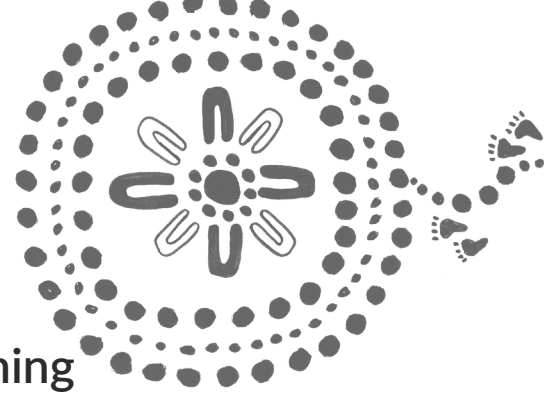




Walk the Talk



Culturally Competent Teaching

Use this guide to develop inclusive and culturally appropriate activities in the classroom. Please note that the criteria below are guidelines only. Please do speak with, and actively listen to, local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations if you are unsure if a resource or prospective classroom activity is appropriate, and seek their advice around which resources and learning experiences would be most relevant and meaningful to your local context.

- ⦿ Unless relevant permissions have been obtained, discourage students from copying or using Aboriginal signs or symbols in their own art-making. Doing so not only runs the risk of infringing on intellectual property and copyright, it may also disrespect particular cultural protocols around who has the authority to share certain symbols and stories through art. Students should be encouraged to develop their own symbolic visual language when creating their artworks for the Schools Reconciliation Challenge.
- ⦿ Ensure that all resources used are culturally sensitive and appropriate. If in doubt, consult with Aboriginal people/advisors in your local community or the NSW Reconciliation.
- ⦿ Integrate other aspects of Aboriginal art and culture, such as the oral story telling traditions, the performing arts, music, and dance wherever possible.
- ⦿ Avoid aspects of Aboriginal art containing secret and or sacred information. It is inappropriate to address this area in classroom situations. However, it is important that students are informed about this issue and learn to respect it. Aboriginal artists or advisors may provide some background to this issue.
- ⦿ Encourage an understanding of the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and visual arts conventions as dynamic living cultures, which, like all cultures, continually create and respond to change whilst referring to and building upon their histories. It is important for teachers and students to understand that whilst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts cultures are connected to tens of thousands of years of history they are also contemporary and have an important role in community life and a variety of other spaces today.
- ⦿ Follow appropriate cultural protocols when engaging with artworks by Aboriginal artists who have passed away. Ensure that students are aware that, in some Aboriginal communities, the mentioning of names and display of photographs of people who have passed away is considered disrespectful. Permission must be sought from the family members of the deceased person prior to showing images of the artist or displaying images of his or her artwork.
- ⦿ Ensure that any references to, or representation of, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander art, artists, cultures and communities are carefully contextualised and explained, by making specific reference to place, time, people and events. Avoid generalisations and stereotypes by drawing attention to the rich diversity that exists both within and between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and communities.
- ⦿ Recognise how contemporary Aboriginal art can adapt Western art forms and new technologies and media, and still communicate cultural knowledge and express Aboriginality.
- ⦿ Keep informed of significant developments and innovations in the ways Aboriginal art practice, forms and media change over time. There are numerous magazines, catalogues and newspapers that have current information.

Providing meaningful learning opportunities for Aboriginal students

- ⦿ Wherever possible employ Aboriginal artists and local community members, to work with the students in the classroom.
- ⦿ It is important to recognise some of the complexities of inter-personal or inter-cultural sharing. It is not always appropriate to expect people's personal or cultural knowledges to be shared. Be careful not to place expectations on Aboriginal community members or students to share details of their histories and cultures.
- ⦿ Enrich the classroom environment by displaying positive affirmations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, art and other contributions.
- ⦿ Provide Aboriginal students with opportunities to affirm their cultural identity if they choose to do so. Do not assume that all students will have the desire to do this. Recognise that Aboriginal students, like other students, learn in a variety of ways, and come from cultures with rich and diverse educative and creative arts methods and practices. Teachers need to be flexible in their delivery of programs and be responsive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' learning styles and preferences.
- ⦿ Acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students may speak a language other than English. Some students may speak an Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander language, a Kriol language, or Aboriginal English, for example.
- ⦿ Develop an awareness of how to create supportive, healthy and engaging learning environments for Aboriginal students.
- ⦿ Engage with the Aboriginal Education Assistants within your school, and with representatives from your local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group to support the development of your teaching/learning approaches and activities.
- ⦿ Acknowledge that some Aboriginal students may need time to participate in important cultural and familial commitments and events (such as Sorry Business) that teachers will need to be respectful and supportive of.

Terminology

Terminology changes over time within Aboriginal culture and communities. The following is a selection of terms to help teachers with the sensitive implementation of the units of work.

- ⦿ 'Aboriginal people' is the preferred term. Aborigine is an outdated term and can offend some Aboriginal people.
- ⦿ In any writing activity, the word Aboriginal should always be written using a capital 'A'.
- ⦿ It is unacceptable to use the terms half-caste or full blood when referring to Aboriginal people. This is highly offensive.
- ⦿ Use terms such as group, nation, language group or cultural group rather than the word tribe, as it is now outdated terminology.
- ⦿ Avoid using words such as legends and myths when referring to the Dreaming or Dreaming stories. Dreaming is preferred to Dreamtime as the latter refers to the past, and is not inclusive of the present and the future.
- ⦿ Torres Strait Islanders do not consider themselves Aboriginal people. There are similarities and differences between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.
- ⦿ Torres Strait Islanders refer to their traditional stories as legends rather than dreaming stories.
- ⦿ Aboriginal people will often refer to themselves as Koori, Murri, Noonga etc. These names refer to a particular group or area to which they belong. They are not general terms and should not be used as such.

**For further information on cultural safety and respect in the classroom
go to www.narragunnawali.org.au**