Integrating culturally responsive place-based content with language skills development for curriculum enrichment

CULTURAL SPECIALISTS
David Katzeek
Linda Belarde
Donald Gregory
Rosita Worl

UNIT DEVELOPMENT
Jim MacDiarmid

PROOFING & PAGE DESIGN
Kathy Dye

COVER DESIGN
Crystal Worl

COVER ART
Celeste Worl

CURRICULUM ASSISTANT
Michael Obert

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# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Book</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>BOOK 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIT 1</td>
<td>A–1: Science as Inquiry Process</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>BOOK 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIT 2</td>
<td>A–1: Science as Inquiry Process</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>BOOK 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIT 3</td>
<td>B–1: Concepts of Physical Science</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>BOOK 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIT 4</td>
<td>B–1: Concepts of Physical Science</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>BOOK 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIT 5</td>
<td>C–1: Concepts of Life Science</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>BOOK 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIT 6</td>
<td>C–1: Concepts of Life Science</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>BOOK 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIT 7</td>
<td>D–1: Concepts of Earth Science</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>BOOK 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIT 8</td>
<td>D–1: Concepts of Earth Science</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>BOOK 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIT 9</td>
<td>E–1: Science and Technology; F–1: Cultural, Social, Personal Perspectives of Science; G–1: History of Science</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>BOOK 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIT 10</td>
<td>Raven and the King Salmon</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>BOOK 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OVER THE YEARS, much has been written about the successes and failures of students in schools. There is no end to the solutions offered, particularly for those students who are struggling with academics. For example, there have been efforts to bring local cultures into the classroom, thus providing the students with familiar points of departure for learning.

While the inclusion of Native concepts, values, and traditions into a curriculum provide a valuable foundation for self-identity and cultural pride, they may not, on their own, fully address improved academic achievement.

Through science lessons, students are exposed to new information and to the key vocabulary that represents that information. While the students may acquire, through various processes, the scientific information, the vocabulary is often left at an exposure level and not internalized by the students. Over time, this leads to language delay that impacts negatively on a student’s ongoing achievement.

Due to weak language bases, many Native Alaskan high school students struggle with texts that are beyond their comprehension levels and writing assignments that call for language they do not have.

This program is designed to meet the academic realities faced by high school students every day, using a developmental process that integrates culture with skills development.

To this end, each key vocabulary word, in science, is viewed as a concept. The words are introduced concretely, using place-based information and contexts. Whenever possible, the concept is viewed through the Native heritage cultural perspectives. Using this approach, the students have the opportunity to acquire new information in manageable chunks, the sum total of which represents the body of information to be learned in the science program.

When the key vocabulary/concepts have been introduced, the students are then taken through a sequence of listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities designed to instill the vocabulary into their long-term memories.

This is the schema for the Developmental Language Process:
Finally, at the end of each unit, the students will participate in enrichment activities based on recognized and research-based best practices. By this time, the science information and vocabulary will be familiar, adding to the students’ feelings of confidence and success. These activities will include place-based and heritage culture perspectives of the information learned.

This approach is radically different from current practices in most science classes. Historically, little or no formal vocabulary development takes place. It is assumed that the vocabulary is being internalized during the learning process, which is most often an erroneous assumption.

Increasing the language bases of the students will lead to improved comprehension in listening and reading, and higher levels of production in creative speaking and writing.

This, coupled with the place-based and culturally-responsive content, will provide the students with the foundations necessary for ongoing confidence and achievement.
UNIT 1

A–1: Science as Inquiry Process
KEY VOCABULARY
Culturally Responsive & Place-Based Introduction of Science Vocabulary

**PREDICT**

**Place-Based Perspective**
Show the students the picture of the fortune cookies from page 63.* Have them describe the purpose of the cookies (i.e., to tell one’s fortune). Use this to introduce “predict” to the students. Have the students cite other common predictions, such as weather, sports, and so on.

* Use a real fortune cookie, if available.

**Heritage Cultural Perspective**
Native people of Southeast Alaska used many natural phenomena to predict the future. For example, if thunder occurred in the middle of the winter, Native people would predict a mild winter. They would predict rain or snow, if a ring appeared around the moon.

**OBSERVE**

**Place-Based Perspective**
Show the students a pair of binoculars and a magnifying glass. Have them tell the use of each—lead this into observing different things. Have the students suggest other methods of observing, such as telescopes and microscopes.

**Heritage Cultural Perspective**
Native people made observations of the natural world that played vital roles in everyday life in Southeast Alaska. For example, Natives observed the migratory habits of fish and birds, the cycle of tides, and weather. Also, it was common for people to observe the habits of animals and the body language of other people.

**DESCRIBE**

**Place-Based Perspective**
Mount the picture from page 65 on the board. Use words to describe the picture (e.g., sour, heavy, light, etc.). The students must identify each picture by its descriptor. Continue until all of the pictures have been described and identified.

**Heritage Cultural Perspective**
Traditional stories describe in detail historical accounts of clan history. This includes names of people, places, things, and belongings. Personal introductions include names, clans, houses, and descriptions of lineage—from fathers, to grandfathers, to great grandfathers, to great great grandfathers.
Culturally Responsive & Place-Based
Introduction of Science Vocabulary

CLASSIFY

**Place-Based Perspective**
Mix colored clothes and white clothes together. Tell the students that you are going to do your laundry and have them suggest what you need to do first. Lead the students to suggest that the clothes have to be sorted or classified. Cite examples of how things can be classified by type, color, size, taste, feel, and so on.

**Heritage Cultural Perspective**
The clan system in Southeast Alaska is a process of classification. People are grouped by their moieties, clans, communities, and houses.

Salmon are classified by their species and habitats.

GENERALIZE

**Place-Based Perspective**
Present the students with chocolate bars, pop, sugar, and other sweet items. Have the students suggest what might happen to a person who eats too many sweets. Have them generalize that the sweets might cause bad teeth, excess weight, and complexion problems.

**Heritage Cultural Perspective**
Native people would generalize that a poor berry season would lead to more aggressive behavior in bears. They would also generalize that if the winter were cold and the snowfall did not insulate the spawning waters, many salmon fry and fingerlings would perish.

INFER

**Place-Based Perspective**
Show the students the picture depicting “sad” from page 67. Have the students suggest why the fireman might be sad. Lead the students to realize that they are guessing as to the causes of his sadness. Introduce this as inferring based on some information provided. Cite other examples that may cause one to infer.

**Heritage Cultural Perspective**
Native people used stories to cause people to infer a variety of information. For example, in Raven and the Salmon Box, it is implied that the Raven brought the salmon to the streams to spawn. This provides the reader with the opportunity to infer that Raven provided food for the people.
Culturally Responsive & Place-Based
Introduction of Science Vocabulary

COMMUNICATE

Place-Based Perspective
Show the students the picture from page 69 and a cell phone. Have the students tell how the two are the same—they both represent forms of communication. You may wish to introduce the SOS signal in Morse Code as ...---.... Have the students name other forms of communication used today.

Heritage Cultural Perspective
Native people use totem poles, crests, house posts and screens, ceremonial hats, and other regalia to communicate family histories and origins. When Native people communicate through traditional oratory, recognition and acknowledgement of the opposite moiety is customary.

INQUIRE

Place-Based Perspective
Show the students the picture from page 71 that represents a house for sale. Have the students suggest what information people should have before they buy a house. Use this to introduce “inquire”. Have the students tell of other situations that may cause people to inquire about some form of information.

Heritage Cultural Perspective
Historically, when visitors approached a Native village by boat or canoe, the clan leader stood on the shore and inquired who they were and where they came from.
LESSONS
Science Language for Success—Lesson 1

LISTENING

Use the Mini Pictures activity page from the Student Support Materials. Have the students cut out the pictures. Say the key words and the students show the pictures.

Let’s Move
Identify an appropriate body movement for each vocabulary word. This may involve movements of hands, arms, legs, etc. Practice the body movements with the students. When the students are able to perform the body movements well, say a vocabulary word. The students should respond with the appropriate body movement. You may wish to say the vocabulary words in a running story. When a vocabulary word is heard, the students should perform the appropriate body movement. Repeat, until the students have responded to each word a number of times.

What’s the Answer?
Before the activity begins, develop questions related to the concept being studied. For each question, prepare three answers—only one of which in each set is correct for the question asked. Ask the students the question and then read the three answers to them. The students should show you (using their fingers or prepared number cards) which answer is correct for the question asked. Repeat this process with other questions and answers.

SPEAKING

Right or Wrong?
Mount the vocabulary pictures on the board. Point to one of the pictures and say its vocabulary word. The students should repeat the vocabulary word for that picture. However, when you point to a picture and say an incorrect vocabulary word for it, the students should remain silent. Repeat this process until the students have responded a number of times to the different vocabulary pictures.

Hand Tag
Group the students in a circle on the floor. Have the students place their hands on the floor, palms down. Stand in the center of the circle with the vocabulary picture and a flashlight. The object of the activity is to attempt to tag a student’s hand or hands with the light of the flashlight. The students must pull their hands from the circle when they think they are about to be tagged. When you eventually tag a student’s hand or hands, he/she must then say a complete sentence using the word for a vocabulary picture that you show. Repeat this process until many students have responded.
**Science Language for Success—Lesson 2**

**READING**
*Introduce the science sight words to the students—match the sight words with the vocabulary pictures. The sight words are included in the Student Support Materials, attached to these lesson plans.*

**Sight Word Bingo**
Before the activity begins, prepare a page that contains the sight words. Provide each student with a copy of the page. The students should cut out the sight words. When the students have cut out their sight words, each student should lay all of the sight words, but one, face down on his/her desk. Show a vocabulary picture. Any student or students who have the sight word for that picture face-up on their desks should show the sight word to you. Then, those sight words should be placed to the side and other sight words turned over in their place. Continue in this way until a student or students have no sight words left on their desks.

**Letter Encode**
Give each student five copies of a page that contains the letters of the alphabet. The students should cut all of the letters out. Mount one of the science pictures on the board. The students must use the cut out letters to spell the word. Review the students’ work. Repeat, until all of the words have been spelled in this way. The students should keep their letters in individual envelopes for use in other units.

**Student Support Materials**
Have the students work on the activity pages from the Student Support Materials for this Unit.

**WRITING**
**Watch Your Half**
Prepare a photocopy of each of the vocabulary pictures. Cut the photocopied pictures in half. Keep the picture halves in separate piles. Group the students into two teams. Give all of the picture halves from one pile to the players in Team One. Give the picture halves from the other pile to the players in Team Two. Say a vocabulary word. When you say “Go,” the student from each team who has the picture half for the vocabulary word you said should rush to the board and write the word on the board. The first player to do this correctly wins the round. Repeat until all players have participated. This activity may be played more than once by collecting, mixing, and redistributing the picture halves to the two teams.
Sentence Completion
Write a number of sentence halves on individual sentence strips. These should include both the beginning and ending halves of sentences. Mount the sentence halves on the board and number each one. Provide the students with writing paper and pencils/pens. Each student should then complete ONE of the sentence halves in his/her own words, writing his/her part of the sentence on the sheet of paper. When the students have completed their sentence halves, have a student read ONLY the sentence half he/she wrote. The other students must then attempt to identify the “other half” of the sentence on the board (by its number). Repeat until all of the students have shared their sentence halves in this way.

Student Support Materials
Have the students work on the activity pages from the Student Support Materials for this Unit.
VOCABULARY
PICTURES
CLASSIFY
COMMUNICATE
DESCRIBE
GENERALIZE
INQUIRE
OBSERVE
PREDICT
STUDENT SUPPORT MATERIALS

Listening • Mini Pictures
Listening: Mini Pictures

Prepare a copy of these pages for each student. The students should cut out the pictures and lay them on the floor or desk. Say the key words and the students should show you the pictures. Repeat a number of times. This activity can also be done with pairs of students to determine who is the fastest player.
Listening: Mini Pictures
STUDENT SUPPORT MATERIALS

Listening Comprehension
Listening Comprehension

Read the following sentences to the students. The students should circle “true” or “false” for each of the sentences. Review the students’ work.

1. The weatherman predicts how much gasoline will cost during a rain storm.  
   True  
   False

2. Binoculars can be used by a hunter to observe the animals that are being hunted.  
   True  
   False

3. Phone books describe the steps necessary to make different food items from different restaurants.  
   True  
   False

4. Things can be classified only by their color and size.  
   True  
   False

5. We can generalize things based on information that we hear.  
   True  
   False

6. When we infer, we are measuring the things we need to make a cake.  
   True  
   False

7. E-mails are one way we can communicate with other people.  
   True  
   False

8. To inquire about something means to ask questions to get information.  
   True  
   False
STUDENT SUPPORT MATERIALS

Sight Words
describe
observe
predict
inquire
communicate
STUDENT SUPPORT MATERIALS

Basic Reading  •  Sight Recognition
Sight Words Activity Page

Have the students highlight or circle the words in this word find. Words appear horizontally.

describe
generalize
classify

observe
inquire
communicate

infer
predict

e e o e i p i m g e n e r a l i i n
s s s r i c o m m u n i c a t e q f
e e i r e m i n q u i u r r b v a n
s n c l a s s i f y c n e c n e f i
e u e i a e b e z c i l e t q u i p
f m c o m m u n i c m e e m n s e e
l a d e s c r i a s i i a o d n d i
i c e g e n e r a l i z e o s n e c
c e u d e s c r i b e d c e n i c n
r i m r e l i d t g s s i r r e n d
r i e t d r n e i i d i n f e r s q
b e z a e i n q u i r e o i u m a c
C m a c p r e d i c t l i c n l l t
i r e e c q r i e i i n f p i v e e
i t u f i s m i b o s s e r v e o q
E e e t g i p r e d i e i s i i i s
E a i f b r m o b s e r v e i y e e
N c a v c l a s s i f i c o g n c e
L l s e m m r y m r e e i t e d e s
R v i e e r d e c e f a e n e r s e
Sight Words Activity Page

Have the students cut out the key words and glue them at the bottom of their pictures.

communicate  observe  describe  classify
predict  generalize  inquire  infer
Sight Words Activity Page

Have the students print the key words from this unit horizontally in the boxes (each word may be written more than once). They should then fill in all other boxes with any letters. Have the students exchange pages. The students should then circle the words on the page.
STUDENT SUPPORT MATERIALS

Basic Reading  •  Encoding
Encoding Activity Page

Have the students cut out and encode the syllables of the words, OR number the syllables in their correct sequence.

er ize gen al

si clas fy

mu cate com ni
STUDENT SUPPORT MATERIALS

Reading Comprehension
Reading Comprehension Activity Page

Have the students read the text and then select the correct answer for it. They should fill in the appropriate bullet beside the answer of their choice.

1. What is it called when we try to think what will happen at the end of a movie?
   - classifying
   - predicting
   - multiplying
   - inquiring

2. When we inquire, what are we doing?
   - We are cooking.
   - We are looking for information.
   - We are grouping things by color.
   - We are watching a movie.

3. When we observe something, what are we doing?
   - We are sleeping.
   - We are cooking with brown sugar.
   - We are watching something.
   - We are eating a food from another country.

4. Which of these would go with communicate?
   - a rock
   - a black belt
   - sleeping during the day
   - a cell phone

5. When we infer, we are
   - using information to catch big fish.
   - using information to send an e-mail.
   - using information to cook a meal.
   - using information to decide something.
6 When we describe something, we
- tell something about it.
- tell someone to have a big supper.
- tell a person to go home.
- tell someone to go to bed.

7 When we decide that too much sugar is bad for us, we are
- reading.
- classifying.
- inquiring.
- generalizing.

8 When we put the knives, forks, and spoons in their own trays, we are
- inferring.
- classifying.
- communicating.
- predicting.
Reading Comprehension Activity Page

Have the students write the letters for sentence halves that match.

1. We can try to predict _______
2. We can observe _______
3. We can describe _______
4. When we sort things by how they taste, _______
5. When we make a decision from what we know, _______
6. When we infer something, _______
7. People can communicate _______
8. When we buy a new house, _______

A. how something looks.
B. we are generalizing.
C. we are guessing information.
D. we inquire about how much it costs.
E. in many different ways.
F. the weather.
G. we are classifying.
H. plants and animals around us.

1→__________  2→__________  3→__________  4→__________

5→__________  6→__________  7→__________  8→__________
**Reading Comprehension Activity Page**

Have the students cut out the words and glue them under their definitions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>to come to a conclusion</th>
<th>to think what will happen next</th>
<th>to tell how something looks, feels, tastes, and so on</th>
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<tr>
<td>to contact other people</td>
<td>to group things</td>
<td>to imagine some information</td>
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<tr>
<td>to watch something</td>
<td>to ask about something</td>
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- communicate
- observe
- describe
- classify
- predict
- generalize
- inquire
- infer
STUDENT SUPPORT MATERIALS

Basic Writing
Basic Writing Activity Page

Have the students write in the missing letters.

pre______________

ob______________e

des______________e

cl______________y

gen______________e

in______________

com______________te

inq______________
Basic Writing Activity Page

Have the students write the word for each picture.

1. [Image of food]
2. [Image of two people talking]
3. [Image of desert landscape]
4. [Image of man and woman]
5. [Image of factory with smoke]
6. [Image of telescope]
7. [Image of fortune cookies]
8. [Image of classroom setting]
STUDENT SUPPORT MATERIALS

Creative Writing
Have the students write sentences of their own, using the key words from this unit. When the students’ sentences are finished, have them take turns reading their sentences orally. The students should say “Blank” for the key words; the other students must name the “missing” words. You may wish to have the students write the “definitions” for the key words.

PREDICT

_____________________________________________________________

OBSERVE

_____________________________________________________________

DESCRIBE

_____________________________________________________________

CLASSIFY

_____________________________________________________________

GENERALIZE

_____________________________________________________________

INFER

_____________________________________________________________

COMMUNICATE

_____________________________________________________________

INQUIRE

_____________________________________________________________
Creative Writing Activity Page

Have the students write sentences of their own, based on the picture below. When finished, have each student read his/her sentences to the others.

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
UNIT ASSESSMENT

A–1: Science as Inquiry Process
Unit Assessment

Provide each student with a copy of the students’ pages. Read the following instructions aloud. The students should answer the questions on their copies of the assessment.

BASIC LISTENING

Turn to pages 1–2 in your test. Look at the pictures in the boxes.

1. Write the number 1 on top of the picture for PREDICT.
2. Write the number 2 on top of the picture for OBSERVE.
3. Write the number 3 on top of the picture for DESCRIBE.
4. Write the number 4 on top of the picture for CLASSIFY.
5. Write the number 5 on top of the picture for GENERALIZE.
6. Write the number 6 on top of the picture for INFERENCE.
7. Write the number 7 on top of the picture for COMMUNICATE.
8. Write the number 8 on top of the picture for INQUIRE.

LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Turn to page 3 in your test. Listen to the sentences I say. Circle “T” for true and “F” for false sentences.”

1. When we predict, we are inferring.
2. We observe during the night when we are asleep.
3. We can describe things by how they feel.
4. We usually classify the clothes before we wash them.
5. We generalize when we have no information.
6. We can infer things from information we get.
7. We can use language to communicate with other people.
8. A person might inquire about something to get information.
Unit Assessment

Provide each student with a copy of the students’ pages. Read the following instructions aloud. The students should answer the questions on their copies of the assessment.

SIGHT RECOGNITION
Turn to page 4 in your test. Look at the pictures in the boxes. Circle the word for each picture.

DECODING/ENCODING
Turn to page 5 in your test. Look at the word parts in the boxes. Circle the other half or part of each word.

READING COMPREHENSION
Turn to page 6 in your test. Read the sentence part and fill in the bullet for the correct sentence ending.

BASIC WRITING
Turn to page 7 in your test. Look at the pictures in the boxes. Write the word for each picture.

CREATIVE WRITING
Turn to page 8 in your test. Write a sentence of your own, using each word.
Teacher: To get a percentage for this student's assessment, divide the total number of questions correct by the total number of questions, then multiply this answer by 100 to determine the percentage of questions answered correctly.
SCIENCE PROGRAM

Unit Assessment Student Pages
Grade 6  ●  Unit 1 (A–1)
Theme: Science as Inquiry Process

Date:____________  Student’s Name:____________________________

Number Correct:___________  Percent Correct:____________
1. T   F
2. T   F
3. T   F
4. T   F
5. T   F
6. T   F
7. T   F
8. T   F
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<td>quiire</td>
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<td>cat</td>
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</table>
1. We can predict
   - the end of a story.
   - how old we are.
   - our names

2. We observe when
   - we close our eyes.
   - we watch something.
   - we go to sleep.

3. We can describe a thing
   - only by its weight.
   - only by what we see.
   - in many different ways.

4. We classify things when we
   - throw them out.
   - buy them.
   - group them.

5. We can generalize
   - only what we see.
   - many different things.
   - when we sleep.

6. When we infer, we are
   - imagining.
   - eating.
   - running.

7. Which of these is used to communicate?
   - a chair.
   - a computer.
   - knives, forks, and spoons.

8. When we inquire about something, we are
   - asking about it.
   - eating it.
   - giving it away.
PREDICT

_____________________________________________________________

OBSERVE

_____________________________________________________________

DESCRIBE

_____________________________________________________________

CLASSIFY

_____________________________________________________________

GENERALIZE

_____________________________________________________________

INFER

_____________________________________________________________

COMMUNICATE

_____________________________________________________________

INQUIRE

_____________________________________________________________