

Professional Development Training for Educators

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE CIRCLE TRAINING**How to Engage Australian Students
in Indigenous Studies****UNIT 0: INTRODUCTION TO BELIEF SYSTEMS****0.1 INTRODUCTION TO BELIEF SYSTEMS**

In beliefs we live, we move and we are [...] the beliefs constitute the base of our life, the land on which we live [...] All our conduct, including the intellectual life, depends on the system of our authentic beliefs. In them [...] lies latent, as implications of whatever specifically we do or we think [...] the man, at heart, is believing or, which is equal, the deepest stratum of our life, the spirit that maintains and carries all the others, is formed by beliefs ... ” (Ortega y Gasset) ¹

0.2 WHAT IS A CULTURE'S BELIEF SYSTEM?

In our six-year Indigenous perspective research at the CultuRecode™ Project, our team have discovered that a culture's Belief System is founded on the four Core Needs of humans on Earth, handed down over thousands of years to entrench a set of Core Responsibilities and Values for a group of humans to live by and aspire to.

A culture is only unique because of its inherited Belief System Core Values, transferred from ancestor to ancestor over a very long time. We have identified specific perspectives and processes that evolved from living within a mechanical lifestyle (where everyone in your group follows the same practice each day).

We believe a culture cannot be taken on by those who have not had its unique set of Core Values handed down to them. The knowledge, teachings and skills (what evolves) of a culture are also strongly influenced by the geographical environments they live in. A culture's Belief System is not a religion.

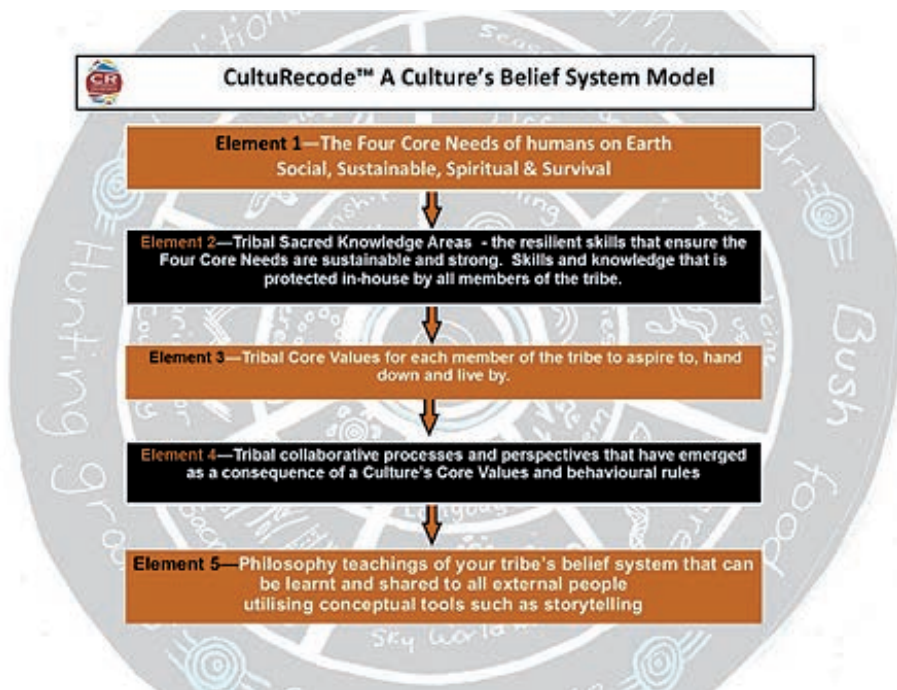
Belief systems are the stories we tell ourselves to define our personal sense of Reality. Every human being has a belief system that they utilize, and it is through this mechanism that we individually, “make sense” of the world around us. Perceived Reality is constructed by means of systems of signs, being affected and being changed by means of Belief systems ... From these we can see that people can construct all manner of individual beliefs by which they tell stories about how the world works. As humans, we tend to use all these belief systems to varying degrees to cope with events in our lives. Ultimately, we need the world to make sense at some level. Therefore, those areas where that “sense of reality” is most challenged will tend to be the areas in which the most controversies exist ... A belief system need have no basis in reality, so long as it consistently provides adequate explanations. ²

Resource

Watch the interactive animation *My Grandmother's Lingo*, which tells the story of a young Aboriginal woman fighting to save her language. <https://www.sbs.com.au/mygrandmotherslingo/>

0.3 WHAT IS A CULTURE'S BELIEF SYSTEM PHILOSOPHY?

A culture's Belief System Philosophy are the Core Value teachings of a Belief System Culture that are available for all to learn from and share in. This is the invisible cultural line of what you can teach and take on without breaching protocols or taboos of other cultures.



0.4 BELIEF SYSTEM OF ANCIENT INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIA

The following is an example of the Belief System of the Ancient Indigenous people of Australia.

0.4.1 ELEMENT 1 — The Core Needs: Four S's of Humans on Earth

Survival (Heart)

Sustainable (Oxygen)

Society (Water)

Spiritual (Essence)

There are four main needs of human beings on earth: survival, sustainable, social and spiritual needs. The management of natural resources should be limited to and fulfilment of those four basic needs. ³

In the beginning, all ancient societies decided that a Mutualistic group was the best way to survive on Earth. The Ancient Indigenous people, who lived under the philosophy of Mutualism for tens of thousands of years, believed that living in prosperity meant living in harmony with nature in the lands of your ancestors.

0.4.2 ELEMENT 2 — Sacred Knowledge Areas connected to each of the Four S's

Knowledge areas were born from an obligation to ensure the Belief System's Core Needs were strengthened and sustainable. These are the protected areas of a culture.

These are examples of Sacred Knowledge Areas created by Aboriginal Australians.

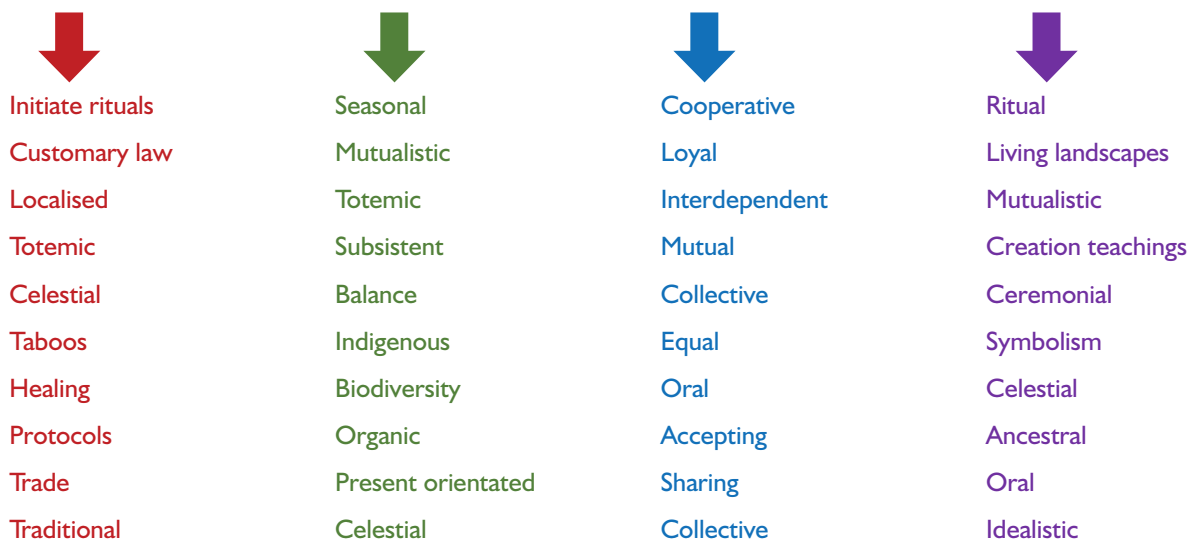


0.4.3 ELEMENT 3 — Core Values

Each Sacred Knowledge Area must have a set of attached Core Values, which are the foundation of what to teach (hand down) to establish group loyalty, harmony and sustainability (how we feel safe, judge others, behave in public, perceive success and happiness etc.). These Core Values were critical to entrench a Belief

System Culture into a person's daily life. The environment where a culture is located also helps shape the responsibilities and knowledge that evolves.

Below are examples of the Core Values of Aboriginal Australians.



0.4.4 ELEMENT 4 — Cultural perspectives and processes

The processes and perspectives of people that have evolved from living in specific environments under a Belief System's Cultural Core Needs and Values. This is an example of



Respectful
Ritualistic
Process driven
Pragmatic
Mutualistic



Time is non-linear
Holistic viewpoint
Ecological outlook
Practical
Patient/time for pause



Wholly group motivated
In group membership exclusive
Highly empathetic
Verbal problem solvers
Affective trust



Entrepreneurial thinkers
Strong connection to land
Creative and abstract views
Highly intuitive
Accepting

some of the unique motivations, behaviours and perceptions of Aboriginal Australians forged over time with the handing down of Elements 1, 2 and 3.

0.4.5 ELEMENT 5 — Philosophy Teachings

A collection of philosophy teachings that people from other belief systems can learn and utilise. These teachings can only be taken from Elements 3 and 4 of a culture (these are elements of a culture that do not require the Core Values to have been handed down over thousands of years). Many ancient tools can be utilised to deliver or share a group's philosophy,

such as storytelling, songlines and totems (you cannot just take another culture's sacred stories, songlines, totem designs and stories).

Below is a small example of the Mutualism philosophy teachings that we are utilising to restore Ancient Indigenous Consciousness to the world.

Survival (Heart)

- Rely on experienced people for advice and include cultural knowledge as a field of expertise.
- Assign a totemic place, plant or animal to all newborn babies.
- Hold initiation events/celebrations that honour the Indigenous flora and fauna in your homelands.

Sustainable (Oxygen)

- The earth holds your ancestors; care for (or return her to) her natural state.
- Utilise and learn the unique gifts from Australia's native produce (plant native bush foods and plants).

REFERENCES

1. Ortega y Gasset, quoted in Usó-Doménech, J.L. and J. Nescolarde-Selva. *What are belief systems?*, 1. PDF. Alicante, Spain: Department of Applied Mathematics, University of Alicante. Accessed April 28, 2017. <http://www.vub.ac.be/FOS/cfp/what-are-belief-systems.pdf>.
2. Usó-Doménech, J.L. and J. Nescolarde-Selva. *What are belief systems?*, 1. PDF. Alicante, Spain: Department of Applied Mathematics, University of Alicante. Accessed April 28, 2017. <http://www.vub.ac.be/FOS/cfp/what-are-belief-systems.pdf>.
3. Bamba, John. *Indigenous Peoples Self-Determined Development & Lessons from Kalimantan Credit Union Movement*, 8. PDF. Accessed April 28, 2017. <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/Paper%20submitted%20%20by%20Mr.%20John%20Bamba.pdf>.

UNIT 0

INTRODUCTION TO BELIEF SYSTEMS

Multiple-choice questions

These multiple-choice questions directly relate to information found in *UNIT 0*. They are designed to help you reinforce your understanding of the concepts and cultural components of *UNIT 0*.

Complete the multiple-choice questions below.

Question 1 – True or False? A culture’s Belief System is founded on the Seven Core Needs of humans on Earth.

- a) True b) False

Question 2 – True or False? There are Six Core Needs that make up a culture’s Belief System.

- a) True b) False

Question 3 – True or False? A culture is only unique because of its inherited Belief System Core Values, transferred from ancestor to ancestor over a very long time.

- a) True b) False

Question 4 – True or False? The philosophy teachings of a culture are not available for all to share.

- a) True b) False

Question 5 – True or False? Belief systems are the stories we tell ourselves to define our personal sense of Reality.

- a) True b) False

Question 6 – True or False? The knowledge, teachings and skills (what evolves) of a culture are also strongly influenced by geographical environments a person lives in.

- a) True b) False

Question 7 – True or False? Sacred Knowledge Areas are the protected areas of a culture.

- a) True b) False

Question 8 – True or False? Each Sacred Area does not have attached Core Values.

- a) True b) False