

Cultural Inclusive Curriculum & Sustainable Living in Fiji



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The idea of a Cultural Inclusive Curriculum

- History of marginalization of indigenous peoples in formal education/ schooling (*culture – gap*)
- Overemphasis on education for human resource development
- Focus on two pathways:
 - (a) Higher education; and,
 - (b) Employment.

The state of culture in Pacific Education

We live in a region where there are literally thousands of vibrant indigenous communities, each with their own unique cultures and languages that express what is worthwhile knowledge, skills and values necessary to be learnt for cultural survival and continuity. Sadly though, many of these are at risk of disappearing simply because of their small sizes and populations. Worse, since the arrival of foreigners in the region indigenous peoples have been denied opportunities to learn about their own cultural knowledge and value systems in schools and higher education institutions, where teaching and learning continue to be underpinned by foreign knowledge, skills and values, much of which had been literally and metaphorically destructive of indigenous peoples and their communities. (Thaman 2012, p.3).

What is a cultural inclusive curriculum?

- culturally inclusive curriculum is one that is designed to incorporate elements of culture to ensure positive learning experiences for all learners.
- Little (1995) the culture-gap is the difference in expectations between the home culture and the school.
- The greater the difference, the more difficulties students will face.
- Students whose home culture is closely aligned with the cultural expectations promoted by the school will face fewer difficulties.

*Education for what
and whom?*

Sustainable Living

- Sustainable living is grounded in Life Skills Based Education (LSBE)
- WHO Life skills are those adaptive and positive behaviours and abilities which help individuals and communities deal with the challenges of everyday life (See WHO 1999, 2004)
- Sustainable living is about the same things

Life Skills

“...many students as well as teachers continue to miss out on basic life skills associated with their various cultures and societies, a factor that is increasing being seen as contributing to many indigenous students’ underperformance in formal education” (Thaman 2012, p.6).

The Idea of Resilience as the basis for Sustainable Living

- Resilience is seen as the ability to bounce back or recover from a shock or crisis point
- **Resilience Literacies (RL)** are those attributes and competencies that enable an individual/community to thrive amidst the challenges of everyday life.

RL Attributes

- **Attribute 1:** *Self-esteem* – sense of self-worth and pride in self and abilities
- **Attribute 2:** *Self-efficacy* – belief that you are the master of your own destiny
- **Attribute 3:** *Self-determination* – ability to make decisions for yourself, to reason these choices without feeling pressured to think, be, do a certain way
- **Attribute 4:** *Agency* – to make choices and to enact these choices

RL Competencies

- **Competency 1:** *Beliefs, Attitudes, Values (affective domain)*
- **Competency 2:** *Knowledge (cognitive domain)*
- **Competency 3:** *Logical Reasoning (cognitive domain)*
- **Competency 4:** *Skills (psychomotor domain)*
- **Competency 5:** *Contextual Application/ Synthesis (combination of all three)*

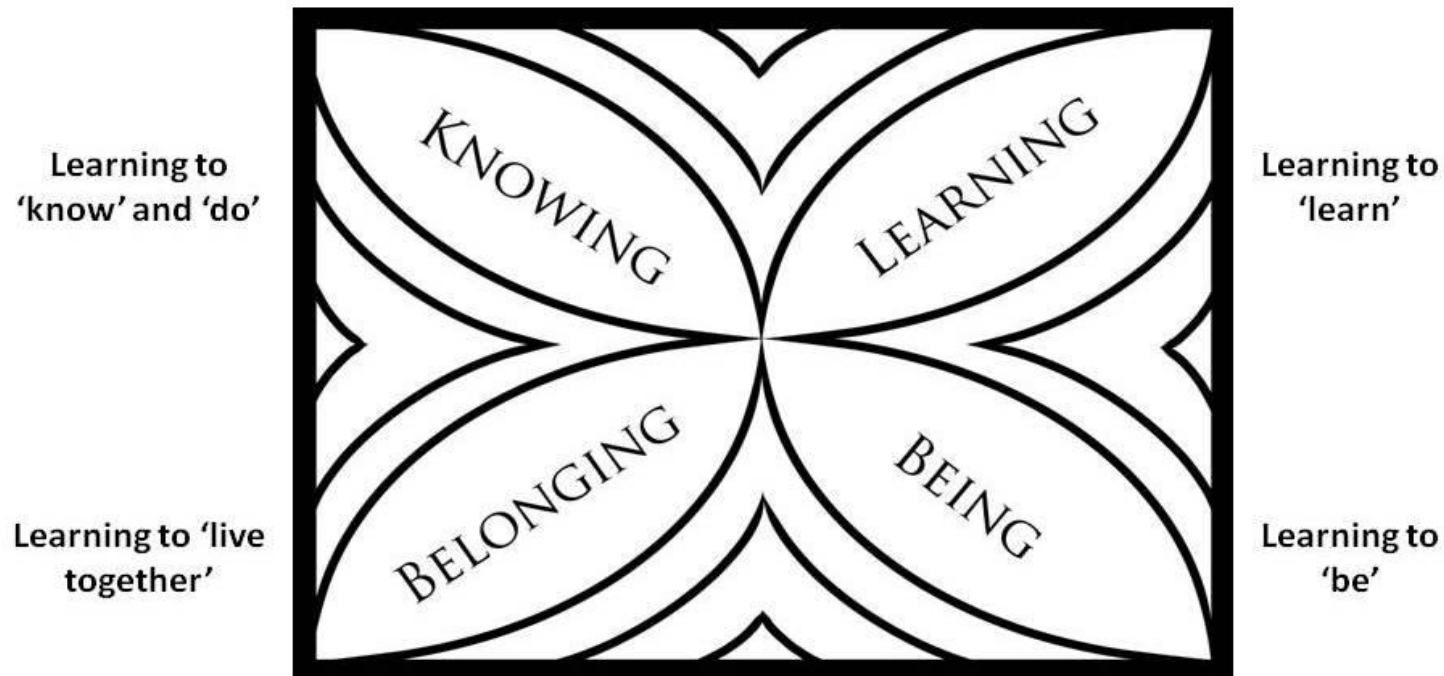
Resilience Literacies Model



From a Pacific Cultural Learning Theory to a Fijian Cultural Learning Theory

- **Knowing** -- knowing and knowledge (ontology/epistemology);
- **Learning** – teach(ing) and learn(ing);
- **Being** – the self (personhood/identity); and,
- **Belonging** –family, community (socio-cultural context/ civics) (p.218).

Synergy with Delors' Report (1996) | Curriculum Implications



This approach has implications for curriculum content, pedagogy, assessment and evaluation.

What is the vision? What do we hope to achieve?

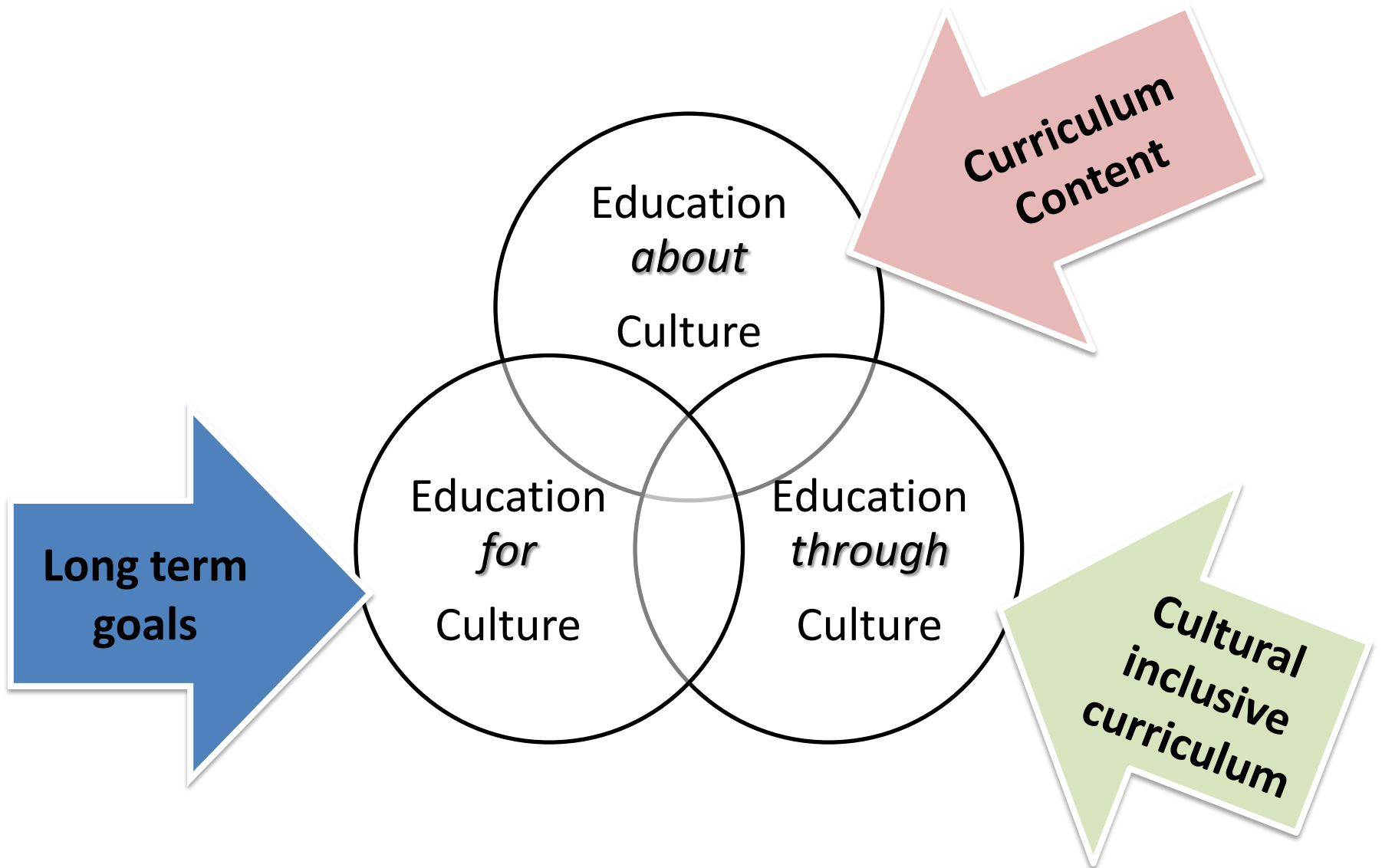
Are we interested in:

- Creating inclusive curriculum to improve the learning experience?
- Improving student learning outcomes and/or academic performance?
- Preserving aspects of culture?
- Maintaining cultural values, knowledge and skills?
- Promoting Cultural and/or Cross- and Multi-cultural awareness?

Curriculum Mapping

- Aligning the curriculum means equal emphasis on the three educational approaches ‘about’, ‘through’, and ‘for’ culture.
 1. Education **about** Culture – (content-driven)
 2. Education **through** Culture – (active learning experiences)
 3. Education **for** Culture – (futures – driven)

Curriculum Considerations



Cultural Issues

- Culture as a contested term
- How is culture viewed or defined in Fiji?
- How does this understanding inform the curriculum?

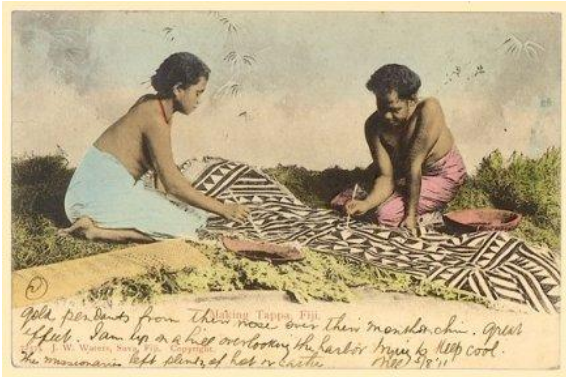
Five Key Perspectives

Cultural Perspective	Foundations or Roots	Basis of Cultural Identity
Culture as Ethnicity	Biological roots	Cultural identity is tied to the fact that a person is born into a particular ethnic and cultural group.
Culture as Place	Geographical roots	Cultural identity is tied to a person's place of origin with specific geographical markers or boundaries.
Culture as Religion	Faith-based	Cultural identity is tied to religious teachings and spiritual beliefs and practices/ritual.
Culture as Tradition	Historical	Cultural identity is tied to cultural memory and the focus is on preservation and conservation of culture (fossilized view).
Culture as Practice	Dynamic & Contemporary	Cultural identity is tied to cultural practice and based on the understanding that culture is dynamic and always evolving. It takes into account the here and now differentiating it from past practices.

Cultural Studies *for* Sustainable Living

Indigenous/iTaukei Studies

- Aim: To promote an understanding of iTaukei culture and language to address the issue of (a) culture loss; (b) at risk/endangered language status; and (c) promote sustainability through indigenous knowledge (IKS/TK).



A possible way forward | iTaukei Studies

Level 1 Cultural Knowledge Systems and Language	In this phase, students engage in activities and discussion that enables them to reflect on their own cultural experiences, values, beliefs, attitudes and knowledge. Students complete a cultural analysis. They examine their own multiple identities in terms of ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, sexuality and nationality. They also consider how their beliefs and values color their perceptions and judgments of others who may not share their beliefs.
Level 2 Tangible Cultural Heritage	In the second phase, students learn about and reflect on various aspects of Tangible Cultural heritage (material culture).
Level 3 Intangible Cultural Heritage	In the third phase, students learn about and reflect on various aspects of Intangible cultural heritage.

Multicultural/Fijian Studies

- Aim: To promote social cohesion by providing learning opportunities that encourage cross- and multi-cultural understanding.
- This approach is more complex in nature as it would require cross-cutting themes that include a number of cultural references or case studies.



A possible way forward | Fijian Studies

Level 1 Cultural	In this phase, students engage in activities and discussion that enables them to reflect on their own cultural experiences, values, beliefs, attitudes and knowledge. Students complete a cultural analysis. They examine their own multiple identities in terms of ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, sexuality and nationality. They also consider how their beliefs and values color their perceptions and judgments of others who may not share their beliefs.
Level 2 Cross-Cultural	In the second phase, students learn about and reflect on one culture other than their own. The cross-cultural analysis activity which is critical to this phase enables an in-depth comparative analysis of the knowledge frameworks, beliefs, values and skills of their own culture in relation to the selected other culture. They would consider how differences in core values, beliefs and communicative conventions could lead to conflict and how these could be minimized or addressed if conflict arises. This phase could be administered as pair work with students pairs made up of two students from different cultural or ethnic groups.
Level 3 Multicultural	In the third phase, as in the previous phases similar activities are engaged in with students attempting to complete a multicultural analysis. This is a greater task and requires much thinking and collaborative work. Small teams of four or five may be comprised of students from various ethnic, cultural, religious and gender groups for greater diversity.

iTaukei vs. Fijian Studies – A preliminary Assessment

Possible Areas of Emphasis	iTaukei Studies	Fijian Studies
<i>Main Objective:</i> Cultural competencies	Specifically iTaukei	Cross- and Multi-cultural competencies
Thematic Areas for Integrations:		
Culture and language	Specifically iTaukei	The culture and languages of other ethnic groups and cultural communities in Fiji
Cultural Values	Specifically iTaukei	Across a range of cultural groups
Social structures	Specifically iTaukei	Across a range of cultural groups
Common Knowledge	Specifically iTaukei	Across a range of cultural groups
Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage	Specifically iTaukei	Across a range of cultural groups
Cultural Expressions, Heritage Arts and Ritual	Specifically iTaukei	Across a range of cultural groups
Integrate IKS into topics such as climate change, healthy lifestyles, TVET etc	Specifically iTaukei	Across a range of cultural groups

Beyond a superficial Treatment of Culture

- In Fiji, the idea would be to encourage learning opportunities that :
 - (i) allow young people to recognize and value the diverse cultural communities that make up the Fijian demographic ;
 - (ii) acknowledging difference and similarities; and,
 - (iii) the cumulative contribution of all groups towards the creation and maintenance of a shared national cultural identity.

Cultural Intelligence or competencies

- Going beyond the superficial (dress and food)
- Looking deeper at VALUES, BELIEFS, & KNOWLEDGE



Final Reflections

- Back to the beginning:
 - ❑ Cultural Inclusive Education *for What?*
 - ❑ How do we define *Sustainable Living* in Fiji?
 - ❑ Culture Education or Cultural Studies *for what and whom?*



End Note

- Fijians need more than rugby to connect in the 21st century.
- Challenge: Is Fiji destined to become another cosmopolitan society as evidenced in our current development pathways?
- A vision: A Fijian national consciousness grounded in Fiji and an overall shared vision of the *common* good.



"We have to understand our people, our land, our history, culture and heritage, our language, our beliefs and values, who we are, where we come from, and where we would like to be. Unless we have such understandings, our work will be rootless and worthless" - Hon. Dr. 'Ana Taufe'ulungaki. Minister of Education, Tonga.

Who are we as Fijians?
What is our shared cultural heritage?
What are our shared cultural expressions?
What are our shared cultural experiences?

