

BUILDING EFFECTIVE TEACHER-LEARNER RELATIONSHIPS
GUIDED BY TRADITIONAL CREE TEACHINGS

*A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of San Diego State University in Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts in Educational Leadership*

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research project explored the significance of teacher-learner relationships guided by traditional Cree teachings in a First Nations College. Students and faculty who participated in the project emphasized the importance of incorporating the traditional Cree knowledge and protocols in curriculum and classroom practices. A participatory action research model that followed traditional Cree protocols was used to conduct a research circle to investigate and collect data on how instructors and students experienced the implementation of traditional teachings. Also investigated were the effects on their educational experience, and the necessary changes required to assist instructors with implementation of these teachings in their practice. The data revealed that history and identity are important factors in a quality learning experience, and that students want to be recognized as whole human beings with mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. The importance of effective learning relationships guided by the Natural Laws of love, honesty, sharing, and strength/determination was also established.

Analysis of the data precipitated the creation of a teacher orientation workshop manual that offers strategies for implementing the teachings of the Medicine Circle

and the Natural Laws in the learning environment. The workshop manual also presents facilitators instructions, participant activities, and supporting information from the literature review and research circle to add context to reflective dialogue. Follow-up research might include individual interviews at Blue Quills or another First Nations college, to add clarity, depth and perspective. Future case studies to determine the effectiveness of implementation strategies are another potential avenue for investigation.