***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**

**Burnside Hall, Room 1205, McGill University**

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.

Marta da Costa, Manchester Metropolitan University

Kent den Heyer, University of Alberta

Raphaël Gani, Université Laval

Jill Morris, Brandon University

David Scott, University of Calgary

Joanne Pattison-Meek, Bishop’s University

Karen Pashby, Manchester Metropolitan University

Paul Tarc, Western University

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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 county, 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 Progam**

Following greetings from CIES, the meeting convenor (J-C Couture, University of Alberta) will welcome everyone including the invited presenters: Marta da Costa (Manchester Metropolitan University); Raphaël Gani, (Université Laval); David Scott (University of Calgary); (Joanne Pattison-Meek, Bishop’s University); Karen Pashby (Manchester Metropolitan University); Paul Tarc (Western University).

Jill Morris (Brandon University) will briefly outline the theoretical considerations informing the two questions the presenters were invited to consider:

1) to what extent do the strategies of anticipatory governance help us understand how governments legitimatize 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?

Based on a summary (300-400 words) posted one week prior to the session, presenters will each have 10 minutes to share their responses to one or both of the above questions, depending on their current research interests. Throughout the presentations there will be opportunities for questions and dialogue.

To conclude, Kent den Heyer (University of Alberta) will act as the ‘wise listener’ for the session by offering participants to share in developing a synthesis in two parts: 1) ‘what we heard?’ and 2) ‘so what – no what?’ Both the closing synthesis activity and the presenters’ summaries will form the basis of a legacy publication to be circulated to all participants.

The session will be followed by a social gathering at a local pub nearby (TBD).