



Evaluating university student equity programs in Australia: A practitioner's perspective

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What I will cover

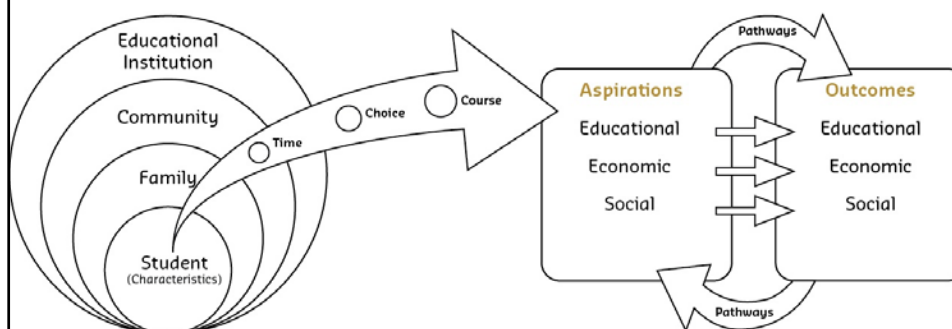
- Widening participation programs in Australia
- Challenges around evaluation of programs



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Student Progression via Multiple Pathways



Source: Student progression via multiple pathways (adapted from A.B.S. 2010, 22).

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“How do we measure the success of equity initiatives that attract, support and retain students from all backgrounds into higher education?”

This study
Research Question



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Methodology

- Case Study
 - What?
 - How?
 - Why?
- Data Collection
 - Semi-structured Interviews
 - Document Analysis
 - Researcher Journal



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This study
Background



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Background

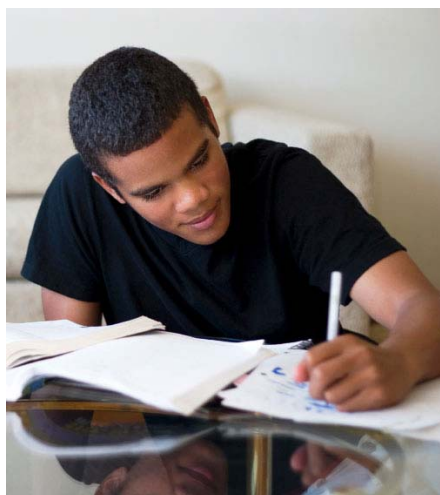
- 2008 review of Higher Education (HE) System
- Bradley Review (*Review of Australian Higher Education*)
- Findings:
 - HE central to high standard of living
 - HE sector major contributor to skilled workforce
 - All citizens must benefit

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Equity Groups in Australia

- Low socio-economic status (LSES) students
- Indigenous students
- Students from regional and remote areas
- Students with disability
- Women in non-traditional areas of study, and
- Students from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB students)



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Higher Education Support Act (2003)

- *Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Programme (HEPPP)*
 - Participation: increase uptake by LSES students
 - Partnerships: partner with schools and vocational institutions
 - *National Priorities Pool*: national and institutional level projects

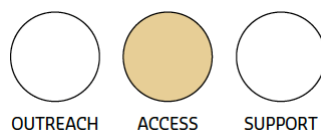
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- Primary and Secondary school visits and activities
- University campus visits and activities
- Open Days / Career Expos
- Community events
- Student Ambassadors
- A Day in the Life
- Professional development for school teachers

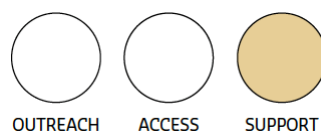
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- University Preparation Programs
- Pre degree programs
- Multiple Pathways
- Online and Face to face
- Mentoring Programs

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- Mentors
- Financial support
- Student Housing
- Counselling
- Learning Centres



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Access and Participation in Higher Education: Outreach | Access | Support



DARE focuses on meeting the aspirations of Indigenous students through face-to-face mentoring and engagement with parents, teachers and Indigenous communities.

Objectives

The DARE (Dream Aspire Reach Experience) program aims to address the barriers needed to participate in education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The curriculum-based program focuses on building the capabilities of students through face-to-face mentoring and engagement with parents, teachers and Indigenous communities. DARE engages with a variety of stakeholders to develop partnerships aimed at supporting, informing and increasing rates of tertiary education opportunities through the school years. The importance of a holistic approach encompassing Indigenous aspirations and knowledge is integral to supporting school engagement, building support and trust.

Features of the program include:

- Year 11 mentoring: school students engaged to continue with tertiary education and training opportunities.
- To seek program contained in group settings within schools.
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous undergraduate university students, Indigenous parents, Indigenous community members, business partners, health service employees, Community Education Counsellors, Queensland Police Officer and Indigenous Liaison Officers engaged as mentors.
- Cross-cultural awareness training and ongoing support for mentees.
- Cultural understanding, historical awareness and local knowledge are incorporated to benefit both mentees and mentors.

DARE (Dream Aspire Reach Experience)

Indigenous Secondary School Student Mentoring Program

- DARE Traditional Indigenous Games School Competition
- DARE Learning Camps: mentoring, guest speakers, leadership and inclusion workshops, work building, and cultural experiences.
- DARE Awards Ceremony for student participation, academic and attendance achievements.

Objectives

The program aims to:

1. raise the aspirations of Indigenous students to higher education
2. improve university school attendance and completion rates of Indigenous students
3. improve English literacy and numeracy skills of Indigenous students
4. promote healthy and positive lifestyles
5. encourage Indigenous students to improve their participation in education
6. promote and foster cultural respect and understanding

Outcomes

Success of the program is judged based on school participation, university student enrolment patterns, and attendance rates, academic engagement records, work skills, literacy levels and program completion rates.

Results to date

- 10 secondary schools engaged in 2012, increasing to 15 in 2013
- 20 undergraduate students volunteered as mentors in 2012, increasing to 16 undergraduates and 10 supporting mentors in 2013
- 400 secondary school students engaged in 2013
- Improved attendance rates, engagement and completion rates
- Increased Indigenous Higher Education Footprints Program enrolments at the University of Southern Queensland from DARE engagement initiatives



OUTREACH ACCESS SUPPORT




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Partnerships in Higher Education



In the future we hope to be able to attribute improved oral health in our remote and regional locations to this program

Description

The iSmile Dental Assisting Training Program is a multi-sector partnership providing a supported pathway for Indigenous students to pursue a career in dental health in the health industry. The program is primarily delivered through the University of Southern Queensland, with support from the Queensland Health Department of Health, the Queensland Police Officer and Indigenous Liaison Officers engaged as mentors.

Objectives

The iSmile Dental Assisting Training Program aims to address the barriers needed to participate in education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The curriculum-based program focuses on building the capabilities of students through face-to-face mentoring and engagement with parents, teachers and Indigenous communities. iSmile engages with a variety of stakeholders to develop partnerships aimed at supporting, informing and increasing rates of tertiary education opportunities through the school years. The importance of a holistic approach encompassing Indigenous aspirations and knowledge is integral to supporting school engagement, building support and trust.

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iSmile Dental Assisting Training Program

The program was developed specifically for Indigenous people in rural and remote areas of western New South Wales

Objectives

The program aims to:


1. raise the aspirations of Indigenous students to higher education
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Findings:



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Practitioner backgrounds



Career Conversations



Resume Critiques



Mock Interviews



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Challenges

- Lack of evaluation skills
- 80% of staff reported not being confident about evaluating their programs

I don't really know and I don't really feel that I necessarily have the right skill set to do it and I think that really the guidance I guess has been a bit like a bit of a loop

I am coming at it from my teacher training and years of experience and head of department and the kind of reporting and evaluation around that. But in terms of the outreach space the content is very different and so is the professional perspective

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Building Capacity



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Time



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University

Staff Mobility



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Ideal Outcomes

- More support for practitioners
- Develop capacity of practitioners
- Embed an Evaluation Specialist
- Longer term HEPPP funding

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Thank you

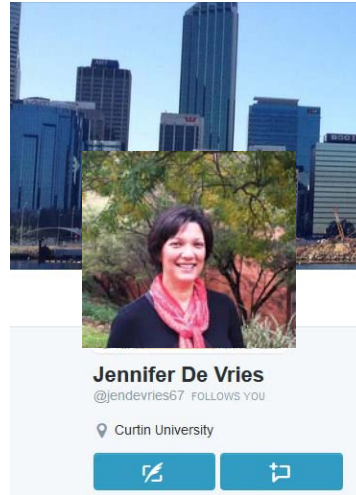


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Thank you

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