

Keynote Speaker

Respectful two-way academic partnerships and entity relationships: Impact and engagement with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal researchers

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Abstract

The keynote will raise a number of questions and possible avenues of resolution to enhance Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal researchers working together in educational research practice. Respectful two-way academic partnership and entity relationships are central to engagement and impact of research. The question of why these Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relationships should occur will be reinforced and then upended to examine decolonization in educational research. To provide further depth to this probing of decolonization another question will be raised; what can replace the void if colonization is reduced? The Aboriginal English term, 'Country' is central in our discussion and informs the theoretical approach or Storying (McKnight 2015) of our keynote: reculturalisation of the decolonized space.

In this process of decolonization/reculturalisation it is always important to remind ourselves as researchers on why we engage in research. The central tenant in Anthony's research is relationships; for example, in his PhD work, this informed his methodology, a 'methodology of relationship'. This methodology was grounded by Country when engaging in the academic space that still maintains colonial practice: the separation of academics from the communities and relationships we are researching 'with'. Aboriginal knowledge systems do not separate they seek connections. However, for Aboriginal knowledge to counter the separating nature of colonization, in our relationships Anthony uses a binary approach taught from Yuin Country. In Anthony's PhD thesis the spiritual umbilical cord of tripartition presents a metaphorical tilde (~) a binary that connects and separates in the one action to protect Country and Aboriginal knowledge. This term 'with', in turn, informs our methodological discussion on what is a methodology of relationship. The focus here is on identifying and recognizing all of the relationships that exist in a research project. In this way, methodology is viewed and steeped in relationships; it is living (McKnight, 2017).

Relationships as we will argue, are the first, foremost and central element of any educational research projects to be successful when working with Aboriginal peoples and communities. The research as a living entity takes care of Country, therefore we will explore Country's role, positions and influence in the research process and the relatedness to the methodology of relationship. Our keynote will involve the speakers sharing a number of stories about varying relationships, drawn from three of our research projects. The first story of relationship is from Anthony's PhD research, with Valerie as a supervisor. In the second story, Anthony will discuss '*Stronger culture, healthier lifestyles: a pilot after school cultural activity program for Aboriginal Children*' a UOW Global Challenges Project in partnership with a non-Aboriginal academic Dr Rebecca Stanley. Third, Valerie will discuss the Future fellowship work '*Lead my learning*' in partnership with Aboriginal postgraduate student Nyssa Murray. These stories will contextualise our keynote address. Each will share how the requirement of intimacy or a closeness may demonstrate a research capacity to make an impact and engage respectfully in research.