

Kinship Terms - Stephanie Charging Eagle - OSEU #3

But what does not change is the concept...the philosophy of what it is we did. For example, if we no longer address each other as relatives...use those relationship terms...then we are going to experience that disrespect from younger people and person to person. But the concept that needs to be carried on today...because I understand that you could be somebody's mother in the classroom...and you're the teacher...your student...or maybe your child...or you have some students that are closely related to you...they see you as your "auntie." Well, in a classroom setting, it's very difficult. But you still have to...in some way...bring forth the concept of the relationship between you and that student and that student and yourself. And so, you still have to acknowledge and carry that in your classroom. The concept is that that relationship is so important, you cannot ignore it. So, in your own way, you treat that child as if you would them at home. They still learn from you as a teacher...and as a student...and the rest of the group. And pretty soon you just say...for example...I'm at the age now where I have grandchildren in some of the classes I go to or work with...so I would call them "takosa" which is the general term for grandchild. And so, they know that I'm "unci" or grandma to them. And pretty soon the whole group acknowledges me as grandma or unci. And it doesn't do anything less for them academically.

But that is the concept...that that relationship is so important...that from over here when the children called you by unci and not your first name and vice versa...that concept is so sacred. It's so spiritual that...if you're a teacher in a classroom and you have students who are your own children or your own grandchildren...nieces and nephews...that should be carried out, but carried out in however it's comfortable. But the idea is that you still bring the concept forward.