



Expanding Worlds: Incorporating Alaska Native Cultures into the Public Schools

Presented by Patricia H. Partnow
Alaska Native Heritage Center
Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians Culture and Change
Symposium
October 2008

What do the schools need?

- More Native teachers educated and certificated
- Instruction in the children's Native languages in the schools
- A school environment that is conducive to learning in a variety of ways
- **Teaching materials, lesson plans, and curriculum with a content that reflects traditional knowledge and cultures and acknowledges the presence and contributions of the Native inhabitants of the state**

Four Rules for Curriculum Development

- Write good stuff.
- Be “invited” to write curriculum by the school district where the material will be used.
- Teach teachers both content and teaching strategies that support your curriculum.
- Support teachers long after the development of the material with additional training and replenishment of supplies.

Rule 1: Write Good Stuff

- Maintain high standards of **authenticity, accuracy, and appropriateness**. This usually means that the local Native community must be intimately involved in the creation of the materials.



Rule #1, continued

Alaska Studies Standards, Anchorage School District

D =Direct instruction; R =Reinforcement

Standard	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6
History A	D		D	D		R
History B	D		D	D		
History C	D		R	D	D	
History D				R		R
Geography A	D	D		R		
Geography B		D				
Geography C		D				
Geography D	D	D	D	D	R	
Geography E	D	D		D		
Geography F	D					
Government/Citizenship A						
Government/Citizenship B						
Government/Citizenship C					D	
Government/Citizenship D						
Government/Citizenship E						R
Government/Citizenship F					D	
Government/Citizenship G					D	
Cultural Standard A	D		D	D		R
Cultural Standard B			D			
Cultural Standard C			D			
Cultural Standard D						
Cultural Standard E			D			
English/LA A				R		
English/LA B	R	R	R	R	R	
English/LA C		R	R	R		
English/LA D				R	R	R
English/LA E				R		R
Library/Information A		R	R	R		
Library/Information B	R	R	R	R		
Library/Information C						
Library/Information D		R	R	R		

- Curriculum must be **standards-based**. This will ensure that the skills and knowledge you are teaching are demanding yet within the students' intellectual and emotional grasp.

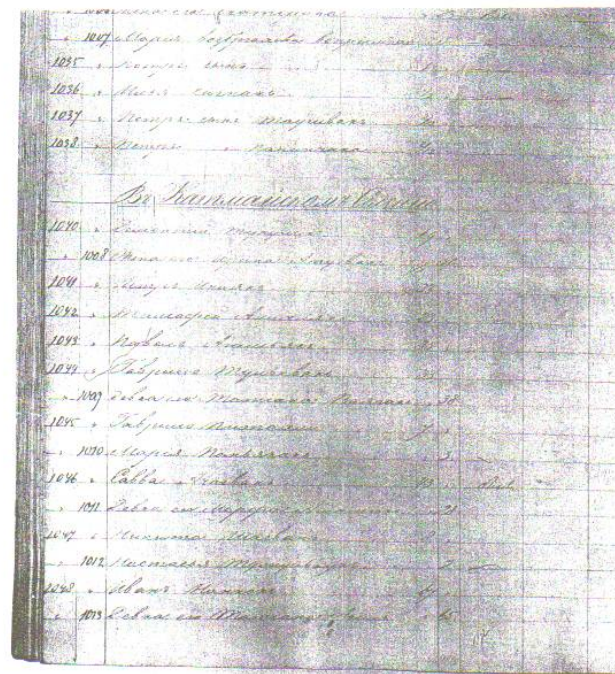
Rule #1, continued

- The writer must be **excited** about the topic in order to design material that excites kids.
- The lessons have to **motivate** the kids to want to learn. Except for some sponge-like 2nd through 5th graders, this means that the material should relate directly to students' lives, families, home, and interests.
- Life is not divided into academic disciplines; avoid a similar division in the curriculum as much as possible. Or, put another way, make the units **interdisciplinary**.

Rule #1, continued

Use **primary sources** as much as possible, but be aware that dependence on “an elder” to teach part of the curriculum can be a weakness in the plan. People with the necessary knowledge might not be available or interested in working in the schools, schedules might be hard to coordinate, or although local protocol might make it appropriate to pay elders, the school might not have funding.

Russian Document 1845

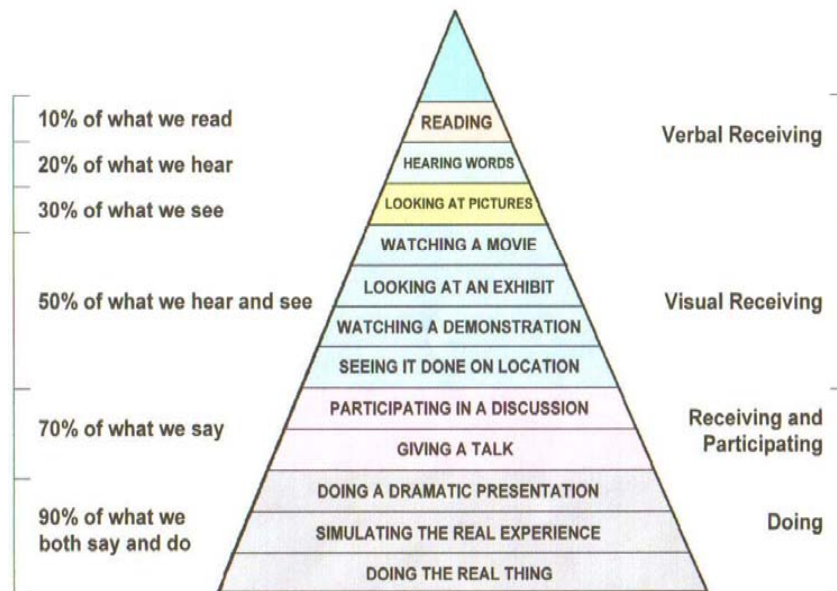


Rule #1, continued

CONE OF LEARNING

WE TEND TO REMEMBER OUR LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT

(developed and revised by Bruce Hyland from material by Edgar Dale)



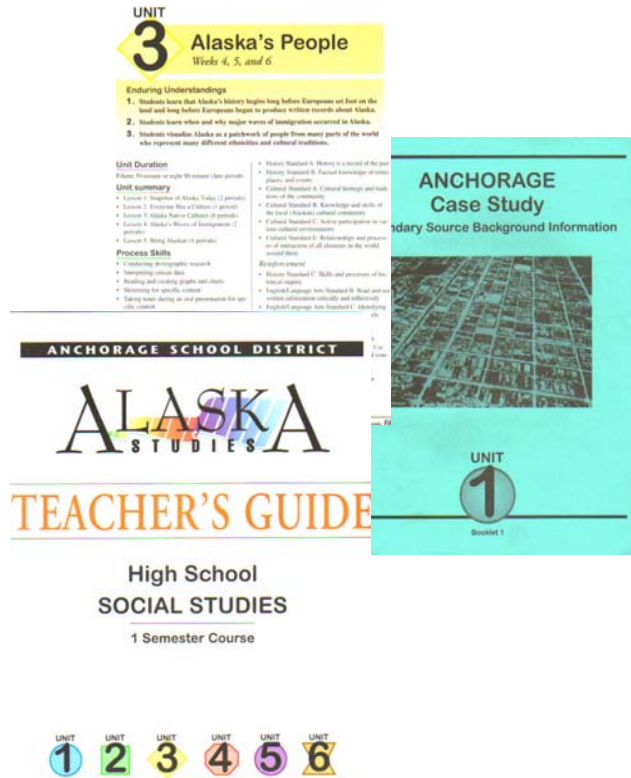
Edgar Dale, *Audio-Visual Methods in Teaching* (3rd Edition). Holt, Rinehart, and Winston (1969).

- Keep in mind that students engage in a **variety of learning styles** and that the instructor's teaching style might not be the best fit with all of them. Similarly, students will come to the lessons with a wide range of abilities and skills and these must be accommodated in the plan.

Rule #1, continued

- **Focus.** There's a universe of information about any given culture, but an overwhelming amount of information paralyzes the teacher. Choose the part of that universe that you will write about and be realistic about the amount of time it will take to do so. Two helpful tools in deciding the focus are “**enduring understandings**” – five years from now, what do you want students to still remember and know from the lessons; and “**essential questions**” – what questions about the culture, environment, or history does your curriculum answer?
- Incorporate activities that engage **kinesthetic, affective, and cognitive** domains; include variety with a minimum of lecture.
- Don't expect teachers to have time to look things up – **provide the information** for them.
- **Assessments** have to be part of the process.

Rule #1, concluded




- **Production values** should be as high as you can afford. Students notice when money has been spent to produce beautiful books and instructional materials. And they notice when all they are given are Xeroxed copies of worksheets. Get a graphic designer. Put money in the budget for printing.



Rule 2:

Be “invited” to write curriculum by the school district where the material will be used.



Rule 3: Teach teachers both content and teaching strategies that support your curriculum.

- Have teachers help design the outline
- Conduct a pilot test
- Hold training sessions



Rule 4:

Support teachers long after the development of the material with additional training and replenishment of supplies

Begin with the familiar, but with a twist

ANCHORAGE Case Study Secondary Source Background Information



UNIT



Booklet 1

Dena'ina preceded today's metropolis

First of two parts

As you look at modern Anchorage, it is hard to recognize that, until about 200 years ago, this was an Indian place, as it had been for many centuries. The indigenous people were the Dena'ina, one of the 11 Athabaskan language groups in Southcentral and Interior Alaska. Long before the first Europeans (Russian fur-traders and the Orthodox Church) arrived at the end of the 1700s, both sides of Cook Inlet were dotted with small communities of the semi-nomadic Dena'ina. Their entire economic base for production of food, clothing, housing and equipment — was in the land and waters of the area.

What is now Anchorage was then open, rural land. In the summer, clan and family fish camps lined the banks of the many streams that run through the modern urban area: Eagle River, Ship Creek, Chester Creek, Campbell Creek and Rabbit Creek. Drying racks and smokehouses contained thousands of life-sustaining salmon. Shell fish were abundant, and many species of birds and land mammals were taken for food.

Long before the first Russians appeared, the Dena'ina had taken advantage of unique natural conditions to develop a remarkable sophistication of culture. According to professor Alan Boraas, an anthropologist at Kenai Peninsula College, it was around A.D. 1000 that Cook Inlet Athabascans began to perfect cold-storage techniques for preserving foods in circular pits dug in the ground. The new technology was made possible by the fact that "there are very few places in the North where you have the combination of large, relatively easily accessible fish runs and frozen ground that is not permafrost."

By providing food for lean times, storage technology became a central fact of Dena'ina culture; and an intricate clan system evolved to provide harvest labor and

community distribution systems. Cultural complexity evolved further with partnerships between communities. A village that experienced shortages could ask another village to share some of its food — and the latter would do so because it knew that its own survival might depend on the return of the favor a few years hence. Professor Boraas concludes that Dena'ina culture became "one of the most sustainable and egalitarian, in terms of equitable resource access, that the world has ever known."

We are in a place of imagination.

In 1968, a great Native leader of the Cook Inlet region, George Miller, testified before Congress about the impacts that non-Native immigration into Cook Inlet had had on his Dena'ina people in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He quoted from the journals of a Russian Orthodox priest, Father Brotnovsky, who described the general condition of the Kenaitze Indians: "The Kenai Indians are a very kind people, ... but at present they are experiencing many hardships. Means of existence are becoming exhausted. ... The hunting grows poorer. Frequent forest fires caused by American prospectors either exterminate the animals or drive them to safer places. ... [Another] scourge fell on them [when] the fur prices dropped. ... The quantity of fish grows smaller each year. And no wonder, as each carries annually ships out 30,000 to 40,000 cases of fish. ... During the summer, all the fishing grounds are jammed with

BYRON
MALLOTT
COMMENT



In the summer, clan and family fish camps lined the banks of the many streams that run through the modern urban area: Eagle River, Ship Creek, Chester Creek, Campbell Creek and Rabbit Creek.

American fishermen."

Brotnovsky also wrote of his 1897 visit to the village of Knik: "Last winter two white men unmercifully beat the chief because he, according to his duty, refused these men contact with the local women. He has now recovered from the beating but is still afraid to return here to Knik, where something worse may befall him."

Later that year, 10 Dena'ina families from Old Knik, led by Father Brotnovsky, migrated from the northwest side of Knik Arm to the northeast side, where they might be safer. There they founded a new village that still exists today. They had carefully dismantled their Orthodox chapel at Knik and reconstructed it at the new site. In the absence of draft animals, they literally carried their church on their backs, log by log. At first, the new village site was called New Knik, but later, the name was changed to Eklutna. Eklutna is located 12 miles northeast of the Anchorage city limits; and its restored church is the oldest standing building in the Anchorage area.

We are in a place of hope.

■ Byron Mallott is president of the First Alaskan Foundation and former executive director of the Alaska Permanent Fund. His second column about the history of Anchorage and the surrounding region appears in this space Thursday.

Anchorage Daily News 2-18-04

An excerpt from the student text

Long before the first white homesteaders, the land known today as Anchorage was home to Dena'ina (Tanaina) Athabaskan Indians.

The Dena'ina living in upper Cook Inlet may have numbered as many as 1,000 in the days before contact, out of a total precontact Dena'ina population of perhaps 5,000. The Dena'ina ranged as far west as Lake Iliamna, Lake Clark and upper Stony River, as far north as the Alaska Range, and as far south as the Kenai Peninsula. Several distinct groups of Dena'ina lived in upper Cook Inlet. These groups — the Knik Arm, Susitna River and Tyonek Dena'ina — were generally delineated by their winter village sites. The Knik Dena'ina, whose winter villages also included Eldutna, used the Anchorage region extensively for seasonal hunting and fishing.

Dena'ina elder Shem Pete, who grew up in the area and remembered seeing the tents of Anchorage for the first time in 1914, provided much of the information known about the upper Cook Inlet Dena'ina and traditional place names of the region. His stories were collected during a period of years before his death by linguist James Kari and anthropologist James Fall, among others. The book *Shem Pete's Alaska* (1987), compiled by Kari and Fall, contains many of his stories and descriptions of his people's home territory.

The Dena'ina may have moved into upper

Dena'ina Country



Shown here with his wife and child, Chief Wassily represented the Knik Dena'ina, who depended on the Anchorage bowl for important subsistence resources. (Photo No. 882.52.273, Anchorage Museum)

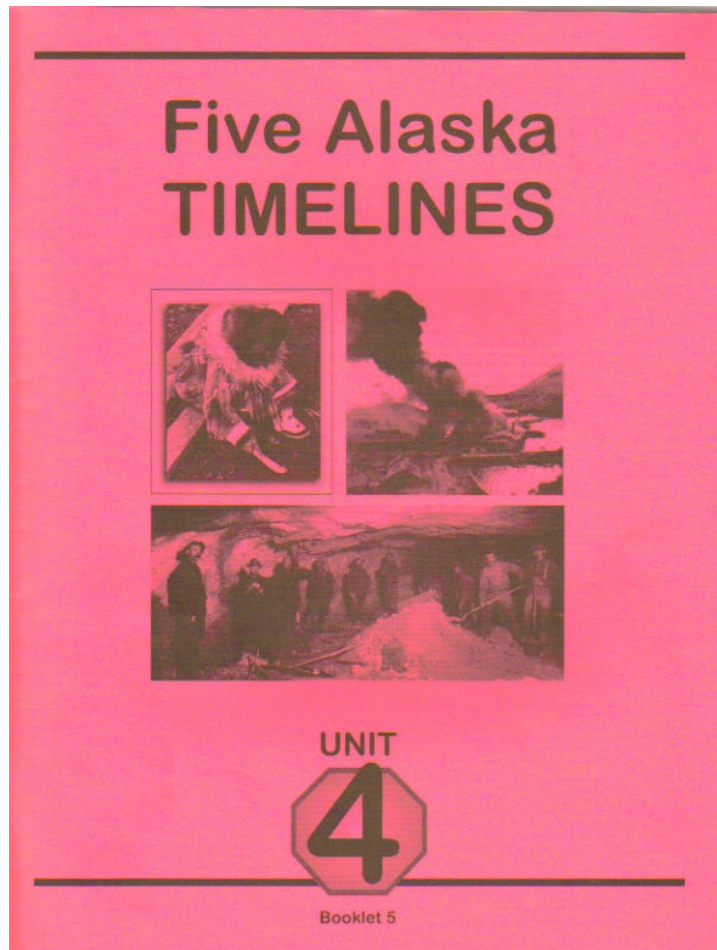
Cook Inlet out of the Interior as early as 500 A.D., according to anthropologist William Workman as cited by Fall in his article "The Upper Inlet Tanaina" (1987). This arrival date is also supported by linguistic information, according to Kari. This timing would have put the Dena'ina in the upper inlet more than 1,000 years earlier than some other scholars have speculated. The upper inlet Dena'ina were a distinct group and arrived on Cook Inlet much earlier than the Dena'ina who later populated the Kenai Peninsula.

Archaeological artifacts found in the area indicate that the Alutiiq of Kodiak or Prince William Sound probably frequented the upper inlet as well, and perhaps were displaced by the Dena'ina. The Dena'ina apparently adapted

tools for the marine environment, perhaps borrowing technology from the Alutiiq including the kayalike baidarka. While the Kodiak Alutiiq would have come in by water, the Prince William Sound Alutiiq would have traversed Portage Glacier. Dena'ina lore includes a story about one of the last battles against the Alutiiq who came over the glacier and raided an upper inlet Dena'ina village, according to a story told by Shem Pete. The Alutiiq kidnapped a Dena'ina chief's daughter, and were on their way home when Dena'ina warriors caught them pulling their boats from the water at Campbell Point. The Dena'ina killed all but a couple of the Alutiiq men, who were sent back to report what had happened.

The Dena'ina were the only Alaskan Athabaskans to live along saltwater. They found the upper inlet rich in food. They hunted beluga whales and adapted freshwater river fishing methods to the inlet's extreme tides. The Knik Dena'ina hunted caribou in upper Ship Creek, and other wild game such as moose and beaver in the swampy muskeg and spruce forests of the Anchorage bowl,

Students learn that history is written from a number of different perspectives



Moments in Alaska's History:

Bits and Pieces

<http://www.everythingalaska.com/eta.history.html>

16th century

- 1578** Cossack Chieftain Yermak Timofief was on an expedition in central Russia when he heard word of rich sable and valuable furs in the east. The journeys across the steppes marked the beginning of Russia's conquest eastward.

17th century

- 1639** Cossack horsemen came over the eastern mountain range in Siberia, and continued to the shore of the Okhotsk Sea. Once there, they built the first Russian village, facing east, across the Pacific.

18th century

- 1711** Russian traders learn of a "Great Land" to the east.
- 1725** Peter the Great of Russia commissioned a Danish sea captain, Vitus Bering, to explore the Northwest coast of Alaska. This feat is credited with the "official" discovery by Russia and the first reliable information on the land. Bering established Russia's claim to Northwestern North America.
- 1728** Vitus Bering sails through the Bering Strait.
- 1733** Bering's second expedition, with Georg Wilhelm Steller aboard, the first naturalist to visit Alaska.
- 1741** Alexei Chirikof, with Bering expedition, sights land on July 15; the Europeans had found Alaska.
- 1742** First scientific report on the North Pacific fur seal.
- 1743** Concentrated hunting of sea otter by Russia begins.
- 1774** Juan Perez ordered by Spain to explore west coast; discovers Prince of Wales Island, Dixon Sound.
- 1776** Captain James Cook expedition to search for Northwest Passage.
- 1778** While searching for the elusive Northwest Passage, British Explorer Captain James Cook explored the waterway that downtown Anchorage now borders, Cook Inlet.
- 1778** Cook reaches King Island, Norton Sound, Unalaska.
- 1784** Grigori Shelikov establishes first white settlement at Three Saints Bay, Kodiak.

The Teacher's Guide must be well organized and easy to use.

UNIT

1

Introduction

Week 1 and part of Week 2

Enduring Understandings

1. Students know the difference between a primary and secondary source and how to effectively use each.
2. Students know that all historical documents were produced from within a particular context. They learn to search for that context and recognize its unstated assumptions.
3. Student's learn Anchorage's origins and history.

Unit Duration

Seven 50-minute or four 90-minute class periods

Unit summary

- Lesson 1: Class outline and expectations (1 period)
- Lesson 2: *Trends in Alaska's People and Economy* and *Alaska Almanac* search (1 period)
- Lesson 3: Historical Method (1 period)
- Lesson 4: Learn about Anchorage's History (4 periods)

Process Skills

- Identifying primary sources
- Examining documents
- Interpreting data
- Inferring from evidence
- Synthesizing from a variety of sources
- Drawing conclusions

Vocabulary

- Primary source
- Secondary source
- Historical perspective and context
 - Economic booms and busts
- Reproduction
 - Land use
- Hypothesis
 - Infrastructure
- Synthesis
 - Carrying capacity

Standards

Direct Instruction

- Geography Standard A: Use and make maps
- Geography Standard D: Spatial characteristics of human systems
- Geography Standard E: Interaction between humans and physical environment
- Geography Standard F: Using geography to interpret the past and prepare for the future
- History Standard A: History is a record of the past
- History Standard B: Factual knowledge of times, places, and events
- History Standard C: Skills and processes of historical inquiry
- Cultural Standard A: Cultural heritage and traditions of the community

Reinforcement

- English/Language Arts Standard B: Read and use written information critically and reflectively
- Library/Information Literacy Standard B: Use research processes to locate, evaluate, and communicate information and ideas

UNIT

3

Alaska's People

Weeks 4, 5, and 6

Enduring Understandings

1. Students learn that Alaska's history begins long before Europeans set foot on the land and long before Europeans began to produce written records about Alaska.
2. Students learn when and why major waves of immigration occurred in Alaska.
3. Students visualize Alaska as a patchwork of people from many parts of the world who represent many different ethnicities and cultural traditions.

Unit Duration

Fifteen 50-minute or eight 90-minute class periods

Unit summary

- Lesson 1: Snapshot of Alaska Today (2 periods)
- Lesson 2: Everyone Has a Culture (1 period)
- Lesson 3: Alaska Native Cultures (6 periods)
- Lesson 4: Alaska's Waves of Immigration (2 periods)
- Lesson 5: Being Alaskan (4 periods)

Process Skills

- Conducting demographic research
- Interpreting census data
- Reading and creating graphs and charts
- Skimming for specific content
- Taking notes during an oral presentation for specific content
- Reading for content and intent
- Writing a personal essay

Vocabulary

- Culture
- Hutlaanee

Standards

Direct Instruction

- Geography Standard D: Spatial characteristics of human systems

- History Standard A: History is a record of the past
- History Standard B: Factual knowledge of times, places, and events
- Cultural Standard A: Cultural heritage and traditions of the community
- Cultural Standard B: Knowledge and skills of the local (Alaskan) cultural community
- Cultural Standard C: Active participation in various cultural environments
- Cultural Standard E: Relationships and processes of interaction of all elements in the world around them

Reinforcement

- History Standard C: Skills and processes of historical inquiry
- English/Language Arts Standard B: Read and use written information critically and reflectively
- English/Language Arts Standard C: Identifying and selecting strategies to complete projects independently and cooperatively
- Library/Information Literacy Standard A: Organization of information and resources
- Library/Information Literacy Standard B: Use research processes to locate, evaluate, and communicate information and ideas
- Library/Information Literacy Standard D: Freedom and ability to pursue information beyond what is immediately available

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT



TEACHER'S GUIDE

High School
SOCIAL STUDIES

1 Semester Course

