

# The Peripatetic Journey of Teacher Preparation in Canada

Rosa Bruno-Jofré and Joseph Stafford

Emerald Studies in Teacher Preparation **in National and Global Contexts**



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# **The Peripatetic Journey of Teacher Preparation in Canada**

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## Preface

The history of education has been a rich field of scholarship in Canada over the past 50 years. From the 1970s, research by Michael B. Katz, Alison Prentice, Susan Houston, Chad Gaffield, J.D. Wilson, Paul Stortz and others inspired scholars to understand the history of schools, teachers and the emerging educational state within the broad contours of social, economic, cultural and political change. Canadian historians of education cannot be accused of focusing narrowly on institutions. *The Peripatetic Journey of Teacher Preparation in Canada* by Rosa Bruno-Jofré and Joseph Stafford exemplifies the best of this tradition, bringing to the reader an underexplored area of history that deepens our understanding of both Canadian history and the history of education. In the process, the volume brings into sharp focus the centrality of education in not only promoting but also articulating deeply held and changing beliefs about what it means to be human and what society is for.

Writing a history of any aspect of Canadian educational history is complicated by the fact that education is a provincial, not a federal, jurisdiction, with the important exception of Indigenous schooling. Undaunted by the archival and research difficulties involved in providing a pan-Canadian overview, this volume situates teacher training, education and preparation within national and global histories, and particularly histories of education. The book provides important insights into the ways in which international discussions and ideas about education percolated through various elements in Canadian society, through the filter of regional, class, gender and racialized identities, influencing people and the structures within which they worked and lived. It provides, furthermore, an overview of the last four centuries of educational change, giving the reader a view that is not only geographically and sociopolitically broad but also that extends through the *longue durée*. Beginning with the traditional practices of families and communities in teacher preparation in Indigenous communities on the brink of colonization, the book goes on to trace the myriad changes associated with missionaries, colonization, the development of the educational state and the professionalization of teaching, ending with the revolutions of the long 1960s. The authors explore general educational trends, such as education's shift in focus from religious, moral and spiritual concerns to the secular, utilitarian and state-oriented ones, rooting these in the larger political and socioeconomic contours of Canadian history. The book adds a deep chronological perspective to its vast geographical reach.

While the focus on teacher training and preparation allows the authors to directly address and redress an underresearched area of educational history in Canada, the authors show us how the subject of teacher training provides an unusual and extremely fruitful perspective from which to explore the role and meaning of education within Canadian society and beyond. Teacher preparation was a discursive space where the promise and hopes for what education could and should accomplish were actively discussed and debated. From informal training to normal schools, teacher training was also a place where people – including teachers, community leaders, administrators, elected officials, local school boards, parents and even children – came together to mobilize those ideas into practice. *The Peripatetic Journey* fully realizes the potential of searching the spaces of teacher preparation for answers to questions about education’s contested meanings and purposes – practical and aspirational, local and global.

For the book does much more than articulate a linear transitions of progress or decline. Each chapter includes abundant evidence of the fractured, fragmented and contested nature of educational stability and change of the multiple voices, motivations, beliefs, ideologies and interests that were worked out through the discussions about and practices of teacher preparation. The result is not a cacophony of discordant voices, in spite of the fragmentation and conflict the book reveals. In the skilled hands of these historians, the reader is able to see as well broad patterns of change over time, waves of action, interaction and response around a range of key issues identified, and disagreed about, by Canadians. In the process, this volume succeeds in articulating just how important *education* was to the social, cultural and political contours of the public as Canadians collectively remade their individual subjectivity and gradually imagined what it was to be modern. As the authors aptly succinctly sum up in their introduction, they not only aim at placing their analysis within “prevailing political and economic processes” in relation to overlapping discourses but also at “leading the reader to explore the objectives of schooling, the contextual role of teachers and the political intentionalities sustaining the various educational conceptions and policies.” In all this, and more, they have succeeded.

Ruth W. Sandwell  
May 21, 2020  
Kingston, Ontario

# Introduction

*Rosa Bruno-Jofré and Joseph Stafford*

This book provides a comprehensive, although not exhaustive, historical synthesis of teacher preparation in Canada.<sup>1</sup> The two authors take a “longue durée” approach, and thus the book begins with the traditional practices and the role of the community as an educator in Indigenous nations encountered by the colonizers. It traces teacher preparation all the way through colonization, the formation of the educational state, the development of the educational sciences and debates over education, the professionalization of teaching, its feminization particularly at the elementary level, and its integration into the university, along with changes that emerged out of the “long 1960s.”<sup>2</sup> The book closes with a discussion on Indigenous people reclaiming control over their education and with it their spirituality, as well as gaining control over the formation of their own teachers.

The historical analysis of teacher preparation is placed within the prevailing political and socioeconomic processes and in relation to overlapping discourses and international configurations of ideas. Overall, the authors aim at leading the reader to explore the objectives of schooling, the contextual role of teachers, and the political intentionalities sustaining the various educational conceptions and policies.

The book is divided into six chapters, of which Joseph Stafford wrote the first three. We made the decision to keep developments in Quebec from 1840 to 1975 in a separate chapter, written by Stafford, to maintain continuity in the narrative given the province’s unique characteristics.

Chapter 1, “From a Social and Emotional Educational Process to Missionary Conversion and Schooling: The 1600s to the Fall of New France in 1763,” by Joseph Stafford, introduces the reader to the way Indigenous nations initiated their young into their culture and way of life. The community was the teacher. The missionary disregarded Indigenous spirituality and brought conversion to a religion and a view foreign to the Indigenous peoples. In the European mind, the natural world was something to be studied and exploited, while for Indigenous people, their

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<sup>1</sup>We will use teacher preparation for the programs previous to the integration of teacher preparation in the universities, at which point we use teacher education.

<sup>2</sup>Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958–1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

spirituality was predicated on their understanding of a natural world that possessed its own spirits and was replete with meaningful signs that humans should heed. As French settlements expanded, the missionary teachers began to serve the French settlers; prominent among the orders were the Jesuits, the Ursulines, and the Congregation of Notre Dame. Teacher preparation was carried out by the orders/congregations for their own members and confessionalization was at the core of their preparation.

Chapter 2, “Teacher Preparation in British North America before the Establishment of Normal Schools, 1763–1840,” by Joseph Stafford, details the time of political reorganization in British North America. In relation to schooling and teacher preparation, it is noted that an increase in population made education a pressing issue for secular governments. Schooling was by and large the responsibility of the different Christian churches even though colonial governments became somewhat involved by establishing local school boards and, in some cases, providing financial assistance for public schools. For lay teachers, moral character and some background knowledge without formal training was the norm. Colonial instruction relied on developments in Europe and the United States in terms of methods and various motivations behind the extension of schooling to large segments of the population. Social stability was the goal of schooling at the time. To that end, monitorial schools reached various parts of British North America.

In those areas within the jurisdiction of the Hudson’s Bay Company, traditional Indigenous education and the formative role of members of the community (“teachers”) continued for some time. In areas occupied by settlers, Indigenous peoples faced dire circumstances as their traditional lands were encroached upon and their livelihoods threatened. In particular, after the War of 1812, when colonial authorities no longer relied on Indigenous warriors, the colonial authorities did not deal with Indigenous peoples in the context of a nation-to-nation relationship. Rather, they began to govern them. Assimilation became an overt policy with charity and missionary schools and their teachers played a major role. Given this, Stafford notes that Indigenous educators worked to undermine the policy by establishing their own community schools, where they focused on maintaining their own languages. Acquisition of Indigenous alphabet literacy was essential—a legacy of the French missionaries who compiled Indigenous dictionaries. Finally, this chapter also pays particular attention to developments in the west.

Chapter 3, also by Joseph Stafford, is entitled “Teacher Preparation in French Quebec, 1841–1975” (Quebec was known as Canada East from 1841 to 1867). Given the unique characteristics of teacher preparation in the province, it is treated on its own in this chapter. Until the 1960s, the Roman Catholic Church controlled much of the education system and it was the Church and not the provincial government that embodied the “educational state” in Quebec.<sup>3</sup> From the mid-nineteenth century, ultramontanist—an ideology that made the Church supreme over the civil government even in temporal matters—was dominant in

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<sup>3</sup>Roger Magnuson, *The Two Worlds of Quebec Education during the Traditional Era, 1760–1940* (London: Althouse Press, 2005), 126.

Quebec Catholic circles. Although supremacy was never achieved, the Church, and in particular its teaching congregations, became the major cultural and educational institution in the province. Its influence on teacher certification was paramount, even as the Council of Public Instruction consisted of two committees, one Protestant and the other Catholic. The Church dominated the Board of Examiners—established in 1841 to examine and certify teachers and active until 1939—this being the prominent method through which one could become a teacher with little training. Pedagogical developments were not absent, but they had little impact on the preparation of teachers. The chapter closes with a focus on the 1960s and the Quiet Revolution, when the entire system was overhauled, and Stafford refers to the Report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Education in the province of Quebec (“the Parent Report”) as the blueprint for the education reform that would result in teacher preparation becoming a university responsibility.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6, written by Rosa Bruno-Jofré, are devoted to teacher preparation in English-speaking Canada. The author, following William Sewell, tries to transcend the “antinomy of social and cultural history” to interpret structures while dealing with culture, contingency, and agency.<sup>4</sup> Chapter 4 is entitled “The Creation of the Educational State, the Normal School, and the Formation of a Polity in the Emerging ‘Age of Empire,’ 1841–1918.” As the author writes, the leading line of thought in this part of the book places teacher preparation at the nexus of international and political forces, intellectual changes, religious forces, and regional contexts. In other words, the author does not separate the self and the world, whether it be the teacher and student, the Catholic school and public school, or the colonizer and colonized. Thus, the chapter deals with the geopolitical context of the “age of empire” that framed the growth of the education system and teacher preparation, which were an integral part of the larger modern project of state formation. Pedagogically, the normal school, influenced by Swiss pedagogue Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, who actually psychologized education and emphasized its regenerative power, aimed at serving as a socializing tool. The chapter addresses the School Act of 1841, a point of historical reference later for the creation of separate schools in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, then situates Egerton Ryerson and the normal school in an international landscape, before moving to the creation of Confederation in 1867. The author discusses in particular the space carved by the Catholic Church in the new system not only in Quebec but also across Canada and delves into the ideological and intellectual configurations within which an international debate over education and teacher education developed from the end of the nineteenth century to the end of the First World War. Educational and psychological theories began to form a body of knowledge referred to as “educational sciences” and a complex material infrastructure emerged alongside the normal school. Those schools in the various provinces are examined as well as intersections and

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<sup>4</sup>William H. Sewell, Jr., *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 80.

intentionalities behind related policies while the presence of counter discourses in the schools are also explored. In the period, associated teacher preparation was in line with the intended role of schooling as an agency to anglicize immigrant children, create unity of thought, and generate a civic culture based on service, duties, and responsibilities. While formal education was under provincial jurisdiction, Indigenous children were placed in residential schools under federal jurisdiction, in partnership with religious denominations.

Chapter 5 is titled “Teacher Preparation in English Canada in the Interwar Period: 1918–1945.” Bruno-Jofré provides in this chapter a review of the national and international contexts framing the ideology of Anglo-conformity and changes after the First World War in the way Canadians saw their country as a distinct, national entity, yet at the same time an important part of the British Empire. In the midst of the post-war crisis, the business class and middle class had a concern with “education and the national spirit” and teachers were seen as playing a powerful role in generating social stability. The chapter also examines the internationalization of education through international education networks and the development of a body of scholarship in psychology and education theory that reached normal schools in an uneven manner. From the early days of these developments, the difference between what Brehony called the moral and philosophical conceptions of education, with an emphasis on educational aims and spirituality, and those following a positivist line was clear.<sup>5</sup> The analysis shows a hybrid syncretism in the process of reception of various strands, including progressive pedagogical tenets that circulated along with ideas on social efficiency and measurement grounded in experimental psychology. At the same time, elementary school teacher preparation by and large was poor.

The chapter demonstrates that the education system and its teachers worked in an interplay between bureaucratic state centralization and local power until the mid-1960s; the rural component represented a strong political force in some provinces. “Normal schools” and teacher preparation, thoroughly explored in this chapter, reflected a socioeconomic reality with its own context, ethnic and religious components, and even intellectual and political positioning of the normal schools’ principals. The professionalization of teachers is discussed in relation to various issues, including the creation of teachers’ federations and the salary differential as one major sign of gender discrimination that came to the fore during the Great Depression. Teacher preparation did not undergo major structural changes during the interwar years, but, at the end of the war, a transitional period in the history of teacher preparation in Canada began during a time when elements of unity and patriotism were becoming evident.

In Chapter 6, “Shaking Teacher Preparation/Education: The Post-war Period and the ‘Long 1960s’” Bruno-Jofré addresses the political, social, and intellectual contexts framing changes in teacher preparation, including structural changes in

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<sup>5</sup>Kevin J. Brehony, “A New Education for a New Era: The Contribution of the Conferences of the New Education Fellowship to the Disciplinary Field of Education, 1921–1938,” *Paedagogica Historica* 40, nos. 5 and 6 (October 2014): 733–55.

the liberal order in Canada. After the War, Canada entered into a transitional process while trying to assert its distinctive character through state intervention and education. It was placed in a new global geopolitical alignment in a world with two new superpowers engulfed in the Cold War. Looking through the lenses of teacher preparation and developments in education, the author finds that the thesis of Christie and Gauvreau defining the period between 1943 and 1955 as an “interregnum” fits well.<sup>6</sup> It was a time when residual and emergent elements generated conflicting approaches and even disjunctures. Nevertheless, a Protestant worldview was still dominant in most places and among educators.

By the mid-1950s, there was a sense that a change in education was necessary. Thus, the chapter discusses the impact of demographic changes as well as voices for change and introduces the Royal Commissions of the 1950s that highlighted the inadequacy of normal schools. There were also notable consequences of the launching of Sputnik by the Soviet Union, a transformation in the liberal order underlying the Canadian state, and Keynesian controls over the economy and welfare programs. Normal schools became teachers’ colleges, and in a few cases, teacher preparation was moved to universities. Further, the 1960s commissions definitely recommended moving all teacher preparation programs to university settings. The faculties of education and their special characteristics are discussed as well as the socioeconomic structures framing their programs.

The process of professionalization of teaching and the moving of elementary teacher preparation to the university accompanied the consolidation of hundreds of school districts, which played a political role in rural areas and often had counter-agendas. The notion of the governable citizen was compounded in the late 1960s by an understanding of education as the medium for building human capital, by the dominance of cognitive psychology, and by the scientification of education. These intercepted the global dissent of the “long 1960s” and the revival of latent modernist pedagogical progressive education strands in the 1960s in provinces like Ontario, with proposals that were unable to deal with racial and gender issues. The chapter ends with the “long 1960s” and with the establishment of Indigenous Teacher Education Programs that envisioned education as a tool of decoloniality through Indigenous reclamation of control of their education, spirituality, language, and identity. The process leading to the development of these Indigenous education programs is discussed.

The book closes in the mid-1970s, when education became strongly influenced by neoliberal policies. Its writing was partly carried out during the 2020 pandemic crisis, and the global situation set an invitation to think of the crisis of neoliberalism and of a less individualist pedagogy that could be developed within the parameters of the social geography generated by new technologies.

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<sup>6</sup>Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, “Introduction,” in *The Sixties and Beyond: Dechristianization in North America and Western Europe, 1945–2000*, eds. Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

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## Chapter 1

# From a Social and Emotional Educational Process to Missionary Conversion and Schooling: The 1600s to the Fall of New France in 1763

*Joseph Stafford*

### Introduction: A Difficult Encounter

In traditional Indigenous communities, “teacher preparation/education” was embedded in the very nature of the communities themselves. Parents, older siblings, members of the extended family, and the elders assumed the role of teacher. Similar to European societies, teacher preparation often took the form of an apprenticeship process, both informal and formal, at the end of which a new generation of “teachers” emerged. Once the French established colonies, the merchants and missionaries disrupted the Indigenous world, changing the lives of the Indigenous peoples forever. A new form of teacher preparation was introduced, that of the missionary who was trained to convert the Indigenous peoples to Christianity. Yet they failed overall in their conversion efforts, facing an obstacle that they were unable to overcome, namely, an Indigenous world view different from their own.<sup>1</sup> Possessing a new, emerging world view that began to divide the human self from the surrounding world, the missionaries failed to understand the extent to which the Indigenous peoples possessed an

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<sup>1</sup>The term “world view” is understood here not merely as how we see the world, but how it constitutes “our innermost being.” A world view “deeply configures our psychic and somatic experience, the patterns of sensing, knowing, and interacting with the world. No less potently, our world view – our beliefs and theories, our maps, our metaphors, our myths, our interpretative assumptions – constellates our outer reality, shaping and working the world’s malleable potentials in a thousand ways of subtly reciprocal interaction.” Richard Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche: Intimations of a New World View* (New York, NY: Plume, 2007), 16.

entirely different world view.<sup>2</sup> For Indigenous peoples no such division existed with the human psyche understood as profoundly integrated with the natural world, a world that possessed its own meaning and purpose.<sup>3</sup> No amount of teacher preparation ever enabled the missionaries to overcome the “obstacle” of the Indigenous world view.

This chapter then examines teacher preparation in terms of the French inhabitants. During an era when education was not understood as a major responsibility of secular governments, the Church was in charge of education, and therefore teacher formation, with different religious orders playing major roles. A major emphasis of teacher preparation was religious and moral doctrine since a fundamental purpose of education was the development of the students’ moral character. Basic literacy skills were another major focus since the ability to read and write was deemed essential to a religious education. During this period the focus of education and teacher formation was also practical in nature, and aimed at preparing students, especially students of the emerging artisan and merchant class, for everyday life. Overall, however, teacher preparation was not a major priority during this period. An underlying assumption was that any educated person could teach with little or no formal training. At a time when teaching had not yet achieved anything near an enviable professional status, and when most teachers were poorly paid, many individuals became teachers out of economic necessity, remaining in the “profession” only until they found more lucrative work.

A shortage of teachers was a constant problem, especially in rural areas. As a result, many teachers failed to meet the two accepted basic standards of teacher preparation, namely, a good “moral character” in the eyes of the Church and a sufficient degree of literacy themselves. Throughout the period, the colonial government relied heavily on France for both teachers and teacher preparation.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 16. The emphasis here is on “emerging.” Western Europeans were experiencing a gradual, but nonetheless dramatic and complex shift from a Medieval world view in which the Christian “cosmos” was “not only created but continuously and directly governed by a personal and actively omnipotent God,” to a modern world view in which the “universe was an impersonal phenomenon, governed by regular natural laws and understandable in exclusively physical and mathematical terms. God was now distantly removed from the physical universe, as creator and architect.” Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1991), 185. This is not to argue that the French missionaries had totally embraced a new world view since in many ways their world view remained medieval: it is to argue that their transforming world view was very different from the world view of the indigenous peoples. In Section 5 of *The Passion of the Western Mind*, Tarnas analyses how the complex intermingling of three cultural epochs, the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Scientific Revolution, lay the foundations of the modern world view.

<sup>3</sup>Indigenous peoples believed that the natural world permeated with meaning – meaning “whose significance is at once human and cosmic.” Spirits were “seen in the forest, presences are felt in the wind and the ocean, the river and the mountain.” Meaningful signs were everywhere in nature, in the “flight of two eagles” to the “conjunction of two planets in the heavens.” Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, 16.