Teenagers as Agents of Change: Engaging Māori in Brain Awareness Week

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Whakataukī

He aha te mea nui o te ao
What is the most important thing in the world?

He tangata, he tangata, he tangata
It is the people, it is the people, it is the people
Know your Audience!
Rangahau Māori

Positivism: Science is Truth
The truth is out there

VS

Tangata whenua
People of the land knowledge

Social constructionism: we co-construct the truth
Brain Day

- Science festival format
- 3000 attendees
- 80% rate lectures as very appealing and most useful
Co-construction of the brain

Māori make up 2% of the audience, but 17% of the NZ population

WHY?
For Māori, the brain is tapu (sacred) as the seat of the soul

Scientific research is done by Westerners with a Western ideology of scientific detachment

Research is viewed as done ON Māori, not WITH or BY them
Health literacy

Māori are one of NZ’s most deprived social groups disproportionately affected by cardiovascular disease and diabetes

Engagement is essential to:
• raise aspirations in science
• increase involvement in research
• reduce health inequalities
Teenagers as agents of change

Jacquie Bay
Liggins Education Network for Science
Students as Researchers

- Māori Advisory Board
- Whaea advisor
- 6 schools, 44 students
- 11 scientist mentors
- 100 family members
Feedback in an oral culture

Consider alternative methods of evaluation to fit audience needs - video messages suited our storytelling cultures
Engaging with under-served audiences

Issues

- Different ways of viewing the world
- Historical mistrust of science and scientists
- Power imbalances
- Health inequalities

Learning points

- Respect other cultures
- Find gatekeepers or bridges into the community
- Co-construct your meaning together
- Find a topic that motivates you both and work towards changing it together
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