Whai Whakaaro: An Indigenous Perspective on Authentic Partnerships

Keynote Presentation

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Abstract:

In New Zealand, 15 per cent of all Māori people over the age of 15 years are working towards a tertiary qualification, the highest participation rate for any ethnic group in New Zealand. This year’s ANZSSA Conference theme encourages us to form authentic partnerships with our students. The call is backed by compelling research that tells us working in partnership promotes better engagement and awareness for both students and staff. Ultimately, the research says, this leads to improved learning and teaching experiences. So, what does it mean for a partnership with Māori students to be ‘authentic’? As someone who has worked to increase Indigenous university graduates in New Zealand over the last 25 years, I will explore the notion of authentic partnerships with Māori students from a Māori perspective. I will ‘whai whakaaro’ (follow the thought), drawing examples from both ancient Māori houses of learning and modern day Māori experiences, and apply them within the context of student support.