

# Teacher

## Essential ideas:

Teacher poses these thoughts and questions to students.

Travel and transportation are one of the most important issues in rural Alaska.

The means and cost of travel and transportation are ever changing.

Survival in the Bush depends on wise decisions related to travel and transportation.

Understanding what was and what is could give an idea of what might be.

## Engagement:

Students project 10 years into the future and try to imagine how things are going to change, economically and socially. What will increase? What will decrease? Why is technology an unpredictable wild card?

## 9-A Future Travel & Transportation Questions and thoughts to ponder

What has been the major theme of the lessons in Travel and Transportation?

Trace the changes in winter travel from early contact to present.

Trace the changes in boat travel from early contact to present.

Trace the changes in air travel from the time of the first planes until present.

What trends do you see? What variables caused the changes?

It is impossible to accurately project how people will travel in the future and how goods will be transported, as no one knows what technology will come along, the price of fuels, and many other factors.

It seems that three main issues dictate how and why travel and transportation change:

- What people want
- The cost
- What is easier. Sometimes easier isn't better, but people still tend to choose "easier."

Ask the following about the changes you see in your community.

- Why did people change?
- What will bring about future changes?

Since early days, technology has made travel easier. Freight to the bush is difficult, but not as hard as 50 or 100 years ago. By using the internet and the post office, we can receive a package from anywhere in the world within a week or two.

Long ago, people were quite self reliant.

Now we are tremendously dependent on outside resources especially fuel for vehicles and electric generation. What do you see for the next ten years in your community? In your region of Alaska? Will people be more or less self reliant? More or less dependent on a cash economy? If more dependent, where will the money come from?

What do you think the future of your town or village might be if the price of fuel continues to rise? How will people hunt, fish, heat their homes etc.?

Over the years, we have seen air travel and transportation replace barge services to a great degree. Will that trend continue? If so, why?

What will happen if the price of fuel rises and your community cannot afford to run the electric generators all the time? What if government subsidies like PCE (power cost equalization) are not available and electricity is >\$1.00/KWH?

What are the stated reasons for people living in your community as opposed to moving to urban centers? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? Are you personally well prepared for one or both options?

Do you think young people will stay in smaller communities or move to larger towns?

What skills will young people need to succeed in those larger towns?

Some people have already moved to larger towns. What were the reasons they moved? Might some of those reasons apply to you later in life?

Do you want to live in your community 10-20 years from now? How will you prepare yourself for that?

If you choose to stay in your community and other people leave, will there be enough children to keep the school open? To keep the post office open? Bush postal service is greatly subsidized by the U.S. Postal Service, and is constantly being threatened by interests in the Lower 48. What we Alaskans pay for parcel post doesn't come close to paying the real costs. What would happen if you had only one mail plane a week, or one a month and the cost of parcel post tripled?

If you plan to raise a family, would your partner want to live in your community the way it will be 10 years from now?

If you choose to leave your community, what skills will you have to make a living in a larger town?

How do you think lifestyle would change if a road came near or through your community? A railroad? A big mine nearby?

What would happen to your community if the school or post office closed? How often would planes fly? How would people get groceries? Health services?

What would happen if the State Department of Transportation stopped funding the maintenance of small airports? How dependent is your community on air travel? Do any local air taxis have float and ski planes? If you live in a hub community, this wouldn't shut down your airstrip, but it might impact those communities that support your hub services.

Do you think people in the future will be forced to live off the land more? Many people now have big outboards. Do you see people switching to smaller outboards and long slim riverboats again? Do you see people switching to dog teams?

What do you think would happen to your community if Fukushima or some other disaster cut off the salmon runs?

How can you plan with and for your community to make it a better place if big changes come?

What will happen to your community if there are economic problems in the whole nation and life in urban centers becomes difficult? Do you think people who now live in the city might move back to small towns and villages? If so, do you think it will be better or worse in those places?

These are all questions that wise young people should be asking. If you see what changes have taken place in the past, and why they occurred, you should be able to see the trends for the future, and be able to project what things will be like. That type of thought takes time to ponder, but ponder you must.

Should you prepare to live in your community for the next several decades?

Should you prepare to move to another community? To succeed in a larger economy, it is important to have a skill that qualifies you to do a meaningful productive job or run a business. You need something that makes you unique, desirable in the work force. Your skill-set should qualify you above other people to run a business or do a job.

Can you make a living in the field of travel and transportation? If so, what part of it interests you?

Do you like to build? To travel? To fix things? To serve and care for other people? To work with video, sound, communications? To hunt, trap, fish? To cook? To be alone, or in a crowd?

What are things changing to? How can you get ready for that change?

It is much better to ask these questions now and think about them now than be surprised and unprepared later. In order to make a living, you must have something to offer that other people need. How good will your offering be? What will it be?

Wisdom says young people should be able to be versatile and be able to successfully live in small communities and urban centers. Change is inevitable and accelerating. No one accurately knows what ten years will bring. We just watch trends. Young people should be versatile and very alert.

To be a good husband, a good wife, a good parent, a good provider, it will be necessary to have a good skill-set, good experiences and a good reputation.

List yours.

### **Writing:**

Now that you have done this activity for travel and transportation, do the same evaluation process for one of the following:

Introduction of television, Internet, electricity in villages, cell phones and other changes in your community.

Now that you know how things have been, and how they are now, where do you think they are going? In 5 years? 10 years? 20 years?

**Cultural Standards.**

The following standards are met by this lesson.

A.6: Continually involve themselves in learning about the local culture

B.1: Regularly engage students in appropriate projects and experiential learning activities in the surrounding environment

B.3: Provide integrated learning activities organized around themes of local significance and across subject areas

B.4: Are knowledgeable in all the areas of local history and cultural tradition that may have bearing on their work as a teacher, including the appropriate times for certain knowledge to be taught

B.5: Seek to ground all teaching in a constructive process built on a local cultural foundation

C.1: Become active members of the community in which they teach and make positive and culturally-appropriate contributions to the well-being of that community

D.3: Seek to continually learn about and build upon the cultural knowledge that students bring with them from their homes and communities

E.1: Recognize cultural differences as positive attributes around which to build appropriate educational experiences

E.2: Provide learning opportunities that help students recognize the integrity of the knowledge they bring with them and use that knowledge as a springboard to new understandings

E.3: Reinforce the student's sense of cultural identity and place in the world

E.4: Acquaint students with the world beyond their home community in ways that expand their horizons while strengthening their own identities