

Best Practices of Technology Integration

Title: *Alaska and the Iditarod*

Subject: Social Studies

Grade Level(s): Elementary

Narrative:

As part of a unit on the Arctic/Antarctic, these lessons will help students develop knowledge of the cultures and traditions of the people of Alaska and about Alaska as a state and learn about the Iditarod.

Curriculum Benchmarks

[MI.SOC.I.1.EE.4](#)

Place events of their lives and the lives of others in chronological order.

[MI.SOC.I.2.EE.1](#)

Identify who was involved, what happened.

[MI.SOC.3.EE.2](#)

Differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations.

[MI.SOC.II.EE.2](#)

Describe the natural characteristics of places and explain some basic causes for those characteristics

[MI.SOC.II.4.EE.2](#)

Compare their community and region with others.

[MI.SOC.V.1.EE.1](#)

Locate information using people, books, audio/video recordings, photos, simple maps, graphs and tables.

[MI.SCI.1.EE.4](#)

Use simple measurement devices to make metric measurement.

[MI.MAT.I.3.EE.6](#)

Apply measurement to describe the real world and to solve problems.

[MI.ELA.1.EE.1](#)

Use reading for multiple purposes.

MI.ELA.3.EE.1

Integrate listening, speaking, viewing, reading, and writing, skills for multiple purposes and in varied contexts. i.e. Letter writing

Technology Benchmarks:

Elementary Keyboarding K, 1, 2

Elementary Word Processing K, 1, 2, 3

Detailed Timeline:

The lessons will extend over the period of the running of the Iditarod Race in March. In 1999 the race was won in just over 9 days with the last musher finishing in about 14 days.

About 30 to 45 minutes each day will be devoted to the Iditarod activities. This could be adjusted to suit your needs.

Preceding these lessons would be lessons on the different animals of the Arctic and Antarctic. Following these lessons students will write and illustrate their own version of the story of the Iditarod using Story Weaver software.

Goals:

The goal of the lessons is to help the students develop social studies skills, writing skills, and math skills by using them in a very concrete, hands-on way. Learning about the culture, habits, and daily lives of the people of this region will help them to compare and contrast the lives of Alaskan natives to their own.

Content:

Land forms in Northwest

Compare and contrast the weather in Alaska with ours

Storytelling—How Alaskans tell stories differs from the way families in Michigan tell stories

Letter writing

Map making

Prerequisite Student Skills:

Students will need to know how to measure a distance.

Students will have had exposure to several different Native American groups. They should have some knowledge of the globe, the United States, and reading a map.

The difficulty in the lesson will be to help them develop an understanding of how far 1049 miles really is. The measuring activity in preparation for their race and the actual running should help them build that understanding.

Major Learning Activities:

As a group, students will research the meaning of the symbols used on totem poles, plan for, and make their own totem pole using their own personal story.

Individually each student will write to their chosen musher and as a class write to the "Teacher on the Trail" via the Internet.

After reading *Eskimo Boy* by Russ Kendall, learn several Inupiaq words. Create a map of Alaska using modeling compound or clay. Map will include landforms of each area especially those where the race is taking place.

Measure for the distance between the starting line, each checkpoint and the finish line.

Follow the daily progress of their musher in the race, in individual journals. This will include a daily weather update. Students will compare the weather conditions to those at home.

Culminating Activity will be the running of your own Iditarod. Each sled will need a lead dog, a wheel dog, and 2 mushers. They will keep those positions until the halfway marker in the race. Then the mushers become the dogs and dogs become mushers.

Materials and Resources:

1. Chart paper for a KWL at the beginning of these lessons
2. Paper towel tubes for making totem poles
3. Patterns for the symbols to use on the totem poles
4. Modeling Compound to make relief map
5. Cardboard to make relief map
6. Sleds for Iditarod race
7. Markers for start, finish, and checkpoints of the race (I used orange cones from the P.E. teacher because they showed up well in the snow)
8. Meter sticks
9. Student Journals

Books:

The Bravest Dog Ever – The True Story of Balto by Natalie Standiford
Kiana's Iditarod by Shelly Gill
Iditarod Curriculum This book uses Shelly Gill's book
Totem Poles Pat Kramer
Eskimo Boy by Russ Kendall
Schooldays Sept/Oct 1987 page 5
Other books on totem poles and the Iditarod available in your library

Community Resources:

Any one in your community that has lived in Alaska or has a relative living there.

Technology:

Research on totem poles

Research on the Iditarod Race

Daily updates of the Race

Writing and sending letters to mushers

Writing and sending letters to Teacher on the Trail

Reading the journal of the Teacher on the Trail

www.iditarod.com

www.dogsled.com

www.adn.com (This is the website for Anchorage Daily News. They publish a special edition Iditarod magazine each year. It can be ordered by contacting the website. You can also access many of the news stories about the Iditarod in each day's paper.)

Assessment/Evaluation:

The totem pole projects will be presented to the class with explanation of each of their symbols. Letters will be edited before sending. This will be done with the help of a word processing program on the computer. Maps will be created within cooperative groups and presented to the class. Journals will be evaluated twice each week.

Teacher Note:

I will need access to the Internet. It would help very much if that access could be within my own classroom. However, I do have it in our media center. I will need a school e-mail address to receive messages from our mushers and the Teacher on the Trail.

I would like to consult with the special education teacher to make sure that the expectations of each student do not exceed the abilities of any of the students.

Submitted By:

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