Notes and Reflections Journal

Global Change, Communities, & Families in Thailand

January 4-18, 2020

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_



“It is better to travel well than to arrive.”

*The Buddha*



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Use this journal to reflect on your experiences as you journey in Thailand. The purposes of these writing assignments are to:

* Capture your experience in detail so that you can return in the future and remember what you saw, heard, smelled, tasted, felt, and experienced;
* Help you synthesize what you’re learning by taking time to reflect in real-time;
* Integrate what you’ve learned into your knowledge and experience base;
* Contribute to your personal growth through examining and understanding your beliefs, values, and culture; and
* Demonstrate your ability to think critically and respectfully about your experiences;
* Document what you learn in this course.

**Start your journey here.**

**Who are you and what shaped you as a culture being?**

Write down 5-10 words or phrases that help others understand how you see yourself.

Write down a few words or phrases to describe how others tend to describe you.

Identify 2-3 significant events from your life that have helped to define and shape you. In what ways did they influence you?

List 4-6 values that you hold and describe their meanings. For example, if you value family, what does that look like? How does that play out in your life?

How would describe your culture to someone who does not share a similar culture? (Could include dimensions related to customs, beliefs, faith, ethnicity, language(s), foods, holidays, music, art, race, gender, sexual orientation, abilities, education, class, etc.)

Identify the expectations you have for this course and what has shaped them.

Have you traveled internationally? If yes, where have you traveled and what have you learned from those experiences? If no, why are you choosing Thailand as your first travel experience?

**Interacting in a New Culture**

**ODPIE: Observe, Describe, Pause, Interpret, and Evaluate**

**Spend the most time and effort on these two steps.**

Observe: Watch and listen to what is happening without allowing your own thoughts to interpret or evaluate.

Describe: State observable facts. Provide rich detail. Choose non-judgmental words.

**When you believe you have a good grasp on the situation/phenomenon/interaction, then move to the next step…**

Pause: Stop to identify the assumptions from your own framework that may be influencing your thinking about and reactions to what you’re experiencing or observing. Pause to take perspective.

Interpret: Don’t rush to interpret what you’ve seen or experienced. First, ask questions of cultural insiders that can help you understand. Why might this be the case?

Then ask yourself, why am I frustrated, excited, sad? What is influencing me to think about what I’ve observed in this particular way? Can I consider the Thai or contextual perspective to begin to understand this phenomenon or idea in a different way?

**When you have grappled sufficiently to understand your own and another’s perspectives, you *MAY* be able to move to this step. This takes time and fairly extensive cultural insight.**

Evaluation: You must first understand deeply enough to interpret the situation/phenomenon/interaction. You must recognize that your own values and cultural socialization are influencing how you are judging the situation. You must consider context – what has influenced this situation/phenomenon/interaction?

**HUMAN ECOLOGY Model**

**Human Ecology Model:** Interdependence of organisms (individuals/families) and the environmental systems with which they interact

**Nested model:** Reciprocal relationships – interdependence – both influenced by and influence

**Families** live, work, move in their **Human Built Environment (HBE)** which is influenced by their **Social-Cultural Environment (SCE),** and adapt to and draw resources from their **Natural Physical-Biological Environment (NPBE).**

**Family**: defined as groups of people who have enduring relationships and who share resources

**HBE:** elements of physical and biological environments altered by humans (buildings, bridges, homes, roads, etc.)

**SCE:** relationships, beliefs, language, laws, cultural values and norms, systems (education, political, religious)

**NPBE** – soil, water, climate

**Family Structure:** Families have diverse characteristics (Members, Ethnic Origin, Life Stage, Socio-economic status) with combined individual and family attributes (Needs, Values, Goals, Resources)

**Principles of Social Justice\***

**Human Dignity**

Dignity of the human person is the ethical foundation of a moral society. The measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.

**Community and the Common Good**

All individuals by virtue of their human nature have social needs. Human relationships enable people to meet their needs and provide an important vehicle for change.

**Rights and Responsibilities**

People have a right and a responsibility to participate in society and to work together toward the common good.

**Priority for the Poor and Vulnerable**

A basic moral test of any community or society is the way in which the most vulnerable members are faring. In a society characterized by deepening divisions between rich and poor, the needs of those most at risk should be considered a priority.

**Participation**

All people have a right to participate in the economic, political and cultural life of society. Social justice and human dignity require that all people be assured a minimum level of participation in the community. It is the ultimate injustice for a person or a group to be excluded unfairly.

**Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers**

In a marketplace where profit often takes precedence over the dignity and rights of workers, it is important to recognize that the economy must serve the people, not the other way around. If the dignity of work is to be protected, the basic rights of workers must be respected – the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to organize and join unions, to private property and to economic initiative.

**Solidarity**

We are our brothers and sisters keepers. We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences.

**Stewardship**

It is incumbent upon us to recognize and protect the value of all people and all resources on our planet. While rights to personal property are recognized, these rights are not unconditional and are secondary to the best interest of the common good especially in relation to the right of all individuals to meet their basic needs.

**Governance/Principle of Subsidiarity**

Governance structures in all levels/settings have an imperative to promote human dignity, protect human rights, and build the common good.

**Promotion of Peace**

In light of the human dignity and worth of all and the ethical imperatives of solidarity and stewardship, we are called to promote peace and non-violence at all levels – within families, communities, society and globally. Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon the respect and cooperation between peoples and nations.

\*School of Social Work St. Thomas University; Adapted from U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Office of Social Justice-Archdiocese of St. Paul.

**Reflection 1: Arrival, First impressions, First Interactions**

**Describe your very first impressions of Thailand. Use your five senses – taste, touch, smell, sight, sound.**

**What information did you learn from the Child Safe Workshop that surprised you? What is something you learned that changes your awareness and will influence your behavior when you travel?**

**What did you observe and learn about Thai culture from the Khan Toke cultural dinner?**

**What was your favorite part? What challenged you in that experience?**

**As I write, I am feeling ………**

**I am looking forward to ………………**

**\*\*\*\*\* Please know that if you have any concerns or are anxious about anything, let Acharn Cat know right away.**

***Reflection 2: Local market, Cooking School, Buddhism lecture***

**What did you experience at the market? Use your senses to describe tastes, textures, smells, sights, sounds.**

**What surprised or seemed strange to you? What basis of comparison did you use in your evaluation of the market experience?**

**What was the favorite part about the Cooking School? What was your favorite food? Was this a new taste for you? What new ingredients did you use in the foods you prepared?**

**What did your experience at the Cooking School (including the market visit) teach you about Thai culture? How does this relate to the connection between food and culture (family or ethnic culture) for you? (For example, are there dishes that connect you to your family or your ethnic roots? What about food holds the memory or tradition – the cooking/baking, the ingredients, the traditions connected to the food, the people connected to it?)**

**What did you observe in Wat Suan Dok?**

**What did you learn about Buddhism that added to your understanding of this religious philosophy?**

**Do you find any similarities between Buddhism and your own beliefs? In what ways do you connect with Buddhism and/or in what ways is Buddhism connected to Thai culture?**

**Reflection 3: Ethnic Diversity in Northern Thailand**

***Hill Area Community and Development Foundation***

**Briefly describe the work of the HADF (program focus, populations served, goals, etc.)**

**How does intersectionality and social justice manifest in their work with families and communities?**

**How will you describe the indigenous foods that you prepared/ate to friends and family?**

**Share your reactions to the food you ate. (Use your senses!)**

**Describe your experience of cooking these foods. What techniques did they use? What ingredients and/or techniques were new to you? How did they fit within the local indigenous cultures to which they were connected?**

***CRRU Hmong Student Club***

**Describe your experiences with the students.**

**Which of the activities did you enjoy the most and why?**

**What did you learn about Hmong Thai culture?**

**What did you learn about higher education and students’ college experiences?**

**What five Thai or Hmong words were you able to use today in your interactions with Hmong Thai people? What did they mean?**

**Reflection 4: Life in Mae Salong Village**

Describe in detail the village and its people. Use the human ecology model to think about the people (ethnicity, relationships, general demographics, etc.), **human built environment** (houses, roads, stores, schools, etc.), the **socio-cultural environment** (values, traditions, economics, etc.), and the **natural physical environment** (mountain/hills, vegetation, climate, pollution, water, etc.).

What are the strengths of the Mae Salong community and families?

What challenges do families and the community face?

**Reflection 5: Cultural Diversity and Social Locations**

***Center for Girls***

**What strengths did you observe in the women with whom the Center for Girls works?**

**What vulnerabilities do women and children in northern Thailand experience? What is influencing their vulnerabilities?**

**How did you feel when learning about these vulnerabilities? How did you engage your privilege as an American?**

**What are some of the ways that the Center for Girls ‘empowers’ women and children to protect them from human trafficking, drug addiction, etc.?**

***Hmong Village***

**What strengths and challenges did you learn about during your time in the village?**

**How did you connect with the people in the village despite language barriers?**

**How can you connect the experiences of Hmong in Thailand to Hmong in Minnesota? Similarities? Differences?**

**Final Reflection: Synthesis of What Thailand Has Taught You**

**Look back at the expectations you wrote down before you left the U.S. Which ones were accurate? Which ones were not? What did you experience and learn that were not included in your pre-departure expectations?**

**Share three stories/experiences that stand out for you. In what ways were they meaningful? (Describe briefly or refer back to your description in this journal)**

**How did you change, grow, develop, or mature through this time in Thailand? What have you learned about yourself?**

**How do you think you might you use what you learned in Thailand about others and about yourself in the future?**

**Write a brief description of the focus you are imagining for your digital story. What might be the primary theme(s)? How will you communicate what you learned through words, images, sounds?**

**I will use the following space to give you feedback on your participation in this course and your overall reflections.**

**Additional Page for Notes**

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