

Cultural Standpoint Questionnaire

These questions were developed from a lesson on identity in Rhonda Ashby's Aboriginal Studies class at Lightning Ridge, and inspired by the work of Dr Karen Martin, Noonuccal woman and Aboriginal researcher. These questions are designed for you to reflect on your own unique cultural standpoint, no matter where you are from in this world. The process of constructing an Indigenous standpoint methodology is:

1. Figure out your **ontology** (what you believe is real)
2. Figure out your **epistemology** (way of thinking about that reality)
3. From this develop your **methodology** (tools to make your epistemology further inform your ontology)
4. Do these steps within a framework of your **axiology** (ethics and values)

1. Ontology (Ways of being)

Where do you belong? Who do you belong to?

.....

..

How do you know that something is real?

.....

..

List some of the things that you know are real:

.....

..

From the following sets, select the orientations you most identify with:

Salt water / fresh water

High ground / low ground

Open country / forest

Wet / dry

Warm / cool

Hills / plains / ridges / mountains / coast

Fur / feathers / scales / fins

Wood / rock / earth / wind / fire

Sand / dirt / rock

Red soil / black soil

Mother's side / Father's side

Where are your ancestors from and how do you connect with / relate to them?

.....

How are you accountable for maintaining relationships with ancestors, people and the environment? What are your personal consequences for damaging these relationships?

.....

How will the knowledge you have learned in this life be passed on, and to whom?

.....
What things in your life – world must change, and what must always be the same?

2. Epistemology (Ways of knowing)

How did you know the answers so far – how did you learn these things?

.....
Sketch a diagram of the way you solve problems. What shape does this take for you?

When you access knowledge from memory, what form does that take in your head? (E.g. images, sounds, print, language, shapes).....

.....
What are the stories that have had the biggest impact on how you relate to the world around you? (Might be books, films, oral histories, fables etc).....

.....
What symbols are most meaningful for you? (E.g. crucifix, icon, flag)

How do these symbols impact on your life and work?
.....
.....

.....
What sorts of things do you know implicitly, without having been taught?

3. Methodology (Ways of doing)

Do you learn new knowledge best with others, for others, alone or for yourself?
.....

What is the most effective process for learning something new? List steps:
.....
.....

Do you internalise new knowledge through dialogue, reflection or both?

.....

Do you achieve learning outcomes at the end of a process or during the process?

What are the signs you look for to know if what you are doing is right?

.....

.....

..

What does it usually take for you to change your mind about something?

.....

..

What are your main cultural practices, your ways of expressing your culture? (E.g. singing, sport, events, rituals) How do these cultural practices impact on the way you do your work?

.....

.....

..

4. Axiology (Ways of valuing)

What is truth?

.....

.. What would be your top three rules / protocols for living?

i.

ii.

iii.

Top three for learning?

i.

ii.

iii.

What is the most important thing in the world for you?

.....

How did you learn your values?

Where did they come from?

Reflection on Cultural Standpoint Quiz:

Now, track back through your responses and find the points that relate to:

1. Stories and histories:

2. Knowledge pathways/processes:

3. Unspoken/instinctive/ancestral knowledge:

4. Symbols and images:

5. Land and place:

6. Non-linear/contradictory/irrational/creative ideas:

.....

7. Wholes vs. parts / Macro vs. micro / Communal vs. independent:

.....

8. Family, community, cultural base: