



Sharing Our Pathways

VOL. 9, ISSUE 1
Jan/Feb 2004

A newsletter of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative

Alaska Federation of Natives ♦ University of Alaska ♦ National Science Foundation ♦ Rural School and Community Trust

Education and Cultural Self-Determination

*by Paul Ongtooguk, a son of Tommy Ongtooguk,
Presentation to the 2003 AFN Youth and Elders Convention*

Thank you for the privilege of sharing in this meeting in which we have all been gathered to consider the great challenges facing us as Alaska Natives. The issue of this conference of the Alaska Federation of Natives is central to the future success of Alaska Native peoples.

Our very existence as distinct peoples within Alaska—the very existence of our communities—rest on how we answer the challenge of this conference: education and cultural self-determination. For the last thirty years we have avoided the heart of the dilemma about being Alaska Natives in this world at this time.

Our political leaders in the 1960s were caught up in the conflicts and threats resulting from federal and state governments and many other people taking Alaska Native lands — lands and waters we had been living on for countless generations. We accepted our life on these lands and waters as blessings with enough hard challenges to press the very best efforts from us as people. Many of the Elders here today are offering to share with us all the lessons of our ancestors and what the land, the waters and the animals

have to share with us. The world is more than money and there are lessons we can best learn as a part of the world our cultures have grown up within.

Our schools were originally intended to break the connection we had to our lands and waters and to break the spirit within us that keeps us nurtured as Alaska Native peoples. Schools tried to cut out of our minds our distinct understanding of the world and our place within it. Schools tried to erase Alaska Native cultures from the world. Most tragically, schools tried to erase being Alaska Native from the hearts of our young people. Fortunately for us and for the world, the heart of being Alaska Native could not be erased. In many places our Elders and some very tough parents

(continued on next page)



Tommy Ongtooguk

Contents

The Williwaw Way	3
Native American Songs as Literature	4
Translations of Native Literature	6
NEC and BMEEC Merge for 2004	7
ANKN Curriculum Corner	8
Athabascan Region:	
Environmental Group Visits Old Minto .	9
Iñupiaq Region: Discovery, Native	
Science After-School Activities	10
Annie Blue, Elicarai—Her Teachings .	16
Learning Styles Grant Summary	11
Southeast Region:	
Southeast AK Tribal Resource Atlas ...	12
Unanga Region	
Values poster now available	13
Unanga Language and Culture	14
Yup'ik Region:	
Cultural Accuracy in Curriculum	15

(continued from previous page)

ignored the falsehoods put forward in schools about Alaska Natives being primitive or savage.

Our young people learned very different lessons at home, at fish camps, at hunting camps, at potlatches, around traditional feasts and during ceremonies. Some of our young learned from the lessons of traditional dances and even from within the folds of some culturally friendly churches.



Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative

Ray Barnhardt, Co-Director

UAF/ANKN/AKRSI
PO Box 756730
Fairbanks, AK 99775-6730
(907) 474-1902 phone
(907) 474-1957 fax
email: ffrjb@uaf.edu

Oscar Kawagley, Co-Director

on sabbatical
email: rfok@uaf.edu

Frank Hill, Co-Director

Alaska Federation of Natives
1577 C Street, Suite 300
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 274-3611 phone
(907) 276-7989 fax
email: fnfwh@uaf.edu

Sharing Our Pathways is the newsletter of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative, funded by the National Science Foundation Division of Educational Systemic Reform in agreement with the Alaska Federation of Natives and the University of Alaska.

Comments and suggestions can be sent to:

Alaska Native Knowledge Network
University of Alaska Fairbanks
P.O. Box 756730
Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-6730
(907) 474-5086 phone
(907) 474-5615 fax
<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu>
email: fyankn@uaf.edu

Newsletter Editor: Vacant

fyankn@uaf.edu

Layout & Design: Paula Elmes
paula.elmes@uaf.edu

Most of all our young people learned through the lives of Elders who demonstrated the importance of giving to the community as more important than gathering for oneself. The best Elders taught with their lives the value of sharing as more important than taking. The Elders also taught there was more to life than others would have us learn. The lesson of developing what one Elder, William Oquilluk, called the power of imagination (www.alaskool.org) has been essential in allowing us to exist and grow as Alaska Native peoples. We must learn again to imagine more than what is taught in our schools and on TV. We must again reject the lesson of ignorance about being Alaska Native.

The challenge of cultural self-determination will not be won by the Native corporation with the biggest bank account. A good future for the next generation of Alaska Natives will not be established on winning some lawsuit. A political win will not produce cultural victory. Success in business, in politics and in the courts is important for Alaska Native people to exist with dignity in this world today, but while these are necessary they are not sufficient.

With the creation of Regional Education Attendance Areas (REAs) Alaska Native peoples won the promise of some measure of self-determination and control over the education of rural Alaska Native young people. This was a new and uncertain task 27 years ago as Alaska Native communities began to take over our schools. We, as Alaska Native communities, were so happy that our young people might not have to leave anymore to acquire an education, we just wanted our young people to be as happy as we were at simply being together.

For years many of our Alaska Native communities had not experienced having young people living within our lives all year round. In some ways we seem to have forgotten how to

help young people learn about their responsibility in contributing to the community. I think some of us expected the expert teachers to raise our young people as boarding home schools had raised us. We live in the midst of this challenge today.

It's been 27 years since the REAs were formed and 37 years since the Alaska Federation of Natives was formed, and finally the issue has been raised about Alaska Native education and cultural self-determination. I think we can put this issue into some direct questions for our communities, our schools, our teachers and most importantly ourselves.

By the time our young people graduate from school what will they be expected to know about our cultures? What will Alaska Native young people learn about us? What *should* Alaska Native young people learn about us? For schools and teachers and communities that think they are doing pretty well on this issue consider these questions:

- How many of our Alaska Native high school graduates will have read any—ANY—Alaska Native author? Most current Alaska Native graduates will not have had a single essay, speech, novel, short story, legend, oral history, piece of poetry or anything written by an Alaska Native during their 12 years of schooling.
- How many Alaska Native young people can name an Alaska Native leader and what that leader fought for on our behalf?
- How many Alaska Native young people know their Alaska Native organizations and why they were created? Too many of our young people are not being given the chance to learn about us. The shame is not theirs—it belongs to all of us.

As youth and Elder delegates you can stand up and say this is wrong. We must reverse the direction of schools. Schools and communities

must come together and ensure the opportunity to learn about our own history, Alaska Native leaders and oral traditions that, in some cases, Alaska Native organizations have spent millions of dollars preserving and yet the lessons of our Elders still remain silent in most of our schools.

I think the Youth and Elders Convention should ask the business and tribal delegates to address the theme of this year's convention first before they get lost for another year in the politics and money issues that so often preoccupy them. We need commitment to change. I suggest a new resolution asking the other delegates to begin answering the questions:

“What should Alaska Native young people learn about us? What organizations, leaders, legends, poetry, stories, oral history, political and social issues should we learn about as young people? No professional educators can answer these questions for us, nor should they. We, as Alaska Natives, together should begin to ask and then answer the questions ourselves. We have young people in Bethel who do not know who Jackson Lomack or Chief Eddie Hoffman was. We have young people from the Interior who do not know who Morris Thompson or Rosemarie Maher were. We have young people from Southeast Alaska who do not know who Elizabeth Peratrovitch was.

We need a resolution to ensure that education does not come up every ten years or so but sits at the core as a central focus of the Alaska Federation of Natives. In this regard I recommend a resolution calling for a vice-president of education within the Alaska Federation of Natives.

We need a resolution asking AFN to seek funding to coordinate the learning opportunities of the Youth and Elder Convention in ways similar to what Close-Up has done for learning about federal and state issues.

We need a resolution coordinating what is taught at cultural camps and

after-school programs, changing what is taught in schools and changing what teachers learn about Alaska Natives.

There are many other parts of this issue that must be addressed. We should have a resolution that supports web sites as places to learn and share about our regional and state-wide cultures, organizations and issues. We need a resolution to support Alaska Native young people who live outside the state to learn about us. These young people who live outside the state now number in the thousands. While they may be living out-of-state, they have not left our hearts nor have they left the purpose of the AFN Youth and Elders Convention.

We have too many young Alaska Natives who do not feel nor do they learn any sense of connection to our Alaska Native communities. We must ensure that our young people learn key ideas about being Alaska Native,

about our communities, about our issues, about our challenges, about our leaders, about heroes, about the tragic parts of our histories and about things for which we can all be rightfully proud. This is not happening. This must change.

Our Alaska Native young people must know that we want them to learn about our rightful place in this world, about the challenges we have faced as peoples and the opportunities they will share. Most of all, our young people must know we care about who they are as well as what they know. We must love and respect our young people enough to share our greatest riches with each one of them. We must share our heritage so they can contribute to it, as well as to each other's and the world beyond. Education and cultural self-determination are one and the same. ✨

The Williwaw Way

by Matthew Dunckel, UAA PTEP Student

Every fall, just before school begins, the teachers at Williwaw Elementary School spend an afternoon visiting each of their new students at home. It is amazing what a home visit by a teacher can do for the life of a student and their parents. Welcoming a student and their family into the educational community allows for a sense of belonging. A stronger bond exists between children, their parents and a school community when all feel involved and committed to the students' education.

Some parents view school as a place that people go to lose their culture and language, but these home visits allow the Williwaw staff to show parents that their children's culture and first language will be embraced while at school.

Home visits have become a standard practice at Williwaw Element-

tary for the last four years. Bonnie Goen, the principal at Williwaw, believes these visits are becoming a tradition for the staff and the students. “The more we know about our students and where they come from, the better educators we become.” Ms. Goen feels so strongly about the home

(continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

visits that she requires them during the in-service days, prior to the first day of school. She hopes that teachers will get a sense of their students outside of the classroom and that the students will see their teachers outside of the school setting. A teacher needs to be understood as an educator and as a person, just as students need to be seen as both students and individuals. “We gain empowerment through cultural bonds.” Ms. Goen adds, “. . . getting out there and seeing where these students come from allows us to see where we need to go as a class.” To further the sense of community, Williwaw plans a barbecue later the following day for all students and their families. By embracing all languages and cultures, a tone is set for positive educational interaction.

Williwaw notifies the parents the afternoon the teachers will be visiting, and the day takes on a festive quality with children running up and down sidewalks eager to see their new teacher arrive. Students stop former teachers and talk openly about what they are doing now and how they are enjoying their summer. Bonnie and her staff understand that because of the varied cultural backgrounds of the student body, a personal bond needs to emerge early with the children and their parents. Due to the cultural make up of the school community there are a large number of parents who do not speak English, so their children are in the unique position to act as translators. Even with this language barrier the home visits have created a sense of unity. These interactions between parents and educators foster an awareness that their children’s cultural identity will be accepted and not become an obstacle. After the visits end the students of Williwaw are less apprehensive about the first day of school. They come to school ready to learn.

Although home visits aren’t standard in the Anchorage School District, they are valuable. With expanding class size and multiple ethnic groups represented, classrooms

with the advantage of home visits benefit substantially. Trust isn’t given freely—it must be earned—and home visits start that process before the students ever leave for school. ✕

Native American Songs as Literature

by Vivian Martindale

Utilizing the richness and variety of Native American songs is one way to open up the world of Native American literature in the classroom. After all, Native American cultures have a rich oral tradition and many stories are told through the medium of songs. Rhyme, rhythm, drums and dancing have the ability to enhance the memory while simultaneously healing the spirit, mind and body, providing for an enriching classroom experience.

Classrooms don’t have to be boring. Literature classes especially can be enhanced through the medium of song. In David Leedom Shaul’s article “A Hopi Song-Poem in Context”, he claims that the listener is similar to an audience during storytelling, in that the listener is also interacting with the music. The listener, as a participant, is not passive; the listener is hearing rhythms, words, patterns and much more. The listener does not have to understand the Native language in order to appreciate the song. Shaul calls attention to the genre called “song poems.” These songs are in a category by themselves, separate from poetry and prose. “The text of song-poems in Hopi culture, like much poetry, seemingly create their own context by virtue of minimalist language” (Shaul 1992:230–31). Therefore it would be interesting to include the concept of

song poems or poetry as music into a curriculum.

Poet, songwriter and saxophonist, Joy Harjo, is one such example of an artist/poet whose work could be shared in a class on Native American literature. Other than being a poet, Harjo is in her own band called Poetic Justice. Harjo is from Oklahoma and is an enrolled member of the Creek Tribe. Her work combines music with poetry. According to Harjo, “The term poetic justice is a term of grace, expressing how justice can appear in the world despite forces of confusion and destruction. The band takes its name from this term because all of us have worked for justice in our lives, through any means possible and through music.” Harjo’s lyrics to her songs are a reflection of her poetry, “a blending of rock, blues and prophecy” (Princeton 2003).

I include here an excerpt from Poetic Justices' song "My House is the Red Earth," words and music by Joy Harjo and John L. Williams:

My house is the red earth. It could be the center of the world. I've heard New York, Tokyo or Paris called the center of the world, but I say it is magnificently humble. You could drive by and miss it. Radio waves can obscure it. Words cannot construct it for there are some sounds left to sacred wordless form. For instance, that fool crow picking through trash near the corral, understands the center of the world as greasy scraps of fat. Just ask him. He doesn't have to say that the earth has turned scarlet through fierce belief, after centuries of heartbreak and laughter (Poetic Justice 2003).

Poetic Justice is just one example of how contemporary musicians use poetry to express issues facing Native Americans today. Song poems, in themselves, hold a unique element of language and culture.

In a more traditional manner, songs from around Native America could be included, not just for listening enjoyment, but also could include students' input on the lyrics; afterward asking how the students thought the poet/artist expressed themselves and how they felt when listening to the songs. Traditional singers could be invited into the classroom to perform. But of course permission to perform the songs and dances must be given by the owners of the song so educators need to be aware that there is an aspect of ownership as well as some songs and dances are only to be performed at certain times of the year and by specific persons. Usually dancing and other forms of expression accompany songs. Students could be encouraged to close their eyes briefly and afterward record what they heard as a participant compared to what they

saw as a participant. Also ask the students if they felt as if they were participants on some other level or were simply an observer or listener. In many of the contexts, songs may not have to be translated if they are performed in their Native languages. One can simply enjoy the language, how it sounds, how it feels to the soul.

For further studies on Native American song poems a good source is by author and editor Brian Swann called *Song of the Sky: Native American Songpoems*. Although adding music and song in a literary context may seem like a revolutionary idea, Native Americans have been using songs to educate since time immemorial. According to an article on the Alaska Native Knowledge Network, "Singing and dancing were very important to the Athabascan people. People often made up songs about events, love songs, war songs or about relatives who had died for the death potlatch. The children at potlatches and community events observed the adults as a means to learn how to dance and sing. Children learned to sing very early as it was very important to the Athabascan way to carry on their teachings through oral languages" (ANKN 2003). And yes, even college students enjoy learning through the medium of music and song, especially when it opens up the world of literature from other cultures.

Another resource for educators comes from Canyon Records called *Traditional Voices*, which includes recordings made in the 1950s and 60s. These rare songs were recorded by "historically important singers from all over United States and Canada." This collection offers a glimpse into the rich and varied tribal cultures of twenty different Native American tribes. Samples from the works include songs such as the Navajo "Yei-Be-Chai Chant," Northern Cheyenne "Sun Dance Song," and the

Tohono O'odham, "Song Of The Green Rainbow." Through traditional songs and dances this recording would be an excellent tool to introduce students to Native American literary forms.

Songs or song poems, whether traditional or contemporary, can be one instrument for educators to utilize in order to explore various Native cultures. Involving local singers and dancers is also important as well as any students who are willing to share their songs and dances with their classmates. Dance and songs are a means to understanding Native American cultures. To appreciate other cultures, it is good to immerse ourselves in each other's songs. ✨

References

- Alaska Native Knowledge Network. 2003. Athabascan Winter Studies: The Dene' Indigenous Peoples of Interior Alaska. Electronic document, <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/ANEunit/aneindex.html>, accessed July 14, 2003.
- Harjo, Joy. 2003. Joy Harjo. Electronic document <http://www.princeton.edu/~naap/harjo.html>, accessed July 14, 2003.
- Harjo, Joy. 2003. KACTV Publishing/ Muskogee. Mekko Productions, Electronic document, <http://www.joyharjo.com/index.html>, accessed July 14.
- Shaul, David Leedom. 1992. "A Hopi Song Poem in Context" In *On the Translation of Native American Literatures*. Brian Swann ed. Washington: Smithsonian Institution. Traditional Voices. Electronic document, <http://www.canyonrecords.com/cr7053.htm>, accessed July 14, 2003. Phoenix: Canyon Records.

Translations of Native American Literature

by Vivian Martindale

“The fact that Indians were human took some time to sink in. The fact that their languages had value took longer”

From On the Translations of Native American Literature, ed. by Brian Swann.

When offering translations of Native American texts in the classroom, an educator ought to be aware of the background of the translated material that is offered. The written text is simply not enough as discussions must include information about the author if available, background information about the culture and demographics, information about the translator and, most importantly, the implications of translation from oral traditions to the written form. Only then can an educator offer an honest examination of the Native American text.

Brian Swann’s *On the Translation of Native American Literatures* is one such resource for educators. Published in 1992 by the Smithsonian Institution, this book is divided into four sections. The book opens with a brief introduction by Swann, followed by a second section providing an overview of the translation of Native American literature. In section three, Swann organizes the contributing essays by language and geography. Finally, section four concerns itself with the translations of Central and South American Indian literature.

When offering translated texts in the classroom an educator must consider a very important point: “The very problematic relationship between the academics who study this material and become its interpreters to American society at large, and the people who live in it” (Swann 1992). One should realize that the Western

worldview provides a different context for interpreting material that is originally performed in a Native American context. The translator, considered the author (especially in older published texts), is often Euro-American. So therefore when reading poetry or songs from as far back as the early seventeenth century through the 1800s and early 1900s, no value was placed upon accurate translation of Native literature. In the essay “Tokens of Literary Faculty” by William M. Clements, he claims translating the songs, poems and oratory of Native Americans was done simply to control them and ultimately eliminate their culture.

Clements strongly stresses the opinions of the times: “The songs, stories and orations of the Indians had so little literary merit that they deserved the same fate as the cultures in general. Since they could be consigned

to oblivion with no aesthetic loss, translating them served at most the purposes of those who sought to understand Native Americans for the sake of efficiently subjugating them.”

When translated, oral traditions were written to fit the popular forms of poetry and songs of the times. Euro-American translators thought there was an infancy in the language that would eventually mature with the Natives becoming civilized (Clements 1992:35–37). Therefore, offering students who study and appreciate Native American literature these thoughts could profoundly change how they interpret the material.

These reasons could account for the stereotypes and prejudices about Native Americans that evolved into our American culture. For example, from books and other literature we read about the stoic Indian, the savage, the vanishing Indian, the child-like Indian and the drunken Indian. All are images that began with translators who came from a different worldview than the Native peoples themselves. This insight, however, should not dissuade the educator from offering older texts in the classroom or other valuable interpretations of Native literature by non-Natives, but the educator should definitely discuss with students the background of the translator and the views of the times. Also discussed should be how much time the translator spent in the community and what, if any, knowledge the translator had about the community or people. The question should also be asked “Does the translator have a reliable person from the Native community who they consulted on the translated material?”

For many Euro-American translators the goal is to be aesthetically pleasing to the market for which the translator is working. In regions where the languages are non-existent and the translator only has anthropologist’s and ethnologist’s documents to work from, with no local

speakers available, the translator is in danger of taking excessive creative license. Fortunately in Alaska there are Native language speakers still available for consultation.

The culture and demographics of the material being examined is also important. Since reading literature from a particular culture is an excellent way to learn about that culture, it would be valuable if students looked up terms they didn't understand and were presented with an overview of the culture. Items to consider are the location of the community and a bit of historical perspective about the region from which the literature comes. For example, if one would be studying Velma Wallis' *Two Old Women*, it would enhance the readers experience if they knew where Velma lived and where the story took place. In Wallis' case, she is an Alaska Native and she herself is the translator of the story from the oral tradition to the written form. Wallis also used some creative license to re-tell the story for publication with editing help from others. In this case, Wallis' book is probably a more accurate style of the retelling of an oral tradition than many earlier works in Alaska that were done by non-Natives (Wallis 1993).

Lastly, the implications of translating an oral tradition into the written form must be considered when exploring Native American literature in the classroom. Many older literary works from the 1800s aren't up to modern standards of translative criteria (Clements 1992). A good technique to introduce into the classroom would be to invite a Native American orator to tell a story using the oral traditions prior to the students reading a written version and then, at another time, have them read the story first prior to hearing and watching it performed. Knowing the difference and identifying the possible places where interpretation could differ is a valuable lesson when reading material that is based upon oral traditions.

An educator must be aware when offering material that are translations from oral traditions that not all translators come from the same worldview as the Native peoples they are writing about. But despite this, Native American literature, whether a translation or by the original author, offers wonderful ways to explore the beauty and uniqueness of America's numerous Native American cultures. ✨

References

- Swann, Brian, ed. 1992 *On the Translation of Native American Literatures* Washington: Smithsonian Institution.
- Wallis, Velma. 1993 *Two Old Women: An Alaskan Legend of Betrayal, Courage and Survival*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Clements, William. 1992 "Tokens of Literary Faculty," In *On the Translation of Native American Literatures*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution.



Native Educator's Conference and BMEEC Merge for 2004

The annual Native Educator's Conference (NEC) and Bilingual-Multicultural Education and Equity Conference (BMEEC) will be held at the Anchorage Sheraton February 10–14, 2004. Registration information and a preliminary event schedule can be viewed at: www.ankn.uaf.edu/bmeec.

NEC will be held concurrently with the BMEEC, with NEC workshops running as a special strand focusing on culturally-responsive strategies for education in Alaska. A strong set of panelists and workshop presenters from throughout Alaska will provide a stimulating look at what schools and communities are doing to implement the *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools*.

The first day of activities will consist of pre-conference work sessions where all are invited to join in. The morning session will focus on finalizing plans for the re-establishment of a statewide Alaska Native Education Association to assist with the efforts of the regional Native educator associations that have been formed over the past ten years. In addition to adopting a set of by-laws and electing officers, discussions will be held regarding potential projects for which the new ANEA

can seek funding, including support for sponsoring regional cultural orientation programs.

The afternoon session will address performance criteria for the establishment of a cross-cultural specialist endorsement that will be presented to the State Board of Education for approval to be implemented in a manner similar to the current reading and special education endorsements associated with a state teaching certificate. We encourage everyone to attend the work sessions and participate in shaping these initiatives.

In the evening of February 10, we will host the annual Honoring Alaska's Indigenous Literature awards ceremony and reception at Josephine's on the top floor of the Sheraton. Everyone is invited to join in this event recognizing people from each region who have contributed to the rich literary traditions of Alaska Natives. ✨

ANKN Curriculum Corner

Forests for the Future

by Dawn Wiseman, dawn@encs.concordia.ca

Forests for the Future is a research project run out of University of British Columbia (UBC) that is focused on integrating local ecological knowledge with natural resource management. Working with members of the Tsimshian people, the Forests of the Future team has developed seven curriculum units.

The key focus of these materials has been inspired by the experiences of students and community members living within the Tsimshian territory of the province of British Columbia. The extension material in this package include curriculum material designed for use in the Province of British Columbia's K–12 education system. In addition, the material can be easily adapted to function as reference resources for community members and other interested resource stakeholders.

Unit 1: Two Ways of Knowing, Traditional Ecological Knowledge Meets Western Science

Unit 2: Traditional Plant Knowledge of the Tsimshian

Unit 3: First Nations Resource Use on the Northwest Coast: Investigations into Geography, Ecology, Knowledge and Resource Management

Unit 4: Tsimshian Involvement in the Forest Sector

Unit 5: A Sense of Place: Regional Identity, Informal Economy and Resource Management

Unit 6: Oona River. The River People: Living and Working in Oona River


Unit 7: Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Ecosystem Sustainability: Guidelines for Natural Resource Management.

Units are in PDF format and require Adobe Acrobat Reader (a free download) for viewing and download.

The units can be found at: <http://www.ecoknow.ca/activities.html>. ✨

You are invited to an education symposium:

Thirty years later: A look back at the Molly Hootch case and forward to the future of rural schooling in Alaska



Save these dates!
Friday & Saturday February 27 & 28, 2004



**Locations: Friday, February 27, 2004 - The Alaska Native Heritage Center
Saturday, February 28, 2004 - The Cuddy Center, UAA**

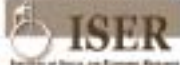

This symposium will explore options for how we can best provide a quality education to Native and non-Native students in rural Alaska. We will examine the current rural education system, revisit the educational and legal issues underpinning the Molly Hootch lawsuit and the Tobeluk v. Lind consent decree, and consider how these legal cases have shaped the legal, social and political context of rural and Native education in Alaska.

For more information, see <http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/ed/policy> or contact:

<p>Diane Hirschberg Educational Leadership Program, College of Education & Institute of Social and Economic Research 786-5413 hirschberg@uaa.alaska.edu</p>	<p>Betty Meyer Alaska Partnership for Teacher Enhancement 786-4307 betmeyer@uaa.alaska.edu</p>
---	--

Sponsored by the UAA College of Education, the College of Education Educational Leadership Program, the Alaska Partnership for Teacher Enhancement and the Institute for Social and Economic Research

Athabaskan Region: Youth Environmental Group Visits Old Minto

by Nicholette Sauro, Alaska Youth For Environmental Action

It was our last night at Old Minto and the last rays of the sunset were still reaching out for us with their orange glow. The whole camp gathered in a circle with Elders and distant relatives teaching us their traditional dances. Beating on plastic bowls with spoons for a beat, everyone joined in clapping and bringing their own style to the circle.

Elders Suzie Charlie and Sarah and Berkman Silas lit up when teaching three guys the Raven dance, where the men stretch out the arms and circle around an object representing food. "Now get it, pick it up," they



Minto Elders show campers how to dance.

said. All three guys at once tried picking it up at the same time with their mouth while still keeping their balance which is almost impossible. The sight would make anyone laugh. The dancing continued late into the night until everyone was exhausted from dancing and laughing so hard.

This event was part of the fourth annual Alaska Youth for Environmental Action (AYEA) Summer Get Together (SGT) held in Fairbanks August

4–10, 2003. AYEA is a non-profit organization run through the National Wildlife Federation. The SGT is a one-week educational field trip held at a different place in Alaska each year. Thirty students from all around

Alaska—urban, rural, Native and non-Native—were invited. This year we had students from Anchorage, Saint Marys, Healy, Juneau, Naknek, Fairbanks, Fort Yukon, Homer, Point Baker, Point Lay, Russian Mission, Kenai and Dillingham. With this broad range of students, you would think we would have trouble getting along but to my surprise,

it was much the opposite. Every student had unique ideas to bring to the table which was important when we were discussing such issues as subsistence and local issues that affected Alaska. Not to mention there was always something to talk about.

At the SGT we picked a topic that we feel is of concern to Alaska that we can focus our energy on for the upcoming year. This year we chose the topic of trophy hunting which affects



A reflective time watching the river.

many people in rural Alaska. Our concern is that a lot of meat is being wasted when hunters simply take the hide or head of an animal and leave all the meat or body to rot. A smaller group of AYEA students meet periodically throughout the year to discuss the issue and steps we have to take. We hope to have it resolved by the end of the school year.

Besides singing and dancing at Old Minto we made mini birch-bark canoes to take home. Elders Susie and Sarah led the ladies into the woods and showed us how to score birch trees and slowly peel away the outer bark in big sheets. To sew the bark into a canoe, we needed the root of spruce trees which we also learned how to identify, dig up, peel and split. It doesn't sound like much, but was a long delicate process. It took me six hours to finish mine and about 30 minutes for Sarah to finish. I found myself out of breath trying to keep up with 76-year-old Susie as we tried to find a tree with thick bark. I was amazed about how healthy and young-looking the Elders were. In the Athabaskan culture, Elders are looked up to and respected for their wisdom. They are taken in by their families instead of being seen as a burden.

Overall, the SGT was an unforgettable, once-in-a-lifetime experience. I have a better understanding of Alaska Native culture and the environment and learned how to be a leader while building confidence and hanging out with an awesome group of people, all at the same time! ✨

Iñupiaq Region: Discovery, Native Science After-School Activities

by Katie Bourdon

Kawerak's Eskimo Heritage Program has recently begun an after-school activity for fourth through sixth graders in Nome called "Discovery" or "Native Science". Our small group has six devoted young scientists who come every Thursday for one hour to learn together. Experiments involve using materials, food or animals that are common in our community such as tomcods, salmon, homemade bread and coffee.

Paula Herzner and Katie Bourdon, EHP staff, have been using Alan Dick's *Village Science* and the Alaska Native Knowledge Network website as resources for class ideas. Barbara Pungowiya, Nome Public Schools Native Programs Director, has provided Native science fair exhibits from her junior high and high school students. These exhibits have served as examples for the young students in the Discovery class.

Elder Esther Bourdon joined the group on the first day to talk about

harvesting salmon and the various ways to preserve it. The students were willing and eager to begin cutting fish for hanging, smoking and salting. An experiment was done on frozen fish, dry fish and fish left out at room temperature for a few days. The youth learned about bacteria, the importance of weather and keeping blow flies away and about surface area.

Recently, the kids did an experiment with coffee. Local Elder Frank Okleasik regularly gets his tea water from Glacier Creek and donated the

creek water for an experiment. The kids made percolated "campfire" coffee using the Glacier Creek water. Filtered coffee was also made using regular tap water. The students went around to 6 different teachers to find out which coffee was preferred. "Old-timers say that campfire coffee is the best" (Alan Dick's *Village Science*). Students hypothesized about the outcome of the experiment; most guessed that three out of six would know the difference. Zachary Bourdon's hypothesis was correct: five out of six preferred the campfire coffee. The students had fun making the coffee, presenting their experiment to the teachers and documenting their results.

Another fun (and in the kids' words, "cool") activity was mummifying tomcods. Paula Herzner's family had fished for the tomcods prior to class so the students were able to gut them in class, weigh them and



Elder Esther Bourdon sitting on the right and Zachary Bourdon cutting fish to hang. Watching from left to right are Maggie Ahkvaluk, Cody Sherman and Rachel Pomrenke in the front.



L to R: Maggie Ahkvaluk, Darla Swann, Emma Outwater; teachers Josie Bourdon, Joel Bachelder, and Jenny Bachelder. Teachers Miss Bourdon and Mrs. Bachelder both picked the campfire coffee.



Darla Swann packs tomcod with baking soda to begin the mummifying process.

document their observations of the fish before the mummifying process. Loads of baking soda filled and encapsulated the tomcods. The following week, the students again weighed and documented their findings. They cleaned out the old baking soda and repacked the tomcods with enthusiasm. After two weeks of dehydrating, the results were mummified tomcods!

We want to share our experience to encourage other communities to have their own after-school Native science class. The resources are available, as long as there are volunteers in your community who are willing to plan and work with the youth.

Please contact Kawerak Eskimo Heritage Program at (907) 443-4386 or at ehp.pd@kawerak.org for more information about having your own Native Science after-school activities. Visit the Alaska Native Knowledge Network at www.ankn.uaf.edu for class ideas and activities and to find Alan Dick's *Village Science*. Go Native Science! ✨

Editors Note: *Village Science* by Alan Dick, is available online at www.ankn.uaf.edu/VS. An interactive version for the computer is also available online or on CD free-of-charge from the ANKN offices.

Learning Styles Grant Summary

by Bob Maguire

The Association of Interior Native Educators (AINE) recently received a three-year grant from the U.S. DOE to fund the establishment of a Learning Styles Center to train teachers in both the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District and the Yukon-Koyukuk School District.

National research on the effect of learning styles-based teaching has demonstrated that this style of teaching can produce a dramatic increase in student achievement and learning. The training of classroom teachers in how to assess individual students learning styles and, more importantly, how to set up classroom learning environments and develop teaching strategies based on learning styles is very exciting for Interior Alaska school districts.

In the AINE Learning Styles grant there will be three "partner teachers" hired to serve as trainers and mentors for other teachers within the two districts. The FNSBSD will have two partner teachers and the YKSD will have one.

During the first year of the grant, AINE will advertise and hire one position within YKSD and one position within the FNSBSD. The timeline for hire is second semester of the 2003-04 school year (January-May). These partner teachers will reside in Fairbanks and receive Learning Styles training as well as observing and working in a model Learning Styles classroom in Fairbanks. They will also be exten-

sively involved in the planning of the 2004 Summer Institute on Learning Styles for teachers.

Beginning with the second year of the grant, the partner teachers will mentor and work with both the YKSD and FNSBSD teaching staffs on site in their various classroom locations.

In addition, the AINE Learning Styles Center grant will contain a curriculum development strand. This will allow for the continuation of culturally-relevant curriculum through the Project AIPA model based on the concept of an Elders academy bringing together certified Native teachers and selected Elders in a camp setting. The certified teachers then develop curriculum units based on their experiences.

The potential for educational change throughout these two Interior school districts through the Learning Styles concept is extremely exciting.

Anyone wishing further information regarding this new grant can contact Sheila Vent, Learning Styles Center project secretary at (907) 459-2141 or by e-mail: vents@doyon.com. ✨

Southeast Region: The Southeast Alaska Tribal Resource Atlas

by *Andy Hope*

The Southeast Alaska Tribal Resource Atlas is an ongoing project that has many components and has been several years in the making. Beginning in January 2004, presentations of the atlas will be made to tribes, Elders, clan and clan house leaders, educators and other interested parties. These presentations will continue throughout the winter and spring of 2003–2004. Each of these respective individuals, groups and organizations will be requested to endorse publication of the atlas for educational purposes. The atlas has been developed in the noble traditions of reciprocity, sharing of knowledge and generosity. Here are some of the components of the atlas:

The Southeast Alaska Native Place Name Project

In 1994 the Southeast Native Subsistence Commission (SENSC) initiated a three-part project to document Native place names in Southeast Alaska. The project has been funded largely through the National Park Service Heritage Preservation Fund grant program, with additional support from Native, state and federal entities and covers all of Southeast Alaska's Native communities from Yakutat to Hydaburg.

The Southeast Alaska Tribal Electronic Mapping Project

This project started in the summer of 2002. The purpose of the project is development of place-based education materials for educators.

Objective: Provide GIS maps and technical support to facilitate access

to the Southeast Alaska Native Placenames Database, including integration with existing data on subsistence use areas, development of regional and community-based maps for use in classrooms, internet mapping and other place-based education activities.

The Angoon, Kake and Sitka Cultural Atlases

The ANKN web site contains the Angoon and Kake cultural atlases. These links require a user name and password that can be obtained at www.ankn.uaf.edu/oral.html. The Sitka Atlas is accessible at: www.sitkatribes.org/placenames

Space precludes a complete acknowledgement of those that contributed to development of these atlases in this article. Such acknowledgements are included in above-referenced links.

The Traditional Tlingit Country and Tribes Map

The Traditional Tlingit Country Map/Poster was the culmination of more than 25 years of research. It was initially published in draft form in 1997. There have been four printings of 1,000 since 1998. I began compiling a list of Tlingit tribes, clans and clan houses in 1972. Initially, this list was part of a manuscript on Tlingit clan and clan house at.óow, or crests. At.óow translates "our belongings or possessions". www.ankn.uaf.edu/TlingitMap/index.html

The Herman Kitka Traditional Ecological Knowledge Series

This is a collection of 13 CD-ROMs originally recorded in winter 1996 at UAS Juneau as part of Anthropology 354, Culture and Ecology, co-taught by Professor Thomas F. Thornton and Herman Kitka, Sr. The CD-ROMs were produced and edited by Arlo Midgett, UAS Media Services and Thomas F. Thornton under a grant from the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative, with additional support from the Sitka Borough School District and the Sitka Tribe of Alaska. The series is cross-indexed category, topic, format, disc number and by clip. www.ankn.uaf.edu/tek.html

The Place-Based Education Resources for Southeast Alaska Educators Web Site

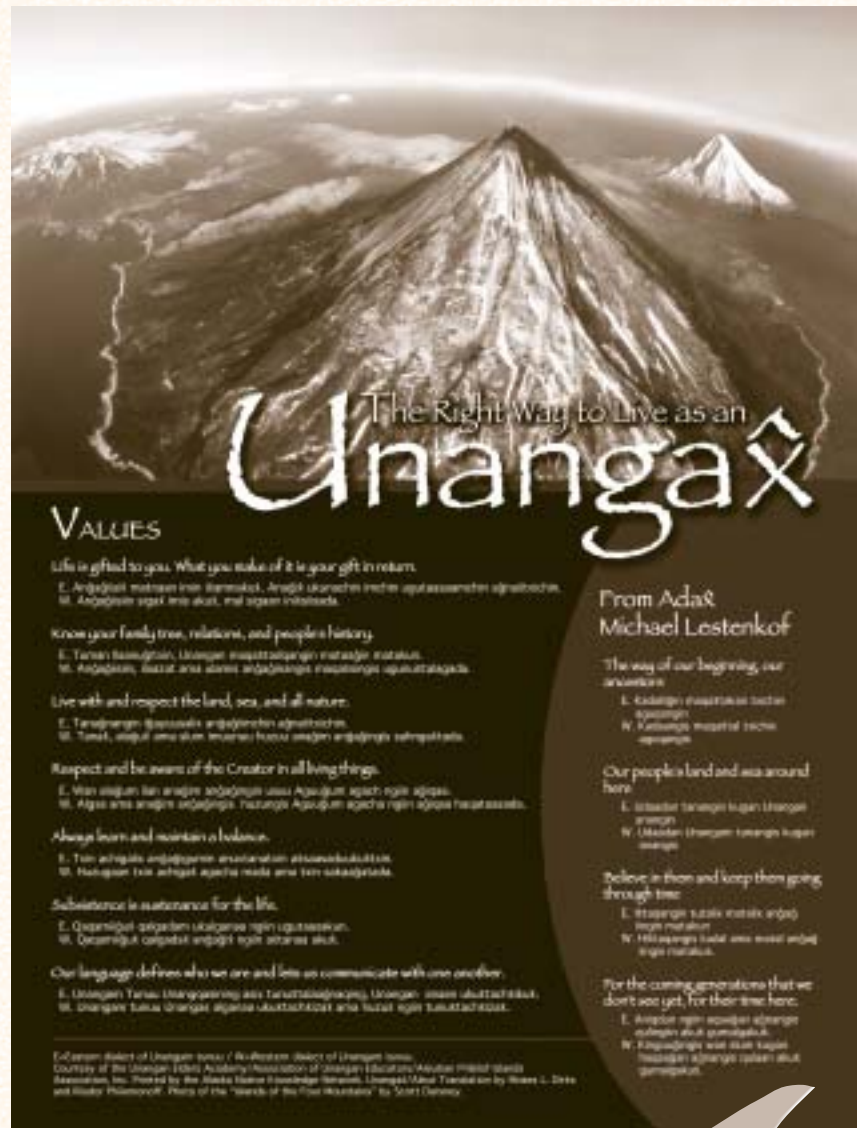
The goal of this project is to provide Alaska educators with access to online and print resources to assist them in creating place-based curriculum for Alaska schools. This site includes the I Am Salmon curriculum project materials. Of particular interest are the "Aakwtaatseen/Alive in the Eddy" materials. These materials will be added to the Place-Based Education Resources web site in January 2004. This material is based on a story told by Deikeenáak'w of the Kookhitta in Sitka in 1904 and

transcribed by John R. Swanton in 1904 and published in *Wanton, Tlingit Myths and Texts* (1909) as Story #99. The story was transliterated into modern orthography by Roby Littlefield and Ethel Makinen. The material was edited by Roby Littlefield, Ethel Makinen, Lydia George, Nora Marks Dauenhauer and Richard Dauenhauer. This site can be found at: <http://pec.jun.alaska-edu:1680/salmon>

The Tlingit Elders Traditional Education Checklist

The Tlingit Elders Traditional Education Checklist was originally published by Tlingit Readers in 1976 in the appendix of *Beginning Tlingit*. *Beginning Tlingit*. It has been reprinted a number of times, most recently in 2003 by Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI). The checklist was originally published in the 1991 SHI edition. Among the contributors to the checklist are the following Tlingit Elders and educators: Jessie Dalton, Katherine Mills, David Kadashan and Henry Davis—T'akdeintaan of Xunaa Kwáan; George Davis—Deisheetaan of Xutsnoowú Kwáan; Forrest DeWitt—L'eeneidí of Aak'w Kwáan; Walter "Babe" Williams—Chookaneidí of Xunaa Kwáan; Walter Soboleff—L'eeneidí of Xutsnoowú Kwáan and Austin Hammond—Lukaax.ádi of Jilkoot Kwáan. The draft reflects feedback and input received from Tlingit Elders. It is difficult or impossible to know everything on the list. Probably no single Elder knew all of it. The checklist was endorsed by the Southeast Alaska Tribal College Elders Council in October 2001 and by the SEATC Board of Trustees in the spring of 2002. The checklist will be published in poster form in a joint venture with SEATC Elders and Trustees and the Southeast Alaska Native Educator Association in January 2004. ✕

Unangaġ Region Values poster now available from the ANKN offices!



Actual poster is 12" x 16", full color.



Unangaĭ Language and Culture

by Qagidax Moses L. Dirks, Unangan Language and Culture Teacher, Unalaska City School District.

The Unangan Language and Culture students in Unalaska have been working on reproducing traditional Unangan artifacts. As part of the program the students had the opportunity to do hands-on type of projects. One of the first projects the students worked on was carving of an Aleut mask. All mask carvings were based on what was found in historical texts and pictures. Once the students started carving they did a good job in portraying what an Unangan mask might look like. Here are some of the students' work and what they had to say:



Maqulaasiġulux

by Garrett Pletnikoff

This mask is Maqulaasiġulux which means "no reason to be an idol." It is made out of basswood, which isn't traditional material. If it were a traditional mask it would have different facial expressions, it would have a hat and it would not have such white teeth. Way back, a long time ago, the Unangan would use driftwood such as yellow cedar. They used this wood because it has less knots so it is a lot easier to work with. The Unangan used stone adzes and bones to make the masks, well, a thousand years ago the Unangan did this.

The paint I used was a red ochre and flat white. The red ochre was used in the time of war so it is basically war-paint, but I just got a can of red paint; do you know how they got red a thousand years ago? First they would collect ochre rocks and they would grind the red ochre into fine dust, and then oil was mixed and red paint was made. I used the white paint for the teeth. I also have an untraditional "labret," which means he is a man. The bigger the labret the higher the person's social-class in the village.



Chugudaĭ

by Jon Nichols

After I bent my hat I then painted it. I got most of my designs for my hat from *Glory Remembered*, a book on the wooden headgear of Alaska sea hunters. The main Aleut traditional design on my hat is a design created by Andrew Gronholdt. The sea lion whiskers tied to the top of the visor represented how successful the hunter was, and the longer the whiskers the better the hunter. To paint the hat, I used acrylic paint so that it would last a long time. I used only traditional Aleut colors to keep it in line with the culture. The colors are turquoise, black, and red ochre. After all the painting was done I then layered the hat with a clear varnish to preserve it even longer and make the paintings on it stand out more. Then I tied duck feathers to the sea lion whiskers with sinew for decoration and also to show that the person who wore it was a duck hunter.



Ayagam Tayaġuu

by Alberto Oropeza

This mask is named Ayagam Tayaġuu, which means, ladies man in Unangax. The mask is made out of basswood. All of the decorations are painted on with acrylic paint and have some sort of meaning. For example, on the Ayagam Tayaġuu mask there is an item on the chin called the iqluĭ, which determined where an Unangaĭ came from and what their status was in the village. Also, the colors used to paint this mask are very common in other things, like bent wood hats, spears and spear throwers.

Masks were used by the Unangan for ceremonial and feasting purposes, but after Christianity was introduced by the Russian Orthodox church priests, they did not want the Unangan to have masks because they believed that they attracted evil or bad things. The Unangan decided that masks were bad based on the newly formed religion, and that is when masks were abolished.

Presently masks are being brought back by the Unangan people and replicas are being made of what we think they may have looked like in the past, but that is a long ways to the real intent of the Unangan Sagimaaqluu. ✨

Yup'ik Region: Cultural Accuracy in Curriculum

by Esther A. Ilutsik

It dawned on me when I was listening to the frustrations of Elder Annie Blue of Togiak as she was reacting to a non-Native authors' account of some of the beliefs of the Yup'ik people that there is this illusion of a common language. Before writing this "historical fiction," the non-Native author had done extensive research of ethnographic reports by anthropologists who came into the Yup'ik region and documented their observations and findings in the 1890s. Simply put, it was the ignorance and ethnocentric attitudes that intervened as researchers strove ". . . to get a perspective beyond one's own nation, to see some sort of whole instead of the defensive little patch offered by one's own culture, literature and history" (from *Changing Traditions in Northern Ethnography*, by Julie Cruikshank, 1994).

Apparently, the complications of language did not enter the minds of those academics whose goal it was to publish works that were only understood from the Western perspective.

Language in itself is not only for communication, but to organize one's thinking, to direct reason and analyze nature (from *Language, Experience and Illusion*, by Prof. K.V.K. Nehru). I

have been trying to understand how those ethnographers in the late 1800s were able to document traditional Yup'ik knowledge and have it recorded and published within such a short time frame, which seems like such an unrealistic endeavor, especially if one understands how hard it is to translate humor from the Yup'ik context into the Western context. The humor can easily be lost in translation because it is retained

within the context of the culture, where "the fact of the matter is that the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group" (from *Language, Experience and Illusion*, by Prof. K.V.K. Nehru, who cites Whorf and his teacher Edward Sapir.) Likewise, we have the same problem with the

It is important therefore, that Native authors and educators take a more active role in documenting traditional knowledge and helping to prepare curriculum materials

historical context of the Western educational system (since the late 1800s) and the on-going efforts at "educating" the indigenous people utilizing the English language, even though the results have continued to disappoint those who utilize assessment tools that are generic to the Western-based culture.

So I can begin to understand the frustrations that Elder Annie Blue shared as we reviewed examples of childrens' literature, much of it written by non-Natives. The information presented was too often an unrealistic and inaccurate portrayal of the Yup'ik people. The same problem continues today with professional educators who are asked to write curriculum addressing the cultural context. It is important therefore, that Native authors and educators take a more active role in documenting traditional knowledge and helping to prepare curriculum materials that reflect a strong understanding of cultural ties and most importantly the language and local knowledge base. ✨



Nita Reardon and Esther Ilutsik at the the first meeting of the Yup'ik Literary Review Board held Dillingham October 24-27, 2003

Inupiaq Region: Annie Blue, Elicarai—Her Teachings

by Yaayuk Alvanna

Always teaching
Always learning
An Elder speaks
While listeners
observe intently
Learning from brain to heart

Lessons given
Lessons learned
Through oral speech
Knowledge passed
Knowledge gained
Through listening carefully

Stories told
Stories hold
Such treasured wisdom
That can only be passed
From an Elder to younger ones
In the Native language

Quiet settles as she speaks
A world created
In the minds
Of each individual
Always learning
Always teaching

—yaayuk alvanna



Elder Annie Blue sitting with John Mark, a retired Yup'ik principal from the village of Quinhagak.

Alaska RSI Regional Contacts

Regional Coordinators:

Andy Hope—Southeast
fnah@uaf.edu

Teri Schneider, Olga Pestrikoff,
Moses Dirks—Alutiiq/Unanga
tschneider@kodiak.k12.ak.us

John Angaiak—Yup'ik/Cup'ik
john_angaiak@avcp.org

Katie Bourdon, Iñupiaq Region
ehp.pd@kawerak.org

Athabaskan Region
pending at TCC

Lead Teachers:

Angela Lunda—Southeast
lundag@gci.net

Teri Schneider/Olga Pestrikoff/
Moses Dirks—Alutiiq/Unanga
tschneider@kodiak.k12.ak.us

Esther Ilutsik—Yup'ik/Cup'ik
fnei@uaf.edu

Bernadette Yaayuk Alvanna-
Stimpfle—Iñupiaq
yalvanna@netscape.net

Linda Green—Interior/Athabaskan
linda@mail.ankn.uaf.edu

University of Alaska Fairbanks
Alaska Native Knowledge Network/Alaska RSI
PO Box 756730
Fairbanks AK 99775-6730

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Fairbanks AK
Permit No. 2

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED