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Can Truth-telling be Decolonial? Sanctioned Ignorance and Desire-based Possibilities in Teacher Education

Short description / Abstract:

This paper explores how truth-telling can be understood and practiced as a pedagogical approach in teacher education (TE), in response to findings of the 2023 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC and current research have identified persistent colonial ignorance and implementation gaps in policies concerning Sámi rights and perspectives. Educational institutions across Norway and Sápmi are mandated to promote comprehensive knowledge of Sámi culture, history, and languages, requiring competencies in indigenous worldviews (Somby & Olsen, 2025). To prevent reconciliation efforts from reinforcing colonial power dynamics, the paper argues for a reorientation of knowledge practices toward Sámi onto-epistemologies and decolonial pedagogies. The contributions from the presentation are primarily theoretical-conceptual, but the reflections are informed by the authors' long-standing empirical, explorative and auto-ethnographic research and development work in Norwegian TE (Eriksen et al., 2023; Eriksen et al., 2024; Eriksen, 2025). As pointed out by Gannaway (2025), truth-telling practices are an invitation toward building collective capacity for discomfort - not as coercion, but as desire (Dankertsen & Paulsen, 2025; Tuck, 2009). Inviting the audience to reflect upon the question "can truth-telling be decolonial?" the author suggests two aspects as key: Firstly, the need to critically examine what constitutes claims to truth in relation to colonial power dynamics, and engaging a pluriversal approach to knowledge; secondly, a pedagogical framework that enables a transformative approach to engaging and transforming the self.