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# Editorial: Women in teacher education: gendered stories of teaching, learning, and teacher education

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## Editorial on the Research Topic

[Women in teacher education: gendered stories of teaching, learning, and teacher education](#)

The higher representation of women in the field of education is said to reflect traditional gender stereotypes that impact on women's trajectory into the teaching profession (Napierala and Colyar, 2022, p.14). Using international lenses, that view reflects UNESCO (2023) discussion of the predominance of women in the profession of teaching. Other reports about women in higher education corroborate when mentioning that "women make up 58% of faculty in fields stereotypically considered more feminine, such as education and health, whereas women make up just 21% of STEM faculty" (Napierala and Colyar, 2022, p. 5).

The present topic entitled "*Women in teacher education: gendered stories of teaching, learning, and teacher education*" emerged from the impetus to honor women researchers in recognition of International Women's Day. The Editors for this journal Research Topic that is focused on women in educational research and women in teacher education comprise researchers in the broad field of Education. We bring together shared perspectives from our contexts of Canada, Ireland, Pakistan, Spain, and the United States while shedding light on cutting edge research in Education involving women.

In contemplating the scope and concentration of this Research Topic, we noted how we had witnessed the keen (and important) focus among these researchers on the disparities between that of women and men in the sciences, math, and engineering. However, less attention seems to have been paid to how women in teacher education and the educational field are faring. While we wonder if this scholarship gap is due to the *predominance* of women in the field, there are questions that remain even in the face of that predominance. For example, even though the gap in women's salaries is narrowing in comparison to that of men, the education field tends to pay a lower salary than that of researchers in the sciences, math, and engineering (Napierala, 2022, p. 6).

This Research Topic pays attention to the knowledge production among women researchers as sole authors, co-authors, and/or as primary authors whose work contributes to the field of education and teacher education and recognizes the added value they bring to the social sciences. Noting that those few studies that do consider women in social sciences (Oleschuk, 2020) do not incorporate educational researchers, this Research Topic offers a unique focus.

We provide below an overview of the articles that have been collected for this journal Research Topic. Each of the articles focus on pertinent areas of education and/or teacher education. They highlight a focus on gender in the field of Education and showcase the work of women educational researchers. We invite readers to explore this set of articles to shed light on the issues facing women in education and the perspectives of women in education. We anticipate that this Research Topic of research will pave the way for ongoing discussion and research.

In “*Engaging practitioners as co-researchers in national policy evaluations as resistance to patriarchal constructions of expertise: The case of the end of year three evaluation of the access and inclusion model*,” Sheridan et al., feminist theory is applied to understand the gendered experiences of one practitioner researcher in a national program, the *Access and Inclusion Model* in Ireland. Thematic analysis is applied to the critical reflection composed by the first author. Findings highlight the need to bolster feminine constructions of power related to care, nurture, collaboration, and enabling. Data also demonstrate the possibilities of a feminist lens in the discovery of expert identity and in the empowerment of others. Finally, the authors posit that focus on inclusion of practitioner voices in education, particularly feminized perspectives, could empower female educators to transform policy and practice.

In “*Hate speech in adolescents: A binational study on prevalence and demographic differences*,” Castellanos et al. argue that there is a predominance of researchers attending to hate speech as it occurs online. However, the authors argue that due to the impact of hate speech on “victims, perpetrators, and those who witness it” (p. 1) it is critical to pay attention and characterize its occurrences both online and offline with particular interest in schools. The researchers draw from data that includes 3,620 7–9th graders from 42 schools in both Germany and Switzerland. They identify that 50% of respondents named offline hate speech while 63% named online hate as being due to “skin color and origin” (p. 1). Findings regarding the high frequency of hate speech point to the need to make available school-based programs for youth that focus on prevention.

Mooney Simmie calls for critical feminist approaches to research in teacher education in “*The fast globalizing gendered construction of teacher education: A critical feminist research policy analysis of the contemporary reform movement, challenges hegemonic masculinities at play in the fast-paced, globalized context of higher education*.” This article raises a number of concerns about assumptions of gender-neutral inclusion policies and the ways in which macro policy shapes and re-shapes gendered constructions of teacher education. Through a feminist discourse analysis of two OECD educational policy texts, Mooney Simmie reveals the framing of gender relations in teacher education macro policy with specific reference to the uncritical nature of gender-neutral

policies of inclusion and sustainability. Mooney Simmie’s timely article invites readers to interrupt the audit culture, speed, and hegemony of contemporary discourse in educational policy and to consider emancipatory practices that can offer hope and solidarity to women teacher educators who seek to uphold affective practices, deep learning, and democracy.

In “*Educators in Israel define cultural competence*,” Shapira et al. focus on the concept and application of cultural competence as it pertains to the Israeli context. The authors consider the unique cultural setting of Israel, where schooling is organized along religious and cultural lines. The article presents the findings of a mixed methods study into teachers’ perception of cultural competence. The authors highlight that most of the teachers understood the concept of cultural competence. However, the findings indicate the need to take into account the specific context of Israeli schooling in preparing teachers to be culturally competent educators in support of learners in Israeli schools.

In “*Attending to the voices of parents of children with Reactive Attachment Disorder*,” Schlein and Taft delve into a narrative inquiry case study of the school experiences of adoptive and/or foster parents raising children with Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD). Utilizing interviews and support group observations, data were collected from families facing the challenges of parenting children with attachment disorders. Results display the pervasive sense among caregivers that they are systematically silenced by educational institutions. The data elucidate the dissonance between the social, emotional, and academic needs of children with attachment disorders and the prevailing structures of educational accountability. Considerations regarding the imperative to reimagine educational accountability frameworks, emphasizing the necessity of aligning them with the perspectives and experiences of parents with children with special needs are highlighted.

In “*Examining gender issues in education: Exploring confounding experiences on three female educators’ professional knowledge landscapes*,” Kelley et al. use a critical feminist lens to share stories of their early career, middle career and recent career experiences. These narratives have deeper implications for recognizing the way women face inequities in their academic workplaces. Employing the broadening, burrowing, and storying-restorying framework of Clandinin and Connelly (2000), the three female educators take the readers through an emotive continuum of reflective experiences, relating how their resilience toward inequitable treatments helped them break the “glass ceiling.” There are important lessons in these stories for all women to rise above the injustices and oppressions that they face in their workplaces and break through the glass ceiling through a collaborative knowledge community of mentors and critical friends.

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DM: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Writing—original draft, Writing—review & editing. RM: Conceptualization, Project administration, Writing—review & editing. GM: Writing—review & editing. MR: Writing—review & editing. GG: Writing—review & editing. CS: Writing—review & editing.

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