

DEVELOPING LEGAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN A SOUTH PACIFIC CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

Like many other institutions, the University of the South Pacific has recently developed university-wide Graduate Attributes, and its School of Law has developed Program Learning Outcomes for its LLB degree. These program learning outcomes are similar to those identified in the Australian Threshold Learning Outcomes for law, yet the local legal environment is very different. This article demonstrates that even seemingly generic or transferable skills, and even where identically described, can only be given content by the local context.

This article focuses on the 'communication' learning outcome to illustrate the need for the development of such skills to take into account students' backgrounds, the university environment, and future professional requirements. The article draws on an empirical study of lawyers in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands to identify the communication skills needed by lawyers in this environment, the challenges involved in developing such skills, and possible methods for improving this development.