

Mni Sota Maḵoḵe: The Dakota Homelands Curriculum Project Overview

6th Grade Social Studies/Minnesota Studies Teachers and Indian Education Staff

Dakota Wicoḵan and Partners

Founded in 2002, Dakota Wicoḵan is a Native non-profit organization that seeks to revitalize the Dakota language and lifeways in Minnesota. Located in Morton, Minnesota, Dakota Wicoḵan works across tribal, state, and political boundaries. *Mni Sota Maḵoḵe: The Dakota Homelands* curriculum was created to preserve and transmit the rich historical and cultural heritage of Minnesota's Dakota people to the next generation of leaders in our state—our youth. This project has received financial support from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund, the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, the Honor the Earth Foundation, the Collaborative Research Center for American Indian Health, and the Indian Land Tenure Foundation. Grant support allows Dakota Wicoḵan to share this curriculum, and provide professional development and teacher support for three cohorts of teachers (Fall 2016, Spring 2017 and Fall 2017).

Project Overview

Teachers representing eleven school districts across Minnesota have already joined this project through our Cohorts 1 and 2 in Fall 2016 and Spring 2017. We are currently recruiting for our final cohort (Cohort 3) for Fall 2017. This curriculum is a 10-lesson, standards-based unit that includes Dakota youth, adult, and elder voices to share Dakota perspectives and provide teachers with much needed resources to address the Social Studies standards implemented since 2013-2014.

A goal of this project is that the *Mni Sota Maḵoḵe* curriculum will be taught to sixth grade students across Minnesota as part of the required sixth grade social studies curriculum. Students will learn about and integrate Dakota values of caring for the land as a relative through learning about Dakota environmental teachings and philosophies. Examining Minnesota as a Dakota place will encourage students to consider their own individual, family, and community connections to place. Teachers will guide them with access to and training in the *Mni Sota Maḵoḵe* curriculum, ongoing support by project staff, and access to first-person perspectives of Dakota youth, adults, and elders in their classrooms.

Benefits to Cohort Members

Professional Development: Two-Day Teacher Training and Ongoing Support

This project recognizes the importance of supporting teachers and developing teacher capacity and confidence in the implementation of the curriculum. It is our belief that every teacher and every learner belongs to the story of Minnesota. The more teachers see their own histories as part of our shared story and the greater cultural context they have, the more likely teachers will feel competent to teach history that includes Dakota perspectives and experiences. Our training will help teachers, and their students, see their own connectedness to Minnesota, to the Dakota story, and to one another.

Connections to Indian Education Staff

For districts with American Indian Education staff, we encourage a representative to join teachers and attend the training in order to support teachers and students as they implement the curriculum.

Research and Evaluation

With research partners at the University of Minnesota-Morris and St. Cloud State University, we will analyze student and teacher impacts through pre and

post curriculum surveys and talking circles. These assessments will measure the impact of the curriculum on students regarding new knowledge gained in the curriculum and on belonging and connectedness—two concepts that are related to the curriculum’s focus on a Dakota Worldview. We will also evaluate the effectiveness of the teacher training and ongoing support provided to teachers and students.

Program Resources and Ongoing Support

To realize the curriculum’s potential impact on our state’s learners, we believe it is essential to provide ongoing support for teachers while they are using the new materials and new content in their classrooms. Project staff will work with teachers to develop a program of support that is useful and relevant to each classroom setting. These activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Coaching or facilitation of planning/reflection sessions before, during, and after implementation
- Co-teaching of lessons
- Observations and feedback
- Recommendations for additional resources on curriculum content
- Dakota language support (face to face, online)
- Participation in team meetings (face to face, online)

Project Expectations

Participants are expected to:

- Participate in a two-day training (minimum 12 hours)
- Plan with project staff to prepare for implementation of the curriculum
- Implement the curriculum with support from project staff
- Provide feedback to project staff
- Participate in the evaluation through pre and post assessments
- Participate in developing ongoing teacher support in consultation with project staff

School and/or District Support

- Provide substitutes as needed: for training and/or if planning/reflection occurs during a school day
- Provide teacher extended time, if work occurs beyond the contracted work day
- Connect MSM project staff with district staff that manages research protocols
- Provide a letter of support highlighting research commitments (draft available)

For more information about the Mni Sota Maḵoḵe Project or to apply to join Cohort 3:

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Mni Sota Maḵoḵe: The Daḵota Homeland Curriculum Outline

Curriculum Goal:

Minnesota learners will understand the significant Daḵota relationship to Mni Sota Maḵoḵe and explore how certain Daḵota worldviews and values can help create more balance and respect among the different communities who call Mni Sota Maḵoḵe home.

Lesson	Main Idea	Essential Question(s)
1) Mni Sota Maḵoḵe: Our Homeland	Mni Sota Maḵoḵe is the homeland of the Daḵota people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we know that Mni Sota Maḵoḵe is a Daḵota place? • What kind of relationship do Daḵota people have to Mni Sota Maḵoḵe?
2) Mitakuye Owas'iy: Daḵota Worldview	A central part of the Daḵota worldview places Daḵota people in a special relationship with the land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the Daḵota worldview of <i>mitakuye owas'iy</i> ("we are all relatives") mean? • What relationship do Daḵota people have to the land in Mni Sota Maḵoḵe? • Why does it matter to learn certain Daḵota names and phrases?
3) Mitakuye Owas'iy: Our Relative the Land	<i>Mitakuye owas'iy</i> teaches that humans are a relative of the land and of all things that exist on the land, in the air, and in the water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does viewing the land as your relative change your relationship to it?
4) Daḵota Wicoḥ'an: Daḵota Values in Action	Within a Daḵota worldview, it is important to live <i>Daḵota wicoḥ'an</i> (Daḵota ways of living).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does living <i>Daḵota wicoḥ'an</i> (Daḵota ways of living) mean to Daḵota people?
5) Striving for Ikḵe Wicaḥta in Mni Sota Maḵoḵe	Within a Daḵota worldview, it is important to strive to be an <i>ikḵe wicaḥta</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why should we all learn about <i>ikḵe wicaḥta</i>?

Lesson	Main Idea	Essential Question(s)
6) Dakota Places in Mni Sota	The longtime and ongoing Dakota relationship to Mni Sota Maḵoḵe is supported by the longtime and ongoing use of Dakota place names in Mni Sota Maḵoḵe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does knowing more about the origins of certain place names help us deepen our understanding of the history of Mni Sota Maḵoḵe? • Why should we learn the meaning and correct pronunciation of Dakota place names?
7) Changes and Upheaval in Mni Sota Maḵoḵe: Treaties, Loss, and Exile, Pt. 1	The Dakota have a significant and sovereign connection to Mni Sota Maḵoḵe that, because of United States governmental policy, changed drastically between 1805 and 1930.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did treaties between the United States and the Dakota in Mni Sota Maḵoḵe affect Dakota relationships to the land? • How did <i>Mni Sota Maḵoḵe</i> become Minnesota?
8) Changes and Upheaval in Mni Sota Maḵoḵe: Treaties, Loss, and Exile, Pt. 2	The Dakota have a significant and sovereign connection to Mni Sota Maḵoḵe that, because of United States governmental policy, changed drastically between 1805 and 1930.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did the events of 1862 and afterwards impact the relationship of Dakota people to Mni Sota Maḵoḵe and with the United States government? • What changes did the US force upon the Dakota in Minnesota?
9) De-colonizing Mni Sota Maḵoḵe: Reclaiming Dakota Language and Culture	Dakota connections and relationship to Mni Sota Maḵoḵe continue through a process of de-colonization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some ways that the Dakota stay connected to Mni Sota Maḵoḵe?
10) Living Together in Mni Sota Maḵoḵe	We all belong to Mni Sota Maḵoḵe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even if I am not Dakota, how can I be a good relative in and with Mni Sota Maḵoḵe?