about five years working at SMS (a local sewing factory) I went every day for three years / 10. and then after that I just worked at a volunteer job at the school and then I worked at the Library, checked books to read because I really wanted to improve my English./

Did you do this at the public library?

S1: Uhuh. I read children's books and so I felt better about my English. And then I did some volunteer jobs at the schools and then there was a Bilingual Tutor position opened and I had learned English so I got the job and I've been working in the school district as a teacher so I can teach the Hmong students and tutored them./ 11. But I also learned from the teachers...I really learned

At the same time, right...

S1: I worked there for about six years./

badly, having been spat upon and told to go back to their own country.

8. After S1 finished high school she did not want to experience the overt discrimination again even though she thought of college as an opportunity to get a good job. If Americans didn't like her the way she was, then it was not worth it to her to subject herself to such treatment. She did not feel good about herself and so she gave up and worked for five years.

9. After three years of working at a factory job she also...

10. started volunteering at the grade schools and at the public library, where she improved her English by reading children's books.

10. Because of her improved English and her volunteer work in the schools, she got a job as a Bilingual Tutor so she could teach Hmong children.

11. She learned a lot from the teachers she worked with. They became role-models for her.

Was B. the head teacher?

S1: 12. She was the director.

12. She worked with the director and with the teachers for five years before she came to college. When she started at UM she was also a computer teacher at one of the trade schools, teaching American, Hmong, and Russian children.

The director. So you worked more specifically with the teacher?

S1: Yeah, so five years, three years at SMS and five years at the District before I came to the University. And when I came to the University here, I was at E.D. (grade school) teaching the...I taught a computer class

To Hmong students?

S1: To all students...Russians, Americans, Hmong students from first grade up to fifth grade.

How was that as an experience?

S1: Good! I'm good at that. I taught the first grade and...and teach them how to read and write. So I was full time./ 13. It was too difficult to teach at the school and be a full time student.

12. S1 really liked that experience because she feels that she was good at teaching. She also taught first grade bilingual students, teaching them to read and write.

13. When S1 entered college, however, she had to drop her job because being a full time student and a full time teacher was too much .

Can I back up a little and could you tell me what inspired you to come to college? What made you say... I'm going to college?

S1: 14. I have a lot of things that motivate me. The first thing is that when we came to this country and I saw how hard it was for my dad to really get an education...and he wanted my sisters and me to get a good education. And I

14. Lots of things have motivated S1 to come to college, beginning with how, when she first came to this country, she noticed that her dad tried to get an education for himself, with difficulty. He also wanted his children to get a...

remember that...how much he wanted to be a part of our education and he couldn't because he didn't know English and it was really hard for mom and him to be a part of that./ 15. And when I first starting working I the district I realize that all the Hmong people or at least a lot of Hmong people were in the same situation as my dad was, like that they felt uncomfortable with their kid's school and they can't come to talk with the teacher./ I really...

And you saw that when you worked at the teaching and you saw that the parents...

S1: 16. My philosophy is that I want to be able to help both the teachers and the parents, not just Hmong parents but all parents as much as I can for example, if someday I have a classroom of my own. And the American teachers who have the Hmong students in the class...I want to help her to be able to communicate with the Hmong parents. To be able to help the teacher and the parents communicate. / 17. I want to be a role model for the Hmong children. I just feel that if they don't see any teachers who have the same color as them well how can they see themselves becoming a teacher. I hope to get a job where there are a lot of Hmong kids./ 18. And coming here, it's really hard. I remember when I first came here...when I came here, my first day, I was so scared...

Were you by yourself?

S1: And I had...Yeah, I was so scared I thought I was going.../ 19. L., she is my friend. She knew that I was really scared and she said "do you want me to walk with you to the classroom?" I said "oh yeah, you know"...She walked me to

good education. He and her mother also wanted to participate in their children's educations but could not because of their limited English and their lack of knowledge about the American education system.

15. When she started working in the schools she realized that her family's problems were not unique, and that many Hmong parents had the same experience with the school systems.

16. S1 wants to become a teacher with a classroom of her own. She wants to be a mediator between teachers and Hmong or other parents who are cannot communicate successfully regarding their children's education. She wants to help teachers and parents communicate with each other.

17. S1 also wants to be a teacher so that she can be a role model for Hmong children. She feels that "if they don't see any teachers who have the same color as them, well how can they see themselves becoming a teacher." She wants to get a job where there are lots of Hmong kids.

18. Coming to the University, however, was "really hard". When she first came she was so scared.

19. A friend, who knew that she was really scared offered to walk with her to her first classroom. She not only walked her there but held the door open for her. "It was like

my classroom and she opened the door and I...it was like she opened the door so I could get into...SCHOOL...I was so relieved! I stayed up all night...I couldn't sleep. I kept thinking, tomorrow I'm going to go to college! I was so scared so she came with me, she opened the door, I walked right in...it was a big classroom! / 20. And then, the first three years I was not comfortable at all.

she opened the door so I could get into SCHOOL! She had stayed up all night without being able to sleep, in anticipation of the first day of school Her friends gesture was an enormous one, making a frightening situation into a positive one.

20. Yet, the next three years were not comfortable ones for S1.

Even though you did know a few people?

S1: 21. Yeah, I did know a few people but my instructors especially...do you remember when I first came to see you? /

21. S1 did know a few people on campus, mostly instructors. She recalls meeting the interviewer for the first time when she was a new student.

I remember!

S1: 22. I was so happy because usually American people they always have you make an appointment to come and see you...and you didn't ask me to make an appointment.

22. The open door policy of the advisor and of the EOP office was a positive factor for S1. Making appointments were a big barrier that did not exist at the EOP office, thus making S1 feel welcome to go there whenever she needed help.

Really, I don't remember that...

S1: You just talked to me you know. I felt like, finally, she understands me and I don't have to make an appointment. I just felt like I can go there whenever I need help./ But you were there one year and then you left.

Yeah, I went on a leave of absence...

S1: 22. Yeah, I was really sad to hear that you weren't going to be there...you were gone./

22. When the advisor left for a year of absence, S1 felt a sense of abandonment and sadness, at least for awhile.

Well you had S. here...

S1: 23. Yeah, it was when you were gone I talked to S. It was like this

23. She soon, however, was befriended by other EOP staff members. She felt that the

building, you know, everytime I would come and see this building I walked in here, there was light.../

office building was like a light on campus for her.

That's good to know. It's important, it sounds like, to have...

S1: 24. Oh yeah, and then Q. Do you remember Q.?

24. S1 remembers one particular staff member who really helped her a lot.

Yes! He comes back, you know, every now and then. You liked him...

S1: 24. He did some things to really help. He did a really good thing for me. I always remember, I remember it is really hard for me to call, drop, add. He helped me go through, get all the signatures. He took me to the Lodge and then he called the other teacher and the other...that really...for me to have to go through all of that. Q. just provided that model for me of how to help. It's not that I want him to do all of that for me. It was just something that I was afraid...I had never done that. For him to do that for me...it really helped me./

24. He helped her with the "red tape" of registration by making phone calls for her and helping her drop and add classes. He provided a model for her of how to help others without doing everything for them. He really helped her.

...to see how to do that...

S1: 25. Yeah, there's a lot of time I felt that I wanted to give up. I remember one time that they kept sending me from place to place. It was when we used to register in the ballroom. I hated that. I felt that just one day I'm not even going to...They kept sending me to here and there. I just feel like, I'm not going to go through all of this, I'm just going to give up. I almost did it so many times. I'm sure that without this EOP you know, I totally would have given up./

25. There were lots of times she wanted to give up at UM. Being given the run-around, especially in the old days of registration in the Ballroom, were frustrating to her. S1 "hated that. I felt that just one day I'm not even going to... they kept sending me here and there. I just feel like, I'm not going to go through all of this, I'm just going to give up. I almost did it so many times." She credits EOP with keeping her from totally giving up.

Well we're glad you stayed! Well, just

keep thinking of things. These are perfect, exactly what I was hoping you would remember... these experiences from your point of view.

S1: 26. And then when I took Psychology you know, it was really hard for me...

26. An all-time low in her college experience was having to repeat a psychology class twice. The experience was "really hard" on her, and "really threw me (her) off."

Uhhumm, is that one of your lowest times?

S1: Yeah, it really threw me off! /

Do you know how it made you feel... I mean...

S1: 27. I was really frustrated because the first time I didn't pass I thought, oh well, maybe I didn't know the information and that's why so it's ok for me. But to go through the second time I didn't pass again, I thought, oh well. The third time I would try again and then I got really frustrated. It's like, I'm doing this over and over and over and I'm not going to make it even the third time. I took my first test, I saw the same problem and I thought...I'm not going to make it./

27. Even though she tried to rationalize not doing well by convincing herself that the information was new to her so it was ok to fail, but the third time around made her frustrated and angry and discouraged. It seemed hopeless and she wondered if this meant the end of her college career?

Uhhumm,so what finally came out of that?

S1: 28. The S. and I studied together and I went to talk to the...actually S. helped me talk to the dean and if they gave me an oral test. So they agreed with that.

28. Finally, with the help of S., an EOP staff member, they talked with the Dean and asked if they could try an alternative, oral test instead of a written one. The dean agreed, S1 took the tests orally and actually got an A in the class, passing it on the third try.

And did you do that... an oral test?

S1: Yeah, we did an oral test.

And how did it turn out then?

S1: Then it was great. I got A out of the class.

Great! And do you think that if, if they had thought of that solution earlier, that you could have passed the class earlier?

S1: 28a. Yeah, I'm sure./

28a. S1 is sure that if they had thought of that solution earlier, she would have passed earlier.

Isn't that something!

S1: 29. Yeah, how they word...it's just the multiple choice. And it's one chapter's questions. But then there would be two answers that are alike you know. But they just change how they word it ...differently. But in English I can't really choose. It looks like that. I don't really know which one to choose, so it.../

29. Multiple Choice questions are a big problem for S1. The wording of the choices is usually too subtle for her to distinguish the correct answer in English. She really can't choose.

Right... did it do anything to your... the way you felt about yourself?

S1: 30. Yeah, I really felt like...like I'm not good enough. It's too hard. I felt very low. I think that if they didn't let me go on, they just wanting me to take this class...it was hard. I don't know what. I know that like...I had no idea. I can't figure out condition, un-condition. It was really difficult for me. I can't really see how it's worded. / 31. And, uhm at the Education Department, education program, I learned so much, so much./ 32. Science class, I learned a lot.

30. Having to repeat that class three times made S1 feel "like she was not good enough." She had no idea what to do about it and was extremely discouraged about it. It was too difficult for her to discriminate between negatives and other subtleties of grammar.

31. Yet in the Education program, S1 felt that she learned so much.

32. This was especially true in her science education classes.

This is good. I want to know what things were positive too...

S1: 32a. Like I always think of, for me to learn about children's mental

32a. S1 learned about children's mental models, in which children view the world

models...like how children view the world differently than scientific view of the world and I think for myself that, that coming from a different culture, I view the world differently too, like through our legends and through our ...?...This earth you know, I thought that we were living inside the earth. You know, I wrote so many papers and I said that we were living in the earth, not on the earth, this earth. And people who edited my papers always cross in and put on, but I don't think they ever thought that...

You really meant it. That you meant in. They thought you were just using the wrong word...

S1: Yeah, we had never talked about that.

And when did you discover, or when did they discover...?

S1: When I took the science course, I realized that they talked about. When I took my Science 250 class they talked about all the layers...I asked the teacher, what layer did we live in? And he said, this is the core of the earth and we're not living in the earth, we live on the first layer...on the earth. And that's when I finally understand that, oh, we live on the earth *not inside* the earth. Well, looking at the sky...well, the sky comes right down to meet the mountain so it's just like we live inside the earth...!

Yeah, with the sky up above you...

S1: So I didn't think that we live on the earth and when I took the science class the teacher told me that and I didn't understand. And for me to think

differently from the adult or scientific view of the world. She feels that even she, from a different culture, views the world differently. Her world view is influenced by legends and (?) An example of this difference is her belief, until she discovered the scientific view, that people lived IN rather than ON the earth. Even though she had written many papers using her original assumption, most teachers missed the difference, thinking that she had merely confused the two words *in on*.

It was not until she was in the science course when she finally explained her assumptions to the teacher, who then explained the scientific version of the universe.

that children or people from other cultures understand...yeah, how they perceive the world...and that you need to know how they understand the world so that we can understand. So that the people learn and the way we teach, we need to understand each other. And I feel like, if my teacher understand why I keep saying that the reason we live in the earth is because I though we live in the earth...and if the teacher understands that then she probably will have a better way of explaining.../

The point that S1 wants to make is that we all, especially teachers, need to know how others understand the world. Until we know what each other's worldviews are, there will continue to be miscommunications and misunderstandings among people.

To you...

S1: 32c. To me. And if like, for her, for the science teacher to tell me...she can just show me the thing, globe, you know. Here, you can see that here's the sky and the whole universe, then I can understand. It took me a long time to figure out why they kept saying on the earth, and ever since then.../

32c. If teachers understand their students' viewpoints, then they can better explain the concepts they are trying to get across.

So, would you say that that experience makes you conscious that children, or anybody else for that matter, could have a total different perception of the earth...and not just earth, but life?

S1: 33. Yeah, not just the earth.

33. Not only in relationship to this example (the earth) but in everything.

Just for you it happened to be the earth. That was the experience that made you...

S1: Yeah.../

Wow!

S1: 33a. Uhumm...another example that's really off the school...

33a. Another example of cultural misunderstandings from outside of the college setting...

That's all right.

S1: We have a Hmong student that's in the school, the grade school, and she has palate, you know, problem. And she has, when she talk, it doesn't come out, kind of comes from her nose. So the teacher and the principal, they didn't have a very good conversation with the parents. And the principal was not very happy with the parents because the mother talk really loud, and she was not angry but the way she talks, she talks really loud...and some people thought the mother was angry with the principal. And I went in and talked with her and I got the feeling that the principal did not really like the mother, so I went in and they told me that everything...the child...they gave her an intelligence test and it was really low and her skills were not at a very good level. All kinds of stuff about this little girl. And the principal she really listened to me and what I had to say about the culture and I just felt that if you want me to and if you want to work with me...so I told them, ok, I have to do some observation with the child and have to go and talk to the parents and then go back to you.

And this was because of being bilingual...

S1: Yeah, so I took this case and I went to talk with the parents and they were really nice people. They want so much for the children and they want to be a part of the children's education but they just couldn't. So I made arrangements for the test./ 34. And the psychologist came and I sat there and they gave this child...ok, a spoon, a bowl, a knife, a fork, and a toothbrush. And they said, asked the child to circle the one that does not belong to the group. And this child circled the toothbrush and the knife and so she got this wrong. And

has to do with a little Hmong girl who is in the grade schools. This little girl has a cleft palate problem, and many problems in school. The teacher and the principal have tried to communicate with the parents about the girl, but with a number of misunderstandings. One barrier is that the mother talks in a really loud voice, which is interpreted by the principal as anger. In acting as a mediator between the parents and the school, S1 got the impression, probably because of the mother's loud voice, that the principal did not like the mother very much.

The principal did talk with S1, however, and told her that the girl tested really low on an intelligence test and that her skills appear to also be very low.

The principal, however, was willing to listen to what S1 had to say about the girl and about Hmong culture and was willing to work with S1 on coming to some kind of resolution about the little girl.

... S1 first observed the little girl and then went to talk with the parents, whom she found to be really nice people who wanted so much for their children and wanted to be a part of their educations, but could not because of language and cultural differences. So S1 made arrangements to help interpret the girl's responses during an intelligence test.

34. The psychologist gave the child a test about an appropriate place setting including a spoon, bowl, knife, fork and toothbrush. The child was to circle

I said, you know, this child, when she eats at home, she has never used a knife to cut her food. She used the spoon, she used fork, she used bowl, but she has never used a knife.

So, to her...

S1: Yeah, it doesn't go in that group.

That's because at home they use the knife to cut the food, but they don't put it on the table?

S1: No, they don't use the knife to eat, only for cooking./ 35. And then, there's another...this child, she was born in a traditional home, very traditional. And there was a picture, and there was a picture of a little girl who went to the barber shop to have her hair cut. And the teacher would point and this girl had a cape on. And the teacher would say, what do they use this for? And this little girl could not answer because she had never had her hair cut and she didn't even know what that was for. So this girl got another one wrong./ 36. And the other part is that her mother is very short. I'm very short but her mother probably comes up to my shoulders, very short. And then the teacher asks this little girl, is this girl tall or short? And the Hmong girl says, this girl is tall. Of course she was tall compared to her mom and everybody else, so she got another problem wrong./ 37. And another problem was she had to say two dresses. And in Hmong language you don't say two dresses, you say two dress. So this child got another problem wrong because she didn't say dresses, she left the -es off. So I had to explain to them. /

whatever did not belong in that group of items. The child circled the toothbrush (correct) and the knife (wrong). S1 then explained to the psychologist that the child's answers would have been correct in Hmong culture, where the knife is used to prepare food but is never used to eat with.

35. Another example of differences in cultural knowledge had to do with identifying the function of a cape while having your hair cut at a barber shop. As the child had never been to a shop and had never had her hair cut, she could not figure that one out.

36. Yet another example is having the child identify a (picture of?) a person as tall or short. S1 reminds the tester that even American children are taller than most Hmong adults (especially the child's mother who is very short)

37. Yet another problem is the formation of plurals in English (adding -es) where in Hmong, plurals are formed using numbers and the singular of the noun as in two dress.

38. And these are the kind of problems that we have in college too./

Oh... it, so... it's almost as if these... you can maybe predict problems are going to show up... but others, you never know... when you're taking a test, when you're taking a test, when you're listening to a lecture...

S1: 39. Well, some teachers say...well, you know, she speaks really good English. Or she just doesn't know a few words. Not true, they can speak English socially, but...

When it comes down to those fine little details...

S1: 39a. Yeah, and a lot of Hmong students, they can decode really well, but they don't know what it means. I can read well enough, but I can't translate it word for word. You know that written language is different from oral language. It's really hard to make sense out of the written word. So that's a lot of problems that I have in college./ 40. And after all of these years, even our children who were born in this country, they still have a lot of problems.

Well, I'm interested in that whole thing. Even in doing this research, I tried to decide, if, am I going to interview people like yourself who were born outside of this country... well, I did limit it to that, definitely. And I am trying not to interview the students who were born here, but now as you speak, I realize, that of course, even though the younger ones have gone through the educational system, their parents are still very traditional. So going home, living in two worlds... I think...

38. According to S1, Hmong college students experience similar pitfalls when they are in college.

39. Some teachers overestimate the English proficiency of Hmong students because they are usually able to speak very well socially.

39a. Lots of Hmong students can decode well but don't really comprehend what they are reading. It is very difficult for them to make sense out of the written word, which is different from their (own) oral tradition.,

40. After all of these years, even her children, who were born in this country, still have a lot of problems with the English language.

S1: Even my kids, you know, I think that they still are doing really well, but I still see some things./ 41. I found myself, you know, for some reason I think that when I work at the school district, I have given speeches, I give presentations, and I do a lot. I feel good about myself/ 42. and I think that I want to go to college to build more confidence. But coming to college I feel like I'm losing a lot of my confidence.

Oh really?

S1: Yeah, I mean, I don't feel like I'm gaining. I find myself being silent.../

Really, in what ways? Do you think there's not enough opportunities to express yourself?

S1: No...

Or, why do you feel yourself silent?

S1: 43. Uncomfortable, you just feel like you're in college and you have to use the language that...Oh, you know, she's in college but she still using...she's not using the language in an educated way./

That's very interesting. And, so, it's not so much that you couldn't express yourself, it's just that you're worried that...and would this be so among students, among teachers? Who?

S1: 44. Among students and classmates. I feel really comfortable with my teachers, giving presentations and giving speeches in the school district or administrators or teachers./

41. S1 finds herself wistful about how good she used to feel about herself when she was connected with the grade schools. She gave many speeches and presentations and felt very good about herself then. 42. S1 had looked forward to coming to college to build on those skills and experiences. But she has been disappointed in college and has lost a lot her confidence in herself because she has had no opportunity to use her skills.

43. Instead of growing, she finds herself being more withdrawn, more silent.

43. In college S1 feels very uncomfortable especially because she feels that she is not using the English language in an educated way.

44. S1 is most uncomfortable around college students and more comfortable with teachers and administrators from the school district where she has given several presentations.

That's easy...?

S1: 45. Yes, because it's just that I feel that they know that I'm from...and that English is my second language./ 46. And, but in here, I know that my classmates know that English is my second language too. But if I'm from here, they're going to expect, they probably think that I should know more. It's really hard to express, it's really hard to say it.

And would this be in a formal classroom setting or would it be just one to one students?

S1: 47. Classroom.

And is that so even when you get to these higher level education classes where the classes, I imagine, are a little bit smaller. Do you feel that you can speak in those?

S1: 47. No, I feel uncomfortable and somehow I got very frustrated because like when we get into groups, you know, I wanted to contribute into the group but I couldn't. I cannot contribute enough and somehow I'm afraid that the others would think that I had not contributed enough. Which at times, it happens too. Because sometimes, I'm afraid that they're going to think that I'm lazy, that I didn't do anything to contribute, which is very hard for me./

Hard to speak out...

S1: 48. Yeah and sometimes students, they don't know much about our culture, so if I say something from my point of view, they don't understand./

45. She feels that the teachers understand her background and culture and that English is her second language.

46. In college, she feels that her classmates expect more of her since she has lived here for awhile.

47. She is especially uncomfortable in the classroom, rather than one on one with other students.

47. She is especially uncomfortable in higher level education classes where they mostly work in small conversation groups. She becomes very frustrated with herself because she would like to contribute more to the group but is unable to because of her reticence about her English. She knows that she is not contributing as much as she would like and she feels that the other students are judging her as "lazy".

48. In addition to the language barrier, she is afraid that other students, who don't know much about her culture, would not understand her point of view.

Really, like... can you think of any specific examples...

S1: Well, I can't remember any...

But you have gotten that... you do feel that way because it's actually happened to you. Are they usually rude, or are they... just go blank?

S1: Just blank./ 49. Or lots of times I go back to school and I'm usually looking at the children. After I, I just can't wait to be a teacher...

49. There are lots of times when S1 looks wistfully back at her experiences at the schools and wishes she were already graduated so she can start being a teacher.

Now this semester did you work in the schools? So tell me more about that.

S1: ...Yes, we are teaching whole units in the class that you work with. We have to go with a partner so we split the teaching evenly./

... She is already doing some student teaching where she team-teaches with another person.

So tell me what about it made you feel like you would be a very good teacher...

S1: 50. I worry too much. I worry so much about speaking perfect English.

50. Even this experience, however, is intimidating to S1. She worries too much. She worries so much about speaking perfect English.

Uh-huh. So that makes you sort of stiff and not really you"

S1: ...Uhhumm...I felt that I want it to come from my heart and I speak from my heart, I can be a more efficient teacher. But I'm actually worried that the teacher, my advisor. And I have heard that they will judge me on how I speak. But I try to make it too perfect, even for a teacher./

... She feels that she has a lot to say "from her heart" and that she will be a better teacher if that can happen. But she is worried that her supervisor will judge her badly because of her English and so she tries too hard to be perfect. "I try to make it too perfect, even for a teacher."

Trying too hard...

S1: 50a. I like to...I think I came to the realization that for me, for people

50a. S1 would like others to judge her not by how she speaks English, rather by how

who judge me by how I speak in English, it really is better for them to think of how much I can give the children. I can give them the gift of my knowledge if they see it comes from my heart. And if I can't imitate perfect English, then so much love and compassion will be lost.

much she can give to the children. She can give them the gift of her knowledge if they see that it comes from her heart. "And if I can't imitate perfect English, then so much love and compassion will be lost."

It disappears...

S1: ...Yeah, and I have so much love and compassion. And I want to give that to children. It should come from me. It should not seem as if it's coming from somebody else. But English will always be my problem. I don't know how to be a perfect-speaking.../

...S1 wants to share her love and compassion with children and worries that her English, which will always be a problem will prevent that from happening. "But English will always be my problem. I don't know how to be a perfect-speaking..."

Is there any other experience that you have had...?

S1: 51. There's just one thing...I feel that the...like, for example, in the community I always act as the leader. But in here, I can't do that because the American students have...I don't feel like...instead of jumping in and doing it first, I always wait for them to do it...

51. S1 has always, in the Hmong community, acted as a leader, but in college, among American students, she hasn't done that. Instead of jumping right in to things, she hesitates and waits for others to do things, which is quite uncharacteristic of her in more familiar settings.

Whereas in every other aspect of your life, you're kind of like the leader, you...

S1: Take over./

Take over or take charge, or organize. And people look to you and you haven't found that here. There's no... there's been no way for you to use that part of yourself...

S1: 51a. I keep waiting, that oh, maybe I don't know more things, I can't do that...

51a. While in every other aspect of her life, S1 "takes over", here in college she hesitates and is not confident about taking a leadership role. She hasn't shown her real self here in college.

And it hasn't shown itself and now that

you're about ready to leave...

S1: I haven't shown.../ 52. I hope that will change as I go back to the schools./

Right, perhaps in that setting, as a teacher, maybe the chance will show itself...

S1: 53. See, there's times when I just feel like...ah, I thought that I was going to college, and I'm going to gain more.../ 54. And now, I feel so bad about myself./ 55. But whenever I go right back to the school that comes back. So I thought, I still have this feeling./ 55. but I...what is happening in college? Why can't I use this? / 56. See, like in this case, this Hmong case, L. the little Hmong kid...I'm going right back and I hope the principal and the teacher solve all these problems. And everything went great! I can handle these things./

And you were able to handle everything. You got something done, you took control and you did something. But that hasn't shown itself in college. You've never been able to do that here. Do you have any ideas about how it could have been. What ways could have opened up? I don't know...I'm casting about...

S1: 57. Well, I think...I'm usually.../

Can you think of any ways that it could have been? I'm thinking back to the Hmong club...could that have been a way? It never went very far...

52. S1 hopes that this will change when she goes back to the public schools as a teacher.

53. There were times when she was hopeful about all that she thought she would gain in college

54. But because she hasn't had a chance to take a leadership role, she feels bad about herself.

55. Yet when she visits the grade schools she is able to recapture that good feeling. It comes back to her and she wonders then, what is happening in college? Why can't she use those skills in the college setting?

56. As in the case of the Hmong kid she was talking about earlier, she continued to mediate between the principal and teacher and the parents. Everything turned out great, which gave her confidence that she "can handle these things".

57. She is usually a very capable person, which she has not been able to experience in college.

S1: 58. I don't know. I think after you go into a class, the minority ...Americans...too overwhelming, because I talked to some other Hmong students...

Have you talked to them about this?

S1: Not really, they don't really want to speak out.

And do you feel as if your real self...

S1: 59. No, other parts that I'm learning, lots of things. I'm learning how to make lesson plans and I learned how to make a unit and other subject areas...

58. S1 feels that it is very difficult for minorities, especially Hmong students, to realize their full potential in college because the setting is too overwhelming, rendering them silent, for the most part. They don't really want to speak out.

59. Yet S1 is learning lots of things...about teaching methods...

S1, Level Three (Narrative based on Emergent Themes)

One of the goals that motivated S1 to come to the university was her memory of her parents' (especially her dad's) difficulties in trying to adjust to and participate in their own and their children's education. Limited English language skills, knowledge of American culture, and of the American educational system, were huge barriers that prevented her parents and other new refugees from being able to help their grade school children as much as they would have liked. Because of these memories, S1's goal in coming to college is to become a teacher so that she will eventually be able to help Hmong parents communicate with their children's teachers and principals. She also wants to be a role model for Hmong children who, like herself, might be dreaming of becoming teachers in America.

Going to college, however, was a wish that was postponed for five years after she finished high school. High school had been a very bad experience for S1 and for her Hmong peers. American students treated them badly, spitting on them and telling them to go back to their own country. Even if going to college meant she would be eligible to get a teaching job, S1 was afraid and reluctant to begin because she was afraid that the same bad treatment she experienced in high school might recur. Instead, she postponed going to college and took a factory job as a seamstress. She also volunteered at the public library where she was able to improve her English by reading children's books. She eventually got a job as a bilingual tutor in the public grade schools because she had become sufficiently proficient in English. She feels that she learned a lot about teaching from the teachers she worked with. She eventually taught reading and writing and a computers class to fifth grade students in the grade schools. The classes included Hmong, Russian, and American students. She enjoyed the experience because she felt that she was good at teaching. Even though she enjoyed the work, she had to give it up when she started college full time. She found it impossible to do both.

After five years of working, she had rebuilt her confidence to where she felt ready to apply to college. She was really excited about actually being a student. Getting her student ID was a big deal for her. It made her dreams seem real. She was so excited and scared for her first day of college that she could barely sleep the night before. Her first day in college was really hard. She was scared because she remembered the trauma of her high school experiences, but she was also excited because college represented a life long dream, not only for herself but for her parents. Luckily, a good American friend, who realized how nervous S1 was, offered to walk with her to her first class. Although it was a huge classroom, S1's friend helped reduce her anxiety. For S1, it was like "she opened the door so I could get in to school!" Her college career had begun!

S1 was afraid and uncomfortable when she first started and she struggled through her first three years of school. Some of the frustrations she experienced included struggling with the old registration process. She felt as if she was getting the run-around, being sent from one office to the next. Without the help of some of the staff members of a student services program, she feels that she would have dropped out a long time ago because of her frustration with the system. The open-door policy of one staff member and the helpfulness of another during registration helped her through those fear-filled first days of college. She felt that the office building that housed the program was like a

beacon of light for her.

Another staff member helped her through what was one of her lowest moments in college, when she failed a required psychology class twice. Her experience of having to repeat that class three times “really threw her off.” She could rationalize not passing it the first two times because of the unfamiliar material and concepts. But by the time she took it the third time, her discouragement turned instead to frustration. The experience really made her feel that she wasn’t good enough to be a student, that college was too hard. She felt very low. She wondered if her college career was going to be blocked because she could not pass the course. With the help of another staff member who tutored her and eventually acted as an advocate for her by asking the Dean for a special accommodation to take the tests orally, S1 finally passed the class, with an A! She is sure that if they had thought of this alternative earlier, that she could have passed the class without repeating it. S1 feels that the main difficulty in this class was the subtle or contorted wording of the multiple choice questions. S1 feels that she can decode or read perfectly well but doesn’t comprehend a lot of what she reads. Trying to make sense of the written word is a major problem for S1.

S1 says that teachers overestimate Hmong college students’ knowledge of English because their social English is usually better than their academic English. Limited English skills makes academics (such as the psychology class) very difficult. Her insecurities about her English language skills also hinders her when she attempts to participate verbally in class. She feels uncomfortable and frustrated in small group classroom settings. Because of her lack of confidence in her academic English, she does not contribute as much to group discussions as she would like. She worries that the other students will think she is lazy. She also thinks that her classmates, knowing that she is not a foreign student but has lived here a number of years, will not be sympathetic to her hesitancy to speak out. S1 feels uncomfortable in college because she feels she does not speak in an educated way.

Language is also a problem when she is student teaching. She worries too much about speaking perfect English. She feels that she can’t speak from her heart when she’s worried that her supervisor will judge her on how she speaks. She tries to make her speaking too perfect, “even for a teacher,” she says. S1 would rather be judged by how much she can give to children rather than by how she speaks. S1 is confident that she could give the gift of her knowledge, her love, and her compassion despite not being able to “imitate” perfect English. When she is trying to be too perfect, she feels that what she’s saying doesn’t seem to be coming from her true self. She feels that she doesn’t know how to speak perfectly and that English will always be her problem.

Despite these obstacles, however, she yearns to be in the classroom. She always gets a good feeling when she goes back to the grade schools and she hopes that she will later be able to resume her role as a mediator between Hmong parents and the schools, only this time as a teacher. She has had a positive experience as a mediator that has given her a great deal of confidence in herself.

In working as an advocate for a Hmong child who has a physical handicap, the child’s family and the school’s administration, S1 mediated between the mother of the child, who could not communicate her concerns in English and the school principal, who misinterpreted the mother’s naturally loud voice as being indicative of anger. The

principal's concern was that the girl's score on an intelligence test were very low and that her skills were not at a very good level.

S1 made an agreement with the principal to observe the child and to mediate between the parents and the school. She made arrangements to sit in on a session while a psychologist administered an intelligence test to the child. She was able to explain why the child answered the way she did. She cited several examples of cultural bias in testing including having to know a typical American place setting (knife, fork, spoon and bowl). The Hmong child chose knife as the answer because a Hmong person would never put a knife at a the table, whereas the correct answer was, of course, the bowl! Having to identify the function of cape on a person at the barbershop, (where the child had never been to a barber shop or had her hair cut), or identifying a person as tall or short (where all Americans seem extremely tall compared to the Hmong) were baffling to the Hmong child. Differences in grammar also posed problems. An example is that in Hmong, plurals are not formed with a suffix -es but rather by adding a number to the singular—two dress rather than dresses. S1 was able to explain the child's answers to the psychologist and to make the point that the child's answers were correct within her own cultural framework. S1 feels that many of the problems this child is confronted with also apply to Hmong students who are in college and to their American-born children.

S1 is very proud of her cross-cultural mediation skills. She also feels very good about her experiences as a cultural translator for the Hmong community, where she is a leader and is used to taking charge of things. She has given many speeches and presentations to teachers, administrators and other community groups. She feels comfortable around teachers because she thinks that they understand her background and her culture. She feels that they are forgiving of her English skills because they value her message and are not critical of how she conveys it. When she worked for the school district she had lots of responsibilities. She felt very confident and good about herself. S1 was hopeful, upon entering college, that she would gain more self confidence in college. Instead, she now feels very bad about herself and is losing a lot of the confidence she had gained through her work experiences. In college she finds herself hanging back and letting American students take the lead. She feels that the students may not know her culture and will not understand her point of view.

One of the main things that S1 has learned in college through her education classes is the concept of children's mental models. She has become aware of the scientific model of life. She realizes that she, others from different cultures, and children may have world views that differ from the scientific viewpoint. An example of this, for her, is the Hmong worldview that people live *in* rather than *on* the earth. When her science teacher discovered this difference he explained the scientific viewpoint to her. S1 observes that in order to understand each other, we need to understand the potential for different points of view and need to discover what they are. If teachers understand the differing world views of their students, they will better be able to explain new concepts. Differing world views, she realizes, apply in all aspects of life.

Although S1 feels that she has learned a lot while in college, more pervasive feelings are of regret, frustration, impotence, and disappointment. For the most part, college has silenced her, rather than freed her, and it has damaged rather than bolstered her self confidence about her own capabilities.

Appendix E

S2, Levels One-Three

S2, Level One (Verbatim Transcript)

12-18-98

Approximately One hour

This is what I would like to know... would you please describe some important college situations that that you have experienced... does anything come your to mind?

S2: Yeah, well, uh for me ...uh, starting college is, um, it just like, ...for me, the first semester that I started college was, like, nightmare...cause I knowing nothing, you know, uh, coming into college, you know, after graduating from American school, high school for just one year...and then, um, right after that I came to college...uh, that was my first semester...uh, it was so struggling, that uh, I need a lot of help instead of doing it all myself...I need a lot of help, and then... but, for right now, even though, when I start my college career and finally after....I gained a lot more of the language... still, and then I came back to school and back to college, it was a little bit easier on everything because you can get.... You became a better communicator and then its easier that way and you don't need a lot of help on touring around the campus and everything and for me, who has a big family and full time school and full time job...of course right now is part time job, but, uh, before, for a couple of years I was taking a full time student and a full time job...it was so difficult...and also, you have family problems...and once you attend school, and once you attend college, people like me, if you have a family you are away from home too much and then sometimes you have problem with the family...like my kids need me...they need help with their homework assignments they need help for taking to shopping or some kind of activities that the school require that the kids need to be taken to school from home, and I have to take them shopping...and a lot of these things going on...and also, you know, the financial issue is also a big deal...

Lots of pressures...

S2: That I have to handle...and my first semester, was not that good...

And this was when you first came in 1990?

S2: No, 1995...and then... but second semester, my wife and I have talked and my wife was trying to help me anyway that she can, the only thing that having problem with my learning difficulty is that my wife is also working...and then, every day I have to go home to baby sit my children so my wife can go to work...and that's why I don't, I didn't have enough time to study...but second semester my wife went to

help me and she said, well we better looking for day care...and then we looking for day care and so now when my kids they came from school, they went to day care.

And did you find that...

S2: Yeah, then I found that much more easier than my life in college. And, but still, in that second semester I did very well...I was a record of straight A student of the newspaper.

Oh my gosh, really...good for you!

S2: And, um...

You're pretty proud...

S2: But then, to this day, when you think college...when you are being a sophomore or junior, and of course to senior, you have to take higher courses, and those are pretty hard and right now, it sounds to me like college is hard every semester...some people believe that, you know when you stay in college a few years, you get used to it and everything will be easier, but for me, uh, it's still very hard because each semester you take different courses, and its true if you take the same courses its much easier but you don't take the same course every semester and every semester gets new to you...and I found this, that I still have a little bit of language barrier, so in some classes, I still ask for help, especially in my history class right now...

Which history class is it?

S2: History class X. 300 level...it's very hard, and this professor from the south who talk very fast...and I couldn't take notes, I have to tape her lectures, and taping lecture is an extra work for you, cause you have to take the tape home and rewrite the notes, but then, for me, I can never do anything when I get home, because I have kids....

Right...

S2: It's funny, that when you pull out your stuff...your children came around...the baby come around and hang on your neck, climb on your neck, then ask for pencil, ask for paper...you give him a pen and pencil and you hope that they going to stick with that for at least five minutes...but then scratch on the paper for two seconds, and come back and ask for another one and they just...

Not the right study atmosphere...

S2: No, and my second home is the Library.

Oh, I was going to ask you that...

S2: And the Library is my second home where I can do my stuff...my schoolwork.

So during the day, do you go to the Library...?

S2: Yeah, Any spare time...and I'm out of the classroom, I go right to the Library...like in college, sometime, we don't get to eat breakfast and lunch...and I only go home and eat dinner...

Oh, no...

S2: It's very hard...and for me, pushing myself through college...its one of the hopes for me that, I really, really want to accomplish, so I could be one of the role models for the youngsters, for the younger generation. So I could be one of their history you know, if he can do it, we can do it...you know, he has seven kids...if he can go through college, we can...

Uhhuh...

S2: And I just really want to push myself into the situation so I can be at least one role model for the later generation, and also, especially for my kids...you know, kids, these days, there are too many modern stuff and new technology comes up, and then kids just want to play around...you know just playing games, and don't really concentrate on your schooling...and now you know, if I'm the parent and as a parent really try hard, then my kids will not do that, and I need to make a model, a role model, especially for my kids...and this way, I can encourage them to go to college....they would say...oh, look at my dad, look at our dad...well, he was thirty five and was attending college...now, we should go for it too...I push myself into it but I find it is very, very hard for me...especially, uh, and one of the issue in school, is that it is harder when I get a professor who will not cooperate and don't know your background...don't know anybody out of the sphere, you know...

Yes, like there is someone who is sitting there who has seven children and...

S2: Yes, and I took an X class last semester that ...with a professor...he didn't really cooperate...I ask him, see if I can have more time for my test...because I'm a native speaker, and I need to...and I read slow...but, I need to understand...if I don't understand, I don't feel comfortable to just guess...and then I went to him and talk to him and he refer me to the disabilities program....and it shocked me...becausewhy he considered me as a disability student? You know, then I question to myself, and I talk to him...and he says ok, if you find that you are having a hard time when you take this course, and if you feel you need more time...you go

to disability service and if they approve, then I give you more time...Oh, I just feel like, Oh, my god, this is not why...

So that really made you feel like...

S2: That really made me feel that uhm, my language is not good enough...

So you didn't want it to be a considered a disability, like that...

S2: No, no...NO, in my side, in my language, I'm the strongest one, you know...I would really ask him if He could take my course, I can lecture him...I can make a test that he can't pass...the course...as hard as a class I can...but, I didn't get help from him at all, I didn't get extra time on my test at all...but finally, fortunately, I pass the course with a C, so I'm proud of that.

Yeah...can I go back, to what you said about feeling like...I mean, like maybe you can give me other examples of how it feels when you can't express as much as you know... when you know you know a lot but you just...have you had that in other classes too, or just that one...

S2: Uh, that is just the one class that I remember...but other than that...Oh, but one of the X classes...oh you know, I went to him one time asked if I could take the exam, extra time, like twenty more minutes...he said no...lot of students, he compared me to American students who were born here, raised here, speak the language, he told me, uh, everybody...you know, for this test, twenty five questions...most of the students just walk off in twenty minutes...and plus that, according to that, you have forty more minutes...and then I go like, still when I read it, I don't really understand...and especially X...when you get the answers....its all multiple choice, but when you get the answer, you write it out too see which one is the right...and then, to do that, it takes time, and I want to do that and he won't allow me to do that...but some professors are SO nice...you know like this one chemistry teacher, he said...S2, you come to my office and take the test in there...take it as long as you want...and some professors are so nice...they just make my life easier...much easier....and then I get a better grade that way...This lead me into the concept about my understanding to myself that I still lacking a little bit in the English Language...and I still feel like I don't have enough English to manage everything. And I feel like, because I have to take time...like, for example, this test might be 45 – 50 minutes in length...and I might take like an hour...and fifteen minutes, and I feel like, what can I do...to do it faster...but somehow, I think, well I'm not born here...and I'm....

Well, it's quite an accomplishment to do what you're doing...like if we went to your country, and tried to do something in that language after living there only for

S2: Well, you know, some kids say...oh its easy, you know...English is easy...Yes,

if you are just verbally just communication, you just cannot...we call street talking...then yes, I can talk that way...But what about being academically...you know, lecturing and everything...its still very hard for me...it takes me a longer time...anything else that you want me to talk about?

Well, maybe we could talk about your ideas here for the course, that we were talking about before we turned on the tape recorder...you know your idea about a course... Hmong language...

S2: Well, it came to my mind and I talked to N. a couple of weeks ago...and he mentioned to you... -Pause-

S2: I was discussing...well, I said to him, what do you think if I teaching course...then we talk about what kind of problem do we have to go through...like, what kind of requirements that we might need to face, and then how can we get this program going so I can teach in college level...so I've been teaching at the elementary and secondary level for many years already...and we just came up with this idea because in other cities...you know...where they have major minority population...they teach Hmong courses at the college level and I just talked to one of my friends in Sacramento, about his teaching in college, and he said, boy, your classroom is full of American students because they want to take the language...and they started to learn about Hmong history...

So, in his classes, its filled mostly with American students?

S2: Mostly...its amazing, he said, with American students who take a second language...they register in my class and they even sit on the floor through the semester and it was amazing...

How popular... it is?

S2: Yes, and just if I could get this going and I would like to teach Hmong courses at the college level...

Well, I suggested to N that if you could get in touch with your friend who teaches the class, and get maybe on the internet or something like that and get a syllabus, a description of his course... what does he actually teach, and also, well that would be it...a description, an example of a course....

S2: I think that basically, we were talking at the Hmong national conference, last April, and he kind of shared that were very similar to my ideas...and I was thinking that teaching at the college level, even here, I would start with, I would call it Elementary Hmong courses, I and II, beginning and advanced courses here, basically in my first class, I would teach basically how to learn the Hmong alphabet, about the tone, the consonants, how to put words together, and how to pronounce

it...my advanced courses I would think a more like conversations, where you can teach the student to talk , so they can communicate in Hmong language, faster than speaking...

I'm going to give you the name of... to me, it seems that the department you should talk to is the department of Foreign Languages... Do you have one of these at home... you know, a telephone book...

S2: No, but I can get one...

They're free you know and if you want to, what you do is get hold of the chairman... she's someone I know, and if you want, I can call her and introduce you, and you can tell her your ideas... what she might know is that there could be other languages who have approached her... and the reason you would do this is because in order to teach at the University, every course has to be approved by a big committee...

S2: Yes, I think like at the schools, it has to be approved by the board of trustees...

Yes, she would know, and ...in this book I gave to N... this woman was teaching history of Vietnam War and then some Hmong students came to her... and were interested in the Hmong part of it... language, culture, etc... so eventually, I think that now, there is a course of Hmong history or culture... but, it started because the woman was already a teacher... for example, here, X teaches Social Work, but in his class, he brings it Hmong history, stories, and so on... he might have an idea about how you could go about... talk to everybody you know about the idea... I think it's a great idea... but as I said, there are lots of bureaucratic things... Well, what time is it getting to be? I think we'll stop here...

S2: Is there anything else you would like me to say?

Well, I was just going to ask you, is there anything else you would like to say, maybe feelings that have changed over time... you've already talked about some things... like at first you were totally lost here and the second time, you felt more familiar with things... can you think of any other things like that that have affected you?

S2: Yeah, the first year I came to college I feel very stupid, because a lot of time... the other students, and for me, its not easy to make friends with the American students, because I, traditionally, in my culture...its very hard for me to say...can I study with you? And all you need to do is go up to them and say can you help me on this?

But at first you didn't know how to do that? You didn't feel comfortable?

S2: I didn't feel comfortable, I ashamed myself, to do that...I feel like shy in front of them, and ask questions like that...so I kind of doing everything on my own that

first semester, and that's why my grades...

And what made you change, I wonder?

S2: Well, there were some American people who are very nice in the classroom, you know...I would say, this is not a racism, or a feminine issue or something, but mostly women are the one who are easier to talk with, not the men...cause the men, sometime, when you feel like, oh, I want to talk to him, then you gotta, back up because you might feel like either he's going to say yes, or no, or he's going to say...who you are? Who are you or something, that it makes me scared...and I just kind of pull back myself...but women, well, its easier for me to approach, because, in my culture, women are also easier to speak with then men, and I trace that out and my second semester...and the first thing I start to make myself more comfortable and I feel like part of the students at this university, I always like to sit with older females, you know...older than you, and sometimes they can even make jokes when they would say, like get out of here, kid...you know....so, I would sit close to older American women and I would talk to them...and even if you don't talk to them, then they would talk to you , and I really like that...they say, hi...how are you today, and you feel comfortable to talk to older female, and then I talk to them, and somehow...and also, the older people are more willing to help...and more willing to find out who you are, and then, what kind of difficulties you have I this course, and you tell them, and you share with them, and later on I don't mind to have older friends...and that's how I started...

That's really interesting...

S2:...my life in college...and having more friends, and feeling more comfortable...

So you feel quite comfortable now...

S2: Yes, now I have no problems because this new society has been adopted to my brain, a lot...that you know, if you want to approach somebody you just go to say hi and do you have spare time, or can I talk to you a second...and just go up with them and talk with them...and it's the American way, that if they don't want to talk to you well they'll just say, Oh, I'm sorry, I don't have time and then you know that they don't want to talk to you, but if some says Oh, OK, yes, what about this time, this place, yes...oh, then we just go in there...also, study group helps a lot...Yeah, but not all the professors encourage the students to do the study group, but I took a social class with professor X. and he encourage students to discuss in groups and also, study in groups, and I feel comfortable that way too...that you have a chance to speak, and once you can speak its just like expressing yourself to the group, and hopefully, they would understand, and then, I feel much better...

That's really helpful...that's really good...

S2: And actually, at my job, also, one of the encouraging issues that really, really brought me into a comfortable situation is that as a tutor, you know, I have to interact with student, both parents and teachers, and that way, it encouraged me to, ok, this is my job, I have to go meet with the principal in order for me to solve this kind of problem...solving problem is one of my careers, in tutoring field, that I have improved myself in being Americanized, you know...some problems in elementary school, you know...some teachers, didn't understand the background of minority students, just like here in college, of some professor, never, ever understand about all the culture and the minority background...that's the same thing...but in school, I can just go to them...talk to them, do a presentation, and I can prepare the classroom teacher, and speak with them...and I did that a lot at the elementary level...and that makes me feel comfortable...

I'm seeing that, speaking to you and to N, both... that that was such a good experience... that being a tutor or part of that program, that makes you... a better... teacher and student?

S2: That's why my position is still hanging in there...B. don't want to drop me off...but now, if they have problem with the Hmong...with bilingual students I have to be there to help solve the problems, like this one time at Big Sky high school, the Hmong students population has been below, and the grade had been dropped and attention to the principle and the teacher and became problem issue...and they had to call me to the meeting and we had to talk about the Hmong in high school And a lot of time in grade school I have to set up some kind of meeting after school for teachers and speak with them about Hmong history and background, and if you have a Hmong kind in your classroom, don't know why he or she is not learning as well as the other kids...because such and such at home they speak Hmong, and here they speak English and then its confusing, especially some teachers who didn't understand, uh culture, uh Hmong kids in the first grade, second grade, third grade who didn't do very well, they would ...some teachers refer to Hmong students are learning disabled...and we gave them the test...and if the we, the bilingual tutor sit there and speak in both language...they got excellent...

Right. it was just a language barrier...

S2: Yeah

So. have you ever thought of taking those things that you've done at the high school level... and bringing that to the college level? Like, for example, like even in our program here, like being a tutor, say people like yourself for other Hmong students...

S2: Well here, most of the Hmong student are trying to understand in English, so they don't speak Hmong, even if they have a tutor, they are trying to push themselves into speaking English...so, but, it's real important, but its not the need of Hmong students here at the college level...but, in high school the requirement of

having a bilingual tutor is still acceptable...because the need is great...it's important because the bilingual students, including the Belarus, I mean, the Russian kids need some native speaker right there...lot of kids would come to you with a Russian word or Hmong word and would say, what does it mean...and you would have to express the meaning...and they go like, oh, yes, that's easy!

Does that make you feel good?

S2: Yes!

Sounds like you really like doing that...

S2: Oh, Yes!

S2, Level Two, (Spontaneous Meaning Units)

This is what I would like to know... would you please describe some important college situations that you have experienced... does anything come to your mind?

S2: 1. Yeah, well, uh for me ...uh, starting college is, um, it just like, ...for me, the first semester that I started college was, like, nightmare.../ 2. cause I knowing nothing, you know, uh, coming into college, you know, after graduating from American school, high school for just one year.../ 3. and then, um, right after that I came to college...uh, that was my first semester...uh, it was so struggling./ 4. that uh, I need a lot of help instead of doing it all myself...I need a lot of help, and then.../5. but, for right now, even though, when I start my college career and finally after....I gained a lot more of the language... still, and then I came back to school and back to college, it was a little bit easier on everything because you can get.... You became a better communicator/ 6. and then its easier that way and you don't need a lot of help on touring around the campus/ 7. and everything and for me, who has a big family/8. and full time school and full time job...of course right now is part time job, but, uh, before, for a couple of years I was taking a full time student and a full time job...it was so difficult.../ 9. and also, you have family problems...and once you attend school, and once you attend college, people like me, if you have a family you are away from home too much and then sometimes you have problem with the family...like my kids need me...they need help with their homework assignments they need help for taking to shopping or some kind of activities that the school require that the kids need to

1. For S2, starting college was like a "nightmare".
2. He felt he knew nothing especially since he came to college after attending an American high school for just one year.
3. After graduating from high school he came right to college. His first semester was really a struggle.
4. He needed a lot of help back then, instead of doing it all by himself.
5. After starting his college career he has finally, now, gained a lot more of the language than he had when he started. Everything is a little bit easier now because he has become a better communicator.
6. He doesn't need as much help in touring around the campus.
- 7 and 8. Yet, for him, who has a big family, a full time job (right now it has been reduced to a part time job) and is going to school full time, things are very difficult.
9. And when you have a big family, there are family problems. For him, if he is away from home too much, that becomes a problem with his family. His kids need him to help with their homework assignments, to take them shopping, to participate in school activities, to be transported to school and back, and again, to be taken shopping.

be taken to school from home, and I have to take them shopping...and a lot of these things going on.../10. and also, you know, the financial issue is also a big deal...

10. And also, financial issues are a big deal for S2.

Lots of pressures...

S2: 11. That I have to handle.../ 12. and my first semester, was not that good...

11. There are lots of pressures that he has to handle.

12. And his first semester (in 1995) was not that good.

And this was when you first came in 1990?

S2: No, 1995.../ 13. and then... but second semester, my wife and I have talked and my wife was trying to help me anyway that she can, the only thing that having problem with my learning difficulty is that my wife is also working...and then, every day I have to go home to baby sit my children so my wife can go to work...and that's why I don't, I didn't have enough time to study...but second semester my wife went to help me and she said, well we better looking for day care...and then we looking for day care and so now when my kids they came from school, they went to day care.

13. But then, in his second semester, he talked things over with his wife, who was trying to help him in whatever way she could. His problem then was that his wife was working at the time and he had to go home every day to baby sit while she went to work and thus he didn't have enough time to study. So in his second semester his wife helped him out by saying that they should look for day care so that he could study and she could continue to work. That worked out well, so the kids now go to day care after school, making life in college much easier for him.

And did you find that...

S2: Yeah, then I found that much more easier than my life in college./ 14. And, but still, in that second semester I did very well...I was a record of straight A student of the Missoulian/

14. In the second semester S2 did very well, getting straight A's and recognition in the city newspaper.

Oh my gosh, really...good for you!

S2: And, um...

You're pretty proud...

S2: 15. But then, to this day, when you think college...when you are being a

15. S2 observes that although he had successes at first, classes have become more difficult as he moved

or junior, and of course to senior, you have to take higher courses, and those are pretty hard and right now, it sounds to me like college is hard every semester...some people believe that, you know when you stay in college a few years, you get used to it and everything will be easier, but for me, uh, it's still very hard because each semester you take different courses, and its true if you take the same courses its much easier but you don't take the same course every semester and every semester gets new to you.../ 16. and I found this, that I still have a little bit of language barrier, so in some classes, I still ask for help, especially in my X class right now...

Which history class is it?

S2: History X, 300 level...its very hard, and this professor from the South who talk very fast...and I couldn't take notes, I have to tape her lectures, and taping lecture is an extra work for you, cause you have to take the tape home and rewrite the notes./ 17. but then, for me, I can never do anything when I get home, because I have kids....

Right...

S2: It's funny, that when you pull out your stuff...your children came around...the baby come around and hang on your neck, climb on your neck, then ask for pencil, ask for paper...you give him a pen and pencil and you hope that they going to stick with that for at least five minutes...but then scratch on the paper for two seconds, and come back and ask for another one and they just.../

Not the right study atmosphere...

S2: 18. No, and my second home is the Library.

through the sophomore, junior and eventually senior years. The higher level courses are pretty hard and right now it feels that college gets harder every semester, contrary to what some people believe, which is that you get used to college the longer you are here. For him it's still very hard, mainly because every semester he has to take different courses making each semester new.

16. S2 had found that he still has a little bit of a language barrier in college, so in some classes he still asks for help, especially in his X class, History X 300 Level.

The class is very difficult especially because the professor is from the South and talks so fast that he can't take notes. He tapes her lectures, which is extra work because he has to take the tapes home and rewrite the notes.

17. When he gets home he can never do anything because of his kids.

He's amused by his kids, who, when he gets home and pulls out his school work, all come around and hang on his neck and climb on him and ask him for a pen or pencil and try to imitate his having to do homework. Of course they can stick to it for only five minutes or so, they scratch at the paper for two seconds then come back for more paper.

18. He doesn't have the right atmosphere for studying at home and so his second home is the Library at

Oh, I was going to ask you that...

S2: And the Library is my second home where I can do my stuff...my school work

So during the day, do you go to the Library...?

S2: 18a. Yeah, Any spare time...and I'm out of the classroom, I go right to the Library.../ 19. like in college, sometime, we don't get to eat breakfast and lunch...and I only go home and eat dinner.../ Oh, no

S2: 20. It's very hard...and for me, pushing myself through college.../ 21. it's one of the hopes for me that, I really, really want to accomplish, so I could be one of the role models for the youngsters, for the younger generation. So I could be one of their history...you know, if he can do it, we can do it...you know, he has seven kids...if he can go through college we can...

uhhuh...

S2: 22. And I just really want to push myself into the situation so I can be at least one role model for the later generation, and also, especially for my kids.../ 23. you know, kids, these days, there are too many modern stuff and new technology comes up, and then kids just want to play around...you know just playing games, and don't really concentrate on your schooling.../ 24. and now you know, if I'm the parent and as a parent really try hard, then my kids will not do that, and I need to make a model, a role model, especially for my kids...and this way, I can encourage them to go to college....they would say...oh, look at my dad, look at our dad...well, he was thirty five and was

school where he can do his school work undisturbed.

18a. He spends all of his spare time, whenever he is not in the classroom, in the Library.

19. He is so busy in college that he often doesn't eat breakfast or lunch, eating dinner only when he finally gets home.

20. College is very hard for S2 but he pushes himself to get through college.

21. College is a goal (hope) that he really, really wants to accomplish so that he can be a role model for (Hmong) youngsters, for the younger generation. He wants to be part of their history. He wants youngsters to be inspired by the fact that even though he has seven kids, he got through college. He wants them to feel that "if he can go through college, we can"

22. Being a role model for the next generation, especially for his kids is a major motivator for him. He pushes himself to succeed in college for his kids.

23. S2 regrets that these days kids are tempted by too much modern stuff and new technology and that they only want to play games and play around. They don't seem to concentrate on their schooling.

24. And as a parent he really tries hard to set an example for his own kids to encourage them to go to college. He wants them to be proud of him and to be able to say that despite the fact that he was thirty five years old and had a whole bunch of kids, that he attended college, and therefore they should aspire to the same also.

attending college...now, we should go for it too.../ 25. I push myself into it but I find it is very, very hard for me...especially, uh, and one of the issue in school, is that it is harder when I get a professor who will not cooperate and don't know your background...don't know anybody out of the sphere, you know.../

Yes, like there is someone who is sitting there who has seven children and...

S2: 26. Yes, and I took an X. class last semester that ...with a professor...he didn't really cooperate.../ 27. I ask him, see if I can have more time for my test...because I'm a native speaker, and I need to...and I read slow...but, I need to understand...if I don't understand, I don't feel comfortable to just guess... and then I went to him and talk to him and he refer me to the disabilities program....and it shocked me...becausewhy he considered me as a disability student? You know, then I question to myself, and I talk to him...and he says ok, if you find that you are having a hard time when you take this course, and if you feel you need more time...you go to disability service and if they approve, then I give you more time...Oh, I just feel like, Oh, my god, this is not why.../

So that really made you feel like...

S2: 27. That really made me feel that uhm, my language is not good enough.../

So you didn't want it to be a considered a disability, like that....

S2: 28. No, no...**NO**, in my side, in my language, I'm the strongest one, you know...I would really ask him if He could take my course, I can lecture him...I can make a test that he can't pass...the

25. He pushes himself hard but he finds college very, very hard

25a: One issue that make school especially hard is when he gets am uncooperative and narrow-minded professor who is not aware of cultural differences.

26. He had such a professor last semester who really didn't cooperate with S2.

27. When S2 asked for extended time for taking a test in that professor's class, the professor referred him to the disabilities program. This shocked and offended S2 because he felt that his problem in the class had to do with his not being a native speaker of English and therefore needed more time to read and comprehend what was on the test, rather than having a learning disability, per se. When he asked the professor whether he consider him a disabled student, the professor told him that if he was having a hard time when he took the course and felt he need more time, then he had to get approval from the disability services and if they approved, then the professor would comply. S2 really resented being considered a disabled student.

27. That incident really made him feel that his command of English was not good enough.

28. But he emphatically did not want his language level to be considered a disability. In his own community and language he is considered a leader and a very articulate speaker. He is the strongest one. He feels that he could teach a course, could

course...as hard as a class I can.../ 29. but, I didn't get help from him at all, I didn't get extra time on my test at all.../ 30. but finally, fortunately, I pass the course with a C, so I'm proud of that.

Yeah...can I go back, to what you said about feeling like... I mean, like maybe you can give me other examples of how it feels when you can't express as much as you know... when you know you know a lot but you just...have you had that in other classes too, or just that one...

S2: 31. Uh, that is just the one class that I remember...but other than that...Oh, but one of the Y. classes...oh you know, I went to him one time asked if I could take the exam, extra time, like twenty more minutes...he said no...lot of students, he compared me to American students who were born here, raised here, speak the language, he told me, uh, everybody...you know, for this test, twenty five questions...most of the students just walk off in twenty minutes...and plus that according to that, you have forty more minutes...and then I go like, still when I read it, I don't really understand,...and especially...when you get the answers....its all multiple choice, but when you get the answer, you write it out too see which one is the right...and then, to do that, it takes time, and I want to do that and he won't allow me to do that.../ 32, but some professors are SO nice...you know like this one Z. teacher, he said...S2, you come to my office and take the test in there...take it as long as you want...and some professors are so nice...they just make my life easier...much easier...and then I get a better grade that way.../ 33. This lead me

lecture and design tests in his own language that that professor could never pass. In his own language and culture he is very learned and smart.

29. The upshot of that incident was that he did not get any help and any extra test time from that professor at all.

30. Somehow he made it through with a C. S2 is proud of himself for doing that despite that professor.

31. S2 has experienced similar events on several occasions, as in the case of a test in which everyone else in the class finished in about twenty minutes and walked out of the class. Because S2 could not finish even in the remainder of the one hour class period, he asked the professor for twenty more minutes but was denied. S2 says that in order to understand what he reads and to answer multiple choice questions, he needs to read over and over and then he needs to write the choices down so that he can figure out the difference between one answer and another, which all takes a lot of time. A test which many American students finish in twenty minutes and for which a whole period is allotted can take him up to one hour and fifteen minutes. He can't seem to speed the process up.

32. But other professors are SO nice. One of his teachers allowed him to complete the test in his office and allowed him to take as long as he needed to finish. Nice professors make his life so much easier, much easier. He is able to get a better grade that way.

33. He understands that he still has a long way to go in mastering academic English. He re-tells the story of how long it took him to finish a one-hour test.

into the concept about my understanding to myself that I still lacking a little bit in the English Language...and I still feel like I don't have enough English to manage everything. And I feel like because I have to take time...like, for example, this test might be 45 – 50 minutes in length...and I might take like an hour and fifteen minutes, and I feel like, what can I do...to do it faster.../ 34. but somehow, I think, well I'm not born here...and I'm.../

Well, it's quite an accomplishment to do what you're doing...like if we went to your country, and tried to do something in that language after living there for...

S2: 35. Well, you know, some kids say...oh it's easy, you know...English is easy...Yes, if you are just verbally just communication, you just cannot...we call street talking...then yes, I can talk that way.../ 36. But what about being academically...you know, lecturing and everything...its still very hard for me...it takes me a longer time.../ 37. anything else that you want me to talk about?

Well, maybe we could talk about your ideas here for the course, that we were talking about before we turned on the tape recorder...you know your idea about a course...Hmong language...

S2: 38. Well, it came to my mind and I talked to N. a couple of weeks ago...and he mentioned to you...

He still feels that he's lacking a little in English and that he still doesn't feel like he has enough English to manage everything .

34. Not being born here is his rationalization for his problems.

35. Street talking comes easy for him. He can communicate orally and verbally.

36. But in an academic setting where there are lectures and other things, it is still very hard for him to succeed. It takes him a longer time to do everything.

37. S2 wonders if there's anything else I want him to talk about.

38. In talking with another Hmong student, he came up with the idea of teaching a Hmong culture and language course at the college level. He was unsure about what kind of requirements there might be for starting such a course.

He didn't go into detail but I told him that you were coming to see me... so...

S2: I was discussing...well, I said to him, what do you think if I teaching a course...then we talk about what kind of problem do we have to go through...like, what kind of requirements that we might need to face, and then how can we get this program going so I can teach in college level.../ 39. so, I've been teaching at the elementary and secondary level for many years already.../ 40. and we just came up with this idea because in other cities....you know...where they have major minority population...they teach Hmong courses at the college level and I just talked to one of my friends in Sacramento, about his teaching in college, and he said, boy, your classroom is full of American students because they want to take the language...and they started to learn about Hmong history...

So, in his classes, its filled mostly with American students?

S2: Mostly...its amazing, he said, with American students who take a second language...they register in my class and they even sit on the floor through the semester and it was amazing.../

How popular... it is?

S2: 41. Yes, and just if I could get this going and I would like to teach Hmong courses at the college level.../

Well. I suggested to N. that if you could get in touch with your friend who teaches the class, and get maybe on the internet or something like that and get a syllabus, a description of his

39. He feels inspired and qualified to teach the course because he has already taught at the elementary and secondary level for many years.

40. They came up with the idea after attending a national Hmong education convention where they learned that one of his friends in Sacramento, a city with a large minority population, had taught a Hmong studies course. His friend's class was packed full of American students who were interested in learning Hmong language and history.

S2 was amazed that most of the students are American, who are taking a second language. The class is so popular that students register for it and even sit on the floor.

41. S2 wants to get a similar course started which he would like to teach.

course... what does he actually teach, and also, well that would be it... a description, an example of a course...

S2: 42. I think that basically, we were talking at the Hmong national conference, last April, and he kind of shared that were very similar to my ideas...and I was thinking that teaching at the college level, even here, I would start with, I would call it Elementary Hmong courses, I and II, beginning and advanced courses here, basically in my first class, I would teach basically how to learn the Hmong alphabet, about the tone, the consonants, how to put words together, and how to pronounce it...my advanced courses I would think a more like conversations, where you can teach the student to talk, so they can communicate in Hmong language, faster than speaking.../

I'm going to give you the name of... to me, it seems that the department you should talk to is the department of Foreign Languages... Do you have one of these at home... you know, a telephone book...

S2: No, but I can get one...

They're free you know... and if you want to, what you do is get hold of the chairman... she's someone I know, and if you want, I can call her and introduce you, and you can tell her your ideas... what she might know is that there could be other languages who have approached her... and the reason you would do this is because in order to teach at the University, every course has to be approved by a big committee...

S2: 43. Yes, I think like at the schools, it has to be approved by the board of trustees.../

42. S2 was really impressed with the description of the Hmong class in Sacramento. The presented shared ideas that were similar to his own. He plans to call the courses Elementary Hmong, I-Beginning and II-Advanced. Basically, in the first class he would teach the Hmong alphabet, about tone, the consonants, how to put words together, and how to pronounce it. In the advanced courses he would have conversations where you can teach the student to talk so that they can communicate in Hmong.

43. He understands that there is some bureaucracy that he needs to deal with in order to start any course, much as, in the schools, it has to be approved by the board of trustees.

Yes, she would know, and ...in this book I gave to N... this woman was teaching history of Vietnam War and then some Hmong students came to her... and were interested in the Hmong part of it... language, culture, etc... so eventually, I think that now, there is a course of Hmong history or culture... but, it started because the woman was already a teacher... for example, here, X teaches Social Work, but in his class, he brings it Hmong history, stories, and so on... he might have an idea about how you could go about... talk to everybody you know about the idea... I think it's a great idea... but as I said, there are lots of bureaucratic things... Well, what time is it getting to be? I think we'll stop here...

S2: 44. Is there anything else you would like me to say?/

Well, I was just going to ask you, is there anything else you would like to say, maybe feelings that have changed over time... you've already talked about some things... like at first you were totally lost here and the second time, you felt more familiar with things... can you think of any other things like that that have affected you?

S2: 45. Yeah, the first year I came to college I feel very stupid, because a lot of time...the other students,/ 46. and for me, its not easy to make friends with the American students,/ 47. because I, traditionally, in my culture...its very hard for me to say...can I study with you?/ 48. And all you need to do is go up to them and say, can you help me on this?/

But at first you didn't know how to do that?
You didn't feel comfortable?

S2: 49. I didn't feel comfortable, I ashamed myself, to do that...I feel like shy

44. S2 wants to know if there is anything else I would like him to say.

45. The first year S2 was in college he felt very stupid a lot of the time.

46. It is very hard for him to make friends with American students.

47. Traditionally, it is very hard, in his culture, it is very hard for him to ask someone to study with him.

48. Yet he knows that all he needs to do is go up to someone and say, "Can you help me on this?"

49. He didn't feel comfortable approaching other students. He was ashamed of himself to do that. He

in front of them, and ask questions like that.../ 50. so I kind of doing everything on my own that first semester, and that's why my grades.../

And what made you change, I wonder?

S2: 51. Well, there were some American people who are very nice in the classroom, you know...I would say, this is not a racism, or a feminine issue or something, but mostly women are the one who are easier to talk with, not the men.../ 53. cause the men, sometime, when you feel like, oh, I want to talk to him, then you gotta, back up because you might feel like either he's going to say yes, or no, or he's going to say...who you are? Who are you or something, that it makes me scared...and I just kind of pull back myself.../ 54. but women, well, its easier for me to approach, because, in my culture, women are also easier to speak with then men, and I trace that out / 55. and my second semester...and the first thing I start to make myself more comfortable and I feel like part of the students at this university./ 56. I always like to sit with older females, you know...older than you, and sometimes they can even make jokes when they would say, like "get out of here, kid..."you know....so, I would sit close to older American women and I would talk to them...and even if you don't talk to them, then they would talk to you , and I really like that...they say, hi...how are you today, and you feel comfortable to talk to older female, and then I talk to them, and somehow.../ 57. and also, the older people are more willing to help.../ 58. and more willing to find out who you are, / 59. and then, what kind of difficulties you have.../60. I this course, and you tell them, and you share with them,/ 61, and later on I don't mind to have older friends...and that's how I started...

felt shy in front of them and couldn't bring himself to ask if they would study with him.

50. So during the first semester he kind of did everything on his own and his grades suffered for that.

52. He got bolder about making friends because there were some very nice American students in some of his classrooms. Not wanting to appear racist or feminist, he nevertheless found women easier to talk to than men.

53. He feared that men would be more threatening, confrontational, and less receptive to talking with him and so he avoided them.

54. It was much easier to try to approach women because even in his own culture, women are easier to speak with then men.

55. And by the second semester he had started to make himself more comfortable and to feel like a part of the student body at this university.

56. He enjoyed the comraderie of older females because they would joke with him and say things like, "get out of here, kid". He would sit close to older American women and they would talk together, say hi to him, and in general, made him feel welcome.

57. S2 finds older people much more willing to help others.

58. S2 also finds older people much more interested in you as a person, and are willing to find out who you are.

59. They are also interested in what kinds of difficulties you have.

60. It is easy to talk with them and to share with them.

61. He liked having older friends, and that is how he

started connecting with others in college, having more friends, and feeling comfortable here.

That's really interesting...

S2. ...my life in college...and having more friends, and feeling more comfortable.../

So you feel quite comfortable now...

S2. 62. Yes, now I have no problems because this new society has been adopted to my brain, a lot.../ 63. that you know, if you want to approach somebody you just go to say hi and do you have spare time, or can I talk to you a second...and just go up with them and talk with them...and it's the American way, that if they don't want to talk to you well they'll just say, Oh, I'm sorry, I don't have time and then you know that they don't want to talk to you, but if some says Oh, OK, yes, what about this time, this place, yes...oh, then we just go in there.../ 64. also, study group helps a lot... Yeah, but not all the professors encourage the students to do the study group, but I took a social class with professor Z. and he encourage students to discuss in groups and also, study in groups, and I feel comfortable that way too...that you have a chance to speak, and once you can speak its just like expressing yourself to the group, and hopefully, they would understand, and then, I feel much better.../

That's really helpful... that's really good...

S2: 65. And actually, at my job, also, one of the encouraging issues that really, really brought me into a comfortable situation is that as a tutor, you know, I have to interact

62. At this point he feels quite comfortable and has no problems in adjustment because "this new society has been adopted to my brain, a lot."

63. He has learned that the American way to do things is that if he wants to approach somebody, he just goes up to them and says hi and asks them if they have spare time, or asks them if he can talk with them for a second. And then he just talks with them or they'll make arrangements to meet somewhere .He has also learned that if they don't want to talk to you well they'll just say, sorry I don't have time to talk to you.

64. S2 also finds study groups helpful. Although not all teachers encourage it he did take a class in which study and discussion groups were encouraged. He felt comfortable in study groups, because he feels that if he has a chance to speak then he can express himself. He feels good when he can express himself and be understood by the group.

65. Another experience that has given him a lot of encouragement and confidence is his job as a tutor in the schools in which he has to interact with students, parents, and teachers. In his job he has to meet with

with students, both parents and teachers, and that way, it encouraged me to, ok, this is my job, I have to go meet with the principal in order for me to solve this kind of problem.../ 66. solving problem is one of my careers, in tutoring field, that I have improved myself in being Americanized./ 67. you know...some problems in elementary school, you know...some teachers, didn't understand the background of minority students, just like here in college, of some professor, never, ever understand about all the culture and the minority background...that's the same thing.../ 68. but in school, I can just go to them...talk to them, do a presentation, and I can prepare the classroom teacher, and speak with them...and I did that a lot at the elementary level...and that makes me feel comfortable.../

I'm seeing that, speaking to you and to N. both... that that was such a good experience... that being a tutor or part of that program, that makes you... a better... teacher and student?

S2: 69. That's why my position is still hanging in there...B. don't want to drop me off...but now, if they have problem with the Hmong...with bilingual students...I have to be there to help solve the problems, like this one time at X. high school, the Hmong students population has been below, and the grade had been dropped and attention to the principle and the teacher and became problem issue...and they had to call me to the meeting and we had to talk about the Hmong in high school./ 70. And a lot of time in grade school I have to set up some kind of meeting after school for teachers and speak with them about Hmong history and background./ 71. and if you have a Hmong kid in your classroom, don't know why he or she is not learning as well as the other

the principal of the school in order to help solve problems that Hmong students are facing.

66. Solving problems related to his tutoring job has helped him become more Americanized.

67. There are problems in the elementary school in which the teachers don't understand the background of minority students, just as there are in college where some professors, he believes, never ever understand about the culture and background of minority students.

68. But in the schools he acts as a mediator and is able to talk with the teachers or make presentations that explain the minority student's cultures. He did much of this kind of work in the elementary level and is comfortable in those situations.

69. Despite the fact that he is a college student, he is still on call at the elementary and high schools, where his skills as a cultural mediator or interpreter are still sometimes needed, especially with Hmong or other bilingual students. He has to be there to help solve problems. He recently had to talk with teachers and the principals at a local high school because the Hmong student's average grades had started to drop.

70. Lots of times in the grade schools, he is asked to talk with teachers after school about Hmong background and culture.

71. He is sometimes called in to the grade schools when young ESL Hmong kids are diagnosed as learning disabled based on tests. He has found that if

kids...because such and such at home they speak Hmong, and here they speak English and then its confusing, especially some teachers who didn't understand, uh culture, uh Hmong kids in the first grade, second grade, third grade who didn't do very well, they would ...some teachers refer to Hmong students are learning disabled...and we gave them the test....and if we, the bilingual tutor sit there and speak in both language...they got excellent...

a bilingual tutor, such as himself, sits in with the child who is being tested and speaks in both languages, then the child will usually test very well.

Right, it was just a language barrier...

S2: Yeah/

So, have you ever thought of taking those things that you've done at the high school level... and bringing that to the college level? Like, for example, like even in our program here, like being a tutor, say people like yourself for other Hmong students

S2: 72. Well here, most of the Hmong student are trying to understand in English, so they don't speak Hmong, even if they have a tutor, they are trying to push themselves into speaking English.../ 73. so, but, it's real important, but its not the need of Hmong students here at the college level.../ 74. but, in high school the requirement of having a bilingual tutor is still acceptable...because the need is great....it's important because the bilingual students, including the Belarus, I mean, the Russian kids, need some native speaker right there...lot of kids would come to you with a Russian word or Hmong word and would say, what does it mean...and you would have to express the meaning...and they go like, oh, yes, that's easy!//

72. Although he has been successful as a tutor in the schools, he feels that Hmong students in college are anxious to function in English and so a bilingual tutor is not necessary here.

73. So although English competency is still a need at the college level, bilingual tutoring is not, where at the high school level, students will still accept one.

74. It is more expedient, at the high school level to simply translate for the Hmong or Belarus Russian kids.

Does that make you feel good?

S2: 75. Yes!/?

75. Being able to help clarify things for the students really makes him feel good.

Sounds like you really like doing that...

76. He really likes being a tutor.

S2: 76. Oh Yes!/?

S2, Level Three (Narrative Based on Emergent Themes)

Starting college was a “nightmare” for S2. He felt “very stupid,” struggled a lot, and consequently did not do very well in his first semester at The University of Montana. He felt that he really needed a lot of help but was afraid to reach out. He did everything on his own and the result was that his grades suffered.

Many things were working against S2 when he first started college, including having attended an American high school for only one year after he first arrived in Missoula as a new refugee. In addition to his limited English language skills and his minimal academic preparation, he was also, at first, overwhelmed by the burden of having to work a part-time job as a bilingual tutor with the grade schools, in addition to being a full-time college student. In addition, S2 has seven children. Although he has reduced his job hours to part-time, he is still very much worried about finances and about how to support his family. The responsibilities connected with supporting his family and of being a good father are constant worries to him. He knows that if he is away from home too much, his family suffers for it. His kids need him to help with their homework assignments, take them shopping, participate in school activities, and transport them to after school activities.

Although he feels the pressures of financial and parental responsibilities, his family is also a source of pleasure and strength for him. One of the major motivations for pushing himself to go to college is that he really wants to be an inspiration and role model for the next generation of Hmong children, including his own. He thinks that the current youth are exposed to too many modern distractions and that they therefore don't concentrate on their schooling. His wife is very supportive of him and tries to think of how she can help him. She insisted that they get after school day-care for the children so that he could concentrate on college and she could continue to work outside the home. That arrangement made it easier for him to succeed in college, resulting in straight A's in his second semester. He is very proud of how well he did that semester and that he was recognized in the local newspaper for his accomplishment.

S2 believes that college is getting harder rather than easier as he goes along, especially as he takes higher-level courses. Nevertheless, he keeps pushing himself to succeed even though he insists that it is very hard for him. He thinks that English is still a barrier to his progress and so he still gets tutoring help in some of his classes. He works really hard, spending all of the time that he's not in classes in the library, which he considers his “second home”. Despite his obvious affection for his family he can't study with their activity level at home so he stays on campus as much as he can, sometimes not even eating anything until he goes home for dinner.

One of S2's most frustrating experiences in college has been his need for more time for test-taking. Although some professors have been generous and cooperative in allowing more time, others have been less compromising. S2 reacted with shock when one professor suggested that he go to the disabilities office to get permission for extra test time. He felt completely misunderstood by that professor, whom he considered narrow-minded and unaware of how language and cultural differences affected his performance in class. He did not want his language problems to be misconstrued as learning problems. S2 is emphatic about this because he feels that he is quite accomplished and

articulate in his own language and in his community. He felt belittled by the professor's insinuations that S2 might be "stupid". He repressed a wish to challenge that professor to try to succeed in a test that S2 could create in Hmong language on a topic unfamiliar to that professor.

Another negative experience involved a professor who assumed that since American students could finish a multiple choice test in twenty minutes, that S2 should also be able to finish within the period. In this case, S2 says that multiple choice questions are really difficult for him to figure out. He needs to read every answer over and over and then he needs to write the choices down in order to figure out the differences between one choice and another. Despite the lack of cooperation he received from his professors in those classes, he's proud of the fact that he managed to get passing grades. These experiences have been mitigated by at least one other very sympathetic professor who allow him to finish tests in their office, taking as much time as he needs. That professor made his life much easier, allowing him to show he does know the material given enough time. Another difficulty he has with language is when teachers have a strong regional accent or talk very fast. Taking notes becomes a problem that he has tried to solve with the very time-consuming use of audio-tapes, which he then goes over after classes.

Although he can rationalize his difficulties by blaming them on not being a native-born speaker of English, he acknowledges that he still needs to improve, especially as it impacts his test-taking skills. Despite the fact that street talk and verbal communication come easy for him, academic English, as in lectures or textbooks does not. It takes him a longer time to do everything. He is determined to learn, however, and pushes himself to improve his English.

With time, he has adjusted to the campus and to American life. He developed a very effective strategy for making friends by approaching older females in his class, who, he found, loved to joke with him and treat him as if he were a kid. He found them friendlier, less threatening than males, interested in his culture, and willing to help him with his homework. He considers these "real friends" whom he can share his thoughts with and can also study with. Study groups, he has found, are also great experiences. They allow him to speak and express himself, allowing others to better understand him.

S2 not only wants to be better understood as an individual, but would also like to have his culture understood by others. He describes, in detail, his dreams for teaching a Hmong language and culture course at the college level. He was inspired to do this while attending a national Hmong educator's conference, where he met a friend who was teaching such a course, with great success, at another university. S2 sites his own experiences of teaching Hmong language and culture at the grade and high schools that qualify him to offer the course. He appears to have worked out most of the details for getting it going but recognizes that some bureaucratic hurdles still exist before the course could be implemented.

Teaching and tutoring in the high schools was a very satisfying and rewarding job for S2. He essentially translated what the classroom teacher said to the Hmong or Russian immigrant students. In addition to working directly with students, he also interacted with parents and teachers, and school counselors, either as a presenter, a mediator or as a translator during placement tests with Hmong children.

Appendix F

S3, Levels One-Three

S3, Level One, (Verbatim Transcript)

2/1/99

Approx. 45 minutes

What I'm interested in is what it's like for Hmong students, especially students who came here as adolescents, teenagers, those who were not born here, not like your kids, who when they get to college, I think it will be different from how it is for you... I'm sure. So, what I want you to do is think about some experiences you have had and try to describe some situations that you have experienced in college that stand out to you in your memory, either good or bad. Can you think of any?

S3: You mean right now?

Yes, just tell me...

S3: Well, let's see...

It could have happened several years ago or it could have happened last week, it doesn't matter...just things that seem interesting or important to you...

S3: That happened here...

Yes, here at the University.

S3: Hmm...I think the first year is confusing...

Hmmm...

S3: Cause I don't know anybody here. My brother and me, we both enter school at the same time, but I made a friend, and...but, I was fortunate that somebody mentioned to me about the EOP program here, about tutoring. So I just applied here and got a tutor and all my classes went pretty well. And, but, all the classes...(not clear)...But the second semester here...mmm...I don't know. I learned that Hmong students and lot of foreign students here they kind of have the same situation like me. But I have taken ...(not clear)...that, I...

Let me back up to your first semester, when you said you were really confused. And you said you made a friend who kind of told you about U of M. Who was that friend and how did you make that friend?

S3: Oh, I took the...I decided to take the EOP class.

S3: Yeah, and I forgot her name...

S.? Was S. your teacher?

S3: Yeah, S. was my teacher and I made that friend in her class.

And did you meet that friend just by sitting next to the person?

S3: Oh yeah, and I talked to her and she said...we kind of talked and she said...she was nice. And although my language was not very good, she just kept talking to me. And then we became real friends and, uh...

Was she your journal partner, by any chance? Did you remember that in that class you had to write journals?

S3: Yeah, wrote a lot of journals.

Was she...that person was not your journal partner?

S3: No...yeah, she's my journal partner. Well, we write to each other and then we...

And so she suggested that you come over here?

S3: Yeah, if I need some help, then EOP could help, yeah.

So you came over and you got...

S3: Yeah, I filled on an application and I got a tutor...

And what subject was that?

S3: That was in Computer Science.

And, OK, was that Computer Science 101, do you remember? So how did you find that class to be, even with the help of a tutor?

S3: Oh, he really helped me. I didn't know what the teacher was talking about...that was the hardest thing for me to understand. Just go right into the lectures...like a hundred and fifty students in there, and I just sit there...like a confused...

Not knowing anything...

S3: Yeah, back in high school it was like, fifteen and twenty students. Here, the

first class I went to had a hundred and fifty students in there.

And it was a computer science class, but do they just lecture? So you're not sitting at the computer, no?

S3: No, just lecture...

So you had to learn by listening to the professor...ok.

S3: Oh yeah, and then later on, the friend I told you, she suggest that if I don't catch the teacher, she had a tape. I could just tape the teacher, tape the lecture...

So did you do that?

S3: Yeah, so I said, that's good advice...and I did that and took the tape in. And the teacher let me. I think the first semester I taped all, almost all my lectures.

Did you? And did that work for you, then?

S3: Oh yeah, I would read the book and listen to the lecture.

And what did you do then? Go home and listen to it over?

S3: Oh yeah, I would go to class for one hour and listen five or six hours the same lecture, and...

And at the time were you still living with your parents? You weren't married yet?

S3: Oh yeah, I was still single.

And so then you and your brother were both new students at the same time?

S3: Yeah.

So, tell me then... I want to back you up again... so you said that the next semester... oh, the first semester, you did very well... you got...?

S3: My gpa was 3.4!

Oh, that's wonderful!

S3: Yeah, I got mostly Bs, and then...

Uhuh... and how did you feel about it?

S3: Well, I feel proud of myself. And my dad, my mom, they encouraged me. They said, wow! You did really great! And you'll be able to...well, now...

So you felt really good...

S3: Yeah, I felt really good...

What do your parents think about your being in college? Do they really encourage you to go on?

S3: They really encourage me. They believe that, without any education we won't be able to survive. Like the other people who got here, they're older...they can't go to school...that's one thing. But me, my age is still good enough to go to school and they really encourage me. And when I get a good grade that made me feel good too.

And so what happened the second semester? Sounds like...a little less...

S3: I went to the next higher level of classes and then I dropped. I didn't want to take the next level...but I'm still passing. When I came to work here...I mean, classes...I failed one class.

Which class was that?

S3: I think it was Biology. It's too many...I studied all the chromosomes and all of that...and I think we had two hours in the lab...and tests...

And had you had any background, like in high school?

S3: No. I had a little bit of Biology but it wasn't much. But in high school I passed it, but it didn't help...

No...

S3: The tutors didn't help. But Math, English, Computer Science...those they really helped me. But the Biology, I can't see the reason for it.

And why do you think that is? Why can't they help you in those classes? I'm interested in that...in the tutoring program.

S3: Because we have lectures and the mid-term like that. Ok, you take lecture notes and all that and the mid-term doesn't really count. But in Math, the homework, it helps. You get a grade from them, so it helps.

Instead of only relying on test grades, which is what happens in biology...

S3: Yeah.

So then, let's see... that brings us up to your second semester. Now, your third semester, that's when you said you failed a course. So at any time, were you kind of wondering whether college was right for you, or did you just thin... oh well, it's just that course?

S3: I still take courses. I had to do it...I was determined to do it.

No matter what...

S3: Yeah, no matter what. And when I don't pass one course, it doesn't affect my other courses. That is just one and it's over. So it's over...just keep going.

So in other words, just this one class doesn't mean that you're not good in the other classes or anything like that?

S3: Oh no!

So, besides computer science classes, which other classes have you liked at this university and which don't you like?

S3: I like math and computer science, physics...those are my best classes. But I still have a little bit of a problem, because the university program...I still need to improve my English. So that I still need a little bit of help. But physics and math, those are my good areas.

And have you taken any of the other general education classes, like...

S3: Oh yeah, History and Psychology and Interpersonal Communications.

And how do you find those kind of classes?

S3: They just...I'm not very good at the, but I'm still doing good. I think I'm doing fine.

And what, if you think about some things you've done to help yourself succeed in college, what are they? I mean, like at one point you said you got a tutor, so that's one thing. But what are some other tips that you use yourself to get through the classes?

S3: Just trying to communicate with the instructor...

Do you feel very comfortable going to the...

S3: Oh yeah...

That's easy for you?

S3: Yeah, that's easy. I mean, I always talk to the instructor, ask if I'm not clear, talk about it over again. Most instructors they are really nice. They do that for me...so they can understand...

Oh, that's really... that's interesting. And do you consider yourself an outgoing person, so it's not too hard for you to talk to professors? Because some students will say, oh, I'm afraid to talk to the professor...

S3: Oh ho, I mean I'm not. I mean I took a Computer Science class and the instructor and I talked...and that's the first class I ever took...and that was the hardest class. But I talked to him for two hours...

On a regular basis?

S3: Yeah, on a regular basis. And after the semester and everywhere when I see him.

Who is this, now... Dr. ?

S3: Dr. X.

Anyway, that's a great idea. You got a lot out of it and he got to know you. And did you talk about...?

S3: He got some kind of understanding about my experiences, my education, my background.

So, you wouldn't just talk about computer science?

S3: Oh, no! When we got there, he kind of ask me questions...I ask him questions.

So you don't sit down and do problems or anything like that?

S3: Oh no, we talk about anything.

Oh that's very nice.

S3: So he got to know me and like that...

That's great! And would you recommend that as something people should do?

S3: Oh yeah, especially Hmong students. I think...I mean, if someone else do not

have good enough English you should talk to your professors. And I took English 100 and my professor really, really like me and I went to her. She really liked me.

And then you were able to explain yourself a little bit better?

S3: Yeah, it's good to talk to the teacher... when you're not sure what you're doing.

Well, that's really a good tip. So, think of some other things that you've done to help you progress, not only get a better grade, but learn more...

S3: I think you need to have friends. I mean, I went in the classroom...I mean the first day, I went ...I didn't know anybody. Somebody said to me...I talk to him and he talked to me...just asked my name and make friends. So when you don't understand and the teacher talks so fast you can't write it down, you can ask them for a copy of the lecture. And if you make friends, it makes it more...

And did you usually just talk to the people sitting next to you?

S3: Well, in every class, after awhile, almost everybody knows everybody else.

That sounds like a winning recipe to me.

S3: So, one thing is to make friends.

Over the years here, have you made some friends who you would consider them friends even outside of the classes?

S3: Oh yeah, most friends...some of my friends, because of our schedules we don't see each other for weeks. Yeah, I talked with them or e-mail them, or after school we meet each other.

You said something that I did mean to mention... which is email. Do you use e-mail quite a lot? And of course you learned to use that after you got here?

S3: Oh yeah, the first time I ever used e-mail...

Do you e-mail people in other parts of the country, or do you...

S3: I have a friend who goes to school here and his parents live in Canada and I e-mail back to him...

I wondered because talking to other Hmong students, I found out that they really use e-mail a lot... So, can you think of any other experiences, any suggestions, recommendations? I like the idea of getting to know the professors, getting to know

other students. Can you think of any other?

S3: And I don't know...another thing is that you should do a lot of studying.

Well, I know that at the beginning you said you would put in five hours or so. Do you think you put in a lot of time, studying?

S3: I don't know. Like right now, I took a harder time, I need to study more. I go over and over...

How do you find the time? I mean, with your family and all? Do you study at home? Do you study at the university?

S3: I, it doesn't matter...everywhere. I study alone in the library and when I go home, I lock myself in my room and study.

You do? Your wife understands?

S3: Oh yeah, she understands, yeah...

Do you think you have to study more because of the English barrier?

S3: Oh yeah, I think so. I don't have enough energy to put everything in writing. I can't keep it all in my head. I mean, like a page, you can't read through and memorize it. You have to read it over and over again until you learn. But not just look at it, and memorize it, you can't do that...

Not just glance at it, right...

S3: I don't mind, I don't care how many hours I spend, I just go over and over it. I just do it.

Yes, I'm kind of interested in what Hmong students, or any students who have English as a Second Language, do to deal with the work. Do you still record your lectures?

S3: No.

Is it something you just did early?

S3: Yeah, early. Right now...

Do you take notes in class?

S3: Oh yeah, but right now I think I'm better than before. I can catch what the professors say, what it's about. So that helps me so I can do better in the courses.

At the beginning you said that you and your brother came and you were really confused. Were there any other Hmong students here? Did you know anybody else who was a student?

S3: Oh yeah, I knew a lot of them.

But they didn't help you out at the beginning?

S3: Like those Hmong students who have been here, some of them still shy or kind of embarrassed to, like, say words to you in Hmong. Instead they want to say English to you.

Oh...yes, I understand that...

S3: They kind of embarrassed themselves.

Right, they kind of want to be as American as possible...

S3: Oh yeah.

And so, to meet with someone like you or your brother...

S3: Yeah, even walking by, they say...

Hi.

S3: They don't look at you.

So, there's kind of a division between the ones who came later and don't know as much English and those who were practically born here?

S3: Oh yeah, and I mean a lot of people, the Hmong students, they've been here before. But we never talk to them and they never talk to us. We try to talk on campus but we never talk to each other. But I think if you talk to them, they have some opinions, they talk to us. But most of them, like I said, they're too embarrassed to talk in Hmong.

And, you didn't happen to go through the Upward Bound program?

S3: I went for two years.

And how did you find...did that kind of help you get used to being here?

S3: I think so, yeah.

Cause you had to come on campus and take the summer classes...

S3: Oh yeah, that helps a lot. And that helped me, yeah, that helped me.

Well, not you've mentioned a few things that I'm kind of interested in. A little bit hard to put into words, but it's like, the whole idea of saying that yes, I'm Hmong or no, I'm just another person... How do you feel, do you feel like a Hmong person or a foreign student... or, I mean, do you have any feelings about your identity?

S3: To me, I'm feeling, I'm Hmong...definitely. I can't change myself, I can't change my hair, I can't change my nose, I can't change my skin. Everybody asks me, where are you from? Who are you? I always tell them I'm Hmong. They say, some Americans they ask, What? Where's Hmong? Where's Hmong country? And I told them, I'm Hmong. But Hmong just traditional...our clothes, our language, that's Hmong. But we don't have any country. We lived back in Laos. Laos is Laotian and they don't know that Hmong is in Lao. Why you from Laos and you're not Lao, you're Hmong? We are not Lao, we are Hmong and we are part of Laos. We are a small group of people. We have our own language, we have our own traditional customs. So that's Hmong, so we are Hmong.

Yeah.

S3: So those people, they embarrassed themselves, they don't like to be Hmong. I think that's a shame. They don't think about their parents when their parents are gone. Most of the Hmong in Missoula right now, they have their parents, their own grandparents, their cousins...most speak Hmong but they speak English. But some of the kids they go to school and they're so embarrassed of themselves and they can't express themselves in Hmong.

Were you at the Hmong New Year?

S3: Oh yeah.

And did you see that guy... and did you like him? I thought he was saying something similar to what you just said...about kids who pretend that they're not Hmong and so they never speak Hmong. And when they go home everyone is speaking Hmong. And the young people... it's kind of a problem?

S3: I don't know. I mean, I'm proud to be Hmong.

And do you find that most people don't know the history of the Hmong?

S3: Oh yes, even today, I went to class and my teacher say, where is Hmong? They say, what? They never know about Hmong. But I'm still proud of it. I'm Hmong, I'm really Hmong. I will always speak Hmong, eat Hmong food. And my

wife speak Hmong and my children speak Hmong. I teach them how to speak Hmong. And I mean I teach them to speak English, to go to school. But when they come home, they have to speak Hmong.

Right, so you want them to be bi-cultural...

S3: Yeah, my great grandparents, they live back in Laos. OK, why didn't they become Laos, you know? They still want to teach their customs, their traditional back to their children like me. And they never became Laotian, they still Hmong. And even though we came to this country, I think it's really important to have your Hmong...If your great grandparents became Laotian, then we all became Laotian.

But they kept their culture...kept their own culture...

S3: Yeah, so we shouldn't, we should learn from our great-grandparents.

So for Hmong, it's not so much where they live, it's more the keeping of the language and the customs and...

S3: Yeah.

Cause there's Hmong now, all over. I mean not all over but...

S3: Yeah, I think there's Hmong in China. My great great grandfather comes from China and they speak Chinese but they still are Hmong, But they have Chinese...they change the name...

Well, this is kind of getting off my thing about college, but what do you think is the future for the Hmong? I mean, like, do you think that enough Hmong think like you and want to keep Hmong culture strong, or do you think that more are like... oh, we're just Americans...?

S3: I think more...I don't know why...I think we should educate more to know about Hmong.

To keep the spirit alive?

S3: I mean in the past we don't have anybody to talk about it...to...Well, we're going to an American school and why don't we just keep the new traditions? Forget the old? Well, me...I feel differently.

Well, I'm glad that there are people like you. What do your parents think about it? Are they afraid of...?

S3: They're afraid of it. They're not afraid of me but they see their

grandchildren...They talk a lot about it. Teach your children to keep your culture, language. We talk about it. Our parents encourage our children to remember who they are. And having a son in the family...it's really important to keep your last name. It's really important to...

So you probably feel lucky to have two sons?

S3: Oh yeah, hopefully they will be like...

Oh yeah, what do people think about...like, I've heard that in big cities especially, like with gangs? The teenagers are kind of going wild...

S3: I've been once in Minnesota and they were shooting each other...

Really shooting...guns?

S3: Yeah, they were really shooting and one was dead. And how...I don't know why...but to me, I would never use a gun like that. And some of them were born here and they don't realize how much their parents sacrificed. And their families back in Laos and the Americans...and so my strategy is to do well here. And I think about my friends and my experiences back in Thailand and in the camps and how they cannot go to school and me, I'm here, and I...

And are there still some of your friends back there?

S3: Oh yeah.

So that's still very much alive...the memory of that?

S3: Oh, these days I still dream about being in the camp...

Do you?

S3: Yeah, I still have that dream...in the camp...worried...can't go to school. In my experience, I was...

Makes you really treasure your time here. Can you think of any other thoughts...doesn't necessarily have to do with school...that you think about?

S3: So education is key. So if you think about school...if you quit school right now, you can go to a restaurant and be a dishwasher. You can work for...I can't do...those people in this country who don't have a diploma, they can't do anything.

Do you think that is something that... obviously you realize that, and everyone in college realizes that, your parents it sounds like they understand that too?

S3: Oh yeah, they know that.

So is everyone in your family in college or some kind of schooling?

S3: Two of my older brothers didn't finish high school and they are working...

In Missoula?

S3: And my sister is in school.

So just you and X got the idea to go to college... do you think your older brothers didn't come to college because they were too old and their English just wasn't...

S3: And especially have a wife and working, you need some money...

Is your wife working?

S3: Oh yeah, she is sewing at X factory.

Is she thinking of coming to school someday?

S3: She thinks about it but she...

Who babysits?

S3: My mother.

Can you think of any last words to say?

S3: I think in college, you have to be yourself. I mean, nobody else helps you. Be yourself. If you give up that's it. You say to yourself, I'll keep going no matter what.

In a way though, you do have people encouraging you... your parents...

S3: My wife, my uncle, my children. When they grow up, they would be disappointed...

So you do have people who will be proud of you.

S3: So many people encourage me and support me.

But you have to have the drive...

S3: I think you have to have...(more about the division between the Americanized and non-Americanized Hmong in the Missoula community)

S3, Level Two, (Spontaneous Meaning Units)

What I'm interested in is what it's like for Hmong students, especially students who came here as adolescents, teenagers, those who were not born here, not like your kids, who when they get to college, I think it will be different from how it is for you... I'm sure. So, what I want you to do is think about some experiences you have had and try to describe some situations that you have experienced in college that stand out to you in your memory, either good or bad. Can you think of any?

S3: You mean right now?/

Yes, just tell me...

S3: Well, let's see.../

It could have happened several years ago or it could have happened last week, it doesn't matter... just things that seem interesting or important to you...

S3: That happened here.../

Yes, here at the University.

S3: 1. Hmm...I think the first year is confusing.../

1. Although he and his brother entered the university together, the first year was "confusing" for S3, mainly because he didn't know anybody who was already a student who could help them out.

Hmmm...

S3: Cause I don't know anybody here. My brother and me, we both enter school at the same time,/ 2. but I made a friend, and...but, I was fortunate that somebody mentioned to me about the EOP program here, about tutoring. So I just applied here and got a tutor/ 3. and

2. Luckily he made a friend very early in the first semester who told him about the EOP tutoring program. He submitted an application and got a tutor there.

3. All of his classes went pretty well that first semester.

all my classes went pretty well./ 4. And, but, all the classes...(not clear).../ 5. But the second semester here...mmm...I don't know./ 6. I learned that Hmong students and lot of foreign students here they kind of have the same situation like me./ 7. But I have taken ...(not clear)...that, L...

Let me back you up. Let me back up to your first semester, when you said you were really confused. And you said you made a friend who kind of told you about U of M. Who was that friend and how did you make that friend?

S3: 8. Oh, I took the...I decided to take the EOP class.

Oh, Study Skills?

S3: Yeah, and I forgot her name...

S.? Was S. your teacher?

S3: Yeah, S. was my teacher/ 9. and I made that friend in her class./

And did you meet that friend just by sitting next to the person?

S3: 10. Oh yeah, and I talked to her and she said...we kind of talked and she said...she was nice. And although my language was not very good, she just kept talking to me. And then we became real friends and, uh...

Was she your journal partner, by any chance? Did you remember that in that

4. (not clear)...a kind of hesitation...

5. But the second semester was a different story and he had more difficulties than at first. That semester made him doubt his capabilities.

6. He thinks that other Hmong students and perhaps also foreign students might be experiencing the same kinds of difficulties he is.

7. (not clear)--perhaps an extension of the above thought?

8. In his first semester he also took the EOP study skills class.

9. He made the friend that told him about the tutoring services in the study skills class.

10. Even though his English was not very good at that time, his new friend was very nice and persistent about talking with him. They talked and talked and they "became real friends".

class you had to write journals?

S3: Yeah, wrote a lot of journals.

10a. His new friend was his journal partner in that class. They wrote to each other as part of their assignment.

Was she... that person was not your journal partner?

S3: No...yeah, she's my journal partner. Well, we write to each other and then we.../

And so she suggested that you come over here?

S3: 11. Yeah, if I need some help, then EOP could help, yeah.

11. It was she who suggested that he come over to the EOP office for help.

So you came over and you got...

S3: Yeah, I filled on an application and I got a tutor...

11a. He got a tutor who really helped him in his Computer Science class.

And what subject was that?

S3: That was in Computer Science.

And, OK, was that Computer Science 101, do you remember? So how did you find that class to be, even with the help of a tutor?

S3: Oh, he really helped me./ 12. I didn't know what the teacher was talking about...that was the hardest thing for me to understand. Just go right into the lectures.../ 13. like a hundred and fifty students in there, and I just sit there...like a confused...

12. He didn't know what the teacher was talking about in his Computer Science class. It was really hard for him to understand the lectures. He just sat there really confused.

Not knowing anything...

S3: Yeah, back in high school it was like, fifteen and twenty students. Here, the first class I went to had a hundred

13. His large lecture classes with a hundred and fifty students or so in there were in extreme contrast to the fifteen or

and fifty students in there./

And it was a computer science class, but do they just lecture? So you're not sitting at the computer, no?

S3: 14. No, just lecture...

So you had to learn by listening to the professor... ok.

S3: 15. Oh yeah, and then later on, the friend I told you, she suggest that if I don't catch the teacher, she had a tape. I could just tape the teacher, tape the lecture...

So did you do that?

S3: Yeah, so I said, that's good advice...and I did that and took the tape in. And the teacher let me. I think the first semester I taped all, almost all my lectures.

Did you? And did that work for you, then?

S3: Oh yeah, I would read the book and listen to the lecture.

And what did you do then? Go home and listen to it over?

S3: Oh yeah, I would go to class for one hour and listen five or six hours the same lecture, and.../

And at the time were you still living with your parents? You weren't married yet?

twenty students he was used to in high school classes.

14. Another problem was that the computer class was taught by lecture and there was no hands-on experience connected with it at all.

15. Hearing and understanding lectures were really hard for S3 at first. His new friend suggested that he tape the lectures. He found that even though it took hours and hours of re-listening to the tapes of the lectures, that they at least made it possible for him to eventually understand the lectures. He taped almost all of his lectures during his first semester.

His strategy was to tape the lectures, read the book and listen to his tapes for five or six hours at home.

S3: 16. Oh yeah, I was still single./

And so then you and your brother were both new students at the same time?

S3: 17. Yeah./

So, tell me then... I want to back you up again... so you said that the next semester... oh, the first semester, you did very well... you got... ?

S3: 18. My gpa was 3.4!

Oh, that's wonderful!

S3: Yeah, I got mostly Bs, and then...

Uhuh... and how did you feel about it?

S3: Well, I feel proud of myself. And my dad, my mom, they encouraged me. They said, wow! You did really great! And you'll be able to...well, now...

So you felt really good...

S3: Yeah, I felt really good.../

What do your parents think about your being in college? Do they really encourage you to go on?

S3: 19. They really encourage me. They believe that, without any education we won't be able to survive./ 20. Like the other people who got here, they're older...they can't go to school...that's one thing. But me, my age is still good enough to go to school and they really encourage me./ 21. And when I get a good grade that made me feel good too./

16. At this time he was not yet married and was living with his parents.

17. He and his brother were both new to the university at the same time.

18. His first semester he got mostly B's and got a 3.4 gpa. Later, however, his grades worsened...

He was really proud of himself that first semester. His parents were also proud of him and gave him a lot of positive reinforcement and encouragement. They were all encouraged by his good grades and felt that he could make it in the college setting.

He felt really good about it also.

19. His parents are really encouraging him and pressuring him to get a college education. They believe that without any education he (and they) won't be able to survive in this country.

20. His parents know that they were too old when they came to this country, to go to college, but they encourage those of S3's age to go because they are of the right age

to do so.

21. Getting good grades really made him feel good also.

And so what happened the second semester? Sounds like... a little less...

S3: 22. I went to the next higher level of classes and then I dropped. I didn't want to take the next level...but I'm still passing. When I came to work here...I mean, classes...I failed one class.

22. When he got to the next higher level of classes, however, his grades dropped. He was hesitant about moving to the next level but did so anyway. He's still passing even though he did fail one class.

Which class was that?

S3: 23. I think it was Biology. It's too many...I studied all the chromosomes and all of that...and I think we had two hours in the lab...and tests

23. He failed his Biology class, a subject that he had very little high school preparation for.

And had you had any background, like in high school?

S3: 24. No. I had a little bit of Biology but it wasn't much. But in high school I passed it, but it didn't help.../

24. He did take Biology in high school but it didn't help him much in college.

No...

S3: 25. The tutors didn't help. But Math, English, Computer Science...those they really helped me./ 26. But the Biology, I can't see the reason for it.

25. He knew so little about the subject that even tutoring did not help him succeed in Biology. But tutors did help in Math, English, and Computer Science.

26. S3 cannot see any worthwhile reason for taking Biology, anyway.

And why do you think that is? Why can't they help you in those classes? I'm interested in that... in the tutoring program.

S3: 27. Because we have lectures and the mid-term like that. Ok, you take lecture notes and all that and the mid-

27. Another factor in his failing Biology was the way the class is taught, in which there are lectures and a mid-term that

term doesn't really count. 28. But in Math, the homework, it helps. You get a grade from them, so it helps.

doesn't count. The whole grade in the class is dependent on understanding the lectures and being able to do well on one or two major tests on the subject.

28. He prefers classes like Math, where the homework also counts. He can therefore work on problems at his own speed, and they will count toward his grade.

Instead of only relying on test grades, which is what happens in biology

S3: Yeah./

So then, let's see... that brings us up to your second semester. Now, your third semester, that's when you said you failed a course. So at any time, were you kind of wondering whether college was right for you, or did you just think... oh well, it's just that course?

S3: 29. Yeah, no matter what. And when I don't pass one course, it doesn't affect my other courses. That is just one and it's over./ 30. So it's over...just keep going./

29. Despite his failure in Biology, he perseveres, no matter what. He is able to separate his performance in that class from his performance in others. He is also able to put a bad grade behind him and move on.

30. He tells himself to just keep on going.

So in other words, just this one class doesn't mean that you're not good in the other classes or anything like that?

S3: 31. Oh no!//

31. He does not judge himself on the basis of only one grade.

So, besides computer science classes, which other classes have you liked at this university and which don't you like?

S3: 32. I like math and computer science, physics...those are my best classes./ 33. But I still have a little bit of a problem, because the university program...I still need to improve my

32. His best subjects are Math, Computer Science and Physics.

33. He still considers that English is still "a little bit of a problem" that needs to be

English. So that I still need a little bit of help./ 34. But physics and math, those are my good areas./

And have you taken any of the other general education classes, like

S3: 35. Oh yeah, History and Psychology and Interpersonal Communications.

And how do you find those kind of classes?

S3: They just...I'm not very good at them./ 36. but I'm still doing good. I think I'm doing fine./

And what, if you think about some things you've done to help yourself succeed in college, what are they? I mean, like at one point you said you got a tutor, so that's one thing. But what are some other tips that you use yourself to get through the classes?

S3: 37. Just trying to communicate with the instructor...

Do you feel very comfortable going to the...

S3: Oh yeah...

That's easy for you?

S3: Yeah, that's easy. I mean, I always talk to the instructor, ask if I'm not clear, talk about it over again. Most instructors they are really nice. They do that for me...so they can understand...

Oh, that's really... that's interesting. And do you consider yourself an outgoing

worked on because he still has to succeed in his General Education Requirements at the university.

34. Physics and math are his strong areas.

35. He has taken some general education classes, such as History, Psychology, and Interpersonal Communications but he is not very good at them.

36. Despite those difficulties, he's still doing well at the university and feels that he's doing fine.

37. An important strategy for success that he has used is that he tries to communicate with his instructors whenever possible.

He feels quite comfortable talking with professors, and does not find it intimidating to do so.

Whenever he needs to clarify something he goes in to see the professor about it. His experience is that most instructors are very nice and are willing to talk to students. They do it so they can understand their students.

person, so it's not too hard for you to talk to professors? Because some students will say, oh, I'm afraid to talk to the professor...

S3: Oh no, I mean I'm not. I mean I took a Computer Science class and the instructor and I talked...and that's the first class I ever took...and that was the hardest class. But I talked to him for two hours...

He had a good experience talking to the teacher of the first computer science class he ever took. The teacher talked with him for two hours and they developed a routine of talking on a regular basis. Although they did talk some about the class, the professor seemed really interested in getting to know S3 as a person. S3 felt comfortable talking about himself and also learned about the professor, in his conversations.

On a regular basis?

S3: Yeah, on a regular basis. And after the semester and everywhere when I see him.

S3 continues the friendship even to this day.

Who is this, now...Dr. ?

S3: Dr. X.

Anyway, that's a great idea. You got a lot out of it and he got to know you. And did you talk about...?

S3: He got some kind of understanding about my experiences, my education, my background.

S3 feels that the professor has an understanding of his experiences, his education, his background,

So, you wouldn't just talk about computer science?

S3: Oh, no! When we got there, he kind of ask me questions...I ask him questions.

So you don't sit down and do problems or anything like that?

S3: Oh no, we talk about anything.

Oh that's very nice.

S3: So he got to know me and like that.../

By talking about all sorts of things, he felt that the professor really got to know him...

That's great! And would you recommend that as something people should do?

S3: 38. Oh yeah, especially Hmong students. I think...I mean, if someone else do not have good enough English you should talk to your professors./ 39. And I took English 100 and my professor really, really like me and I went to her. She really liked me./

38. S3 feels that Hmong students, especially, or any other students whose English is not very good should talk with their professors to clarify things they don't understand.

39. He had another teacher, an English professor that he spoke to. He felt that she really liked him also.

And then you were able to explain yourself a little bit better?

S3: 40. Yeah, it's good to talk to the teacher... when you're not sure what you're doing./

40. He feels that it's a good idea to talk to the teacher, especially when you're not sure what you're doing in a particular class.

Well, that's really a good tip. So, think of some other things that you've done to help you progress, not only get a better grade, but learn more...

S3: 41. I think you need to have friends. I mean, I went in the classroom...I mean the first day, I went ...I didn't know anybody. Somebody said to me...I talk to him and he talked to me...just asked my name and make friends. So when you don't understand and the teacher talks so fast you can't write it down, you can ask them for a copy of the lecture. And if you make friends, it makes it more...

41. Another very important strategy for success is to have friends in the classroom. He made some friends on his very first day of school. Someone talked to him and he talked back with that person. They learned each other's names and became friends. S3 thinks that classroom friends are very important for sharing lecture notes. If you make friends, it makes college more (?)

And did you usually just talk to the people sitting next to you?

S3: Well, in every class, after awhile, almost everybody knows everybody else.

S3's experience is that after awhile, everybody in a class gets to know

everybody else.

That sounds like a winning recipe to me.

S3: So, one thing is to make friends./

Friends are definitely one way to improve life in college.

Over the years here, have you made some friends who you would consider them friends even outside of the classes?

S3: Oh yeah, most friends...some of my friends, because of our schedules we don't see each other for weeks. Yeah, I talked with them or e-mail them, or after school we meet each other./

He has made some friends whom he still keeps in touch with even if, because of their schedules, they don't see each other for weeks. They communicate by e-mail or see each other after school.

You said something that I did mean to mention... which is email. Do you use e-mail quite a lot? And of course you learned to use that after you got here?

S3: 42. Oh yeah, the first time I ever used e-mail...

42. He started using e-mail after he became a college student here.

Do you e-mail people in other parts of the country, or do you...

S3: I have a friend who goes to school here and his parents live in Canada and I e-mail back to him.../

and uses it to communicate with others, even those in foreign countries.

I wondered because talking to other Hmong students, I found out that they really use e-mail a lot... So, can you think of any other experiences, any suggestions, recommendations? I like the idea of getting to know the professors, getting to know other students. Can you think of any other?

S3: 43. And I don't know...another thing is that you should do a lot of studying.

43. Another suggestion he has is that students should do a lot of studying.

Well, I know that at the beginning you said you would put in five hours or so. Do you

think you put in a lot of time, studying?

S3: I don't know. Like right now, I took a harder time, I need to study more. I go over and over.../

How do you find the time? I mean, with your family and all? Do you study at home? Do you study at the university?

S3: 44. I, it doesn't matter...everywhere. I study alone in the library and when I go home, I lock myself in my room and study.

You do? Your wife understands?

S3: Oh yeah, she understands, yeah.../

Do you think you have to study more because of the English barrier?

S3: Oh yeah, I think so. I don't have enough energy to put everything in writing. I can't keep it all in my head. I mean, like a page, you can't read through and memorize it. You have to read it over and over again until you learn. But not just look at it, and memorize it, you can't do that

Not just glance at it, right...

S3: I don't mind, I don't care how many hours I spend, I just go over and over it. I just do it./

Yes, I'm kind of interested in what Hmong students, or any students who have English as a Second Language, do to deal with the work. Do you still record your lectures?

S3: 45. No.

He started out studying a lot and as his classes have gotten harder, he studies even more. He needs time to go over and over his work.

44. Even if he now has a wife and two children, he studies a lot. He studies by himself in the library and when he goes home he locks himself in his room to study.

His wife is understanding of his situation and helps by making it possible for him to seclude himself and study.

He needs lots of time to study because he doesn't have the energy to put everything in writing and thus has to keep a lot of it in his head. He has to read things over and over until he learns it. He can't learn it by just looking at it and memorizing it. He has to take a lot of time to actually process the material.

He doesn't care how long it takes or how much he has to go over and over the material. He'll do as much as it takes to learn it.

45. At this point he doesn't need to tape-record his lectures any more.

Is it something you just did early?

S3: Yeah, early. Right now...

Do you take notes in class?

S3: Oh yeah, but right now I think I'm better than before. I can catch what the professors say, what it's about. So that helps me so I can do better in the courses./

He has improved quite a bit as far as understanding what the professors are saying. He can catch what they say and can understand what they're talking about, which helps him do much better in his courses.

At the beginning you said that you and your brother came and you were really confused. Were there any other Hmong students here? Did you know anybody else who was a student?

S3: 46. Oh yeah, I knew a lot of them.

46. When he first came here he did, actually know a lot of the other Hmong students who were here, even if he said he didn't know anybody.

But they didn't help you out at the beginning?

S3: Like those Hmong students who have been here, some of them still shy or kind of embarrassed to, like, say words to you in Hmong. Instead they want to say English to you.

The Hmong students who were already here, however, were too shy or embarrassed to acknowledge S3 and his brother, whom they might have considered to be too traditional compared to themselves. If they encountered each other on campus, the others would not say anything to S3 in Hmong language and wanted to speak to him in English only.

Oh... yes, I understand that...

S3: They kind of embarrassed themselves.

He thinks they are ashamed of their Hmong culture and background

Right, they kind of want to be as American as possible...

S3: Oh yeah./

and that they want to be seen as Americans rather than as Hmong.

And so, to meet with someone like you or your brother...

S3: Yeah, even walking by, they say...

They barely acknowledge S3 and his brother, just barely saying hi.

Hi.

S3: They don't look at you.

So, there's kind of a division between the ones who came later and don't know as much English and those who were practically born here?

S3: Oh yeah, and I mean a lot of people, the Hmong students, they've been here before. But we never talk to them and they never talk to us. We try to talk on campus but we never talk to each other. But I think if you talk to them, they have some opinions, they talk to us. But most of them, like I said, they're too embarrassed to talk in Hmong./

Yes, there are Hmong students here who have been going here for awhile, but they don't mix with S3 and his brother. They barely talk to each other. He thinks if he would take the initiative to talk to them that they would reciprocate. But most of them are too embarrassed about their own culture and language.

And, you didn't happen to go through the Upward Bound program?

S3: 47. I went for two years.

47. S3 went to Upward Bound for two years. He became familiar with the campus before coming to college and found it to be a useful program.

And how did you find...did that kind of help you get used to being

S3: I think so, yeah.

Cause you had to come to come on campus and take the summer classes...

S3: Oh yeah, that helps a lot. And that helped me, yeah, that helped me./

Well, not you've mentioned a few things that I'm kind of interested in. A little bit hard to put into words, but it's like, the

whole idea of saying that yes, I'm Hmong or no, I'm just another person... How do you feel, do you feel like a Hmong person or a foreign student... or, I mean, do you have any feelings about your identity?

S3: 48. To me, I'm feeling, I'm Hmong...definitely. I can't change myself, I can't change my hair, I can't change my nose, I can't change my skin. Everybody asks me, where are you from? Who are you? I always tell them I'm Hmong. They say, some Americans they ask, What? Where's Hmong? Where's Hmong country? And I told them, I'm Hmong. But Hmong just traditional...our clothes, our language, that's Hmong. But we don't have any country. We lived back in Laos. Laos is Laotian and they don't know that Hmong is in Lao. Why you from Laos and you're not Lao, you're Hmong? We are not Lao, we are Hmong and we are part of Laos. We are a small group of people. We have our own language, we have our own traditional customs. So that's Hmong, so we are Hmong./

Yeah.

S3: 48. So those people, they embarrassed themselves, they don't like to be Hmong. I think that's a shame. They don't think about their parents when their parents are gone. Most of the Hmong in Missoula right now, they have their parents, their own grandparents, their cousins...most speak Hmong but they speak English. But some of the kids they go to school and they're so embarrassed of themselves and they can't express themselves in Hmong./

Were you at the Hmong New Year?

48. S3 is very adamant about his cultural identity. He is definitely Hmong. "To me, I'm feeling, I'm Hmong...definitely. I can't change myself, I can't change my skin. Everybody asks me, where are you from? Who are you? I always tell them I'm Hmong. They, some Americans, they ask, What? Where's Hmong? Where's Hmong country? And I told them, I'm Hmong. Hmong is just traditional...our clothes, our language, that's Hmong. But we don't have any country. We lived back in Laos. Laos is Laotian and they don't know that Hmong is in Lao. Why you from Laos and you're not Lao, you're Hmong? We are not Laotian, we are Hmong and we are part of Laos. We are a small group of people. We have our own language, we have our own traditional customs. So that's Hmong, so we are Hmong."

48. So some of the Hmong college students here are embarrassed about their Hmong heritage. S3 thinks that's a shame. Those students are not being considerate of their parents and what they have done for them. Most of the Hmong in Missoula are not so removed from their Hmong culture...their parents, grandparents, and cousins still speak Hmong and try to preserve their culture. But the kids who are in school will only speak English and not Hmong. They are losing their Hmong culture and language.

S3: 49. Oh yeah.

And did you see that guy... and did you like him? I thought he was saying something similar to what you just said... about kids who pretend that they're not Hmong and so they never speak Hmong. And when they go home everyone is speaking Hmong. And the young people... it's kind of a problem?

S3: I don't know. I mean, I'm proud to be Hmong.

And do you find that most people don't know the history of the Hmong?

S3: Oh yes, even today, I went to class and my teacher say, where is Hmong? They say, What? they never know about Hmong. But I'm still proud of it. I'm Hmong, I'm really Hmong. I will always speak Hmong, eat Hmong food. And my wife speak Hmong and my children speak Hmong. I teach them how to speak Hmong. And I mean I teach them to speak English, to go to school. But when they come home, they have to speak Hmong./

Right, so you want them to be bi-cultural...

S3: 50. Yeah, my great grandparents, they live back in Laos. OK, why didn't they become Laos, you know? They still want to teach their customs, their traditional back to their children like me. And they never became Laotian, they still Hmong. And even though we came to this country, I think it's really important to have your Hmong... If your great grandparents

49. S3 was at the Hmong New Year when a visiting performer dramatized the generation gap that he has just described.

S3 is proud to be Hmong.

Even today in one of his classes, one of his professors asks him where are the Hmong from? Very few people here know anything about the Hmong. But he is still proud of it. "I'm Hmong, I'm really Hmong. I will always be Hmong, I will always speak Hmong, my wife speak Hmong and my children speak Hmong. And I mean I will teach them to speak English to go to school. but when they come home they have to speak Hmong. He wants them to be bi-cultural.

50. His great-grandparents, who lived in Laos never became Laotian. They maintained their Hmong customs and language and taught them to their children like himself. They never became Laotian, they still remained Hmong. Even though they are now in America, he still thinks it is really important to retain Hmong culture. As with his grandparents, who never became Laotian, he too believes that

became Laotian, then we all became Laotian.

Hmong culture is carried with them wherever they go.

But they kept their culture... kept their own culture...

S3: Yeah, so we shouldn't, we should learn from our great-grandparents.

He feels that they should learn that lesson from their grandparents and work to keep their culture alive.

So for Hmong, it's not so much where they live, it's more the keeping of the language and the customs and...

S3: Yeah.

Cause there's Hmong now, all over. I mean not all over but...

S3: Yeah, I think there's Hmong in China. My great great grandfather comes from China and they speak Chinese but they still are Hmong, But they have Chinese...they change the name.../

His great great grandparents lived in China, and although he thinks they spoke Chinese and even had Chinese names, they still retained their Hmong identity.

Well, this is kind of getting off my thing about college, but what do you think is the future for the Hmong? I mean, like, do you think that enough Hmong think like you and want to keep Hmong culture strong, or do you think that more are like... oh, we're just Americans...?

S3: 51. I think more...I don't know why...I think we should educate more to know about Hmong.

51. S3 believes that they should educate more of their own youth to know about Hmong culture.

To keep the spirit alive?

S3: 52. I mean in the past we don't have anybody to talk about it...to...Well, we're going to an American school and why don't we just keep the new traditions? Forget the old? Well, me...I feel differently./

52. He feels that today's youth are becoming so much of the American mainstream, so interested in new traditions, that they want to forget the old. He definitely feels differently about this and believes that the old should be

Well, I'm glad that there are people like you. What do your parents think about it? Are they afraid of...?

S3: 53. They're afraid of it. They're not afraid of me but they see their grandchildren...They talk a lot about it. Teach your children to keep your culture, language. We talk about it. Our parents encourage our children to remember who they are. And having a son in the family...it's really important to keep your last name./ 54. It's really important to...

53. The older generation is very much afraid of the generation gap that is personified in their own grandchildren. They talk about it a lot. They encourage young parents to teach their children to keep their culture and language and to remember who they are. He and others of his generation also talk about it. Having a son in the family is a good way to ensure the perpetuation of the family name, at least.

54. It's really important to have sons, who hopefully, will also carry on Hmong traditions.

So you probably feel lucky to have two sons?

S3: Oh yeah, hopefully they will be like.../

Oh yeah, what do people think about... like, I've heard that in big cities especially, like with gangs? The teenagers are kind of going wild...

S3: 55. I've been once in Minnesota and they were shooting each other...

55. S3 had been to Minnesota where he has seen Hmong gangs in action. He has actually seen someone kill another person, a horrible thought to him.

Really shooting... guns?

S3: Yeah, they were really shooting and one was dead. And how...I don't know why...but to me, I would never use a gun like that./ 56. And some of them were born here and they don't realize how much their parents sacrificed. And their families back in Laos and the Americans.../ 57. and so

56. Some of the gang members were Hmong youth who were born here. They don't realize how much their parents and families sacrificed for them to be able to come to America. They aren't thinking about their families back in Laos and the Americans who ???.

my strategy is to do well here. And I think about my friends and my experiences back in Thailand and in the camps and how they cannot go to school And me, I'm here, and I...

And are there still some of your friends back there?

S3: Oh yeah.

So that's still very much alive... the memory of that?

S3: Oh, these days I still dream about being in the camp...

Do you?

S3: Yeah, I still have that dream...in the camp...worried...can't go to school. In my experience, I was.../

Makes you really treasure your time here. Can you think of any other thoughts... doesn't necessarily have to do with school... that you think about?

S3: 58. So education is key. So if you think about school...if you quit school right now, you can go to a restaurant and be a dishwasher. You can work for...I can't do...those people in this country who don't have a diploma, they can't do anything./

Do you think that is something that... obviously you realize that, and everyone in college realizes that, your parents it sounds like they understand that too?

S3: 59. Oh yeah, they know that.

So is everyone in your family in college or

57. His strategy is to do well here. When he thinks about his friends and experiences back in the Thai refugee camps, and remembers some of his friends who are still there and who cannot get an education as he is now able to.

He still dreams about his experiences of being in the camp, when he was so worried and he couldn't go to school.

58. S3 feels that education is the key to success in America. He has seen that if you quit school you could get a job in a restaurant or some other menial job, which he does not want to be doing. He has seen that if you don't have a diploma you can't do anything worthwhile here.

59. This is something that not only he understands, but so do his parents.

some kind of schooling?

S3: Two of my older brothers didn't finish high school and they are working...

And although his older brothers couldn't continue with their education because they got married and had to work to support their families, several others in his family are now in college.

In Missoula?

S3: And my sister is in school.

So just you and X got the idea to go to college... do you think your older brothers didn't come to college because they were too old and their English just wasn't...

S3: And especially have a wife and working, you need some money...

Is your wife working?

S3: Oh yeah, she is sewing at X factory.

His wife is working to help support their family while he is in college.

Is she thinking of coming to school someday?

S3: She thinks about it but she...

Who babysits?

S3: My mother./

His mother helps by babysitting while his wife works.

Can you think of any last words to say?

S3: 60. I think in college, you have to be yourself. I mean, nobody else helps you. Be yourself. If you give up that's it. You say to yourself, I'll keep going no matter what./

60. S3 believes that in college you have to be self-sufficient and self-motivated. Nobody else helps but yourself. You have to keep pushing yourself to reach your goals. If you give up, that's it.

In a way though, you do have people encouraging you... your parents...

S3: 61. My wife, my uncle, my children. When they grow up, they would be disappointed...

So you do have people who will be proud of you.

S3: So many people encourage me and support me./

But you have to have the drive...

S3: 62. I think you have to have...(more about the division between the Americanized an non-Americanized Hmong in the Missoula community)

61. He does have quite a lot of support or pressure from his wife, his uncle, and his children. He does not want to disappoint any of them.

So many people encourage him and support him even though he has to do the work himself.

S3, Level Three, (Narrative Based on Emergent Themes)

The subject and his parents believe that without a college education, they won't survive in the United States. They believe that education is the key to success in America. Although his parents feel that they are too old to get an education themselves, S. and some of his siblings are still of an educable age and so they are really given a lot of encouragement and pressure to get college degrees. Although his older brothers had to drop out of high school to support their families, he and another brother and a sister are still in college. S. believes that without a diploma he would be stuck in a menial job in a restaurant as a dishwasher. He has observed that without a diploma, people in this country can't get ahead. Lots of people, including his wife, his uncle, and his own children, would be disappointed if he did not finish college.

When he started in college everything was very confusing because he didn't know anyone who could help him adjust. He did attend the Upward Bound Program for two years, where he made some good friends. When he started college, however, he was overwhelmed by the huge size of the classes (some of which had nearly a hundred fifty students in the class) as compared to small classes in high school.

The subject felt great when he got really good grades in his first semester. He got a 3.4 gpa. That made both him and his parents very proud. His grades worsened in his second semester, but he still feels that he is doing fine. He thinks that in college he has to be self-motivated, and that he needs to tell himself not to give up and that will keep him going, no matter what!

He also, however, thinks it's really important to have friends to help with the adjustment to college life. He has made several friends, including one who was his journal partner in an EOP class he took. His journal partner became a "real friend" by continuing to talk to him despite the fact that his English was pretty limited at the time. She suggested that he get a tutor for his Computer Science class and that tutor also became a friend. He observes that in every class, everybody gets to know everybody else after awhile.

The lectures in his Computer Science class were a major problem at first, as the course was taught in a large classroom and he could not understand anything the teacher was talking about. On the advice of his journal partner he started taping all of his lectures, reading the textbook and spending hours and hours going over and the tapes. He learns by reading his work over and over. He learns the material by repetition. He rarely has the energy to put everything into writing and so he relies on re-reading to learn things. He used this technique a lot in the beginning until his English started to improve and he could eventually understand the lectures in class. His strategy is to work as hard as he can.

When he moved to a tougher level of classes, his grades started to drop off. He did especially poorly in classes outside his major, especially Biology. Tutoring was not as effective in Biology as it was in other classes. He can't see any good reason why he has to take Biology and other general education classes that are not in his major. He has problems in those classes because he's not interested in them and also because classes like History, Psychology, and Interpersonal Communications are particularly difficult because of his poor English skills level. Another problem with some classes (like

Biology) is that one's performance on the major exams is the only thing that counts, whereas in other classes like Math, homework grades also count, which help him get a better grade. Despite some failures, he perseveres. He is determined to do it, no matter what. If he doesn't pass one course it doesn't affect his other courses. His motto is, "when it's over, it's over..." just keep going"

Another positive connection he has made has been to establish good communications with some of his teachers. He feels comfortable going to talk with some of them if he's not clear about some of the subject matter. By talking about the subject over and over again he begins to understand it. Some instructors are really nice and understand his predicament. They are willing to talk with him about things. His computer science instructor was particularly friendly and talked with him not only about the subject but also wanted to know about S. as a person, about his background, his education, and his experiences. They would ask each other questions. S. felt that the instructor got to know him quite well. His English teacher "really liked him" and he felt comfortable going to talk with her. He recommends that Hmong students, especially "if someone else does not have good enough English", should talk with their professors. He feels that other Hmong and foreign students probably have the same problems he does.

The subject has a strong sense of his own identity and is very proud to be Hmong ... "I can't change myself... I can't change my hair, I can't change my nose, I can't change my skin. He is happy to explain his background to others because he is very proud of his past. Everybody asks me, Where are you from? Who are you? I always tell them... I'm Hmong. They say, some Americans, they ask. What? Where's Hmong? Where's Hmong country? And I told them, I'm Hmong, but Hmong is just traditional. Our clothes, our language, that's Hmong. But we don't have any country... we are a small group of people. We have our own language. We have our own traditional customs. So that's Hmong. So we are Hmong." He would like to be like his grandparents and great grandparents who kept their separate Hmong culture and identity alive despite the fact that they lived in Laos and before that in China. He does, however, remember Laos himself. He also remembers what it's like back in Thailand in the camps back there. He still has dreams of being there... being worried, and not being able to go to school.

So many modern Hmong are embarrassed about their heritage and do not keep their Hmong language. Many have lost their way, and in Minnesota, S. says Hmong youth are shooting each other. He doesn't know why they were doing that. He believes that they don't realize how much their parents and their families back in Laos sacrificed for them to be here.

He did know a lot of other Hmong students when he first came on campus but some of the Hmong students who were born here were either too shy or "kind of embarrassed" to talk to him and his brother in their own language. They wanted to speak English... they were embarrassed to talk to each other in Hmong. They would say hi, but wouldn't look at them. They never talk to them and likewise. And when they do talk, they're too embarrassed to speak Hmong.

He, however, insists that his family keep Hmong traditions and speak Hmong at home, even his kids. He wants them to be bicultural and to be able to speak both English and Hmong. He is happy that he has two sons in the family as they are important to keeping tradition alive. S. does notice a generation gap, however. He thinks that young

people should be educated to know more about their Hmong history, especially since they are going to American schools and might be tempted to keep new traditions and forget the old. His parents fear that their grandchildren might be losing their culture and their language. They all talk about it. His parents encourage their grandchildren to remember who they are.

Appendix G

S4, Levels One-Three

S4, Level One, (Verbatim Transcript)

12-17-99

Approximately one hour

So, this is the question—just try to describe, or think of some of experiences, important college situations that you have experienced, they could be recently or they could be long...when you first came, it doesn't matter... can you think of anything?

S4: Uhum...one thing I know, there's a lot about computers...I didn't know anything. When I first came here I wasn't much...I'm not familiar with computers, so...and the only thing I go is when I have something to do, but I wasn't comfortable enough to go and operate a computer by myself. Now that I'm more comfortable I find myself going more often. And now someone...takes a lot of going...I feel more comfortable...I think as I get along with the years I'm so much more comfortable with the school system...and all the people I meet, especially the...they help me out...

So would you say, to back up, the whole bit about computers and also just feeling more comfortable, would you say that when you first started you felt quite uncomfortable and you...

S4: Yeah, I feel quite uncomfortable and kind of afraid...scared...you didn't know what it's going to be like and you kinda shaky and you don't know where to go and you have this question...and you don't know who to go to...

Right... well, can you remember any experiences when you were new that kind of illustrates that...feeling uncomfortable or feeling scared or something...

S4: Well, some of the classes they...well, turn in the papers the first time, and you have to correct the grammar...like in English class...I know there were some places on campus where they can help but I didn't know where to go so you...running around...you don't know how you're going to go...who you're going to ask...

Right. Well, so you knew there was some place to get help but...

S4: Yeah, but I wasn't sure where it is...so I thought I'd skip the...

Well what did you do... let's think of some... did you finally, did you just try to struggle on your own, make some corrections?

S4: Yeah, I spent hours and hours doing it myself. If I had to turn it in a couple of times, that's what I what happened...yeah, but it just makes it worse...harder to...to go over it would save a lot of time...

And then you said something about...getting more and more familiar as the years have gone along...and can you think of some ways that that has happened?

S4: Uhhum...well, I was kind of afraid to go and talk to the professor

Oh, OK...

S4: Well, I think most of my life I was kind of shy person so I'm not...so, in class, I don't usually raise my hand...shy...

And now, how about now...

S4: Yeah, now, more like that...more comfortable talking...

Well, who are some professors that you...well, can you think of any...maybe describe to me some kind of time when you went to talk to a professor...

S4: Well, in my math class, I uhhh...right after class I went to talk to my professor...

What kind of class was that...which math class?

S4: Pre-calculus...so I went in and...

Oh, did you feel comfortable, going in?

S4: Yeah, uhhuh...not...

What other things can we think of...those are exactly the kinds of things I'm trying to hear about, learn about...

S4: And also, I think the only...I'm glad that I can talk to X. and talk about...

Well, you knew about her because of Upward Bound?

S4: Yeah, Upward Bound.

Well, would you say that Upward Bound is a good thing for...

S4: Yeah, I think so...I think that's great...

Well, I know that one of things you mentioned is that you met X... who then could continue with you ... were there some other good things that came out of that program for you?

S4: Uhhum, yeah...my last year there we took college courses...

Uhhumm... so you got a little bit more familiar with being on campus...

S4: So you begin to feel a little bit comfortable but not...

So did you keep going back to the Upward Bound office even after you...

S4: Yeah, yeah, I still go there now...yeah, once in awhile...just say hi and see how things are going...a lot of those guys they go between classes...

Oh really, they just keep checking back in there and...

S4: Yeah, just keep going back.

Oh that's great... let's see, let's back up a little... you went , you did the Upward Bound Program, you met X. and then you kept coming

Silence

S4: Yeah, that's all...

Uhhum... let's think a little while, now those are some positive things that have happened... like you're saying, you gradually got more comfortable being here, you got to know computers... uhhum, would you say that's a skill that's really valuable, even if you were not a computer science major?

S4: Yeah, I think that's very valuable, without knowing anything about computers it's going to be hard to get by, I think in all the classes. Almost half the classes you take require some kind of paper...go in there it's great...the best part is that the labs are almost full...so there's a line, you have to wait, try to find a spot...a lot of them are filled up...

So do you use e-mail quite a bit?

S4: Not a lot...

But would you say you use the computer room almost every day?

S4: Yeah, right now, basically every day, but where I work, we have a computer in the room so I just use...

Oh you work at a computer lab?

S4: No, I ... where I work we have a couple of them...we have the ESL program...we have ten computers in the room that are provided...

Oh... well, tell me a little more about that program then... where is it?

S4: Oh, it's at Hellgate High School...what it is...Hmong students, but also Russian students and Hmong students ...well the students come in with their work...and any questions they have any subject in school...Yeah, we have to be there to answer the questions. If they have any questions we have to give them the resources they have there...we have lots of books and computers and lot of time we have to be prepared to ...everything, almost everything...

How many, how long have you been doing that?

S4: Uhhum, this is my fifth? year...

And do you feel that you have learned something... does that help you ... this is what I'm wondering... if being a tutor helps you to be a student... does it? Do you feel some carry over? There is? What can you tell me...

S4: Yeah...I think being a tutor is really tough but then at the same time you realize that learning is fun. Uhhum, there I was once...I watch them at exactly the same level...

Really, so do you see yourself in those students?

S4: Yeah...I see myself, it's like...I walk through the same stuff they do...and I tell them it's your task...I'm just a couple of steps ahead of you...and going back through the steps I see it wasn't easy...I look back and see that I did push myself a little bit...it gives me the self confidence to learn some things that...especially like some of the subjects like History...it's one of the tough subjects for the immigrants, I mean, the Hmong students...

This is really... yeah, of course it would be, yeah...

S4: Yeah, so every year I help students with either government or history...

And you have to be able to tutor any subject, no matter what...

S4: Yeah, any subject.

So, you have to be up on it yourself...

S4: Yeah, so last time...I have this work of my own at school and also I have...

The tutoring...

S4: Yeah, so the kids they're doing chapter seven or eight and they're learning this and this...so maybe, I grab the book the day before and look it over so the next day when the kid comes in...uhhum...we can get going, but a lot of the times the teachers over there they...so if you don't understand you can just go up and ask them and ask them...

And who are your supervisors over there?

S4: Oh...X.

So, she kind of...how many of you work at one time, tutoring like, when you go at a certain time, are you the only one?

S4: No, me and T. go together, right now we work together so our schedule is pretty much flexible...

So, being a tutor...it hasn't inspired you to be a teacher?

S4: No, actually, it kept me away from being a teacher...

(Laughter)

S4: I don't know, it's really challenging...here in town...well, my first year I had about five Hmong students that they had just been here about two years, very low you know, so we had to do one on one. And just in that period one would have Math test and one would have English test...so within minutes you have to switch your head back and forth so that was very stressful for me...and a lot of times, you know, I just read the book and have to answer questions. I don't want to say something that's wrong, you know, but I couldn't just...

Yeah, you really had to do a lot of preparation work...

S4: Yeah, but at the same time I learned a lot from the students...

You learned a lot...aahh...Do you think that kind of a system could work at the University...Hmong students tutoring other Hmong students? For example in advanced Math...or perhaps in other course...I don't know...

S4: Yeah...

I mean because you aren't the first person who said that they learned a lot by being a tutor in the Bilingual Program... and you know they were quite excited about it... so, I guess I should talk to X. and find out how she does that program.

S4: Uhhuh...I think that's pretty important...I know my brother X. he asked me a lot of questions, like how the school is...what classes are good and what kind of stuff...even that, you might find out about this class and that...while you are tutored, maybe an hour a week...and I don't know...well some people they just feel more comfortable with someone they talk to a lot...I feel more comfortable that way...yeah, last year I had a tutor and that's the first time I had...

You had a tutor, through us... and what was your experienced then?

S4: It was good, I found out her really helpful. I had never met her before...and we met...and she was...

So that was a good experience there... was that the first time you had had a tutor...

S4: Uhhum...yeah and...?

Do you know what some of the qualities were that she had that you thought were good?

S4: The subject I took, pre-calculus...she pretty much know about...

She was really knowledgeable...

S4: Yeah, so that helps a lot...and if you ask her questions, she would help or she would go out and look it up for you...after she would go home...

Huummm... interesting... uhhumm... have you had any horrible experiences here... really bad ones... or even not really bad ones... but... more on the negative side?

S4: No...other than registering for classes...

Registering for classes? How?

S4: A lot of times I didn't...last couple of years I wasn't able to register until the very end...so by the time I got to it, it's all filled up, so, getting the class you wanted wasn't the first choice...so...yeah...

So, have you been usually stuck with the classes... or...you know sometimes you can register for a class and then...

S4: But it was kind of hard...back when I first started I couldn't get into my classes but the last couple of years it's better...I remember when we used to...

Oh, I can barely remember those days... how times have changed... Now we don't have to stick to classes as such, but maybe just being in college, what has it meant to you... and to your family and to maybe your self concept or your goals... can you think of something that you've thought of...

S4: Yeah, I think it is culture stuff I think of...

So had you always been motivated... I mean, since you were little, you think... I'm going to college... I'm going to do this, I'm going to do that...

S4: I know I'm not...my family background...my parents never had any higher education, they never had the opportunity to go to school, but they know that and that's the one thing they want ...but, they pass the motivation...

So your parents... about how old are your parents?

S4: They're mid- fifty no forty four or forty seven...

But you have their support... they wanted you to go to college...

S4: Yeah that's the big deal...my parents put the big pressure on me...but at the same time, I put the pressure on myself to finish...if I do I'll be the first one in my family...yeah

Yeah, you're a junior... when do you think you'll graduate... what year...

S4: I'm not sure...I just got to get better grades...

Are you almost done with your general education requirements?

S4: Yeah, just one class or two...

Good...yeah...

S4: Hopefully not too long. I'm going to try to take...

So your family definitely wants you to finish college...and you say it's stressful and yet it's... it's positive and negative... And they do understand the difficulty of it all?

S4: But, personally I think it's the most important thing...nowdays to find a job out there without an education...it's tough out there trying to make a living...

Right, so you see that it's competitive and you need a college education, yeah...and you say you do have some friends or relatives or people who are already out there in the job world...and do you talk with them very much...I mean, is there a lot of, sort of...

S4: Yeah, uhm, when we were young you know, go to school together, hang out together like stay a couple of years together and afterward we went to college when we graduate you cannot guarantee we stick together...

Right, so this is a bunch of your friends

S4: Yeah, all scattered all over...

Is there kind of a competition going...like, oh...so and so has a good paying job.

S4: Yeah, that's what it is...yeah...well, my class...

Who would be some of the people your age who you hung around with...

S4: Uhhum...the class I graduated with...there was no one but two years before me, there was...

That would have been, X.?

S4: Yeah, X. was there and...

I should interview X.

S4: X. and then X1. and X2.

X. ahh, he went to Spokane...those guys are a little bit older than you...ahead of you.

S4: I think T...is still here, I don't seem them every day but once in awhile I do...they all have a decent job, they even got a family...

Uh-huh...well you've got a family too now...

S4: Yeah, so, now OK, now...

You're getting there...

S4: Now it's like, I've got to go there...

Is there, among the Hmong young people, is there getting to be a quite large group of college graduate types...or college students...a group there?

S4: Yeah...

And would you consider...you're part of that, I take it...

S4: Yeah, some day...hopefully. But, actually, we have a pretty small community

Missoula community here....

S4: Yeah, so that...?...pretty comfortable community

Pretty small community...And is this the only community you've experienced in America? Or have you lived in Minnesota or...

S4: No, this is the only one...

Yeah, for this group...there actually is a large number of students who have gone on to college...

S4: Yeah, when I first came to school there were only three or four of us and now there are at least over twenty five...

Yes, exactly...in fact, I needed to look that up for this research that I'm doing...and I saw that in 1993, 1994...there were only three or four students...so I didn't realize you were one of the first group...

S4: Yeah...it was in Upward Bound and X. (who went to Bozeman)

Were you the only one to stay here?

S4: Yeah, from the U.B. program...It was two of us that year.

Then who came in next...the next year...I don't remember either...And when you're on campus, do you hang around with Hmong other Hmong students?

S4: Umm...no, once in awhile...but usually we just wave and say, hey, how you doing and that's it...but I don't...

Uhhh...and maybe if you could describe kind of a typical day or a typical week...like this semester? I'm kind of interested in whether you stay on campus very much or do you go home or go to work ...or what's a typical kind of schedule...

S4: Well my class and I go to work and then I come back and forth...

So, how many hours to you put in at Hellgate...

S4: 19 hours.

So a typical day you might work there...maybe half a day?

S4: An hour, then walk back and forth...then go home.

Then you go home...like, do you study on campus, do you use the computer labs?

S4: Sometimes...I use the computer labs...

And I know you said that you've been feeling more and more comfortable here...and would you sort of have the feeling like, this is my campus...I mean, do you feel that way about it?

S4: Uhhumm...no, I never think of it that way...but I feel more familiar with knowing what things are...I ask questions...knowing what help is available...

And I think you said you feel comfortable talking to professors...

S4: Yeah...

Speaking out in classes...

S4: Yeah...

We'll stop pretty soon...I just wanted to see...can you think of anything else?

S4: Well, one year, it was, I took a history class and one of the professor I think, was from India...so we have to ask him...when he talked...so he was up there, he lectured went up there and he talked and was showing slides, and I couldn't understand him at all...but he asked the whole class to...I ended up taking too much notes...and that was really hard...that was really tough...

Did you drop the class or did you stay in it?

S4: I stayed in it ...its pretty tough...there were two professors, one ...they switched off...the other one I could understand well but the one from India, I couldn't. Speaker was a pretty good professor, but his accent, I couldn't understand...yeah, so for a week, two weeks, I just couldn't understand...they make you feel like, oh gosh, should I go to class or not...I'm not going to understand at all...so my other resource was to use the worksheet and to use the book...so that kind of...that class a lot of time they showed slides and videos that's why I finally got used to it.

Well that's very interesting to me because I'm interested in what people do...when either they can't understand the professor or they can't understand the book...or they can't understand this or that...so sounds like you had to...the lectures were useless to you, so you had to rely on the worksheet....

S4: Which...the book was only a small book...it was a novel...most of the time he gave lectures, slides, videos...

And it didn't help to see the pictures...the videos?

S4: One other thing...the good part...???...he mainly talked about religion and that was...

Foreign to you?

S4: Totally, I didn't know the first thing about it...I mean, Oh, my god, you know...so I'm glad...I got used to the professor...finally got used to it...but it was too hard, you know...

Well, let me get back to the whole idea of Asians...say, yourself being an Asian...taking a class like that you would think you would know something but it turns out you don't...

S4: Well, I'm not sure what the title of the class was...Asian Studies...I thought it might go over an include Laos and China...

But it didn't....

S4: It didn't so everyone in there...he touched a little bit on stuff that I knew about but about 90% of the time he really focused on India...and I totally didn't know...I know about their culture and their traditions...but I think by listening to the lecture, I realize that this is nothing....

Well, that's an eye opener! Did you have any other classes like that, that you can kind of...that really stand out for some reason or other? I mean, that one sounds like you remember that one...for sure...

S4: Yeah, that one for sure...I did pass the class...

Well, we won't stay too much longer...you're probably getting tired...

OK, can we think of anything else, like that...those are good stories...

S4: That was one of...

One that you really remember...

S4: And one other thing, when I first came...ah, back in High School...most classes that I'm in have 35, 40 students...and in my college classes, I kept wondering...one time, I was talking to a friend of mine who said, if you go to college, nobody cares if you do your work...the class is so huge, the teacher is not going to call on you every day...like in high school...there are hundreds and hundreds of students...I said, like, oh, is that how it is? So I go, yeah, but anyway, lectures...geology or something...walked into a huge lecture hall...for Upward Bound...I actually walked into the class that had that huge lecture...oh god, you feel like, oh Jesus...and also, the professor talked and doesn't say, oh you supposed to take notes this way or that way...where in high school the teacher write everything on the board...but here he talked and talked and talked...and at that time, you know, I didn't know about note-taking and I thought there's no way I can get all this information...in time.

And it really wasn't a matter of English either...it was a matter of the amount...and the fact that he never did write on the board...so you had to hear it..yeah...

S4: Yeah, and he doesn't stop, give you time to write it down...

So, did you remember what you did? You just didn't have very good notes...or did you...

S4: I did...I took notes...I asked some other students....

And you felt comfortable enough to do that...

S4: Yeah, I have to...there's no other way...and the good part is that we had a good book..

Yeah, especially since you didn't get that much from the lecture...you could use the book...

S4: ???? I was pretty shocked going into a class that big.

That huge...

S4: Yeah, I had heard about it....

Yeah, that's a real college experience...Now, I suppose...

S4: It's OK. I realize...

Have you had any classes that are really small...like where there are only a few of you?

----Break in the tape--

Can we go over that again...because that is exactly what I want to know...that is what to Hmong students...what can Hmong students suggest...for themselves and for others?

S4: Yeah, well T. and I discussed about this, like down in California where a lot of Hmong live...they actually have a Hmong literature class...

Well, there's actual Hmong history class...I know that...(about Santa Barbara)—I loaned him the book -Hmong means Free-(and related it to his idea of a similar class here)...

S4: Well we were suggesting that we could have a class here...I think that would help us...that would expose our culture...not only to our people but to others...in some kind of class...that would give them a little bit of an idea where we come from...I go around a lot...in class people ask me, where you come from? They have no idea of where I came from or who I am.

And even if you tell them, they don't know where it is...

S4: Yeah...so if you do have a class you could talk about these things...that would help a lot...

Yes, and now as you say, we're having more and more of you who are graduating...or who are students and are able to articulate to speak in English... to be able to talk about it to others...

S4: Cause I know, me myself, I don't know even half of the Hmong tradition...so a lot of kids nowadays they grow up and they are losing a lot of their traditions...

And how do you feel about it...well I know that there's kind of a generational difference...uhhum...are you part of the group that feels like you would like to keep some of the history?

S4: I think that, to a point, we should try to keep our traditions...it's tough living in two environments at the same time but I believe that it's possible. I think we should...family and friends.

You know I went to the Hmong New Year and I saw that performer...and I was thinking that the reason he was there was to talk to the younger generation...to kind of not lose their way...and so I thought that was a message that was aimed at the younger generation so they wouldn't lose their culture...

S4: I think I feel the same...

X. was the guy who...So who was the guy you were talking about?

S4: T.

Oh T. I'll talk to him about it when I see him tomorrow.

S4: Yeah somehow, I don't know how, but we just talked up and we kind of discussed it over and I told him, great!...Yeah, now we have over ten students, fifteen...

Twenty...and last year there were more...there were twenty seven...I can't get an accurate count, for some reason...we could make a list...but it's somewhere between twenty and twenty two or something...but that's a big group now...getting to be a big group.

S4: We had the Hmong Association.

Yes, well, is it functioning anymore?

S4: No, it's not functioning any more

Were you part of that?

S4: I was part of it and...

What do you think about that now, as far as reviving it...maybe...bringing it back?

S4: I tried, L...

Were you the president?

S4: No, I wasn't the president I wasn't here much of the time, I was working at the same time...X. would tell me...how can we get more students to come...

Well, it's kind of hard to revive something like that...everybody is so busy...well maybe once or month or something...uhmm...you know, if you get interested in starting something up...I'll be happy to see what I can do from this end of things...actually, S. was big in getting things going, being an advisor and all of that, and it doesn't necessarily have to be the way it was...you know the way it was it was an ASUM club...kind of gets...there's so much red tape...it doesn't necessarily have to be that...but something...do you think there would be a lot of support...the other students.

S4: I think so...we always

I know...one of the reasons is that there's no place you can really meet...no place to hang out...except maybe the Upward Bound office but not all of them are connected to UB...you know...yes, there's no place or one....

S4: But you do have the club...it can be social...

Yeah, socialize...you know those of you who are in college have a lot that's different from your parents or your little brothers and sisters...and you know, its a specific group of students...socialize is one thing, help each other with academics, like what's a good class to take, what order should you take classes in, what majors are good...that's helpful information that doesn't get to some people...some people take classes and fail because they're in the wrong ...Yeah, well...some ideas were to teach a class, another is to have a kind of social club, do something together, go to dinner or have coffee...

S4, Level Two, (Spontaneous Meaning Units)

So, this is the question: Just try to describe, think of some experiences, important college situations that you have experienced...they could be recently or they could be long... when you first came...it doesn't matter. Can you think of anything?

S4. 1. Uhhum...one thing I know...there's a lot of computers. I didn't know anything when I first came here. I wasn't much...I'm not familiar with computers. So, and the only thing I go is when I have something to do, but I wasn't comfortable enough to go and operate a computer by myself. / 2. Now that I'm more comfortable, I find myself going more often. And now, someone...takes a lot of going. I feel more comfortable. I think as I get along with the years, I'm so much more comfortable with the school system and all the people I meet, especially the? they help me out.../

So would you say, to back up... the whole bit about computers and also just feeling more comfortable... would you say that when you first started you felt quite uncomfortable... and you...

S4. 3. Yeah, I feel quite uncomfortable and kind of afraid...scared. You didn't know what its going to be like and you kinda shaky and you don't know where to go, and you have this question...and you don't know who to go to.../

1. S4 was overwhelmed at first by computers. He was not familiar with them and he wasn't comfortable enough to experiment by himself.

2. Now, however, he is much more comfortable with the school system and with the people he has met.

3. At first he was uncomfortable and kind of afraid, scared, shaky, and he didn't know where to turn to find the answers to his questions.

Right... well so you knew there was some place to get help, but...

S4. Yeah, but I wasn't sure where it is. So I thought I'd skip the.../

Well, what did you do? Let's think of some... did you finally, did you just try to struggle on your own... make some corrections?

S4. 4. Well, some of the classes, they...well, turn in the papers the first time, you have to correct the grammar, like in English class. I know there were some places on campus where they can help, but I didn't know where to go so, you running around, you don't know where to go, who you're going to ask.../to...to go over. It would save a lot of time.../

4. This was especially true in English class. He knew there was someplace to get help but because he couldn't find help he just did without.

S4. 5. Yeah, I spent hours and hours doing it myself. If I had to turn it in a couple of times, that's what happened. Yeah, but it just makes it worse...harder, right...

5. He spent hours doing it by himself, which made it even tougher.

Well, can you remember any experiences when you were new that kind of illustrates that feeling uncomfortable or feeling scared or something? And then you said something about getting more and more familiar as the years have gone along. And can you think of some ways that that has happened?

S4. 6. Uhhum...well, I was kind of afraid to go and talk to the professor.

6. He was afraid to go to the professor.

S4. 7. Well, I think most of my life I was kind of shy person, so I'm not so...in class, I don't usually raise my hand...shy.../

7. Most of his life he's been a shy person and so in class he doesn't usually raise his hand.

And now, how about now?

S4. 8. Yeah, now, more like that...more comfortable talking.../

8. But now he's more comfortable talking in class.

Well, who are some professors that you... well, can you think of any? Maybe describe to me some kind of time when you went to talk to a professor...

S4. 9. Well, in my math class, I, uhuh...right after class I went to talk to my professor.

9. After his pre-calculus class he even talked with his professor.

What kind of class was that? Which math class?

S4. Pre-calculus. So I went in and.../

Oh, did you feel comfortable going in?

S4. Yeah, uhuh..not.../

What other things can we think of... those are exactly the kinds of things I'm trying to hear about... learn about.

S4. 10. And also, I think the only...I'm glad that I can talk to X., and talk about...

10. Through the Upward Bound program, S. met X., a counselor, who continued to help him after he entered college. He still hangs out at the Upward Bound office but not as much as others do.

Well, you knew about her because of Upward Bound?

S4. Yeah, Upward Bound.

Well, would you say that Upward Bound is a good thing for...

S4. Yeah, I think so. I think that's great.

Well, I know that one of the things you mentioned is that you met X., who then could continue with you. Were there some other good things that came out of that program for you?

S4. Uhhum, yeah. My last year there we took college courses.

Uhhum...so you got a little bit more familiar with being on campus.

S4. So you begin to feel a little bit comfortable but not...

So did you keep going back to the Upward Bound office even after you...

S4. 10. Yeah, yeah. I still go there now. Yeah, once in awhile, just say hi and see how things are going. A lot of those guys, they go between classes.

Oh really, they just keep checking back there and...

S4. Yeah, just keep going back./

Oh, that's great. Let's see, let's back up a little.

... you went, you did the Upward Bound program, you met D. and then you kept coming...

(silence)

S4. Yeah, that's all.../

Uhhum... let's think a little while... now those are some positive things that have happened... like you're saying, you gradually got more comfortable being here, you got to know computers, uhhum... would you say that's a skill that's really valuable even if you were not a computer science major?

S4. 11. Yeah, I think that's very valuable. Without knowing anything about computers, it's going to be hard to get by. I think all the classes, almost half the classes you take require some kind of paper./ 12. Go in there, it's great. The best part is that the labs are almost full, so there's a line. Try to find a spot...a lot of them are filled up.

11. S4 feels that computer skills are essential in college, since almost half the classes you take require some kind of paper.

12. Although the computer labs at the university are usually filled up, S4 has access to computers through his work at the high school.

So do you use e-mail quite a bit?

S4. Not a lot...

But would you say you use the computer room almost every day?

S4. Yeah, right now, basically every day. But where I work we have a computer in the room, so I just use...

Oh, you work at a computer lab?

S4. No. I, where I work we have a couple of them. We have the ESL program...we have ten computers in the room that are provided...

Oh well, tell me a little more about that program then. Where is it?

S4. 13. Oh, it's at Hellgate High School. S4. What it is...Hmong students but also Russian students and Hmong students...well, the students come in with their work and any questions they have, any subject in school...yeah, we have to be there to answer the questions. If they have any questions, we have to give them the resources they have there. We have lots of books and computers and a lot of the time we have to be prepared to...everything, almost everything.

How many... how long have you been doing that?

S4. Uhhum...this is my fifth year.../

And do you feel that you have learned something? Does that help you? This is what I'm wondering... if being a tutor helps you to be a student... does it? Do you feel some carry-over? (Yeah) There is? What can you tell me?

S4. 14. Yeah, I think being a tutor is really tough, but then at the same time you realize that learning is fun. /15. Uhhum, there I was once...I watch them at exactly the same level...

Really, so do you see yourself in those students?

13. S4 has been a tutor for Hmong and Russian ESL students at Hellgate High School for the past 5 years. He has to be prepared to help them with any subject.

14. Being a tutor is a tough job but it also made him realize that learning is fun.

S4. 15. Yeah, I see myself. It's like, I walk through the same stuff they do and I tell them, it's your task. I'm just a couple of steps ahead of you./ 16, And going back through the steps, I see it wasn't easy. I look back and see that I did push myself a little bit. It gives me the self-confidence to learn some things that...especially like some of the subjects like History. It's one of the tough subjects for the immigrants...I mean the Hmong students.

This is really... Yeah, of course it would be...yeah.

S4. Yeah, so every year I help students with either government or history./

And you have to be able to tutor any subject, no matter what?

S4. 17. Yeah, any subject./

So you have to be up on it yourself?

S4. 18. Yeah, so last time, I have this work of my own at school and also I have.../

The tutoring...

S4. 17. Yeah, so the kids they're doing chapter seven or eight and they're learning this and this. So maybe, I grab the book the day before and look it over so the next day, when the kid comes in...uhumm...we can get going./ 19. But a lot of the times the teachers over there they...so, if you don't understand, you can just go up and ask them and ask them.../

15. He sees himself in the students he tutors, remembering that he was in their place not that long ago.

16. It reminds him how it's not easy to learn and that he had to push himself quite a bit, especially in courses that are particularly tough for immigrants (Hmong), like government and history.

17. S4 actually had to be prepared for the possibility of tutoring any subject the kids needed help with.

18. At the same time he was also a student at University.

17. He had very little preparation time and was just keeping one step ahead of the kids.

19. The classroom teachers, however, were very helpful to him and he had a pretty flexible work schedule, which made the work a little easier.

And who are your supervisors over there?

S4. Oh...X...

So, she kind of... how many of you work at one time... tutoring, like, when you go at a certain time, are you the only one?

S4. No...me and T. go together. Right now we work together so...our schedule is pretty flexible...

So, being a tutor... it hasn't inspired you to be a teacher?

S4. 20. No, actually, it kept me away from being a teacher! (laughter). I don't know...it's really challenging here in town. Well, my first year I had about five Hmong students that they had just been here about two years...very low you know, so we had to do one on one. And just in that period, one would have math test and one would have English test. So within minutes you have to switch your head back and forth...so that was very stressful for me. And a lot of times, you know, I just read the book and have to answer questions. I don't want to say something that's wrong you know, but I couldn't just...

Yeah, you really had to do a lot of preparation work...

S4. 21. Yeah, but at the same time, I learned a lot from the students./

You learned a lot... aahh... Do you think that kind of a system could work at the University... Hmong students tutoring other Hmong students? For example in advanced math or perhaps in other

20. Being a tutor was stressful but it was also rewarding.

21. Although working as a tutor was stressful, he learned a lot from the students.

courses... I don't know...

S4. 22. Yeah...

I mean because you aren't the first person who said that they learned a lot by being a tutor in the Bilingual Program... and you know they were quite excited about it... so, I guess I should talk to N. and find out how she does that program...

S4. Uhhuh...I think that's pretty important. I know my brother, P., he asked me a lot of questions...like how the school is...what classes are good and what kind of stuff. Even that, you might find out about this class and that. While you are tutored, comfortable with someone they talk to a lot. I feel more comfortable that way./ 23. Yeah, last year, I had a tutor and that's the first time I had...

You had tutor through us... and what was your experience then?

S4. It was good...I found her really helpful. I had never met her before and we met, and she was...

So that was a good experience there... was that the first time you had had a tutor?

S4. Uhhum...yeah, and.../

Do you know what some of the qualities were that she had that you thought were good?

22. S. thinks that a similar tutoring system might work at the university... information about the university and advising about classes could take place in a tutoring session or with someone who you feel comfortable with.

23. He did have a math tutor he really liked. She was very knowledgeable about the subject.

S4. The subject I took, pre-calculus...she pretty much know about.

She was really knowledgeable...

S4. Yeah, so that helps a lot...and if you ask her questions, she would help or she would go out and look it up for you after she would go home./

If she didn't know the answer to his questions, she would look it up after the tutoring session.

Humm... interesting... uhhumm... have you had any horrible experiences here... really bad ones... or even not really bad ones, but more on the negative side?

S4. 24. No, other than registering for classes.

24. The only negative experiences he can remember have to do with registering for classes... not being able to get the classes he wanted or having to stand in long lines during registration.

Registering for classes? How?

S4. A lot of times I didn't...last couple of years I wasn't able to register until the very end, so by the time I got to it, it's all filled up. So, getting the class you wanted wasn't the first choice...so, yeah.

So, have you been usually stuck with the classes, or...you know, sometimes you can register for a class and then...

S4. But it was kind of hard. Back when I started I couldn't get into my classes but the last couple of years it's better. I remember we used to...(stand in line for registration).../

Oh, I can barely remember those days. How times have changed! Now we don't have to stick to classes as such, but maybe just being in college... what has it meant to you, and to your family, and maybe to your self-

concept, or your goals... can you think of something that you've thought of?

S4. 25. Yeah, I think it is culture stuff I think of...

25. S4 thinks a lot about his culture now.

So had you always been motivated... I mean, since you were little, did you think... I'm going to college, I'm going to do this, I'm going to do that?

S4. 26. I know I'm not...my family background...my parents never had any higher education. They never had the opportunity to go to school, but they know that, and that's the one thing they want. But they pass the motivation...

26. Although his parents never had a higher education and never had the opportunity to go to school, they really value education and have passed on the motivation to him and his generation.

So your parents... about how old are your parents?

S4. They're mid fifty, no, forty four or forty seven...

But you have their support? They wanted you to go to college?

S4. 26a. Yeah, that's the big deal. My parents put the big pressure on me...but at the same time, I put the pressure on myself to finish. If I do, I'll be the first one in my family, yeah...

26a. His parents put a lot of pressure on him to finish, as he does on himself. When he finishes, he'll be the first in his family to graduate from college.

Yeah, you're a junior. When do you think you'll graduate? What year?

S4. I'm not sure. I just got to get better grades...

Are you almost done with your general education requirements?

S4. Yeah, just one class or two...

Good... yeah.

S4. Hopefully not too long. I'm going to try to take.../

S4. 27. But personally, I think it's the most important thing...nowdays to find a job out there without an education...it's tough out there trying to make a living.

27. He personally also thinks that education is the most important thing because it is impossible to find a good job without it. He feels that it's tough out there trying to make a living.

So, your family definitely wants you to finish college... and you say it's stressful and yet it's positive and negative, and they do understand the difficulty of it all? Right, so you see that it's competitive and you need a college education, yeah... and you say you do have some friends or relatives or people who are already out there in the job world... and do you talk with them very much? I mean, is there a lot of, sort of...

S4. 28. Yeah, uhmm...when we were young you know, go to school together, hang out together, like stay a couple of years together...and afterward we went to college when we graduate you cannot guarantee we stick together.

28. When he was younger he had a couple of friends he hung around with who are now scattered all over the place. He sees some of them sometimes... they have good jobs and also are starting families

Right, so this is a bunch of your friends?

S4. Yeah, all scattered all over...

Is there kind of a competition going... like, oh, so and so has a good paying job?

S4. Yeah, that's what it is. Yeah, well, my class...

Who would be some of the people your age who you hung around with?

S4. Uhhum...the class I graduated with there was no one...but two years before me there was...

That would have been X.?

S4. Yeah X. and there was...
I should interview X.

S4. X... and X1. and X2...

Is X older than you, ahead of you Ahh, he went to Spokane... those guys are a little bit...

S4. I think X is still here. I don't see them every day, but once I awhile I do. They all have a decent job, even got a family./

Uhhuh...well, you've got a family too, now...

S4. 29. Yeah, so, now OK now...

You're getting there...

S4. Now it's like...I've got to go there./

Is there, among the Hmong young people...is there getting to be a quite large group of college graduate types or college students... a group there

S4. 30. Yeah...

And would you consider...you're part of that, I take it...

29. In fact he has a family now and now he feels that he's got to go there too (get a good paying job)

30. He's seen the growth of the number of Hmong university students from when he started in 1993 and there were only three or four other students, to today when there are over twenty five.

Yes, exactly, in fact, I need to look that up for this research that I'm doing. And I saw that in 1993 and 94, there were only three or four students. So I didn't realize you were one of the first group...

S4. Actually, we have a large number of students who have gone on to college. Yeah, when I first came to school there were only three or four of us and now there are at least over twenty five...

S4. Yeah, it was in Upward Bound with X.. (who went to Bozeman)

Were you the only one to stay here?

S4. Yeah, from the Upward Bound program. It was two of us that year...

S4. 31. Uhhum...no, once in awhile...but usually we just wave and say hey, how you doing? And that's it...but I don't...

31. He only sees other Hmong students occasionally on campus. They just say hi to each other but don't hang around together.

Uhummm... and maybe if you could describe kind of a typical day or a typical week... like this semester? I'm kind of interested in whether you stay on campus very much... or do you go home or go to work... or what's a typical kind of schedule?

S4. 32. Well, my classes, and then I go to work and then I come back and forth...

32. His typical day involves going back and forth between his classes at UM and his tutoring at Hellgate High School.

So, how many hours do you put in at Hellgate?

S4. 19 hours.

S4. An hour...then walk back and forth, then go home...

So a typical day, you might work there... maybe half a day? Then you go home... like, do you study on campus? Do you use the computer labs?

S4. Sometimes I use the computer labs./

And I know you said that you've been feeling more and more comfortable here... And would you sort of have the feeling like... this is my campus? I mean, do you feel that way about it?

S4. 33. Uhhumm...no, I never think of it that way...but I feel more familiar with knowing what things are. I ask questions, knowing what help is available./

33. He feels more comfortable with asking for help.

And I think you said you feel comfortable talking to professors...

S4. 34. Yeah...

Speaking out in classes?

34. He feels comfortable with professors.

We'll stop pretty soon... I just wanted to see... can you think of anything else?

S4. 35. Well, one year, it was...I took a history class and one of the professors I think was from India. . Speaker was a good professor, but his accent, I couldn't understand. Yeah, so for a week, two weeks, I just couldn't understand. They make you feel like...oh gosh...should I go to class or not? I'm not going to understand at all...so my other resource was to use

35. One difficulty S4 remembers is not being able to understand or follow a lecture in history class given by two professors from India. He ended up taking too many notes and that was really tough. He couldn't understand the lecture and the only book there was in the class was a short novel. The class was mainly reliant upon lectures, slides and videos. He finally did get used to it.

the worksheet and to use the book...so that kind of...that class, a lot of time they showed slides and videos...that's why I finally got used to it.

Well, that's very interesting to me because I'm interested in what people do... when either they can't understand the professor or they can't understand the book. Or they can't understand this or that. So, sounds like you had to... the lectures were useless to you. So you had to rely on the worksheet.

S4. Which...the book was only a small book. It was a novel. Most of the time he gave lectures, slides, videos.

And it didn't help to see the pictures... the videos?

S4. One other thing...the good part...???...he mainly talked about religion and that was.../

Foreign to you?

S4. 36. Totally. I didn't know the first thing about it. I mean, Oh my God, you know./ 37. So, I'm glad. I got used to the professor. Finally got used to it. But it was too hard you know./

Well, let me get back to the whole idea of Asians. Say, yourself being an Asian, taking a class like that, you would think you would know something, but it turns out you don't...

S4. 38. Well, I'm not sure what the title of the class was...Asian Studies...I thought it might go over and include Laos and China...

36. He didn't know anything about the subject.

37. But he finally got used to the professor although it was too hard.

38. Although the class was an Asian Studies class it didn't really cover anything he thought he knew about.

S4. 39. Yeah, that one for sure. I did pass the class.../

Well, we won't stay too much longer. You're probably getting tired... OK, can we think of anything else like that... those are good stories...

S4. That was one of...

One that you really remember...

S4. 40. And one other thing, when I first came...ah, back in High School, most classes that I'm in have 35, 40 students. And in my college classes, I kept wondering...one time, I was talking to a friend of mine who said, if you go to college, nobody cares if you do your work. The class is so huge, the teacher is not going to call on you every day like in High School. There are hundreds and hundreds of students. I said, like...oh, is that how it is? So I go, yeah, but anyway...lectures, geology or something...walked into a huge lecture hall. For Upward Bound...I actually walked in to the class that had that huge lecture. Oh God, you feel like, oh Jesus! / 41. And also, the professor talked and doesn't say, oh you supposed to take notes this way or that way. Where in high school the teacher write everything on the board. But here he talked and talked and talked...and at that time, you know, I didn't know about note-taking and I thought, there's no way I can get all this information in time.

And it really wasn't a matter of English either...it was a matter of the amount...and the fact that he never did write on the board...so you had to hear

39. That class was memorable for being hard, although he did pass the class.

40. S4 was shocked by the size of his lecture classes especially compared with high school.

41. The professor lectured without regard for how the students were going to take notes. The professor relied totally on the students hearing and understanding what was said. He had no idea how to take notes and didn't know how he was going to remember all the information.

it... yeah...

S4. Yeah, and he doesn't stop...give you time to write it down./

So did you remember what you did?
You just didn't have very good notes, or did you?

S4. 42. I did. I took notes...I asked other students.

42. He took notes and also asked for help from other students.

And you felt comfortable enough to do that?

S4. Yeah, I have to. There's no other way./ 43. And the good part is that we had a good book...

43. He also had a good textbook, fortunately.

Yeah, especially since you didn't get that much from the lecture. You could use the book... That huge...

S4. Yeah, I had heard about it...

Yeah, that's a real college experience. Now, I suppose...

S4. It's OK. I realize.../

Have you had any classes that are really small...like where there are only a few of you?

-Break in the tape-

Can we go over that again... because that is exactly what I want to know. That is, what, to Hmong students... what can Hmong students suggest for themselves and for others?

S4. 44. Yeah, well T. and I discussed about this. Like down in California where a lot of Hmong

44. S4. and T. discussed the idea of starting a Hmong studies class modeled after a class in California.

live...they actually have a Hmong literature class.

Well, there's actually a Hmong history class (in Santa Barbara)

So what was your idea?

S4. Well, we were suggesting that we could have a class here. I think that would help us. That would expose our culture...not only to our people but to others in some kind of class that would give them a little bit of an idea where we come from. I go around a lot...in class people ask me...where you come from? They have no idea of where I come from or who I am.

And even if you tell them, they don't know where it is./

S4. Yeah...so if you do have a class, you could talk about these things. That would help a lot./

Yes, and now, as you say, we're having more and more of you who are graduating. Or who are students and are able to articulate... to speak in English... to be able to talk about it to others.

S4. 45. Cause I know...me, myself...I don't know even half of the Hmong tradition. So a lot of kids nowadays, they grow up and they are losing a lot of their traditions./

And how do you feel about it? Well, I know that there's kind of a generational

The purpose of the class would be to inform others and Hmong themselves, especially the younger generation, about Hmong history and culture and language.

45. Even he doesn't know half the Hmong traditions. Kids nowadays are losing a lot of their traditions as they grow up.

difference... Uhhum... are you part of the group that feels like you would like to keep some of the history?

S4. 46. I think that, to a point, we should try to keep our traditions. It's tough living in two environments at the same time, but I believe that it's possible. I think we should...family and friends.

46. He feels that they should try to keep their traditions as it's tough living in two environments.

You know, I went to the Hmong New Year and I saw that performer. And I was thinking that the reason he was there was to talk to the younger generation, to kind of not lose their way. And so I thought that was a message that was aimed at the younger generation so they wouldn't lose their culture.

S4. I think I feel the same./

So who was the guy you were talking about?

S4. X.

Oh X. I'll talk to him about it when I see him tomorrow.

S4. 47. Yeah, somehow, I don't know how...but we just talked up and we kind of discussed it over and I told him...great! Yeah, now we have over ten students...fifteen./

47. He wants to follow up on the idea of a Hmong class.

Twenty... and last year there were more... there were twenty-seven... I can't get an accurate count for some reason. We could make a list, but it's somewhere between twenty and twenty two or something. But that's a big group now. Getting to be a big group.

S4. 48. We had the Hmong Association.

Yes well, it is functioning any more?

S4. No, it's not functioning any more.

Were you part of that?

S4. I was part of it and...

What do you think about that now... as far as reviving it, maybe bringing it back?

(More about the organization)

S4. I tried, I...

48. S4. recalls the Hmong Association of students which doesn't function any more. He is not too enthusiastic about it... it was hard to get students to participate. It could be social, he thinks. He has thought of trying to revive the Hmong club. In the past he was working and couldn't participate very much. He and others are concerned about how to get more students to come to the meetings.

S4, Level Three, (Narrative Based on Emergent Themes)

S4 is both self-motivated and motivated by his parents to go to college. Although his parents never had the opportunity to go to school or college, they really value education and have passed their values on to him and others of his generation. His parents are putting a lot of pressure on him to finish college, as he does on himself. When he finishes, he'll be the first in his family to graduate from college. He also thinks that education is most important for success in America because it is impossible to find a good job without it. He feels that it's tough out there trying to make a living.

When he was younger, he had a couple of other Hmong friends he hung around with who left Missoula and who have now scattered all over the country. He sees some of them sometimes and they compare notes about how they're doing. Most have finished college, have good jobs, and are also starting families. He too, is married, and now feels that he's get on with his education and get a good paying job.

As a student at UM, he now feels familiar with campus, and yet he does not feel that "this is my campus". Through the Upward Bound (UB) summer program, S4 met a counselor who continued to help him after he entered college. He still hangs out at the UB office but not as much as others do.

He does feel more comfortable asking questions on campus and getting help, even from professors--a big improvement from when he first started college when he felt uncomfortable and kind of afraid, scared, shaky, and he didn't know where to turn to find the answers to his questions. This was especially true in his English composition class when he needed help writing papers. He knew there was someplace on campus to get help but he didn't know where. So he just did without. He spent hours and hours doing his English assignments by himself... it made it worse and harder... he feels that he would have saved a lot of time if he could have gotten some help.

S4 was overwhelmed at first by computers. He was not familiar with them and he wasn't comfortable enough to experiment by himself. S4 feels that computer skills are essential in college, since almost half the classes you take require some kind of paper. Although S4 doesn't use the university's computer labs, he has access to computers through his work at the high school.

S4 feels that he's been a shy person most of his life and which explains why he doesn't participate in class very often. He's now, however, more comfortable talking in class. He has even been bold enough to talk with one of his professors after class.

In addition to being a college student he also works as an ESL tutor at Hellgate High school. His typical day involves going back and forth between the two campuses. In his tutoring job, S4 actually had to be prepared for the possibility of tutoring any subject the kids needed help with. He had very little preparation time and struggled to keep one step ahead of the kids he was tutoring. The classroom teachers, however, were very helpful to him. He also had a pretty flexible work schedule that made the work a little easier.

Instead of inspiring him to go into teaching, the tutoring experience has actually deterred him from wanting to be a teacher. Having to work one on one with very low level students was very stressful and challenging. He agonized over times he wasn't prepared and was afraid he would make mistakes. Although working as a tutor was

stressful, he learned a lot about himself and about teaching from the experience.

S4 thinks that a similar tutoring system might work for him at the university. Information about the university and advising about classes could take place in a tutoring session or with someone you feel comfortable with. He did have a math tutor he really liked. She was very knowledgeable about the subject. If she didn't know the answer to his questions, she would look it up after the tutoring session.

One difficulty S4 remembers is not being able to understand or follow a lecture in history class given by two professors from India. He ended up taking too many notes and that was really tough. He couldn't understand the lecture and the only book there was in the class was a short novel. The class was mainly reliant upon lectures, slides, and videos. He finally did get used to it. He didn't know anything about the subject. But he finally got used to the professor although it was hard. Although the class was an Asian studies class, it didn't really cover anything he thought he knew about. That class was memorable for being hard, although he did pass the class. The professor lectured without regard for how the students were going to take notes. The professor relied totally on the students hearing and understanding what was said. He had no idea how to take notes and didn't know how he was going to remember all the information.

He did manage to take notes, however, and he also asked other students to share their notes with him. Luckily he had a good textbook. S4 was shocked by the size of his lecture classes, especially compared with the smaller classes of Hmong traditions. He thinks that kids nowadays are losing a lot of their traditions as they grow up. He feels that the Hmong should try to keep their traditions although it's tough living in two environments.

He's seen the growth of the number of Hmong university students from when he started in 1993. There were only three or four other students, then, whereas today there are over twenty five. He only sees other Hmong students occasionally on campus. They just say "hi" to each other but don't hang around together.

S4 and another Hmong student have discussed the idea of starting a Hmong studies class modeled after a class in California. The purpose of the class would be to inform others and Hmong themselves, especially the younger generation, about Hmong history and culture and language. He wants to follow up on the idea of a Hmong class.

S4 recalls the Hmong association of students that doesn't function anymore. He is not too enthusiastic about reviving it... it was hard to get students to participate. It could work out if it were a social club, he thinks.

Appendix H

S5, Levels One-Three

S5, Level One, (Verbatim Transcript)

12/21/98

Approximately one hour

So what I would like you to do is describe for me... what are some important college situations that you have experienced... it could be positive, in other words, something good that happened to you, or it could be negative, something horrible, bad... whatever... and we don't have to stick to one thing either, just as you think of it... we don't have to limit it... so can you think of anything?

S5. Actually, it's hard time to start...I think for myself it's harder than for the Hmong students, because most of them, they grew up here and they go to high school here and their English is much better...but like me, I went to other school and some parts here and I didn't know anything in here, even the building...or, .I didn't know any people...or friends...

No one?

S5. No one, only myself...actually there were lots of Hmong students here but I hardly see them and I went to my class, but I didn't know my class...difficult, and it's hard for me, at first ...I took English 100 and 250, and I went up and up and up and up ...and at first I took that class, what class does X. teach?

Study skills? Yes...

S5. Yeah, I took the class with X. and she's pretty nice, I like that and after that I spoke to the same students...and I feel a lot better...and better and better, then because I became familiar with the campus and I knew some people, and if anyone say...I know what to do and if I and I knew how to, I think I can do that...and if I'm shy, to go...and later on, if I have question, I ask in the classroom...now I feel a lot better because I have friends, and my English is better compared to before, it's just a little...but I feel better....some friends...but American friends and stuff like that, because of my English...I just ask them, sometime...for study, my classmates ...I feel very nice now...

Good... so can you tell me, I notice you mentioned that at first you didn't have any friends, you didn't know anyone....

S5. Nobody...

Is that literally... I mean, no one... even other Hmong students?

S5. Actually I know them... Among students but we don't have class together...so hardly see each other...if you don't have same class, same schedule, so hard to see each other...because there are thousands and thousands of students here and everybody busy, it's hard to ask...

Hard to ask them for help...

S5. Uhhumm...

So then I noticed that you mentioned that you made some American friends... that you were able to study with and so on... or talk to at least, can you think of how you... try to think of some friend that you made... and how have you met them, and how do you...? Just a little bit more of a description?

S5. Actually, I guess I met them in the classroom...actually, it's hard to make friends, in here, for myself, I know and for any other people...for myself, it's probably hardest because sometime you sit in the class and you can't say much and you don't know each other because in here they change all the time and you can sit where ever you want.

And anyone can sit anywhere they want...

S5. Yeah, if that person not your close friend or something like that, you can change, change a lot...and you can't make friends like that, but if you think some students will be nice, or something like that, they are kind of friendly,ask them...but usually I'm not asking, but I just will sit with them and if I have some friends sit next to me I feel more comfortable and each year that I have no friends, I feel lonely. They have a lot of people there, forty or fifty so it's hard to get to know if you don't have any friends you feel that only but you have friends, at least one person...

Sounds like you've been able to find at least one person... in each class?

S5. Usually in each class...yep!

So you like that...when you can connect with somebody in the class...

S5. You feel more comfortable...and if you go sit there you don't know anybody...it's very lonely.

Euhumm...

S5. But sometimes you have to because you don't know anybody...if you don't know anybody and you're shy, because you sit far away from the teacher, far away from other students...sometimes you feel sad and because you feel like you don't

have any friends...If you have friends, if you feel like you can study together...but...

And have you ever tried to study with somebody else?

S5. Yeah, I did a couple of times...

And does it work out to be a good idea?

S5. Yes, a good idea, because after class, we go and talk, because we had different ideas and we could share ideas...

When you've done that, where do you meet?

S5. In the Library...

At the Library, uhhumm...

S5. And sometimes we share notes...I like people myself, I like to talk to people, I like people, I like to have friends, I don't like to stay alone...I feel lonely...

So, do you think it's hard to make friends because of the language problem... why?

S5. No, I think my language, now, it's not a problem for me to make a friend...I can understand what they are talking to me and what I'm going to talk to them about...I'm not worried about it...it's not a problem for me but I think it's because in here we're different cultures and everybody busy, and after classes, everybody walk out...

Disappears...

S5. And everybody has a different...because today...make it...they won't (unclear)

So you can't really make a friend because the classes keep changing...

S5. Yeah, and then go to class and everybody busy...and you don't have time to talk with the teacher and go to classes, take notes, and after that...oh you only have time to say, oh, hi...or something like that, that's all we do...because everybody so different

Different from...

S5. My old college

Oh... in what ways?

S5. My college...they accept only few students...I know everybody...I still remember...at least now, I can write their name down.

Really?

S5. Yes...but in here I study for two years, maybe I can write ten people down...because over there...but after college we talk and we just talk and talk.

And over there did you have a place to meet... to talk...to have coffee or whatever?

S5. No, actually we don't have coffee shop...just after class we just get together and talk...seems like everybody just wants to talk...because...and so small...and we know each other...if you go there and you mention a name...everybody know...if you go there...like for my friends...they just ask my name and everybody know me...and I know everybody...and you feel more comfortable...

Yes, you are more comfortable and you're part of a group...

S5. Yes, and everybody...

And you really miss that...

S5. Yes, but in here...not only Hmong...maybe some other foreign students....

Yes, I never thought of that before...but it is different.

S5. Yes, very different, cause in here it is very...(unclear)...school.

And there people have more time...

S5. But in here everybody hurries.

Everyone has something to do as soon as schools out...

S5. And actually, the culture is...for example, our next door neighbors...but at home you know...

You know the whole community.

S5. You know the village...they call...at least the village ...you know each other...just mention the name and they know...that's how I know lots of people...who helping each other...

So here, you're saying that not only on campus but even in the city, in the town... it is the same... and you don't know everybody, even in your neighborhood... only your next door neighbor, maybe...

S5. I live here about ten years and I know my neighbor, but that's all...we see each other, we say hi, and that's it.

You don't invite each other over... hmmm, that's very interesting....

-Pause-

I was thinking back to when you first were talking about that you feel comfortable now, to go to see some professors? I was wondering if you could tell me about your experiences... about the first time you ever spoke to a professor... was it difficult... or whatever you can think of....

S5. Yeah, actually, it's different you know, because professors, you know it's different than with some students... some professors it's easy, you can talk to them...It's hard for me...I have one class... it's hard for us...

So have you been able to get some professors to give you a longer time?

S5. Yes...

How do you arrange that? Do you just go and ask the professor, or how do you arrange things?

S5. Yeah, just go ask the professor,

Do you ask before the test, or at the beginning of...

S5. You ask him and try to explain how...ask him about the time and some even give you a different room.

So some are very willing.

S5. Yes, and even (some will let you take the test in their office and let you take any amount of time)

uhumm...

S5. Most understand...(but some are not as understanding)

Some are not so...

S5. They...(unclear, something about professors being an elite)

So you mean, they're so high above every body else... they can't imagine what...

S5. And there are lots of students that if you take class with a Dr. the doctor professor (something about Dr.s talking faster and using more difficult language than TAs, assuming that students know more than they actually do)

TA's or staff?

S5. Because Doctors...they think that the students can understand...the students not like that ...they go very fast, they even not, they go fast, they don't go slow, so you can't go along...it's harder...

So it's harder when an actual doctor... a professor who's a doctor... because they go so fast, they just think that you understand everything, they forget that you're a student.

S5. They don't go slow...the doctor have lot of information, they expect you to remember everything...it's hard...

Oh gosh... can you think of any other experiences...I know that when we talked a long time ago you mentioned that when you first came you ended up in the classroom and it was the wrong classroom.

S5. Yep.

You remember that, to this day...

S5. It was LA, 8:00 am. It was the wrong hour...and I even can't ask them...

Because of your English, you were so shy?

S5. But you learn a lot from that.

Can you think of any other experiences, that you remember, that were really embarrassing or really bad?

S5. Yes, the first day...I went to the Library, I don't even know how to get the books...

So, what did you do... how did you figure it out?

S5. I just tried by myself just tried to do the best...tried the computer and see how it works...I have one class where the teacher taught in class, and I have to do some research paper, I tried to remember that.

So you wouldn't ask the people who work at the library, ..you just tried to figure it out... So you spend a lot of time in the library?

S5. Uhhumm, every day...

Is that where you study, do you study in the library?

S5. Actually, if I don't have any term paper, and I don't need the library, I can study at home because I have a huge room and it is quiet...I can just close my door and nobody bothers...If I want to study nobody bothers me...

Has your schedule been such that you can go home early in the day... or do you spend most of your time at the University, I mean, where do you spend more time, at home or at the University?

S5. Here...if I m not working...I usually go home at 4:30 or 5:00...Sometimes I go home for lunch...

I've been wondering about that, whether Hmong students go home for lunch or bring it here or eat here?

S5. I don't bring my food...because it would be cold.

So, you go home for lunch only on Fridays... what do you do the rest of the time?

S5. Sometimes, I buy some pizza...it's not my favorite...

It's not your favorite...no?

S5. But I did not try, I think it's good for me

We won't talk too much longer, but I was going to say, can you think of anything else that you might want to mention about being in college... either good or bad, or that you might like to see different for yourself or for any Hmong students in the future?

S5. I think...more money...

Is that what you hope for yourself too?

S5. That's my dream.

To make more, so you can get a good job?

S5. I don't know...but it's my dream, my goal.

Uhhumm...

S5. I think it's a good thing, but it's hard, I'm getting better, my goal is still far away for me.

So maybe if we could go over all of the problems you mention, and maybe you could fill me in if I'm not naming all of them, so, one problem I heard you talk about was not being familiar with the campus, so that's one we talked about, another is...

S5. Friends...

Yes, another was not being able to connect with any people, yes...

S5. That's the hard part...

Yes, that's the hard part...now, what were some other things? The English language...

S5. Yes, English language, is not hard for everyone but for me, it's hard, but some of them were born here and if they grow up here it's not hard...

But I'm kind of interested in the ones like you, yourself, that didn't really have the high school, grade school...

S5. Yeah, I just came up here from my college...

And how do you feel about it?

S5. I feel (recording not clear)

And how will it help you in the future, do you think?

S5. The education here (recording not clear)

So it's not just the schooling part, but you learn the social part. Do you think you'll stay in Missoula, after you graduate?

S5. Actually, I like Missoula, depends on the job...without job, you can't stay in Missoula...job and money, for me are the most important...if I can get a job here, I'll stay here...

Are you the oldest?

S5. Yes, I'm the oldest.

Are you responsible for your parents, in other words, to take care of them, or, how does that work?

S5. I don't know, my parents they have many kids.

So somebody will take care...

S5. Actually the Hmong they are going to keep the youngest...that's...

Money is a problem.

S5. It's hard for the single person

I didn't realize it is harder for a single person, single man....

Were you able to get financial aid?

S5. I still have problems (Discussion of Financial Aid/Drop-Add/Etc. January 8th....etc...

(at this point we ended the formal interview and continued to discuss P's financial aid problems)

S5, Level Two,(Spontaneous Meaning Units)

So, what are some important college situations that you have experienced... it could be positive, in other words, something good that happened to you, or it could be negative, something horrible, bad... whatever... and we don't have to stick to one thing either, just as you think of it... we don't have to limit it... so can you think of anything?

S5. 1. Actually, it's hard time to start...I think for myself it's harder than for the Hmong students, because most of them, they grew up here and they go to high school here and their English is much better...but like me, I went to other school and some parts here / 2. and I didn't know anything in here, even the building...or, I didn't know any people...or friends.../

No one?

S5. 3. No one, only myself...actually there were lots of Hmong students here but I hardly see them / 4. and I went to my class, but I didn't know my class.../ 5. difficult, and it's hard for me, at first...I took English 100 and 250, and I went up and up and up and up.../ 6. and at first I took that class...what class does X. teach?

Study skills? Yes...

S5. Yeah, I took the class with X. and she's pretty nice, I like that and after that I spoke to the same students...and I feel a lot better...and better and better/7.then because I became familiar with the campus and

1. S. feels that college is harder for him than for other Hmong students because they grew up and went to high school here while he didn't.

2. He didn't know any one on campus, had no friends, and was unfamiliar with the buildings at first.

3. Actually, there were lots of Hmong students here but he hardly saw them.

4. He got lost on his first day of school.

5. School was hard for him at first, he took basic English and ESL classes and began to improve.

6. He also took a study skills class with a teacher that he thought was pretty nice. In the class he was able to speak to some students and he started to feel a lot better.

7. He also got to be familiar with the campus.

S5. **8. And if I'm shy, to go...and later on, if I have question, I ask in the...I knew some people, and if anyone say...I know what to do if I knew how to, I think I can do that.../ classroom.../ 9. now I feel a lot better because I have friends/ 10. and my English is better compared to before, it's just a little...but I feel better...some friends...but American friends and stuff like that, because of my English...I just ask them, sometime...for study, my classmates.../ 11. I feel very nice now.../**

Good... so can you tell me, I notice you mentioned that at first you didn't have any friends, you didn't know anyone...

S5. **12. Nobody...**

Is that literally... I mean, no one... even other Hmong students?

S5, **Actually I know them...Hmong students, but we don't have class together...so hardly see each other...if you don't have same class, same schedule, so hard to see each other.../ 13. because there are thousands and thousands of students here and everybody busy, it's hard to ask...**

Hard to ask them for help...

S5. **14. Uhhumm.../**

8. However, he sometimes feels shy but is still able to ask questions in the classroom.

9. He now feels a lot better because he has friends.

10. His English is a little better than before and he now feels more comfortable about talking with American friends and asking them to study.

11. He feels very nice now.

12. Although he did know some Hmong students when he first came, he still felt that he knew nobody else. And even the Hmong students did not hang around together... if they didn't have class together, they never saw each other.

13. He notices that there are thousands and thousands of students here, all of whom seem busy, so it seems hard to ask any of them anything.

14. He agrees that it is really hard to ask any other student for help.

So then I noticed that you mentioned

So then I noticed that you mentioned that you made some American friends... that you were able to study with and so on... or talk to at least, can you think of how you... try to think of some friend that you made... and how have you met them and how do you...? Just a little bit more of a description?

S5. 15. Actually, I guess I met them in the classroom...actually, it's hard to make friends, in here, for myself, I know, and for any other people...for my self, it's probably hardest because sometime you sit in the class and you can't say much and you don't know each other because in here they change all the time and you can sit wherever you want.

And anyone can sit anywhere they want...

S5. Yeah, if that person not your close friend or something like that you can change, change a lot...and you can't make friends like that, but if you think some students will be nice or something like that, they are kind of friendly...ask them...but usually I'm not asking but I will just sit with them. And if I have some friends sit next to me I feel more comfortable and each year that I have no friends I feel lonely. They have a lot of people there, forty or fifty, so it's hard to get to know...if you don't have any friends you feel that only but you have friends, at least one person.

Sounds like you've been able to find at least one person... in each class?

S5. Usually in each class...yep!//

15. He has made some American friends in the classroom...but actually it is pretty hard to do because classes change every hour...and even within a classroom you can sit wherever you want and can change whenever you want, therefore you never get to know anyone, even the person sitting next to you, unless you are already friends. He sits with friends if he knows them but he usually sits by himself and is sometimes lonely. It is hard to get to know anyone in classes of forty or fifty people... he would like to have "at least one person" as a friend in each class.

with somebody in the class.

S5. 16. You feel more comfortable ...and if you go sit there you don't know anybody...it's very lonely.

Uhhumm...

S5. 16A. But sometimes you have to because you don't know anybody...if you don't know anybody and you're shy, because you sit far away from the teacher, far away from other students...sometimes you feel sad and because you feel like you don't have any friends.../ 17. if you have friends, if you feel you can study together, but...

And have you ever tried to study with somebody else?

S5. Yeah, I did a couple of times...

And does it work out to be a good idea?

S5. Yes, a good idea, because after class, we go and talk, because we had different ideas and we could share ideas...

When you've done that, where do you meet?

S5. In the Library./

At the Library, uhhumm...

S5. 18. And sometimes we share notes.../ 19, I like people. Myself, I like to talk to people. I like people, I like to have friends. I don't like to stay alone...I feel lonely.

16. He would like to connect with someone in each class... if you sit there not knowing anybody it's very lonely.

16A. Sometimes you're shy and don't know anybody and you sit far away from the teacher and from other students... it makes you feel sad because you feel like you don't have any friends.

17. If you have friends you can study together in the Library and can talk and share ideas.

18. And sometimes you can share notes.

19. S. likes people. He likes to talk to people and he likes to have friends. He doesn't like to stay alone. If he does, he feels lonely.

So, do you think it's hard to make friends because of the language problem... why?

S5. 20. No, I think my language, now, it's not a problem for me to make a friend...I can understand what they are talking to me and what I'm going to talk to them about...I'm not worried about it...it's not a problem for me /

20. He doesn't think that English is a barrier anymore as far as making friends is concerned.

S5. 21. But I think it's because in here we're different cultures and everybody busy and after classes everybody walk out...

20. He thinks that here people are from different cultures and are busy and change classes and therefore do not mix with each other.

Disappears...

S5. And everybody has a different...because today...make it...they won't (Unclear)

So you can't really make a friend because the classes keep changing...

S5. 21A Yeah, and then go to class and everybody busy...and you don't have time to talk with the teacher and go to classes, take notes, and after that...oh, you only have time to say, oh hi...or something like that...that's all we do...because everybody so different.../

21A. And even in class you don't have time to talk with the teacher or any others...Just go to classes, take notes, and that's about it.

Different from...

S5. 22. My old college.

Oh...in what ways?

S5. My college...they accept only few students...I know everybody...I still remember...at least now, I can write their name down.

22. This is very different from his old college back in Laos, which accepted only a few students. He knew every one there and to this day he can still remember them all and write their names down.

Really?

S5...if you go there and you mention a name, everybody know. If you go there, like for my friends, they just ask my name and everybody know me and I know everybody. And you feel more comfortable.

You know the whole community...

S5. 22/1. Yes...but in here I study for two years, maybe I can write ten people down./ 23. because over there, but after college, we talk and we just talk and talk...

And over there did you have a place to meet... to talk... to have coffee or whatever?

S5. 21. No, actually we don't have coffee shop...just after class we just get together and talk...seems like everybody just wants to talk because.../ 23. and so small...and we know each other...

Yes, you are more comfortable and you're part of a group.

S5. Yes and everybody./

And you really miss that...

S5. 24. Yes, but in here...not only Hmong...maybe some other foreign students.../

Yes I never thought of that before... but it is different.

S5. Yes, very different, cause in here it is very...(unclear) school.

22. He hardly knows anyone at this university.

23. Over there after classes they talk and talk and talk... everyone knows each other.

... the school is so small, they all knew each other.

24. But here the Hmong and perhaps other foreign students might feel the same way.

S5. 25. At home everybody knows their neighbors and every one in the village. They help each other. But in here, everybody hurries.

Everyone has something to do as soon as school's out...

S5. 26. And actually, the culture is...for example, our next door neighbors...but at home you know...

And there, people have more time...

and they know. That's how I know lots of people who helping each other./

So here, you're saying that not only on campus but even in the city, in the town, it is the same. And you don't know everybody, even in your neighborhood... only your next door neighbor, maybe...

S5. and all you have to do is mention a name and everybody knows that person. It make a person feel more comfortable.

S5. 27. I live here about ten years and I know my neighbor, but that's all...we see each other, we say hi, and that's it./

You don't invite each other over... hmmm, that's very interesting...

(Pause)

I was thinking back to when you first were talking about that you feel comfortable now, to go to see some professors? I was wondering if you could tell me about your experiences... about

25. It appears that here, everybody hurries.

26. He barely knows his neighbors here.

27. S. has lived here ten years and just knows his neighbor well enough to say hi and that's all.

the first time you ever spoke to a professor... was it difficult... or whatever you can think of...

S5. 28. Yeah, actually, it's different you know, because professors, you know it's different than with some students...some professors it's easy, you can talk to them...it's hard for me...I have one class...it's hard for us...

28. Some professors are easier to talk to than others...and some are more accommodating giving him either more time or a separate room or both in which to take tests.

So have you been able to get some professors to give you a longer time?

S5. Yes...

How do you arrange that? Do you just go and ask the professor, or how do you arrange things?

S5. Yeah, just go ask the professor.

Do you ask before the test or at the beginning of...

S5. You ask him and try to explain how...ask him about the time and some even give you a different room.

So, some are very willing.

S5. Yes, and even (some will let you take the test in their office and let you take any amount of time.)/

uhumm...

S5. 29. Most understand...(but some are not as understanding)

29. He has been able to connect to some professors but not all.

Some are not so...

S5. 30. They...(unclear, something about professors being an elite)

So you mean, they're so high above everybody else...they can't imagine what...

S5. And there are lots of students that if you take class with a Dr. the doctor professor (something about Drs. Talking faster and using more difficult language than TAs, assuming that students know more than they actually do.)

TAs or staff...

S5. Because Drs...they think that the students can understand...the students not like that...they go very fast, they even not...they go fast, they don't go slow, so you can't go along...it's harder.

So it's harder when an actual doctor... a professor who's a doctor... because they go so fast, they just think that you understand everything, they forget that you're a student.

S5. They don't go slow...the doctor have lot of information...they expect you to remember everything...it's hard./

Oh gosh... can you think of any other experiences? I know that when we talked a long time ago, you mentioned that when you first came you ended up in the classroom and it was the wrong classroom.

30. Although most professors are understanding, some are not... especially those who have doctorates. They talk faster and use more difficult language than the TAs... assuming that the students can understand them. They have a lot of information that they expect the students to remember.

S5. 30. Yep.

You remember that, to this day?

S5. It was LA, 8:00 am. It was the wrong hour...and I even can't ask them...

Because of your English...you were so shy?

S5. But you learn a lot from that./

Can you think of any other experiences, that you remember, that were really embarrassing or really bad?

S5. 31. Yes, the first day...I went to the Library, I don't even know how to get the books.

So, what did you do...how did you figure it out?

S5. I just tried by myself...just tried to do the best...tried the computer and see how it works...If I have one class where the teacher taught in class, and I have to do some research paper, I tried to remember that...

So you wouldn't ask the people who work at the Library, you just tried to figure it out. So you spend a lot of time in the Library?

S5. 32. Uhhumm, every day./

Is that where you study, do you study in the Library?

30. He remembers his first day of school when he went to the wrong class at the wrong hour but couldn't ask anyone about it because of his lack of English skills.

31. Similarly, in the Library he tried to figure out for himself how to get books and how to use the computer. If he had to write a paper he tried to follow the model of how he had to do it for another class.

32. He studies in the Library almost every day but he can also study at home because he has a huge quiet room where nobody bothers him.

S5. 32. Actually, if I don't have any term paper and I don't need the Library, I can study at home because I have a huge room and it is quiet. I can just close my door and nobody bothers. If I want to study, nobody bothers me./

Has your schedule been such that you can go home early in the day, or do you spend most of your time at the University, I mean, where do you spend more time, at home or at the University?

S5. 33. Here, if I'm not working. I usually go home at 4:30 or 5:00. Sometimes I go home for lunch.

I've been wondering about that... whether Hmong students go home for lunch or bring it here or eat here...

33. If he's not doing homework he usually goes home in the late afternoon and sometimes at lunchtime. He doesn't bring his lunch as it would get cold. He has tried pizza and although it's not his favorite, he thinks it should be good for him.

S5. I don't bring my food, because it would be cold.

So, you go home for lunch only on Fridays. What do you do the rest of the time?

S5. Sometimes I buy some pizza. It's not my favorite.

It's not your favorite, no.

S5. But I did try. I think it's good for me./

We won't talk too much longer, but I was going to say, can you think of anything else that you might want to mention about being in college... either good or bad, or that you might like to see different for yourself or for any Hmong students in the future?

S5. **34. I think...more money...**

Is that what you hope for yourself too?

S5. **That's my dream.**

To make more... so you can get a good job?

S5. **I don't know...but it's my dream, my goal.**

Uhhum...

S5. **34A. I think it's a good thing, but it's hard. I'm getting better. My goal is still far away for me./**

So maybe if we could go over all of the problems you mentioned, and maybe you could fill me in if I'm not naming all of them...? So, one problem I heard you talk about was not being familiar with campus.

S5. **35. Friends...**

Yes, another was not being able to connect with any people, yes...

S5. **That's the hard part.../**

Yes, that's the hard part... now, what were some other things? The English language?

S5. **36. Yes, English language, is not hard for everyone, but for me it's hard. But some of them were born here and if they grow up here it's not hard.**

But I'm kind of interested in the ones

34. The main thing he thinks about while in college is money. His dream is to get a good job and make good pay.

34A. Although he feels like he's getting better, his goal is still far away for him.

35. Making friends is the hardest part of being in college.

36. English is hard for him although he knows it isn't hard for those who were born here and grew up here.

like yourself, that didn't really have the high school, grade school...

S5. Yeah, I just came up here from my college...

And how do you feel about it?

S5. I feel (recording not clear)/

And how will it help you in the future, do you think?

S5. The education here (recording not clear)

So it's not just the schooling part but you earn the social part. Do you think you'll stay in Missoula after you graduate?

S5. 37. Actually, I like Missoula, depends on the job. Without job, you can't stay in Missoula. Job and money for me are the most important. If I can get a job here I'll stay here.

37. He likes Missoula, and depending on the job he can get after he graduates, if he can he would like to stay here.

Are you the oldest?

S5. 38. Yes, I'm the oldest.

Are you responsible for your parents, in other words, to take care of them, or, how does that work?

38. Money is a problem, especially for a single person. He has lots of financial problems. Although he is the oldest, his parents have many kids, and in fact, their custom is to keep the youngest at home.

S5. Actually, the Hmong they are going to keep the youngest...that's.../

Money is a problem.

S5. I don't know. My parents, they have many kids.

So, somebody will take care...

S5. 38. It's hard for the single person./

I didn't realize it is harder for a single person... a single man...

Were you able to get financial aid?

S5. I still have problems

(Discussion of Financial Aid and his financial problems)/

38. Financial problems are his main concerns at this time.

S5-Level Three, Narrative Based on Emergent Themes

Getting started in college was pretty tough for S5. He remembers that he felt totally lost on his first day on campus. He went to the wrong classroom at the wrong hour but couldn't ask anyone about it because of his lack of English skills. He didn't know any one on campus, had no friends except for a few Hmong students that he knew before coming to campus, and was unfamiliar with the buildings. In time he became familiar with the campus, he took ESL and basic English classes to improve his language skills, and took a study skills class with a teacher he liked. In that class he was able to speak to some students and started to feel a lot better about being a student.

S5 feels that college is harder for him than for other Hmong students because they either grew up here or at least went to high school here, unlike himself. He feels that learning English is a lot harder for him than for them. He actually completed college in Laos, an experience that he remembers nostalgically.

S5 feels that one of the hardest things for him to do at this university is to make new American friends. He considers himself a sociable person who likes people. He likes to talk to people and he likes to have friends. He doesn't like to be alone. He would like to have many friends so that you can share notes, can study together in the library and can talk and share ideas as he did in Laos. S5 does know other Hmong students on campus, but they do not hang around with each other unless they happen to have a class together.

S5 has found that making American friends is the hardest part of being in college. He contrasts Missoula to his village in Laos, where everyone knew each other and helped each other out. He also contrasts UM to his small college back in Laos, where all of the students were close to each other. He knew everyone there and to this day he can still remember them all and write their names down. Although he's been going to UM for two years he thinks he probably knows the names of only ten or so students. He notices that there are thousands and thousands of students here, all of whom seem busy, so it is hard for him to stop any of them to ask any of them anything. Individualized schedules that change every hour also make it hard for him to talk between classes. Everyone seems in a hurry and seems to be going in different directions.

Over in Laos, the students socialized between and after classes. They talk and talk in contrast to here, where students rush off to classes and do not seem to mix with each other. He thinks that people are from different cultures and other Hmong students might feel the same way he does about American college students.

For S5, the freedom to sit wherever you like within the classroom also makes it harder to get to know the person sitting next to you unless you are already friends. He sits with friends if he knows them, but he usually sits by himself and is sometimes lonely. He feels that is hard to get to know anyone in classes of forty or fifty people. He would like to have at least one person as a friend in each class. He would like to connect with someone. If he sits there not knowing anybody it's very lonely. If he is feeling particularly shy and doesn't know anybody, he sits far away from the teacher and from the other students. It makes him feel sad because he feels like he doesn't have any friends.

By not communicating with other students, he sometimes feels that he is missing

out on what is going on in some of his classes. If he doesn't have time to talk with other students, or with the teacher, he just goes to classes, takes notes, and that's about it. Understanding the professors, especially those who have doctorates, is sometimes very difficult. They talk faster and use more difficult language than the TAs, assuming that he students can understand them. They give a lot of information that they expect the students to remember.

As time has gone by, he has overcome some of his shyness and is able to ask questions in the classroom. His English has improved and he now feels more comfortable about talking with American friends and asking them to study with him. He actually feels a lot better now than when he first started, because has friends. He feels more accepted now.

His academic skills have improved as he has figured out how to use the Library, how to get books, and how to use the computer for writing papers. He studies in the library every day although he could study at home, where he has a good study area. If he doesn't have much homework, he usually goes home in the late afternoon or sometimes at lunchtime. He doesn't usually bring his lunch, as it would get cold. He has tried pizza although it's not his favorite. He thinks it should be good for him.

Although he feels like he's getting better as a student, his ultimate goal is still far away from him. The main thing he thinks about while in college is money. His dream is go get a good job and make good pay. If he can, he would like to get a job in Missoula. Job and money are the most important things to him, at this point.

Appendix I

S6, Levels One-Three

S6, Level One, (Verbatim Transcript)

2/4/99

Approximately one hour

S6. Well, high school is when I first came and started high school it's really difficult for me.

Uh hmmm... because...

S6. English

Because of English...

S6. And I would take ESL and a lot of people, Americans people, they teasing us...everytime we go to take lunch, and sit down and eat, they always bother us...

Really, would they actually be mean to you?

S6. Yeah, they mean to us and teasing us and they spit at us.

Really...

S6. Yeah, and we can't do anything because we cannot say back to them...the English...

Right...

S6: And...all we do is just tell some teacher...and the teacher say who? And all we can say is some guy and the teachers can't do anything because they don't have a witness or a proof...so...they do that to us for a little while...

So, how did you feel about that... did you feel angry? Or did you feel sad?

S6: Oh...I feel sad and angry that I feel sad...I don't have a good education and I can't speak English, and I can't talk back to them and I feel angry because they did that to us. -Pause-

S6: And no one can help us, you know...and I was thinking about, it's OK. Someday...they will understand who we are...if we don't give up, and if we try to do what we have to what we have to do...and, to prove who we are and where we come from. And soon, when I was a junior and senior in high school, my English kept

getting better, so lots of American kids started making friends, and I still have a lot of friends in my junior and senior year of high school

Who are Americans?

S6. Yeah.

OK, that's good...did that help, improve things so you had a better experience?

S6. Yeah.

And were people still mean to you at lunchtime?

S6. Yeah, they were still mean, but we tell them that we don't like to stay in United States too...but the reason we're here is because of the CIA. Vietnam and the "Secret War...the reason we are here...the CIA they came to Laos and started having war with Vietnam so we had to, CIA forces us to be secret military, so our people sneak into South Vietnam and to North, so that's the reason, and we lost the war so the CIA promise that if we lost the war, CIA can promise to take us to the United States...

If you stayed there

S6. We went, the CIA would provide everything and provide us whatever we lost, you know, the pay back...

Uh hmmm

S6. That's why we here and so we tell them and some people they think we lie and some say, oh that's why we're here...if you do that to them, our government will do something to them, but...

Hmmm...

S6: But some people they don't believe it...they still doing that, they say that's not true...so...and we're lying...and they say prove it...but we can prove it here but it's not important that we prove it to you...it's only important to prove it to the government...like we go to welfare and they say you have to work...you are good, you can speak English, you can get a job...but we have to prove that we came here are from and we came here with the CIA, we have to have a piece of paper that can prove that the CIA, X.? Can't remember...

X... Yes... Right...

S6. X., he promised everything...we can prove that one...and we have a radio...a

movie...about the war...

Really?

S6. Yeah, the secret war...

Do you have a copy of that?

S6. No, Y. has it...

I should get it from him and I should look at it myself...

S6. One they speak English, and the other they translate to Hmong...so all the people can understand.

So when you were in high school, then, you had to deal with people who were mean to you and they didn't understand why you were here, and it was hard to explain to them...

S6. Yeah.

OK, so, how did you get the idea of thinking of coming to University? What made you want to come here?

S6. Because I want to get my life better...in my family, no one has had a high education.

Tell me a little about... did you say that your father...you only talk about your father...and I read about your mother, very sad...

S6. You mean, about my parents?

So, did you and your father come to the United States?

S6. No, my mother, my dad already died...my mother died in 1980, my dad died in 1989...

So, when you came over, you came by yourself?

S6. Well, I came with my stepmother...and two stepbrothers.

So, it's just you, yourself, who decided that to get ahead you need to go to college?

S6: Yeah...so, I want to prove, myself, that I came from the poor family, but I want to be, want to have a nice family, a high education, so I can help my little brother, or sister or my cousin, whatever, and I also think that education, in the

United States, is the top...so if you have no education, you have no job, you don't have no money, no car, nothing, no family, everything is money...so first thing is education, then money, then family, that's the most important...

Uhhmmm...and do you have...do you feel that, well just tell me how it's been to come...now that you're here, how do you feel about it...what have been some good things, some bad things, since you started here at school?

S6. Well, the good thing is...uhm, I have lots of friends help me with my homework...my English.

Are these people you've just met, since you came?

S6. Yeah...especially like...like my wife? She really good at Math, so she help me with Math...but English, I can talk to the teachers, mostly English teachers, that I have met here, very nice teachers, so they can teach me and talk to me personally...

So you feel pretty comfortable to go to the teacher and talk...

S6. Yeah

To them, and do you go like, like to their office...

S6. I can go after class or to the teacher's office...

So, your wife helps with math, and you can get help in English from the teachers...and have you made any friends at the University?

S6. No, it's very hard to make Americans friends. I don't know if because... it's the language, skin color, or what. It's very hard, I don't know about somebody very hard to make a friend of American students.

Hummm...

S6. Maybe the way we talk...is not, we don't understand each other...or the way I look or the way they look, I don't understand...

There's something though, that makes it hard to make friends easily... So how about any bad, disappointing, or horrible things happen since you've been in school?

S6. Oh, nothing bad, nothing good...but the bad thing is, for me is to register for class...especially for me, as a freshman, so all the junior and seniors, they already register, so all the freshmen have to register after that, all the classes they're closed...and its really difficult to find a class...or the time that you want...

Right...uhum, well let's get around to that after the interview... now let's get around to some difficulties... I know you already mentioned your Military Science class... now why is that so hard, so difficult? What's the reason, do you think?

S6. The reason is they talk about American military history...but I just don't understand what he's talking about...I don't know...the way he talks...I understand every single word says...

You do...

S6. But I don't understand what he meant. See like, you read...you understand every word, but when you put all the words together, you don't know what they mean. All the words together...that is very hard for me...

And...it's especially hard in that class.

S6. Yeah, that's very interesting to me...because, it's hard to explain...yes I understand the word, yes, but I don't understand the meaning of the whole thing...

Have there been other subjects like, last semester, where that has happened to you?

S6. Last semester it was Math...

Was it hard that way?

S6. Well, no not hard that way, like that class...but Math, you had to listen very carefully, so you had to concentrate so you can learn the math, it's not easy. So if you don't understand, you can't do it...it's very hard.

Huh... Well, can you think of any other things you might want to say, about being in college... like any ideas you might have... or new ideas you might have gotten here, or... new anything... or changes, in the way you feel about something?

S6. Well, I have lots of feelings about going to college...like, I really want to be what I want to be, but sometimes I don't believe myself that I can't or can do this...because of English...Sometimes I think, well I can do this but I have a problem because of the English or the Math...so I have a problem that I can't do this and I can't do this...but I cannot do the next thing...so that is the problem

Does it worry you or does it just make you feel stronger?

S6. I always tell myself that no matter what, even if I don't know, that I have to do my very best to try and I do my best and for awhile and if I study for the rest of my life...so if I study for ten years and I can't get it, so I'll say to myself, ok, just forget it, and try some new thing...but I think lots of people they can do it, so I can

do it. You have to study hard, so if you don't study, you don't know, so I think if they can do it, I can do it, that's what I was thinking.

Yeah, if they can do it, then you can do it.

S6. Yeah. If I'm not a lazy person, if they can do it, I can do it. At least I'm not a lazy person.

You are a lazy person or you're not a lazy person...?

S6. I'm not lazy... (laughter)

Right...ok. Where do you get your encouragement from, other than yourself? Now your wife, I take it, is she very supportive of you to come to college... she wants...

S6. Yeah, she always asks me to go to college...since I finished high school, like doctor bills, car, insurance, and to support my family...I can't go right now, I have to work for a little while and save some money too, so I can go to college...she keep telling me every single week, and ...finally I got in and she was really happy and she supports me...and every time I go back home...she says, "Do you have any homework?" and she checks on my math...and she says study, study and she talks to me like a teacher talks me...do your homework...so I say OK. I have lots to do right now, but I'll set some time for later, and like the next couple of hours lie after my baby goes to sleep...and so keeps quiet...every time I study at home, my kid wants paper and pen...draw picture...

So she's doing her little homework too...

S6. Yeah, so sit down now, and she starts laughing...so I can't study...

So you have to give her some attention too... so do you think your wife will be coming to school later on too?

S6. She wants to but, uhm, her paperwork for permanent resident, there's a problem...so if she come in she has to pay very expensive...the financial arrangement...so I don't know if we can afford ...see now the reason ...I tell her don't come in yet is because we have lots of bills...and she have to work to pay the bills and I can go to school...

So if both of you came...

S6. If we both came, like I say, no money for gas, no money for laundry, for food, we can die...

Sounds like you've been taking care of yourself for almost your whole life... being what we say responsible for your own rent, your own this, your own that... - Pause-

Well, I wanted to see how college compares to high school as far as how you feel... if we have the same kind of mean people like in high school? Does it seem like a different atmosphere? You feel conscious of your English language? I mean...

S6. I would say right now, here's America, I don't care what they say about me now I just ignore it...but if they bother me or if they mean and do it...I would talk to them or even, they say you fight, or if they fight me, I would fight, fight...if they don't fight me, just talk the mouth...I can ignore it because I can say, that doesn't hurt me...at least they beat me...mouth is not hurt me...so I don't want to get trouble...I don't care what they saying...the word you say is back to you...it's not hurt me...so if like, you say it does hurt your feelings and you talk back to them, and soon there's a fight, but if you don't talk back to the, they will stop. You just don't care, just ignore them, walk away.

Can you think of any other things to mention about college life? In general, about school, or about experiences you have had?

S6. Like what?

About school, or how you feel, about experiences that you have had...

S6. Well, I feel great...

Uhhumm, you like being a student...

S6. Yeah, I like being a student.

Was it what you thought it was going to be like... is it like you imagined?

S6. Well, I thought...first I came into college and I thought I had not enough, not enough...I can't, I can't really do anything...but as soon as I came in here, I knew I can do here but I didn't know what it is...so I said to myself, "I know I can do it. I know there's something in there I can do...but I have to try and do, until I find out which one I can do..."

So at first, you thought, oh my gosh... everything's so difficult or something...

S6. Yes, something so difficult...when I was a little boy, I tell you the truth, I was lazy to go to school. Every time I go to school...I skipped school

You did? (at this point S6's wife and daughter came in, so the interview ended)

S6, Level Two, (Spontaneous Meaning Units)

S6. 1. Well, high school, is when I first came and started high school it's really difficult for me./

Uh hmmm... because...

S6. 2. English/

Because of English...

S6: And I would take ESL/ 3. and a lot of people, Americans people, they teasing us...everytime we go to take lunch, and sit down and eat, they always bother us...

Really, would they actually be mean to you?

S6. Yeah, they mean to us and teasing us and they spit at us./

Really...

S6. 4. Yeah, and we can't do anything because we cannot say back to them...the English.../

Right...

S6. 5. And...all we do is just tell some teacher...and the teacher say who? And all we can say is some guy and the teachers can't do anything because they don't have a witness or a proof...so...they do that to us for a little while.../

So, how did you feel about that... did you feel angry? Or did you feel sad?

S6. 6. Oh...I feel sad and angry that I

1. When he first started high school it was very difficult for him.

2. English was his main difficulty. He took ESL classes to learn English.

3. In high school, many American students teased them (Hmong students) every time they went to lunch. They bothered them and were mean to them. They teased them and spit on them.

4. The Hmong students were powerless to do anything about it because they couldn't answer back in English.

5. So they had to resort to telling the teachers, who would ask them for proof, which they couldn't produce. And so nothing happened as a result.

6. S6 feels both sad and angry about those

feel sad...I don't have a good education and I can't speak English, and I can't talk back to them and I feel angry because they did that to us./

Right...

S6. 7. And no one can help us, you know.../ 8. and I was thinking about, it's OK. Someday...they will understand who we are...if we don't give up, and if we try to do what we have to what we have to do...and, to prove who we are and where we come from./ 9. And soon, when I was a junior and senior in high school, my English kept getting better, so lots of American kids started making friends, and I still have a lot of friends in my junior and senior year of high school

Who are Americans?

S6. Yeah.

OK, that's good...did that help, improve things so you had a better experience?

S6. Yeah.

And were people still mean to you at lunch-time?

S6. 10. Yeah, they were still mean, but we tell them that we don't like to stay in United States too...but the reason we're here is because of the CIA, Vietnam and the "Secret War...the reason we are here...the CIA they came to Laos and started having war with Vietnam so we had to, CIA forces us to be secret military, so our people sneak into South Vietnam and to North, so that's the reason, and we lost the war so the CIA promise that if we lost the war, CIA can

experiences. He feels sad and he also feels angry because of what happened. He feels that he didn't have a good education and couldn't speak out and talk back to those students. He felt angry at the American students for taunting them.

7. He feels that no one can help them but themselves.

8. He feels that someday, if they don't give up and if they try to establish their own merit, than that will be proof of who they are and where they come from.

9. As he became a junior and senior in high school, his English improved and he made more American friends, which improved the quality of his high school experience.

10. Some kids continued to be mean to them but they were able to explain their history and reasons for being in this country. He tried to explain to the students that the Hmong were here because they helped the CIA during the "secret war" which was part of the Vietnam war. He has tried to explain that the CIA came to Laos and forced the Hmong to be part of the secret military and that their people sneaked into South and North Vietnam to help the Americans. Because the

promise to take us to the United States...

Americans lost the war, the CIA promised to take the Hmong to the United States.

If you stayed there

S6. 11. We went, the CIA would provide everything and provide us whatever we lost, you know, the pay back...

11. And that the CIA promised that they would provide every thing for them in their new country, would provide what they had lost. It was to be a pay back for the help that the Hmong had provided during the war.

Uh hmmm

S6. That's why we here and so we tell them/ 12. and some people they think we lie and some say, oh that's why we're here...if you do that to them, our government will do something to them, but...

12. S6 says that although some students believed him, others still thought that he was lying and want more proof of his story.

S6. But some people they don't believe it...they still doing that, they say that's not true...so...and we're lying.../ 13. and they say prove it...but we can prove it here but it's not important that we prove it to you...it's only important to prove it to the government...like we go to welfare and they say you have to work...you are good, you can speak English, you can get a job.../ 14. but we have to prove that we came here are from and we came here with the CIA, we have to have a piece of paper that can prove that the CIA, X.? Can't remember...

13. S6 says that he doesn't feel that he should have to prove himself to anyone, except to the government. The welfare office is especially hard on them if they think they should be able-bodied and can speak English...that they should be able to get a job.

14. He feels that the Hmong should not be held to the same standards as anyone else because of the promises that were made to them by the CIA, especially by a particular person who wrote a statement about the Hmong's contributions during the Vietnam War and a promise to them of protection in America.

XX? ...Yes... Right...

S6: X., he promised everything...we can prove that one...and we have a radio...a movie...about the war...

The Hmong have a movie about the "secret war" which is in both Hmong and English, to explain their story to everyone.

S6. Yeah, the secret war...

Do you have a copy of that?

S6: No, Y. has it.../

I should get it from him and I should look at it myself...

S6. One they speak English, and the other they translate to Hmong...so all the people can understand./

So when you were in high school, then, you had to deal with people who were mean to you and they didn't understand why you were here, and it was hard to explain to them...

S6. 15. Yeah.../

15. So in high school, S6 had to deal with students who were mean to him and who also didn't or wouldn't understand why he and the Hmong were here in the first place.

OK. so, how did you get the idea of thinking of coming to University? What made you want to come here?

S6. 16. Because I want to get my life better...in my family, no one has had a high education./

16. He decided to come to college to improve his life, since no one in his family has had a high level of education.

Tell me a little about...did you say that your father... you only talk about your father... and I read about your mother, very sad...

S6. 17. You mean, about my parents?

17. When he came to the United States, his parents were already dead. He came with his step mother and two step brothers.

So, did you and your father come to the United States?

S6. No, my mother, my dad already died...my mother died in 1980, my dad

died in 1989...

So, when you came over, you came by yourself?

S6. Well, I came with my step-mother...and step-two brothers./

So, it's just you, yourself, who decided that to get ahead you need to go to college?

S6. 18. Yeah...so, I want to prove, myself, that I came from the poor family, but I want to be, want to have a nice family, a high education, so I can help my little brother, or sister or my cousin, whatever, and I also think that education, in the United States, is the top...so if you have no education, you have no job, you don't have no money, no car, nothing, no family, everything is money...so first thing is education, then money, then family, that's the most important.../

Uhhmmm...and do you have ... do you feel that, well just tell me how it's been to come... now that you're here, how do you feel about it... what have been some good things, some bad things, since you started here at school?

S6. 19. Well, the good thing is...uhm, I have lots of friends help me with my homework...my English./

Are these people you've just met, since you came?

S6. 20. Yeah...especially like...like my wife? She really good at Math, so she help me with Math.../ 21. but English, I can talk to the teachers, mostly English teachers, that I have met here, very nice teachers, so they can teach me and talk

18. On his own, he decided to go to college because he wanted to prove that he could do it even though he came from a poor family. He also believed that a high education would help him have a nice family and would help him support his siblings and cousins. He feels that in the United States, that education is the top...and that without an education one would have no job, no money, no car, no family...nothing. He believes that money is everything. That education, money, and family, in that order, are of utmost importance to him.

19. In college he has friends who help him with his homework and with his English.

20. His wife is also a big help. She's really good at Math and helps him with his homework.

21. But with English, he talks with his English teachers who are very nice, are

to me personally...

So you feel pretty comfortable to go to the teacher and talk...

S6. Yeah/

To them, and do you go like, like to their office...

S6. 22. I can go after class or to the teacher's office.../

So, your wife helps with math, and you can get help in English from the teachers... and have you made any friends at the University?

S6. 23. No, it's very hard to make Americans friends. I don't know if because... it's the language, skin color, or what. It's very hard, I don't know about somebody ...very hard to make a friend of American students/

Humm...

S6. 24. Maybe the way we talk...is not, we don't understand each other...or the way I look or the way they look, I don't understand...

There something though, that makes it hard to make friends easily... So how about any bad, disappointing, or horrible things happen since you've been in school?

S6. 25. Oh, nothing bad, nothing good...but the bad thing is for me is to register for class Especially for me, as a freshman, so all the junior and seniors, they already register, so all the freshmen have to register after that, all the classes they're closed...and its really difficult to find a class...or the time that you

really easy to talk to and are willing to help him personally.

22. He speaks to his teachers after class or at their offices.

23. Despite the help he gets in his subjects, he finds it very hard to make American friends. He doesn't know if it's language, skin color or what. Whatever it is it's very hard to make a friend of American students.

24. "maybe the way we talk is not...we don't understand each other...or the way I look, or the way they look...I don't understand"

25. One bad period of time for him has been registration. He runs into difficulties because as a freshman most of the classes are closed by the time it is his turn to register.

want.../

Right... uh, well let's get around to that after the interview...

Now let's get around to some difficulties... I know you already mentioned your Military Science class... now why is that so hard, so difficult? What's the reason, do you think?

S6. 26. The reason is they talk about American military history...but I just don't understand what he's talking about...I don't know...the way he talks...I understand every single word says

26. One class that has been really difficult has been American Military History. He doesn't know what the professor is talking about despite the fact that he understands every single word he says.

You do...

S6. But I don't understand what he meant. See like, you read...you understand every word, but when you put all the words together, you don't know what they mean. All the words together...that is very hard for me...

He does not understand the meaning of the words. He doesn't understand what he reads in that class, either. All the words put together don't make sense. It is very hard for him.

And...it's especially hard in that class.

S6. Yeah, that's very interesting to me...because, it's hard to explain...yes I understand the word, yes, but I don't understand the meaning of the whole thing.../

It's hard to explain how he can understand words and yet not understand the meaning of the whole thing.

Have there been other subjects like, last semester, where that has happened to you?

S6. 27. Last semester, it was Math.

27. Math was also difficult last semester for different reasons. In Math you have to listen very carefully and have to be able to concentrate to get it. It is a difficult subject.

Was it hard that way?

S6. Well, no not hard that way, like that class...but Math, you had to listen very carefully, so you had to concentrate so you can learn the math, it's not easy. So if you don't understand, you can't do it...it's very hard./

Huh... Well, can you think of any other things you might want to say, about being in college...like any ideas you might have...or new ideas you might have gotten here, or...new anything...or changes, in the way you feel about something?

S6. 28. Well, I have lots of feelings about going to college...like, I really want to be what I want to be, but sometimes I don't believe myself that I can't or can do this...because of English....Sometimes I think, well I can do this but I have a problem because of the English or the Math....so I have a problem that I can't do this and I can't do this...but I cannot do the next thing...so that is the problem/

Does it worry you or does it just make you feel stronger?

S6. 29. I always tell myself that no matter what, even if I don't know, that I have to do my very best to try and I do my best and for awhile and if I study for the rest of my life...so if I study for ten years and I can't get it, so I'll say to myself, so OK, just forget it, and try some new thing...but I think lots of people they can do it, so I can do it..You have to study hard, so if you don't study, you don't know, so I think if they can do it, I can do it, that's what I was thinking./

Yeah, if they can do it, then you can do it.

28. One of his feelings about college is that he doesn't have the self-confidence to know whether or not he can achieve his goals or not. He doesn't believe himself that he can or can't get a college degree, mainly because English is such a barrier. Sometimes he feels he could do the work if his Math and English skills were better. When he has a problem where he can't do one level of it, he wonders whether he can do the next step of it or not.

29. When he doubts his abilities, however, he just tells himself to try his best no matter what. He feels that he has the rest of his life to study...so he'll try to do his best. If he studies something for ten years and can't get it, then he'll change his path and try something new. He is goaded on by the belief that if others can finish college, so can he. He knows he has to study hard.

S6. 30. **Yeah. If I'm not a lazy person, if they can do it, I can do it. At least I'm not a lazy person./**

You are a lazy person or you're not a lazy person...?

S6. 31. **I'm not lazy.../ (laughter)**

Right... ok. Where do you get your encouragement from, other than yourself? Now your wife, I take it, is she very supportive of you to come to college... she wants ...

S6. 32. **Yeah, she always asks me to go to college...since I finished high school she always asks me why I don't go to college?**

S6. 33. **And I say that I still have a lot of bills, like doctor bills, car, insurance, and to support my family...I can't go right now, I have to work for a little while and save some money too, so I can go to college/**

she keep telling me every single week, and ...finally I got in and she was really happy and she supports me.../ 34. and every time I go back home...she says, "Do you have any homework?" and she checks on my math...and she says study, study—and she talks to me like a teacher talks me...do your homework...so I say OK I have lots to do right now, but I'll set some time for later, and like the next couple of hours lie after my baby goes to sleep...and so keeps quiet...every time I study at home, my kid wants paper and pen...draw picture....

30. He knows that he is not a lazy person and that he can do it if he keeps trying.

31. Emphasizes not being lazy.

32. His wife is very supportive of his being a college student. Ever since he finished high school she has encouraged him to go to college.

33. He's worried about bills and wanted to work before starting college.

He finally gave in and was accepted. That made her very happy.

34. His wife reminds him to study and she helps him with his math homework. She helps keep a home life going so that he can study and still enjoy his little daughter.

So she's doing her little homework too...

S6. Yeah, so sit down now, and she starts laughing...so I can't study.../

So you have to give her some attention too... so do you think your wife will be coming to school later on too?

S6. 35. She wants to but, uhm, her paperwork for permanent resident, there's a problem...so if she comes in she has to pay very expensive...the financial arrangement. So I don't know if we can afford...see now the reason...I tell her don't come in yet is because we have lots of bills. And she have to work to pay the bills and I can go to school. So if both of you came...

S6. If we both came, like I say, no money for gas, no money for laundry, for food, we can die.../

Sounds like you've been taking care of yourself for almost your whole life... being what we say responsible for your own rent, your own this, your own that...
Pause

Well, I wanted to see how college compares to high school as far as how you feel... if we have the same kind of mean people like in high school? Does it seem like a different atmosphere? You feel conscious of your English language? I mean...

S6. 36. I would say right now, here's America, I don't care what they say about me now I just ignore it...but if they bother me or if they mean and do it...I would talk to them or even, they say you fight, or if they fight me, I would fight, fight...if they don't fight me, just talk the mouth...I can ignore it because I

35. His wife would like to come to college also, but right now he needs her to work to help pay the bills so he can go to school. If they both came, there would be no money for gas, laundry, food...they could die.

36. Any more, he doesn't care what people say about him. He just ignores them. If they wanted to actually fight he would fight back, but talk doesn't hurt him. He doesn't want to get into trouble and he doesn't care what they say. Words don't hurt him. His tactic these days is to not care about it...ignore them and walk away.

can say, that doesn't hurt me...at least they beat me...mouth is not hurt me...so I don't want to get trouble...I don't care what they saying...the word you say is back to you...it's not hurt me...so if like, you say it does hurt your feelings and you talk back to them, and soon there's a fight, but if you don't talk back to them, they will stop. You just don't care, just ignore them, walk away.

Can you think of any other things to mention about college life? In general, about school, or about experiences you have had?

S6. Like what?

About school, or how you feel, about experiences that you have had...

S6. 37. Well, I feel great.

37. He likes being a college student.

Uhhumm, you like being a student...

S6: Yeah, I like being a student.

Was it what you thought it was going to be like... is it like you imagined?

S6. 38. Well, I thought...first I came into college and I thought I had not enough, not enough...I can't, I can't really do anything...but as soon as I came in here, I knew I can do here but I didn't know what it is...so I said to myself, "I know I can do it. I know there's something in there I can do...but I have to try and do, until I find out which one I can do."

38. When he first came to college he didn't know whether there was anything here that he could do. He wasn't sure that he had enough of a background to do anything. But once he got here, he began to think that he could do it. He just needs to keep trying find out what it is that he can do.

So at first you thought, oh my gosh, everything's so either difficult or something...

**S6. 39. Yes something so difficult.
When I was a little boy, I tell you the
truth, I was lazy to go to school. Every
time I go to school, I skipped school.**

39. He was aware that coming to college
would be difficult, even though, as a boy he
was kind of lazy as far as schoolwork was
concerned.

You did?

(At this point X's wife and daughter came
in. so the interview ended)

S6, Level Three, (Narrative Based on Emergent Themes)

S6 has very bad memories of his high school years in America. He has vivid memories of the tauntings and overt discrimination he experienced from the American students who were mean to them, teased them, bothered them, and spit at them, especially in the cafeteria at lunch time. He and other Hmong students couldn't retaliate because their English was not good enough to respond... they could only resort to telling their teachers, who usually didn't do anything about the situation. S6 feels both sad and angry about the treatment he suffered in high school. S6 feels that no one can help them succeed in America but themselves... he is confident that someday Americans will understand the Hmong if they don't give up and try their best to show who they really are and what their heritage is.

The longer he was here and the more his English improved, the easier it was to make American friends. His high school experience improved considerably. However, some students were still mean to him, telling him to go back to his own country. S6 responded by saying that he didn't really want to come here in the first place, but that the CIA offered the Hmong asylum here for their help to the CIA in the Vietnam "Secret War". He recalls that the Hmong have evidence that proves that they did work for the CIA and that they were promised protection and paybacks for their help in the war. They also have a video, in both English and Hmong, about the war and their part in it. It has been hard and frustrating to try to explain why they are here. He now doesn't care what people say about him or his people. He just ignores mean remarks. If necessary, he would fight back, but verbal taunts do not scare him... he just ignores them.

He is in college because he really wants to improve his life. Because he was from a poor uneducated family and his parents are both dead, he wants to prove that he can have a nice family, a high education, and that he can help the rest of the family. He thinks that education is the key to being on top. To him the most important things in life are, first, an education, then money, and then family.

A positive part of his college experience is the support he gets from his wife and also from teachers in school. His wife helps him with math and several English teachers have been very helpful and friendly to him. It is still very hard for him to make American friends, however. He isn't sure if it's language or skin color that makes it hard, or if it's them or him or the communication involved.

One of the bad things that he has had to deal with in college has been the complications of registration for classes. Another difficulty has been that he cannot understand what the professor is talking about in one of his classes and doesn't understand his reading assignments... he says he understands what each word means but doesn't understand the context or what the meaning of the message is. Although the problems are different, learning Math is also very difficult for him. He has to listen very carefully and concentrate so he could learn each part of the problem before proceeding on to the next.

Sometimes S6 doesn't believe that he can succeed in college and become what he wants to eventually become because of English... and Math. He feels stuck on the basics and wonders how he can proceed. He wonders how he can choose the right classes and

programs. Although at first he wondered whether he could do any college work at all, he now feels there is something here for him but he doesn't know what it is exactly.

S6 is determined to do his best to succeed even if it takes him a long time...and if he finally gives up, he can tell himself that he has at least tried. He sees other people who have done it and feels like he can also finish college, especially since he is not a lazy person.

He has a lot of support and pressure from his wife to go to college. Even though he is worried about bills and about how he will support his family, she encourages him to continue his studies. He tries to balance family life and schoolwork.