Favorite Earth Science Activity

Minnesota Focused, Inquiry Based Earth Science

Semester long course at Great River School

Tami Limberg, tlimberg@greatriverschool.org

Students read excerpts from Talking Rocks. Geology and 10,000 Years of Native American Traditions in the Lake Superior Region by Ron Morton and Carl Gawboy. Morton, a trained geologist and Gawboy a retired professor of American Indian studies tell the story of Minnesota and North America scientifically and culturally accurate and make it enjoyable to the reader.

During our Astronomy unit, my 9th and 10th graders read chapter eight, The Talking Sky. This chapter highlights many well- known constellations and tells the importance of them in the native culture. The chapter depicts pictographs and tells of seasons and tribe movements based on the constellation positions in the sky.

When we study glaciers, specifically the glacial history of the Twin Cities area we read part of chapter 2, beginning at page 20 and finishing at page 31. This gives the students an overview of what we’ll be studying and how the scene might have felt and looked to someone who knew the land well 10,000 years ago.

While studying plate tectonics, we focus on Taylors Falls as a location that demonstrates well how much of our state was formed. We read a part of Chapter 5, page 82 – 90. I also tie in a reading here about native copper, which is also outlined in the book well and tells the history of how natives used and mined copper.

This book is a fantastic way to not only bring literacy to the content area and a historical context to your class, but also hit the standard 9.1.3.2.1 “Men and women throughout the history of all cultures, including Minnesota America Indian Tribes and communities, have been involved in scientific inquiry and engineering design” but certainly does not cover it entirely.

Morton, R. and Gawboy, C. Talking Rocks. Geology and 10,000 Years of Native American Traditions in the Lake Superior Region. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis. 2000.

http://www.amazon.com/Talking-Rocks-American-Tradition-Superior/dp/0816644306