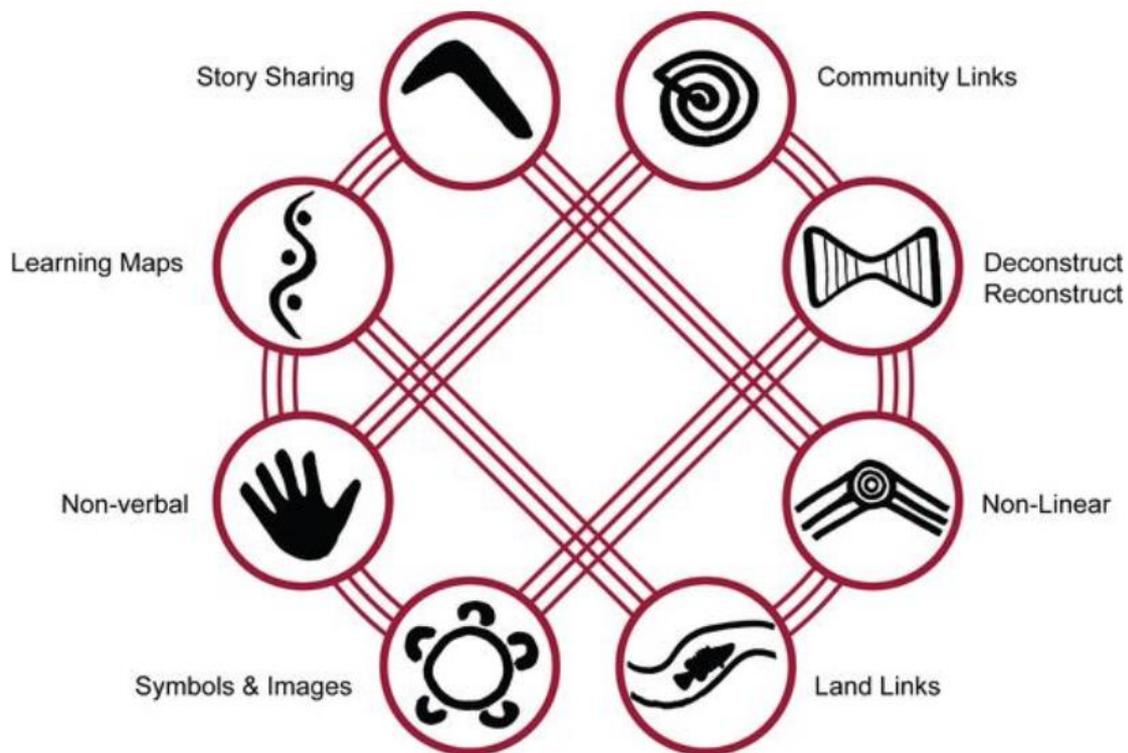




Aboriginal Pedagogies and Practice

When looking to incorporate Aboriginal Pedagogies and Practice into the classroom and school a great resource to look at is the '8 Ways' of learning website (<https://www.8ways.online/>)

8 Aboriginal Ways of Learning



Aboriginal perspectives are not found in Aboriginal content, but Aboriginal processes...



8 Ways

This Aboriginal pedagogy framework is expressed as eight interconnected pedagogies involving narrative-driven learning, visualised learning processes, hands-on/reflective techniques, use of symbols/metaphors, land-based learning, indirect/synergistic logic, modelled/scaffolded genre mastery, and connectedness to community. But these can change in different settings.

About 8 Ways

8ways is something that grew out of a particular ethic, a way of working that goes beyond cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity and even cultural responsiveness. It is all about relational responsiveness, a protocol of attending to relational obligations to the field you're working in, relating and responding holistically to people, land, culture, language, spirit and the relationships between these with integrity and intellectual rigour. 8ways is a point of entry into this way of knowing. It is a way to develop relationally responsive practice in the way you work with your Aboriginal community.

This is a pedagogy framework that allows teachers to include Aboriginal perspectives by using Aboriginal learning techniques. In this way, focus can remain on core curriculum content while embedding Aboriginal perspectives in every lesson. It came from a research project involving DET staff, James Cook University's School of Indigenous Studies and the Western New South Wales Regional Aboriginal Education Team between 2007 and 2009. AECG and SERAP approval was granted for the project.

8ways

1. **Story Sharing:** Approaching learning through narrative.
2. **Learning Maps:** Explicitly mapping/visualising processes.
3. **Non-verbal:** Applying intra-personal and kinaesthetic skills to thinking and learning.
4. **Symbols and Images:** Using images and metaphors to understand concepts and content.
5. **Land Links:** Place-based learning, linking content to local land and place.
6. **Non-linear:** Producing innovations and understanding by thinking laterally or combining systems.



7. **Deconstruct/Reconstruct:** Modelling and scaffolding, working from wholes to parts (watch then do).
8. **Community Links:** Centring local viewpoints, applying learning for community benefit.

HOW WE LEARN - CULTURE WAY

1. We connect through the stories we share.
2. We picture our pathways of knowledge.
3. We see, think, act, make and share without words.
4. We keep and share knowledge with art and objects.
5. We work with lessons from land and nature.
6. We put different ideas together and create new knowledge.
7. We work from wholes to parts, watching and then doing.
8. We bring new knowledge home to help our mob.

The joining lines are as important as the pedagogies themselves. Values, protocols, systems and processes refer to the ways of valuing (axiology), ways of being (ontology - protocols are rules for how to be), ways of knowing (epistemology) and ways of doing (methodology). When you engage with Indigenous communities at this level, you truly have the potential to embed broad and deep Indigenous perspectives.

UNDERSTANDINGS

Since the initial reporting for the 8ways research in 2009, many people have reached a more nuanced understanding of both the philosophy and the eight elements themselves.

Of the philosophy, it is now understood by a number of teachers and community members that 8ways is about identifying local Aboriginal

- values
- systems
- protocols
- processes

Then integrating these into the mainstream schooling system. These four can be found on the diagonal lines in the 8ways diagram, as follows:

The element of “**Story Sharing**” is now understood by more practitioners in terms of Aboriginal yarning modalities, narrative as pedagogy, narrative as process, narrative



as ethics/values, storied experience, cultural meaning-making, place-based significance, and as dynamic frameworks for memory and cognition.

The element of “**Learning Maps**” is now understood by more practitioners in terms of Aboriginal intellectual processes that can be visualised using metaphors grounded in culture and country. More people are using this in their planning and as a tool for communicating explicit quality criteria.

The element of “**Non-verbal**” pedagogy is now understood by more practitioners in terms of Aboriginal ways of relating and connecting to knowledge reflectively, critically, ancestrally and physically. Teachers are using this primarily for behaviour management and problematic knowledge.

The element of “**Symbol/Image**” is now understood by more practitioners as a visual metalanguage, the building blocks for memory and the making of meaning, which is cross-cultural and dynamic. Teachers are finding this useful in helping students to understand and remember new concepts. Increasingly, it is being understood more as "metaphor", with images being created orally as well as visually in support of learning new concepts.

The element of “**Land Links**” is now understood by more practitioners in terms of Aboriginal concepts of place and country – a dynamic set of relationships containing vast schematics, knowledge systems and intellectual processes that can guide and enrich school systems and curricula.

The element of “**Non-linear**” pedagogy is now understood by more practitioners in terms of Aboriginal traditions of cultural innovation through the interaction of cultural systems, which can be applied today to a more productive integration of community and school knowledge. It is also known as a way of approaching higher order thinking by incorporating seemingly unrelated domains to create complex, real-life problems to be solved by learners using holistic thinking and innovative processes.

The element of “**Deconstruct/Reconstruct**” is now understood by more practitioners in terms of Aboriginal scaffolding methodologies that engage with whole processes and texts, modelling and building upon students' basic skills and identities and then transferring these successfully from familiar to unfamiliar contexts.

The element of “**Community Links**” is now understood by more practitioners in terms of Aboriginal relationships with both insiders and outsiders, and the centrality of these relationships to the development and acquisition of all knowledge. We know that any learning (or program, or policy) that fails to connect to this system of relationships will ultimately fail.



Teachers can use Aboriginal processes to:

- 1. Foster pride and confidence in Aboriginal intellectual capacity**
the students need to feel that they are equals in the classrooms as the non-indigenous students. They need to feel comfortable in their environment to have the confidence to learn and grow as a person
- 2. Find common links between mainstream practice and Indigenous ways**
tie the indigenous students sense of community and storytelling to all subjects being learned. The students need to see the link between their study and how it can help them contribute to their community.
- 3. Help students understand aspects of mainstream content**
incorporate the students into modern ways of learning. Develop their appreciation for technology, science and maths.
- 4. Indigenize the learning environment/ curriculum content**
Find indigenous people in history who have made a contribution to that particular field of study being learned. Connect the curriculum to indigenous storytelling and how it relates to their community.
- 5. Inform Behaviour management approaches**
Students need to conduct themselves in the appropriate manner in the classroom so all students can make the most of their learning experience
- 6. Change paradigms in and out of the classroom**
Change the way the students think about themselves, their education and their ability to absorb and learn a topic
- 7. Inform the structure of lessons, units and courses**
the indigenous students need to understand that learning needs to be done under a particular structure in the modern day classroom.
- 8. Increase the intellectual rigor of learning activities**
Make the learning visual. Incorporate hands on learning. Utilize technology as a tool for innovative learning.
- 9. Inform understandings/ innovations of systems and processes**
Reinforce the ever developing technology which is relevant to learning and how best to apply these technologies to enhance learning
- 10. Implicitly ground all teaching and learning in Aboriginal ways of knowing**
Apply themes of indigenous storytelling and community to the classroom and incorporate these themes in the curriculum.