

A guideline for establishing cultural safety when teaching South Australian Aboriginal historical and cultural contexts

Every child or young person has the right to feel safe in a school situation. Creating safe conditions for rigorous learning through the provision of supported yet challenging conditions provides learners with increased opportunities for high-quality learning (Government of South Australia, Department of Education and Children's Services 2010).

Safe conditions include the concept of cultural safety, defined as an environment which is spiritually, socially, and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people; 'where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning together with dignity and truly listening' (Eckermann et al 1994 cited in Williams 1999).

Developing cultural safety in classrooms requires:

- facilitating the delivery of curriculum and learning through strengthening Aboriginal input, and valuing and respecting Aboriginal knowledge, language, culture, and histories (Department for Education 2019)
- teaching for effective learning by creating safe conditions for rigorous learning through:
 - developing democratic relationships
 - building a community of learners
 - negotiating learning
 - supporting and challenging students to achieve high standards (Government of South Australia 2010)
- recognising that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people come with a wide range of cultural/life experiences and knowledges from metropolitan, regional, and remote contexts
- supporting students in classroom interactions to be respectful of individuals' beliefs and values through establishing ground rules for group discussions. Actively discourage student language and/or behaviour that is racist or discriminatory or demonstrates belief(s) in the superiority of one's own ethnicity. For further information, please refer to <https://racismnoway.com.au/>
- being aware that not all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people have depth and breadth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges. Strongly consider the appropriateness of requesting a student to share information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, as students may not hold the knowledge, have permission to share knowledge, or feel comfortable sharing
- you to establish ongoing processes to reflect upon potential impacts of teaching and learning practices within your school context to ensure students' learning experiences support their 'dignity and security; participation; identities and inclusivity; access to information; and privacy' (Osler and Starkey 2006).

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