

# *The Dialogic*

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Volume 12, Issue 1 offers a new dialogic format for this Issue that is presented within a new visual identity for the *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*. This format stems from our desire to create more coherent and inclusive curricular conversations. In this Issue, we curate a discussion on Canadian Curriculum Studies as an *idea*. We invited four responses to Nicholas Ng-A-Fook's anchor article, *Provoking the very "Idea" of Canadian Curriculum Studies as a Counterpointed Composition*. The responses, authored by William Pinar, Madeline Grumet, Ingrid Johnston, and Peter Hlebowitsh offer a range of perspectives that examine Ng-A-Fook's characterization of Canadian curriculum studies as a theoretically and methodologically diverse field where scholars "continue to be open and pay attention, to live well together as a community without consensus" (p. 44). Taken together, the anchor article and the responses constitute a *dialogic* — a text that carries

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a continual conversation forward from past to present and from person to person (Bahktin, 1930). It is the enacting of connections, between texts, communicating a present position in relation to temporal, geographic, and cosmopolitical landscapes. As betrayed by its Greek roots, *δια* and *λόγος*, dialogic curriculum work is, in fact, the study and examination of the spaces and words *in between* us and the practice of connecting these spaces together.

A dominant theme within the dialogic of Canadian curriculum studies and as represented throughout this Issue is the theme of *diversity*. This theme is not surprising when we take into consideration that in Canada we take particular pride in our diversity. Whether related to culture, religion, ability, sexual orientation, gender, or any other categories of difference, throughout history, we, as a nation and as people, have responded to diversity differently. From acts of assimilation, to classification, to celebration; our evolving response to difference marks, for many, a strength of the Canadian identity.

We believe that our ongoing engagement with diversity in the Canadian cultural, intellectual, and social landscapes is the hallmark characteristic — and at times the challenge — of the Canadian curriculum studies field. We must ceaselessly consider the spaces between us and connect together these spaces whilst acknowledge our internal diversity. As we continue to move forward in responding to diversity, we believe that our next step is to examine the spaces and connections between us, to engage the dialectic, and to connect our differences in a coherent, yet complex whole of humanness (Greene,

1993). This dialectic implicates equally curriculum scholarship as it does the ethics and meanings of our lived curriculum experiences. The anchor article in this Issue, and its subsequent responses, begins to fodder this dialectic for Canadian curriculum studies. As Ng-A-Fook recognizes, “the very ‘idea’ of Canadian curriculum studies remains an opportunity for improvised interpretive and reiterative play to *curriculum in a new key* with the uncommon countenances of our differing intellectual histories and respective interpretations” (p. 14).

Ng-A-Fook’s introduction of the concept, *counterpoint*, is particularly useful with respect to dialogic curriculum work. In musical composition, the act of counterpoint establishes a relationship between two or more lines of music, which often are diverse in their rhythm, timber, melody, and/or dynamics. The dissonance of these lines is subjective. There are, however, two important tenets embedded even in this simple definition of counterpoint. First, counterpoint becomes music when there is a *relationship* — a connection — between divergent lines of song. Second, counterpoint becomes music when we connect *lines of music* — complete with their own logic, history, structure, and narrative. Each line, independent, is coherent, but only in relation to others does it make counterpoint.

As curriculum scholars, we are the composers of this counterpointed dialogic. Therefore, we are responsible for connecting our lines of song to those of others — past, present, and future. In doing so, we follow Ng-A-Fook in composing complex curriculum compositions that invite us “to hear each other differently” (p. 13).

### References

- Bakhtin, M. M. (2010). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays*. (C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press. (Original work published 1975).
- Greene, M. (1993). Diversity and inclusion: Toward a curriculum for human beings. *Teachers College Record*, 95(2), 211–221.