


1990

Reducing the Odds: an Educational Board Game for the Repatriation of Cambodian Refugees

Don L. Robishaw

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cie_capstones

 Part of the [Art Education Commons](#), [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), [Curriculum and Social Inquiry Commons](#), and the [Disability and Equity in Education Commons](#)

Robishaw, Don L., "Reducing the Odds: an Educational Board Game for the Repatriation of Cambodian Refugees" (1990). *Master's Capstone Projects*. 87.

Retrieved from https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cie_capstones/87

This Open Access Capstone is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for International Education at ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact scholarworks@library.umass.edu.

Master's Project

Parts I + II

“Reducing the Odds: An Educational Boardgame for the Repatriation of Cambodian Refugees.”

PLEASE RETURN TO
NONFORMAL EDUCATION
RESOURCE CENTER
222 HILLS HOUSE SOUTH
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
AMHERST 01003

by Don Robishaw



**REDUCING THE ODDS: AN EDUCATIONAL BOARDGAME FOR THE
REPATRIATION OF CAMBODIAN REFUGEES**

PLEASE RETURN TO
NONPROFIT DEPARTMENT
RESEARCH CENTER
200 HIGHLAND AVENUE
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
AMHERST 01003

**BY
DON L. ROBISHAW**

PART ONE OF A MASTER'S THESIS

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for
the degree Master's of E. ed - University of Massachusetts.**

1990

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
INTRODUCTION.....	1-5
Clientele.....	2-3
Rationale.....	3-4
Field test/Evaluation.....	4-5
CREATION OF THE PROJECT.....	5-6
RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES.....	7-10
CONSTRUCTION.....	10-17
Making the board.....	10-11
Making the spinning wheel.....	12
Making the game cards.....	12
Game questions for the staff.....	13-16
Game questions for the displaced Khmer.....	16-17
Game icons.....	17
DIRECTIONS.....	17-22
Problem statement.....	17
Purpose.....	18
Scenario:	
The Repatriation of Sokhoum and His Family.....	18
Objectives.....	19
Materials.....	19
Game cards.....	20
Number of players.....	20
Playing time.....	20
The Game.....	20
Steps.....	21
Points to remember	22

AN ANALYSIS: WHAT IS AN EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL TOOL.....	22-23
AN ANALYSIS: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EDUCATIONAL GAMES IN GENERAL....	23-27
AN ANALYSIS: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SIMULATION GAMES THAT LEAD TO DIALOGUE AND DISCUSSION.....	27-30
AN ANALYSIS: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF BOARDGAMES WITH SOUTHEAST ASIANS.....	30-37
CONCLUSION.....	38-39
APPENDIX	
Survey results.....	40-41
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	42-43
ADDENDUM	
Report from the field.....	?
PART TWO: A REFLECTION PAPER.....	1-16

INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how a boardgame can be an effective tool for the education of Cambodian refugees (displaced Khmer) living in the Thai border camps. As a secondary purpose this paper discusses and summarizes the process the author went through in the development of a non formal education (NFE) game and what he has learned in the process.

The goal of the product is:

- * To help eliminate the educational gap and the informational void that prevails in the border camps.*
- * To better help displaced Khmer critically look at their own problems.*
- * To help displaced Khmer prepare for the perilous journey back to Cambodia.*

The gap and void are a result of the limited amount of education that takes place in the camps and the limited amount of information refugees receive about their chances of a successful repatriation.

Just what is an effective educational tool to use with Southeast Asians and specifically (Cambodian refugees)? What works well and why does it work?

There are various educational philosophies in the field of adult education. Which ones are most applicable? In the development of "Reducing the Odds" the author/designer of the game states his philosophy of education and recognizes other educational philosophers who may be in agreement with him. The author is a proponent of dialogical education and problem posing. In Thailand an NFE philosophy of problem solving

Khmer Pen) was developed in 1971 by the Ministry of education. The author intends to discuss this philosophy and its applicability towards his product. Traditional Cambodians have adhered to Buddhism, and an educational philosophy should be flexible and attempt to adapt to traditions.

CLIENTELE

Today, hundreds of thousands of refugees from Cambodia are waiting in "limbo" (refugee camps) on the Cambodian/Thai border. Many of these long term prisoners of their own culture have been in camps for years. Children eight, nine and ten years old have known no other life outside of the camps. Half of the displaced Khmer are under age 16.

Between 1969 and 1973 the American military bombed Cambodia looking for the Viet Kong. When the Cambodian communists (Khmer Rouge) took over in 1975 a few people left for Thailand, but most stayed on. Many died during the war between the Cambodian government and the Cambodian communists (Khmer Rouge) prior to 1975, but even more died during what followed over the next four years (1975-1979).

The Vietnamese Communists invaded in 1979 and hundreds of thousands of other refugees escaped over the mountains to the camps in Thailand. Many of these refugees left the camps in Thailand for other third countries.

Yet many more were to stay in border camps or oscillated between camps and Cambodia for ten years or more. During this ten year period (1979-1989) the Vietnamese controlled Cambodia. The Vietnamese departed in September 1989 and left behind a Vietnamese backed Cambodian communist government (not the Khmer Rouge). The present Cambodian government met with representatives of a small coalition of resisters (representatives of three former Khmer government including the Khmer Rouge (communists) during the fall of 1989. The coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) had been fighting along the

borders with the Vietnamese and the present Cambodian government for ten years. Since the recent failure of the Paris peace talks and the inability to draw a truce, the Vietnamese supported Cambodian government is again fighting with the coalition. Only this time it is not restricted to just the borders. The coalition (mostly the Khmer Rouge) is on the move towards the second largest city (Battambang). In February of 1990 Vietnamese troops were reported seen in outside of Battambang.

Which leads us back to the current situation where hundreds of thousands of refugees are still in the boarder camps. About 2,000 people are leaving for Cambodia every month under the cover of darkness. Because of United States Immigration Nationalities Service's (INS) strict refugee policy there are very few resettlement opportunities for refugees to go to third countries. There are also very few educational opportunities available in these camps. It is clear that there is an overwhelming need for the world community to do something for people stuck in a life of horror and uncertainty.

RATIONALE

The University of Massachusett's Center for International Education (CIE) may, in some small way, be able to introduce educational programs into these camps. If successful in its bid to get funding to run border education programs, a primary focus may just be on education for repatriation.

In addition to the game's primary clientele, it will obviously be important for the program staff to learn as fast as possible, just what are some of the issues refugees will have to face if they are destined for repatriation. If the staff plays the game it will help them in some small way be able to empathize with the displaced Khmer. Just what are some of the critical incidents that might occur in the process of repatriation? ...cultural issues? ... political issues? ...basic human needs? What needs to be known about the culture of the refugee camps? Who holds power... How are things done... Through whom should you work...

An NFE product or tool is available to set the scene for dialogue and pose repatriation problems to refugees. It is a boardgame that is multidimensional in purpose. It can serve as a vehicle for program staff to learn about refugee issues. In addition it can be used as a research tool to find out more information about the situation.

FIELD TEST/EVALUATION

The author has field tested the product using politically astute Cambodian Americans who live in New England. Several useful ideas for improving the game were obtained from field tests on November 24, 1989, May 12, 1990 and also from several presentations at the Center for International Education. Ideas for possible amelioration include the following suggestions:

1. *To speed up the game use one die instead of a spinning wheel.*
2. *To obtain broader participation the game's creator should not take part in the discussions but only serve to explain and clarify the rules.*
3. *To make the game move at a faster pace the questions should :*
 - a. *Be written in Khmer language.*
 - b. *Be giving to the participants beforehand.*
 - c. *Be simplified and made more specific, (You are in Cambodia...) have an issue, offer fewer choices, and/or ask why questions.*
 - d. *Not try to get too much in one question.*
4. *Use only one icon (game piece) to represent the family and try to get the family safely back to Cambodia. Using several icons prolongs the game.*

Besides field testing the boardgame with Cambodian American participants it is also important to address issues that relate to the subsequent strengths and weaknesses of the project? An evaluation will be conducted after every demonstration and/or presentation. Some questions that may be asked after the completion of the game include:

1. Was it useful for getting at some serious information in a non threatening manner.
2. Were the directions easy to understand?
3. Was it a good method and how could it be improved?
4. What were the strengths of the gameboard?
5. How could it be improved?
6. Are the goals and objectives being accomplished?
7. How did you feel about the product?
8. Are the questions effective and do they stimulate discussion?
9. Is the design of the board culturally acceptable? Should any changes be made?
10. Are the answers given sufficient enough for the new staff to come away after one viewing with a new sense of awareness? Should the staff also play?

CREATION OF THE PRODUCT

In reflecting back on the development of the game it was the author's original intent to design a simulation for the rural poor of the world. The author was attracted by an axiom in Rural Development Education that states, the rural poor will usually not take risks with what little they have.

After a couple of days in deep contemplation toying with that idea, the author came up with the idea to develop a simulation boardgame for displaced Cambodians in the Thai refugee camps. The problem posed for the learners - How to successfully get back to Cambodia safely? It was decided that the learners would solve this problem and all the accompanying problems by discussing the issues involved in repatriation with other members of the camp community as part of the process of the simulation.

It was hoped that by playing the game participants would develop a sense of the complexity of problems that inhibit the repatriation process. The learners participation in the game was expected to give more clarity and understanding of the problems and to enlighten the participants to the importance of developing critical thinking, reflective thinking and planning skills.

Besides the cognitive processes that went into the conceptualization of the game there were the sequential planning steps taken to develop the simulation. After the scenario was set the objectives of the game were formulated. Then of course there must have been some thought about the rules of the game. ... more conceptual thinking about different styles of design for the game. ... still more ideas.... Actually (truthfully) the design process was a little erratic. Perhaps it is not possible to develop a creative boardgame in a logical sequence. It was the author's intention to use a logical sequence to develop the game.

Then, further thought raised the issue of how to field test the product. It was decided that the game would be field tested with willing politically astute Cambodian Americans living in New England. Next, came the idea of using the game to acquaint the staff of a mythical repatriation program with the problems refugees might face if they decided to return to Cambodia.

In further development stages of the game the author discovered the possibility of using the game as a way to do participatory research. This seemed like an ideal opportunity to gather some research data about the problems in the camps, (including education) in addition to fulfilling the other objectives of the game.

RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES

Various sketchy reports from the U.S. government, United Nations, Lawyers Amnesty International, Refugee Reports and others have been used to supplement opinions of CIE members and the opinions of former Cambodian refugees living in the United States who have played the game. It has been recognized that women and girls comprise the majority of refugees living in the border camps of Thailand, thus in the planning of educational programs it is important to remember the needs of these women. But basically what is needed are actual field reports based on needs assessments.

The purpose of a research project would be to assess the type of educational programs being implemented in the Khmer refugee camps, to determine the appropriate educational needs and to see how well the knowledge generated in the camps matches up with ours here in the United States. Will the data collected from the camps match ours? If successful in obtaining funding to conduct research and to be able to confirm some of our beliefs of what the educational needs are - we may be able to obtain funding to run border education programs.

Research would be necessary to determine refugees present needs, as well as to determine what it will take to rebuild Cambodia. One of our representatives will be working in a border camp. This person is willing to conduct participatory research and a needs assessment to determine some of the educational needs of refugees repatriating back to Cambodia.

One innovative way of collecting data and information about what refugees feel their educational needs are, is through the playing of "Reducing The Odds", which can also be designed to collect refugee opinions about what their specific educational needs are. Prior to using the game to collect data, our man in the field can determine whether or not a game is a culturally appropriate educational tool/research tool to be used with Southeast Asians by first conducting the following survey:

SURVEY

The purpose of this survey is to determine, in your opinion, if educational games in general are effective educational/research methods for use with Cambodian refugees in the border camps in Thailand. More specifically can a boardgame be an effective educational method to obtain research information about the educational needs of Cambodian refugees in Thailand and can it also be used to help assist refugees in repatriating back to Cambodia. As a graduate student at the Center for International Education, (CIE) University of Massachusetts I am conducting research. The information from this survey will help to decide if games are an appropriate method for collecting data from Cambodian refugees to help to determine what a curriculum should look like for educational programs on the border. We also want your opinion about the development of educational materials to be used in border camp education programs. Your input will be valuable in helping us to assess the educational needs.

Please respond to all statements. If you feel that a statement is good or bad circle the response that best indicates the extent to which you think the statement is good or bad. There are five possible choices. If you agree a statement is correct and good circle either: strongly agree or agree. If you are not sure circle N for Neutral. If you disagree with a statement and think that a statement is not correct and bad circle either: disagree or strongly disagree.

1. Southeast Asian people like to have fun.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE N DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

2. The idea of fun or "Sanuck" in Thai or "Sabay" in Khmer is an important part of the cultures of Southeast Asia.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE N DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

3. Cambodian people have historically used games as way to have fun.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE N DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

4. Games are a part of Cambodian culture.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE N DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

5 . Games have not been used very much in Cambodian formal schools.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE N DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

6. Games played on a square board (boardgames) like chess or checkers have historically been used as a way to have fun.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE N DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

7. Boardgames are a part of Cambodian culture.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE N DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

8. Boardgames have not been used very much as educational methods in Cambodian formal schools.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE N DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

9. It is possible that some Cambodians would see an educational method (boardgame) as just a game.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE N DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

10. It is possible for Cambodians to learn playing a boardgame.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE N DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

This survey has been conducted with twenty five former Cambodian refugees in Western Massachusetts. They almost all agreed that Cambodians in the camps can effectively use a boardgame as a way to get at useful information that could lead to the development of educational programs in the camps. See appendix for the results of the survey.

Reducing the Odds is ready to set the scene for dialogue and to pose repatriation problems to refugees. Based on field tests here in the United States "Reducing The Odds" can be an effective research tool. Our perceptions on what are the needs of the refugees are probably as close as we can come without implementing an actual needs assessment in the

border camps. "Reducing the Odds" can be used to see if refugees perceptions of their own needs are similar to the limited information we get from reports and opinions here in the United States.

The rationale for developing the game as a research tool is based on the previous success of NFE techniques and methods with Southeast Asians. These methods can later be used to help participants at least become aware of what the content of their problems are. Later new information can be interspersed and knowledge created through other various NFE methodologies.

This method follows a philosophy that allows insiders to participate in the research and development of their own educational program. It also utilizes their prior knowledge and helps refugees to become aware of what their present situation is like. If their experiences and reflections are given an opportunity to flourish and if the facilitator can provide guidance through questions, new knowledge can be created and useful qualitative research data and needs assessment information can be collected through a participatory approach to research.

CONSTRUCTION

"Reducing The Odds" can be made from basic low cost materials. Gather together some poster paper, tape, markers, one fastener, magic markers and 3x5 cards.

Making the board

First, on your white poster board draw a snake like road that begins at Khao I Dang refugee camp and ends in the upper center portion of the poster board. Next section off the road into thirty squares (see figure 1). Label each square with the following phrases:

- 1. Playing the Odds (4).
- 2. Reducing the Odds (4).
- 3. Against the Odds (4).
- 4. Go back three spaces (4).
- 5. Go back to Khao I Dang (1).
- 6. Safe (13).

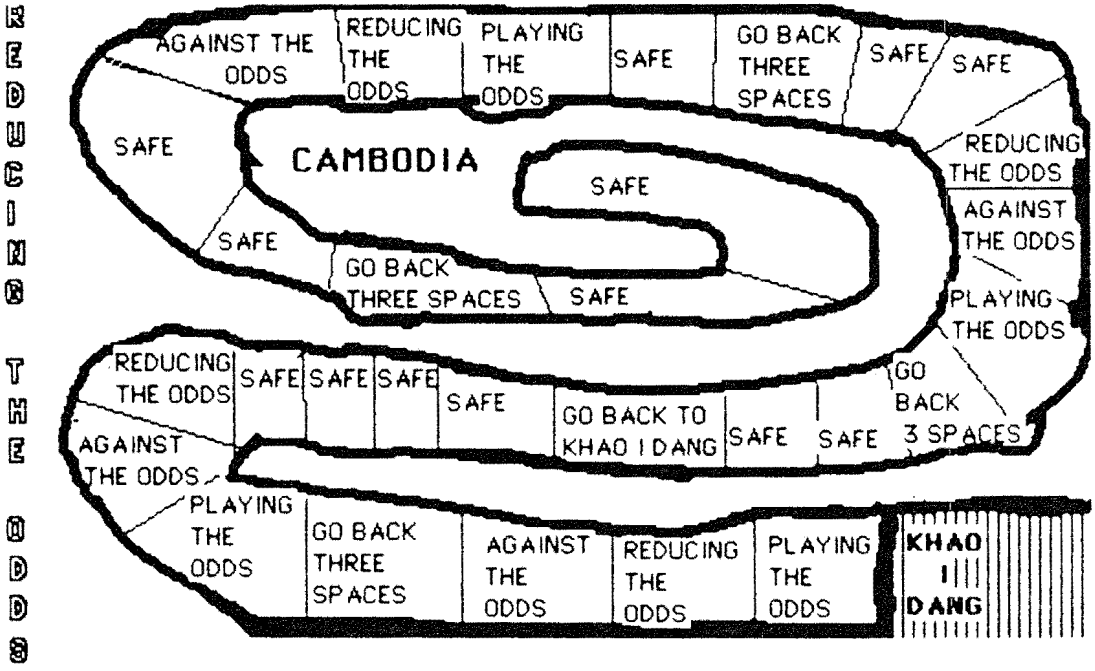


FIGURE 1

Making the spinning wheel

Second, cut out a large circle from a new sheet of poster board and attach the circle to a similar sized square sheet of poster board and connect both sheets at the center with a fastener. Section off about 15 triangles from the center and label each section. With a small piece of scrap poster board make clock hand and attach it to your spinning wheel. Write the following phrases on the spinning wheel:

- * *Advance -1*
- * *Advance -3*
- * *Advance -5*
- * *Skip a Turn*
- * *Advance -2*
- * *Advance -4*
- * *Advance -6*

Making the game cards

Type up the sixty five questions on to a sheet of paper. Cut and tape each question to a separate individual 3x5 card. Stack each card into it's appropriate stack . Label three cards:

1. Against the Odds
2. Playing the Odds.
3. Reducing the Odds.

Game questions for staff

Key: R = Reducing The Odds A = Against The Odds P = Playing The Odds

R. What are some of the choices and decisions the family will have to make?

A. What are some of the most important survival issues the family will face on the way to Cambodia?

P. What are some of the most important survival issues the family will face when they get to Cambodia?

A. What are some safety issues in traveling to Cambodia?

R. What do the young men and women talk about in the camps?

R. What do they hear in letters from Cambodia?

R. What services exist that will help them in their repatriation efforts in the camps?

A. What services exist that will help them in their repatriation efforts in Cambodia?

A. Is there any local leadership available in the camps that can help them?

P. Is there any local leadership available in Cambodia that can help them?

R. Any local organizations that can help them?

R. What resources exist in the camps that can help them?

P. How do repatriation problems relate to other problems?

P. Do they still have friends and families in Cambodia?

A. Where do they get food?

A. How do they get there?

R. Who will help them in the camps?

A. Who will help them on the way?

P. Who will help them when they get there?

R. How do they make repatriation easier in the camps?

A. How do they make repatriation easier on the way to Cambodia?

P. How do they make repatriation easier after arrival in Cambodia?

R. What things must they know if they want to repatriate to Cambodia?

P. Should they have a sponsor?

R. What are their expectations?

R. How does the family feel about repatriation?

R. In Cambodia where do they go for help?

P. When Cambodians have a problem in Cambodia where do they go for help?

A. How do they stay healthy?

R. What things do they want to know about Cambodia before they leave Khao I Dang?

R. What things do they need to take when they leave Khao I Dang?

R. What information do they have from other refugees who have left Khao I Dong?

R. How do they feel about the information they get from other refugees?

A. Do they need a map?

A. What is the best thing that could happen to them. ...worst?

P. What skills do they have need?

A. What do they expect to happen on the way to Cambodia?

P. What do they expect to happen in Cambodia?

R. How realistic are their expectations?

R. Is there a need for them to modify expectations?

A. The trip back to Cambodia will be a success for them if...?

P. Once back in Cambodia life will be a success if...?

R. 1. Break into more than one group and make a list of the expectations the family might have. 2. Discuss the list. 3. Join with the other groups and come up with a list on newsprint? Now discuss the new list. Is this list realistic? Is there a need to reexamine or modify the list?

P. When they leave Khao I Dang they hope to...?

R. How would they find out what problems people in Cambodia are having?

R. What do they need or want before leaving?

A. Do they need a leader on the trip? Who will take on the leadership role? What style of leadership is needed?

R. What are their priorities?

A. What problem solving strategies can they use?

R. What information do they need to collect? What method of collecting information will they use?

R. What do they have? What do they need and where can they get it? Who is responsible for it?

R. What should they do first? What next...?

P. What will be some of their problems? What can be done about these problems ?

R. What questions can they ask themselves?

R. 1. What can they do to organize themselves or prepare themselves for the trip? 2. Do they want to organize a team?

A. What needs to happen in order to have a successful repatriation trip?

P. What needs to happen in order to have a successful repatriation?

P. What is repatriation? Why is it needed? Why repatriate?

P. What are the key issues in repatriation?

P. What are specific questions they should ask about repatriation?

R.1. What information do they need and where do they get it? 2. What information is needed to answer their questions? 3. From whom can the necessary information be gathered?

A. What needs to be known about the culture of the refugee camp?

- Who holds power?
- How are things done and through whom should you work?

R. What kind of critical incidents might occur in the process of repatriation?

- Cultural issues
- Political issues
- Basic human needs

Sample game questions for the displaced Khmer

- Why do you want to leave the camp?
- If you are on your way back to Cambodia and you have no more food what will you do? Why?
- If you get back to Cambodia and you can not find family or friends what will you do? Why?

Questions for use with the displaced Khmer in the border camps need to be simplified, more direct and specific. Questions pertaining to problems have to be more specific. . . everything in their life is a problem. Why questions are appropriate or questions like; If this scenario happened what would you do and Why? A field report based on an actual try out in the border camps is located in an addendum to this project.

Game icons

Make several icons (markers) from scrap poster board for the players to choose from . Find a small pill box to store the icons in. Just about any small object can be used as a marker.

DIRECTIONS

Problem statement (game scenario)

There is a problem of over crowding in Cambodian border camps. The political situation has improved and the exiled Cambodian coalition and the Vietnamese established Hun Sen regime have drawn a truce. But not all the soldiers on all sides have heard about the truce. It is still somewhat dangerous to go back to Cambodia. Hundreds of thousands of refugees who live in the border camps have been offered the opportunity to repatriate to rural Cambodia. A repatriation program is in the process of being set up to help with voluntary repatriation. Imagine if you will, you are in their situation or that you are part of a team to help in the process of setting up a repatriation plan.

Purpose

A simulation gameboard has been designed as a tool to help planners, educational staff and all project participants understand the dynamics of the problem and broaden and deepen their understanding of the issues facing Cambodian refugees who have decided to repatriate to Cambodia after many years in various camps in Thailand and Cambodia. The game was also designed to help participants obtain research information in order to develop a similar game (different questions) for refugees, to develop other activities and/or to test various solutions.

The staff needs to understand the situation, problems and concerns of refugees and to interpret the data in such a way that they will be able to help plan activities with those who are leaving. It is also helpful for workers to get a better understanding of the situation facing refugees who opted for repatriation. The staff needs to continuously revise their understanding of the problems and issues. There are many facts the staff will need to know. Program staff can do a better job if they experience the situation (or gain knowledge through a simulation). They can be made more aware of the problems and will be more able to help refugees help themselves to overcome some of these problems.

Scenario: The Repatriation of Sokhoum and His Family

Sokhoum, Phanny and their family came from Battambang Province in Cambodia. They have lived in Khao I Dang refugee camp for eight years. All four of their children were born in the camp. Life was very hard for them in the refugee camps. Life was also very hard for them in Cambodia. Because life was so difficult, they went to Khao I Dang in 1981. They now have little or no opportunity to resettle in the United States or another third country. There is now an opportunity (dangerous as it is) for people to go back to rural Cambodia. Sokhoum and Phanny want to do whatever they can to "Reduce the Odds" of failure.

Objectives

- 1. Participants will become familiar with some of the problems refugees face when they are repatriated.**
- 2. Participants will become sensitized to the issues and problems in repatriation.**
- 3. Participants will be stimulated enough by the game to take part in a brainstorm or other activities to help ameliorate and revise the game.**
- 4. Participants will be motivated enough by the use of NFE techniques to start to develop other activities and techniques to use with refugee students who will be repatriated to Cambodia.**
- 5. Participants will become exposed to some of the situations facing Cambodian refugees upon repatriation.**

Materials

Gameboard, tokens for each player, spinning wheel, cards representing reducing the odds, playing the odds and against the odds, newsprint, markers, tape recorder, audio tapes, VCR, camera, video cassettes and TV.

Game cards

1. *"Reducing The Odds" - Questions and/or activities that will help to improve the chances of success for repatriation. Things they need to know and do before they leave the camps).*
2. *"Against The Odds" - Questions and/or activities that will help to improve the chances of success for repatriation. (things they need to know and do during the trip).*
3. *" Playing The Odds" - Questions and/or activities that will help improve the chances of success for repatriation. (Things they need to know and do after arrival).*

Number of players

Two - four teams or individuals. Observers may want to join in on the discussions.

Playing time

One to two hours.

The game

At one time or another (in life) everyone tries something new and takes a risk. It is peoples' attitudes that influence the process of change or prevents them from changing. The rural poor are very skeptical about taking risks with what little they have. Many people around the world are not willing to take risks.

But in a simulation or a boardgame people will be willing to take risks or at least discuss why they would not be so willing. Perhaps through a boardgame simulation people can learn about risks and ways to reduce risks or "reduce the odds".

The game (see figure one) represents the route from Khao I Dang refugee camp to Cambodia. Sokhoum and Phanny are leaving the camp and it is your job (objective) to help them along the "road to success". When a player lands on a square he/she turns over one of the three cards (Playing the odds, against the odds or reducing the odds) and initiates a discussion between the other player(s) and observers. Each player is attempting to give advice to the family in order to improve their chances of success.

Steps

Step 1. Player select one icon to represent progress. Next spin the wheel or toss the die to determine how many spaces to move your icon.

Step 2. If the icon lands on one of the three "ODDs" squares, that player must turn over one card and read it aloud. Players and observers can now attempt to answer the question on the card. When a question is answered sufficiently and to the approval of all players and observers (no time limit) the next player or team may begin by spinning the dial of the spinning wheel.

Step 3. If a player lands on any other square, that player should simply follow the directions on that square.

Step 4. Play continues until players have helped the family to reach Cambodia safely. Option: Players may choose to play cooperatively or competitively. The first player(s) to reach Cambodia must roughly compile and type up all the useful information that was obtained during the discussions that took place during the game. The second player(s) to reach Cambodia must (upon completion) take this data and categorize and finalize it.

Points to Remember When Trying to "Reduce The Odds".

- * The player(s) that land on a square become the facilitator(s) for that specific question. (only an option)
- * It is more important to completely answer a question than it is to finish the game.
- * The content is more important than the process.
- * Always tape or video the entire game for research purposes and play it back for your edification and/or amusement.

AN ANALYSIS: WHAT IS AN EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL TOOL

What makes a good educational tool? What do all good educational tools have in common? People learn best by doing and then reflecting on what happened. Tools that involve and enable the learners to do something and then analyze and reflect on what they have learned (including discussion) are the most effective educational tools for adult learners. Other important criteria that can go into the design of effective materials, methods, techniques, etc. include the following:

- **Contributes to the increase of the learners self confidence and skills.**
- **Allows learners to see how their experiences are important.**
- **Needs a way for students to test their new skills in real or simulated situations.**
- **Encourages learners to find their own answers rather than relying on a teacher.**
- **Encourages learners to take an active part in their own learning.**
- **Allows for the use of local resources in the making of learning materials.**
- **Includes simple methods for evaluating.**
- **Provides for maximum participation by the learners.**

- Conducts a lively discussion in which everyone is involved.
- Encourages learners to learn how to learn.
- Facilitates a real situation.
- Stretches learners abilities and is challenging.

The effectiveness of an educational tool for adult learners is also determined by the tool's ability to integrate the learners present learning with previous and future experiences, it's ability to help learners examine the consequences of choices and weigh those choices for future planning. An educational tool for adult learners must also effectively give clarity, understanding to and express a complexity of problems that learners may face during and after it's use.

AN ANALYSIS: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EDUCATIONAL GAMES IN GENERAL

Games have historical significance in education. Games have been traditional forms of nonformal and informal education since the beginning of mankind. "An anthropological study of games in traditional cultures distinguishes three kinds of games: games of physical skill, which aim at mastery of the self and the environment; games of strategy, which aim at mastery of the social system; and games of chance, which aim at mastery of the supernatural" (Hofstede, 84 p.138). Three types of games have also been identified and used extensively in education; 1. Skill Practice 2. Role Playing 3. Simulations.

These three game types occasionally do overlap and some games contain element of all three types. Skill practice games provide learners with a situation for repeated practice of basic skills. Role playing games set up a particular scenario, set up roles for the learners and setup problems to be solved by the learners. Several outcomes are possible in a role playing game. A simulation is a kind of real life situation set up for the learners.

Gameboards are an example of simulation games and represent specific characteristics of reality. Gameboards can provide learners with a visual representative of the learners progress towards a goal. Gameboards can also offer optional actions that may be taken by learners.

A game can be defined as, " any contest (setting) among players interacting within a set of limitations (rules) to achieve an objective" (Evans,1979 p. 79). The basic components of any game include:

- *A certain number of players*
- *Players who must interact*
- *Rules and limitations*
- *Goals and objectives*

There are many types of games and most of them have some educational value.

It has often been said that play is an effective way to learn. Educational games have been used in many countries, settings and for many different educational purposes. Educational games have been used in formal education from nursery school right up to graduate school. Non formal education (NFE) has experimented with games from its inception.

Man is a playful animal and games are a form of play. Asians strive for balance and that includes play and work. Both ends of the polarity must be in balance in order to find harmony (see section on Southeast Asians and the use of games). Many people lack opportunities for play and work too hard with little diversion.

Forms of getting together for play are important opportunities and serve as powerful tools for motivating learners and discussing local problems. Educational games offer a chance for active learning and also opportunities for feedback. Feedback is usually nonthreatening, especially when it is given by one's peers. Slow learners are also more apt to participate. Effective educational games focus the content, and the process is provided by the learners.

Educational games effectively provide learners with an opportunity to see things in a new light, offer learners new ideas and initiate discussions. A effective game should first be enjoyable and then be:

- * Well organized and field tested.
- * Easy to understand.
- * Important to the learners.
- * Playable by many learners at the same time.
- * Visually appealing, understandable and designed to stimulate action.
- * Able to hold the learners attention.
- * Able to accomplish it's goals and objectives.
- * Able to allow learners to discover.
- * Able to Contribute to communication.
- * Able to actively involve the learners interest and participation, both verbally and nonverbally.

Last but not least an educational game must be playable. "Many game are not playable because of problems with content and/or structure" (Bialosiewicz & Burns, 1983 p.11). Game designers tend to develop blinders to their work and do not see the possibility that other tools may be more effective for conveying an idea. Certain learning objectives can be taught by using other educational strategies. Often games that are designed away from the place of use fail. Some content area may be more appropriately taught in a lecture, film, recorded on a handout for later reference, etc....

Educational games can be rendered ineffective by the facilitator rather than anything the learners does. Games are often misused by the trainer/facilitator. A game can also be used to manipulate learners. Games can also mislead learners into thinking that they are coming up with the specific response, when in fact the responses came directly from the facilitator.

As with any educational tool, the criteria mentioned in the above section "What is an Effective Educational Tool" holds true with games as well as with other educational tools. And in the final analysis the successful use of games in particular, as well as all educational tools depends on the facilitators experience, training, level of awareness, commitment, trust in the learners, acceptance, empathic understanding, attitude, lack of prejudice, realness or genuineness, enthusiasm, sensitivity, faith in the learners ability to learn and guidance. "At the most general level, guidance is essentially training in decision-making; as such its purpose is to provide information, to make alternative choices meaningful, and to provide practice in making decisions" (Booncock, 1968 p. 251).

Games give support to active pedagogy. Learners are involved and participate during a game. " We have often argued that a virtue of gaming is that students cannot be passive recipients of information from the teacher but must be active participants in the learning process" (Greenblat, 1980 p. 45). Educational games allow the learner to give input into the content area. Learners become masters of their own destiny. Learners have influence over their own educational process. Learners share experiences. Games provide challenge and force the learners to act on their own behalf. Games can replicate real life situations. There is no longer a teacher student relationship. Games are enjoyable when properly facilitated and they also spark interest.

Most professional teachers realize the value of games and use them. Learning comes more easily when students are relaxed. Students remember 20% of what they hear, 60% of what they hear and see and 80% of what they hear, see and do. They learn the axiom "learning is by doing."

When students are part of a group they have less fear of making mistakes and they learn to work together. They create a situation for interaction, students become more comfortable with each other, feel part of the group and lose their fear of making mistakes.

AN ANALYSIS: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SIMULATION GAMES THAT LEAD TO DIALOGUE AND DISCUSSION

What is a simulation game? These games, as mentioned in the above section "An analysis of the effectiveness of games in general" reflect on real life situations. They have been very effective when it comes to stimulating dialogue and discussion. A simulation is a good way to get learners to utilize their prior knowledge as a base for continued learning.

A simulation can also be a boardgame and it is possible to recreate a critical situation on a gameboard. They are intended to initiate dialogue about local problems presented during the game.

Adult learners learn more effectively when they are involved in activities that take their past experiences and knowledge into account and attempt to meet their present and future needs. Old knowledge and experiences become the base and can be channeled into action to enable the adult students to achieve new knowledge. As equal partners in a dialogue facilitators and learners come to understand more.

Problem posing and problem solving simulations imitate real life situations on a boardgame. The boardgame as in any other educational tool has to have learning objectives to direct the problem solving procedures. A problem that concerns the learners must be the theme of the game and the problem can become more apparent as the game progresses.

The learners involved in the game reflect upon their past experiences and begin to anticipate future situations. Learners engage in a dialogue and as a result of their discussions begin to figure out ways to address their own problems. The boardgame provides a structure for questioning. Learners face their own problems and must use analyzing skills in order to solve them.

In a boardgame learners must apply information they learned to the problem that must be solved. The learner must analyze the problem's importance and combine it with other information that is made available to him. This is real. On the otherhand it is reversible, " So the outcome of a particular decision or strategy has immediate effects, thereby providing data for analyzing and evaluating the selected course of action with neither the time lag nor the potentially irreversible consequences of a decision in the real world" (Abt, 1970 p. 90). The game deals with learning effective, rationale and systematic thinking. Learners learn ways to cope with their problems. Learners get practice at systematical analysis and skill development.

Educational game design procedures consist of a system analysis of a problem, process or situation that can be taught. The educational objectives of a game are specified in terms of substantive scope, structured comprehension, factual detail, and relationship to other educational material. The educational objectives are used to limit the situation or process to be analyzed in time, geographic area, and functional scope and detail (Boocock & Schild, 1968 P.73).

The parameters are now set for system analysis, which consists of identifying decision making entities, informational materials inputs and outputs and resource information.

Simulation games offer the learner the opportunity to learn situational analytical skills that come from alternative strategies or decision making. Learners learn about understanding simple probabilities that are created from a whole series of direct experiences. Learners are forced to become decision makers. Decision-making procedures are based on analytical question which guide a decision maker in framing a problem, identifying useful data, analyzing the data, and rendering judgments about appropriate actions. . . . Learning a decision making process is often not so much a matter of learning new skills as it is organizing previously learned skills within a new conceptual framework (VanSickle, p. 415-416). Learners/players develop logical strategies used under game situations, other uncertain situations must take into account certain probabilities and costs.

Games teach analytical strategical thinking skills that are underdeveloped in adult basic education (ABE) learners. Bruner talks about the lack of development of these skills in underprivileged children. These children as adults depict a history of failures. Games can help to develop these necessary important skills. These are learned skills and not biological cognitive advantages that certain classes have. ABE students may criticize themselves as being stupid, but they are not. Strategical thinking skills are the major difference. ABE learners as children only failed to find strategies for effectively moving through the system. Underachievers are skeptical of their abilities. They are afraid to attack, or are not skillful enough to attack a problem. Games offer the learners a relaxed fun situation and the opportunity to experience content directly rather than being told about something.

The most important thing adult underachievers can benefit from game play is not necessarily the content of the game (although in "Reducing the Odds" it is) but the further development of strategic decision-making, relational thinking (observing results & directing cause and effect) and planning skills or the higher order of cognitive thinking skills. Participation in simulation games can go a long way in the development of cognitive learning:

(a) Participants in simulation games gain factual information.

(d) Participants in simulation games learn general principles of the subject matter simulated (e.g., the need for social control, good communications, and long range planning).

(g) Participants in simulation games learn a systematic analytical approach.

(h) Participants in simulation games learn better decision-making skills.

... (Greenblat, 1980 p. 37.)

AN ANALYSIS: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF BOARDGAMES WITH SOUTHEAST ASIANS

Southeast Asian adult learners can benefit from improving their higher order of cognitive thinking skills. Southeast Asians are more laid back than Westerners and many people develop an attitude called "Mai Pen Rai" in Thai and "Aut Men Dai" in Cambodian, which loosely translates to "never mind."

In 1971 a philosophy of NFE was developed by the Thai Ministry of Education. The NFE philosophy was called the Khit Pen Philosophy. The Khit Pen philosophy was developed to counteract a well known and often used idiom, "Mai Pen Rai." It was often used in response to thank you. If you did a favor for an individual and felt that the person should be rewarded, most people would say never mind it was nothing (Mai Pen Rai). If you suggested that some work needed to be accomplished in a hurry, you might also hear "Mai Pen Rai". Many Southeast Asians appeared rather layed back and complacent when compared to Westerners. Through the eyes of a Westerner they appeared (at least outwardly) not to take certain aspects of life so seriously.

Asians as well as western adult basic education (ABE) learners depict weak motivation unless the learner can trust his or her own ability and get involved in using analytical thinking to solve problems. Boardgames can give learners practice in analytical thinking. The ability to master analytical and strategical thinking skills may be the missing elements that separate the disadvantaged from the advantaged classes of the world.

Khit Pen means a skillful thinker able to solve problems? " A man who has mastered the process of Khit Pen can analyze his life problems systematically" (Srinivasan, 1983 P. 26-27). A Khit Pen person has developed the ability to think analytically and critically towards any situation.

Many Southeast Asians believe in a holistic and cyclical approach to analytical thinking for decision making. On the first leg of the cycle a person searches for information about him/herself. When there is a problem a person needs to find out the cause of the problem. An individual must search to find out about one's own personal background in regards to life, family, career, conduct and beliefs.

Next an individual must survey to find out more information about one's environment. After discovering information about the environment one must also find out about the society in which he or she lives and the people's morales in that society.

Next one must find out about the technical knowledge available that can help in the analysis of the problem at hand. The above is the first stage within the holistic process and it is called the survey stage. The purpose of the survey stage is specifically to gather data as the base for analysis. The cause of the problem could be self, community or just ignorance.

The second stage (analysis) finds several ways to solve the problem. The best solution must include the moral aspects as a major criterion to solve the problem. Again to solve the problem the Khit Phen person must think about information about self, environment and the technical knowledge available at the time.

In the final stage the selected solution is put into practice. This stage ends when the Khit Pen person is satisfied that he or she has chosen the most appropriate solution. The completion of the final stage of the cycle depends on the Khit Pen individual's feelings towards the outcome; whether or not the solution was a good choice or not. If it was not the individual could temporarily choose a lesser solution and start the process over again.

The NFE Khit Pen philosophy is a humanistic philosophy. Buddhists and many other Southeast Asians as well believe that harmony must exist between humans and their environment. Humans can improve their analytical skills by reflecting back on their own experiences, societies experiences and the current technical knowledge available. Cycles occur within the individual and an individual's effectiveness in problem solving depends on harmony and the energy that is created from these cycles. According to ancient Asian philosophy an individual has a four phase energy cycle; motivation, preparation, performance and completion.

Two concepts recur constantly; cycles and change and cycles occur within the individual. All humans need happiness and happiness is gained through harmony. According to eastern thought change is natural and always moving. Energy flows from every person as well as all around us.

Solving problems can create a balance of opposites. Harmony exists when this balance is achieved and refugees suffering can be alleviated through balance. The way to rid suffering is through harmony and harmony is gained by the balancing of antagonistic polarities. The concept of balance is most important. Individuals must be active participants in their balancing process as well as their problem solving process. In problem solving an ideal exists calling for responsibility to make change towards balance, unity and openness.

It is possible for Asian adult learners to improve their analytical skills when using a boardgame by reflecting back on experience in order to understand the process. To get a better understanding Asian adult learners need to consider that nothing exists by itself. Nature is a balanced harmony of its antagonists. Nature or the environment can be divided into five elements; wood, fire, earth, metal and water which together represent the whole (nature). Traditional eastern healers study ways of nature in order to find disharmony. Their diagnosis starts with observation . . . the way one looks, sounds, feels and moves, and only then is the healer able to help solve the patients medical or mental problems.

The reality of the Khit Pen philosophy is that life is suffering and suffering can be healed. In order to heal suffering the origin of the suffering must be identified and only then can those who seek solutions choose the right way or ways that may alleviate the problem.

Cambodians are Buddhists and Buddhist thought is prevalent in Cambodia. According to Buddhist thought, suffering has its roots in poverty and underdevelopment. Once there is harmony and stability the path of development comes into being. Too many people in the world have accepted non action and thus have accepted suffering. They tend to shut out frustration and avoid responsibility.

The Khit Pen person feels responsible for using the human powers of analysis and reflection to get at the root causes of the problems and to choose the right course of action. Not accepting fate is an important characteristic of the Khit Pen philosophy of NFE and also a characteristic of critical consciousness.

Paulo Freire calls accepting one's fate as being at a magical level of awareness. J. Krishnamurti calls it accepting destiny. He describes it for a particular culture or country as,

...when millions of people have for centuries taken part in the development of a certain civilization or culture, they have set going a movement in which individual human beings are caught up and swept along, whether they like it or not; and this whole process of being caught up in and swept along by a particular stream of culture or civilization may be called destiny. (Krishnamurti, 1982 P. 123).

For the individual if you are born the son or daughter of the elite you are expected to comply with your parents insistence that you follow the family line. Perhaps the same can be said of a son of a peasant, carpenter, laborer or a factory worker. If you comply even though you want to do something else then you are following your destiny. It is the same for both groups and individuals. But on the other hand it is possible for an individual, culture or civilization to break away from it's destiny and step out of that stream, as Khrisnamurti calls it. Pedagogy that truly empowers through learner centered methodologies are very important. These methodologies can help people to develop critical consciousness, move away from a magical level of awareness and defy destiny:

That is why it is very important that we should be rightly educated- educated not to be smothered by tradition, not to fall into the destiny of a particular racial, cultural or family group, educated not to become mechanical beings moving towards a predetermined end. The man who understands this whole process, who breaks away from it and stands alone, creates his own momentum; and if his action is breaking away from the false towards the truth, then that momentum itself becomes the truth. Such men are free of destiny. (Krishnamurti, 1982 P. 125).

Adult education in Asia as well as around the world needs to focus more on the development of analytical and strategical thinking skills that help to shift the polarities and to move towards the center - towards harmony. The facilitator's role (perhaps a monk could be an appropriate facilitator) in the boardgame process, when working with Asian adults is to facilitate problem confrontation as a way of achieving inner harmony. The absence or degree that one is capable of using analytical thinking and problem solving skills is one of the fundamental if not the key element that stratifies the world.

The overall aim of the Khit Pen philosophy is to attain harmony and tranquility between the individual and the environment. There is tension between values, aspirations and the environment. Balance in the use of an educational game is reached when one overcomes game barriers, makes adjustments and finds solutions .

In rural areas of Southeast Asia it is not uncommon to find groups of people in the evening discussing the local problems of the village. Asians are familiar with these informal type of discussions. Having these types of discussions around a boardgame would take very little time for Khmer refugees to get accustomed to. The game only serves as a structure or framework for starting discussions. Many of them are already analyzing their precarious situation in the camps. Using learner center methodologies such as a boardgame to analyze repatriation problems can strengthen the analytical process and reinforce traditional Asian values. (Kindervatter, 1979 p.233)

Another important concept in Thai is "Sanook" or "Sabay Nas" in Khmer. Loosely translated it means having a lot of fun or enjoyment. Southeast Asians enjoy having fun even in a work situation. The Southeast Asian workplace is less structured compared to a western workplace. To an observer it may not be so readily apparent that a serious discussion is taking place.

The author in his years of experience working with Southeast Asians has discovered that it is possible to discuss a serious topic, in a fun classroom environment, and have maximum learning going on at the same time. Learner centered activities that are fun can motivate learners to participate. (Kindervatter, 1979 p. 233) "Sanuck" combined with a "Mai Pen Rai" attitude made teaching Southeast Asians a challenge as well as a pleasure.

Southeast Asians smile and laugh for various reasons. Sometimes it may be out of embarrassment or confusion or just not knowing what else to do. I am under the impression that they learn best when having fun. Is it possible for Cambodians to have a serious discussion and be able to have fun (not rolling on the floor type of fun) at the same time? I think so! Based on the results of a survey of 50 former Cambodian refugees here in the United States who all agreed that boardgames can be an effective educational tool to use with Cambodians in the border camps.

Cambodians have historically used games as so many other cultures have as a way to relax and have fun. Games are a part of Cambodian culture and traditions. But on the other hand, games have not really been used very much as educational tools in traditional or formal schools. Education in those places were very structured. The banking concept of learning and rote memory were very much part of the order of things.

There may be a slight problem if one tries to get older students to learn via a classroom game by just popping into the classroom. Some may see educational games as just a game and think they will not learn anything from playing a game. In the future I would recommend using my survey with students before hand to initiate a discussion about learner centered materials. Once learners are aware of what the facilitator is attempting to do "Reducing the Odds can serve as a bridge between tradition and problem solving.

I have created and used other games in the camps and in my work with Southeast Asians in the United States and have always had great success. When clearly explained that the game was an educational tool and what was important was the discussion that came from playing the game, students were able to learn from educational games.

Again Cambodians have historically and traditionally used boardgames as way to relax and have fun. So if boardgame/simulations like "Reducing The Odds" are used with refugees in the Thai border camps and if the purpose of the games are to help start discussions about some very important issues, those particular method will be very useful in helping refugees alleviate some of the many difficult problems they face.

CONCLUSION

Based on the author's experience and several field tests used in fine tuning the game, he feels confident that "Reducing The Odds" and other similar NFE methodologies can go a long way in helping displaced Khmer to repatriate. The rationale for developing the game is also based on the previous success of NFE techniques with Southeast Asians.

At the present time the author believes that a better solution to the refugees repatriation and educational problems lies more with NFE than with formal education. These methods can be used to help participants at least become aware of what the content of their problems are. Later new information and political solutions can be interspersed and made available through NFE methodologies.

This learner centered methodology follows a philosophy of NFE that allows learners to utilize their prior knowledge as a base for continued learning and helps refugees become aware of what their present situation is like. If these learners experiences and reflections are given an opportunity to flourish, if these students can be motivated to understanding through using learner centered materials and if their facilitator can provide guidance through questions, new learning can occur.

The questions used in "Reducing The Odds" can help learners achieve new learning about their present situation and perhaps discover some solutions to some of their problems. New conceptual knowledge can have meaning to refugees when their links to the past are linked with the unknown. If students take their past experiences and knowledge into account and attempt to meet their present and future needs they may learn more effectively. When refugees relate their prior experiences and knowledges to solving problems and conceptualizing future experiences via some action, they can begin to develop critical consciousness. In the camps refugees can react to what is familiar and what has helped them to cope with their own present life situation.

New methodologies must be developed and adapted specifically to meet the needs of displaced Khmer, not someone else's agenda. The refugees need to be liberated from their current situation and not to have someone else's educational context imposed on them. These refugees are apt to accept any new information given to them in the camps. Refugees need to understand the context of their own priorities (not someone else's) in the camp and relate those priorities with past experiences and any new information they receive.

Together as equal partners in dialogue they will come to know more about their priorities and be able to integrate any new information that becomes available. "Reducing the odds" will simply be one method among many that will be designed by the CIE to help refugees on the Thai border better understand the context and content of their priorities and to integrate their immediate learnings with their previous learnings to conceptualize some future experience.

What is needed in the border camps right now are NFE programs. A needs assessment is also necessary as well as research to find out more about what it will take to rebuild their country. More education may be needed in the form of education for women, community development, literacy, health, problem solving, skills training, empowerment and cultural preservation. The future looks bleak for Cambodians even if repatriation become a viable alternative to camp life. What is being done in the camps today in regards to education may need to be expanded on.

APPENDIX

SURVEY RESULTS

The following raw data has been collected from a survey prepared by the author, to determine if boardgames are culturally appropriate for Displaced Khmer living in the border camps of Thailand. The data from the survey serves to give some support to the author's statements that boardgames are appropriate classroom techniques. He bases his statements on his years of experiences working with Cambodians in the refugee camps and in the United States.

The results are based on the responses of twenty five former Cambodian refugees. They were surveyed to get their impression on whether or not boardgames could be used successfully as an educational tool or as a research instrument.

1. Southeast Asian people like to have fun.

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	N	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
19	6	0	0	0

2. The idea of fun or "Sanuck" in Thai or "Sabay" in Khmer is an important part of the cultures of Southeast Asia.

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	N	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
0	6	19	0	0

3. Cambodian people have historically used games as way to have fun.

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	N	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
10	14	1	0	0

4. Games are a part of Cambodian culture.

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	N	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
0	0	0	0	0

Bibliography

Abt, Clark C., *Serious Games*. New York: The Viking Press, 1970.

Bialosiewicz, F. & Burns, J. *Games of Childhood Diseases: Technical Note No 23*. Amherst, Massachusetts: Center for International Education School of Education University of Massachusetts, 1983.

Bialosiewicz, F. & Burns, J. *Road to Birth Game: Technical Note 24*. Amherst, Massachusetts: Center for International Education School of Education University of Massachusetts, 1983.

Boocock, Sarine S., and Schild, E. O., (eds). *Simulation Games in Learning* : Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1968.

Bruner, Jerome. *The Process of Education*. New York: Vintage Books, 1960.

Bruner, Jerome. *The Relevance of Education*. New York: Norton & Co., 1971.

Bruner, Jerome. *On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962.

Cash, Kathleen. *Designing and Using Simulations for Trainings: Technical Note No.20*. Amherst, Massachusetts: Center for International Education School of Education University of Massachusetts, 1987.

Center for International Education School of Education University of Massachusetts, *Nonformal Education in Ecuador 1971-1975*.

Connelly, Diane. "The Art of Acupuncture" (1974). Oxford, England: College of Chinese Medicine.

Evans, R. David. *Games and Simulations in Literacy Training*. Tehran: International Institute of Adult Literacy Methods, 1979.

Greenblat Cathy. "Group Dynamics and Game Design: Some Reflection." *Simulation & Games An International Journal of Theory, Design and Research* 11, no. 4 (March, 1980): 35-57.

Hoxeng, James. *Hacienda: Technical Note No. 3*. Amherst, Massachusetts: Center for International Education School of Education University of

Massachusetts, 1987.

Kindervatter, Suzanne. Learner Centered Training for Learner Centered Programs. Amherst Massachusetts: Center for International Education University of Massachusetts, 1977.

Kindervatter, Suzanne. Nonformal Education as an Empowering Process. Amherst Massachusetts: Center for International Training University of Massachusetts, 1979.

Krishnamurti, J. Think on These Things. New York: Perennial Library Harper & Row, Publishers, 1982.

Robishaw, L. Don. The U.S. According to CODOG: Cultural Orientation Pictures. Manila: International Catholic Migration Commission, 1982.

Robishaw, L. Don. " Analysis of a T-Group Experience Using a Yin/Yang Model". Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1989.

Robishaw, L. Don. " The Thai Khit Pen Philosophy of Non Formal Education". Amherst, Massachusetts: Center for International Education University of Massachusetts, 1990.

Tollefson, W. James. Alien Winds. New York: Praeger, 1989.

Smith A. William. Concientizacao & Simulation/Games: Technical Note No.2. Amherst, Massachusetts: Center for International School of Education University of Massachusetts, 1987.

Smith A. William. The Education Game. Amherst Massachusetts: Center for International Education University of Massachusetts, 1981.

Srinivasan, Lyra. Perspectives on Nonformal Adult Learning. Boston: World Education 1983.

Vansickle, Ronald L. "Designing Simulation Games to Teach Decision-Making Skills." Simulations & Games: An International Journal of Theory, Design and Research 9, no. 4 (Dec. 1978): 413-427.

A REFLECTION PAPER

**BY
DON L. ROBISHAW**

PART TWO OF A MASTER'S THESIS

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the
degree of Master's of E. ed - University of Massachusetts.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
MASTERS PROJECT CLASS.....	1
Why it was effective.....	1
How it was effective.....	1
How to make it more effective.....	1
VIDEO PROJECT (MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT COURSE).....	2-3
Why it was effective.....	2-3
How it was effective.....	3
How to make it more effective.....	3
HOW THE PROJECT RELATED TO MY MASTER'S DEGREE.....	4-7
Area interest.....	4
Materials development.....	5
Cognitive skills development.....	6-7
THEORETICAL BASIS/ CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLASS.....	8-12
How adults learn and solve problems.....	8
How approach views learners and meaning and compares to other methods.....	8-10
POST ANALYSIS: SECOND THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS.....	10-16
Strengths/Weaknesses:	
Learners most appropriate for the approach	
Learners least appropriate for the approach.....	10-12
Why I had to do things the way I did and things I would do differently if I could.....	12-13
Past knowledge used in the development of the game..	13-14
What I can use and how I can apply it.....	14-15
CONCLUSION.....	16

MASTER'S PROJECT CLASS

Why it was effective

I found the Master's Project class effective because the instructor helped motivate me to get started on the project despite my insistence that I would do most of it during the summer break. If it were not for the class I would not be as far along on my project as I am at the present time. After being a victim of a one and a half year struggle to complete a previous master's thesis (without much support) I came to appreciate the importance of the support offered by this class.

How it was effective

It was really effective in helping me to outline the written project. It made the writing process much easier. By having a good outline I knew where I was going with the project.

The course was also effective in encouraging me to do a more thorough literature review than I might otherwise have done. The literature search made the project more interesting because of my discovery of the literature about game analysis, development of cognitive thinking skills and as well as the hands on stuff.

How to make it more effective.

I suggest ending the class earlier in the semester to allow center members more time to finish other course projects that come due at the end of the semester. If one is diligent there is ample time during the summer and winter breaks to finish the Master's project.

I also suggest stressing the importance of having a support system available. A terrible feeling can occur if one stumbles too many times trying to complete a master's project on one's own.

VIDEO PROJECT (MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT COURSE)

The field tests of former Cambodian refugees playing the boardgame were recorded on video as part of a project for a materials development course. Two one hour field tests and small segments of a one hour commercially produced video (about Cambodia) were edited to make an eight minute promotional video for the boardgame.

Actually I wanted to take on the idea of developing a CIE promotional video, but opted for shooting small segments of the game in the hope that the "Center" would eventually use it when it produces a promotional video for the twentieth anniversary celebration (my latest idea). I think a series of short cuts from various CIE projects & activities over the past twenty years could be edited to make a real nice video collage for the anniversary.

The final product could also serve as a video capability statement to submit along with proposals for grants, as well as a tool in the recruitment of international students, and domestic students for that matter (for example; send copies to minority colleges). The "Center" could send out the video capability statement anytime it feels it would be useful to the center.

Why it was effective

The video project was effective in motivating me to organize the field tests so I could later fine tune the game. I think the video project served to motivate the game participants to come together for a field test of the game. Otherwise it would have been even more difficult than it was to get a group together to play the game.

The video also served as a way to record valuable ideas and as a way to observe areas that needed improvement. It was possible to go back and analyze the whole game process in order to make changes. During one test I served as the cameraman and in another as the game facilitator. Even if it were possible to remember everything that took place during the game, the recording also allowed me to get feedback from others who were not present at the time of the recording .

How it was effective

The video was really effective in getting me to think in a different light about the materials development process. It was effective in getting me to think about ways of combining high tech materials development with low tech materials development.

As in designing training sessions the designer should consider using more than one technique during a training session. A materials developer should also consider the possibilities of using various combinations of videos, slides, still pictures, audio tapes and computer programs with more hands on type of materials development (puppets, flannel boards, boardgames etc.). A photo novella is a perfect example of combining low tech and high tech material development. Using a low tech method of a boardgame in combination with a video is another example of combining high tech and low tech materials development. At times the two are very compatible.

How to make it more effective

Recording Cambodian Americans in their native language here in the United States may be an educational option. Copies of the videos and the boardgame can be sent to the border camps. Displaced Khmer in the camps can view the video and decide if they want to play the game or perhaps revise the game by creating their own set of questions or devising a whole new framework for discussion.

HOW THE PROJECT RELATED TO MY MASTER'S DEGREE

Area interest

My geographical interests include all the countries of East Asia. To be even more explicit I want to narrow my focus to Southeast Asia and specifically two countries; Thailand and Cambodia. My area interest is based on my professional experiences working with Southeast Asians in the United States and overseas.

My interest in Southeast Asia has been rekindled since coming to the "Center". When I first heard about the proposed Cambodian project during the fall semester I got excited and wanted to help, but felt somewhat inadequate in the area of program development and proposal writing. Although I failed to maneuver myself into that particular project, my creative juices began to flow as I gradually gained more confidence as a center member.

I also began to increase my information base of what was going on in the camps as well as inside Cambodia via the media, a literature review and my personal contacts. I felt it was important to keep center members up to date about the Khmer situation.

Simultaneously I started to think of other avenues for getting the "Center" involved in refugee work in the Thai border camps. Eventually I was led to the development of the boardgame. I realized that we have an abundant supply of creativity and expertise at the center, but unfortunately the appropriate funders and governments are not yet aware of our capabilities.

Materials development

I have developed other games, materials and activities for use with refugees. I considered materials development an area of strength. What I failed to do in the past was to reflect on all those experiences as a materials developer. The Master's project not only allowed me the opportunity to reflect on this specific boardgame, but also to reflect back to previous projects. Through the development of "Reducing the Odds" I have been able to analyze the material development process and to see what specific criteria goes into the development of games.

This past semester I analyzed teaching methodologies in a literacy methods course. Previous to that experience I never seriously analyzed teaching methods, but developed numerous techniques for various subject areas. I have been able to increase my interest in education through the analysis of materials development and teaching methods. The Master's project has helped me to discover that if I want to be a well rounded educator I must realize that analysis, theory and practice go hand and hand. It was important that I learn how theory related to practice.

The materials development process is more complex than I imagined. There are vast resources available to those who are interested in this subject. Pre and post analysis are important aspects in the development of educational materials and methodologies. The development of educational tools, for classroom teaching isn't just something that is done in a vacuum but is something that needs to be given thought by practitioners as well as theorists.

Cognitive skills development

When I first started the Master's program at the "Center" I felt my weak link just might be analytical thinking. Most of my work experience in education was either as a classroom facilitator or as a materials developer. As I have stated previously, I developed materials and methods but never seriously analyzed the process that went into the development of the product. I avoided professional educational activities that required higher cognitive skills and that included strategical thinking, planning, analysis and problem solving.

At one point during the Master's program I started to create adult learning theories, perhaps they were more appropriately called motivational theories, that were based mostly on my own individual experiences and criticism of the U.S. educational system. On a personal level I originally felt my problems with analysis were based more on my preference for different learning styles rather than not learning these analytical skills as well as other students. But there always was that possibility that I did not develop these abstract thinking skills to their fullest; either because of inequalities in the U.S. educational system or lack of proper direction from the system on how best to use these skills.

As a Masters candidate I became interested in the development of cognitive skills in adult basic education (ABE) learners. I began to look at the literature as well as reflecting upon my own personal experiences. In my search for appropriate resources for various projects in my Master's program I stumbled upon several authors and theorists who supported my claim that these higher order of cognitive skills are important and can be developed and improved upon later in life.

Through self reflections and a short study and analysis of adult learners I discovered something important. I can relate to a world community of learners that need to develop or improve these skill areas in order to be on or near equal footing with their oppressors, so as to be able to dialogue with them in order to escape oppression and poverty. They also need to get closer in economic and political power, but that's a whole other discussion.

Some boardgames will give learners practice and can lead to improved cognitive skills development. My interest in this area will continue throughout my Doctoral program. I hope to create more practical ideas that lead to the development of these skills in ABE learners.

On a personal note I have discovered via my Master's project and other course projects that I read, write and talk a lot about cognitive skills development for adults. I have been able to describe what the problem is and create methods for learners to try and improve these skills.

My problem is, sometimes when I attempt to do an in depth analytical study, I still continue to be more descriptive and less analytical. Am I still lacking the necessary skills to truly do justice to an analytical paper or do I just simply get a little lazy and stop digging? Just what are some of the skills and tools that a good analytical thinker and writer needs?

As a result of my Master's project I have discovered that I still need to learn how to dig deeper to get at the root of a problem or solutions to a problem. My Master's project has helped me to realize that I need to take a course that will help me to develop and use these analytical writing skills better.

THEORETICAL BASIS/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE GAME

How adults learn and solve problems

If we look around the world we discover that children and adults in all cultures learn many things differently. Besides that, these adults also see many things differently than their teachers; especially if their teachers are culturally different. Adult learners have their own needs and problems and have their own cultural ways of dealing with these needs and problems. They do not need teachers to solve their problems for them.

What adult learners can use however is an educational framework, not an educational theory, that can bring them together in order to search for solutions via their own traditional methods. There are games around that include the solutions to the problems within the game itself. If a player is skillful or lucky they find the solution to their life problems by just turning over a card or putting a puzzle together. This is fine for fun but does it really lead to discovery? Isn't discovery an important concept in education? These kinds of educational tools are tools for banking education and do not lead to the development of critical thinking skills nor are they very empowering.

How approach views learners and meaning and compares to other methods.

"Reducing the Odds" theoretical base is founded on the assumption that Southeast Asian adult learners (as well as other adults) can learn and solve their own problems through participation and interaction (see core of the text for a more detailed study). In fact participation and interaction are informal cultural processes that enable Southeast Asians to find solutions to their own problems (if there are solutions). Southeast Asians often come together informally to discuss issues and to develop ideas on how to solve problems.

"Reducing the Odds" does not impose content on the learner it only offers a framework for discussion, thus allowing participants the opportunity to use their own cultural processes for learning, creating new knowledge and solving problems. It is conceptually broad based enough to allow learners to use and develop their own traditional informal ways of learning and problem solving. It does not offer any solutions to the numerous problems they face. The method does not impose a way of learning on the participants but offers freedom for the learners to find things out for themselves.

Displaced Khmer need opportunities to find things out through discussion and analysis. Together they can produce a process to solve some of their problems. The learners do not need to know the nature of their learning process as they have been using informal discussions to solve their own problems for many years.

But before playing the game participants could benefit from knowing that the boardgame is just that, a framework for stimulating discussion. In fact if you removed the structure of the game the learners could participate very well just by using the questions on the cards.

But the game also serves as a reminder to the participants of their overall goal of safely repatriating. As they come to find solutions to some problems and not others they learn about long term problem solving, short term problem solving and the importance of planning. Playing the game may only help participants to discover ways to meet their immediate needs, but on the other hand it does not allow the participants to get totally caught up in the present. Each question and the solutions uncovered can serve as steps towards hopefully obtaining the overall goal of repatriation.

This specific educational approach views the learners as adults who are capable of finding solutions to their own problems. It gives credence to NFE adult educational practices that view participants as having important past experiences and that adults are capable of solving many of their own problems.

Compared to other methods or approaches in adult education the game has some similarities to Paulo Freire's Consciousness Raising, in that participants come to realize that they are victims of oppression and may be capable of changing certain things in order to improve their lives. Through discussion, participants may begin to realize that they do not have to leave all their problems to fate. Displaced Khmer have problems that they have not created, but they are victims and when things settle perhaps they can develop a critical consciousness towards change.

"Reducing the Odds" is different from other games and methods in the way it views learners as capable adults able to distinguish between solvable and unsolvable problems. It does not try to manipulate refugees into thinking they are coming up with their own solutions when in fact solutions are being offered by outsiders. The players themselves control and initiate the discussion.

POST ANALYSIS: SECOND THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

Strengths/Weaknesses: learners most appropriate for the approach and learners least appropriate for the approach

The strengths of the project lies in the possibility of getting people with little self esteem/confidence to participate in a dialogue. Displaced Khmer who have the same and/or similar problems can come together for meaningful discussion and problem solving. They are not totally helpless and dependent upon outsiders to tell them how to solve their problems.

The major weakness of the project is the difficulty of actually getting the game into the camps and using it with displaced Khmer. Hopefully it will not just go by the wayside as just another academic or theoretical exercise that only benefits the creator of the game and his colleagues.

The most appropriate learners for "Reducing the Odds" are those who are in a leadership role in the camps. Leaders who are chosen by the inhabitants of the camp can serve as facilitators of information or as decision makers.

The game should serve as a vehicle for all displaced Khmer not just a chosen few. Families may benefit by playing together in order to make decisions about repatriation that affect everyone. The game could be played by neighbors who often discuss such issues when they get together.

"Reducing the Odds" could also be played by women since they comprise the majority of the residents. Women may become the real decision makers once back in Cambodia or they may already be the primary decision makers in the family.

Ideally it should be played by everyone in the camps. All ages and sexes have had similar and different experiences and have a lot to offer in the development of solutions to both short term and long term problems solving.

Besides, as mentioned in the text of this paper, a backdrop of humor as created from playing a boardgame takes away some of the pressure of discussing difficult content. Many of the displaced Khmer have suffered heavily during these years in the camps as well as the atrocities that happened prior to their incarceration. The concept of a little humor evoked in the playing of the game may just be enough to allow some people to participate, who might not otherwise because of problems coping with discussions that may revive traumatic experiences.

Some displaced Khmer may not want to pour salt on open wounds that could add to serious mental health problems. The migration and encampment of displaced Khmer are known to be stressful life events. Like many educational frameworks this one may not be applicable to the complex circumstances of some displaced Khmer. A lack of ability of some individuals to cope with traumatic events can contribute to stress. There is a real relationship between stress and mental illness. The ability to tolerate stress is individual. Certain traditional support systems may be missing and the use of "Reducing the Odds" may cause more harm than good for certain individuals.

**Why I had to do things the way I did/
Things I would do differently if I could**

Obviously as a graduate student I could not afford to travel to the border camps to develop the game for my Master's project. Besides the financial problems there is the difficulty of getting into the camps without backing of an organization.

Ideally If the game had been developed in the border camps themselves rather than in an "ivory tower" the most obvious difference would be the opportunity to use local knowledge in a more participatory approach to the materials development process. Real change can occur fast if "insiders" (displaced Khmer) are used in the research, planning, implementation and evaluation efforts. Insiders would have been used in all aspects of the educational process.

When the community controls knowledge, that knowledge can be transformed to action. If a dialogue takes place between insiders and outsiders (non-refugees) the outcome can also lead to participation.

Participants should be involved in analyzing their own problems as well as developing their own questions to be analyzed. Knowledge can be created through dialogue between insiders and outsiders. Knowledge can be created through a critical analysis from both insiders and outsiders. The planning of the project could enable participants to learn and think about their problems.

If a project recognizes local knowledge it can build on that knowledge. The participatory process can analyze the issues, plan for solutions and design and implement action plans.

Past knowledge used in the development of the game

The methods used to design the project were simple but the process to try and make it a reality will be very difficult. Once I created the project I had no idea of how useful it would ever be to displaced Khmer in the border camps in Thailand. This thought was very depressing considering the amount of work that went into the development of the game and the writing of the paper. I realized how important the learning process had been to me and that has been described in other sections of this paper.

Past knowledge has taught me how to avoid disappointment. It has taught me not to expect too much from the product other than what it contributes to my own learnings and what it may contribute to the learning of others who read this paper.

Past knowledge has taught me that any product that allows the learners to use their prior knowledge and experiences as a base for continued learning must be a good product. Of course it must also be field tested and fined tuned before actual implementation or reproduction.

Past experiences have taught me that adult learners learn more effectively when they are involved in activities that allow for dialogue and discussion. That particular dialogue needs to be done in an atmosphere between equal partners.

Past experiences have taught me that when students are more relaxed and confident the learning process comes a lot easier. These particular learners need an opportunity to use fun activities in the classroom considering that they have undergone many horrible experiences.

Past experiences have taught me that when learners are part of a group they have less fear of making mistakes. They also learn to work together. In other games in which I created a situation for interaction the students became more comfortable with each other, felt part of a group faster and lost their fear of making mistakes.

What I can use and how I can apply it

The basic game format can be redesigned and applied to many different populations and in many different settings. It can be used within an entirely different context. It does not have to be used specifically with refugees.

"Reducing the Odds" can be used with almost any community problem solving effort. Take for example the plight of the homeless in the United States. Imagine a group of homeless people living in a shelter. In the center of the board could be a new apartment to serve as the ultimate goal of the game. Participants could start out in the shelter and progress along the board until they achieve their ultimate goal of obtaining a new apartment. The name of the game and the three categories of cards could remain the same.

"Reducing the Odds" - Questions and/or activities that will help to improve the chances of successfully finding and holding a new apartment (Things they need to know and do before they go apartment hunting).

"Against the Odds" - Questions and/or activities that will help to improve the chances of successfully finding and holding a new apartment (Things they need to know and do during the process of apartment hunting).

"Playing the Odds" - Questions and/or activities that will help to improve the chances of successfully finding and holding a new apartment (Things they need to know and do in order to keep a new apartment).

Example of possible game questions might be:

1. *What are some of the choices and decisions you will have to make before moving out of the shelter?*
2. *What services exist that can help you find an apartment?*
3. *How do housing problems relate to other problems?*
4. *Why do you want to leave the shelter?*
5. *If you are looking for an apartment and discover that you do not have enough money for a deposit what will you do? Why?*
6. *If you move into an apartment and later lose your job what will you do? Why?*

Other problem areas that the game can be designed around include, but certainly not limited to are issues dealing with:

- *How to find a job*
- *How to clean up a neighborhood*
- *How to rid a neighborhood of crime and drugs*
- *How to*

CONCLUSION

The process of developing "Reducing the Odds" has served an important function in helping me to become a more well rounded educator. Becoming an informed educator was a specific goal for my Master's degree. By combining various areas of strengths and weaknesses I have not only been able to do some of the fun things that I like in education such as materials development, but to also examine an area of personal weakness (analytical skills). As a result of the project and the array of various education courses taken at the University of Massachusetts I feel more grounded in my profession.

Using Cambodia as the foundation for my project also contributed to making the project more interesting. The end result was better because I used a cultural, historical and political setting that interests me.

Finding areas of interest can contribute a lot to the development of a better project. On the other hand my best work comes to the surface when I am able to critically reflect back on issues of reality that are meaningful to me as well as issues that bring out my anger such as inequities in the U. S. educational system, advantages that certain individuals and groups have in developing important cognitive skills, to the atrocities that happened in Cambodia. In the final analysis many more intellectual arenas came up for my scrutiny than I ever expected from the making of a game.