

**GUEST EDITORS' INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL THEME ISSUE:  
MARGINALISED PEDAGOGUES?**

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For José Elio Anteliz, Herbert Radcliffe-Brown and Maurice Danaher

*“The words that a father speaks to his children in the privacy of home are not heard  
by the world, but, as in whispering galleries, they are clearly heard at the end, and by  
posterity.”*

Jean Paul Richter

*“To sum up the whole with a 'Saw' of much use,  
Be just and be generous,-- don't be profuse!--  
Pay the debts that you owe,-- keep your word to your friends,  
But -- DON'T SET YOUR CANDLES ALIGHT AT BOTH ENDS!--  
For of this be assured, if you 'go it' too fast,  
You'll be 'dish'd' like Sir Guy,  
And like him perhaps, die  
A poor, old, half-starved, Country Parson at last!”*

Richard Harris Barham, “The Lay of St. Cuthbert; Or The Devil’s Dinner-Party: A  
Legend of the North Countree”, *The Ingoldsby Legends*

*“Yet in my lineaments they trace  
Some features of my father’s face.”*  
Lord Byron, “Parisina”

**Background and Rationale**

Writing in the *International Handbook of Teachers and Teaching*, Good, Biddle and Goodson (1997) referred to “the recent flowering of works on the lives of teachers” (p. 672). Although this “flowering” can be traced to earlier publications (see for example in the Australian context Connell, 1985 and Turney, Eltis, Towler & Wright, 1986), its existence is reflected in the creation and expansion of Special Interest Groups in various Educational Research Associations: Lives of Teachers in the American Educational Research Association; Teachers’ Work and Lives in the Australian Association for Educational Research; Primary School Teachers’ Work in the British Educational Research Association; and Continuing Professional Development for Teachers and Leaders in Schools in the European Educational Research Association. In addition, there is the publication of texts such as the

collections edited by Goodson and Hargreaves (1996) and Tattam (1998), entitled respectively *Teachers' Professional Lives* and *Tales from the Blackboard*; books like Huberman with Grounauer and Marti's *The Lives of Teachers* (1993) and Muchmore's *A Teacher's Life: Stories of Literacy, Teacher Thinking and Professional Development* (2004); and texts written by authors who have contributed to this volume, including June A. Gordon's *The Color of Teaching* (2000) and *Beyond the Classroom Walls: Ethnographic Inquiry As Pedagogy* (2002). There are also the cinematic representations of educators' lives, from Robin Williams as John Keating in *Dead Poets Society* (1989) to Julie Walters' memorable portrayal of Dame Marie Stubbs in *Ahead of the Class* (2005).

These developments are manifestations of the recognition of the crucial links between *what educators do* and *who they are* – that is, between their work and their identities. Given the “flowering” noted by Good and his colleagues (1997), it is timely to interrogate those links in relation to a particular topic: the impact on educators of teaching so-called ‘minority’ learners. By this term we mean the diversity of individuals and groups who by one measure or another are defined as ‘different’ from the ‘mainstream’, including on the basis of age, ethnicity, gender, location, political and/or religious affiliations, and socioeconomic position. Given that ‘difference’ often shades into ‘deficit’ and ‘discrimination’, it is necessary to consider the extent to which educators teaching these learners see themselves as ‘marginalised’ – and/or perhaps as ‘privileged’ to be working with these learners, as ‘innovators’ because they are away from the surveillance directed at ‘mainstream’ education and so on. Through a close examination of several incarnations of this ‘difference’, we have sought to explore in this special theme issue of *Teaching and Teacher Education* the character and existence of “marginalised pedagogues” through posing such questions as the following:

- What attracts educators to teaching learners who are ‘different’ or ‘minority’?
- What distinctive challenges and opportunities for the educators’ work arise from their interactions with ‘minority’ learners?
- What are the effects of such interactions on the educators’ identities?
- What are the implications of these international studies for extending understandings of both educators’ lives and the education of ‘minority’ learners?

The aims of the special theme issue have been as follows:

- to represent a broad diversity of international studies of the work and identities of educators teaching ‘minority’ learners
- to investigate whether and how these educators construct themselves as ‘marginalised’ and/or as other kinds of pedagogues
- to link that investigation to the broader literature on educators’ lives and the education of ‘minority’ learners.

### **Process and Structure**

Agreement in principle to the proposed theme issue having been gained from the journal editors, the issue guest editors contacted a number of potential contributing authors from among their shared professional networks and others known to be working in the field of educators’ work and identities. Indeed, the interest was so great that it became necessary to negotiate with some of the authors a proposed

additional theme issue in a separate journal, so great is the interest in this field of research.

Each article published here draws on the long standing and substantial scholarship of its respective author/s and has been anonymously peer reviewed using the 'double blind' refereeing system and then carefully copyedited by at least one of the guest editors, to maximise the quality of the published articles. The penultimate versions of the articles were sent to Helen Currie, who as Adviser for Minority Ethnic Achievement in the Children's Services Department at the Wokingham District Council in Wokingham in the United Kingdom has been able to provide distinctive insights into the impact on educators' identities of working with 'minority' learners.

What has resulted from this process has been the publication of seven articles representing the work and identities of educators in six countries (Australia, Japan, Nigeria, Italy, the United States of America and Canada) engaging with six sources of 'minority' existence (otherness, immigration, mobility, ethnicity, urban location/socioeconomic status and sex, sexual and gender differences). We contend that this diversity of coverage encapsulates much of the corresponding diversity of lived experience in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century and that the authors' analyses of these manifestations of diversity constitute a significant contribution both to celebrating the positive and enabling dimensions of such 'minority' existence and to disrupting and subverting its less positive and more disempowering implications.

In the first article, Phyllida Coombes and Geoff Danaher, respectively former and current lecturers in the innovative Skills for Tertiary Education Preparatory Studies (STEPS) pre-undergraduate, preparatory program at Central Queensland University in Australia, explore the STEPS students' minority status arising from their 'otherness' in relation to traditional university students on account of their often damaged schooling experiences and other life circumstances. The authors explain the success of the STEPS teachers' strategies of transformative learning in order to boost the students' success. In doing so, the teachers' work and identities are positively influenced by helping their students to achieve in an often uncomprehending and sometimes hostile broader university environment and in doing so to move from the margins to the educational centre.

June A. Gordon, Associate Professor of Education at the University of California, Santa Cruz in the United States of America, uses the second article to depict the reverse situation of particular groups being assigned to the educational margins through her portrayal of the generally negative educational experiences of 'newcomers' or immigrants in Japan (although these experiences extend also to certain Japanese ethnic minorities). That portrayal reveals the correspondingly negative impact on teachers allocated to working with these students, generally with inadequate training and a lack of understanding of the students' needs and aspirations. Gordon argues that there are integral relationships between the teachers' identities and the perceived status and representational strategies on the one hand and those identities and the nation's ongoing renegotiation of its identity in relation to successive waves of immigrants on the other.

In the third article, Abdurrahman Umar, Director of Academic Services at the National Teachers' Institute in Nigeria, focuses on the teacher education curriculum's

efficacy in preparing teachers for their work with disadvantaged children, particularly those of nomadic pastoralists, in that country. Not surprisingly, Umar finds a considerable dissonance between the curriculum and the teachers' existential realities, on the basis of which some teachers have urged significant changes to both that curriculum and the opportunities for and strategies of professional development available to them. Umar contends that, while in many ways the teachers of the nomadic pastoralists constitute 'margins within margins' by being disadvantaged in an already poorly paid and undervalued profession in Nigeria, their desire for professional growth represents the grounds for some optimism for the future.

Francesca Gobbo, Professor of Intercultural Education and Anthropology of Education at the University of Turin in Italy, uses the fourth article to investigate another site of minority status arising from mobility: the Veneto *attrazionisti viaggianti* or fairground and circus people. Gobbo analyses something that is often overlooked: the pedagogical and enculturating role performed by parents and other family members. In doing so she asserts that these people are indeed marginalised pedagogues on account of their teaching their children how to live and work 'along the margins' and 'across the borders' of the Italian economy and society.

In the fifth article, Alberto J. Rodriguez, Associate Professor at San Diego State University in the United States of America, deploys the vivid metaphor of 'the politics of domestication' and 'curriculum as pasture' to argue that the science curriculum constitutes a site of uncritical acceptance of the *status quo* and hence of perpetuating the marginalisation of various groups of learners, including those from ethnic minorities. In that context, the work and identities of Latina/o teacher educators and pre-service teachers are placed under considerable strain and their efforts to enhance learning outcomes for children from those ethnic minorities are rendered problematic. Rodriguez argues that strategies are required urgently to challenge and contest this politics of domestication and curriculum as pasture.

Gerald J. Brunetti, Professor of Education at Saint Mary's College of California in the United States of America, turns in the sixth article to what he terms 'resilience under fire' to characterise the work and identities of experienced, inner city high school teachers in the United States. He uses the results of quantitative and qualitative research to elicit the varied perspectives of teachers at Presidio High School in a large Californian city and in particular the reasons that they have remained in jobs that are often stressful and highly demanding as a result of working with students from ethnic minorities who are often socioeconomically impoverished. Brunetti contends that greater support mechanisms would enhance the teachers' resilience under fire and promote their retention in greater numbers.

In the seventh and final article, André P. Grace, Associate Professor at the University of Alberta in Canada, focuses on the possibilities and problems of 'writing the queer self' – that is, of using autobiography to mediate inclusive teacher education in Canada. The minority status depicted in this article is that of sex, sexual and gender differences and the link with the question of marginalised pedagogues lies in the author's autobiographical account of being marginalised as a teacher and teacher educator as a consequence of his sexual identity. Through strategies such as the establishment of Agape, a focus group in his university's teacher education program,

Grace asserts the crucial importance of writing the queer self as work for social justice and as an ethical cultural practice.

The theme issue concludes with Helen Currie's respondent's text, in which she also uses elements of autobiography to trace her own journey as a marginalised pedagogue through working with ethnic and occupational Travellers and members of ethnic minorities. In exploring some of the articles' separate and shared intersections among 'minorities', 'margins', 'misfits' and 'mainstreams', Currie links those intersections with references to her colleagues' perceptions of what constitutes marginalisation for their students and themselves and to ongoing changes to national and local education policy-making. Currie ends with a clarion call for refocusing our collective attention on the interface our learning and our humanity as a means of seeking to position every learner and every educator at the centre, rather than at the margins, of educational provision.

### **Implications and Significance**

Part of both the implications and the significance of this special theme issue of *Teaching and Teacher Education* can be gauged by the range of the necessarily restricted terms selected by the second-named guest editor for crossreferencing across the articles in the issue and listed here in alphabetical order:

- at risk students
- curriculum
- disadvantaged
- discrimination
- English Language Learners
- equity
- Hispanic
- identity
- minority
- newcomer
- nomadic groups
- other
- outsider
- resilience
- self
- social in/justice
- stereotype/ing
- transformative education/learning.

In one sense, this list represents in microcosm the strategies of marginalisation and the tactics of resistance and subversion (de Certeau, 1984) immanent in any human community throughout history and the contemporary world. In another sense, these selected terms highlight the contextualised and contingent particularities and specificities attending the provision of formal education in the six countries and the six sources of minority existence traversed in this theme issue. The latter point is surely part of the explanation of the continued power of the forces of marginalisation, despite the compelling analyses of the foundations of those forces presented here.

We hope that readers of this theme issue will develop their own responses to the questions posed above by linking their current conceptual and experiential knowledge with the multiple engagements with the questions presented in the articles that follow:

- What attracts educators to teaching learners who are ‘different’ or ‘minority’?
- What distinctive challenges and opportunities for the educators’ work arise from their interactions with ‘minority’ learners?
- What are the effects of such interactions on the educators’ identities?
- What are the implications of these international studies for extending understandings of both educators’ lives and the education of ‘minority’ learners?

In closing, we hope also that in combination this editorial introduction, the articles and the respondent’s text will be seen as constituting one among several possible ways of fulfilling the aims for the theme issue outlined above:

- to represent a broad diversity of international studies of the work and identities of educators teaching ‘minority’ learners
- to investigate whether and how these educators construct themselves as ‘marginalised’ and/or as other kinds of pedagogues
- to link that investigation to the broader literature on educators’ lives and the education of ‘minority’ learners.

Certainly it is vital that the task of researching and interrogating the links between work and identities in the lives of educators – whether marginalised pedagogues or otherwise – continues and expands.

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