Title
Understanding the Importance of Relationships in Lakota Culture.

Grade Level
Adult learner workshop.

Theme

Duration
4 hours.

Goal
Participants will learn the importance of Lakota kinship.

Objectives
Participants will increase their understanding of Lakota spirituality by exploring Lakota kinship roles. Participants will be able to
1. Diagram Lakota kinship roles.
2. Explain kinship roles using Lakota terms.
3. Identify the attributes and characteristics of a good relative.
4. Demonstrate a basic understanding of the term *mitakuye oyasin*.

South Dakota Standards

Cultural Concept
Mitakuye oyasin [all my relatives] is a foundation of Lakota culture.

Cultural Background
Kinship is the cohesive societal bond of Lakotas and dictates all aspects of social life. Within the Lakota social structure of kinship, all people are related. The four types of kinship include blood—mother, father, siblings, etc; affinal—related to you by marriage; adoption—*hunka* relative; and social—friends, neighbors, and acquaintances. These relationships establish a foundation for respect and courtesy and provide a trust between people. In addition to these four types of relationships, the workshop will briefly explore the concept of *mitakuye oyasin*.

Ella Deloria writes that spiritual culture is the most difficult area to describe, as it is “what remains after the tangible and visible part is cleared away” (p. 18).

Narratives pertaining to this cultural background are contained in:


Student Activities
Introductions—10 minutes  
Workshop overview—10 minutes  
Student activity—1 hour, 30 minutes  

Participants will work in groups of 4-7.

1. Silent reading:


2. Participants will:
   a. Create a diagram of kinship relationships using Lakota terms.
   b. Identify the attributes and characteristics of each kinship roles.
   c. Establish kinship roles within their group.

   Break – 10 minutes
   d. Participant led discussion of kinship roles.

3. Presenter led presentation and discussion on relationships, *wacekiya*, and the pipe. The presentation and discussion will focus on the relationship between the federal government—The Great White Father—and Lakota tribes. Topics will include:
   a. What was the relationship?
   b. Who played what role?
   c. What were the expected attributes and characteristics of each role according to Lakota kinship?
   d. What happened?
   e. What are the ramifications today?

4. Wrap-up and evaluation—15 minutes  

**Resources**

Visual aids:
Sphere of multi-colored play-dough to represent “marble cake” (Deloria, p.19). Photo of Old Man Afraid of His Horses smoking the pipe (DeMallie, p. 798). Copy of 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty.

Participant activity aids:
Large pad of newsprint paper, colored markers, ruler, scissors, tape, and glue.

**Assessment**
References


Reference material for presenter led discussion:


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Date
8 June 2008