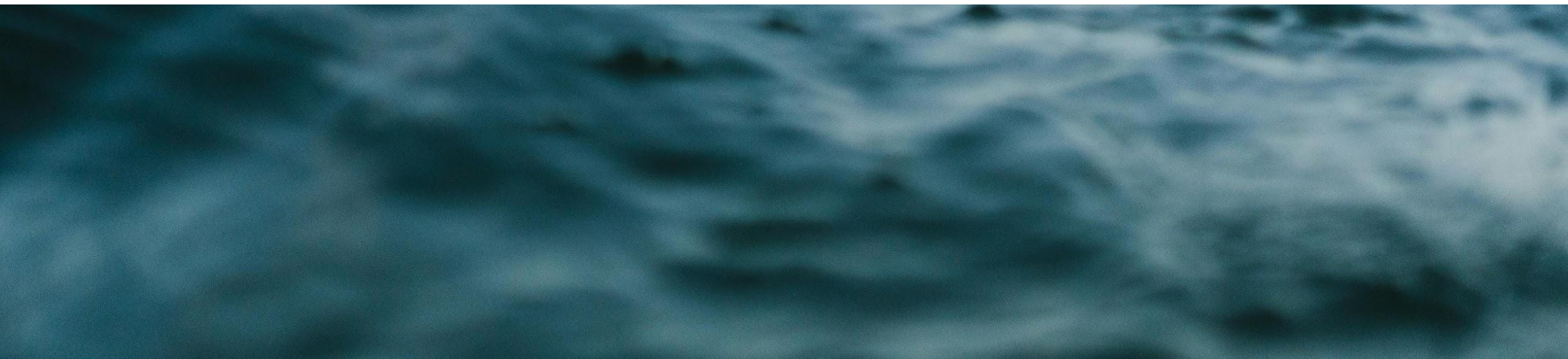


CON-CURRENTS



21st Annual York University Graduate Student Conference in Education

con-currents : part one

February 19, 2025 at The Tranzac Club in Toronto

CON-CURRENTS

con-currents program at a glance

presented by York Graduate Students in Education at The Tranzac Club, Toronto, February 19th, 2025

9:00AM | Arrival & Registration

9:30AM | Land Remembers, Water Reconciles
~by Myrtle Sodhi

9:40AM | Opening Remarks

9:45AM | Drawn to the Waves: Introducing *con-currents*
~with Mercedes Veselka, Yomni Tesfaye, and Tesni Ellis

10:30AM | Riding the Waves: Participatory Performances

~Ayesha Menezes, Tristan Castro, & Lynda Hill present
No Strings Attached: Concurrent Learning from Muddy Play to Object Puppetry

~Tristan Castro presents
Tres Tristes Títeres (Three Trapped Puppets)

12:15PM | Lunch

1:15PM Cascading Insights: Inquiry Workshops

~Myrtle Sodhi facilitates *Self & Community Integration: A Practice in Returning to the Centre of the Self*

~ Ellie VanBerkel and Yomni Tesfaye facilitate
Asking Provocative Questions

3:00PM | Break

3:15PM | Undertows, All Along: Keynote Paper
~with discussant Suad Ahmed

~Sonia Martin presents
Water-Language Re:Membering – A Doctoral Story

4:30PM | Ripples: Closing Remarks and Reception at The Southern Cross

A Theme, An Invitation

Sometimes I need both to be strong and to be held. My own mysterious strength of quantum genetics, of cape and revolution, of spin and stripe. What if it is the world being the world that makes the sky the sky? What if the sky rushed in all directions to meet us here, connect us to everywhere? What if the ocean has my back? Could I trust that?
(Gumbs, 2021, p. 32)

This method versus that one; those traditions over another; their word against theirs — constantly asked to choose between one or the other, staying in the tension of the in-between is a challenge. But what is *constant* if not the push-and-pull of currents, which are constantly moving? What might it mean to be *with* — learn *with* — these *currents*? What is it to be swept away by the force of a theory, an observation, or even a pedagogue? When have we been rocked by the waves of knowledge that upend established notions of ‘what works’ and ‘what matters’ in education? How does it feel to be pulled under, surprised by the undertow that was there all along, running below the surface?

This year’s conference theme extends an invitation to linger with the *concurrents* of tensions and possibilities encountered in our own scholarship and in our pedagogical relationships. Whether these are methodological, ethical, historical, epistemological — compared with the familiar ‘concurrent sessions’ found at a typical conference (which split attention and attendance into separate spaces, apart from the whole) — we are designing a space where what is experienced as *concurrent* may be the varied practices we animate across our scholarship. And what might that tell us about the questions we ask in our inquiry?

A Theme, An Invitation

With *con-current(s)*, the first half of the hyphenation, “con”, means ours is a place for being “with” one another, and our ideas, to explore the possibility of holding estranged, or seemingly dichotomous ideas, in the same hand. The latter half, “current(s)”, expresses our intention for this conference to be a place for recognizing what is already “existing and happening at the same time” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). Our ‘happening’ alongside one another requires us to engage with what tensions we meet, and through that, make new waves.

Extending the 2022 conference and its theme, *re: alongside the 2024 conference’s desires for thinking other worlds, anyways*, we situate *con-current(s)* as a way to think and *re:imagine* otherwise worlds that are *with us, here and now, from then and there*. As Ellyn Lyle, Jodi Latremouille, and David Jardine (2021) write: “We often hear that we are living in extraordinary times. This gives us pause as we wonder, *has there ever been a time that was not extraordinary? ... now is the time. Just as now has always been the time*” (p. 3, emphasis in original).

Mirroring the dynamic push-and-pull of *currents*, our desire is for these dialogues to shape what we imagine, even as we are pulled toward the depths in the face of despairing events and contradictions. As we do this, we approach the in-between as a place of possibility, not stuckness. This may allow us to find, as Bronwyn Davies and Susanne Gannon (2006) suggest, an ability to tolerate the disruption of binaries and move our questions towards those needed to carry out careful, ethical research and pedagogy. As they write,

It is the both/and of these stories that we turn to discover that we are both working in an oppressive regime that silences us and we are the wild women who will laugh at it, and name its absurdity and violence. (Davies & Gannon, 2006, p. 86)

In such a “both-and proposition” writes adrienne maree brown, “Doing the work reveals more of the work to be done in us” (p. 81). We invite graduate scholars to join us in this work, so that we might reveal, analyze, and create *con-current(s)*, together.

A Theme, An Invitation

To do so, this year for the 21st annual graduate student conference hosted by the YGSE, we took a different approach than usual. We decided to not only to witness students' works in progress through traditional paper sessions, but to generate a dedicated space for graduate students studying topics in education to gather and think together about their ideas, ongoing work, questions, and experiences. First, at an in-person *colloquium*, participants gather to encounter a keynote panel by upper-year doctoral students, facilitated workshops, and artistic provocations focused on generating dialogue. This day is an opportunity to share ideas and work in progress in conversation with peers. In part two, participants meet again, this time online, to encounter each others' work in the form of paper presentations. The program that follows includes details for part 1, our in-person *colloquium*.

A *colloquium* centres group discussion and analysis of specific topics and questions, prioritizing dialogue rather than multiple paper presentations. Hosted at The Tranzac Club in Toronto, the in-person *colloquium* is a chance to spend time with each other and with our ideas. We will all share the same space for the duration of the day, and encounter the works offered altogether. "The Tranzac is a non-profit performing arts organization dedicated to supporting, presenting, and promoting creative and cultural activity in Toronto" (Tranzac, 2025) and we are excited to bring students together in this dynamic space.

con-currents Program

9:00AM | Arrival and Registration

Gather in the Main Hall at The Tranzac Club

9:30AM | Land Remembers, Water Reconciles

by Myrtle Sodhi

9:40AM | Opening Remarks

from YGSE Conference Coordinators,
Tesni Ellis & Ellie VanBerkel

9:45AM | Drawn to the Waves: Introducing *con-currents*

facilitated by Mercedes Veselka, Yomni Tesfaye, and
Tesni Ellis

Participants will be invited to begin exploring and reflecting on the “concurrents” they see and experience in their research and practice. Through dialogue, provoked first through the mode of drawing images, participants will elaborate on the tensions, negotiations, possibilities, and other metaphorical ‘waves’ that preoccupy them in their work.

con-currents Program

10:30AM | Riding the Waves: Participatory Performances

Tristan Castro presents
Tres Tristes Títeres (Three Trapped Puppets)

Three Trapped Puppets is an experimental anti-war puppetry play which reflects on the rules of war and the conflictual relationship between marionettes and controllers. The play incites discussion of the fragility of human nature and the importance of free thinking.

Ayesha Menezes, Tristan Castro, and Lynda Hill present
No Strings Attached: Concurrent Learning from Muddy Play to Object Puppetry

Participants will be invited into the world of learning through muddy play and object puppetry. By blending the tactile experience of muddy play and the narrative potential of object puppetry, workshop participants will experience two valuable pedagogical tools. *No Strings Attached* is an invitation to challenge traditional teaching methods and explore the broader concept of rethinking pedagogy through creative interdisciplinary approaches.

12:15PM | Lunch

We invite you to bring your packed/purchased lunch back to the The Tranzac to eat together. Participants seeking reimbursement for their purchased lunch (up to \$20.00 per person) must keep their receipts for submission at a later date.

con-currents Program

1:15PM | Cascading Insights : Inquiry Workshops

*Self & Community Integration:
A Practice in Returning to the Centre of the Self*

facilitated by Myrtle Sodhi

Participants will encounter a workshop centering care, well-being, and belonging from an arts-based Afrocentric approach. Our engagement will focus on building an awareness of practices and orientations that can sustain us through graduate studies.

Asking Provocative Questions

facilitated by Ellie VanBerkel and Yomni Tesfaye

Participants will practice asking provocative research questions, as we explore modes for crafting inquiries that unsettle assumptions and open pathways for transformative and speculative thinking.

3:00PM | Break

We invite you to take a break together as we prepare for our keynote session.

con-currents Program

3:15PM | Undertows, All Along: Keynote Paper

Sonia Martin presents

Water-Language Re:Membering – A Doctoral Story

in conversation with discussant Suad Ahmed

Sonia will share the story of how she came to her doctoral inquiry and what she has learned. Sonia's inquiry considers the connections between water, language, and international education while prioritizing Haudenosaunee language and teachings. Sonia will describe how she accidentally fell into the water-language connection (Martin, 2024a), "surprised by the undertow that was there all along" (YGSE, 2025).

4:30PM | Ripples: Closing Remarks

followed by Reception at The Southern Cross

Meet our *con-currents* Keynote Author

Sonia Martin presents Water-Language Re:Membering – A Doctoral Story

Arriving at the panel as a 4th year doctoral candidate, English language teacher, and perpetual newbie surfer, Sonia will share the story of how she came to her doctoral inquiry and what she has learned. Sonia's inquiry considers the connections between water, language, and international education while prioritizing Haudenosaunee language and teachings. Sonia will describe how she accidentally fell into the water-language connection (Martin, 2024a), "surprised by the undertow that was there all along" (YGSE, 2025). Sonia will offer metaphorical and literal examples of how water and language are linked (Martin, 2024b). Experiencing the water-language connection is a practice of re:membering that water and language are embodied and relational. Re:membering can expand current theorizing about critical multilingual language awareness (CMLA), which supports anti-colonial, anti-racist language practices (Prasad & Lory, 2020; Martin, 2024b).

Re:membering the water-language connection led to Sonia's collaboration with Kristi Talbot, a community-based Kanyen'kéha educator. Together, they facilitated an international education intervention. The social design-based experience (Gutiérrez et al., 2020) included a water-based Kanyen'kéha lesson, Haudenosaunee teachings, and CMLA activities on the shore of Onyatarí:yo. Sonia will comment on *con-current(s)* that flow through this project: What tensions and possibilities arise as she, a non-Indigenous descendent of settlers, participates in Indigenous language learning and teaching in an internationalized context? (How) can re:membering the water-language connection contribute to dismantling rigid colonial language borders while supporting boundaries for Indigenous language revitalization and liberatory language practices? Sonia will share visual aids, photos, and drawings from the project and conclude with initial learnings.

Sonia Martin is a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Education at York University. Her doctoral inquiry is a transdisciplinary project that focuses on the connection between water and language to inform anti-colonial, anti-racist language practices for international education. Sonia holds a BA in French Language & Literature and a MA in Applied Linguistics. She worked in the English language teaching industry for over 20 years and has lived in 15 cities and five countries on three continents. Sonia prioritizes collaborative projects that support unlearning colonial practices and becoming open to alternative ways of being. She spends her free time in and around the waters of Onyatarí:yo.

A Note of Gratitude

Thank you to our Committee Members, with whom *'concurrents'* took its shape through conversation and collaboration,

- ~ Dragana Mirkovic
- ~ Myrtle Sodhi
- ~ Yomni Tesfaye
- ~ Mercedes Veselka

Thank you to our Reviewers, who carefully spent time with students' proposals and offered feedback to support their success,

- ~ Fenella Amarasingh
- ~ Hamza Arsbi
- ~ Jenna D'Andrea
- ~ Wendy Moffatt
- ~ Ari Para
- ~ Sheetal Prasad
- ~ Richard Rizzo
- ~ James Thomas

Thank you to Gabby Moser, Graduate Program Director, for supporting our conference goals, listening to us, and advocating on our behalf to ensure our event could go forward as we hoped.

From the waves,

~Tesni Ellis and Ellie VanBerkel
Conference Coordinators, 2024-2025 YGSE

We'll meet again at con-currents Part Two

We look forward to continuing what we begin at *con-currents*, when we meet again March 19th, online. For students seeking to present at the online March 19th event, we are pleased to accept submissions until Friday, February 28th. All abstracts/proposals must be anonymized for peer review (no mention of author name in abstract or reference list) and submitted through the YUWrite student journal portal at: <https://yuwrite.journals.yorku.ca/> (you will need to register to submit). Submissions must be uploaded in PDF or Word document and include a 250 word abstract and a relevant reference list.

We invite you to consider the following questions as you prepare your proposal:

- ~ What is 'happening' concurrently in your scholarship (e.g. mixed methods and interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks; the both/and you encounter and navigate, etc.)
- ~ How does the language our scholarship takes (our questions, methodologies, knowledge mobilization efforts) reveal concurrent meanings — when does our 'data' mean more than one thing at once; what are its contrasting yet converging meanings...
- ~ What con-current(s) as tensions do you encounter in your work? What do these encounters do? Where might they lead?
- ~ Where do you see, or see possibility for, 'new waves' in your scholarship? Where could, or do, these waves draw us to? What holds us back from entering these new waters?
- ~ How have interdisciplinary approaches opened you to possibility in your scholarship or teaching?
- ~ What might it mean to see or make con-current(s) through our methodologies, our pedagogies, our interventions?

We'll meet again at *con-currents* Part Two

Submissions may take shape as any of the following (please make sure work is suited for online delivery):

~ *Workshop/Collaborative Activity/Facilitated Discussions*: Workshops and collaborative activities designed to provoke discussion of central topics of concern, perhaps by co-producing an artefact, listening to something together, etc.

~ *Artistic Intervention, Display, or Performance*: Presentation or re-presentation of arts-based educational scholarship or works of research-creation. May also include co-production of arts-based works with conference attendees.

~ *Paper Presentation*: Short papers (15 minutes) that essay, intervene, explore, or animate ongoing scholarship in the realm of education (broadly conceived).

~ *Panel Presentation*: A group of 3 to 4 papers centred around a common question or method, for instance.

~ *Works in Progress*: An opportunity to propose questions or provocations related to ongoing challenges you may be encountering in your scholarship and have peers respond. You may also wish to submit a section of a paper already in the works or submitted to an upcoming, large-scale academic conference. We welcome the opportunity to witness new scholars practice/prepare to share work; please indicate this in your submission (ours is a space for practice, in the company of fellow graduate students).

About York Graduate Students in Education (YGSE)

The YGSE represents and advocates for the collective interests of Faculty of Education graduate students in all matters of departmental policy and action at York University and beyond. The YGSE seeks to build community among the graduate students, faculty, and the larger university, with consideration for diverse experiences and interests. Above all, the YGSE works to nourish the environment within which graduate students develop, both professionally and personally while maintaining an open, accessible and democratic voice for students.

As an organization that operates and is implicated within a colonial institution, we recognize our responsibilities to Indigenous peoples, Land, and members of marginalized communities.

We do so by supporting community projects that have these concerns as central to their initiatives, ensuring equity concerns are prioritized in YGSE matters, and ongoing reflection on and articulation on our relationship with treaty. In this way, we are actively working on noticing and dismantling oppressive structures within YGSE.

YGSE membership is drawn from volunteers each Fall and meets approximately five times during the academic year. Getting involved with the YGSE is an excellent leadership opportunity to better understand and more fully participate in the Faculty of Education and the university. Learn more about the YGSE and how to get involved at <https://ygse.info.yorku.ca/>.

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