

MARTIN, Kathleen (UC Santa Barbara) **THE LANGUAGE OF ORAL NARRATIVE: EDUCATING LAKOTA STUDENTS** In American Indian communities, oral narrative and storytelling is essential for the education of children, establishment of social relationships, and continuation of cultural traditions. Oral narrative accurately represents cultural differences through language and is indispensable in the understanding and maintenance of cultural traditions. With the increasing diversity and the need for equity in the United States, it is imperative to explore differences as exhibited through language. Therefore, this paper presents cultural and linguistic differences represented through language in a traditional Lakota oral narrative. The analysis identifies cultural representations in the narrative that are relevant to classroom contexts and an understanding of social interaction in American Indian communities.

A phonemic transcription of a Lakota narrative and an English translation and interpretation were used in conjunction with four methods of analysis, Hymes's (1982) poetic structural analysis, Tedlock's (1983) expressive analysis, Labov's (1988) "fully formed" structural analysis, and a textual analysis based on Lakota exegesis. The methods illuminate the construction of concepts and beliefs that foster community relationships and communicate cultural knowledge.

There is a clear link between the variable of culture and cognitive styles which teachers must deal with in order to maximize student opportunities for achievement (Eckermann, 1994). Finding ways through language that support relevant perspectives and a view of "self" for the learner is important to strengthen and extend as a preferred mode of thinking and learning. Making the effort to study and appreciate "how children understand and how they manage their own learning" (Bruner, 1996, p 58) must be a goal for education in the future.