Lesson Title: Introduction to Maps

Grade Level: 3

Lesson Objectives:
• Students will describe maps and their uses.
• Students will make a map of their local environment.

Big Idea: Maps are useful tools.

Essential Question: Why do people make and use maps?

California Standards:
• HSS 3.1: Students describe the physical and human geography and use maps, tables, graphs, photographs, and charts to organize information about people, places, and environments in a spatial context.
• HSS 3.1.1: Identify geographical features in their local region.

Lesson Introduction:
Teacher shares a personal story about using a map (e.g., traveling, driving to a new place, shopping in the mall, exploring a museum) and explains the function and importance of a map. Teacher shares some maps with students (e.g., paper fold-up maps, poster maps, digital maps) and invites Students to comment about the maps and share their own personal map stories with a partner.

Learning Activities:
Teacher leads a class discussion about maps. What do maps show? How do people use maps? Why do we need maps? (relate responses to the map stories shared earlier)

Teacher asks Who makes maps? Students learn the term cartographer (a person who draws or produces maps). Teacher explains that long before this term was created, people were drawing or making representations of the land. These maps were useful in planning travel routes and identifying locations of people, animals, food and other resources. Teacher explains that Students will be cartographers today.

Students consider What materials can be used to make a map? Teacher shares photos of Polynesian Stick Charts (found online) and other examples of maps created from found materials.
Students work in pairs to create a map of their local environment (classroom, building, school, park, neighborhood, etc.) by making decisions about the following questions:

- What is the area of the map?
- What information will be presented on the map?
- Who will use this map and for what purpose?
- What materials will be used to create this map?

Three dimensional maps and creativity are encouraged. Teacher provides examples or models of maps for students to consult. Students are instructed to include the following map components:

- Title
- Authors
- Date
- Orientation (label directions, compass rose)
- Key or Legend

Students present their maps to the rest of the class and explain why they made that map. Students receive feedback from their peers about the usefulness of the map.

**Assessment:**

5-point Scoring Guide

- 1 point for creating a map representing the local environment
- 1 point for providing accurate information in the map
- 1 point for describing the usefulness of the map
- 1 point for presentation of the map to the class
- 1 point for a reasonable explanation about why this map was made

**Credits:** Lesson plan adapted from “Beginning Mapmaking Lesson for Students Ages 5-7” by Matt Crews. Empires of the Wind NEH Seminar, June 2015.