

Invited Symposium: Teaching from the Margins Across Continents: Teacher Education, Identity, and Professional Survival

Organized under the WERA IRN: *Minority and Minoritised Teachers: Exploring Social Justice in Schools Around the World.*

Chair: *Natasa Ciabatti*

Discussants: *Moses Adeleke Adeoye, Naomi Kagawa*

This invited symposium brings together scholars from Brazil, Australia, Germany, Poland, Israel, Finland, Japan, and Nigeria to explore how teachers and pre-service teachers navigate education, professional development, identity formation, and long-term professional survival from positions of marginality. Across highly diverse contexts shaped by migration, multilingualism, rurality, displacement, institutional inequality, and socio-economic exclusion, the symposium examines how educators continue to construct professional meaning and sustain participation within systems that often limit full recognition and belonging. Rather than approaching marginality solely as a condition of deficit or exclusion, the symposium conceptualises the margins as dynamic educational spaces in which teachers negotiate legitimacy, develop adaptive practices, and generate alternative forms of professional knowledge.

The symposium opens with the presentation ***Teacher Education, Development, and Professional Survival from the Margins: Brazilian Experiences from LeCampo and PIBID***, presented by Cristiene Adriana da Silva Carvalho and Luiza Lana Gonçalves. Their study examines teacher education programs rooted in marginalised rural communities in Brazil and explores how these frameworks foster professional belonging, participation, and long-term persistence among teachers from historically excluded territories. Grounded in Paulo Freire's concept of praxis, the presentation demonstrates how community-based teacher education challenges dominant professional models by connecting pedagogical learning with local realities, collective memory, and community knowledge. Drawing on policy analysis, curricular materials, and participant accounts, the presenters argue that teacher education from and for the margins can create alternative pathways of professional agency and survival that resist centralised and urban-centred assumptions about educational legitimacy.

The second presentation, ***From Multilingual Margins to Professional Survival: Minority Pre-Service Teachers Negotiating Legitimacy in Australia and Germany***, will be presented by Nataša Ciabatti and Lisa Rosen. Drawing on comparative interview-based research, the presenters examine how multilingual and migrant pre-service teachers navigate teacher education systems that simultaneously frame multilingualism as both a valuable resource and a source of marginalisation. Their findings illustrate how professional identity develops through practicum experiences, institutional expectations, and interpersonal encounters shaped by ethnicisation and deprofessionalisation. The study demonstrates that marginality often emerges already during initial teacher education and continues into early professional stages, shaping teachers' capacity to persist within linguistically and culturally stratified systems.

Professional survival, therefore, is conceptualised not as a stable achievement, but as an ongoing negotiation of legitimacy, identity, and agency within unequal institutional environments.

The third presentation, ***Teaching from the Margins: Minority Educators and Crisis-Driven Knowledge in Poland, Israel and Finland***, will be presented by Joanna Madalińska-Michalak, Mary Gutman, and Ekaterina Sokolova. Focusing on educators of CIS origin working with war-affected students following the 2022–2023 displacement crisis, the presentation examines how teachers positioned at linguistic, cultural, and institutional margins compensate for systemic gaps through emotional care, distributed leadership, and collaboration with families and NGOs. The study identifies three recurring cross-contextual patterns: emotional care without credentials, leadership without titles, and community substitution for the state. These findings suggest that educators working from the margins often generate forms of adaptive knowledge and relational leadership that remain insufficiently recognised within formal teacher education and policy frameworks. The presentation calls for teacher education systems that acknowledge emotional labour, community engagement, and psychosocial support as core professional competencies rather than peripheral forms of educational work.

The symposium then shifts to East Asia with the presentation ***Uniform Expectations, Uneven Experiences: Marginality in Teacher Professional Development in Japan***, presented by Naomi Kagawa. This presentation critically examines Japan's highly standardised professional development structures, which define expected competencies according to years of service and assume linear professional progression. The study explores how institutional norms, gendered expectations, and age-based hierarchies shape unequal experiences of participation within teacher learning systems. Focusing particularly on women teachers and early-career educators, the presentation highlights how seemingly neutral developmental frameworks may restrict agency and voice for certain groups. Rather than locating these difficulties within individuals, the study demonstrates how collegial cultures and institutional expectations produce differentiated opportunities for professional participation and recognition.

The symposium concludes with ***Teaching from the Margin: Marginality, Identity, and Knowledge Production in Nigerian Teacher Education***, presented by Moses Adeleke Adeoye. Drawing on qualitative analysis of policy documents, institutional reports, and scholarly literature, the presentation examines how socio-economic inequality, ethnicity, rurality, and institutional instability shape teacher education in Nigeria. At the same time, it argues that marginalised educators are not only subjects of exclusion, but also active producers of alternative pedagogical knowledge and professional agency. By foregrounding locally grounded forms of educational practice and knowledge production, the presentation contributes to broader discussions concerning participation, identity, and professional development from the margins.