

Title

Kinship's role in the life of the Lakota.

Grade Level

9th grade.

Theme

The importance kinship had in holding the Lakota people together.

Duration

4 50-minute class periods.

Goal

Students will become knowledgeable and understand the role kinship played in past generations and its relevance in today's society.

Objectives

1. Students will better understand Lakota kinship relationships.

South Dakota Standards

Students will communicate in world languages for multiple purposes within various contexts.

9-12.WL.1.1. Use oral and written language to provide information, exchange ideas, and explain concepts in formal and informal communications.

Students will gain knowledge and understanding of other peoples cultures through the study of the target language.

9-12.WL.2.2. Analyze various customs, traditions, beliefs, and values of the target culture.

Students will use world languages to increase their understanding of the home language and culture.

9-12.WL.3.1. Analyze how linguistic elements are used to convey meaning in the home target languages.

Students will use knowledge and perspectives gained from the target language and culture into various aspects of learning.

Cultural Concept

Mitakuye oyasin: The inter-relatedness and respect Lakotas had for all creation—the environment, the animal nations, the winged and their own, with emphasis on their own.

Cultural Background

The ultimate goal in life for Lakotas was not measured in how much you could acquire in this lifetime or what level of status you could attain, but rather it was one of obeying the kinship rules which had been set in place for generations, resulting in each person becoming a good relative.

Relative terms used by Lakotas are based on the sex of the relative through whom one is reckoning kinship, and on the extension of lineal terms to collateral relatives. Thus one uses the

same term for mother and mother's sister (*ina*) and for father and father's brother (*ate*). All of the mother and her sister's children then become bothers and sisters as do the father and his brother's children. Your mother's brother and father's sister are called uncle and aunt, respectively.

Student Activities

1. Students will learn Lakota kinship terminology, including the words used for mother, father, uncle, aunt, older brother, younger brother, older sister, younger sister and cousin in both gender usages. They will also be breaking these words apart to explore their meaning. An example of this is the word *ina* (mother). In Lakota, "i" means mouth and "na" means giving, thus *ina* is the giver of breath and life. This will be accomplished by role playing in our classroom as in a traditional Lakota family setting. The students will then carry this information home and with the help of their parents, fill in their actual family members to complete their kinship terminology tree.
2. Students will then learn the meanings of Lakota kinship terms and how kinship terms applied to a person in traditional culture determined their behavior toward that person. For instance, a person called "mother" and "father" were treated with love and respect. Between brothers and sisters, there was cooperation and great love, and with uncles and aunts, a more reserved attitude.
3. As for our classroom, we will be addressing each other as either brother, sister, or cousin. This will be a model followed throughout the year in our classroom, with emphasis on the behaviors and attitudes of each classmate towards one another as they use these kinship terms.

Resources

- Deloria, E. (1983). A scheme of life that worked: Kinship's role in Dakota life. In *Speaking of Indians* (pp.17-25). Vermillion: University of South Dakota.
- Maynard, E., & Twiss, G. (1970). [Excerpt from Kinship system]. In *Hechel lena oyaate kin nipi kte: That these people may live* (pp. 115-118). Community Mental Health Program, Pine Ridge Service Unit, Indian Health Service, U.S. Public Health Service. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Assessment

1. Students will consistently clarify the connection between cultural perspectives and socially approved behavior patterns
2. Students will consistently interact accordingly with individuals from or within the target culture and classroom.

References

- Deloria, E. (1983). A scheme of life that worked: Kinship's role in Dakota life. In *Speaking of Indians* (pp.17-25). Vermillion: University of South Dakota.
- Maynard, E., & Twiss, G. (1970). [Excerpt from Kinship system]. In *Hechel lena oyaate kin nipi kte: That these people may live* (pp. 115-118). Community Mental Health Program, Pine Ridge Service Unit, Indian Health Service, U.S. Public Health Service. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

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