

Abstract:

Indigenous Peoples' Encounters with Steiner in Teacher Education

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Auckland is the most multi-cultural city in the southern hemisphere. It is also the world's largest Polynesian city . By 2030, it is estimated that 30% of the population will be Pasifika . The Steiner education movement in New Zealand is well established. The majority of Steiner schools are state funded, their status being protected by law. Steiner schools have been exempted from national standard testing requirements in the lower and middle schools as it is contrary to their pedagogy, and the Steiner Schools Certificate has been approved by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority as an accepted method of entry to all tertiary education institutions nationwide. Every university has agreed to accept this qualification as equivalent to the International Baccalaureate. AUT University in Auckland offers qualifications in Steiner education up to doctorate level. It is also the university choice for Pasifika students; both Steiner education and Pasifika education are actively promoted as alternative pedagogical models which can be studied as specialties.

The speaker has been approached by indigenous students at AUT who are currently specialising or have specialised in Steiner education who have commented on commonalities between the image of the human being given by Steiner and their own cultural traditions, as well as similarities in pedagogies for learners of different ages. Although there has been a Steiner school on the Latoka reservation in South Dakota since 1992, to date the relationship between Steiner education and the indigenous education movement has not been significantly researched or investigated. No research has been done in New Zealand into this relationship.

Aims

Acknowledging the work of Penetito, Marsden, Durie and Kincheloe among others , this study aims to let the voices of indigenous student teachers from the South Pacific region be heard as they detail their engagement with Steiner education. They explore what drew them to Steiner education and what they see as the commonalities and differences between their cultural traditions and what they have learned and experienced of Steiner education and anthroposophy themselves.

Scope

Present and former student teachers who identify themselves as Pasifika have been approached to take part in this study. Five have indicated they are willing to take part. All are female, age range from mid-20s to mid-40s, representing early childhood and primary sectors.

Method

Following an initial questionnaire, participants will be invited to take part in one-to-one interviews as well as group discussions.