

March 20, 2022

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To whom it may concern;

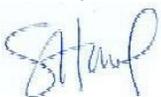
I am writing this letter in sincere thanks to Dr. Joe Norris and the Mirror Theatre team for their work, which began in early 2019, working in partnership with Brock University faculty, Human Rights & Equity Services and the Experiential Education team to develop workshops for students using participatory theatre as a tool for safe exploration and learning. This work has resulted in the development of Cultural Humility workshops offered both in-person and virtually, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as an open educational resource (OER) made possible through funding from eCampus Ontario titled, *Haunting our Biases: Using Participatory Theatre to Interrupt Implicit Bias*.

With many students at Brock University engaging an experiential and community-based learning, going out into community and/or working with social service organizations often takes place. The ability to examine personal assumptions and bias is critical to personal success in these environments. Through participatory theatre workshops, students are able to develop their self-awareness, communication and critical thinking skills, as well as determine how they personally see the world, or need to *unsee* the world, prior to their time in the community. These workshops also help in identifying systemic barriers someone might experience in our diverse world, as well as how they might help by first identifying the existing problems and then having the opportunity to test possible solutions. Reflection on learning, a key element of high-quality experiential learning, is encouraged by Mirror Theatre and all its facilitators as learning is underway, but also beyond time spent in the workshop as they go out into their communities and put theory into practice.

I have also had the pleasure of collaborating with Dr. Norris and Mirror Theatre on other projects as well. One of these was a series of vignettes to prepare Co-op students for future work-integrated learning experiences as part of their professional preparation course. These were focused on common scenarios people experience when beginning a new job, as well as some of the awkward moments or faux pas that surface in the workplace.

Being co-facilitators and even sometimes performers in these workshops, we often hear students reflect on the impact of these experiences. They comment that having the chance to step in and redirect a scene is helpful practice, hearing the perspectives of others helps open their minds to new things, and that the experience is transformative. In experiential learning, a transformational experience is one of the highest outcomes an educator can strive for, which is achieved with Dr. Norris and the Mirror Theatre team. I can only hope that more opportunities for future collaboration surface!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sandy Howe".

Sandy Howe

Associate Director, Experiential Education

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