

Mni Sota Maḵoḱe: The Dakota Homelands

Dakota Wicoḵan and Partners

Founded in 2002, Dakota Wicoḵan is a Native non-profit educational 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 Maḵoḱe: 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.

Project Overview

This project will expand the teaching of *Mni Sota Maḵoḱe: The Dakota Homelands* to additional schools around the state. 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 in 2013-2014.

A goal of this project is that the *Mni Sota Maḵoḱe* 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. They will be guided by teachers with access to and training in the *Mni Sota Maḵoḱe* curriculum, ongoing support by project staff, and access to first-person perspectives of Dakota youth, adults, and elders in their classrooms.

Curriculum Impact

Through relationships 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.

Two-Day Teacher Training and Ongoing Support

This project recognizes the importance of supporting teachers. Developing teacher capacity and confidence is the focus of the teacher training and ongoing support. One of the key findings of the pilot study of this curriculum was the need for increased training and support. 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 new training will help teachers see their own connectedness to Minnesota, to the Dakota story, and to one another.

To realize the curriculum's potential impact on our state's learners, we believe it is essential to continue to support 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. These activities may include, but are not limited to:

- co-teaching of lessons
- observations and feedback
- additional resources on curriculum content
- Dakota language support
- participating in team meetings (face to face, online)

Beginning in Fall 2016, we will be training teachers all around the state that will implement the curriculum in three separate cohorts:

Fall 2016 8 teachers

Spring 2017 15 teachers

Fall 2017 35 teachers

If you know of a 6th grade teacher, a school, or a district that might be interested in joining one of these cohorts, please share with them the contact information for the project.

For more information about the Mni Sota Maḵoḵe Project:

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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'iq: 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'iq</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'iq: Our Relative the Land	<i>Mitakuye owas'iq</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 Wicasta in Mni Sota Maḵoḵe	Within a Daḵota worldview, it is important to strive to be an <i>ikḵe wicasta</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why should we all learn about <i>ikḵe wicasta</i>?
6) Daḵota Places in Mni Sota	The longtime and ongoing Daḵota relationship to Mni Sota Maḵoḵe is supported by the longtime and ongoing use of Daḵota 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 Daḵota place names?
7) Changes and Upheaval in Mni Sota Maḵoḵe: Treaties, Loss, and Exile, Pt. 1	The Daḵota 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 Daḵota in Mni Sota Maḵoḵe affect Daḵota 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 Daḵota 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 Daḵota people to Mni Sota Maḵoḵe and with the United States government? • What changes did the US force upon the Daḵota in Minnesota?
9) De-colonizing Mni Sota Maḵoḵe: Reclaiming Daḵota Language and Culture	Daḵota 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 Daḵota 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?