



Iñupiat Weather Expertise

Grades:

5th – 7th

Duration:

1 week of class time.

1 hour of class time a day.

If the class can do activity 2, half an hour a day for a month of classtime is needed.

Objectives:

The objective of this lesson is for students to learn some weather related traditional knowledge by inviting an elder into the classroom, and to document this knowledge. Also, the students are to prepare a weather forecast and present it as if they were on a television news program. The forecast must be given partly in the Iñupiat language.

Alaska State Content Standards:

English/Language Arts: A-1, A-3, A-4, A-6, C-1, C-2, C-3, C-4, C-5, E-1, E-4

World Languages: A-1, A-2, A-4, B-4, B-6, C-4

Materials:

Iñupiat dictionary/vocabulary books

Poster board, markers, etc...

Introduction:

Traditionally, Iñupiat people have learned a vast amount on local weather on the North Slope of Alaska. This knowledge came from observing the environment and passing down information to the next generation. Understanding the weather is essential when out hunting or traveling in the Arctic. Today many people get information on the weather from their local television, radio station, or from the Internet. In Activity 1, students will learn some traditional ways of predicting the weather from one of their Elders. Activity 2 will have students spend the next month or more trying to put to use what methods of weather predicting they have learned. In Activity 3, students play the part of an Iñupiat-speaking weather forecaster on the local television station. This activity is to increase Iñupiat language speaking and listening skills, and Iñupiat vocabulary on the weather.

Activity 1:

How did people predict the weather before they could get daily weather reports on the television, radio and Internet? The class will invite a local elder or elders to the classroom to teach about weather predicting, types of local weather, and weather safety. The class will be reminded to be respectful and not to speak while the visiting elders are speaking. Two students will be in charge of offering and serving the elders tea and juice. Two other students will be in charge of video-taping the speaking elders. All the rest of the students will listen quietly and take notes on what the elders tell them.

When each elder is done speaking, the students will take turns asking the elder questions. Teachers should work with the students in advance in creating their questions. Each student should ask one question. Questions should revolve around local weather, cloud types, predicting the weather, asking if the elder knows a story that relates to weather, what the weather was like when they were a child, if different winds bring different weather, storms, summer vs. winter weather, etc.

Students will document this elder knowledge by creating a large poster with words, photos, and drawings showing the Elder knowledge they have learned about weather. This poster will be hung up in the hallway for all the other students to view (Other methods of documenting may be used, such as creating a webpage, a booklet, or an edited video).

Activity 2:

Each morning the students will go outside and use the elder knowledge they have gained in predicting the weather. Students will keep a weather journal of the daily conditions, paying special attention to what they have learned. They students will try to predict the upcoming weather daily and see if their predictions come true! Keep a weather journal for as long as 2 weeks or even for the rest of the school year.

Activity 3:

The class will be divided into pairs or groups of 3. Each group must prepare a weather forecast for their town. Collect local weather reports and forecasts from the newspaper, the internet, or the local television station. The students will take notes on:

- Temperatures, the highs and lows
- Cloud cover
- Humidity
- Sunrise and sunset times if applicable
- Wind speed and direction
- Any other information

The students will be broken into groups of 2 and will write and present a weather report. The weather report must include:

1. A map - poster board size map using weather symbols.
2. A written script - this will be turned in and graded. The written script needs to be written in both English and as much Inupiat as possible. Attached is a list of Inupiat weather vocabulary the students may use
3. An oral presentation to the class. Try to give as much of the weather report in the Inupiat language as possible!

Students are encouraged to be creative! Have fun with this!

The following should be included in the weather report:

1. Begin your presentation by introducing yourselves. You may include a small conversation with your partner(s). Remember, you are weather forecasters on television. Don't forget to play the part!
2. Today's weather - including Highs/lows, the record high/low for this date, sunrise/sunset times if applicable, weather conditions such as snow or clear, ice conditions etc.
3. Tomorrow's weather- highs/lows, etc.

Each student should speak in Inupiat for at least 1 minutes.
The total time for each forecast will be about 5 minutes.

It may be helpful for the students to watch a couple of television weather reports to get an idea about what is expected.

Other Related Classroom Activities:

1. Invite an Elder into your classroom to hear the weather reports.
2. Discuss with the students the importance of Elder/local knowledge on the weather. How did people survive back before there were modern conveniences?

Assessment:

Activity 1: Students are graded on their respect, their listening skills, and their participation when asking questions.

Activity 2: Students are graded on keeping the weather journal daily and taking good weather notes.

Activity 3: Students are graded on their script, map, and their oral presentation.

1. The script will be graded on correct use of vocabulary, and spelling.
2. The weather map will be graded according to detail and creativeness.
3. The oral presentation will be graded on following directions, participation, and creativeness. Elders should be invited into the classroom to hear the weather reports as a way of assessing the students of how well they did.

Teachers: Read this interesting article by Paul Ongtooguk called [Aspects of Traditional Iñupiat Education](http://www.alaskool.org/native_ed/Pauls_doc2.htm): http://www.alaskool.org/native_ed/Pauls_doc2.htm