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In this issue of *History of Education*, we are pleased to present our first annual review of periodical literature (RPL). The history of education is a large and growing field of research, with new journals and other publishing initiatives appearing across the world, and our RPL is one of a number of attempts at ‘mapping’ it. At the International Standing Conference on the History of Education, for example, a standing working group, ‘Mapping the Discipline’, regularly discusses the key trends in the history of education, and there is a long tradition of ‘state of the field’ articles in this journal and elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> Nearly five years ago, a special issue of *History of Education* was devoted to a series of articles reviewing the first four decades of the journal, organised thematically and written by many of the leading UK-based scholars.<sup>2</sup> The declared aim of that special issue was ‘to independently position scholarship published in *History of Education* within the broader bibliographical and historiographical contexts’.<sup>3</sup> For example, one contribution by Joyce Goodman on gender – itself building on an earlier analysis by Ruth Watts<sup>4</sup> – achieved this through mapping several clusters of articles about gender and, especially, femininity onto wider historiographical developments.<sup>5</sup> Through this, Goodman showed how the journal itself contributed to the immense changes that have taken place in the writing of history since the 1970s. Other contributions to the special issue focused on specific stages of education, including primary, secondary and teacher education, while others considered the evolution of biographical writing and the historiography of religion and education. These articles in turn built on the earlier work of William Richardson, who in 2007 published a quantitative survey of trends in the field.<sup>6</sup>

The intention of our new RPL is to identify the main themes in the published work on the history of education for the previous year – in this issue we cover articles published in 2016 – along the lines of similar exercises undertaken in other journals, for example the *Economic History Review* and *Urban History*. In this issue, the inaugural RPL begins with a brief survey of some general trends over time, again building on Richardson’s work. We do not expect this longer-term survey to appear every year, but over time the RPLs will present the story of an evolving field of research.

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Marc Depaepe, ‘History of Education Anno 1992: “A tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing”?’ , *History of Education* 22 (1993): 1-10; Roy Lowe, ‘Do We Still Need History of Education: Is it Central or Peripheral?’ , *History of Education* 31 (2002): 491-504; Gary McCulloch, *The Struggle for the History of Education* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011). Presidents of the History of Education Society have often surveyed the field in their published presidential address: Lowe is an example, as is Ruth Watts, ‘Gendering the Story: Change in the History of Education’, *History of Education* 34 (2005): 225-41.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Forty Years of *History of Education* 1972-2011’, issue 41.1 (January 2012). One of the articles was by an author based in Ireland, and there was a preface by Peter Kallaway from the University of Cape Town.

<sup>3</sup> Deirdre Raftery and David Crook, ‘Editorial: Forty Years of *History of Education* 1972-2011’, *History of Education* 41 (2012): 6.

<sup>4</sup> Watts, ‘Gendering the Story’.

<sup>5</sup> Joyce Goodman, ‘The Gendered Politics of Historical Writing in *History of Education*’, *History of Education* 41 (2012): 9-24.

<sup>6</sup> William Richardson, ‘British Historiography of Education in International Context at the Turn of the Century 1996-2006’, *History of Education* 36 (2007): 569-93.

Our RPL is based on the History of Education Society (HES) online bibliographical database, Exe Libris, which is regularly updated and which has become a valuable source of information for historians and educationalists. It contains details of articles on the history of education published in 56 journals: these are mostly UK-based but also include the main American and Australian history of education publications. The RPL is the combined work of the journal and the HES, with which *History of Education* has always been associated. The RPL is co-authored by one of the editors of this journal (this year, Mark Freeman) and by the HES Richard Aldrich Fellow (currently Alice Kirke). The Society awards fellowships annually to PhD students and early-career researchers: alongside the Richard Aldrich Fellow there is a Peter Gosden Fellow, who manages the online and social media presence of the Society. The RPL, therefore, is an integral aspect of the work of both the journal and the HES. It is also fitting that we have initiated this new development during the year in which the HES itself is marking its fiftieth anniversary. In connection with this event, *History of Education* published a virtual special issue (VSI) in November 2017, alongside the HES conference.

We end by reiterating a point that is also made in the RPL itself: the review is not intended to be the 'official' view of either the journal or the HES, rather it is one overview of the periodical literature published in 2016. The next RPL, covering 2017, is scheduled to appear in the last issue of volume 47, published in November 2018.