



Celebrating the Pacific, Shaping its Future

# Pacific Peoples' Research Skills Symposium

## Book of Abstracts



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## Table of Contents

General Information.....	4
Background to RSD at USP .....	4
RSD Framework.....	4
Plenary Speakers .....	5
Professor Unaisi Nabobo Baba .....	5
Professor Geoffrey Crisp.....	6
Mapping RSD-informed Marking Criteria to USP Graduate Outcomes in Undergraduate Courses .....	7
Empowering Tertiary Students to Reading Through Assertive Approaches .....	8
Scaffolding Research Skills – Impacts .....	9
Moving into the Mainstream: Embedding Research Skills within a Core Academic Course.....	10
Nurturing Self-Regulated Learning for Research Skill Development within an Online Postgraduate Course.....	11
Connecting Pacific Peoples’ Research Mindedness with Employability Skills.....	13
Researching Innovations in Technology Use in Learning & Teaching at USP .....	14
Engaging Pacific Collection Staff in Showcasing the Collection’s Rich Resources to Enhance a More Learned Pacific Community .....	16
RSD Framework - An Instrument for Advocacy and Enforcement.....	17
Theoretical Framework Developed for a Master of Applied Leadership.....	18
Fostering Information Research Skills (IRS) in Postgraduate Students at The University of the South Pacific .....	19
A Model to Integrate Research Skill Development within Cultural Traditions for Climate Change Resilience .....	20
<i>i-Talitali</i> rubric: Enhancing Student Learning in the Pacific Context.....	22



## General Information

As part of the University's 50th Anniversary celebrations, the Research Office has organised a Research Week to highlight the University's achievements in various fields of research and research skill development. The two day Pacific Peoples' Research Skills Symposium is organised during the [Research Week](#) and will provide a forum to learn about:

- Institution-wide outcomes for the [Research Skill Development \(RSD\) initiative](#)
- Case studies of practice using the Research Skill Development (RSD) framework
- Other universities/institutions approaches or [Models of Engaged Learning and Teaching \(MELT\)](#) to building research capacity of students/staff

The two-day symposium is designed to provide:

- Institutional-level drivers and approach at USP
- RSD implementation review report
- RSD intersections of research and teaching
- USP showcase: stories of Pacific peoples' research skills

### Background to RSD at USP

Under the Strategic Total Academic Review (STAR) process at the University of the South Pacific, Working Group 5 (constituting of USP staff) was tasked to determine the best way to incorporate research skills and literacy in USP curricula. Working Group 5 found that in general the Research Skills Development (RSD) framework, devised by John Willison and Kerry O'Regan at the University of Adelaide, was a workable tool that could guide academics in developing and assessing students' research skills in content-rich courses from first year undergraduate to PhD levels. Upon a close study of the RSD framework, Working Group 5 recommended that the RSD framework is a suitable model to be adapted and implemented at USP.

### RSD Framework

The RSD framework is a conceptual tool that draws together six facets of research with varying degrees of student autonomy in the inquiry process (Willison and O'Regan, 2006). [Click here to access the outline of the RSD Framework for USP](#)



## Plenary Speakers

### Professor Unaisi Nabobo Baba

Unaisi has had about 30 years of working in the field of education (mostly higher education and development). Her work has been in teaching, researching, publication and other educational and development related work in the Pacific Islands. She is a teacher, researcher and a prolific author. Unaisi Nabobo-Baba is currently a Professor of Education at the Fiji National University. Her career began in 1986 at the Queen Victoria School, Matavatu, then in 1992, she took on a position at the Fiji College of Advanced Education (now a part of the Fiji National University). In 1996 she joined the University of the South Pacific as Lecturer in Education after completing a gold medal winning thesis in education and the social sciences at the USP. In 2001 she undertook her doctoral studies at the University of Auckland. Her PhD thesis and book "Knowing and Learning: An Indigenous Fijian Approach" was recognized as a distinguished contribution to international and indigenous knowledge by the American Education Research Association in 2007. After the PhD, Unaisi continued at USP until 2011, when a position at the University of Guam took her to the far North of the Pacific where she left as Professor of Education last year in 2017. In 20 November last year, she assumed her new role at the Fiji National University where she is incoming Acting Dean of the College of Humanities and Education. Unaisi is passionate about quality and relevance in education. Her research, publication and consultancy interests include teacher education, education reform and international aid in Pacific Education, indigenous knowledge, research and development, higher education, education for sustainable development, women in leadership in the Pacific Islands, rural and remote education, among others.



## Professor Geoffrey Crisp

Geoff completed his BSc (Honours, First Class) at the University of Queensland in 1977 and his PhD in Chemistry at the Research School of Chemistry, Australian National University in 1981. After a Humboldt Fellowship completed at the Max Planck Institute in Mulheim an der Ruhr and postdoctoral positions at Colorado State University and the Australian National University, Geoff began his first academic appointment in 1985 in the Chemistry Department at the University of Melbourne. In 1988 he moved to the Chemistry Department at the University of Adelaide and continued discipline research and teaching until 2001. Geoff developed his passion for learning and teaching as well as continuing his work in chemistry during this time, being Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching for the Faculty of Science from 1999-2001. He was actively involved in the development of online learning and was appointed the Director of the Online Learning and Teaching Unit in 2001 to oversee the implementation of the university online system (MyUni). Geoff was the Director of the Centre for Learning and Professional Development at the University of Adelaide from 2002-2011 and was the Dean, Learning and Teaching at RMIT University in Melbourne from 2012-2015. Geoff received the University of Adelaide's Stephen Cole the Elder Prize (Excellence in Teaching) in 1999; the Royal Australian Chemical Institute Stranks Medal for Chemical Education in 2003 and Australian Learning and Teaching Council Fellowships in 2006 and 2009. Geoff is a HERDSA Fellow and a Principal Fellow of the HEA. Geoff is currently the Pro Vice Chancellor Education at the University of New South Wales, Sydney.



# Mapping RSD-informed Marking Criteria to USP Graduate Outcomes in Undergraduate Courses

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The University of the South Pacific

The Research Skill Development (RSD) framework was implemented at The University of the South Pacific (USP) in 2012 after a recommendation by Working Group 5 of the University's Strategic Total Academic Review (STAR) project. The working group's report to the USP Senior Management team highlighted the overlap between the RSD framework and the USP Graduate Outcomes (GOs). Since implementation, approximately 80 undergraduate courses developed RSD-informed marking criteria for specific course assessments. In 2017, the criteria for USP GOs were revised through consultation with the three Faculties to ensure clarity and consistency in language, developmental progression across the undergraduate levels, and feasibility of being assessed. This study used a qualitative content analysis approach to identify whether RSD informed marking rubrics also assess the revised criteria of USP GOs. Rubrics from the four compulsory undergraduate courses (UU100, UU114, UU200, and UU204) and one rubric from eight other disciplines were selected from the RSD website. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that assessments and rubrics were selected from the three Faculties and across all undergraduate levels. A descriptive design was adopted and the criteria for each of the seven USP GOs were used as the coding categories. The frequency of occurrence of these categories in the assessment descriptors of the selected RSD informed rubrics were recorded. Our findings indicate that the selected RSD informed rubrics can be used to assess the revised USP GOs.



## Empowering Tertiary Students to Reading Through Assertive Approaches

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The study sought to empower students to complete their allocated academic reading(s) prior to attending their tutorial sessions. The study was conducted in among students enrolled for courses in the Diploma in Leadership, Governance and Human Rights (DLGHR) programme at the University of the South Pacific (USP) in Suva, Fiji. A semester at USP is 17 weeks long, with 14 weeks dedicated for teaching. Students were informed that it was compulsory to complete at least one of their allocated readings before attending tutorial each week. By week 3, it was realised that only a handful of the students completed any readings at all. Hence, in week 4, all students who did not complete at least one reading were sent outside the classroom to complete one reading and re-join the tutorial session. Each tutorial was 2 hours long. In the first week of this approach, up to 20 students from each tutorial group were sent outside but this dropped dramatically to an average 4-6 students per group from weeks 5 to 14. During week 14, a semi-structured questionnaire was utilized to evaluate this approach by the students. The data collected were analysed quantitatively with the use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Figures and tables were used to present the results of findings. From the total of 60 copies of questionnaire distributed, 52 copies, representing 87% were filled and returned. The findings showed that majority of the respondents acknowledge the importance of reading, 95.5% of the respondents found that reading prior to tutorials improved their understanding of what was taught and discussed during the tutorials. 77.3% of the respondents indicated that being sent out of classroom to complete their reading in previous weeks encouraged them to complete their readings in following weeks. 100% agreed that this assertive approach works to encourage them to read and 100% also wanted to see this approach utilized by other lecturers in other courses. This was the first use this assertive approach in Semester II of 2017 and this approach will be utilised and evaluated in future semesters to empower students to read.



## Scaffolding Research Skills – Impacts

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Facets 1 – 3 of the RSD Framework highlights the significance of scaffolding for the student to be able to master research skills and implement them accordingly. This study investigated the extent of scaffolding provided to pre-degree and 100 level students at the Tuvalu campus and discussed its impacts on the quality of research provided by the students. Using the Qualitative Approach, data collection method includes, questionnaires, classroom observations and *sautalanga* talanoa with 30 Undergraduate students at the Tuvalu Campus. The findings highlighted that while majority of the students are aware of the RSD Framework less than 50% were scaffolded in learning the research skills; 71% of the students are aware of the RSD Framework, however, only 42% of the students stated that they were taught the research skills step by step with scaffolding provided by their Lecturer. The students who were provided scaffolding rated their research skills ranging from very good to excellent while those who were not provided scaffolding rated theirs from poor to good. To improve the research skills of all USP students, it is recommended that the research skills are taught step by step not only in language courses such as LLF 11 and UU 114 but in all pre degree and 100 level courses that give research writing assignments. Equipping students well in research writing skills at the lower levels will contribute to better quality research papers in the post graduate level consequently raising the research profile of the university.



## Moving into the Mainstream: Embedding Research Skills within a Core Academic Course

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Ralph Buadromo, Centre for Flexible Learning  
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Traditional university courses typically teach discipline content only, while the academic and research skills needed to navigate that content are taught in generic 'Academic English' courses, delivered through standalone workshops, or left to the students to figure out for themselves. The need for a more embedded, or mainstreamed, approach to the teaching of such skills is well-documented in the literature (McWilliams & Allan, 2014; Purser et al, 2008; Thies, 2012; Wingate, 2006, 2012; Wingate et al, 2011), due to the discipline-specific nature of the texts, discourses, and 'ways of knowing' that students need to master. However, two obstacles are frequently reported: Firstly, academics are often reluctant to engage with academic and research skills, feeling that such matters fall outside both their job descriptions and their expertise. Secondly, there is a perception that time spent dealing with such skills will limit the coverage of the content syllabus.

At USP, a new introductory linguistics course is piloting an embedded approach during Semester 2 2018. It has been developed by an academic with a background in teaching Academic English, and it uses a blended approach in order to supplement the core linguistics content with additional materials, utilising online resources and activities for self-directed learning. Theoretically, therefore, the above obstacles are removed. However, the course design is ambitious, incorporating research skills (such as finding, evaluating and incorporating sources), academic skills (such as reading, listening and note-taking techniques), and communication skills (such as grammar, punctuation and word choice) through supplementary activities that relate to the linguistics topics covered. A research project has therefore been set up to evaluate its effectiveness. Focusing specifically on the research skills component of the course, this presentation will report on the course design phase and summarise some preliminary findings from the first half of the semester.



## Nurturing Self-Regulated Learning for Research Skill Development within an Online Postgraduate Course

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A pilot study was made to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of a research skill development (RSD) framework within a postgraduate course (PC425: Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment) at the University of the South Pacific in 2015. PC425 is provided online across all campuses of The University of the South Pacific, and to all enrolled in the course who have internet access.

The RSD framework that was implemented was created by Willison and O'Regan (2006, 2013). Critical use and development of their framework was however found to be necessary. In particular, the explicit use of self-regulated learning was incorporated, along with the distinction between feedback and feedforward, especially in relation to how both are necessary components of self-regulated learning (Quinton & Smallbone 2010). Care was needed to avoid a misinterpretation that the Willison and O'Regan RSD framework is only or primarily about constructing rubrics to facilitate provision of feedback to students. There was also the need to make feedforward and self-regulated learning explicit, when it is only implicit in the RSD framework. It is implied in the framework that students are expected to spiral upwards through stages as their research skill development. It is recognized however that feedforward for self-regulated learning does not effectively occur without explicit facilitation (Kirschner et.al. 2010). To make it explicit two critical developments of the RSD framework were required: (i) self-regulated learning was modelled as motivated by a process of feedforward created by students, which can be catalysed by teaching models of self-regulated learning to students (Sadler 2010); (ii) feedforward by students was nurtured through requisite feedback provided by teachers, peers and communities (Winne 2010).

The first critical development had to go beyond the RSD framework and was introduced along with the RSD framework in the first learning module. The second critical development used the RSD framework in a novel way. Feedbacks through rubrics were created for all levels of RSD that students were expected to achieve through the course. Evaluations were



staged through the course to develop through the levels so as to nurture the expectation in students for feedforward and self-regulated learning. A common usage of the RSD framework that linked a particular level of feedback with a course year was rejected.

Practical developments in online course delivery were also necessary. To engage students in feedforward, engagement with real-world case studies is helpful, but this was required across distance through online delivery. Therefore an added expectation for student feedforward expectation was nurtured: to motivate and enable student online group discussions, where division of labour emerged because not all could collect the necessary data from the field. Pro-active development of teamwork was nurtured. Moreover, face-to-face discussion where possible were recorded and shared, as well as made available in real-time. To ensure that authentic feedforward was engaged in, evaluation (to provide feedback) of participation in discussion forums was not made. Rather it was provided by other team members (peers).

To gain an initial assessment of the effectiveness of this critical implementation of the Willison and O'Regan RSD framework, an online pre-survey and post-survey was conducted. A total of 21 students out of 34 students (62%) participated in the pre-survey while 16 students out of 30 students participated (53%) in the post-survey. There were 20 questions covering the six facets in the RSD framework. Improvements in research skills were indicated in all six facets. 65% (13) of the questions showed highly significant improvement ( $P < 0.05$ ). Only 25% (5) showed less than significant improvement ( $P > 0.1$ ). The research skills showing the greatest significant improvement covered critical engagement processes.

Further assessment of the critical implementation is required. The pilot study enables a conclusion that it satisfied students to increase their RSD in face of the challenges of dispersed and online delivery, but it cannot yet be concluded that it was due to the implementation of the RSD framework or the critical development of it.



## Connecting Pacific Peoples' Research Mindedness with Employability Skills

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John Willison, The University of Adelaide

A key to Pacific Peoples' success in employment is the capacity to extend their thinking skills in research, to thinking skills in the workplace. The aim of this discussion is to enhance the employability of the Pacific Peoples by introducing a set of comprehensive work skills that replicate similar thinking processes to the skills associated with research, and that are aligned with current USP graduate attributes and outcomes. This paper therefore uses an internationally validated framework, the Work Skills Development [WSD] framework (Bandaranaike & Willison, 2009/2016), which adapts the skills articulated in the Research Skills Development (RSD) framework (Willison & O'Regan, 2006/2013), to the context and terminology of employment. It examines the enabling thinking processes of employability, articulated in the WSD as six facets of work skill - Initiative, Technology, Lifelong Learning, Self-Management, Problem Solving, and Communication. In addition the WSD also represents the degree of student autonomy in each of the six work skills from prescribed direction to open direction, in keeping with the RSD. The WSD is a natural segue between research skills and work skills in order to build on the research mindedness developed in USP courses, to further develop the thinking processes required in the workplace. Embedding these work skills into the curriculum can be achieved through Work Integrated Learning [WIL], such as through placements, internships, clinical trials, work based learning etc. The WSD assists students with the thinking processes required for gainful employability. The outlook of this paper in the current Pacific context of an ageing population and high labour mobility, is providing a solid foundation for graduates to extend and apply thinking skills for research to thinking skills in the workplace in ways that are applicable and essential to 21st century employability across the Pacific.



## Researching Innovations in Technology Use in Learning & Teaching at USP

Flora Bentley

The University of the South Pacific

USP is a diverse institution which operates 14 campuses across 12 regional member countries varying substantially in size and infrastructure, and in relation to access to digital technologies.

Connectivity varies, with larger campuses with access to fiber optic cables, and smaller campuses served by USP-Net, the University's satellite network. The focus of the University's efforts thus far has been on infrastructure and the provision of enabling technologies. Today the University has a sound sense of the nature of its digital infrastructure and what that infrastructure is capable of supporting. Its drive towards transforming pedagogies through digitally-enhanced technologies has resulted in an increased number of Online and Blended courses over the last four years. This paradigm shift has demanded a change in mindsets and increased the demand for technological competence and a greater need to collaborate. As online course development and delivery evolved over the years, instructors are now seeking new ways to create an integrated and engaging online learning environment to enable learners to actively participate in their learning. Instructional practices that encourage greater engagement are essential if we are to effectively use digital instructional technologies. At one end of the continuum are instructors who are technologically competent and innovative, while on the other end are those challenged by the technology. Many innovative and engaging online experiences have been practised in silos and there is a need to propel these into the forefront to inspire, encourage and motivate others to build more engaging learner-centric online learning environments. This paper is based on the preliminary report of a larger ongoing research by several USP faculty and support staff on "Innovations in Technology Use in Learning and Teaching at USP". The results of these findings will be disseminated later



## Preliminary Results: Effective Use and Integration of Technologies in Support of Flexible Learning at The University of the South Pacific

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The University of the South Pacific's (USP) flexible learning students have been familiar with recorded tutorial videos since the REACT videoconferencing system was introduced in 2010. Not till 2017 did the on-campus students have access to recorded video lectures created through the Lecture Capture system. It is known that the creation of these recorded videos and its availability online would facilitate a more flexible teaching and learning environment, and to allow students to learn at their pace. However, at USP it is not documented how students and lecturers use the recorded videos, and their perception of the impact it would have on their learning and teaching. This paper will present on the preliminary findings of a project currently in progress called, "Effective use and integration of technologies in support of Flexible Learning at USP." The project employs a mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) to capture appropriate and relevant data from USP students and teachers based on the current tools available that create videos and enables videoconferencing such as Lecture Capture, REACT, Big Blue Button (BBB), Google Hangouts and Zoom. The methods of data collection include: literature review on a blended and online approach to using and integrating recorded videos and videoconferencing; design and distribution of separate online surveys for students and lecturers university wide; one-to-one interviews with students in the main teaching campuses (Laucala, Alafua and Emalus) to verify results of evaluation survey; and observe the placement of recorded videos online. The data that will be presented and discussed will be further used to inform guidelines for learning and teaching practices, as well as to design and develop a workshop that integrates the results to justify or reinforce an online and blended teaching strategy using videos and videoconferencing.



## Engaging Pacific Collection Staff in Showcasing the Collection's Rich Resources to Enhance a More Learned Pacific Community

Gwen Rounds, Library  
The University of the South Pacific

Recognized internationally for its informational resources, the Pacific Collection of the University of the South Pacific Library is a special collection of library materials pertaining to the Pacific, both published and unpublished. Materials are collected from all over the world with no restrictions placed on format or type of material and both current and old materials are collected. As guardians of this rich and comprehensive collection of resources about Oceania, staff working in the Pacific Collection are tasked on a rotational basis to raise awareness of these valuable resources through library foyer displays. The aim of this exercise is to expose staff to the six facets of thinking with an end product that showcases library resources relevant to a topic of current interest. Every monthly the Pacific Collection curates a new library foyer display on a topic of interest that is primarily supported with informational resources available in the Pacific Collection. Working independently or in pairs, staff are provided a topic and expected to work through the six facets of thinking. The end product of this work assignment is a foyer display that captures the various stages of thinking processes they journeyed through. The display cabinet, one of five, which showcases their work, is located in the Library foyer, a heavily trafficked area with more than 1500 library visitors on any given day. The foyer display boosts the self-esteem of the curator(s) as it showcases their thinking skills and creativity abilities. Equally important, the resources kept in the Pacific Collection are promoted and marketed to the USP community and the wider public who visit the library thus contributing to a more informed and learned Pacific community. The Pacific Collection engages its staff to showcase the collection's rich resources through monthly library foyer displays to enhance a more learned Pacific community.



## RSD Framework - An Instrument for Advocacy and Enforcement

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In any field of work or study one needs to have the basic ingredients or basic ideas of how to accomplish a task. Without this basic ingredient, one will experience difficulty in achieving a task. In order to conduct research, one needs to know what steps are involved in carrying out a research. For students, if it be to write an assignment or to conduct a trial assessment, the basic research skills are prudent. RSD framework implementation encourages teachers to teach students how to conduct a research and later assess them on these skills. In this paper, I will consider research skills for students in terms of how it assists and develops their advocacy skills in conducting trials. RSD framework co-exists with elements relating to legal practice and without it, conducting a trial itself can become a challenge. They operate hand in hand at every level of the trial process. One may not be able to survive without the other. We are all using some form of research skills in our courses already. RSD framework acts very similarly to law enforcement agencies. The law is available however nothing can be achieved if it is not enforced. RSD framework therefore acts as an enforcement agency in ensuring that these skills are incorporated in every course so that the students are developing their skills as they go along learning about the substantive law itself. This paper will examine the similarities of RSD framework as an enforcement agency.



# Theoretical Framework Developed for a Master of Applied Leadership

Susan F. Stevenson

FREEDOM Institute of Higher Education and New Zealand Curriculum Design Institute

This paper details the research and scholarly development of a cohesive, and holistic theoretical framework developed to comprehensively underpin New Zealand's first postgraduate and Master of Applied Leadership programmes. These innovative programmes were approved with a rare commendation by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) in May 2017 and commenced in 2018. The comprehensive theoretical framework designed drew on a range of existing theories (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Durie, 1994; Green, 2017; Stevenson, 2015 & Vygotsky, 1978), and developed new philosophical and theoretical concepts and models. The final theory framework underpins the programme designs, educational facilitation and assessment approaches, programme content, learner and faculty support systems, research culture and development (including the RSDF), quality assurance systems and success measurement methodologies and criteria utilised.



# Fostering Information Research Skills (IRS) in Postgraduate Students at The University of the South Pacific

Jamie Bloss and Vasiti Chambers, Library  
The University of the South Pacific

The Information Research Skills (IRS) program for PG students at The University of the South Pacific was implemented in 2014. The paper will focus on PG students at Laucala Campus who are enrolled in the 400 level research courses namely AL400, DG400 and SC400. This practice-based paper presents the strategic approach and implementation of Information Research Skills (IRS) learning for the research-based courses for PG students, progress made, the initiatives of the program and how the PG IRS aligns to the RSD framework. The level of autonomy at the PG level varies while some have considerable experience using the databases/catalogue or Boolean Operators others still have little or none after years of being out of an academic environment. Additionally the program is tailored to accommodate digital literacies and information technology literacy for users to use the various software's and understanding of how databases work in order to get the best return when searching. During the 7.5 hours (one day) postgraduate students have an opportunity to explore their research topics in greater detail. The students work directly in the embark & clarify facet in defining their search strategy, find & generate to support their topic for their literature review in using the Boolean operators and subject headings, evaluate & reflect by the credibility of the sources, and the difference between sources and evaluating the appropriate type of resources for their literature review. Organize & manage is demonstrated with Endnote or Mendeley citation management software. The paper concludes that IRS contributes to research skills development, which the PG students acknowledge during the evaluations. The sessions will improve the quality of their literature reviews at the postgraduate diploma level and enhance their skills as they advance onto their master's degree work.



# A Model to Integrate Research Skill Development within Cultural Traditions for Climate Change Resilience

Keith Morrison

Sustainable Community Development Research Institute

A community-based learning-system model is outlined. The model has been constructed to frame university-based research skill development with cultural traditions, so as to better understand how to use research to enhance climate change adaptation within the South Pacific region. The model was developed by the author through university teaching and by carrying out research at in the region.

The overarching frame of the model is that research skill development is learning that is engaged by community members within community processes influenced by cultural traditions. The model features the learning systems involved, including the functions and purpose of the components of the learning systems.

The function and purpose of research in the context of climate change adaptation is to critically create innovations for adaptation, so as to enhance resilience through maintaining or gaining flexibility within social-ecological systems. The adaptations can be technological or institutional, including policy development, development of institutional arrangements, and development of cultural traditions. The model focuses on adaptations that involve the development of cultural traditions, because of the relevance of cultural traditions to the communities of the South Pacific region.

The cultural traditions of the South Pacific region are of intrinsic value, and global importance, because of their vitality. Living or developing cultural traditions provide high adaptive capacity through facilitating the questioning of the goals and assumptions of development processes. In particular, for our purposes, they facilitate clarification of what is of highest importance and needing to be maintained at all cost in face of climate change. This enables civil or non-traumatic adaptation to climate change to proceed through maintaining what is most valuable; with adaptation only changing what is of lesser importance. Flexibility is maintained by having multiple options that are non-traumatic or civil (Morrison, 2016).



The model explores how clarification of what is of highest importance enables the letting go of fixation on any particular developments that may not actually be what is most important for communities, for example 'growth', and even 'green growth' (Jackson, 2017). Letting go of fixations is shown to free up greater sensitivity to what is essential for civil society, which is care and concern for the well-being of others and the natural environment, without the increase in sensitivity increasing the vulnerability of communities to climate change.

The model describes how the South Pacific region's cultural traditions value sensitivity to the well-being of others as that which is of highest value and most essential, while at the same time describes how sensitivity to the well-being of others is an intrinsic consequence of being able to let go of fixations, and therefore explains how the region's cultural provide a very resilient self-reinforcing system of civil adaptation.

Finally the model outlines how this already existing highly resilient adaptation system in the South Pacific region can however, and needs to, be enhanced by research skill development provided by universities. This is because the adaptation systems of cultural traditions are resilient only as long as the cultural traditions remain living or developing through continually incorporating new insights and development of potential adaptation options to retain and enhance flexibility. But it works both ways. The South Pacific region's cultural traditions also provide positive influences on universities to free up research at universities to avoid assumptions about the purpose for research, so they enable critical creation of innovative adaptations, which then feeds back to enhance the flexibility of cultural traditions and of the region's communities.



## *i-Talitali* rubric: Enhancing Student Learning in the Pacific Context

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In the search to enhance research skills and knowledge relating to Higher Education, the UU204 Pacific Worlds Teaching Team and students alike are at the juncture of developing a rubric (*i-Talitali rubric*) that illustrates Pacific Research Skills Development using a weaving metaphor. The UU204 Pacific Worlds Teaching Team has embarked on the development of this specific rubric to describe the research process from a Pacific world-view that is underpinned by Pacific knowledge, skills and research values. The *i-Talitali rubric* is designed to illustrate to UU204 students what they might be missing in an assignment that requires research and at the same time help them develop research skills. Drawing on the weaving metaphor, this paper presents an example of a rubric that can contribute to sound assessment for the UU204 course. In this article we discuss the key features of the *i-Talitali rubric* in parallel with the Research Skills Development (RSD) Framework. The basic steps of the research process outlined in the *i-Talitali rubric* are appropriate to the Pacific context.

