

## Chapter 3

# Not a Subject but an End–Goal: Education for Citizenship in New Zealand

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### ABSTRACT

*This chapter discusses the status of citizenship education across three periods of New Zealand history. Each period is characterized by the competing educational debates of the day. The first period (Indigenous vs. Colonial, circa 1200AD-early 1900s) describes the contestation over land, citizenship, and education between the indigenous Māori and their British colonizers. Early in the 20th century, the traditional colonial form of schooling is challenged by a liberal progressive approach (Traditional Conservative vs. Liberal Progressive, 1900s-1970s). With the economic downturn of the 1970s the third era begins (New Right vs. Liberal Left, 1970s-present). In each period of history, the nature and status of education for citizenship has been a subject of debate with the outcome in the hands of the dominant ideology of the time. The tensions have not yet been resolved and while education for citizenship has always been an end-goal, it has never reached the status of a compulsory subject.*

### BACKGROUND

About 800 years ago, Polynesian seafarers found their way to a group of islands in the southern Pacific Ocean. Over time, they settled and made these islands, roughly the size of Great Britain, their home. With the land's abundant food supplies and temperate climate, the newcomers flourished and set up a complex social system of tribes, sub-tribes and extended families. As part of their wider culture, the people, who became known as Māori, passed on important knowledge, skills and values to the next generation. Young people learned their culture through an informal, community-based, experiential learning apprenticeship model (Irwin, 1994). Māori lived in the land, later known as Aotearoa, undisturbed by outsiders for many centuries until European adventurers, sealers, whalers and Christian missionaries arrived in their waters (King, 2007). In 1840, in order to claim the land for Great Britain, a representative of the British Crown signed a treaty with local Māori. In return for passing sovereignty to the British Crown, Māori were granted citizenship of the British Empire (King, 2007; Orange, 2010). This treaty, the Treaty of

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-7110-0.ch003

Waitangi, set the stage for the on-going contestation of what it meant to be a citizen of Aotearoa New Zealand, what attendant rights and responsibilities came with the conferral of citizenship, and what role education might play in preparing children and young people to be citizens of this new country.

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter picks up the story after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Differing interpretations of the treaty lead to the colonists winning domination over the indigenous people and to wars over land. The framework for telling the story of education for citizenship in New Zealand uses three time periods, each highlighted by two contested worldviews (Mutch, 2002). This framework does not aim to set up a dichotomous “good worldview” versus “bad worldview” scenario but rather show the tensions that existed in each time period and their impact on education for citizenship. It should be understood, as well, that the time periods are not rigid but overlap; however, there are particular historical events that mark the shift from one time period to the next. The first period is that of the British settler worldview set against that of the Māori worldview (circa 1200AD to the early 1900s). The second time period sees the rise of a traditional conservative political and educational worldview come up against a more liberal progressive political and educational outlook (1900s to 1970s). The third time period brings us to the present as market forces challenge more liberal left interests (1970s to the present). In each of these periods, education for citizenship was revisited and debated before finally being shaped by whichever ideological force held sway at the time.

## INDIGENOUS VERSUS COLONIAL

The 1840 Treaty of Waitangi was written in both English and *te reo Māori* (the Māori language). As with any language, it is not always possible to capture the cultural, social and linguistic nuances in translation. While the current understanding of the treaty’s three principles is that they guarantee partnership, participation and protection, the understandings that each of the signatories took away from the treaty at the time differed markedly (King, 2007; Orange, 2010; Tawhai & Gray-Sharpe, 2011). *Pākehā* (the Māori name for European New Zealanders) undertook the religious conversion, cultural assimilation and formal education of Māori into British culture through means such as the 1867 Native Schools Act. Māori, “an uninitiated but intelligent and high spirited people” were seen as in need of being brought “into line with our [British] civilisation” (Bailey, 1977, p. 5). Broken promises and misappropriation of land became heated issues for Māori and led to the New Zealand Wars of the 1860s. Following the wars, more Māori land was confiscated by the government. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Māori were dispossessed of much of their land and their population was in rapid decline (Irwin, 1994; King, 2007; Simon & Massey, 1994; Tawhai & Gray-Sharpe, 2011).

When schools were initially established, they were based on the British industrial model, where primary-aged children learned in age-based groupings, in rigid rows, copying and reciting knowledge under the stern eye of a teacher who asserted strict discipline (Campbell, 1941; May, 2011). May (2011, p. 31) describes it this way:

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