CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE FRAMEWORK

2022

Acknowledgment of Country

This document was developed on the lands of the Kaurna people, the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Adelaide Region. The Department for Education acknowledges their spiritual connection, cultural heritage and relationship with their Country is still as important to the living Kaurna people today.

We also pay our respect to Traditional Owners and Aboriginal people across South Australia, particularly those who helped contribute to the development of this document and who will be involved in, or impacted by, the achievement of its actions.

Notes

- Throughout this document, the term 'Aboriginal' respectfully refers to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders.
- The term 'parent' refers to parents and/or caregivers with responsibility for the care of Aboriginal children.
- The term 'family' refers to parents, carers, families and extended families, Elders and community members involved in the education of their Aboriginal children.
- Local Aboriginal community/communities can be complex concepts. For the purposes of this framework, the terms refer to two groups:
  - Traditional Owners of the land on which the workplace is located.
  - Aboriginal people currently living, working, or staying on the land on which the workplace is located.

Thank You

In addition to the many employees that contributed to the development of this framework, the department would particularly like to thank the following contributors:

Members of the Department's Aboriginal Workforce Network, the Aboriginal Expert Advisory Panel, the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People, the Reform Coordination Team, the South Australian Area Schools Leaders Association, the Small Schools Association of South Australia, the South Australian State School Leaders Association, the South Australian Primary Principals Association, South Australian School Business Association and the South Australian Aboriginal Education and Training Consultative Council.

We also express our gratitude to the students and staff of the Taikurrendi Children and Family Centre and Kaurna Plains School for providing the artworks used throughout the framework.

Front Cover artwork: Anonymous, Taikurrendi Children & Family Centre - Blake, Kaurna Plains School - Shayana, Kaurna Plains School

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Senior Executive Group Foreword

Aboriginal business is everyone's business.

Being culturally responsive is not just the responsibility of any one area or role within the department – it is the responsibility of every person working across our education system.

For us to support the wellbeing of Aboriginal people in our workplaces, we all must make a personal commitment.

Aboriginal people must be valued for their contribution and actively involved in decision making, we all have a role to play in making that happen. To create culturally responsive workplaces, where Aboriginal voices, skills and wisdom are respected, we all have to put in the work.

We are pleased to present the department's first Culturally Responsive Framework. It outlines how we can all contribute to creating environments in which Aboriginal people can work, learn and thrive.

When our Aboriginal employees thrive, all employees thrive, and this flows on to every child and young person in our schools and preschools.

A culturally responsive department creates an environment where Aboriginal employees, children and young people, families and communities are valued and have input into the future of Aboriginal education.

Everyone is starting at a different point, with different experiences and knowledge. This framework is about meeting you where you're at and guiding you along your journey to build cultural responsiveness.

It is aligned to our strategic priorities under the Aboriginal Education Strategy, Reconciliation Action Plan and Workforce Strategy.

This framework will be reviewed and built on over time, taking into account our collective learnings along the way.

Together, we are leaders of change and together we create workplaces where Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people love coming to work, every day.

This is our commitment to standing with, and working alongside Aboriginal employees and communities.

Martin Westwell
Chief Executive
Department for Education

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Director
Aboriginal Education

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Executive Director
People & Culture

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Student Pathways & Careers

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Chris Bernardi
Chief Financial Officer
Finance & Funding

Bill Glasgow
Executive Director
Infrastructure

Scott Bayliss
Chief Information Officer
Information & Communication Technology Services

Amanda Trainor
Director
Communications

We make this commitment as the department's current Senior Executive Group. We expect that any new members show the same commitment.

Azalia, Taikurrendi Children & Family Centre

Vision

Culturally responsive workplaces where all Aboriginal people work, learn, and thrive.

The Department for Education is committed to building and growing a strong and sustainable Aboriginal workforce. We envision culturally responsive workplaces in which structures, policies and processes support Aboriginal employees to fully participate, and where Aboriginal people are valued and supported.

To achieve this, we must all work together to create place-based culturally inclusive environments in which Aboriginal people can work and learn.

Through responding to Aboriginal employees and children and young peoples' cultural needs, we support them as proud, confident and active participants in shaping our future.

Whole of Department Commitment

This framework was designed and intended for use by all Department for Education employees. It represents a whole of department commitment to creating a culturally responsive environment through embedding culturally responsive practice in everyday business.

We also acknowledge that Aboriginal cultures across South Australia have different languages, practices and community structures, which means people may need to develop their responsiveness across cultures. This is important as Aboriginal cultures are not static - like all others, they change over time and require ongoing learning and responsiveness.

We acknowledge that becoming culturally responsive is often challenging and, for some people, may be confronting. It requires commitment, critical reflection and awareness of personal cultures, differences in power and privilege and the historical and contemporary inequalities that emerge in and from social and workplace relationships.

It is anticipated that this framework will carry different meaning for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employees, however it is intended to be a useful tool for all of the workforce as we all have equal responsibility to work towards creating a culturally respectful workplace.

The framework is a key priority in the Aboriginal Workforce Plan 2021 - 2031: Chapter 1 in our Workforce Strategy. It strategically aligns with, and underpins, the department's Aboriginal Education Strategy 2019 - 2029; and supports the department's Reconciliation Action Plan.

- the Aboriginal Education Strategy establishes our directions in closing the gap for children and young people.

- our Reconciliation Action Plan promotes relationships, respect and reconciliation opportunities.

- this Culturally Responsive Framework outlines the capabilities for employees to build cultural responsiveness.

Together, these 3 elements underpin environments that support and promote the cultural safety and inclusion of our Aboriginal workforce, and the children and young people in our schools and preschools.

Development of the Framework

The Culturally Responsive Framework guides how we create a culturally safe workplace and is the basis for building the capability for every employee in the department. The framework establishes the key learning areas and articulates how knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal cultures develops, and how values and behaviour changes as people increase their cultural responsiveness.

This framework guides how all employees contribute to the creation of a culturally responsive environment in which Aboriginal people can work, learn and thrive.

The Framework:

- provides a basis for building the cultural capability of the department that is essential for successful partnerships and action

- supports all employees within the department to work respectfully with each other and Aboriginal children and young people, families and communities

- explains the skills, knowledge and practices that employees need to perform their duties in a culturally informed way

- sets out what success looks like in a culturally responsive organisation

- creates the basis from which workforce development occurs across the department.

Co-creating with the workforce

Keeping our world-class ambition front of mind, the development of the Culturally Responsive Framework is anchored by the voices that matter. Bringing the voices, knowledge and insights of the workforce, along with students, parents and communities, is key to success of the framework.

We used a co-design methodology to embed the real experiences, insights and perspectives of our workforce into the framework. This methodology allowed us to ensure the discoveries we made remained central to the framework and guided its design and development.

We undertook extensive, purposeful consultation with over 450 staff across the department. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff from across the state made significant structure and content through consultations, focus groups, workshops, one-on-one interviews, and survey participation.

Additional consultations with community were undertaken by the South Australian Aboriginal Education and Training Consultative Council (SAAETCC).
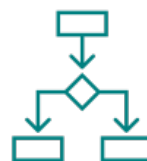
Framework design principles

Human centred – ensuring the voices that matter are at the centre, guiding this work

Grounded in evidence and informed by data and research

The knowledge and wisdom of Aboriginal staff is acknowledged, valued and respected

Strong governance and leadership

Cultural safety – do no harm

What is cultural responsiveness?

Cultural responsiveness is learning from and relating respectfully to develop meaningful and collaborative place-based relationships with Aboriginal people from diverse language groups and communities.

The journey of cultural responsiveness requires ongoing critical reflection to develop awareness, knowledge, attitudes and understanding of the diverse histories and cultures of Aboriginal people. Cultural responsiveness is central to the inclusion, safety and overall health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people.

Cultural responsiveness is a term that has origins in Canada and North America and builds on an earlier body of work describing cultural competency. In this document we refer specifically and only to cultural responsiveness to Aboriginal cultures in recognition of the unique space held by Aboriginal people and communities as First Nations people.

The focus on responsivity indicates the commitment to ongoing learning, reflection and continuous development.

Cultural responsiveness describes the outcome when knowledge and understanding (knowing), action (doing) and values, attitudes, and behaviour (being)[1] come together. It is action orientated and is a strengths-based approach. This model is used by many organisations and is based on the Australian Public Service Commission.

The department is committed to being a culturally responsive organisation, and to do so expects that all employees, alongside our stakeholders, partners and contractors, step up individually to create a department-wide environment in which all staff thrive.

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1 Adapted from Snook, Scott, Nitin Nohria, and Rakesh Khurana, (2012, XV) The Handbook for Teaching Leadership: Knowing, Doing, and Being. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

"Culturally responsive workplaces embrace the knowledge and experiences of the Aboriginal workforce, and children and young people within them"
– survey participant

The Framework

Culturally Responsive Framework

6 DOMAINS FOR ACTION
4 Core +
2 Functional

A LEARNING JOURNEY
that builds cultural responsiveness
(Knowing, Doing, Being)
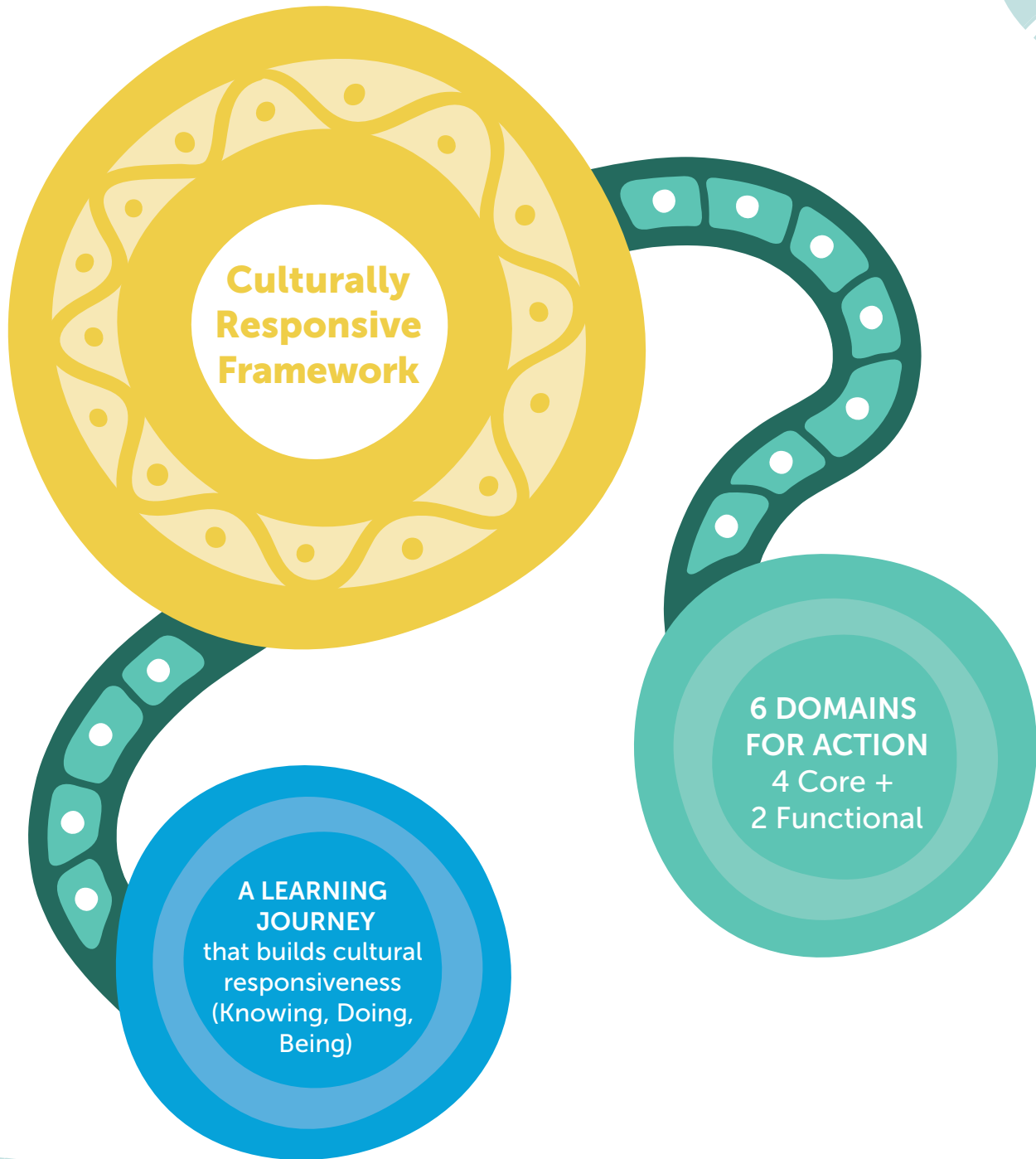
Domains for action

The 6 domains were chosen as capability areas that represent the fields of practice across the department, and articulate cultural responsiveness through the model of Knowing, Doing and Being.

The domains are interconnected and the way they are ordered in this framework does not represent an order of practice or a sequence of learning. People may have knowledge and experience of cultural responsiveness in one or more domain, and likewise may choose to begin by starting with 1 or more domain/s.

People's learning journey is individual and different from one person to the next. Understanding the strengths and opportunities of your development is critical to building cultural responsiveness.

The 4 core domains are elements across which we all undertake a culturally responsive journey. They describe capability areas which are relevant to all employees, regardless of position or location.

The 2 functional domains are practice based, in recognition of different areas of speciality across the department. However, it is acknowledged that many roles will incorporate elements of both functional domains.

4 CORE DOMAINS
Applicable to the entire workforce

RESPECT

COLLABORATION

LEADERSHIP

ACCOUNTABILITY

2 FUNCTIONAL DOMAINS
Applicable to educators and policy staff

TEACHING AND LEARNING

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

4 core domains

Respect

is anchored in the continuing impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal people.

It focuses on:

- expanding knowledge of and respect for the diversity of Aboriginal cultures
- awareness of how personal values and biases impact work practice and outcomes
- valuing the unique cultural lens that the Aboriginal workforce brings to the department
- understanding that for many Aboriginal people the needs of the community sit above the needs of the individual.

Collaboration

is anchored in meaningfully engaging with Aboriginal people and communities.

It focuses on:

- the importance of culturally safe stakeholder and community engagement
- embedding respectful communication and collaborative practices to build healthy, mutually effective relationships
- understanding that timing and flexibility are key to successful, meaningful engagement
- appreciating and implementing processes for Aboriginal self-determination and leadership
- developing respectful communication and engagement strategies that are a cultural match with specific communities
- establishing respectful and equal partnerships in decision making.

Leadership

is anchored in leadership as a practice rather than a position.

It focuses on:

- role modelling culturally responsive thinking and action
- leadership as a practice for all employees, regardless of your role in the department
- leading by example to inspire and influence cultural responsiveness
- challenging biases and long held assumptions
- creating a shared vision of place-based cultural responsiveness
- culturally responsive practice and environments.

Accountability

is anchored in self-agency, responsibility, and documenting evidence-based practice.

It focuses on:

- ongoing review and development of skills, knowledge and behaviours
- embedding improvement measures at individual, team and system levels across all practice areas
- setting and achieving shared goals and targets in cultural responsiveness
- embedding cultural responsiveness in individual and organisational goals and targets
- having accountability to Aboriginal individuals, families and communities in the area/s you live and work.

2 functional domains

Teaching and learning

is anchored in teaching and learning as practices, not positions. This includes everyone that is delivering learning either at a school, preschool, central office or on behalf of the department.

It focuses on:

- the incorporation of Aboriginal voices and perspectives in curriculum development and teaching practice
- side-by-side teaching with Aboriginal staff where appropriate
- cultural approaches to learning
- the use of culturally appropriate curriculum learning resources
- optimising educational outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people through the planning, delivery and assessment of teaching practices.

Policy development

is anchored in Aboriginal voices being embedded in all policy development.

It focuses on:

- the inclusion of appropriate expertise in central office or school and preschool based policy development and governance
- consideration of impact of policy on Aboriginal staff
- challenging racism and policies that promote bias
- ensuring that employees at all levels are guided by culturally safe and respectful policy.

Learning journey

Building the capability to be culturally responsive is a learning journey that is cyclic in nature, not linear. Cultural responsiveness evolves rather than being static.

It is important that we all see ourselves as learners and continue to reposition ourselves on the learning journey as we become aware of new information (knowing) that influences our action (doing) and values, attitudes, and behaviour (being).

The model of Knowing, Doing, Being was chosen to provide a road map for learning as it captures key stages and provides simple indicators of what it looks like for each domain.

This will help you consider where you are at and understand the capability required build cultural responsiveness.

Knowing

The practice of knowing refers to the development and incorporation of new knowledges into your practice.

This includes having a broad overview of the histories, cultures and languages of Aboriginal people, including employees and children and young people.

Doing

The practice of doing refers to practical application of the expertise to real situations and embedding culturally responsive practices.

This includes being responsive to the diverse needs, backgrounds, experiences, and knowledge of Aboriginal employees as well as children and young people; and being able to use these as a basis to facilitate learning opportunities and create culturally responsive environments.

Being

The practice of being focuses on self-awareness, personal values and behaviours.

This includes having a strong sense of self-awareness, recognising the diverse cultural and linguistic needs of Aboriginal people, and building on relationships with Aboriginal employees, families and communities to develop a culturally responsive environment

Blake, Kaurna Plains School

Respect

Knowing looks like:

- understanding the significance of cultural protocols, practices, definitions of family, and how these impact Aboriginal people
- listening to your local community and understanding their cultural protocols
- valuing the importance of culturally specific knowledge and skills Aboriginal people bring to the department
- listening to the goals, needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people
- understanding the importance of self-determination for Aboriginal people
- understanding that communities across South Australia have very different languages, practices and structures. It is important that you acknowledge these differences and develop your place-based cultural responsiveness.

Doing looks like:

- having confidence in your ability to source and share appropriate information that relates to Aboriginal cultures
- developing opportunities for open and honest dialogue
- developing cultural and social knowledge of Aboriginal communities
- developing specific strategies to engage with Aboriginal community or communities you live and work in
- recognising that connections to family, community, country and culture are central to a person's wellbeing
- identifying your own cultural identity, values and practices
- addressing generalisations, stereotypes and racism
- using strengths-based approaches and critical thinking skills to influence change
- including Aboriginal concepts of cultural, social, emotional, and economic wellbeing
- supporting Aboriginal self-determination
- acknowledging the contributions Aboriginal people make to Australian society.

"Respect starts with understanding and being inclusive of people and the environment that we all work in"
— Workshop participant

Being looks like:

- respecting and valuing differences between individuals, families and communities
- inclusivity of own and other's cultural beliefs and ways of being
- putting in place strategies to overcome personal and cultural biases
- committing to contributing to self-determination processes in partnership with Aboriginal people
- respecting cultural differences and recognising the need to contextualise change relevant to place
- identifying and challenging inappropriate behaviours in others.

At the personal level examples of cultural responsiveness include:

- individual's respect and value the diversity of Aboriginal cultures and the contribution that this unique cultural lens can bring to the department
- policy and curriculum are developed using strengths-based approaches and are inclusive of local Aboriginal concepts of wellbeing
- taking the time to ask Aboriginal staff, children and families for their opinion and input into decisions and the development of learning resources.

At the departmental level examples of cultural responsiveness include:

- the department focuses on cultural responsiveness as an essential element of core business and a priority for ongoing departmental capacity building
- staff are supported to develop capabilities in cultural responsiveness and attend training programs
- the department respects and includes Aboriginal concepts of wellbeing and ways of being.

Collaboration

Knowing looks like:

- cultural models, protocols and community dynamics are the base of collaboration with communities

- prioritising the needs of local communities

- understanding of the impact of attitudes, beliefs and past experiences of Aboriginal people in collaborative processes

- basing interactions on reciprocity and respect.

Doing looks like:

- working within place-based cultural and community protocols to deliver results

- facilitating, encouraging and valuing the involvement of Aboriginal community members

- allowing adequate time for community members to consider issues and engage productively

- ensuring ongoing communication to discuss outcomes, actions and initiatives with the community

- identifying and resolving conflict productively and respectfully to build trust and maintain relationships

- adapting communication methods and styles when required to meet the needs of Aboriginal people

- engaging, celebrating and promoting local cultural events and celebrations.

Being looks like:

- showing respect for community perspectives and needs

- responding positively to differences

- identifying opportunities to learn and develop cultural understanding

- listening carefully to ensure all views are shared and understood.

At the personal level examples of cultural responsiveness include:

- positive, respectful and honest communication between individuals and Aboriginal people develops deep, resilient relationships

- practice is aligned with the cultural goals and needs of Aboriginal individuals and communities

- best practice targets and plans are developed in collaboration and partnership with Aboriginal people.

At the departmental level examples of cultural responsiveness include:

- the organisation establishes links and relationships with local and regional Aboriginal organisations

- active engagement with Aboriginal people in collaborative and inclusive decision-making

- Aboriginal people participate in all stages of planning, monitoring and evaluation of policy and curriculum.

"Collaboration is an ongoing commitment, it's about spending time to create relationships, they can't be made in a day."
— Workshop participant

Leadership

Knowing looks like:

- understanding that leadership and cultural responsiveness are qualities for which everyone shares responsibility

- sharing knowledge of cultural context and the impacts of past events, policies and programs and their relevance to emerging issues, challenges and opportunities

- understanding the contributions required to achieve a compelling vision of the future for the organisation working with Aboriginal individuals, families and communities.

"Lead by example and show respect, support and understanding for Aboriginal people and families"
— **Survey participant**

Doing looks like:

- having and implementing a compelling vision of the future of the department working impactfully with Aboriginal individuals, families and communities

- leading by example and modelling culturally responsive action

- leading engagement with Aboriginal people and communities to further the department's goal of cultural safety in a culturally appropriate way

- acknowledging and showing appreciation for contributions and knowledge of Aboriginal people and communities in achieving outcomes

- working in genuine partnership with Aboriginal people to achieve shared outcomes

- using diverse knowledge and experiences to achieve outcomes

- challenging and dealing promptly with inappropriate behaviour

- advocating regard for the relevance and importance of Aboriginal cultures, heritage, values and protocols

- learning about societal and kinship systems and supporting Aboriginal people to observe protocols and maintain cultural systems

- using solution-focused approaches to questioning practices that are not culturally responsive.

Being looks like:

- having clarity on personal and organisational values

- being aware of personal values and choosing to act in alignment with cultural responsiveness

- actively learning from Aboriginal people about their culture and encouraging colleagues to do the same

- respecting and supporting the social and kinship systems of Aboriginal people

- having an authentic and respectful interest in Aboriginal cultures

- engaging with Aboriginal employees, children and young people, families and communities in a sensitive and equitable manner

- supporting clear and realistic contributions to address inequities

- changes in behaviours as a result of embracing social justice and human rights principles

- displaying moral courage, including speaking out when observing inappropriate behaviour.

At the personal level examples of cultural responsiveness include:

- all staff lead by example in cultural responsiveness and undertaking culturally responsive action

- professional development is undertaken to develop knowledge about Aboriginal communities and available resources

- individuals work together and support each other in developing cultural responsiveness.

At the departmental level examples of cultural responsiveness include:

- Aboriginal employees are represented at all levels of governance

- the organisation maintains focus on using strengths-based approaches and on changing policies and practices that may be overtly or covertly racist or otherwise compromise cultural safety for Aboriginal people

- Aboriginal voice and perspectives are considered and embedded from the beginning of projects or policy development.

Accountability

Knowing looks like:

- acknowledging the inequities that exist between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people

- undertaking effective practices and approaches to addressing inequities

- understanding the determinants of wellbeing and the ongoing impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal people

- understanding that people may come from a range of different family structures and communities and have a range of cultural needs

- acknowledging the importance of including Aboriginal cultural, social, emotional and economic wellbeing in monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes.

Doing looks like:

- including cultural responsiveness goals in policy and planning processes

- taking time to understand who you are engaging with and tailor your practice accordingly

- setting targets and working in partnership with Aboriginal individuals, families and communities

- monitoring goal achievement with individuals, families, communities and organisations

- measuring, updating and meaningfully communicating progress to Aboriginal individuals, families and communities as part of a business-as-usual approach

- adapting to feedback on place-based protocols from the community or communities you live and work in.

"Be brave to have difficult conversations"
– Workshop participant

Being looks like:

- committing to contributing to the overall wellbeing of Aboriginal people

- incorporating place-based Aboriginal protocols in everyday business and actively seeking feedback

- making clear and realistic contributions to addressing inequities

- including Aboriginal practice and concepts of wellbeing in everyday business.

At the personal level examples of cultural responsiveness include:

- all leaders, from executive to coordinators/team leaders, lead by example in promoting and modelling cultural responsiveness

- developing best practice measures and plans in collaboration and partnership with Aboriginal staff and local communities

- individuals incorporate cultural responsiveness actions into their performance, planning and review processes.

At the departmental level examples of cultural responsiveness include:

- mechanisms to ensure Aboriginal voice is heard, respected and embedded into all policy and practices

- issues of racism or discrimination are managed swiftly and comprehensively

- comprehensive data is collected and analysed regularly to monitor Aboriginal staff and outcomes of children and young people

- data collection includes Aboriginal concepts of cultural, social, emotional and economic wellbeing.

Teaching and learning

Knowing looks like:

- understanding the cultural background/s of the children and young people you are educating

- knowing the language and family connections of Aboriginal children and young people you teach

- being aware of the range of curriculum resources available to support culturally responsive education

- understanding that you need to tailor your approach to optimise learning outcomes

- having equity in expectations for all children and young people

- valuing and acknowledging the local Aboriginal cultures and languages

- understanding that communities may comprise different family and language groups, and Aboriginal people may belong to more than one community

- understanding the impact that colonisation has had on Aboriginal peoples' engagement in local education settings and the education system.

Doing looks like:

- pedagogy is culturally responsive and developed through a learner-centred approach to teaching

- recognising, respecting and inviting the diverse perspectives of Aboriginal people to guide learning

- being proactive in sourcing accurate information on Aboriginal cultures and knowledges

- using culturally appropriate resources that do not stereotype Aboriginal people or ways of being

- participating in local Aboriginal cultural activities and events

- connecting with the families of Aboriginal children and young people to support them in their learning journey

- providing opportunities for inclusion of local Aboriginal Elders and community members in local events

- engaging in self-directed professional development (eg reading journal articles, participating in cultural activities, to develop your practice)

- modelling appropriate practice, language and behaviours

- creating learning spaces that reflect cultural diversity.

Being looks like:

- incorporating cultural place-based examples into your teaching

- having respectful relationships with your Aboriginal colleagues, children and young people, and their families

- using the knowledge you have of the Aboriginal children and young people you teach to optimise their learning outcomes

- strong awareness of your own cultural biases, beliefs and values and not letting these impact on your teaching practice

- being open to different perspectives and ways of being

- accepting that you will at times feel uncomfortable in the learning journey

- role modelling the delivery of culturally appropriate learning and encouraging others to do the same.

At the personal level examples of cultural responsiveness include:

- the ability to engage with Aboriginal children and young people in a culturally responsive way has been strengthened

- working in partnership with the Aboriginal community to improve outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people

- Aboriginal children and young people have been provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of cultural identity.

At the departmental level examples of cultural responsiveness include:

- learning environments are culturally safe spaces where the cultural diversity and voices of Aboriginal people are recognised and respected

- committing to the provision and ongoing development of resources to support the learning outcomes of Aboriginal children and young people

- all providers of professional learning embody the principles and deliver culturally responsive outcomes

- the number of Aboriginal teachers and leaders continues to grow and is supported with capability, development and career pathways to thrive.

"Like we consider the numeracy and literacy indicators when planning, we need to consider culturally responsive indicators"
– Survey particpant

Policy development

Knowing looks like:

- understanding that Aboriginal people have diverse views and experiences and that one voice does not speak for all Aboriginal people

- understanding there are policies that specifically relate to Aboriginal staff, children and families

- understanding the requirement to be culturally inclusive and sensitive to the diverse needs of Aboriginal children, students and families when developing policy

- understanding the requirement to complete an Aboriginal Impact Statement as part of the development of any new policy

- understanding cross portfolio and whole of government issues and priorities as they impact Aboriginal people and communities

- identifying the range of Aboriginal stakeholders and the dynamics of engaging with them respectfully

- acknowledging possible unintended consequences or disproportionate impact of 'mainstream' government policy on Aboriginal people and identifying options to mitigate risk.

Doing looks like:

- reading and following policies as they relate to the Aboriginal workforce, children and families

- regularly reviewing your policies, processes and procedures to ensure they remain relevant and inclusive of emerging needs and issues for Aboriginal staff, children and families

- seeking advice from a diverse range of Aboriginal people and organisations within and external to the department

- seeking the inclusion of diverse Aboriginal voice and knowledge at the beginning and throughout the development of policies and procedures

- drawing on evidence through appropriate resources, knowledge, networks and consultation to form policy development

- sharing the vision for success by actively engaging Aboriginal internal and external stakeholders in policy development

- recognising and attributing the expertise and contributions of Aboriginal people in developing policy

- ensuring you employ a range of strategies and processes to engage and consult with Aboriginal staff, families and students as one size will not fit all

- ensuring adequate time is built into the process to ensure appropriate consultation can occur.

Being looks like:

- creating opportunities to connect and partner with other agencies in our sphere of influence on policy development that impacts Aboriginal people

- developing and embedding cultural design principles to guide the policy development from the beginning

- partnering and seeking the advice of the Aboriginal Education Directorate, ensuring they are kept aware of policy work and projects that may be occurring within your directorate to ensure joined up work can occur

- creating a shared understanding of the cultural issues on policy

- showing respect and professionalism towards Aboriginal people and communities throughout the policy development process

- advocating for change and addressing issues of racism and bias within policies and at the operational level

- working with and alongside Aboriginal staff during the formation of policy and championing of issues.

At the personal level examples of cultural responsiveness include:

- potential and actual impacts on Aboriginal staff, children and young people and communities are considered during all policy development

- culturally specific input from appropriate Aboriginal people and resources is included in policy development and implementation

- creating regular meetings with Aboriginal Education Directorate and Aboriginal staff across the department to raise your own awareness of emerging issues related to policy for Aboriginal people.

At the departmental level examples of cultural responsiveness include:

- Aboriginal voice is a requirement of all policy development and implementation

- appropriate internal mechanisms are developed to provide policy advice and feedback

- appropriate methods are developed to provide community feedback on departmental policy.

"Policy formulation must include Aboriginal voices at all stages – not as an add on element"
– Survey particpant

Implementing the Framework

The department is committed to providing resources to support every employee in their culturally responsive journey. This includes a learning support program and a suite of other formal and informal resources.

These resources will target specific needs across our workforce and will provide practical, engaging ways for you to increase your cultural responsiveness and support our Aboriginal workforce.

To find out more, visit edi.sa.edu.au/CRF.

Measuring success

We are committed to:

- developing culturally safe workplaces in which the environment, structures, policies and processes enable Aboriginal employees to fully participate, feel valued and supported

- ensuring that the voices of Aboriginal employees are heard and respected and centre them in decision making relating to their work

- developing all employees to respond respectfully and responsively when engaging with Aboriginal people, children and young people, families and communities

- developing a plan to ensure that our cultural responsiveness is measured in an objective and meaningful way against our vision and establishing a baseline from which we can monitor our progress

- monitoring the implementation of the framework to ensure fidelity with its purpose.

We will measure our success through:

- feedback from our Aboriginal workforce that the department values their views, preferences, experience and knowledge and that it informs and influences decisions

- Aboriginal employees provide feedback that they are well supported and feel safe in the workplace

- department-wide increased understanding of, and engagement with, Aboriginal cultures and communities

- the uptake by employees of learning support programs that support us towards being a culturally responsive organisation

- non-Aboriginal employees demonstrating their understanding of Aboriginal cultures in their everyday practices and interactions

- having a strong Aboriginal workforce who are actively engaged at all levels across the department

- improved educational outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people,

Examples of great practice are already happening within the department at many levels.
Across our school communities there are many incredible ways we have acknowledged and raised awareness of Aboriginal achievements, histories and stories, and through progression
on our cultural responsiveness journey we will expand, amplify and extend these opportunities.

Glossary of Terms

This glossary explains some of the terms used in the Culturally Responsive Framework and more broadly. It is designed to support you in developing your understanding of Aboriginal Australia.

Aboriginal people

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the First Peoples of Australia. To identify, a person must be:

- of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent
- identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person; and
- be accepted as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person by the community in which they live.

It should be noted however that this definition is problematic given the colonial history of Australia and the impact of forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from their Country and their culture.

The department recognises that Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a great diversity of cultures, histories, and values. For the sake of readability, and in recognition that the term Indigenous is a sensitive one for many Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, the Culturally Responsive Framework uses the term 'Aboriginal', which includes Torres Strait Islander people.

There are over 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language groups within Australia. Whilst there are accepted Commonwealth definitions, most Aboriginal people identify at their state or local level and may often have family connections in many communities. For example, at the greater regional level, Aboriginal people may refer to themselves as:

- 'Anangu' (people from south-west Central Australia. Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Ngaanyatjarra Nations)
- 'Nunga' (South Australia)
- 'Noongar' (Western Australia)
- 'Koorie' (New South Wales and Victoria, some parts of Tasmania)
- 'Murrie' (Queensland and some parts of New South Wales)
- 'Palawa' (Tasmania)
- 'Yolngu/Yolŋu' (from upper Northern Territory throughout Arnhem Land and island communities).

At the local level language groups can be further defined. Examples from South Australia include:

- Kaurna (Adelaide plains)
- Ngarrindjeri (Coorong and Murray Lower Lakes)
- Narungga (Yorke Pennisula)
- Mirning (West Coast)
- Kokatha (northern region of South Australia).

Acknowledgement of Country

An Acknowledgement of Country is generally offered at the beginning of a meeting, speech or formal occasion and is a way of showing respect for Aboriginal heritage and the ongoing relationship of Traditional Owners to the land on which the event is occurring. It can be delivered by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Acknowledging diversity

Given the diversity of Aboriginal cultures and identities across Australia, advice should be sought from Aboriginal people in your local area regarding appropriate protocols and the preferred use of terminology.

[Ways of] Being

Is demonstrating authentic respect for Aboriginal cultures in all interactions. Being aware of personal values and biases and their impact on others. Having integrity and cultural sensitivity in decision-making. Continuously building capability across all three domains of 'Knowing, Being and Doing'.

Colonisation

Colonisation is the process by which conquest and control of other people's territories is enacted. It largely ignored existing geographical, social and cultural divisions and distinctive forms of law and political governance that already existed in the places that were colonised (Bignall, 2010). In the context of Australia, the British Empire went even further and declared Australia 'Terra Nullius' (land belonging to no-one).

The department acknowledges that Aboriginal people and their Nations have endured past injustices and dispossession as a result of colonisation and that the impact continues to be intergenerational.

[Aboriginal] Community

Community for Aboriginal people is a complex notion incorporating cultural groups, geographic groups or groups and organisations sharing common interests. Community as a term can also be used to describe a shared view amongst Aboriginal people (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018).

Country/Place

The concept of Country is widely understood and used across Australia by Aboriginal people. It represents the spiritual, physical and cultural connection that Aboriginal people have to their land and recognises that Aboriginal lore and spirituality are intertwined with the land, the people and creation and this forms their cultural identity and sovereignty. Country takes in everything within the landscape – landforms, waters, air, trees, rocks, plants, animals, foods, medicines, minerals, stories, and special places. Community connections include cultural practices, knowledge, songs, stories and art, as well as all people: past, present and future (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2018, p. 26).

Cultural awareness

Cultural awareness is the ability to recognise that others may have differing world views based on their culture.

Glossary of Terms

Cultural capability

Cultural capability is a set of behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together to allow people to work effectively in cross-cultural situations and create cultural responsiveness. It is key to building respectful relationships and encompasses cultural safety, cultural competency and cultural awareness and is a process of continuous learning.

A culturally responsive organisation emphasises the advantages of Aboriginal cultural diversity, celebrates the contributions of culture to learning, encourages the positive outcomes of interacting with Aboriginal cultures, and supports the sharing of power among people. Building culturally responsive organisations requires cultural capability, broadening individual perspectives about how people think about other cultures, how they communicate, and how they operate. It means that the organisational structure, leadership, and activities must reflect the broader society in which they are located.

Cultural protocols

Protocols are ethical principles that guide behaviour in a particular situation and can change and evolve over time depending on how much they influence our lives and can be different from one community to the next. Quite simply it means following the customs and lore/law of the people or community you are working with and communicating in a way that is relevant to them. A lack of understanding of cultural protocols can lead to miscommunication, misunderstanding and misrepresentation of information as well as a breakdown of trust and respect.

Cultural respect

The recognition, protection and continued advancement of the inherent rights, cultures, languages, and traditions of Aboriginal peoples.

Culturally responsive (relevant) pedagogy

Is a learner-centred approach to teaching in which the learner's unique cultural strengths are identified and nurtured to promote achievement and a sense of wellbeing about the learner's cultural place in the world. Culturally responsive pedagogy is divided into 3 functional dimensions: the institutional dimension, the personal dimension, and the instructional dimension (Anne Morrison, 2019).

Cultural safety

Is an environment which is spiritually, socially, emotionally and physically safe for people, where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need.

Cultural wellbeing

For Aboriginal people culture is intrinsically linked to wellbeing and includes connection to Country, using traditional knowledges and practices, language and identity.

Culture

The distinctive ideas, customs, social behaviour, meanings, laws and values that are shared by a particular group of people, and which together form the foundation for the way they live. A shared culture enables people to communicate with each other, behave in an accepted way and do things together towards common ends. Culture is acquired and transmitted by people over generations, through written means, oral traditions, participating in group activities and the socialisation of young children (Australian Indigenous Governance Institute, 2021).

Direct (overt) racial discrimination

Occurs when one person or group of people receive less favourable treatment than another person or group in the same position would have received on the grounds of their race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission).

[Ways of] Doing

Taking action in a culturally responsive way. Synthesis and articulation of Aboriginal Ways of Knowing and Ways of Being (Mirraboopa, 2003).

Dreaming

The Dreaming may have varied meanings for a range of Aboriginal language groups. The Dreaming can be seen as the embodiment of Aboriginal creation which gives meaning to the significance of place.
It establishes the rules governing relationships between the people, the land and all things for Aboriginal peoples and is connected to the past, the present and the future.

Elder

Key person within Aboriginal communities who is respected and consulted due to their experience, wisdom, knowledge, background and insight. Often described as the 'custodians of knowledge' or the 'libraries' of a community. Elder does not necessarily equate with age.

First Nations people

The term 'First Nations' or 'First Nations people' recognises Aboriginal people as the sovereign people of this land. It goes further than 'First Australians' as it recognises various language groups as separate and unique sovereign nations. It is widely used to describe the First Peoples in Canada and other countries across the globe. Over recent years, the use of this term has grown in popularity. It is a better choice than many outdated and offensive terms.

Human rights

The Australian Human Rights Commission notes the following definitions of Human Rights:

- the recognition and respect of peoples' dignity
- a set of moral and legal guidelines that promote and protect a recognition of our values, our identity and ability to ensure an adequate standard of living
- the basic standards by which we can identify and measure inequality and fairness
- those rights associated with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Identity

Identity comes from one's own self-awareness and self-image. Identity links with connections to place, people, histories, language(s) and time. Identity is a sensitive issue pertaining to Australian history and the dispossession of Aboriginal peoples. Educators need to be aware that dispossession of identity is a core component of the colonising process and leads to definitions that are not natural or helpful. Be cautious that learning environment language does not use identity terminology that dilutes self-awareness and self-image and diminishes the Aboriginal voice.

Indigenous Australian

Australia's Indigenous peoples are 2 distinct cultural groups made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. However, there is great diversity within these 2 broadly described groups exemplified by the over 250 different language groups spread across the nation. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples also have their own laws and customs to determine the membership of their group. Do not use the acronyms of ATSI or TSI.

Glossary of Terms

Kinship or Kin

Kinship is a term that describes family relationships and ties within a community. Aboriginal kinship rules and lore are diverse and rooted in history and tradition. Some communities maintain strong traditional kindship ties, while others maintain strong kinship ties based on social and family histories. Principles of kinship, community connectedness and obligation continue despite policies of colonisation, assimilation and protection.

[Ways of] Knowing

Gaining knowledge of Aboriginal culture, customs, histories and place-based circumstances and understanding the impact of current and past government actions, policies and practices on Aboriginal people's way of life.

NAIDOC

This acronym stands for National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee. National celebrations are held each year from the first to the second Sunday in July, which celebrate and recognise the rich cultural history of Aboriginal Australia.

Place-based

A 'place-based' lens ensures connection to a specific socio-geographical location. For example, a place-based approach in Adelaide would connect with Kaurna culture, language, values, perspectives and issues to ensure it authenticity. This is important as place can have a significant impact on wellbeing and provides a sense of belonging.

Racism

Racism can include racial discrimination, racial vilification, and racial harassment. It can be a direct (overt) dislike of, unfair treatment of, or harassment of another person or group of people on the basis of differences mainly due to nationality, ethnicity, language, culture, colour or ancestry. It can also be indirect (covert) through policies or systems that have the effect of disadvantaging or excluding a person or group because of race, ethnicity, or culture.

Racial discrimination and vilification is unlawful under several State and Commonwealth Acts. Under Australian law, racial discrimination is defined as:

"a distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of any human right or fundamental freedom in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life." (Racial Discrimination Act 1975) (Department for Education, 2021)

Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a process of improving, renewing or transforming relations between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. The Commonwealth Government established Reconciliation Australia to progress to promote reconciliation in Australia. The 5 dimensions of reconciliation include:

- race relations
- equality and equity
- institutional integrity
- unity
- and historical acceptance (Reconciliation Australia, n.d.).

Self-determination

Is the right of Aboriginal people as a collective to determine how their lives are governed; participate in decisions that affect them; to exercise control over their own lives and development and to live well according to their cultural values and beliefs (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2021).

Social justice

Is a fairness that manifests itself in society. It is underpinned by the principles of human rights, access, participation and equity and includes the rights of all people to economic and social independence and to be empowered to determine the direction of their own lived futures.

Sorry business

The cultural understanding of sorry business relates to grief or loss. People who are related to the deceased are required to fulfil certain cultural obligations in the funerary ceremonies. These obligations vary from group to group. The time and length of mourning periods and ceremonies differ from community to community, and family to family.

Sovereignty

The legal recognition of ownership of land and territory. Implicit in the concept is the right of self-government. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have never ceded their sovereignty over Australia.

Traditional Custodians/Owners

'Traditional Owners' is an English term from the Northern Territory Land Rights Act and refers to Aboriginal decision-making. It refers to a group of Aboriginal people who belong to a certain area of land ('Country') and have the cultural obligation to maintain it. The term 'custodians' considers that in Aboriginal culture the land owns its people (and not vice versa), while 'owners' gives credit to the fact that it is Aboriginal land (both terms are in use).

Welcome to Country

A Welcome to Country is delivered by traditional custodians of that country, or those who are given permission by the traditional owners to do so (AIATSIS, 2021) and occurs at the beginning of a formal event. It can take many forms including singing, dancing, smoking ceremonies or a speech in traditional language or English.

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Behrendt, L (2018). Indigenous Australia for Dummies. 2nd edition. Provides a comprehensive, relevant, and accessible look at all aspects of Indigenous Australian history and culture

AIATSIS (2019). The Little Red Yellow Black Book: An introduction to Indigenous Australia. Whilst this is a useful reference for all staff that introduces the rich cultures and histories of Australia's First Peoples it has been specifically developed as a resource to assist teacher's intercultural understanding and support professional knowledge and proficiency

Shayana, Kaurna Plains School

Anonymous, Kaurna Plains School

The Journey of Success

This artwork represents that the journey of success for a young Aboriginal person is shaped by a solid foundation in learning and development.

Commencing at the bottom left corner, the first meeting place represents the baby being born and the antenatal and early childhood care provided to the mother and family.

The journey then continues along the pathway to the next meeting place, which represents preschool entry.

Subsequent meeting places depict learning, meeting teachers and friends along the way, represented by the dots, and reaching a culmination point represented by the next meeting place before continuing on the journey.

The meeting places outside of the pathway represent families and their support of learning and development.

The patchwork background represents the many different communities that students come from, with the blue representing coastal and the earth brown representing inland.

The artwork gradient gradually gets lighter and culminates with the bright yellow star and sun symbol in the top right of the artwork, depicting the successful outcome of going to preschool and school.

The original artwork, Journey of Success, was created by Jordan Lovegrove from the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Nation specifically for the Department for Education in South Australia. The artwork symbolises the intent of the Aboriginal Education Strategy and the Culturally Responsive Framework.