



# Editorial: World Teachers' Day

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## Editorial on the Research Topic World Teachers' Day

In the call for this Research Topic celebrating *World Teachers' Day*, we sought to “advance an understanding of and appreciation for the important and complex work teachers do, who teachers are, and the ways in which they advance education and democracy across the globe” (Edge and Haniford, 2021). World Teachers' Day is an annual event commemorating the 1966 Recommendation on the Status of Teachers. This landmark document outlines what societies should do to advance the profession of teaching in order to educate citizens able to participate fully in democratic life. One of the guiding principles organizing the document states:

Teaching should be regarded as a profession: it is a form of public service which requires of teachers expert knowledge and specialized skills, acquired and maintained through rigorous and continuing study; it calls also for a sense of personal and corporate responsibility for the education and welfare of the pupils in their charge. (UNESCO, 1966, p. 4)

Stemming from the full set of guiding principles are a host of recommendations. Section VIII is entitled, “The rights and responsibilities of teachers” and the first right listed is “professional freedom.” Per these recommendations, professional freedom includes:

The teaching profession should enjoy academic freedom in the discharge of professional duties. Since teachers are particularly qualified to judge the teaching aids and methods most suitable for their pupils, they should be given the essential role in the choice and the adaptation of teaching material, the selection of textbooks and the application of teaching methods, within the framework of approved programmes, and with the assistance of the educational authorities.

We highlight these elements of the Recommendation because 57 years since the Unesco document was written, teachers and teaching are again under attack, with the most troubling attacks happening to their professional freedom. (p. 8)

This Research Topic includes nine research papers based on original research addressing the complex work of teaching, teacher identity, and the continuing work of advancing education and democracy around the world.

The first paper, “*In enhancing preservice teachers' assessment literacy: focus on knowledge base, conceptions of assessment, and teacher learning*,” Atjonen et al. describe multiple levels and facets of assessment literacy in Finland, highlighting one small slice

of the complex knowledge teachers must be able to put into practice in a classroom setting. In “*Understanding identity development as a science teacher educator through shifts in pedagogical equilibrium*,” Mansfield et al. use the frame of pedagogical equilibrium to explore teacher educator identity and knowledge development through self-study methodology at an Australian, research-intensive university, calling attention to the relationship between teaching practice and identity formation. The context of science teacher education highlights epistemological tensions between teaching and learning as simple, factual, and certain vs. those which acknowledge the problematic and complex nature of teaching and learning in environments of uncertainty. Also in the context of Australian teacher education, Cooper and Marangio take up the complexities of learning to teach and the number of people it takes to do it well in their study “*Views across the boundary: school-based Co-teachers experiences with co-teaching in initial teacher education*.” Cooper and Marangio highlight the transformative nature of dialogue between university-based and school-based science teachers as a mechanism for creating new knowledge and identities within and beyond particular sites of practice.

Through multiple case studies of student teaching in Thailand, Prabjandee illustrates the differences between transmission-oriented and constructivist-oriented mentoring approaches on student-teacher identity in “*Inconvenient truth? How different mentoring approaches impact student-teacher identity development*.” Feng et al., in their study, “*The structure and evaluation of educational research skills and accomplishments among rural teachers: data from China*,” explore the structure of rural teachers’ engagement in action research carried out in the context of their teaching practice in the Hynan Province.

From their survey of 304 teachers in Indonesia, findings in “*The mediating role of meaning at work in promoting teacher commitment and reducing burnout*,” Suyatno et al. take up what can happen when teachers are not supported and the importance of considering the entire schooling context. When leaders don’t take seriously the requirements of teaching and the impact professional circumstances can have on teachers, they risk negative consequences on teacher wellbeing and on student learning. Set in Germany, Dreer research report, “*Witnessing wellbeing in action: observing teacher wellbeing during field experiences predicts student teacher wellbeing*” emphasizes the importance of the wellbeing of in-service teachers on the wellbeing of student teachers.

In their study, “*Will I be molded or crushed? Artistic representations of student teachers’ identities and emotions*,” Kennedy and Glaue utilize arts-based educational research methods to explore the complexity of teacher identity at two United States universities. Kennedy and Glaue help make more visible the often invisible emotional work of learning to teach by reporting findings from teacher candidates’ reflections from

anonymously creating and interpreting art about their student teaching experiences in school settings. Given the shortage of teachers worldwide, the importance of supporting the complex work of learning to teach is critical. Dori et al., in “*Assessing and comparing alternative certification programs: the teacher-classroom-community model*,” investigate the integration of graduates from five Alternative Certification Programs in Israel.

Collectively, articles in this Research Topic illuminate the dynamic nature of teacher learning and identity through theoretical underpinnings which acknowledge identity as narratively constructed and reconstructed, often unconsciously influenced by the contexts in which teacher candidates learn and teach (Edge, 2023). Research findings also highlight the non-linear nature of teacher learning and identity as well as the influence of context on a teachers’ perception of their credibility. As editors from the United States, where attacks on teachers, books, and curricula are especially fierce, we see the events in the U.S. right now as marking a particularly troubling forecast for teachers, education, and democracy. Articles in this World Teachers Day topic take up the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers, document the complexity of being and becoming a teacher, and call for the continuing work of advancing education and democracy around the world.

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## Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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