

No Data Recorded – How statistical data and the deficit in metrics intersects with the Indigenous Researcher

The role of an emerging Indigenous researcher is one mixed with reflections of both insider and outsider knowledge. When working on specific concepts surrounding Indigenous people and deficit discourse, this role becomes more complex, with the Indigenous researcher balancing the mainstream academy, identity processes and issues surrounding their interactions with deficit. This presentation highlights from a reflective position, the work of an early career Indigenous researcher working on two research projects regarding Indigenous education and educational statistics within Australia.

Educational assessment testing performed in Australia each year charts outcomes from school to school on matters such as literacy and numeracy. This information is communicated through the MySchool website, and regularly demonstrates that there are gaps in outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Through textual analysis of data drawn from the metrics of deficit, to the language used in the reporting of such, a degree of analysis and introspection occurs for the Indigenous researcher. This combines with interpretations of Indigenous research from an insider/outsider standpoint. The impact on Indigenous researchers in their desire to work as advocates in their communities and the overall commitment entailed in continued research involvement will also be explored. Through this reflective analysis I explore how the study of deficit and its impacts have influenced my concepts of Indigenous research, and further empowered my desire to build scholarship around changing deficit mindsets within an Indigenous Australian construct. The question is ultimately asked, 'How does an insider inhabit the deficit space to push through and advocate for real change in Indigenous research?'

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