


Tracking Pathways of Success into and through higher education


Leanne Holt
The Wollotuka Institute
The University of Newcastle

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Background and Rationale



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Research Questions

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- What is the relationship between pre-entry levels and progression of Indigenous students in tertiary study?
- What is the relationship between mode of entry and progression of Indigenous students in tertiary study?
- What support programs increase success rates of Indigenous students?
- What are the major contributors to successful retention and completion for Indigenous students in tertiary study?

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Review of Literature

Entry Pathways to Higher Education

HSC

- Late 1990's 70% of Indigenous students entered university through alternative entry programs (DEST 2007)
- Need for greater attention in early intervention in high schools raising pre-entry qualifications of Indigenous students (DEST 2007)
- 43% Indigenous students get to Year 11 and 12 in comparison to 74% of all students (Productivity Commission 2005)
- 1 in 3 complete their HSC (Productivity Commission 2005)
- In 2007 35% Indigenous students that took an HSC that provided them with a University entry mark however only 12% received an entry score that would gain them mainstream entry (IHEAC 2008)

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TAFE

- TAFE is a preferred option for Indigenous students (Miller 2005)
- Diploma level course participation decreased and Certificate 1 – 3 increased (IHEAC 2008)

Enabling Programs

- 2004 less than 50% of Indigenous students accessed university via Enabling programs (IHEAC 2006)
- The number of universities offering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enabling programs has decreased (IHEAC 2006)

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Retention in Higher Education

- Estimated that 50% of all Indigenous higher education students will not complete their degrees (DEST 2006)
- Reasons – financial pressures, social or cultural alienation, academic demands of study, insufficient academic support (DEST 2006)
- Demographic characteristics – age, location, mode and type of study, low socio-economic background, cultural isolation, rural and remote locations and racism (James and Devlin 2005)
- Balance family and community responsibility (Hillman 2005)
- 1st year attrition rates of Indigenous students 2002-2003 37% compared to non-Indigenous students 24%

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Supporting Indigenous students in Higher Education

Role of Indigenous Support Units

- Pre-entry information
- Academic, cultural, social, financial and personal support
- Educational resources
- 'Safe Haven'

University responsibility

- Cultural competency strategies
- Free racism
- Financial and governance support
- Inclusive Curriculum

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Proposed Methodologies

- Sample – currently enrolled Indigenous students from two universities
- Specific pre-entry characteristic pre-tertiary index scores also predictive association is different for students that come through TAFE, HSC or Enabling
- Primary index academic performance Grade Point Average
- Quantitative and Qualitative assessment
 - Hierarchical regression analysis
 - semi-formal interviews

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Expected Outcomes

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- Strong relationship between entry levels and progression
- Qualified by entry pathways
- Altered by access to support programs

Indicating

- Strong foundation developing best practice programs
- Identify outcomes of Indigenous students access higher education through varying pre-entry qualifications
- Provide recommendations for enhancing Indigenous student support programs

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A way forward

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- LOOK BEYOND 'CLOSING THE GAP'
- FOCUS ON 'UNLIMITED GROWTH'
- MAINTAIN A STRONG CONNECTION TO INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

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DISCUSSION

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