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No BioNote

An Old Wolf in New Clothes: The Impact of ‘Political’ Conservatism on Kaupapa Māori Educational Provision

Kaupapa Māori education has gained momentum since its inception in the 1980s. In a time of sweeping educational reform an education for Māori, by Māori and in Māori became a movement for the survival of te reo Māori, tino-rangatiratanga and social change. Twenty years on, questions still remain about the will of successive governments and an education system to fully embrace Māori led educational initiatives and aspirations. Since Don Brash’s ‘Orewa’ speech a racialised political conservatism has been on the increase, resulting in policies and funding for Māori coming under increasing scrutiny and challenge. It is argued in this paper that the current climate has impacted negatively on the lives and schooling of tamariki Māori. Intensifying in the process historically constituted racialised relationships. The experiences of a whānau based bilingual unit in a mainstream South Island school provides a case study for the way in which old struggles continue to be played out and made worse in the present political climate.