

## CeLTA Fellowship Report

### **Life Narratives Video Archive Project: Integrating Film and Storytelling in the French Language Classroom and Beyond**

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#### **Pedagogical Goals of integrating film in language learning as a medium of fostering intercultural learning and cross-cultural awareness/competencies**

Working from the premise that storytelling, personal narratives and testimonial literature can function as dynamic sites of knowledge production and of formation of individual consciousness, I attempted in this Life Narrative Video Archive Project to consider language pedagogies that integrate storytelling in the language classroom through video life narratives to optimize student learning and skill building not only in the areas of speaking, writing, listening and reading, but also in the areas of critical and integrated reasoning, cross-cultural sensitivity and civic and global awareness.

#### **About the outcomes**

Launch the creation of a Life Narratives Video Archive Project that includes a collection of interviews conducted in French with French researchers, scholars, and members of the Hmong community in France (one of many cultural groups that form the French-Asian community), to explore their diasporic expressions of identity and how their family histories fit into their self-perception as French citizens and experience of social marginalization and structural racism.

The launch and development of the content of the Life Narratives Video Archive Project by the production of short educational videos, each presenting a complete interview, were designed to offer an opportunity to develop pedagogical material that supports integrating film and storytelling in the French language classroom and beyond.

This life narratives video archive project is an extension of two grant-funded film projects that I led as senior PI between 2013-2017 to document the diasporic experience of Hmong communities and former Hmong refugees in France and the United States, with the aim of linking their presence in France and the United States to their troubled history as war refugees and former refugee camp survivors, and the consequences of their involvement in what's generally described as French and American anti-communist wars. For more about the two films, please visit: <http://hmc.cal.msu.edu> and <http://growinguphmong.com>

The video archive project is a work in progress and involves using, editing, scripting and digitizing the many hours of unused additional footage of interviews to produce educational content of interest to users, learners, and researchers in different fields of academic and public activity. The videos will be available at <http://growinguphmong.com/video-archive/> in the drop-down menu under Media > Video Archive.

My choice of this project as a French language teacher emanates from a need to respond to current concerns in the discipline with rethinking the humanities and language curriculum at times of crisis, including the question of how the humanities and language programs can continue to meet the new, changing and evolving learning needs of our students. This choice is also rooted in my firm conviction about the immense value that comes from offering our students professional development opportunities through faculty-led research projects.

Involving students as research assistants in co-generating knowledge that fosters the use of storytelling and testimonies in the language classroom provided a unique opportunity for them to understand first hand the value of life narratives and personal stories – in print, audiovisual or digital form – as a privileged medium for:

- Creating and nurturing a more culturally inclusive language pedagogy in the college multicultural classroom.
- Fostering applied and engaged language learning
- Promoting the training of globally aware and culturally-sensitive learners through the cultural enrichment of the French classroom