Editors' Introduction

Inventing New Vocabularies for Curriculum Studies in Canada

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In recent years, Canadians working in the field of curriculum studies have expressed interest in the creation of new sites to showcase work by Canadian curriculum scholars. While there are many opportunities to publish curriculum scholarship in journals both inside and outside of Canada, until now there have been no journals that focus on the field of curriculum studies in Canada. During the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies in Edmonton in 2001 we (Sumara and Luce-Kapler) agreed to investigate the possibility of developing an on-line refereed and indexed journal that would be associated with CACS. At that meeting, CACS members agreed, in principle, that we (Sumara and Luce-Kapler) should conceptualize a curriculum studies journal and propose a plan at the 2002 meeting in Toronto. It was suggested to the membership that CACS support an on-line journal that would be available to both CACS and non-CACS members. The journal would publish one issue during its first year and two issues during its second and subsequent years. If demand grew, and if new resources were found to support the journal, additional per-year issues would be considered. It was agreed that the Editors would be appointed for two-year terms by the Executive of CACS and that members of CACS would serve on the Editorial Advisory Board.

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For this inaugural issue of the *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, we have included some of the papers that were presented in Toronto for the 2002 Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies President's Symposium. Organized by Dennis Sumara and CACS President Rita Irwin, the symposium was entitled "Inventing New Vocabularies for Curriculum Studies in Canada." Each of the symposium participants were provided with the following prompt to assist in the preparation of their presentations:

> Philosopher Richard Rorty suggests that in order to change habits of mind, new vocabularies must be developed:
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> > One way to change instinctive emotional reactions is to provide new language that will facilitate new reactions. By 'new language' I mean not just new words but also creative misuses of language—familiar words used in ways that initially sound crazy.[1]
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> For this year's CACS President's Symposium, we invite you to give a brief talk that represents some of your thinking about what it means to create curriculum theory in Canada. In your presentation, we encourage you to offer some "crazy ideas" that might interrupt habits of mind that currently organize the "commonsense" of curriculum studies.

Following the conference, the Editors of *JCACS* invited participants to further develop their symposium presentations for publication in this inaugural issue. As nationally and internationally recognized curriculum scholars, the authors whose work is presented in this issue demonstrate the breadth, scope, and creativity of curriculum scholarship in Canada. True to their assigned task for the symposium, each of them have challenged those of us who work in curriculum studies to look at old ideas in new ways by using new conceptual lenses that are sponsored by creative uses of language.

In addition to the essays emerging from the CACS President's Symposium, we are also introducing two features that we hope to continue in future issues of the journal. The first we are calling "Curriculum Genealogies," a feature of the journal that will focus on the re-representing of previously published curriculum scholarship and, whenever possible, retrospectives written by authors of those articles. Following the work of Foucault, we use the word "genealogy" to remind ourselves and readers that inquiries into the relationship between past and current events is always a critical interpretive practice that aims to discern the ways in which particular discourses constitute the objects, practices, and/or subjects that are available for study. A "curriculum genealogy," then, is understood as a representation of the way in which the objects, practices, and subjects/subjectivities of curriculum studies have been co-created.

A second feature we are introducing to the journal is a section we are calling "Curriculum Lives," where we will publish biographical and auto-

biographical pieces that feature the work of Canadian curriculum scholars. In addition to representing some of the work of individuals working in the field of curriculum studies in Canada, this section also aims, whenever possible, to offer insights into the working practices of those individuals.

In future issues of the journal, we will be adding two more features. One will be entitled "Curriculum Forum" and will offer responses to critical questions and/or issues that are of interest to those working in the field of curriculum studies. For example, in the next issue of *JCACS*, we will be asking readers to respond to the question:

> Which (one or two) articles/texts are 'must reads' in a graduate course focusing on Canadian curriculum history?

We are hoping that readers of the journal who teach curriculum studies might be willing to share resources and a short rationale for using those resources in curriculum history/studies courses. While most of us in Canada are familiar with the work of George Tompkins[2] many of us struggle to identify what might be considered a fair representation of voices, subjects, ideas, and issues that have helped to shape the field of curriculum studies in Canada. By assembling an annotated bibliography of resources for teaching Canadian curriculum history, as well as publishing some commentary from those who are using these resources, we hope to initiate a national conversation about teaching curriculum studies in Canada and to develop a useful pedagogical resource. Readers who are interested in responding to this Curriculum Forum question should e-mail submissions to one of the editors. We encourage readers of *JCACS* to send bibliographic details of one or two articles (including a 50–100 word annotation for each article), along with a short (under 500 word) discussion of why the article/s is/are important.

Another feature will be entitled "Curriculum Pedagogies", which will feature short essays that describe both undergraduate and graduate courses in curriculum studies being taught at universities and colleges in Canada. In addition to offering some practical information about the *what* and the *how* of curriculum studies courses in Canada, we expect that this section will also deal with pedagogical issues emerging from the teaching of these courses. Therefore, we encourage essays that both describe and analyze critical issues that have arisen in the teaching curriculum studies in Canada. We are hoping that readers will include course outlines as appendices to their essays and, as well, copies of bibliographies that are offered to students.

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Now, a few words to introduce our featured essays for this issue:

In the "Curriculum Genealogies" section, we are very pleased to be able to feature Kieran Egan's (1978) article "What is Curriculum?", originally published in *Curriculum Inquiry*.[3] We are also delighted that Professor Egan

consented to write a "retrospective" to this essay. As many readers will be aware, the question "What is curriculum?" that sponsored Egan's essay emerged at a time when the North American "field" of curriculum was attempting to define its boundaries and its activities.[4]

In his essay, Egan asks readers to consider whether curriculum is about the *how* or about the *what*. Egan concludes that an emphasis on one of these questions at the expense of the other will not be fruitful for curriculum inquiry: "The present fashion that elevates *how* questions leads to disproportion and undermines good sense in talking about education." While it has been 25 years since Egan's essay was first published, in the wake of recent emphases on accountability in education, the arguments presented are disquietingly relevant today. Although the field of curriculum studies has developed enormously in the last few decades (as demonstrated by the papers presented in this issue), the effects of curriculum scholarship are not always evident in the educational practices supported in both school and post-secondary contexts. In the Province of Alberta, for example, there continue to be political interest groups who insist on linking the effectiveness of post-secondary education (including all forms of liberal arts and fine arts education) to the ability of graduates to secure employment that is directly related to their fields of study. This pervasive instrumentalism suggests a needed shift in research and theory in curriculum studies. In order to undermine efforts to reduce education to particular effects, those working in the field of curriculum studies might become less interested in the questions "What is curriculum?" or "How should curriculum be taught?" and more interested in the questions "What counts as knowing?" and "Who counts as knowing subjects?"

While Egan does not address the latter questions directly in his retrospective, he does offer a sweeping historical view of what counts as "education." Suggesting that "much of educational research might be best characterized as an avoidance activity", Egan provokes those working in the scholarly field of curriculum studies to become more interested in "rethinking the idea of education we have inherited from ancient and more modern Europe and its tangled history," beginning with an examination of commonsense understandings of words like "curriculum" and "education." In response to Egan's provocations, *JCACS* offers five essays that use new vocabularies to reconceptualize practices of learning and teaching.

In the first paper, Deborah Britzman, suggests what psychoanalytic practices of "free association" might contribute to our thinking about learning and teaching. Demonstrating how free association, "as a technique of therapy becomes a theory of language," Britzman creates an important conceptual bridge between psychoanalytic therapeutic and pedagogical practices by demonstrating how "practice must resist its own theory in order to even

encounter itself." In acknowledging the contributions the unconscious makes to daily lived experiences, practices of free association become practical demonstrations of how these lived experiences continue to exceed the boundaries of representational language. Linked to the study of pedagogy, the idea of free association reminds us that teaching does not cause learning to happen; instead, teaching is a kind of knowing that is only loosely connected to what has been made available to perception. The idea of free association can help educators to challenge their own thinking about what counts as education. Rather than fixating on what has already made itself present in education free association might become interested in creating conditions where unplanned trains of thought and activity lead to unexpected, surprising insights.

Brent Davis's paper "Toward a Pragmatics of Complex Transformation" explains what recent developments in the field of complexity science can contribute, both conceptually and pragmatically, to the field of education. Describing complexity science as a "science of entanglement" where phenomena are studied at the level of their emergence, Davis shows how principles emerging from complexity science can help educators and educational researchers benefit from the what has been learned by scientists and mathematicians who have studied non-linear systems. When brought to the study of social groupings such as classrooms, complexity science (or non-linear dynamics) helps educators understand that "complex and transcendent unities can arise in co-specifying activities of seemingly autonomous entities." Importantly, Davis suggests that insights from complexity science can be linked to other interpretive practices, including psychoanalysis. As he suggests, both psychoanalysis and complexity science can be considered among the very few Western discourses that are explicitly interested in the pragmatics of transformation.

In their paper "Serious Play: Curriculum for a Post-Talk Era" Suzanne de Castell and Jennifer Jenson show how involvement in computer gaming environments demonstrate forms of learning that are not well known or understood in most practices of schooling. From a gaming perspective, "serious play" represents the ways in which immersion in the structures of gaming creates complex learning environments for players—ones which exceed any of the components which comprise the learning system. According to de Castell and Jenson, "What we most urgently require of schooling today is that it can once again teach us to play, not to obey." In reminding us that the tools we use to organize experience (including deliberate practices of learning and teaching that we call schooling) "work semiotically, like metaphors, to re-cast and re-configure both the forms, and the contents of human intelligence." In reconceptualizing learning and teaching using their research into gaming practices, de Castell and Jenson prompt educa-

tors to think about how complex learning and transformation, as Davis suggests in his paper, must be studied at the site of its emergence. The learning that occurs within the context of a gaming structure, like other forms of cultural involvement (including schooling cultures) cannot be traced to individual learners, to teachers, or to other elements of the learning environment. Instead, learning occurs from continued adaptation to the continually shifting boundaries of the physical, intellectual, and psychic contexts of learning.

In her paper "In Praise of Romance," Rena Upitis wonders what has become of the work of art in pedagogy. Although "arts-based" educational research has become popular in the academy, the productive and creative possibilities of involvement in cultural practices that transcend the commonsensical, the known, and the familiar are not generally valued or understood in school contexts. For Upitis, participation in the production of art forms has practical and important contributions to make to the general education of all human beings. In addition to "experiencing the joy of creation, cultivating the ability to attend to detail, developing tolerance for ambiguity, and learning ways of expressing thoughts, knowledge and feelings beyond words," art work also teaches us "that nuance matters, how to make judgments in the absence of clear rules, that human purposes and goals are best held with flexibility, and that some activities are self-justifying." The problem for educators, Upitis explains, is that while we can admire these dispositions, they are generally not the ones demanded by schools more interested in high stakes achievement testing driven by a seemingly unquenchable desire for continued economic development and productivity. Read alongside de Castell and Jenson's argument for a "re-tooling" of the pedagogical enterprise to incorporate insights about learning that emerge from gaming environments, the call for arts-based dispositions in pedagogy requires an abandonment of the idea that pedagogy can be in control of learning. While schools continue to try to delineate, in advance, the specific skills and knowledge students might need to engage in complex learning tasks, those who are involved in learning creative activities (daily life, for example) experience learning as a continuous process of adaptation.

In "Curriculum as Cultural Practice: Postcolonial Imagination" Yatta Kanu places the study of culture at the centre of curriculum analysis and reform, with specific attention to how particular educational practices have functioned to instantiate the production of colonized identities. Expanding the definition of the colonized to include "minority populations experiencing repression and discrimination in dominant culture societies," Kanu shows how the colonial impulse manifests itself at all levels of culture, including the school setting. Not only does the school serve as the state's vehicle for ideological assimilation and homogenization through formal cur-

riculum and teaching practices, it also finds itself woven through the private and social lives of students and teachers. Because, as Kanu argues, colonialism is woven historically into all cultural practices, it becomes part of the daily lived and imagined experiences of those who live out the effects of history. What is needed, argues Kanu, is a need "for people to define themselves in terms of new memories by which they come to know and understand and experience themselves." Following the work of Bhabha, Kanu suggests that the needed "third spaces" necessary to cultural hybridity can be supported by educational structures if curriculum reforms are grounded in imagined communities rather than only attending to the reproduction of already-known communities. Like the space of "gaming," described in de Castell and Jenson's article, the "entanglements of complexity" in Davis's, the possibilities of "free association" in Britzman's, and the "work of art" in Upitis's, the idea of "curriculum as cultural practice" in Kanu's paper invites educators to re-imagine curriculum as a site of productive engagement where what counts as knowing (and knowing identities) are continually challenged.

To conclude this first issue of *JCACS*, we present the first in our "Curriculum Lives" series. For this issue, we invited Sandra Weber and Claudia Mitchell to offer some reflection and insight into both their work and their work processes. We had actually not invited them to write about their collaborative practices but, rather, had invited them to write a biographical piece about one another. What Weber and Mitchell have offered is much more than we anticipated. Not only have they provided some interesting biographical information about one another but, as well, they have presented important insights about the processes of doing collaborative work in curriculum studies. As they explain, the site of their collaboration is all-at-once geographical, intellectual, phenomenological, and cultural. Ideas spring not only from academic debates but, as well, from practices of socializing (shared meals, shopping, traveling) and from rituals of friendship. As Davis suggests in his article earlier in this issue, both identities and ideas emerge from tangled webs of interdependence. In their reflective essay, Weber and Mitchell show us one way that these collusions can become both productive and pleasurable.

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We hope that readers find their involvement with this first issue of the *JCACS* just as productive and pleasurable as we did in producing it. If you have any response you'd like to share, or have questions about the journal, please contact us (dennis.sumara@ualberta.ca or luce-kar@educ.queensu.ca). If you are interested in having your work considered for publication in *JCACS*, please consult the "submission guidelines".

Notes

1. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope (*Toronto: Penguin Books, 1998), p. 204.
2. George Tompkins, *A Common Countenance: Stability and Change in the Canadian Curriculum* (Scarborough, ON: Prentice Hall, 1986).
3. We are grateful to the publishers of *Curriculum Inquiry* (Blackwell Publishing) for granting permission for us to re-publish Egan's essay.
4. See Philip Jackson's essay, "Conceptions of curriculum and curriculum specialists," in *Handbook of Research on Curriculum*, edited by Philip Jackson (New York: Macmillan, 1992) and William Pinar, William Reynolds, Patrick Slattery, and Peter Taubman's synoptic text, *Understanding Curriculum* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995) for comprehensive reviews of these debates.