



TLEF Project – Final Report

Report Completion Date: (2021/02/04)

1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

1.1. General Information

Project Title:	Graduate Supervisory Relationships: Creating Space for Dialogue and Wellbeing through Theatre		
Principal Investigator:	Susan Cox (and Michael Lee as Co-PI)		
Report Submitted By:	Susan Cox and Michael Lee		
Project Initiation Date:	April 1, 2019	Project Completion Date:	Sept 31, 2020*
Project Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> Large Transformation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Small Innovation <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible Learning <input type="checkbox"/> Other: [please specify]		

*Request to extend initial project completion date and time allowed for final report (due to delays related to COVID) approved by Jeff Miller

1.2. Project Focus Areas – Please select all the areas that describe your project.

- Resource development (e.g. learning materials, media)
- Infrastructure development (e.g. management tools, repositories, learning spaces)
- Pedagogies for student learning and/or engagement (e.g. active learning)
- Innovative assessments (e.g. two-stage exams, student peer-assessment)
- Teaching roles and training (e.g. teaching practice development, TA roles)
- Curriculum (e.g. program development/implementation, learning communities)
- Student experience outside the classroom (e.g. wellbeing, social inclusion)
- Experiential and work-integrated learning (e.g. co-op, community service learning)
- Indigenous-focused curricula and ways of knowing
- Diversity and inclusion in teaching and learning contexts
- Open educational resources
- Other: [Development of approaches, resources and/or activities that actively engage with diversity and build capacity for inclusion in teaching and learning contexts]



1.3. Project Summary

This project focused on graduate supervisory relationships and the wellbeing of UBC students and supervisors. Using research-based theatre, we developed series of dramatized scenes about challenging aspects of graduate supervisory relationships and the implications for faculty as well as student wellbeing. The scenes were performed live by professional actors for audiences of graduate students or faculty supervisors, administrators and staff. Each scene was interspersed with time for facilitated dialogue about issues arising in the scene as well as how to support and improve graduate supervisory relationships. These workshops demonstrated the power of theatre to enable audiences to discuss sensitive issues in light of shared experience, commenting on characters and situations rather than having to reveal personal stories. Throughout this project, we drew upon the tenets of appreciative inquiry to focus on the ingredients of successful as well as problematic supervisory relationships and support greater awareness of supervision as a vital form of pedagogy. Final outputs include a professionally recorded and edited digital version of an expanded set of dramatized scenes (that now focus on inclusivity and diversity as well as wellbeing), a detailed facilitator’s guide and recommendations on how to support further dialogue. These materials will be available very soon as an Open Educational Resource.

1.4. Team Members – Please fill in the following table and include **students**, undergraduate and/or graduate, who participated in your project.

Name	Title/Affiliation	Responsibilities/Roles
Susan Cox	Associate Professor, SPPH	Nominated PI
Michael Lee	Associate Professor of Teacher, Faculty of Medicine	Co-PI
Bryn Williams	Graduate student	Research assistant
Simangele Mabena	Graduate student	Research assistant
Janina Mobach	Graduate student	Research assistant
Tala Maragha	Graduate student	Research assistant
Matthew Smithdeal	Graduate student	Research assistant
Scott Button		Lead Playwright
Laen Hershler	Graduate student	Director
Tetsuro Shigamatsu		Actor
Bahareh Shigamatsu		Actor
Ingrid Brousillon		Actor
Meghan Gardiner		Actor
Brahm Taylor		Actor
Agnes Tong		Actor
Matt Reznick		Actor
Levonne Abshire	Interim Co-Director, Health Promotion & Education	Member, Advisory Board
Rehana Bacchus	Director of Education Programs, Health Sciences (SFU)	Member, Advisory Board



Jacqui Brinkman	Director of Graduate Student Professional Development, G & PS	Member, Advisory Board
George Belliveau	Faculty, LLED	
Grant Charles	Faculty, Social Work	Member, Advisory Board
Chris Cook	Graduate Student	Member, Advisory Board
Julia Henderson	Postdoctoral Fellow, Concordia U	Member, Advisory Board
Brianne Howard	Director, Academic Support, G & PS	Member, Advisory Board
Tal Jarus	Faculty	Member, Advisory Board
Marie Krbavac	Educational Consultant, Learning Design, CTLT	Member, Advisory Board
Yael Mayer	Postdoctoral Fellow	Member, Advisory Board
Kate McCloud	Graduate Student	Member, Advisory Board
Anne Murphy	Acting Associate Dean, G & PS	
Jennica Nichols	Graduate Student	Member, Advisory Board Advice on project evaluation
Kathy O’Flynn-Magee	Faculty Emeritus	Member, Advisory Board
Theresa Rogers	Associate Dean, G & PS	Member, Advisory Board
Karen Smith	Faculty, Science	Member, Advisory Board

1.5. Courses Reached – Please fill in the following table with **past**, **current**, and **future** courses and sections (e.g. HIST 101, 002, 2017/2018, Sep) that have been/will be reached by your project, including courses not included in your original proposal (you may adapt this section to the context of your project as necessary).

Course	Section	Academic Year	Term (Summer/Fall/Winter)
LLED 536 Research-based Theatre		2019/2020	Fall
OSOT 547 Evidence for Practice: Project		2019/2020	Spring

This project is intended to create impact at the institutional level, thereby enhancing graduate students’ learning and research as well as the supervisory and pedagogic approaches adopted by all who supervise graduate students. Thus, this report will not be reporting on student impact at the course level. The impacts for graduate students, faculty and staff members who participated in the project are discussed below under section 3 “project impact”.

2. OUTPUTS AND/OR PRODUCTS

2.1. Please **list** project outputs and/or products (e.g. resources, infrastructure, new courses/programs). Indicate the current location of such products and provide a URL if applicable.

Product(s)/Achievement(s):	Location:
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A report of the environmental scan based on the work carried out in the pre-funding stage.	Internal document, used to shape scene development in phase I
A scene development document describing the ideas and set of possible storylines for scenes that reflect an appropriate spectrum of issues and concerns.	Internal document, used to shape scene development in phase I
The script for the series of 4 to 6 scenes as well as guidance notes on staging the performance piece.	Final version of script for “Don’t Rock the Boat” available by request
Evaluation data (see details below) collected during theatre workshops and used to assess the audience responses to the scenes and dialogue.	Data for internal use only. Guided script development for Phase II.
An actionable set of recommendations that will be discussed with all stakeholders.	Under development in Phase III (supported through additional funding from Equity Enhancement)
Poster and podium presentations of the evaluation findings to be presented at relevant local symposia and events such as the CTLT Institutes	See list below.
Publishable scholarly manuscripts (2) in progress as part of the student learning outcomes.	
Short documentary film about the theatre workshops	Available on website for RbT Cluster See: https://rbtcollaborative.ubc.ca/news/featured-project/nov-8-2019-dont-rock-boat`

2.2. Item(s) Not Met – Please list intended project outputs and/or products that were not attained and the reason(s) for this.

Item(s) Not Met:	Reason:
A professional quality digital recording of 4 scenes (approximately 30 min total) and facilitators’ manual that provides guidance for subsequent use in other settings with the intent to continue dialogue and to reach to wider community	The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated that the project pivot to an online setting and the project also received funding from an EEF grant. As a result, the second stage of this project has focused on creating and filming 4 entirely new scenes that bring in issues of inclusivity and diversity as part of wellbeing. The final product will soon be available as an Open Educational Resource.

3. PROJECT IMPACT

3.1. Project Impact Areas – Please select all the areas where your project made an impact.

- Student learning and knowledge
- Student engagement and attitudes
- Instructional team teaching practice and satisfaction
- Student wellbeing, social inclusion
- Awareness and capacity around strategic areas (indigenous, equity and diversity)

 Unit operations and processes Other: [please specify]

3.2 What were you hoping to change or where were you hoping to see an impact with this project? – Please describe the intended benefits of the project for students, TAs, instructors and/or community members.

The project as a whole focuses on the importance of graduate supervisory relationships to the wellbeing of graduate students and their supervisors. Although graduate supervision is not often recognized as a vital form of pedagogy, this project begins from the premise that good supervision, like good classroom teaching, is the result of careful attention to key elements of pedagogy as well as more commonly recognized factors, such as fit between the supervisor's program of research and the student's research topic or adherence to university regulations. We envision that this project will enhance the awareness of the graduate community (students, faculty and staff) to understand this pedagogical concept and its implications for wellbeing. By using live theatre to create a safer space for dialogue amongst audiences of graduate students or faculty, administrators and staff, this project provides a process for identifying and discussing key challenges in supervisory relationships as well the ingredients of successful ones.

Participation in this intervention increases awareness of the importance of, and challenges inherent to, graduate supervisory relationships for graduate students, faculty and staff. Moreover, the shared forum for discussion elicits insights from audience members on approaches for resolving tensions between supervisors and graduate students and look at ways of upholding and nourishing healthy pedagogic practices. This allows audience members to identify practices that support healthy and respectful supervisory relationships, better navigate challenges when they arise and become more aware of resources and potential allies. The dialogue also contributes to greater awareness of the resources that currently exist to enhance skill development (e.g., effective communication) and support existing efforts to enhance supervisory excellence (e.g., the G+PS Principles of Excellent Graduate Supervision (<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/faculty-staff/information-supervisors/principles-graduate-supervision/>)). The insights and ideas emerging from the theatre event and dialogue are being distilled into a set of suggestions for enhancing existing principles and guidelines as well as identifying any new actionable items.

This project also supports building skills that enhance communication, increase resilience and support productive supervisory relationships, all of which are central to student as well as faculty wellbeing. Over time, we hope this may improve students' and supervisors' sense of satisfaction and achievements, and thereby improve degree completion and decrease the number of complaints and problems arising from poor supervisory relationships. The video and facilitator's manual (soon to be complete and ready for distribution) will enable the participation of wider audiences at UBC and elsewhere. The video could be used by G + PS, the GSS or Faculty Relations to extend the learning and uptake and enable long-term development of a more standardized approach to ensuring that graduate supervisory relationships are



seen as integral to student as well as faculty wellbeing.

We will also be distributing it much more widely through BC Campuses and potentially on a national scale through the Canadian Association of Graduate Schools.

3.2. Were these changes/impacts achieved? How do you know they occurred? – *What evaluation strategies were used? How was data collected and analyzed? You are encouraged to include copies of data collection tools (e.g. surveys and interview protocols) as well as graphical representations of data and/or scenarios or quotes to represent and illustrate key themes.*

The evaluation included observational notes and reflections generated by the project team, facilitators, and actors throughout the duration of the project. (For example, during scene development workshops, we noted how the scenes were modified in light of key insights gleaned from the process.) At the end of each

performance, participants were asked to complete a short individual questionnaire featuring fixed choice as well as open-ended questions about participants' perspectives on the relevance of the issues presented, any immediate personal impacts and the usefulness of utilizing theatre as means of eliciting dialogue on graduate student supervisory relationships. We also conducted audio-recorded debrief discussions with all of the facilitators after each theatre workshop.

In total 100 people participated in the series of 6 theatre workshops offered in fall 2019. The method proved to create that shared experience that enabled participants to have a candid discussion about sensitive issues without necessitating personal disclosure. It produced empathy to the role of the others in the relationship and provided that light bulb moment where participants realized they were not alone in having experienced these challenges. Many participants voiced specific actions they were going to take as a result of watching the performance and engaging in the discussion.

Here are a few sample quotes, that illustrate responses from faculty, staff and students:

"I have never attended or participated in this type of format before. I enjoyed each performance and getting a chance to chat about each scene" – Staff

"[I was surprised by] my own emotion, vulnerability, humility – how much I have yet to learn, how I want to be better, do better by my students" – Faculty

"The performance showed me the power of theatre in exploring difficult topics with nuances and poetic language" – Student

"This was a truly awesome experience – the discussion was invaluable" – Faculty

3.3. Dissemination – *Please provide a list of **past** and **upcoming** scholarly activities (e.g. publications, presentations, invited talks, etc.) in which you or anyone from your team have shared information regarding this project.*

Presentations:

- Oct. 27th, 2019 – *Graduate supervisory relationships and wellbeing: a case study in research-based theatre*, Qualitative Health Research Conference
- Oct. 30th, 2019 – *Don't Rock the Boat*, UBC LLED Faculty Retreat



- Nov. 25th, 2019 – *Research-based Theatre: Entertaining Opportunities for Innovative Health Research*, Black Dog Institute
- Nov. 20th, 2020 – *Introducing Research-based Theatre* [Invited panel presentation]. Faculty of Education Research Initiative, McGill University, Montreal, PQ, Canada.
- Oct. 7th, 2020 – *Don't Rock the Boat: Using Research-Based Theatre to Create Dialogue about Graduate Supervision and Wellbeing*, CHES Celebration of Scholarship
- Nov. 9th, 2020 – *Creating Dialogue about Graduate Supervision and Wellbeing Using Research-Based Theatre: Our Journey of Rocking the Boat*, UBC Research-based Theatre Cluster Meeting
- Dec. 3rd, 2020 – *Graduate student supervisory relationships: Using research based theatre to create deep dialogue*, SFU/UBC Joint conference on Wellbeing in Learning Environments (Thriving Beyond Campus)
- Jan. 13th, 2021 – *A Script for Change using RBT to Create Dialogue on Graduate Supervisory Relationships: Inclusivity and Wellbeing*, The Qualitative Report Conference
- Feb. 25th, 2021 – *Using Research-based Theatre to Generate Dialogue on Wellbeing and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity within Graduate Supervisory Relationships*, Healthy Minds Healthy Campuses Summit
- TBD (postponed due to COVID) -- *Experiencing research-based theatre: graduate supervisory relationships and wellbeing*, Qualitative Research in Mental Health Conference

4. TEACHING PRACTICES – Please indicate if **your** teaching practices or those of **others** have changed as a result of your project. If so, in what ways? Do you see these changes as sustainable over time? Why or why not?

I (Susan Cox) have always viewed supervision as a privilege and not a right and this project has reinforced for me the importance of having faculty view it in this way and treat the supervisory relationship with deep respect. There is a great deal at stake for graduate students in their relationships with their supervisors and the impacts for mental health can be profound, both on the positive side and the negative. As the Director of the MSc and PhD Programs in SPPH, I have observed this on an almost daily basis and the dialogue that has emerged through this project informs my approach and interactions with students and faculty on many levels, perhaps most importantly, with regards to the value of listening deeply as a pedagogic practice and coming to the encounter with one's whole self, so that there is a level of reciprocity that compensates, though never erases, the power differentials that will also shape these relationships.

As a faculty member teaching in a master's degree program, I (Michael Lee) witnessed the high-stress level that many of my students experienced in completing their graduation thesis project, especially when they were assigned to work with faculty members whom they did not know well. This project provides faculty opportunities to dialogue and explore with my colleagues how best to support our graduate students' wellbeing while ensuring the high level of productivity of our students.

5. PROJECT SUSTAINMENT – Please describe the sustainment strategy for the project components. How will this be sustained and potentially expanded (e.g. over the next five years). What challenges do you foresee for achieving the expected long-term impacts listed above?

Following the conclusion of the funding from the TLEF, we obtained funding from the Equity Enhancement Fund. This enabled us to expand the existing script that was piloted in the live theatre workshops and film four new scenes. We have also developed and piloted a new facilitation guide oriented towards an online format for the workshops. Both of these outputs will contribute to the future sustainability of the project. Scenes will be



more easily distributed and used in future workshops without the expense and logistical challenges of performing the scenes live. The new facilitation guide will also contribute to enabling a broader range of individuals to offer these workshops since it includes instruction on how to facilitate.

We are currently in the process of developing a new evaluation plan to assess the impacts of the video version. Once it is available as an Open Educational Resource, we will be pursuing additional funding to support

distribution and comprehensive evaluation of how the resource is being used and its impacts for faculty, staff and students. This will also include an emphasis on how the resource impacts institutional level changes.