
BACKGROUND

At one time, the people understood and lived a life of *Wolakota* based on seven laws and the basic elements of life to achieve healing and revitalization, according to Birgil Kills Straight.

Birgil, in collaboration with Steven Newcomb, formulated a constitution to guide the Oglala Lakota Nation based, in part, on the *Woope Sakowin* (Seven Laws) which was intended to “result in strength, health, and well-being for the nation.”

The ideas and goals presented by Mr. Kills Straight are mirrored in the educational setting to be a foundation for good character, a healthy spirit and courage for all students.

Woope Sakowin

- 1) *Wacante Oganake*: To help, to share, to give, to be generous.
- 2) *Wowausnila*: Pity, compassion.
- 3) *Wowauoniban*: To respect, to honor.
- 4) *Wowacintanka*: Patience and tolerance.
- 5) *Wowabwala*: To be humble, to seek humility.
- 6) *Woobitike*: To be guided by your principles, disciplined, bravery and courage.
- 7) *Woksape*: Understanding and wisdom.

ili.nativeweb.org/constitution.html

RELATED TIE OFFERINGS

Wolakota Project Circle

Developed by TIE Learning Specialists Dr. Scott Simpson & Sharla Steever to support the retention of new teachers and the integration of Native American Essential Understandings, the WoLakota Project supports Culturally Responsive Teaching & learning practices through Native Elder video interviews, mentoring, lesson development and Circle of Trust® retreats.

Courage to Teach

Paralleling the WoLakota Project Circle, the Courage to Teach® Seasonal Retreat Series is a set of 4 retreats that span the school year. This retreat series accommodates 24 to 28 teachers, assisting with the bridging of “soul and role” and helping to prevent teacher burnout.

Leading Together

Developed by the Center for Courage & Renewal® facilitators, and first implemented in Boston schools, Leading Together is a research-based approach for developing relational trust among adults. Relational trust among teachers, administrators and other adults in a school is a key factor for student success.



WOOPE SAKOWIN (SEVEN LAWS) in the Educational Setting



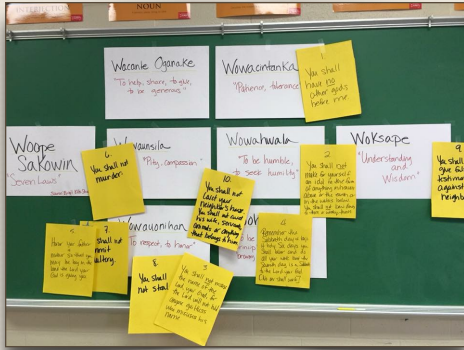
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“*Woope Sakowin* in the Educational Setting,”
developed by Tamera L. Miyasato, 2015, TIE
Learning Specialist (Rev. 2017). Based on Seven Laws
and Translations by Birgil Kills Straight and Steven
Newcomb, “Toward an Oglala Constitution,”

June, 2004.



DEVELOPMENT

During her time teaching at Pine Ridge School, Tamera Miyasato worked to integrate Lakota culture and language into her curriculum. Specifically, she used the *Woope Sakowin* (Seven Laws) as a supplement to Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* so students could relate their own culture and experiences to classic literature.

After seeing huge improvement in student engagement, motivation, and positive relationships, Tamera realized how the Seven Laws can transform students *and* teachers. She initiated her own classroom “climate shift” by developing the *Woope Sakowin* into a unique and effective model for a classroom management strategy.

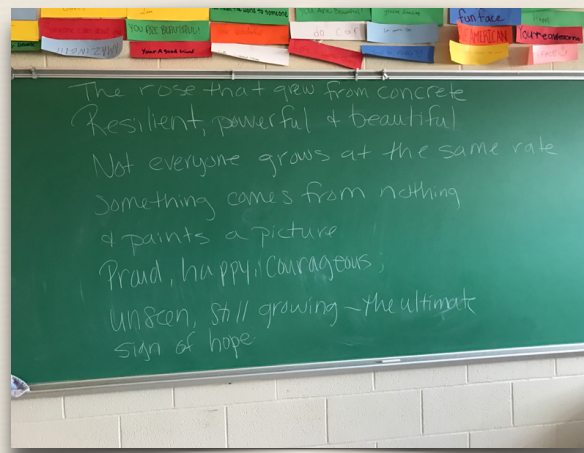
As a result of practicing the *Woope Sakowin* alongside her students, it became clear that the strategy worked beyond classroom management and Tamera explored other areas where the *Woope Sakowin* would benefit students, teachers and administration.

ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

When students have a choice, they feel empowered to make good decisions. When students are allowed a voice, they feel validated to take ownership in their learning. When students feel safe, they feel brave enough to tackle academic and personal challenges. When teachers are compassionate and willing to provide these things for their students, classroom management becomes less about discipline and more about learning and teaching.

Workshop Focus Areas:

- Culturally Responsive Teaching
- Restorative Justice
- Trauma-Informed Practices



Student generated poem in response to Tupac Shakur's “The Rose That Grew From Concrete” using the theme of “Woohitike” from the *Woope Sakowin*.



The *Woope Sakowin* in the Educational Setting Workshop is tailored to meet specific needs of classrooms or schools and is offered in the following:

- Half-day - emphasis on any **one** of the focus areas (3 CEU hours available)
- Full day course introducing all three focus areas (6 CEU hours available)
- Two-day course, deeply engaging with all focus areas (12 CEU hours available)

Participant Feedback

“The movement for understanding Lakota [culture] is everywhere.” *Jay Taken Alive, McLaughlin Schools*

“When I get my own classroom, this is one thing I am **definitely** going to implement.” *Brook Broswell, South West Middle School*

“I’m so happy for a class that was so thought provoking!” *Golnesa Asheghali, Rapid City High School*

“This is the first time since 2005 when I left teaching, that I have actually thought I might like to go back at some point, just to approach it with this concept in mind. That is a pretty powerful statement if you can move me from being done with teaching to maybe wanting to go back at some point.” *Richard Mittelstedt, SDEA Teaching & Learning Coordinator*