

Protocols and considerations for use of Learning Country (iSee VC) and associated zones

Acknowledgement of country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, sky and waterways on which we work and educate.

Background

What is cultural capability?

It is the integration of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices and attitudes to produce better outcomes for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, 2018). Cultural capability is observable, measurable and clearly demonstrates outcomes for individuals, teams, managers, leaders, processes and systems in schools and workplaces.

Cultural capability is a process of continuous learning in all three domains of effective practice, 'knowing, doing, and being':

Knowing - Knowing and understanding history, culture, customs, beliefs and local circumstances.

Doing - Culturally appropriate action and behaviour.

Being - Awareness, authenticity and openness to examining own values, beliefs and biases and their impact on others. Having integrity and cultural sensitivity in decision-making.

[Learn more](#)

Cultural capability – teaching

In culturally capable schools we provide opportunity for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people to thrive in their early years and achieve success in our schools. Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students see themselves, their identities and their cultures reflected in the curriculum of each of the learning areas. The [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority](#) is designed for each local community, enabling all students to engage in reconciliation, respect and recognition of the world's oldest continuous living cultures.

Use of Learning Country for virtual learning within the iSee platform - protocols

The Learning country map and associated zones have been developed with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to provide a culturally reflective and respectful learning area in which teachers can develop, apply and evaluate pedagogical practices known to be effective in engaging, challenging and promoting successful learning for both Indigenous and non-indigenous students.

Prior to use of the Learning Country map features, teachers should consider the "knowing, doing and being" implications of their use of the zone to ensure the best possible outcomes for their student's learning.

These protocols provide a practical guide to the use of the zone within the context of the Department's guidance on developing [cultural capability](#).

Purpose of Learning Country map and zones:

To create a culturally responsive virtual learning area for all students, with specific focus on:

- providing a welcoming and supportive learning environment that respects the cultures and experiences of Indigenous students.
- building collaborative relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, non-Indigenous students and teachers.
- provides flexibility and inclusive choices in context and practice of effective online teaching and delivery to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to achieve meaningful educational outcomes.
- recognises the diverse perspectives that Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students bring to the content being taught.
- Supports and enables Aboriginal students and Torres Strait Islander students to identify and achieve their aspirations.

Design considerations underpinning the Learning Country map:

- Acknowledges contribution of Indigenous people and their guidance for the project.
- Digital learning principles from Griffith University and QVSA collaboration – student centered space that drives peer interaction, curiosity and inquiry.
- Pedagogies and symbols from Tyson Yunkaporta's thesis, [Aboriginal pedagogies at the cultural interface](#) and supporting document [eight-way aboriginal pedagogy framework](#).
 - Story sharing – learning through narrative
 - Learning maps – explicitly mapping/visualising processes
 - Non-verbal – applying intra-personal and kinaesthetic skills to thinking/learning.
 - Symbols and images – using these to understand concepts.
 - Land links – place-based learning, linking content to local land and place
 - Non-linear – producing innovations and understanding by thinking laterally.
 - Deconstruct/reconstruct – modelling and scaffolding
 - Community links – applying learning for community benefit.

Learning Country Map and associated zones:

Learning Country (2D map) is a gateway to the 3D engagement zones, including:

- On Country zone
- Our Art, Our Stories zone
- Experience Country (name to be finalised) zones “Journey to Country”
- Learning Map zone



On Country zone:

- Series of learning areas designed for implementation of [eight-way aboriginal pedagogy framework](#).
 - o Beach
 - o Freshwater area
 - o Mangroves
 - o Fire pits and yarning circles
 - o Gorge/canyon
 - o Waterfall
 - o Forest
- [Yarning Circles](#) are used to learn from a collective group, build respectful relationships and to preserve and pass on cultural knowledge.

Our Art, Our Stories zone:

- Art gallery of images and reflections from ATSIAP Regional Art Challenge.

Experience Country zone:

- 3D image used to connect students to community and country.

Note: Permission to take photos and use in the holodecks must be obtained from Traditional owners of the country. Staff must consult with the Community Education Counsellor or Indigenous Education worker who will link with Elders of the area. If a school doesn't have a Community Education Counsellor or further advice is required, staff must discuss with the Regional Community Education Counsellor of the Department of Education region. Spiritual connection can be compromised if inappropriate recording and use of an image takes place.

Learning Map zone:

- Abstract thinking and maps of learning

Cultural awareness:

- Staff should:
 - o Complete Crossing Cultures Appreciation workshop – contact regional Community Education Counsellor for information.
 - o Contact and work with local community elders to understand community protocols, that are relevant to the learning goals, and observe these when engaging with community.

Cultural communication:

- Ensure that acknowledgement to country is part of the lesson routine with recognition of the country of the students who are participating, as these may extend across the State and nation. Students should be encouraged to be active participants in this acknowledgement.
- Use appropriate and accepted language and terminology, recognising that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly in remote communities, speak English as an additional language or dialect.
- Clearly communicate the objectives and outcomes sought from the engagement process.
- Gain consent to take photos of students