Title:
The place of critical Indigenous methodologies in providing both a framework to critique the discursive impacts of colonialism on Aboriginal people and a platform to initiate transformative change.

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Abstract:
‘Indigenous’ research methodologies have rightfully settled into the landscape of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research. It has become to ‘go-to’ methodology applied by many Indigenous scholars as they have sought to authentically give understand and meaning to the contextual, lived experiences of their communities, knowledges and presence in this country. Over time, this methodology has morphed as First Peoples’ scholars worldwide have applied its core tenants to the contexts and theoretical environments in which their studies have been situated.

This methodological approach is informed by First Peoples’ theorists such as Sandy Grande (2009), Russell Bishop (2012), Linda Smith (2000) and Bagele Chilisa (2012) who have drawn explicitly on key elements of the critical paradigm to establish a rich research methodology to challenge the exploitive practices and positioning of First Peoples within colonised environments. Similarly, Australian Indigenous theorists such as Nakata (2007), Martin (2008), Wilson (2008) and Rigney (1997) have also drawn down on this tradition as they looked to the transformative potential of critical theory to methodologically support research that sought insight and understanding to the discursive experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

This presentation will look to highlight the potential of developing a critical Indigenous lens to investigate the contemporary and complex spaces in which Aboriginal communities find themselves being situated. I will outline the case for scholars to develop a critical frame to interrogate the discursive Aboriginal experiences of colonialism, their interactions with the state and its agents and the complexity of socio-political, economic and legal contexts in which Indigenous people live.

The final section of the presentation will focus how the application of this methodology has facilitated a systems wide investigation of Aboriginal students and their families’ experiences of schooling and the subsequent development of a research informed, whole-of-school model of culturally nourishing schooling.

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1 I have used Indigenous within this context, but otherwise sought to use the term ‘Aboriginal’ or First People. I acknowledge that Torres Strait Islander peoples have their own ontological affiliation and that this too needs to be recognised.