

***The Governance of Curriculum in Canada:  
'Legitimate Futures' in Times of Global Crises***  
CIESC/CSSE Pre-conference forum  
Wednesday, 1:00 – 4:30 pm June 12, 2024  
Pavillon Marie-Victorin, Université of Montréal Room 530

You are invited to join a conversation examining the strategies of anticipatory governance that are colonizing curriculum design across Canada. Share 'green shoots' and interventions here at home and internationally that counter these efforts.

Nombuso Dlamini, York University  
J-C Couture, University of Alberta  
Susan Robertson, Cambridge University  
Jill Morris, Brandon University  
David Scott, University of Calgary  
Raphaël Gani, Université Laval

Joanne Pattison-Meek, Bishop's University  
Karen Pashby, Manchester Metropolitan University  
Marta da Costa, Manchester Metropolitan University  
Veldon Coburn, McGill University  
Rachel Collishaw, McMaster University  
Kent den Heyer, University of Alberta

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In *Reimagining our futures together: a new social contract for education* (UNESCO, 2021), UNESCO's Commission in the Futures of Education situates educational reform, including rethinking curriculum, as a fulcrum for leveraging aspirations for a sustainable world. Yet, as a project of futures-making, across Canada, curriculum design and development are increasingly being managed and led by governments – driven the short-term impulses of provincial “partisan politics” (den Heyer, 2021) and the longer-term currents and influences of the OECD and other global policy actors (Robertson & Beech, 2023). Meanwhile, teachers' work and students' lives remain “preoccupied by the hidden and informal curricula, which is tied to the social class filtering role of schooling/assessment, (that) end up steering (the more privileged) students' subjectivities toward being smart and caring consumers and competent future job seekers” (Tarc, Tarc & Paolantonio, 2023, n.p.).

Paralleling these changes is the growing inability and lack of capacity of teachers and their professional organizations and curriculum scholars in Canada's faculties of education to influence system-level curriculum reform across the country (Morris, Couture and Phelan, 2023). These shifts in the governance of curriculum across Canada have their parallel globally as outlined in a recent analysis by Robertson and Beech (2023) in the examination of five strategies deployed by the OECD to claim legitimacy for particular education reforms through “anticipatory techniques aimed at colonising the future” (p. 1). Adapting the five strategies to reflect the governance structures and mandates of contexts of provincial governments, invited panel members will offer their analysis of these five strategies at work in their respective province and context:

(i) the systematic *rewriting* of a once future, now present and past, to erase the link to previous reforms initiated by the provincial government as an implicated subject;

(ii) a *reimagined new future* which is presented as having its own teleology whilst at the same time needing to be navigated by the student;

(iii) the *refashioning* of key discursive categories, such as students, education and the future so that newer concepts like 'student agency', 'well-being' and reflexivity now dominate, making less visible, but not erasing older concepts like human capital and skills;

(iv) *reinforcing its imagined future* via narratives from an extensive *epistemic community*; and

(v) *reassigning* responsibility for the potential failure of unrealized promises to the student and schools - creating a distance to the government as architect of imagination.

(Robertson & Beech, 2023 p. 2)

Given the current policy priorities of governments across the country, it is expected that contributors might wish to focus on reforms related to Indigenizing curriculum, global competencies, student well-being and the digitalization of instruction and assessment.

In a series of interactive presentations, contributors will be invited to 1) reflect on the applicability of the five strategies outlined by Robertson and Beech to help us understand how the mechanisms of anticipatory governance function globally and across national jurisdictions and 2) how we might counter these strategies through examples of 'green shoots' or promising practices and interventions already in the field.

## References

den Heyer, K. (2021). Alberta curriculum: End the failed partisan politics over what kids should learn. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/alberta-curriculum-end-the-failed-partisan-politics-over-what-kids-should-learn-153163>

Morris, J., Couture, J.C. & Phelan, A. M. (2023). Riding Fences: Anticipatory Governance, Curriculum Policy, and Teacher Subjectivity. *Canadian Journal of Education*. 46: 3. <https://journals.sfu.ca/cje/index.php/cje-rce/article/view/5833>

Robertson, S. and Beech, J. (2023). Promises promises': international organisations, promissory legitimacy and the re-negotiation of education futures. *Comparative Education*. December. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/03050068.2023.2287938?needAccess=true>

Tarc, P., Tarc, A.M. & Paolantonio, M.D. (2023). Upholding "the educational" in education: Schooling beyond learning and the market. *Prospects*. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11125-023-09661-w>

## The Program

Following greetings from CIES (Nombuso Dlamini, York University), the meeting convenor (J-C Couture, University of Alberta) will welcome everyone including the invited presenters. A short video introduction will follow by Susan Robertson, Cambridge University.

Jill Morris (Brandon University) informed the work of Anne Phelan (University of British Columbia) will briefly outline the theoretical considerations informing the two questions posed in the program invitation.

*1) to what extent do the strategies of anticipatory governance help us understand how governments legitimize the governance of curriculum currently?*

*2) how might we counter these strategies through examples of 'green shoots' or promising practices and/or interventions we see in the field?*

Presenters will each have 10 minutes to share their responses to one or both of the above questions, depending on their current research interests:

David Scott (University of Calgary), Raphaël Gani (Université Laval), Joanne Pattison-Meek (Bishop's University), Karen Pashby (Manchester Metropolitan University), Marta da Costa (Manchester Metropolitan University), Veldon Coburn (McGill University), Rachel Collishaw (McMaster University)

Throughout the presentations there will be opportunities for questions and dialogue. To conclude, Kent den Heyer (University of Alberta) will act as a 'wise listener' by identifying three or four themes emerging from the presentations. Small group work will follow as participants select one of these themes to pursue in a 20-minute focussed conversation.

The session will be followed by a social gathering at the nearby Pub McCarold, 5400 Chem. de la Côte-des-Neiges. <https://maps.app.goo.gl/kHR1cC1M6SmJnyTw7>

Both the closing activity and the presenters' summaries will form the basis of a legacy publication to be circulated to all participants to support possible follow-up.