**AVETRA 14 Review Response**

TITLE OF PAPER: How does VET research make an impact? Paths across the Rickety Bridge

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| **Reviewer Comment** | **Author Response** | **Additions and Alteration to Text** |
| **Reviewer Two:** |  |  |
| *I enjoyed reading the paper and learned from doing so. It deals with an important topic and draws on authoritative and relevant literature. I will email to the conference organisers my annotations on the printed version of the paper*.  There needs to be more explicitly a *conceptual framework* underpinning the paper that also frames its asserted contribution to theoretical knowledge. | I have developed and inserted a conceptual framework (Figure 1) that builds the previous studies about research in general and about VET research into a conceptual framework at the close of the literature review.  Have confirmed that the developed model at the close of the paper is a practical guide for researchers. | The new Figure 1 draws together the key points of the literature reviewed into a conceptual framework.  ‘Figure 2 links the key themes emerging in the literature and from the research experiences this paper into a practical model for VET researchers.’ |
| I have identified places in the text where more *extensive/explicit use* can be made of the evocative image in the paper’s subtitle. | I have noted where the reviewer has made these comments and inserted an appropriate extension of the metaphor.  This is an effective addition.  The metaphor in the introduction has also been brought back at the close of the paper. | An immediate reference to Selby-Smith’s rickety bridge has been made early in the introduction, literature review and conclusion:  and the link to changes in practice remains a ‘rickety bridge’ ( Selby-Smith 1998). Page 1  In short, the rickety bridge between policy makers and researchers is poorly constructed and limited in most disciplines. Page 5  The construction of a less rickety bridge begins at the start of the research study planning process. Page 18 |
| I have identified places in the text which make me unclear about the *status of the author vis-à-vis the four studies* discussed in the paper. | I have clarified the issue about the status of the author at the start of the paper and also in the introduction to each of the four case studies. | “This paper first reviews previous studies of VET research impact and then examines four recent VET research studies directed by the author with national or major organisational foci, exploring what impact was achieved, and how that impact was constituted.”  ‘The project is essentially a review and reflection of four previous research studies during the last decade that the author of this paper directed and managed.’ |
| *More extensive discussion* is needed of the model appearing as Figure 1, including more explicitly how it emerged from the analysis in the paper and also how it extends current theoretical understandings of the field. | This is a significant addition to the paper.  I have added passages to the description of the model in figure 1 (now figure 2) to indicate how the components have been developed from the previous analysis and how they link to existing theory in this area. | ‘Figure 2 links the key themes emerging from the literature review (Figure 1) and from the research experiences within this paper into a practical model for VET researchers. The model draws from the diverse literature within and outside the VET community that were detailed in Figure 1 and incorporates lessons learned from a more than a decade of VET research to produce graphic guidelines of the stages VET research planning necessary to increase the possibility of impact. The uniqueness of each situation precludes a prescriptive model. The model provides a series of issues for consideration, adaptation and contextualisation to form an *impact plan* for each VET research study. The planning phase secures the intent and resources. Building partnerships secures the study and begins the stakeholder engagement. Simultaneously the researcher seeks liaisons with the profession to gain support and champions. Listening to agendas is followed by retuning the findings for audiences with the right voice and generating dialogue spaces, with professional support. Finally Building our own capability is an iterative activity flowing from study to study and marketing the value of research to others.’ |
| I have noted some suggested textual changes, including the alignment between the *in-text references and the reference list.* | I have reviewed the alignment between the in-text references and the reference list to ensure they are congruent. | References and in text references have been aligned.  References follow the AVETRA guide. |
| Reviewer 2 also kindly sent an annotated text indicating minor issues and typos. | A number of minor typos have been corrected. | Minor typos have been corrected in the text and are highlighted in multiple places. |
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| **Reviewer 1** |  |  |
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| Abstract:  No mention of methodology or method  No mention of findings/outcomes | The abstract has been modified to ensure there is both a mention of the methodology and the findings/outcome, although reviewer two found the structure clear. | “While deepening understanding in our chosen fields is a worthwhile and personally enriching experience, the primary goal of research should be to *make a difference*, and improve practice. This paper first reviews and models previous studies of VET research impact and then examines through an autoethnographic approach the impact of four recent VET research studies directed by the author with national or major organisational foci, exploring what impact was achieved, and how that impact was constituted. The paper then discusses the outcomes of these studies in terms of impact and produces a model to guide VET researchers towards maximising the impact of their studies by building on the initial conceptual framework, and generating a practical guide for improving the impact of VET research studies.’ |
| Intro:  Too many claims and polemic claims left unsubstantiated.  Too many positions made around the royal “we”.  No introduction to the notion of Impact and how it is conceptualised. | Amendments have been made to remove or modify several initial statements.  The word we was used three times when dis cussing the actions of researchers. All comments that included the word ‘we have been removed’.  A definition of the concept of impact has been provided. | The text has been modified by using less contentious auxiliary verbs.  The word we placed on pages 2, 8 and 16.  The Australian Research Council (2013) defines research impact as,  ….the demonstrable contribution that research makes to the economy, society, culture, national security, public policy or services, health, the environment, or quality of life, beyond contributions to academia. |
| Research Impact – Essentially the paper is descriptive of notions of research impact. Impact is treated unproblematically and hence is under theorised. | The literature review has been expanded to introduce notions of research impact and the complexity of this area. | However, impact is a contentious area of debate and as the previous definition indicates may include diverse outcomes that may well be valued very differently by various stakeholders.  Assessment of impact is inevitably problematic as the diverse outcomes of research studies are subject to significant time lapses and are just part of a far wider series of mediating factors driving social, economic and environmental change. Determining causality is inherently complex and in the social domain a significant challenge (Patten 2005) |
| The author also has an unclear concept of what a research gap is. Articulated well, it makes research publishable.  It is:   * the missing element in the existing research literature * the “gap” that an author’s research fills * the in type and form, that which dictates the methodology and method to be deployed.   It is not the gap between theory and policy. The author is advised to engage with “The role and importance of research intensive universities in the contemporary world” Discussion paper 2013, Group of eight, in order to get a clear perspective on this.  On the gap between P & P, maybe policy makers need to develop evidence-based policy by engaging with the research! Clearly this element of the paper needs addressing appropriately. | This phase has been removed from the paper to prevent any further misinterpretation.  The phase research gap is used by some eminent researchers to describe the gap between research findings and research impact.  The phrase is also used to indicate areas were current knowledge is limited and required. This was not the stated intention of the paper that clearly focuses on impact. | The reference made by Peter Shergold to the research gap has been removed.  Shergold uses the phrase to indicate the gap between research and subsequent impact in the field of practice. |
| Research Method:  Poorly articulated. No references to the literature. No clear conceptualisation of methodology or methods.  In appropriate use of auto-ethnography – it is a self-reflection and writing that explores the author’s personal experience.  Your account is not an auto-ethnography in relation to you engaging with what I see as possibly 3 case studies. | This section has been reinforced through references from the literature to substantiate method used. | Autoethnography is a form of self-reflection and writing that explores the researcher's personal experience and connects this autobiographical story to wider cultural, political, and social meanings and understandings. |
| Other concerns:  Your use of should over and over suggests that you or your paper has a monopoly on the truth. Sorry, there is little place for this in research. You need to consider the positions claimed more in terms of possibilities rather than givens. | The phrases where paper has used the word should have been amended and altered to phrase the suggestion more tentatively. | The word ‘should’ has been removed from the text completely. |
| Your paper suffers from a lack of application of appropriate style guide, in this case APA is recommended. You also need to stick with one grammatical person, not move between. | The references have been reviewed and amended in line with the reviewer’s comments. | The references have been reviewed and rationalised. |
| Your paper is generally light on in terms of its grounding within the relevant literature. | The literature review has been strengthened by additional references to associated literature. | Additional references have been introduce into the text in several places. |
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