



## Examining the Feminization of Nova Scotia's Teaching Profession with Preservice Teachers

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The history of public education in Nova Scotia cannot be divorced from the feminization of the teaching profession. During the rapid expansion of Nova Scotia's public school system in the mid-nineteenth century, women were hired as the majority of teachers because they were considered inherently suited to the moral training of children. In turn, this "innate ability" justified paying women teachers low wages for labour that came "naturally" to them. Little to no teacher training requirements only exacerbated the idea that learned skills were not necessary in order to perform the feminine act of teaching, which hindered teaching's professionalization for well over one hundred years. Today, popular discourse regarding "good teachers" is often reminiscent of the nineteenth-century notion that teaching comes naturally to a predominantly female workforce and that it is somehow bad taste when teachers demand fair working conditions and compensation. Thus, it is important for preservice teachers to challenge this contemporary embracing of the very beliefs and attitudes that sought to hinder the teaching profession throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

## References

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