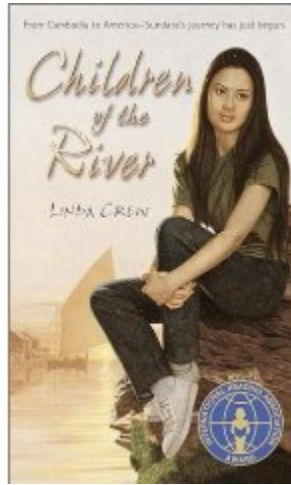


Integrative Unit: Transitions



by

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Introduction

Children of the River by Linda Crew is a novel that focuses on the transitions a young Cambodian girl must make as she adjusts to life in the United States. After completing the novel, seventh grade students will become involved in a three-week integrated unit based on the theme of transition. The unit will be centered on James Beane's "3 D's": democracy, dignity, and diversity. The unit will be focused on allowing students to examine the comparison in Asian culture with American culture with an emphasis on government, lifestyles, and the effects of living in an ever-changing world. The integrated unit will cover a variety of North Carolina standards from the four core subjects (math social studies, language arts, science) as well as a variety of exploratory courses (visual and performing arts, technology, and healthful living).

During the first week, the students will experience a traditional classroom setting in Asian culture and examine the definition of transition and the impact transition has on people's lives. The students will be given an opportunity to connect with an E-Pal from an Asian country of their choice and establish a relationship that focuses on transitions that would occur if the cultures were blended. The students will also be introduced to the weather in Cambodia through research, graphs, and compare the information with the daily and seasonal weather they are used to. As the students are focusing on transitions, they will be given the opportunity to explore percentages and ratios that can be used in real life situations.

As a closing activity for week one, the students will create a poster in which they take pictures/images (real or Google) of their lives such as home, school, family, government, money, etc. and compare it with pictures/images from Cambodia.

In week two, the students will continue to connect with their E-Pals and write journal entries that will be shared during roundtable discussions with their classmates. The students will continue their weather study by creating a comparison/contrast assignment based on the transitions that would take place if someone from the United States moved to Cambodia in regards to expectations with the weather. During this week, the students will be focused on technology by completing a WebQuest that will allow the students to create a brochure using Microsoft Publisher. The WebQuest will focus on the country that their E-Pal is from so they can develop a better understanding of their country. They will explore the culture, education, employment, lifestyles, with a focus on how their government is different from that of the United States. The students' brochures will be assessed by a rubric created by the teacher. Students will also use percentages to explore the changes in government in Cambodia and how this affected the population and quality of life.

During the final week of the integrated unit, the students will conclude their E-Pals relationship, with the opportunity to continue on their own time. The students will be given a writing assessment that will satisfy the requirements of the North Carolina Writing Assessment System in which they will choose between two

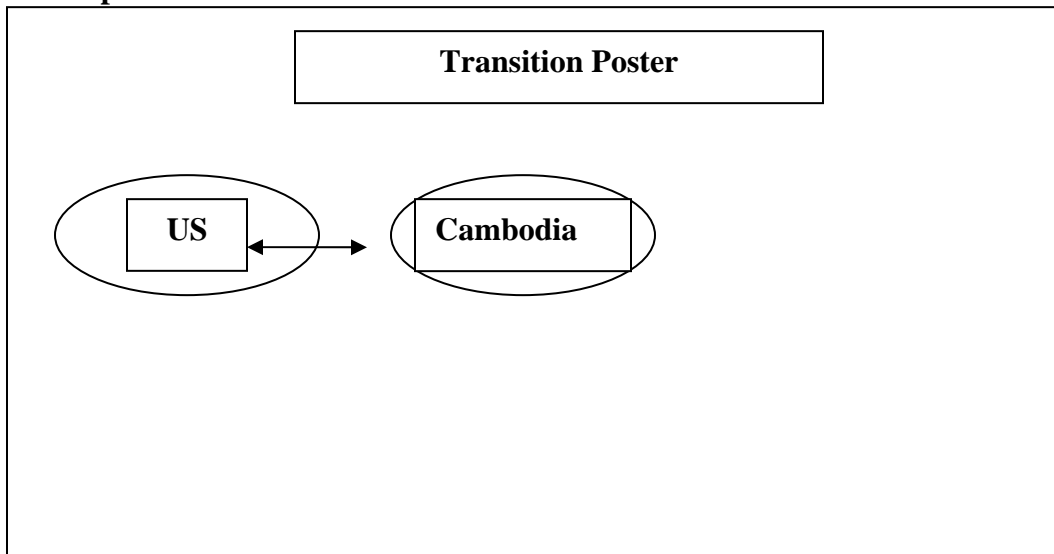
tasks (evaluative and problem solution) and will be scored with the state rubric. Another activity will introduce the game of Mah Jong and integrate the used of percentages and ratios with the outcomes. The culminating activity will be a service-learning project in which the students are allowed to choose an exploratory path based on their interests and create projects to put on displaying during a family fundraiser night. The family fundraiser night will consist of a supper (prepared by the students), presentation of projects, and a silent auction. All benefits from this night will go to UNICEF to help supply technology to the schools in Cambodia.

Transition Posters

Essential Questions:

1. How do our lives differ from the lives of Cambodian students?

Students will be given the opportunity to create a transition poster, which portrays how their lives are different from the lives of Cambodian students. The students will be given a list of required pictures/images that must be placed on their poster and they will have to research and find pictures of the Cambodian students in the same areas. The required pictures/images will be a young adolescent, school, house, transportation, government, family, and food. The students can place any additional pictures/images that they feel will enhance their transition poster.



Students will be scored based on a rubric that the teacher will provide before the poster is started.

NCSCOS Matrix

Activity	Language Arts	Social Studies	Math	Science	Technology	Art	Band	Music	Dance	Healthful Living
Launching Activity	1.02, 1.03									
E-Pals	1.02				1.12					
Google Earth		1.02								
Weather Study			4.01	1.06						
Population Ratios			1.01							
Writing Task	3.02, 6.01				1.12					
WebQuest	2.02, 6.01	1.01, 4.03, 9.04, 10.04			1.16, 3.10, 3.11, 3.03					
Service Learning Project	1.02, 1.03					5.02, 5.03, 5.06	5.03, 5.06	9.03	5.03, 5.06	2.02

Schedule of Events

Week 1:

Launching Activity

E-Pals (bi-weekly)

Weather Study

Percentages and Ratios

Transition Posters

Week 2:

E-Pals (bi-weekly)

WebQuest

Weather Comparison/Contrast Essay

Government Ratios

Week 3:

E-Pals (bi-weekly)

Mah Jong Percentage Game

Writing Assessment

Transition Day (Preparations for Parent Night)

Service Learning Project

Launching Activity

Upon completion of the novel, *Children of the River* by Linda Crew, the students from the participating team will gather in a large room, such as the drama room or gym, where they will be welcomed by their teachers wearing the traditional Cambodian sampot. As they entered the room, the students will be asked to remove their shoes and sit appropriately on the mats that are placed on the floor. Once the students are comfortable, the teachers will start discussing what a disgrace the female students have placed upon the school. After giving the female students ample opportunity to decide what disgraceful act they committed, the teachers will explain that female students in Cambodia are not to sit near, talk to, or have eye contact with male students. Once everyone is in their proper locations, the teachers will address the rules associated with the discussion. The rules will be that only males can answer the questions, no personal stories associated with the answers, and no complaining or questioning the teachers. The teachers will then focus on the three key essential questions that will be the focus of the upcoming integrative unit: “What is transition?”, “How does transition impact me?”, and “Why does our society need to know about transition?”. After the male students answer the questions, the females are asked how they felt during the discussion and what kind of transitions they would have to make to be in that type of school.

The students will then be introduced to Cambodia through Google Earth. They will be given an opportunity to see Cambodia via a satellite and zoom into the

community that was discussed throughout the novel. As an ending activity for the class, students will be quickly introduced to E-Pals and informed that during the integrative unit, each student will be given an E-Pal from an Asian country and will be given weekly opportunities for communication. As a ticket out the door, each student will brainstorm one question that could be asked to his or her E-Pals.

E-Pals

Essential Questions:

- 1. How am I similar and different from my E-Pal?**
- 2. How do the physical and climate differences in my E-Pal's region affect my E-Pal's life?**
- 3. What affect does the culture in my E-Pal's region have on my E-Pal's life?**

After the launching activity, students will be able to choose the location of their E-Pals from the provided map and set up their connection. Students will be given an opportunity at school twice a week to talk to their E-Pals over the three-week period. Students will be expected to compose well-written emails that describe specific details of their lives. They will also be expected to identify the transitions between their culture and their E-Pal's culture. Once the students have talked to their E-Pals, they will complete an ongoing journal that addresses the essential questions as well as any issues that were discussed that the student finds relevant. In roundtable discussions, the students will share their findings with other classmates. The students will focus on the theme of transition throughout their contact with their E-Pals with concentration on the differences in education, customs, and family life.

The students will be assessed on their emails as well as their journal entries through a rubric that measures the grammatical nature of the journals and emails as well as their critical thinking strategies that are used. The students will be scored in a formative type assessment basing the categories on exemplary, accomplished, or developing.

Writing Assessment

Essential Questions:

- 1. How do I create a/an problem solution/evaluative essay?**
- 2. How do I proofread for grammatical errors?**

In addition to journal writings with the E-Pals activity, student will complete a writing assignment that satisfies NCDPI's 7th grade writing assessment pilot. The students will choose from one of the following tasks:

- You are a student who has spent the last year in a school in Cambodia and you are beginning to adjust to the transition of being at a new school in a foreign country. You want to help other students coming from the United States so they will no feel so alienated from the other students. Write a letter to your teacher offering a solution to the problem of foreign students not adjusting to their transition in a different school.**
- Many students feel alienated when they transition from an elementary school to a middle school. Write a letter to the upcoming 6th graders in which you suggest what three activities they should become involved with to make their transition easier. Be sure to justify your suggestions.**

Students will be responsible for completing the writing assessment on the computer in the allotted amount of time that is specified by the Department of Public Education and they will be scored by the rubric that the state provides.

Webquest

Essential Questions:

1. How do I create an informative brochure using Microsoft Publisher?
2. How do I research and correctly site sources?
3. What facts are essential in understanding Cambodian life?

The students will be divided into teams of four and these students will become experts in Cambodian life. The students will research the topic and create a Microsoft Publisher brochure. Each student will assume one of the following roles: political reporter, social worker, historian, and a culture and art expert. The political reporter will be responsible for researching the current political situation in Cambodia and compare it to the political situation in the United States. The social worker will research the current living conditions of the people, especially those in refugee camps. Focus on the food, water, shelter, health care, and sanitary conditions, and compare these findings with the low socio-economic class in the United States. The historian will research the history of the Cambodian people including the kings and rulers and compare it to the United States government. Finally, the culture and arts expert will research the customs and culture of the Cambodian people including the types of dance, music, and household items of daily life and compare it to the student's everyday life.

The students will be assessed based on the information provided in the brochure and how well the students worked together to achieve the final product. The brochure must also focus on the transition theme when discussing the comparisons of Cambodian life versus American life.

Weather Study

Essential Questions:

1. What are the differences in the weather in Cambodia and the US?
2. How do I use graphs to show comparisons and contrasts?
3. How would I transition to the weather in a foreign country?

Cambodia only has two major seasons. Those seasons are the warm dry season and the warm wet season. Students will be researching the weather of Cambodia using the internet. They will focus on the month/months in which this lesson will be taught.

Once students have researched and gathered information from the websites, they will reflect on what it would be like to transition from such a climate to the one in which they currently live. Additionally, they will keep records of the temperatures, and rain fall during the lesson. At the end of the three-week lesson, students will graph the temperatures and rainfall in both countries, and then add to their reflections on the transitions between the countries. Students will be able to identify with the main character in Children of the River with these reflections.

Upon completion, students will write a comparison/contrast essay. They will be able to choose from (1) comparing and contrasting the two climates, comparing and contrasting the warm dry and warm wet seasons, or (2) comparing and contrasting the transition of moving to the United States with moving to Cambodia. The choices will allow students to explore the aspect that interests them the most.

Population Ration and Proportion

Essential Questions:

What are percentages and ratios?

How do I use ratios in real life?

How do I use percents to understand information?

Students will explore transitions in math while studying ratios and percentages, as part of NCSCOS. This will be a three-week course of study with practical applications to Cambodia, which relates to the novel that inspired this unit, *Children of the River* by Linda Crew.

Week One: Students learn about calculating percentages and ratios and how they can be used to represent real life situations. Students will work collaboratively in pairs or in small groups exploring how to express situations mathematically. For example, students use a **spinner with four colors on it** to show the percent of times landed on a certain color as well as ratios. Example lessons can be found online at: <http://www.mathgoodies.com/lessons/percent/proportions.html>.

Week Two: Students learn to use and manipulate percentages to understand and interpret information. Students will explore how the changes in government in Cambodia affected population and quality of life in the region. What sorts of transitions took place? How do we see this mathematically? The issued explored could include:

- How has population changed in the region after the change in government? What factors may have influenced this change? How can we express this mathematically?

- **Have the ratios within the population changed? For example, children: whole, adults: whole, etc.**
- **What is the percentage change of average wages for people in Cambodia?**

Week Three: Students work together and learn the traditional Asian game of Mah Jong. There are various math components to this traditional game. Some calculations can be the percentage of a certain type of game piece to the total number of pieces or the ratio of chips to tiles. Students will learn skills for cooperative work, cultural significance of Mah Jong, and how to use math within a game.

Culminating Activity/Service Learning Project

UNICEF is an organization that provides many services to local, national, and international partners in the name of education. UNICEF works tirelessly to ensure that every child, regardless of gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic background or circumstances, has access to a quality education. Most all of the work UNICEF provides is paid for by donations.

In this unit, students will be, organizing, and participating in a fundraiser to raise money for technology for students in Cambodia. Our students will perform, prepare food, present art, and play games, all from the Cambodian culture. Parents and visitors are asked to pay an admission price, which will include supper. We will also conduct a silent auction with products that are donated by various businesses and community agencies. All proceeds will go to UNICEF to purchase computers. Middle School students in Cambodia have one computer for every two hundred and fifty students. With technology being such an important aspect in lives of our students, they thought it was important to make sure all students in Cambodia had the opportunity to experience the conveniences of life through computers.

In order to give students a choice in the fundraiser, two advisory periods will be spent researching or learning about what each elective class will offer. After the students have been informed, they will make their decisions. Each exploratory class will participate in the fundraiser.

Exploratory Choices for Cambodian Transitions Culminating Activity

Class	Activity
Band	Perform authentic music from China using their native instruments
Chorus	Perform songs that relate to the emotions or experiences from Children of the River
Foods	Prepare traditional foods from Cambodia such as fish, noodles, sticky rice, coconut milk, soups, dipping sauces, etc
Art	Create original interpretations of transitions in art or learn about traditional Chinese calligraphy
Creative Writing	Compose original interpretations or reactions to the literature or alternate endings to the novel.
Apparel	Design or create sampots
Mah Jong	Additional time to learn the game and can teach others during the culminating activity. May create posters illustrating the rules of the game and the pieces used.
Dance	Students will choreograph original interpretive dances on what transitions are and the transitions that have affected their lives.
Khmer Language	Students will learn some phrases in Khmer, the language of Cambodia and will create some signs or poster for display.
Planning Team	Students will determine the floor plan of the event, design programs, and be in charge of donation collections.
Sports	Students will learn about popular sports in Cambodia and have a brief soccer match during the evening.
TV Production	Students will write and produce a mini-documentary on Cambodia to present as an introduction to Cambodian Transitions Activity.
Health	Students will design a health and advice booth focusing on ways to remain healthy if they visit a foreign country

Resources

www.dpi.state.nc.us

www.epals.com

Glosser, G. (2007). Percent and proportions. Retrieved June 22, 2009, from <http://www.mathgoodies.com/lessons/percent/proportions.html>

www.googleearth.com

<http://pcms.pickenscountyschools.org>

www.unicef.org

