



MITIGATING THE MATILDA EFFECT ON CHRISTINE VON PRÜMMER: A (RE-)ILLUMINATION OF HER EXTRAORDINARY WORK

 Hilary SCHMIDT

hschmidt1@athabasca.edu
Athabasca University, Canada

 Susan BAINBRIDGE

susanbainbridge@athabascau.ca
Athabasca University, Canada

 Norine WARK

norinewark@gmail.com
Education, Technology, & Research Consultant, Canada

Received: 31.01.2022

Accepted: 26.03.2022

ABSTRACT

The *Matilda effect* refers to the systematic under-recognition of women's accomplishments in scientific fields (Rossiter, 1993), which we previously proposed extends into additional fields coded male within our culture, such as educational technology and distance education (Schmidt et al., 2021). In the current paper, we attempt to reverse the Matilda effect by highlighting the accomplishments of a groundbreaking early feminist distance education researcher, Christine von Prümmer, whose cross-national, multi-institutional empirical research focused on gender differences in online, digital, and distance education (ODDE). We briefly review von Prümmer's biographical background before exploring her major achievements in ODDE research, which include challenging accepted notions regarding the supposed gender neutrality of theories of learning (such as andragogy), uncovering empirical evidence of female distance learners' needs as distinct from those of "standard" (i.e., male) distance learners, and offering guidance to institutions across the world regarding how they might best support women learners' success in an ODDE environment. We conclude that von Prümmer's omission from standard textbooks and other works focused on distance education provides further evidence of the Matilda effect within this field.

Keywords: Matilda effect, women researchers, distance education, online education, gender differences, gender equity, feminist researchers