
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, 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, 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 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



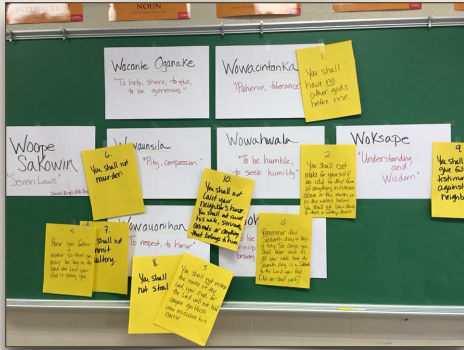
Tamera L. Miyasato
TIE Learning Specialist

tmiyasato@tie.net

605.721.4472

“*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 and motivation, Tamera realized the importance of the Seven Laws and initiated a "climate shift" by developing the *Woope Sakowin* into a unique and effective classroom management strategy.

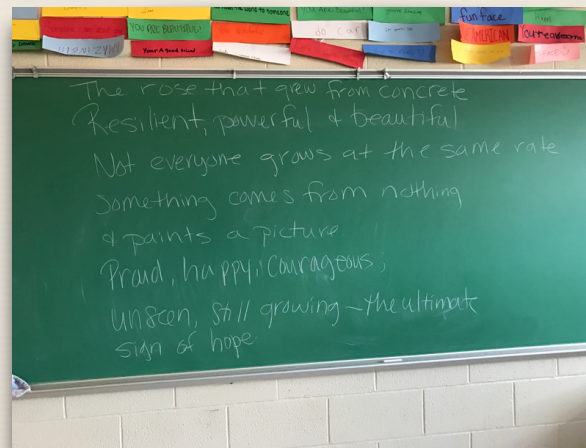
As a result of practicing the *Woope Sakowin* alongside her students, the following improvements emerged:

- Decrease in behavior write-ups
- Decrease in emotional outbursts
- Decrease in truancy
- Improved student/teacher relationships
- Improved student motivation

It was clear that the strategy moved beyond classroom management and Tamera explored other areas where the *Woope Sakowin* would benefit students, teachers and administration.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

- Classroom Management
- Culturally Responsive Teaching
- Curriculum Integration
- Positive Climate
- Anti-bullying
- Leadership Building



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

Pte Ska Win (White Buffalo Calf Woman)



Long ago, the *Oceti Sakowin* people were starving so they sent two of their best hunters in search of food. The hunters came upon a beautiful woman. One man said, "This woman is *wakan* (sacred). We should proceed in a good way." The other man had bad thoughts and wanted the woman for himself. As he moved toward her, a cloud enveloped him and the woman. After a flash of lighting, the cloud disappeared and all that remained of this man was a pile of bones.

The woman said to the honorable man, "I have come to help your people. Go home and tell them to prepare for my arrival. I will return in four days." The man hurried to tell the council about the woman. They prepared a grand welcoming. She arrived carrying a bundle. In this bundle, was the sacred *canunpa* (pipe), which she gave to the people. She also gave them seven sacred ceremonies and **seven sacred laws that would serve as a spiritual foundation for the *Oceti Sakowin* forever.**

Before she disappeared, she stopped in the distance and turned into a buffalo: first she was black, then she was red, then yellow and finally white. It is because of the teachings of *Pte Ska Win* that the people continue to endure.