

# Research Proposal

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## Research Statement

In my research, the question I endeavour to answer pertains to the role of masculinity within Canadian education, more specifically what that role was while public schooling was gaining momentum in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many sources regarding gender and education in Canada focus on the 'feminization' of education and the various opportunities that teaching provided for women; there is less research done, however, on the subject of masculinity and the history of male teachers, which is why it may be necessary to delve into research on the feminization of teaching, and the roles of motherhood in order to analyze what is and is not written regarding masculinity, the father's role, and the male teacher's role.

My research focus will be on what role masculinity played within education in public schools; what society thought of men choosing to teach, as opposed to working jobs more 'appropriate' for their gender during the Victorian era, they were doing what would have been considered as 'women's work'; and what exactly was the role that men played in the public school system as teachers and how did that differ from the role women played as teachers. Furthermore, I hope to explore the question: what role did masculinity play in the feminization of teaching in Canada?

## List of Sources

*Sojourning sisters: the lives and letters of Jessie and Annie McQueen* by Jean Barman

Jean Barman's book is a collection of Annie and Jessie McQueen's correspondence, combined with Barman's research on their stories. The young McQueen girls moved from Nova Scotia to British Columbia and documented their experiences as Canadian women making their living as teachers. I hope to find evidence of masculinity and the roles of masculinity by cross referencing this book with Janet

Guildford's article "Creating the Ideal Man: Middle-Class Women's Constructions of Masculinity in Nova Scotia, 1840-1880".

"Creating the Ideal Man: Middle-Class Women's Constructions of Masculinity in Nova Scotia, 1840-1880" by Janet Guildford

I intend to utilize this article to explore the ideals of masculinity in Nova Scotia, which will allow me to understand what masculine values the McQueen sisters may have brought from their region to their new home in British Columbia. I hope to explore how and if these ideals were in any ways transferred with them as they taught in a region with presumably different values and expectations of masculinity.

"Women Teachers in Canada, 1881-1901: Revisiting the 'Feminization' of an Occupation" by Eric W. Sager

Eric Sager's work on feminization of an occupation provides a strong amount of statistical information regarding teachers throughout various regions of Canada. Much of the statistical information he has provided regarding the history of men and women teaching in Canada will be useful for my research.

"Separate Spheres: The Feminization of Public School Teaching in Nova Scotia, 1838-1880" by Janet Guildford

By exploring Janet Guildford's research on separate spheres and the feminization of public school teaching I will help me to understand how the blurring of the separate spheres began in Nova Scotia, as well as further my understanding of how the feminization of the public schooling system began. Guildford's research will help me raise and answer questions for my research, such as; How often, if ever, were male teachers passed up for their female peers in public schools?

*Lovingly Yours, Nellie: From Portland, Maine to the shores of Ness Lake, British Columbia* by Nellie R. Campbell

This book contains a series of letters written by Nellie Campbell accounting her experience travelling from Maine to Canada, she also lived as a teacher. Her experience will shed light on her experience of male teachers and masculinity while teaching in Canada.

“Exploring Men’s Experiences as Elementary School Teachers” by Rebecca Priegert Coulter and Margaret McNay

In their research, Priegert Coulter and McNay bring up an important fact: for most, if not all of history up to the present women have outnumbered men in the teaching workforce. In the conclusion of their article, they present an idea that I would like to explore suggesting that bringing more men into the education workforce may reinforce existing gender regimes.

“Male Teachers as Role Models: Addressing Issues of Masculinity, Pedagogy and the Re-Masculinization of Schooling” by Wayne John Martino

Martino’s research will provide insight into not only present day masculinity in schools, but also the controversial call for more masculinity in schools.

*Teachers, Students, and Pedagogy: Selected Readings and Documents in the History of Canadian Education* by Douglas O. Baldwin

I will use the research collected by Baldwin to learn about the ways that boys were taught differently than girls, accordingly to the gender spheres, and find out whether they were taught these skills by men or women.

### **Statement of Process**

1. How did you choose your topic? Please explain in as much detail as possible.

While reading the articles on motherhood and feminization I started to wonder about the role of masculinity in education. My intrigue comes from my personal history of being transgender and how I have transitioned from a person of femininity to one of (I hope) masculinity. Because of my complex history with masculinity and my own desire to one day become a teacher, I am interested in how the male teacher’s role and the role of masculinity impacted public education at its roots and how that reflected on both the children and their parents.

2. How did you choose your sources? Please explain your thinking that led you to choose the evidence you will use to interpret the topic.

A plethora of sources on education in Canada are related to feminization which is fascinating, I would be interested in looking at this information through another lens and perspective in order to find the roles masculinity played in the education system.

3. What assumptions did you bring to your research? For example, what preconceived notions about the topic did you have before you began your research? Did your sources cause you to reconsider those ideas? Please explain in as much detail as possible.

Prior to my research and prior to this class, I did not know that women were the first teachers. I did not realize why they were, or how they had gotten to that point. I didn't know anything about the impact of the separate gender spheres on the evolution of education and I had never considered it. I had heard people say that teaching was "women's work" but I had not thought about the ways that the opposite side of the gender sphere, masculinity, had impacted or influenced public schooling.

4. How has your view of the past changed as a result of the research that you have done? What unanswered questions about this topic do you still have?

My view of the past has evolved as my research progresses, when questions are answered there are new ones brought up which is the beauty, excitement, and excruciation of research.

5. What will you do differently next time?

I do not think there is anything I would do differently at this stage of research, besides starting slightly sooner and perhaps start narrowing in on my region being British Columbia specific and my lay out my thesis more specifically than I have.

## Bibliography

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