

PNL Lesson 3
WORKING WITH LOCAL EXPERTS—MENTAL MAPS and STORIES
TEACHER INFORMATION

Lesson Summary: Students become more familiar with local landmarks, place names, and stories as they listen to and work with a local landscape expert.

Objectives: Students will begin to name, locate, and think about key places and landmarks in their area and about what these landmarks reveal about the history and culture of an area.

Estimated Time: 1 hour for initial classroom visit but time could be expanded to multiple visits.

Correlation to Alaska Standards:

- Cultural D-4 Gather oral and written history information from the local community and provide an appropriate interpretation of its cultural meaning and significance.
- Cultural E-2 Understand the ecology and geography of the bioregion they inhabit.
- Geography A Make and use maps, globes, and graphs to gather, analyze, and report spatial (geographic) information.
- Geography B Utilize, analyze, and explain information about human and physical features of places and regions.

BACKGROUND FOR THE TEACHER

This lesson is similar to PNL Lesson 2, Simon Paneak's Sketch Maps, and the background section from that lesson applies here as well.

MATERIALS

(Depends upon the local situation and stations chosen)

- Chart paper
- Brainstormed class list of landmarks (from PNL 1)
- Student-drawn mental maps (from PNL 1)
- 1:63,360 and 1:250,000 topographic maps of area
- Maps of place names that already exist for the area

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

Getting Ready

Although the Simon Paneak sketch maps (PNL Lesson 2) are extraordinary examples of the kind of landscape knowledge held by traditional hunters, many communities in Alaska today have landscape experts who have similar

knowledge and who might be willing to work with students and share their knowledge. Such an expert might be an Elder who traveled seasonally from camp to camp, a riverboat skipper, a hunter, trapper or berry picker, or someone with a keen interest in trails and old places. Is there a person who is known for his or her landscape knowledge who is also known as a teacher or a storyteller and who is willing to share their landscape knowledge?

Seek this person out and explain that you want your students to begin to learn about important local landmarks, trails, and places, and why they are important. Show them some Simon Paneak sketch maps and explain what you've been working on in class so far. Find out if they would be comfortable sketching their own mental map and then sharing stories about travel, or talking about places important in your community. (Generally speaking, the more clear you can be about what you and your students need, the easier it will be for a local expert to respond.) If producing a map of place names is the project goal, then explain the project as specifically as you can, possibly bringing along the *Trip to Puvlatuuq* map (PNL Lesson 4) or the *My Own Trail* map by Howard Luke to help them get a better idea about where the work is headed. Explain that in order to make maps like these, students need a lot of help learning about important places and trails in your area.

Before work begins, talk with this person to better understand what they know and want to share and tailor your focus accordingly. Ideally, such a person would be willing to come to class and work with students both initially on this lesson, sharing mental maps and stories, and then later to actually help with site documentation. In any case, the critical thing is to arrange an exchange between the landscape expert and students in a way that is comfortable and meaningful for all.

Decide ahead of time how best to set up your classroom for this visit. One option is for the visitor to present to the whole class while students listen and take notes. Another option, which is described here, is to set up stations that allow for small group work.¹ The visitors might guide one or more stations while other stations would be set up for students to work independently on other map reading activities. You will need to create your own station tasks and student worksheet based on your visitors and the maps you have available, but the PNL 3 Student Exercise Sample provides some ideas to get you started.

¹ This idea was contributed by Susan Paskvan, Native Language Specialist for the Yukon Koyukuk School District.

Gear-up

- Remind students of their own mental maps and the Simon Paneak maps and explain that your visitor is going to share his or her mental map and stories with the class today. Ask students to predict how the visitor's mental map will be similar to or different from theirs and ask students to explain why they think so.
- Explain that the goal is to learn more about the place names, locations, and stories of their area, possibly leading to the creation of a map of place names in GIS or Google Earth.
- Describe the station rotation process, handing out topographic maps and copies of the PNL 3 Student Exercise.

Explore

Students rotate through stations while expert shares and discusses mental maps stories, and landmarks of the area

Generalize

- Give students some time to reflect on what was shared by the visitor using words, pictures, or diagrams in as much detail as possible.
- Discuss what the expert talked about or explained. What stories did he/she tell? What places did he/she talk about? What would you especially like to remember? What do you wonder about now?
- Post the class landmark list or map (from PNL Lesson 1) and ask if, after listening to the expert, there are any landmarks or features they would like to add?

(Note: The goal here is to help students think about not only place names and landmark information, but also about what the expert focused on and seemed to regard as important, gradually building an understanding of landscape that is more than just places on a map. Depending upon the situation, this might well reveal a whole new perspective on landscape including ways of observing, navigating, and interacting with the landscape as well as the aesthetic regard for the land.)

Apply/Assess

- Refine and use this information for PNL Lesson 5: Picking Points or PNL Lesson 6: Place Names Field Trip.
- Journal prompt:
 - How was the expert's mental map different from yours and why do you think so?
 - What was the most interesting thing that you learned and why?

Name: _____

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STUDENT EXERCISE (EXAMPLES)

Travel Station

1. Study your topographic map to find some places that you know
2. Use a blue marker to highlight the areas you have traveled.
3. If you camped out in an area, mark that place on your map and write what time of year you camped:
 - a) F for fall
 - b) W for winter
 - c) Sp for spring
 - d) Su for summer

Distance Station (using 1:63:360 topographic map or place names map)

1. Each square represents one mile, also known as "an inch to the mile map"
2. Locate (your home community). Take the following measurements to figure out the distance between 2 points
 - a) (blank to blank)
 - i. Air miles = _____
 - ii. River miles = _____
 - b) (blank to blank)
 - i. Air miles = _____
 - ii. River miles = _____
 - c) (blank to blank)
 - i. Air miles = _____
 - ii. River miles = _____

Elder Station (using 1:63:360 topographic map or place names map)

1. Write down the name of your elder _____
2. Use a red pen to trace the travels of the elder on your map.
3. Locate a fall, winter, spring, or summer camp that the elder stayed at and mark it on your map.
4. Is that camp named on the map?
If so, write down the name. _____
5. Is there a (native language name) for that place? If so, what is it named and what does it mean? _____
6. Is this place still being used today? _____

7. Write down the story that the elder shared about this place. Use the space below to write your answer.
