

To Event: Toward a Post-constructivist Approach to Theorizing and Researching the Living Curriculum as Event*-in-the-making¹

ABSTRACT

In this theoretical paper, I (a) argue for approaching processes, events*-in-the-making, by means of process categories—to learn, to teach—not by means of categories that denote differences in state and (b) exemplify doing and writing research consistent with process philosophy. To understand process we must not think, research, and write them in terms of categories (etymologically, things specified by predicates) but in terms of movement itself. The unfinished and inherently open-ended *event*-in-the-making* indicates such movement and is associated with the disappearance of possibilities in its actualization (*the event*), openness toward the future, unpredictability, and excess of intuition over intention. I use empirical materials from a mathematics classrooms to exemplify (give a body to) these categories and to ground my discussion. I conclude by discussing several implications that arise from the fact of theorizing and researching the living curriculum as unfolding, yet-to-be completed event.

Key words: dynamics; cause–effect relation; possibility; advent; arrival; adenant; witness; diastasis

something unfinished and therefore as something that *cannot* be grasped because it does not yet exist as a completed and complete thing—requires us to abandon our cherished ways of thinking (about) the curriculum. An analogy for learning as event is presented in Figure 1b, where the minimum unit of thought and theory *encompasses* difference: What is and what is not-yet. Here, any (a) before and after, (b) witnessing subject who undergoes the event, and (c) action the effect of which is unknown in principle until after the event has come to an end is an integral part of the *same* figure of thought. Precisely because learners do not know what is to be learned, they cannot intentionally orient to constructing future knowledge or discourse (Roth, 2012). As witnesses, they can only recognize the new when it has already arrived, after the learning *event* already has concluded. The minimum unit of theorizing is a unit of change (Figure 1b). This unit of change, which is non-self-identical, undermines the “identitarian logic” that underlies present-day curriculum theorizing (Roth, 2008; Wallin, 2012b). It requires us to think in terms of a future-to-come, which means “allowing the adventure or the event of the entirely other to come” (Derrida, 2007, p. 46). From within the unfolding event*-in-the-making, the event as fact exists only in the future anterior tense, that is, when it factually does not exist. Such an approach emphasizes sense-making and education for uncertain times rather than fixed significations that students are to construct or appropriate (Gough & Stables, 2012; Pesce, 2011). In terms of Figure 1b, we can know the future anterior only when the event has come to an end and no longer exists in its eventness. It is available only through making it present again (by means of re-presentations). Some educators have begun to think in this way about people (Wallin, 2011) and democratic education (e.g., Friedrich, Jaastad, & Popkewitz, 2010).

Given that “much educational thought remains fundamentally committed [to representation” (Wallin, 2012a, p. 147), it surprises little that there is virtually no educational literature or theory on thinking learning through the lens the notion of the eventness of the event (*sobytijnost' sobytie*) (Sidorkin, 2004). Consistent with the

recognition that “curriculum as event must be part of our method” (Grumet, Anderson, & Osmond, 2008, p. 154), I draw in this article on process philosophy to develop a way of thinking, researching, and writing the curriculum through the lens of an *event*-in-the-making*, my terminological alternative to Bakhtin’s notion. I exemplify the approach by means of an analysis of an episode from a mathematics lesson in its unfolding and therefore prior to revealing what kind of event will have been observed. I then offer up a way of rethinking the curriculum as an *event*-in-the-making* and articulate implications for researching the curriculum as something living (rather than finished and dead).

Before proceeding, a comment on writing research is in order. Thinking is intimately tied to language: not only words and their significations but also grammars constitute ideologies (Nietzsche, 1954b; Vološinov, 1930). This is why new ways of thinking (in, about) literature are associated with new ways of writing, as evident in Joyce’s *Ulysses* or *Finnegan’s Wake*, the French literary genre of *Nouveau Roman* (e.g., M. Duras, A. Robbe-Grillet, N. Sarraute), or in H. Cixous’ *écriture féminine*. To be consistent with a “nomadic way of thinking curriculum,” a method of writing curriculum means going “beyond this same grammar,” beyond “the order of the subjectilized words” (Derrida & Thévenin, 1998, p. 116). It requires “w/ri(gh)ting” curriculum research (Roth & McRobbie, 1999), which breaks with habitual ways of comprehension that arise when readers give thought to the use of slashes, parentheses, and the dis/placement of grammatical markers. Related to method, it requires researching curriculum in the future anterior tense (Lather, 2004), which, due to the unassignability of causes to agents, also has radical ethical implications (Dillabough, 2004; Roth, in press). It requires a method that serves “as counterpoint to those technologies that *fix* us/our research participants and cause us/our research participants to mistrust or even subvert our own senses and sense-making” (Gallagher, 2004, p. 73, emphasis added). When I depart from standard ways of writing, it is for the express purpose of making possible ways of thinking that are yet to come, in part by creating multiple possibilities for reading.

TOWARD A THEORY OF CURRICULUM AS EVENT*-IN-THE-MAKING

There are neither causes nor effects. Linguistically we cannot get away from this. But this does not change matters. When I think the *muscle* separately from its “effects,” then I have negated it. . . *In summa: an event is neither caused nor causing.* *Causa* is a potential to bring something about, invented and added to events. . . (Nietzsche, 1954c, p. 768, original emphasis, underline added)

Learning tends to be theorized in terms of nouns—often the difference between two states of knowledge—rather than verbs. But this is precisely the figure of thought that the introductory quotation to this section asks us to abandon because there are no causes and effects, not if we look at events*-in-the-making through the lens of the old English verb “to event” (to come to pass)—even though we may find it difficult to dissociate from the cause–event figure in/of our explanations. Just as the muscle brings about effects, the subject of learning is said to bring about (i.e., cause) its individual knowledge or contributes to bringing about collective knowledge. Nietzsche suggests, however, that this *negates* the posited origin of the action. To recognize the living curriculum *as* an event*-in-the-making—i.e., the event in its eventness, or, perhaps better, in its eventing—implies, as Marion notes, admitting “its *irreducibly originary* spontaneity.” That is, as an originary spontaneity the event *cannot be* reduced to a cause (e.g., the subject), which would take away the sovereignty of the former. In Nietzsche’s view—taken up and transformed in post- and anti-Kantian philosophy including post-structuralism and phenomenology—an event is neither caused nor causing. Change is inherent in the figure of the event in its eventness (Figure 1b); and within this figure, any part depends on all other parts and on the whole.

The very idea of a ~~cause~~ that brings about an effect has been invented and added on to events—it is an invention (of metaphysics)—to create a predictive model. That is to say, it has been added to a view of events *as* events, which “are pure ‘mobility’—without

anything that moves [itself]” (Romano, 1998, p. 1, original emphasis). Nietzsche further elaborates in a way that has implications for thinking not only the event—to be thought in its eventness rather than as a thing—but also the subject. Thus, he suggests that the statement “to every change belongs a cause/causator” (Nietzsche, 1954c, p. 502) constitutes a mythology, which “*separates* that which is causing *and* the (act of) causing” (p. 502). The grammar associating the subject with a verb operating on an object embodies this figure of thought. It is “only through the seduction of language . . . which understands and misunderstands all effectuation as conditioned by a cause, by a ‘subject,’ may things look differently” (Nietzsche, 1954b, p. 789). He uses the example of lightning to suggest that the expression “the lightning flashes” posits lightning as an action and as a subject (i.e., the lightning bolt). However, this subject “is not one with the event, but rather *remains, is,* and no longer ‘*becomes*’” (p. 502). He then concludes: “To postulate events as an effecting [*Wirken*]: and effect [*Wirkung*] as Being: this is the *double* error, or *interpretation*, of which we are guilty” (p. 502). In this analysis, Nietzsche clearly distinguishes the classical approach, which is concerned with things that are stable (“remain”) and are (“is”) and opposes this to “becoming.” In education, knowledge similarly tends to be thought as something that is, can be identified and measured; learning (a form of becoming) is the difference between states. Understanding an event*-in-the-making precisely means coming to grips with its continued becoming, its coming to be toward a result that is forever to come. This distinction is precisely what we find in post-structuralist philosophy, where it is recognized that “[b]ecoming is not being” (Deleuze, 1991/2005, p. 64), which can be read as “becoming *is not* being” or as “becoming *is* not-being.” A similar critique shifts from the metaphysical “is,” which is to be barred or crossed (i.e., “~~is~~”) or followed by a question mark (e.g., “What is? curriculum theorizing: for a people yet to come,” Wallin, 2011), and replaced by thinking process, such as in the concept of *writing* (*écriture*), which, in creating the new simultaneously erases (part of) the old (e.g., Derrida, 1967; Heidegger, 1997).

Once we consider curriculum from the perspective of the event*-in-the-making—which can exist as an entity only after what is happening has come to a conclusion and thereby brought closure to the process subsequently known as “the event”—we have to change our ways of thinking (about) the living curriculum. This approach especially shifts what we conceive of as the subject of activity (teachers, students), and therefore the notion of identity towards the different and “*diverse modes of subjectivization* by means and through which an ‘I’ can come about [*advenir*], responding to what happens to him starting from the kernels of sense that are to him events” (Romano, 1998, p. 2). The curriculum as an event*-in-the-making tends to carry us—teachers, students—away, where “to carry away” is heard as being moved by something that is in excess of our reason or judgment, something that we cannot fully grasp until it is all done and over with. This also means that no individual or group “is in [total] control” of the unfolding curriculum, and the possibility that something unforeseen can happen always exists. The expression “to be carried away by” is used to indicate that something stronger than the will or intention moves the person or group of persons. It allows us to understand that a lesson that unfolds and concludes *as planned* is an accident rather than a necessity.

To think the curriculum as an event*-in-the-making requires us to understand it as the same and different simultaneously: the same because it is the happening as a whole that we designate as “the event,” and different because the happening is unfolding and therefore changing *within* itself. The point is not to merely think *about* a lesson but to think the lesson as event or the lesson as “pure ‘mobility’,” always “between the actual (what is) and the virtual (what is not-yet)” (Wallin, 2011, p. 285). Pure mobility also affects how we have to think (about) any object or (human) subject, for “insofar as I am actually experiencing an object, even if I do so by thinking of it, it becomes a changing moment in the ongoing event of my experiencing (thinking) it, i.e., it assumes the character of something-yet-to-be-achieved” (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 32).² Because it is an irreducible moment of the event*-in-the-making, the object cannot be understood

independently of it. Like the encompassing event, the object is an object-in-the-making that is constituted by the changing whole as much as it contributes to constituting it (whole–part relation); and, with the curriculum as pure mobility, the object is not something constant and self-same but an ever-changing moment of that event*-in-the-making with an ending and outcome yet-to-be-achieved but inherently uncertain and unpredictable (unforeseeable).

THROUGH THE LENS OF THE EVENT*-IN-THE-MAKING: A FRAGMENT FROM A GEOMETRY LESSON

In this section, I present the reading of a classroom episode that makes a radical commitment to the event*-in-the-making. This reading keeps at bay any attempt of reifying the event as fact until what it names has come to a close. Understanding a lesson as an event*-in-the-making means that we understand its openness and non-finalization. This keeps open the gap between a lesson plan (i.e., planned curriculum) and the happenings from which the lesson as lesson emerges (i.e., enacted curriculum). Before and during a lesson, we, teachers, cannot ever know whether the happening subsequently is denoted as “a successful lesson,” “an unsuccessful lesson,” or something else. That is, we cannot grasp the event* we are witnessing as event—even though the likelihood of successful lessons tends to increase with professional experience. In this sense, the living curriculum as event*-in-the-making is a draft *in draft* (flux) rather than a finished sketch that specifies the work to be executed. To understand the curriculum as event*-in-the-making, as something unfolding and never being the same, that is, to be able to grasp its event-ness, requires situating oneself in the middle of the action. For “[i]f I abstract myself from the center that constitutes the starting point of my *once-occurrent* participation in Being . . . then the concrete uniqueness and compellent actuality of the world will inevitably begin to decompose” (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 58, emphasis added).

Methodically speaking, this implies that we have to take a first-time-through perspective of a happening, an attitude typical of ethnomethodology (e.g., Garfinkel, 1996).

To present the event(ful)ness of the curriculum, the following analysis takes us step by step through a lesson fragment by using forms of description that emphasize the unfinished and yet unknowable of what will have happened in the end.³ That is, I analyze the living curriculum from the perspective of the witness, who cannot know how the story ends, and through the theoretical lens of the event*-in-the-making—i.e., without reducing what is happening to one of the moments of an event as accomplished and namable after the fact. This approach makes it impossible to do the educational research equivalent of Monday-morning-quarterbacking, where a finished and graspable event is analyzed with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight.

The Invocation

But the Saying extended toward the Said receives this tension from the Other, of Others, who wrenches words from me before appearing to me. (Levinas, 1978/2004, p. 124)

The fragment derives from the first lesson of a unit on the geometry of three-dimensional objects. The second-grade children had been asked to pull a mystery object from a black plastic bag and to classify it with an existing, or create a new, group of objects. At the point when the fragment begins, Connor already has placed, after doing a reclassification that followed the teacher's request for an explanation, his mystery object. He squats next to the colored sheet of paper on which he has placed his object and opposite from Mrs. Winter who is pointing in the course of much of the fragment towards the boy and "that group" of objects (Figure 2). Mrs. Winter is oriented with her body and points towards Connor and begins to speak. Mrs. Winter's locution begins with an interjection ("em"), followed by a sound "an" that we may hear as the connective "and"

locution, or a way of re-orienting a student who is off-task), and the very possibility of these different possibilities to hear a locution needs to be understood (Levinas, 2004).

The possibility of possibilities denotes openness similar to that which we associate with a draft-in-the-making. A *realized* possibility, on the other hand, already has annihilated not only the possibility to be realized but also all the other possibilities that existed. However, this destruction of possibilities opens up and gives birth to new possibilities. That is, “the *realization of potential* is an *event* of neutralization” (Levinas, 1978/2004, p. 69, emphasis added). The eventness of the lived curriculum is captured in this phase shift, that is, by the fact that at the instant that the possibility is realized it actually disappears as possibility and becomes actuality. In the left-most part of Figure 1b, the oval is but a possibility, which disappears when it is becoming actuality coinciding with the disappearance of an anterior actuality. The concept of the *realization of possibility* therefore captures the movement of the event*-in-the-making because it designates the destruction of the possibility as possibility in its actualization. The unit in Figure 1b is co-extensive with the actualization of a possibility. But it is also a birth of new possibilities. That is, the eventness of the event (*sobytnost' sobytija*), its very mobility, is characterized by the simultaneous disappearance (death) and appearance (birth) of possibilities in and through the actualization of possibilities (Bakhtin, 1993). One way of thinking this movement that we call “the event” is to think of the realization of possibility, which is a process that annihilates and creates at the same time. Without the process, there is only possibility, and with the process, the possibility is destroyed. In this way, we capture precisely what the notion of *écriture* (writing) was designed to capture (Derrida, 1967), as a process of creation of new understandings and the erasure of what we have known before, spatializing and temporalizing the eventness of the event.

In speaking *for* Connor, in addressing him, Mrs. Winter enacts a concern, a form of solicitude, an orientation toward the realization of possibilities, solicitude and anguish. Solicitude is oriented forward, possibilities and uncertainty; anguish is directed

backwards, defining the person who this anguish is anguished about. “ The project-in-draft and dereliction, ‘Being-ahead-of-oneself’ [*l’être-au-devant-de-soi*], and ‘being-always-already in’ [*être d’ores et déjà dans*] are concretely reunited in solicitude understood by anguish” (Levinas, 1996, p. 31). The very asking of a question*, the invocation of another, constitutes and expresses this concern. That is, to understand what Mrs. Winter is doing as she is doing it, which is but a moment in and of the once-occurrent event*-in-the-making that is called the lived curriculum, we also need to understand its ethico-moral dimension, because “the ought is a distinctive category of the ongoing performance of acts or deeds [*postuplenie*] or of the actually performed act (and everything is an act or deed that I perform—even thought and feeling)” (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 6).

Because we do not know yet how the utterance has affected the one intended to be invoked and called upon, Connor, we cannot comprehend, from within the event*-in-the-making, the nature of what is happening. From within the event*-in-the-making, Mrs. Winter is the *advenant*, “which is the term for the human being [*l’homme*] insofar as something happens to him and insofar as by his ad-venture, he is open to the event” (Romano, 1998, p. 34). In fact, comprehension is not already comprised, because it can happen only when some part of the past can be captured as a whole. The event—which is coming *at* Mrs. Winter, is an *ad-venture*—precisely because of its horizon open to the future, quite literally exceeds Connor’s intentionality. It is only in and through what Connor will do or say—i.e., articulated part of the response—that Mrs. Winter and every other witness present in the situation will find out just what she has said/done and how it has affected him, cognitively and affectively. That is, *what* she has actually done will be available only after Connor will have finished a reply, if he replies at all, that is, through the effect that her speaking has brought about. But at the same time, if it turns out from the perspective of the event*-in-the-making that he has been the selected one, this answer was destined to be wrenched from his lips as the introductory quotation to this subsection

suggests. This perspective, therefore, explodes the general tendency to attribute cause, for in this situation there is no way anyone can say what Mrs. Winter is doing *while* she is *doing* it.⁵ Causa, here, is attributable only after the fact—as Nietzsche suggests in the quotation opening the preceding section; it is *added* to the event, an addition that attributes rationality to what has happened. Such addition leads us to a teleological account of events by means of cause–effect relations, a way of reasoning about events characteristic of metaphysical thinking (Heidegger, 1997).

In addressing Connor, Mrs. Winter also opens herself to what is coming—her locution becomes utterance only through the social evaluation that subsequently occurs (Vološinov, 1930). She does not yet know what the social evaluation will be that is going to be embedded in the answer; and to get to know it, she has to open up to be affected by whatever advenes (Roth, in press). This introduces a dimension of passivity that makes the term *advenant* appropriate, for it is a “term for the human being [*l’homme*] as constitutively *open to events*” (Romano, 1998, p. 33, emphasis added). Openness means that we inherently cannot predict with certainty what is going to happen: An inescapable gap opens between the planned curriculum and the living curriculum. The very concept of the *advenant* changes the way in which we think and think about the subject of activity, no longer solely in agential terms, but also in terms of passibility and vulnerability, that is, the affectability by what is coming in the *ad-venture* of the event*-in-the-making and what is happening to the person. No curriculum plan can get Mrs. Winter ready for what is actually happening, what she is provoking in/by invoking Connor.

The Response

To respond: to give a formal reply, to answer a summons to appear, from Lat. *re-*, back, again + *spondēre*, to give a pledge or promise

From the perspective of Connor, towards whom Mrs. Winter has oriented herself and points (Figure 2), in listening to her he already has been exposing himself. This exposure is integral part of his response. Without this exposure, he could not have been affected and *replied* (etymologically, to fold back [the topic]). Connor does not know what is coming at him while words continue to unfurl from Mrs. Winter's lips: Is she making a statement, asking a question, or ironizing him? But to be able to reply at all, he first has to open up, listen to what she has to say. In fact, this opening up by listening is the first part of the response (Waldenfels, 2006), the being-affected by something that cannot be anticipated—not in the least because the current speaker, here Mrs. Winter, cannot know what she will have said in her saying until after she has completed saying it (Merleau-Ponty, 1945; Vygotskij, 2005). Connor, too, is the advenant while Mrs. Winter is speaking. *What* is coming at Connor, which he cannot yet comprehend, for it does not yet exist as an prehensible object, he nevertheless witnesses, “but as a witness that does not *thematize* what it bears witness of” (Levinas, 1978/2004, p. 229). As advenant, the subject is witness of rather than having knowledge about the event*-in-the-making. Not being able to thematize here means that he inherently cannot cognitively grasp what is being said—a moment of the event*-in-the-making—until the saying has finished and the said has become available. When Connor acts in response, therefore, the action (utterance) has to be understood as the second part of the response. *To respond*—the irreducible {listening → replying} unit—therefore is diastatic, internally shifted with respect to itself (therefore also dehiscent). This, therefore, constitutes a diachronic way of thinking required for understanding the living curriculum as event*-in-the-making. It cannot be explained in terms of cause and effect. What the preceding utterance is/was *becomes* something in and through the second part of the response, which is as active as the first part during which the reply forms itself (Vološinov, 1930). That is, the reply forms itself before the respondent prehends the content of the saying, that is, the *said-in-the-making*. The *what* that is affecting Connor becomes available to participants (Mrs.

Winter, his peers, the researchers present) as such only in and through his utterance, which is itself only one moment of the response, the other moments of which are active listening and being affected. From the perspective of the event*-in-the-making, Mrs. Winter, too, cannot know what she is doing while doing it. For example, that she is saying something unclear, incomprehensible, or non-intelligible—if Connor were to make such a suggestion—cannot be apparent to her while speaking. It becomes available to her only in and through Connor’s reply. “Her” action, therefore, cannot be grounded in her own intentions because from *within* the event*-in-the-making, the effect of her action is available only some time later. Her intentions are exceeded by the pathic experience of being subject to something outside of her, literally by something that advenes to her from the outside, something that eventuated.

Let us pursue the analysis of the unfolding lesson-in-the-making. Following Mrs. Winter’s locution, there is pausing, which provides Connor and Mrs. Winter with the possibility to speak. In fact, the expression “there is pausing” has a grammatical structure that explodes the cause–effect figure of reasoning because the process of pausing also is the subject. At the instance Connor begins to speak, the pause-in-the-making has ended and its effect, the pause, has been 1.00 second (turn 47). This is longer than the 0.7 seconds teachers normally allow for students to answer (Tobin, 1987). Here, with a speech intensity (volume) much less than normal, Connor articulates what culturally competent individuals tend to hear as a question*, because of the (a) interrogative at the beginning (“what”), (b) the interrogative grammatical structure of the utterance as a whole, and (c) the rising intonation towards the end (i.e., which turns out to be the end as Mrs. Winter is already beginning to take another turn while Connor is still speaking). “What do you mean like?” (turn 48) Connor will have been heard as having said. But right at the instance of the overlap (turns 48, 49), *while* their mutual speaking is still unfolding, we do not know what will be happening next. It is possible that Connor will continue to speak, elaborating on what he has said or providing some instruction. But it is

As Connor before, for Mrs. Winter to be able to *reply* she has to open up and listen/attend to Connor. Her opening up and listening constitutes the first part of the response. This response, therefore, is itself diastatically stretched from the instance she has stopped talking in turn 46 to the instant she starts talking again in turn 49. When we position ourselves at that instant when Connor and Mrs. Winter speak simultaneously and from the perspective of the event*-in-the-making, we may wonder about what will have happened next. Will we be able to say after the fact that Connor has continued and Mrs. Winter has abandoned her attempt at making it to the speaking floor? Or will Mrs. Winter continue thereby in a way cutting him off from clearly designating his turn as accomplished? At this instant of the overlapping speech, neither our participants nor anyone else witnessing the event*-in-the-making *can* know in principle what will be happening and how this simultaneous speaking will have been understood.

Typical for an event*-in-the-making is that something is happening to us, advenes to us that we cannot anticipate. Thus, any turn, as a second to a preceding turn is only one moment of the saying (i.e., said-in-the-making); its other moment “is pathos, a term denoting that we are or have been affected by something in a way such that the *what-by* cannot be grounded in an a priori (forgoing) *what* nor in an a posteriori achieved *what-for*” (Roth, 2010, p. 84). To properly theorize the *movement* in and of the event*-in-the-making we require passivity as integral to the experience of the living curriculum. That is, the person to whom something is happening in the event, the advenant, has no way of grounding the event in a cause that precedes the instant; s/he cannot know what s/he is affected by or what s/he has been affected for. This, again, explodes any cause–effect figure of thinking about the event of which the speaking turn pair is but a moment—just as suggested by philosophers who attempt to think the event*-in-the-making (e.g., Marion, 1998; Nietzsche, 1954c). This requires us to think the living curriculum as event*-in-the-making, that is, to think the realization and destruction of action possibilities as movement-in-progress (Deleuze, 1991/2005).

Responsive (Responsible) Responding

In this particular instant, Mrs. Winter continues whereas Connor has stopped speaking. When she stops speaking, Mrs. Winter will have produced question*—because of the grammatical structure—even though the intonation decreases, as if she had asserted something. After she has stopped speaking, there is pausing. Mrs. Winter still is pointing in the direction of Connor and the group of objects on the colored sheet at his feet (as in Figure 2). What will Connor have said this time? Will he say anything at all? Is what he will have said going to reify Mrs. Winter’s utterance as a question? The pause still is in the making. And then it is Mrs. Winter who takes the speaking floor again. Grammatically, her unfolding locution is structured like a question (“What is . . .?”) but will again have been intonated as an assertion (strongly falling pitch, as denoted by the period “.”). If the subsequent locution will have treated it as a question, it would be the third instance of a question (in addition to an the one aborted (“WHAt was the (0.15) WHat . . .” [turn 49])).

49 W: [WHAt] was the (0.15) WHAt did we put
 [((Mrs. Winter is still pointing, as in
 Fig. 1))
 for the name of that group. ((still pointing))
 50 (1.51) ((still pointing, then pulls hand back))
 51 whats written on the card.
 52 (0.83)

The turns 46–48 have raised an issue. Rather than settling it, the response calls for a response in turn. Culturally competent witnesses tend to hear Connor’s utterance as a counter-question* (the hired transcriber of the videotape did hear it in this way, indicated by her placement of a question mark). But we have to ask, from *within* this event*-in-the-making, is it treated as such or does the following turn “turn” it into something else? If there is anything like a decision to respond, it cannot be logically derived from the

preceding event-moments and it cannot predict what will happen. After the fact we can say that instead of providing an answer, Mrs. Winter has asked another question*: “What was the . . . what did we put for the name of the group?” (turn 49). If there were cause–effect relations operating then why would Mrs. Winter intend asking another question* (to which an answer might have to remain outstanding)? In fact, there is a response, but the reply ends up as a 1.51-second pause (turn 50), brought to an end by another turn (a continuation of a turn) on the part of Mrs. Winter: “What’s written on the card?” (turn 51). Again, we may hear the utterance as a question*, but we have to await the reply to know whether there will have been a question-reply turn sequence. In taking another turn, Mrs. Winter thereby acts upon the pause as if it were an indication that the called-for answer could not be provided or remained to come forth (outstanding). The pause, a form of active non-action, calls forth a response: It calls upon Mrs. Winter. There now have been five questions* in a sequence.

Throughout this event*-in-the-making (at this point, we still cannot know what will have happened in the end, that is, the completed and namable event), Mrs. Winter is pointing into the same general direction and towards the cluster of objects at Connor’s feet (Figure 2); the pointing is but another moment of the event*-in-the-making. We may therefore understand it as a way of orienting others or as designating what is the topic of the locutions. So far, the three (and a half) instantiations of Mrs. Winter’s questions* may thereby be heard as being about the “group.” The question pertains to “what the group is about,” “the name of that group,” and “what is written on the card.” What will be happening next? Will there be pausing? Will there be another counter-question*? Will there be an answer that can be evaluated in terms of its in/correctness? Although I have posed these questions, there is actually no time out during the event*-in-the-making for the actors themselves to ask these questions—at least not within the temporality of the happening that we witness here (if the participant were to ask these questions, then it would be a different event*-in-the-making).

There is more pausing. At the instant that Connor begins to speak with a tiny voice, the pause has been longer than the amount of time teachers normally tend to wait for students to answer. “Squares,” Connor whispers (turn 53). Is it an answer to the question*?

53 C: <<p>squares>
 54 W: ~square an::d?
 55 (0.20) ((Cheyenne moves forward, repeatedly points to the word
 “cube”))
 56 J: cube
 57 (0.25)
 58 W: cube.

In the next turn, which follows without a noticeable pause to have occurred, Mrs. Winter says with initially falling then rising intonation toward what comes to be the end of the locution, “Square and?” (turn 54). There are multiple reasons for the first part of this locution to be heard as positive evaluation* of the preceding locution and as the (partially) successful completion of the preceding sequentially ordered question–answer turn pair. First, the preceding locution of the other is repeated with falling intonation, as this is typical for constatives (affirmatives). Second, Mrs. Winter produces the conjunctive “and” with rising intonation, which both attributes correctness to the preceding word “square” but also, in asking* for something else to stand side by side with the affirmed “squares,” designates it as insufficient. Educational researchers call this a “designedly incomplete utterance” (Koshik, 2002) because, as pedagogical practice, the construction offers students a slot for self-correcting and completing. We observe precisely the same structure in the turn pair that follows, thereby completing the initiation–response–evaluation (I-R-E) structure of the turn sequence 54–58. Cheyenne moves forward and points repeatedly to the part of the label where we see “cube” (turn 55), and Jane says “square” (turn 56). Mrs. Winter repeats, with a falling intonation typical of a constative: “cube” (turn 58). We note in this instance that Cheyenne and Jane, rather than Connor, complete the ordered question–answer, even though one might have

assumed that Mrs. Winter, based on her orientation and pointing, has designated Connor to speak. That is, although her intention *might have been* to call for *his* response, the event*-in-the-making takes a different turn as per the effect of the action. Now that Cheyenne and Jane have provided replies, the situation is different: There was a possibility for Connor to reply but he has not replied. Others, however, have done so.

Mrs. Winter, still oriented toward Connor, immediately continues producing yet another question*: “Does it meet the criteria of having the square or the cube?” (turn 58). She solicits* *him*, rather than anyone else, including the two who, in their ways, have responded in the place of Connor. This confirms that the turn 54 was addressed to him, and because he has not replied, Mrs. Winter calls on him again. We may gloss this instant in this way: She “knows” that the other two students know, but she wants to find out whether Connor knows. Following a very brief pause, someone on the floor whispers “no,” followed by another pausing before Mrs. Winter, physically oriented toward Connor is taking the speaking floor: “Do you think it does?” (turn 62). Again we might ask: What comes to be next? How will *Connor* reply if he replies at all? Here, someone else answered, but, as the repetition of the question* with a stern gaze and orientation toward Connor might surmise, *he* is asked to answer and not any answer—e.g., one provided by another student—therefore fills the bill.

58 W: cube. does it meet the criteria of having the square or the cube?
 ((looks at Connor sternly, nods while talking))
 59 (0.25)
 60 X: <<p>no>
 61 (0.25)
 62 W: do you think it does?
 63 (0.84)

Connor utters, “Like what do you mean?” (turn 64). We find here yet another form of non-self-identical repetition, where the student utters the same words that we have already seen as the second turn in a question–question sequence that opens this analysis. Here, the very nature of the question* as question is raised. Connor’s locution is an

acknowledgment of the address that has occurred, it realizes the address as an address, and it questions* this address designating it as not making clear what is meant. A longer turn follows. It begins with a segment structured like a question but intonated in the way of a constative. There is a constative about what has been said before, which is that “this group was square or cube.” This is followed by another locution segment structured and intonated as a twice-uttered question*: “Does it match that?” (turn 66). Again, we can hear Mrs. Winter elaborating on her earlier question*, translating it for the benefit of the student who indicated that what she has said was insufficiently intelligible. At this point, we could ask the same questions that we asked before about Mrs. Winter not phrasing her questions in a way that Connor would understand.

64 C: like what do you mean?
 65 (1.10)
 66 W: 'does it match. We said THAT this group ((points)) was 'squa::re
 (0.31) or cube (0.49) ((looks at Connor, nods)) does it match
 that?
 67 (0.41)
 68 X: <<pp>yes.>
 69 (0.48)
 70 X: or::.
 71 C: ((gazes at teacher)) yes.
 72 (0.70)
 73 W: <<p>o>kay. () ben you wanna add? ((nods in direction of Connor))
 () thanks connor.

There is a brief pausing brought to a close by someone saying “yes,” followed by an “or,” before Connor, gazing straight at the teacher, says “yes.” There is another pausing, which Mrs. Winter concludes by saying “okay” (turn 73). She continues asking* Ben whether he wants to add. By nodding in the direction of Connor and saying “thanks Connor,” she marks the completion of the exchange with Connor.

RETHINKING THE CURRICULUM AS A LIVING EVENT

An event as unitary and self-equivalent is something that could be read post factum by a detached (non-participating) consciousness that is not interested in the event; yet even in this case there still would be something that remains inaccessible to it, namely, the very *event-ness of the event* [*sobytijnost' sobitie*]. (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 16, emphasis added)

Classroom fragments such as those analyzed in the preceding section have been explained in terms of the concept of zone of proximal development and teacher scaffolding (Roth & Radford, 2010). But the experiences of co-participation in such situations “are nonadditive and irreducible to the sum of the preceding experiences of all participants, of all they knew, felt, and understood BEFORE the interaction” (Zuckerman, 2007, p. 49, original capitalization). This author therefore suggests that we need to approach teacher–student encounters through the lens of “the event (*sobitie*) of an action” or “the co-life (*so-bytie*) of the actors” (p. 50). The reading in the preceding section uses such a lens. In the present section, I offer a starting point for rethinking the curriculum as a living event before it is finished and therefore can be known as such.

Understood as an event*-in-the-making, this fragment from a mathematical curriculum that real people have lived and lived through in flesh and blood—a constitutive moment of a lesson, itself a moment of “life-as-event [*žizn'-sobytie*],” “world-as-event [*mir-sobitie*],” or “Being-as-event [*bytie-sobytie*]” which are the ultimate all-encompassing events* (Bakhtin, 1993)—has neither Mrs. Winter nor Connor as its causal agents. We cannot fully explain what is happening when we focus on the individual agencies of Mrs. Winter and Connor or the sum of these agencies. In this relation, which some denote by the adjective transactional because it exceeds the interaction of individual agencies, there is a synergistic effect that is in excess of any agency of which we can conceive (Dewey & Bentley, 1949/1999). Mrs. Winter and Connor are (passive) advenants with respect to the unfolding event*-in-the-making, which they cannot yet comprehend as event because of its unfinished nature with an end

result that unforeseeably emerges from the relation. Will Connor have learned? Will Mrs. Winter have succeeded in teaching (allowing Connor to learn)? While the event* is in the making, there is no answer to these questions, for before we can name it this or that (kind of) event, it “does not have a cause and does not plead for any cause, especially not its own” (Marion, 2010, p. 282). The event*-in-the-making has only itself to accomplish itself: “*it passes and comes to pass, therefore it renounces that which is not itself*” (p. 282). The event*-in-the-making unfolds and arrives in excess of what Mrs. Winter and Connor may intend to happen. Because it exceeds intention and intentionality, because it is not their effect, the event*-in-the-making is not homogeneous (cf. Figure 1b). If the event*-in-the-making were the sum or intersection of individual intentions, then we would not require meetings, such as those making decisions about research grants or tenure/promotion. We would not find pleasure in watching sports events if the outcome could be determined based on the abilities of each player. We would simply use an algorithm to calculate the end result based on the combined individual evaluations or abilities of all participants. Events*-in-the-making are incalculable, which means that new qualities arise from them that cannot be anticipated: Their future always to come. Once a future state has arrived, as a result, the event no longer is in the making.

Thinking the Event*-in-the-Making

The event arrives, or rather it happens to *me* [m 'arrive], by surprising me, and by befalling me unexpectedly. (Marion, 2010, p. 286, original emphasis)

Characteristic of the event*-in-the-making is that something-yet-unknown is arriving, happening to and overcoming us, thereby befalling and affecting us. We cannot ever anticipate the arrivage (Romano, 1998), so that there is always an excess of what we experience over what we anticipated—i.e., of intuition over intention—which installs openness and flexibility in the very process of knowing” (Dewey & Bentley, 1949/1999,

p. 97). The description and analysis of the classroom episode shows that it is impossible to evaluate what a locution is doing independent of the effect (perlocution) associated with it. This is so because had Connor responded in turn 48 by saying, “Don’t insult me. You are treating me like a baby,” then, for the purpose of understanding what is happening at the instant, we would need to take Mrs. Winter’s locution as an insult. The effects, thereby, come to be the origin of the attributed causes; ultimately, therefore, effects are at the origin of the causes that are said to have brought about the effect. This form of reasoning, as per the introductory quotation to this text, not only is circular but also negates the cause. To get us out of this circularity, we need to abandon the belief in cause–effect relations (Nietzsche, 1954c) and accept the event*-in-the-making in its irreducible, originary sovereignty (Marion, 2010). The living curriculum is not some entity but an unfinished event*-in-the-making. We might therefore use the now-obsolete verb *to event* to point us toward the eventing of an event*-in-the-making.

Etymologically, the term Lat. *ēvent-us* means occurrence, issue, from *ēvenīre*, to come out, happen, *ē-* out + *venīre*, to come. But events have endings, they come to be understood as events in and through what they have eventuated, their products. Event*-in-the-making means *to event* and *to eventuate* simultaneously and inseparably. To eventuate is used synonymously with to actuate, to realize, to make real. Yet we tend to understand the living curriculum in terms of what it eventuated, that is, only after the fact. That is, event*-in-the-making makes us think the process of coming out (e-vent) and arrival (ad-vent) together, a process of coming and becoming (*venīre*). Already-made events therefore arrive, something arrives that is not already known or foreseen as a *what*; it is unforeseen and undetermined. This view invokes the passive side of human experience in exchange processes, where “both parties (the idiomatic name for *participants*) undergo change” (Dewey & Bentley, 1949/1999, p. 185).

But thinking the living curriculum as a process requires us to think (about) more than merely “to arrive” and “arrival.” In the arrival, something arrives. Arrival therefore

implies arrivage: that which happens to or befalls one. That which arrives, like the end result of a meeting, cannot be anticipated with certainty—though it may be considered before in terms of one of several possible outcomes.

The *event supervenes*: it comes on and occurs as something additional, as something that *cannot be* foreseen because it is unseen and therefore unforeseen. As the fragment unfolds, in fact constituting the ultimately enacted curriculum as such, Mrs. Winter *finds* a manner of asking the question in a way so that the called-for answer does *eventually* come forth—she does so not directly but after several attempts. Here, the verb “to find” implies something that is not readily available but something that is hidden or even unseen/unheard of; there is a degree of fortuity and something accidental about it. The manner of asking a question so that it arrives and calls for the response and calls on the respondent is not available beforehand, it cannot be anticipated with certainty, and in this situation—as in others that have been described in the education literature (e.g., Roth & Radford, 2011)—it involves seeking and *finding* a proper pedagogy.

For us to comprehend the already-made event means being able to apprehend it in the way we apprehend objects. To be an event*-in-the-making, the happening that we denote as a specific event has to pass—otherwise we cannot *represent* it, make it present again—and subject to closure, that is, it no longer is eventing: An event*-in-the-making cannot ever be an *ob-ject* (etymologically, something thrown [*jicere*] of thought that is standing over and against [*ob-*] the witnessing subject [e.g., Hegel, 1807/1979; Romano, 1998]). An already-made event no longer is passing and unfolding but *has to have been* so that we can designate it by some concept: “scaffolding,” “an instance of the zone of proximal development,” “a teacher guiding a student to a realization.” A happening can become a French or Arab Revolution only when this revolution is available as a whole, because prior to closure it is possible that what is in the process of happening will eventually turn out to be an unsuccessful uprising or a failed coup d’état. In 1956, what was happening in Hungary turned out to be an uprising that cemented the Soviet control over Central

Europe rather than bringing about a change typical with a revolution. At the instant of this writing, the year 2012, we do not know whether what is happening in Syria will have been a revolution or an uprising. On the other hand, what we now know as the *French Revolution* was a period, which the name denotes as a thing that comprised change and transformation. Thinking something as event*-in-the-making means thinking it as an internally differentiated, non-self-identical unit, which, precisely because it encompasses everything, cannot be rendered in terms of cause–effect relations. Comprehending something that is happening as event*-in-the-making requires not only historical thinking—which is impossible because we would not ever be able to achieve closure (Nietzsche, 1954a)—but also unhistorical thinking. This is so because the “unhistorical is similar to an encompassing atmosphere in which life generates itself only to disappear with the destruction of this atmosphere” (p. 215). It is also so because “pure givenness cannot be experienced actually” (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 32) requiring abstract categories instead. It is when we stop what is happening—by partializing life to take out something to which we attribute object-nature—and make it the object of thinking that we in fact destroy the event* as a happening: But in this destruction the event becomes accessible to us in thought.

As a coming—in French one would say *à venir* (to come), which is a characteristic of *l’avenir* (future)—we have to think the event in its singularity, that is, also as a one (unit). It is singular because it never ever happens in this way again, it is “once-occurrent [*edinstvennoj*]”; and it is singular because it is a one (Bakhtin, 1993). As a one, it also is a plurality (cf. Figure 1b). We can think these relations in terms of the realization of one of many possibilities, arrival and concretization of something that is annihilated at the time. If there is only one possibility, there is certainty rather than possibility. When we speak about possibility, there is a plurality. This plurality collapses into a one, into certainty, with the concretization (arrival) of one possibility becoming certainty. But in this arrival, the possibilities no longer exist because they have been destroyed with the concretization.

While the living curriculum is unfolding—e.g., during Mrs. Winter’s turn 46—we cannot say what *is* (i.e., the case, truth) because there is only becoming. In atomic physics, there actually is a concrete equivalent as shown in the puzzle of Schrödinger’s cat sitting in a box subject to being killed by a quantum event. When the box is opened, we find the cat either dead or alive. But while the box is closed, there are only possibilities one of which becomes certainty in and through the observation (physicists say “collapse of the wave function”). Just as we can only say that we will find the cat to be dead or alive (in terms of possibilities) without being able to say *what* the cat *is*, so we cannot talk about a current happening *what* it *is* until after it has come to a close. In the event, we have an irreducible plurality of possibilities (each with a probability of $0 < p < 1$), one of which is going to be realized, and, in this realization, this possibility is going to be destroyed because it has become actuality (with a probability $p = 1$, all others with a probability of $p = 0$). Thus, “*the event is nothing other than this impersonal reconfiguration of my possibilities and the world that advenes into a fact and by means of which it opens a fissure in my own adventure*” (Romano, 1998, p. 45, original emphasis). *Eventuation* is the name for the process of destruction of a possibility (all possibilities) as possibility in the event, which furthermore gives rise to a whole new set of possibilities. After Mrs. Winter stops speaking, even the pause opens and closes possibilities; the longer it lasts, the more likely is the probability that Connor cannot or does not want to reply (e.g., Roth, 2010). We have a shift in possibilities; and this shift itself constitutes time (Figure 1b). Events are not *in time*, as Kant (1956) thought, but are constitutive *of time*.

The Abyss in the Unity of the Event

The name that doubles the *being* [*l'étant*] it names is necessary to its identity.
(Levinas, 1971, p. 33)

In the act of naming, a concluded happening comes to be a self-identical, namable thing: this (happening) *as* that (category). The theoretical problem in thinking the living curriculum as something living arises from the fact that on the one hand we have a living, inherently open and unfinished happening and on the other hand we can talk about this happening only as a finished thing.⁶ An abyss is opened between process and the words required to describe and apprehend it. In the middle of the movement that constitutes change (Figure 1b), we do not know the end result (oval) and, therefore, we do not know what kind of event we witness. It is only upon conclusion, when the box in Figure 1b has been closed, that we can name it as some thing. It is naming that “constitutes identities,” “articulates the *ideality* of the same in diversity” (Levinas, 1971, p. 27–28, emphasis added), and, thereby, loses the “modification without change, the phase shift of the identical” (p. 26). This loss leads to the difference between the diachronic Saying, as happening, and the synchronic Said, as what resulted from and of the happening. This abyss creates a tension, for the Saying only tends toward the Said, with which it is never identical (Levinas, 1978/2004).

Because at the instant of the fragment analyzed above, the living curriculum is still unfinished, the participants do not know what is happening to them—other than that they are together in the same mathematics lessons, without however being able to anticipate its exact course—until the happening has come to an end, when there is some kind of closure. This closure is brought about in the conclusion of the interactions concerning Connor’s mystery object. In the end, therefore, once the participants have concluded the episode, we can characterize what has happened as some particular event. Mrs. Winter has asked questions and Connor, with some delay and helping, has answered. Scholars using a Vygotskian framework may say that we have observed an instance of the *zone of proximal development*, a linguist might observe an *IRE*-type event, and conversation analyst may characterize this as an instance of conversational repair to get a particular kind of answer realized.⁷ It is only at this point that cause–effect relations may be

attributed, for example, were we to say “Connor had difficulties comprehending,” which “required Mrs. Winter to spend an extra effort in helping him understand the question.” In this case, Mrs. Winter’s actions are determined to be the causal antecedents of Connor’s comprehension. This is so even if we articulate the situation in more radical constructivist terms, for example, as “Mrs. Winter’s making it possible for Connor to construct meaning.” Here there are two agents, one bringing about an enabling situation, which is the causal antecedent of another cause, Connor’s construction, from which “meaning” results as the effect. We cannot say that he is constructing “meaning” rather than doing something else until this “meaning” is available to us. It is quite clear that we can make such causal claims only when the end result is available, for during the event*-in-the-making (i.e., the construction of “meaning”), we do not know whether what we attribute after the fact to the actions has actually done what we claim it to do. This is so because the fact that two actions are aligned in a necessary sequence *does not mean* that they stand in a cause–effect relation; only metaphysical logicians are used to and accept the “presupposition that thoughts cause thoughts” (Nietzsche, 1954c, p. 728).⁸ Will and intentions are *not* the causes of action; developmentally, will and intentions are the results of events and experiences (Maine de Biran, 1841; Vygotskij, 2005) so that it is only a metaphysical belief that the sequence of thought following another thought constitutes a causal relationship. Each thought in fact is only a one-sided reflection of the event as a whole (Nietzsche, 1954c; Vygotskij, 2005).

There is therefore a gap between an open and unfinished happening and the things to which it gives rise (i.e., those that arrive); and there is a gap between the happening while it happens and the name denoting it *after* everything has been said and done. The gap is of the same kind as that which exists between the curriculum as plan—which also is the description of what has happened when everything has gone “according to plan”—and the curriculum as something living. This is the point that has been made about the abyss between plans and situated action (Suchman, 1987). When we think the curriculum as

living, however, that is, in terms of an unfinished *eventing* or event*-in-the-making rather than a completed already-made-event, then we aim at the “verbality of the verb itself by ceasing to name actions and events” (Levinas, 1971, p. 26). That is, we aim at learning rather than the change in knowledge brought about by learning and teaching intentions. Only when the living curriculum ends, when it no longer exists in its living quality, can we name *what* has happened as a fact (Lat. *fact-um*, thing done, past participle of *facēre*, to do). In the case of the event*-in-the-making, therefore, *comprehension* always arrives late. In fact, comprehension itself *constitutes* this delay, produces and provokes it. An abyss thereby is opened up for thinking the eventing of the living curriculum—between the happening and its outcome, which alone allows us to comprehend and name just *what* has happened in the now past. The event can become an object of reflection only when it can be placed before the mind’s eye. This abyss is not a problem—the problem arises when we think the event only in terms of outcomes and add to the events causes that are not available to us during the event*-in-the-making because we *cannot* grasp in its entirety what is happening, and therefore cannot know what is causing what.

It has been suggested that the eventness of events “can be described only participatively” (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 32). But describing a happening participatively, from the position of the participating witnesses swept up by what unfolds despite themselves, means no longer having a god’s-eye-view that gives the event as a whole. The perspective guards us against doing Whig history to construct teleological accounts of the living curriculum. Comprehension of the event requires it to be completed, no longer open as a happening with an uncertain outcome. We may then appropriate the event as such—and in this “ap-propriation resonates essence of that which speaks as language” (Heidegger, 2006, p. 48). Although it is the completion of the event*-in-the-making that leads us to the name, event*-in-the-making and already-made event belong together: “‘Identity’ / as event / does not tolerate a proposition as that / which properly is saying it—/ the saying of which / belongs to it (the event)” (Heidegger, 2006, p. 97). Here the

author refers to identity as an event that does not tolerate, in fact is destroyed in the naming but requires the name to be comprehensible. There is both an abyss and a possibility, for when we conduct analyses from the perspective of the non-repeatable event then even objects or entities become events*-in-the-making. This is so, for example, for the country of Italy in Bakhtin's (1993) analysis of a Pushkin poem: "The experiencing of Italy as event[*-in-the-making] includes, as a necessary constituent moment, the actual unity of Italy in unitary and once-occurrent Being" (p. 71). To appropriately think the event*-in-the-making, "[w]e have to think the object from the phenomenon [i.e., event] and not the phenomenon from the object" (Marion, 2010, p. 281).

Naming what is happening by means of a verb, however, does not get us out of the aporia yet, because we are naming again. Yet when used in a "predicative proposition," the verb "becomes the resonance itself of being heard as to be" (Levinas, 1971, p. 34). Thus, "Socrates socratizes, or Socrates is Socrates, is *the way* in which Socrates is" (p. 36, original emphasis). The equivalent in education would be the statement that the learner learns, which points us to a process rather than to a state. There is therefore a "unitary two-sided reflexion" (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 14) between the content and living performance of the practical act, which binds them into a unitary whole. In other words, content and performance are but two moments of a single whole; and to understand the two, we have to approach them through the whole, itself an unfolding process. That is, the reason for an action and the practical action cannot be separated without losing the phenomenon, which is what happens when we think about actions in terms of cause-effect relations.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCHING A *LIVING* CURRICULUM

The purpose of this paper is to offer up a new conceptualization of the living curriculum and to exemplify this conceptualization in the writing of research. In this, the

paper is a contribution to the effort of overcoming the problems that come with all metaphysical approaches—including all kinds of constructivism (e.g., Radford & Roth, 2011). I employ a way of writing (about) classrooms that retains the very mobility of the event*-in-the-making, of what we live without ever being able to *comprehend* what is happening and only do so after the fact because the situation *comprehended* (comprised) us as witness. This requires us to think the living curriculum as pure mobility but its comprehension in terms of process and outcome and moves us towards acknowledging the unpredictability of teaching and learning *in the way we live it in situ*. I do so, for “it is impossible to modify the interpretation of particular phenomena without at the same time modifying the language in which it is expressed” (Romano, 1998, p. 2). I describe and analyze a lesson fragment from a perspective that does not destroy its event-ness and then develop associated concepts. The fundamental argument in this paper therefore can be stated in this way: An event*-in-the-making ~~is~~ not, for eventing is synonymous with unfinished-unfolding, advening-to-advenants, taking-advenants-by-surprise, opening-possibilities-in-annihilating-them, and eventuating-demise-of-the-event. The preceding analyses lead us to a number of implications, including how we (a) theorize the subject, (b) view and employ cause–effect relations, (c) view events through the lens of the participants, and (d) analyze data that record events (audiotape, videotape).

First, when we think the living curriculum as an unfinished and yet-to-be-namable and yet-to-be-knowable event*-in-the-making, we have to give up, as intimated throughout this paper, common notions of the agential subject. This is so because interpreted “in the light of the event,” “man [*l’homme*] . . . is not man studied by anthropology, sociology, or psychoanalysis” (Romano, 1998, p. 2). Within the horizon of the event*-in-the-making, the subject, just as the object or relation, is not simply given “as something totally on hand, but is always given in conjunction with another given that is connected with those objects and relations, namely, that which is yet-to-be-achieved or determined” (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 32). Thus, that which is in the process of happening

necessarily escapes both Mrs. Winter and Connor. In this changed perspective, both are learners and teachers (e.g., Roth & Radford, 2010), agential subjects and passive patients. They are witnesses in and to an event that they cannot yet comprehend because it is not yet advened and concluded as some *this* event: It is not available as an entity in completed form. We cannot understand the featured fragment or episode as an event if we approach it through the intentions of the individuals or through the theoretical gaze of the analyst, who takes a complete, god's-eye-view of this episode as a particular kind of event. But to understand this classroom-episode-in-the-making, we have to take a perspective situated in the situation without being able to anticipate its end. From my viewpoint as a participant witness, the happening “is given to me within a certain event-unity, in which the moments of what-is-given and what-is-to-be-achieved, of what-is and what-ought-to-be, of being and value, are inseparable” (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 32). Thinking the living curriculum as event*-in-the-making forces us to change our thinking about the participant and participating subjects. As advenants, they are but moments of the event*-in-the-making, and therefore as much subject of as subject to and subjected to it. They make the event and are made by it. We can therefore assign the roles of teacher and learner (about teaching, about mathematics content) only after the fact. Mrs. Winter is teaching geometry as much as learning to teach geometry; and Connor is learning geometry as much as allowing Mrs. Winter to learn to teach geometry.

Second, thinking the living curriculum as event*-in-the-making also questions—in fact, requires us to abandon—the whole metaphysics of a cause–effect composition of the (social) world. It requires us to do our research differently, if its purpose is to understand “the world *actually experienced*, and not the merely thinkable world” (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 54, emphasis added). In the conversation analytic approach, the effect of the speech comes to be known through the second turn in a turn pair, which means that we cannot know what a locution is doing until after its effect is known. In choosing the turn pair as minimal unit, conversation analysis implements the “modification without change,” the

“phase shift of the identical,” which philosophers suggest is required for capturing the eventing of the event. When we attempt to understand the living curriculum through the verb *to event*, then there are neither causes nor effects (Nietzsche, 1954c). Causes and effects are but discursive resources for attributing rationality and (legal) responsibility after the fact. That is, in conversation analysis, the diachronic and dehiscent nature of eventing is captured in the understanding of the speech act as comprised of locution, illocution, and perlocution. Whereas the first of these three moments of the speech act is made available in the utterance, its second moment, the illocution (i.e., intent), is generally immanent and invisible. The third moment of the speech act, the perlocution or effect, is available only in and through the subsequent locution. Our understanding of the mobility of the conversation, therefore, no longer focuses on causes and effects, but understands the effect (perlocution) as that aspect that allows a speech intent (illocution) to be attributed (e.g., “You are insulting me” [perlocution, effect], “I was only joking” [illocution].)

Third, from the articulated perspective that seeks to capture the event*-in-the-making, we have to research the structure of the world as both given and as something in the course of being achieved. Thus, the “architectonic is something-*given* as well as something-*to-be-accomplished*, for it is the architectonic of an event” (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 75). But this event*-in-the-making “is not given as a finished and rigidified architectonic, into which I am placed passively. It is the yet-to-be-realized plane of my origination in Being-as-event or an architectonic that is incessantly and actively realized through my answerable deed” (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 75). From within the event, *becoming* does not exist in some abstract way—as it does to the theoretician who after-the-fact gazes at what has happened, dissects the event whole into pieces to establish between them the cause–effect relation. Rather, to the participant-me, everything “is given to me within a certain event-unity, in which the moments of what-is-given and what-is-to-be achieved, of what-is and what-ought-to-be, of being and value, are inseparable” (p. 32). As a result, we come to

understand abstract categories as “constituent moments of a certain living, concrete, and palpable (intuitable) once-occurrent whole—an event” (p. 32). This also allows us to understand life in the only way that it “can be consciously comprehended”: “as an ongoing event [i.e., event*-in-the-making], and not as Being *qua* a given” (p. 56). It is only from within the event*-in-the-making that I can truly witness what is and what ought to be—just as it is only from within a game that the possibilities and constraints offer themselves but are hidden and non-understandable to the journalist, analyst, or spectator looking at the game from the outside and always with a delay.

Fourth, from a methodic perspective, to analyze events*-in-the-making requires us, as intimated preceding the analysis of the fragment, to take a first-time-through perspective, where we move through an episode step by step without drawing on anything that subsequently occurs as analytic resource. The analysis of the lesson fragment implements precisely this recommendation. In this way, the analytic stance is similar to that of the participants, who, at any one instant, do not know what will be the case only seconds or minutes hence. In conversation analysis, exemplified in the analysis of the fragment, this first-time-through perspective is already implemented, as two consecutive turns form one irreducible unit. Furthermore, the stipulated unity of content and performance of the practical act also is at the heart of the ethnomethodological approach (Garfinkel & Sacks, 1986). The formal structure of practical action—e.g., of asking a question about the nature of the group—is represented in this way: “doing [asking a question about the nature of the group]” or “doing [having difficulties in comprehending].” Here, the bracketed part of the unity is the accountable text (i.e., proper gloss) that participants and others, after the fact, may use to describe or name to have been the already-made event. “Doing” refers to the living, sensuous work that contributes to bringing the event about, thereby emphasizing that the “accountable-conversation-as-a-practical-accomplishment consists only and entirely in and of its work” (p. 172). Mrs. Winter and Connor *do* something that the other practically understands as “asking a question”—e.g., orienting

toward and addressing Connor, using a particular grammatical form, or raising the pitch toward the end of the locution—or as “exhibiting non-understanding”—e.g., by not replying or by asking “What do you mean?” But this living *doing* is apprehensible and comprehensible only once it is completed. That is, educators do already have access to the kind of tools required for analyzing events*-in-the-making.

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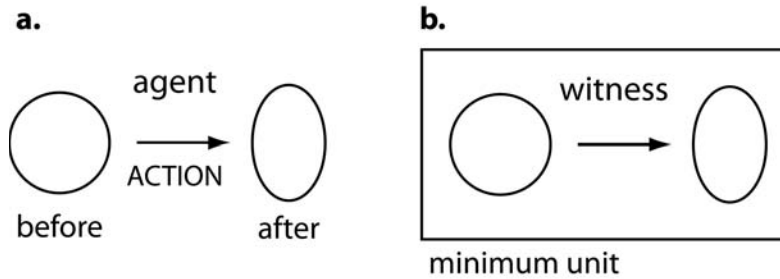


Figure 1. a. In curriculum theory, change is thought in terms of self-identical entities: an agent acts upon a prior state to bring about a desired after state. b. In process philosophy, the minimum unit of theorizing encompasses before, after, witnessing and changing subject, and heterogeneous actions. The minimum unit of thought is non-self-identical.



Figure 2. This artistic rendering of the classroom shows the physical relations at the instant of the conversation analyzed in the text. Mrs. Winter is seated to the right and points toward Connor on the left and the group of (cubical) objects at his feet.

¹ I follow Garfinkel (1991) using the asterisk “*” to mark provisional terms. The analysis has to show whether the provisional concept is actually appropriate. Thus, *event** denotes that we do not know with certainty what kind of event we are witnessing; *question** denotes that a locution might be a question, but only the detailed analysis can reveal what has happened.

² In this essay, I use the term “moment” in the dialectical sense of a constitutive part in its relation to the constituted whole and reserve the term “instant” to denote a period of time.

³ The entire Fragment 8.7 (Roth, 2011, p. 220) of an account concerning the incarnate nature of mathematical knowing is taken up here.

⁴ A locution is one sided, whereas an utterance is two sided, involving an articulation and its social evaluation on the part of the listener (Vološinov, 1930).

⁵ Readers certainly are familiar with situations of this kind: A first speaker says something, the second says “You are hurting/insulting me!” and the first one says “I am sorry, I only meant to joke/say . . .” Here, too, the hurt/insult is available only in and through the second locution, and the third locution now has to address the unintended but nevertheless actual effect.

⁶ Using a simple (phenomenological) exercise, we can experience how eye movements *make* a “cube”; and without the eye movements, there is no cube but only indistinct grey (e.g., Roth, 2011).

⁷ Even grammar, the closing of classroom episodes, and other aspects of the living curriculum are *collective* achievements rather than things determined by this or that participant (Roth, 2010).

⁸ Nietzsche’s own example is the natural number sequence 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.