Provoking Curriculum in Canada:

Enriching Belonging in Vulnerable Times

Call for Submissions

June 2–4, 2027

University of Regina



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We live with/in a cultural and social epoch marked by increasing existential and relational isolation, conflict and division, grief, and loneliness. Encounters with these vulnerable conditions of living, integral to knowing and being, (re)orient our understanding of what it means to belong in a deeply relational, albeit fractured, world. Geopolitical relationships are buckling under the weight of anti-democratic political turmoil, global conflicts are mirroring political turbulence locally (and vice versa), the climate crisis and environmental degradation are hitting a boiling point, and artificial intelligence is threatening the very threads that bind individuals and communities together. In this context, belonging and its contours and complexities become a critical inflection point, driving urgent questions about vulnerability and belonging. Accordingly, in this call we seek to rethink vulnerability and belonging: How might we question and resist socio-political dynamics (or forces), embrace connection and heart, and attend to the sticky threads and fibres that bind us as Canadian Curriculum scholars and practitioners? Moreover, as a collective, how might we (re)orient ourselves to the diverse yet deeply relational ways curriculum is engaged across local and national contexts?

This call builds on the history of the Provoking Curriculum conference itself. In their introduction to *Reconsidering Canadian Curriculum Studies: Provoking Historical, Present, and Future Perspectives* (2012), Nicholas Ng-A-Fook and Jennifer Rottmann also return this history, recalling the inaugural 2003 gathering where celebrations of Dr. Ted Aoki's contributions to curriculum studies created fertile ground for creative presentations and rich dialogue rooted in curriculum theory. Since then, biennial pro/vocations have been held, with some returning to the origins of the conference, "…Aoki improvised, like jazz, theorizing curriculum in a new key, provoking curriculum studies as an *aesthetics of vulnerability*" (p. 5, emphasis added). More than 20 years later, we return to this provocation of vulnerability: In these times, what does it mean to be vulnerable? What is at stake, and what can we risk? Can we turn *towards* vulnerability in community such that new and old ways of belonging together might unfold?

In *The Vulnerable Observer,* Ruth Behar (1996) invites "exposure of the self who is also a spectator" such that it might "take us somewhere we couldn't otherwise get to" (p. 14), what might it mean for Canadian curriculum scholars to be vulnerable in the midst of contemporary strife? To simultaneously observe and feel this moment? How might we variously comprehend vulnerability across different subject areas, and current exigencies of vulnerability in the spirit of relational and generative coming together? What connections and complexities between vulnerability and belonging might we trace? Building on Aoki's (2005) work on belonging wherein he calls upon us to "dwell more sufficiently where we already are" (p. 397). How might we be together in this work? We follow Aoki's further offering regarding dwelling where we are: although "more difficult to be in its fold," it is where "the relation of belonging together may be granted to us as belonging together" (p. 397). Emphasizing togetherness, how might we collectively heed an invitation to attempt to think the unthought, and the not yet, from where we are?

As we turn towards provoking vulnerability and belonging in their many manifestations, this conference call invites a (re)centering of relationship. Here, we specifically return to Dwayne Donald's (2009) question for educators: "How can we be simultaneously different and related?" (p. 548). With this complicated turn towards ethical relationality we heed Cynthia Chambers's (1999) call to develop a "language of our own" (p. 145). We explore curriculum theorizing based on the uniqueness of places and stories where we are located, and invite contributors to consider the following: What is Canadian curriculum studies - and its purpose - in vulnerable times when more robust, renewed notions of belonging may be needed? How might the wisdom of scholars who came before guide us as we move such traditions forward towards renewing engagement with the deeper relational questions that Canadian curriculum studies might ask, answer, and contemplate today? Across critical and interpretive paradigms, and the diverse methods through which curriculum scholars engage central questions, how might we come to remember, rethink, and renew our joint hopes for education within this social, political, and academic landscape? What is it that we now hope to build for the next generation? With what tools, languages, insights, and wonderings might we deepen connections and move closer to one another locally, nationally, and internationally?

To do this work, we propose four sub-themes which draw from the rich history of the *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies* (JCACS): *Curriculum Genealogies*; *Curriculum Lives*; *Curriculum Pedagogies*; and *Aesthetic Interventions*. By borrowing these threads we seek to honour the diverse ways in which Canadian curriculum scholars have been engaged, and to explore through that legacy ways we might participate and connect broadly with the above notions, alongside the concepts of unity, belonging, care, listening, and intimacy across their work as we reinvigorate our current and future responsibilities to the field of Canadian curriculum studies.

As we gather in Treaty 4 territory (Regina, Saskatchewan) ahead of our broader gathering in Treaty 6 territory (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan) for CSSE, we invite you to also consider what it means to deepen relationships and to gather together. The sub-themes below are adapted descriptions of each JCACS section for this gathering. We offer a space within these sub-themes for presenters to share ongoing work, to highlight enduring questions, and to detail how their wonderings manifest in practice.

1. *Curriculum Genealogies:* Remembering Where We Come From

Curriculum is never born anew. It carries the traces of those who came before us—their questions, commitments, ruptures, and unfinished conversations. This sub-theme returns us to histories and intellectual genealogies that have shaped Canadian curriculum studies, attending to the ways our scholarly inheritances continue to inform, unsettle, and transform our work. What wisdom resides in the past? Which stories have been carried forward, and which remain unheard? How might revisiting earlier scholarship open new possibilities for thinking about belonging, vulnerability, and the futures we are called to imagine?

2. ***Curriculum Lives:*** Storying Our Thinking and Being

Curriculum studies is a living tradition, animated by the lives, relationships, and intellectual journeys of those who have shaped—and continue to shape—the field. This sub-theme invites reflections on the scholars, experiences, encounters, and ideas that have stirred our thinking and brought us into relationship with one another. Through biography, autobiography, self-study, scholarly reflection, and creative interpretation, we welcome explorations of the lives and living practices of curriculum inquiry. What do we inherit from those whose work has touched ours? What stories shape our thinking about belonging and vulnerability? What new understandings emerge when we attend to the human stories within our scholarly traditions?

3. ***Curriculum Pedagogies:*** Learning and Becoming Together

Teaching and learning are profoundly relational acts. They bring us into encounters with difference, uncertainty, possibility, and the ongoing work of becoming with others. This sub-theme invites exploration of curriculum pedagogies across undergraduate and graduate contexts, formal and informal learning spaces, and the diverse places in which curriculum is lived. We welcome reflections on teaching practices, pedagogical relationships, course designs, and the tensions and possibilities of teaching curriculum studies today. How might our pedagogies cultivate understandings of vulnerability and belonging?

4. ***Aesthetic Interventions:*** Sensing, Imagining, and Making Otherwise

There are ways of knowing that exceed what can be spoken, written, or measured. Through image, movement, poetry, sound, story, performance, and embodied inquiry, we encounter curriculum as something sensed, felt, imagined, and lived. This sub-theme welcomes arts-based, arts-informed, and other creative approaches to curriculum theorizing, alongside philosophical, poetic, and sensory inquiries that invite us to encounter the world differently. What becomes possible when we approach curriculum through wonder, imagination, and aesthetic sensibilities? How might creative and aesthetic interventions open spaces for vulnerability, unsettle familiar ways of knowing, and bring us into renewed relationships of belonging with ourselves, one another, and the world?

By drawing upon the history of JCACS through the above sub-themes, we seek to engage with the wisdom of past scholars as we look forward in establishing new hopes, goals, and purposes for curriculum studies. The above sub-themes accordingly invite, across disparate approaches and foci, coming together to reflect upon our pasts, presents, and possible futures within and beyond the field. To submit to this conference, please **use this google form to submit** a 250-300 word abstract **by January 8, 2027**. In this google form you will be asked to include:

- The strand you envision your work fitting into
- Space/technology needs, if beyond the typical tech set-up
- Type of contribution - creative, individual paper, formed panel (symposium)
- Your 250–300-word abstracts (please avoid multiple submissions)
- References
- Short bio (100 words)

For symposium submissions, please provide an overview of the theme and an overview of contributing authors and papers. We anticipate issuing notices of acceptance by the end of **January 2027** to the corresponding author, with registration opening late **February 2027** and a finalized program issued by the end of **April 2027**. If you have any questions, please direct inquiries via email to provoking@uregina.ca. We look forward to reading your submissions!

With anticipation,

The Provoking Curriculum Organizing Committee

Ellyn Lyle
Jennifer MacDonald
Brittany Tomin
Carolina Bergonzoni
Melissa Bishop
Chantelle Caissie
Claudia Eppert
Teresa Fowler
Amy Hunter
Kathryn Lawson
Patricia Liu Baergen
Nicholas Geoffrey Rickards
Lorie Wright



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