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Beginning Teachers' Preparedness to Teach Māori Children

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Peti Mihiroa Mere Jessie Kenrick

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Abstract

The preparation of teachers is complicated by a plethora of competing elements seeking consensus as to what a teacher education curriculum might look like for those entering the teaching profession. Ideally the preparation of teachers needs to be an exact science to ensure and secure the future of the teaching profession and educational outcomes for all New Zealanders. Unfortunately, teaching is not an exact science. In New Zealand, education, and teachers as agents of the education system, has not always served all students and groups well. Failure to serve all well challenges the education system and teacher educators' preparation of teachers to teach. This research focuses on beginning teacher preparedness and whether they enter the teaching profession prepared or not. Beginning teachers represent the future of the teaching profession (Education Review Office, 2005). More specifically, and in light of growing diversity, disparity and rights, this research examines beginning teachers' perception of their preparedness to teach Māori children. The consequence of a prepared or unprepared teacher is reflected in the student achievement and educational outcomes. A profession that does not prepare their professionals to perform the job they are charged with do a disservice to their clients. Sadly, poorly prepared teachers are too common, particularly when it comes to teaching Māori children. Concerns raised by participants in this study point clearly at the lack of preparation during their teacher education and later during their induction programme. However, this study did also find teacher education had not completely ignored preparing students to teach Māori children but the approach was limited. Unfortunately, the consequence for Māori children is poor educational outcomes that are too often mirrored in the workforce.

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