Ceremonial Aspects of Lakota Culture: An Approach to Curriculum Development

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Goal
Students will develop knowledge and understanding of the ceremonial aspects of Lakota culture.

Objective
The key to understanding Lakota culture is best expressed by the Lakota saying “Mitakuye Oyasin” or all my relations. This belief is at the heart of Lakota philosophy, which Vine Deloria described as a “moral universe.”\textsuperscript{1} Deloria says that “in the moral universe all activities, events, and entities are related and consequently it does not matter what kind of existence an entity enjoys, for the responsibility is always there for it to participate in the continuing creation of reality.”\textsuperscript{2} This philosophy permeates Lakota ceremony and serves as a touchstone for the ceremonial aspects of Lakota culture. This curriculum will utilize Deloria’s five principles, which he refers to as “the most important components of the Indian universe.”\textsuperscript{3}

Themes
Deloria’s Five Principles

\textsuperscript{1} Deloria, V. (1999). If you think about it you will see that it is true. In B. Deloria (Ed.) et. al. Spirit and reason (pp. 40-60). Golden: Fulcrum Publishing.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{3} Op cit, p. 49.
**Theme 1: The Universe is Alive**

Goal: Students will gain an understanding of how all things in the universe have consciousness, feeling, will, and potential for growth and change.

Examples of key concepts

- Wakan Tanka
- Wakan
- Nagi
- Niya
- Nagila
- Sicun

Resources

Deloria, V. (1999). If you think about it you will see that it is true. In B. Deloria (Ed.) et. al. *Spirit and reason* (pp. 40-60). Golden: Fulcrum Publishing.

Theme 2: Everything is Related

Goal: Students will learn the significance of the Lakota concept mitakuye oyasin or all things are related.

Examples of key concepts
- Tobtob Kin
- Mitakuye Oyasin
- Tiyospaye
- Hunka ceremony
- Oceti Sakowin
- Lakota camp circle

Resources


Deloria, V. (1999). If you think about it you will see that it is true. In B. Deloria (Ed.) et. al. *Spirit and reason* (pp. 40-60). Golden: Fulcrum Publishing.


Theme 3: All Relationships are Historical

Goal: Students will learn the historical Lakota events that originated relationships among gods, spirits, and ancestors that includes the potential for growth and change.

Examples of key concepts
• Creation stories
• Origin stories

Resources


Deloria, V. (1999). If you think about it you will see that it is true. In B. Deloria (Ed.) et. al. *Spirit and reason* (pp. 40-60). Golden: Fulcrum Publishing.


Theme 4: Space Determines the Nature of Relationships

Goal: Students will understand the significance of space, directionality, and location for Lakota ceremonies, kinship, and society.

Examples of key concepts
- Ceremonial directions
- Sacred places
- Particular places

Resources


Deloria, V. (1999). If you think about it you will see that it is true. In B. Deloria (Ed.) et. al. *Spirit and reason* (pp. 40-60). Golden: Fulcrum Publishing.


Theme 5: Time Determines the Meaning of Relationships

Goal: Students will understand the change in Lakota relationships as they develop over time.

Examples of key concepts
- The four times – day, night, month, year
- Seven generations
- Fullness of time
- Lakota star knowledge

Resources:


Deloria, V. (1999). If you think about it you will see that it is true. In B. Deloria (Ed.) et. al. Spirit and reason (pp. 40-60). Golden: Fulcrum Publishing.

4 “As there were interspecies communication between humans and other forms of life, people became aware of larger cycles of time, which can be described as the time jointly shared by all forms of life within a geographic area. In some undetermined manner, the universe [has] a direction to it: Every entity [has] a part to play in the creation of the future, and human beings [have] a special vocation in which they initiated, at the proper time, new relationships and events.”

Deloria, V. (1999). If you think about it you will see that it is true. In B. Deloria (Ed.) et. al. Spirit and reason (p. 57). Golden: Fulcrum Publishing.