



What, Why and How: Reflections on Designing a Comparative and International Project on Teacher Identity Construction

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Over the last two decades, sociocultural and political changes of a global scale have impacted the field of education considerably. Broad trends such as globalisation, internationalisation, and immigration have complexified the jobs of teachers by bringing a wide range of cultural and linguistic diversity into the classroom across all educational contexts (Bottery, 2006; Codd, 2005; Tavares, 2021). Students of an international, immigrant, and refugee background have gone from being the occasional minority to now an integral part of the institutional fabric (Baldwin, 2015; Lenette, 2016; Tavares, 2020). When working in such pedagogical settings, teachers are expected to meet the learning needs of very distinct multilingual student groups simultaneously and within the same space (Miller, 2009). Considering the increasing levels of political instability in many societies around the world, this educational trend is only expected to rise even more rapidly in the coming years (Hogan & Haltinner, 2015). To better understand the ways by which teaching within multicultural and multilingual educational contexts impacts the teacher and their experiences, researchers in education have turned to exploring teacher identity.

In this presentation, I explain how an international and comparative project can contribute to a better understanding of the interplay between diversity in education and teacher identity construction. First, I discuss what lessons and insights researchers can gain from exploring teacher identity, particularly language teacher identity. Second, I present some of the current ontological and political concerns surrounding research on teacher identity construction. Finally, I outline how such a project may be designed and executed in light of these important considerations. The overall objective of this presentation is to provide both presenter and audience an opportunity for dialogue and reflection around the “what, why, and how” of this envisioned research project.