

A SCRIPT FOR CHANGE?

USING RESEARCH-BASED THEATRE TO ADDRESS GRADUATE SUPERVISION, INCLUSIVITY AND WELLBEING

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What is research-based theatre?

“Research-Based Theatre (RBT) is an innovative mode of knowledge sharing that uses embodied approaches to catalyze dialogue to address critical social issues.

Through the careful and ethical presentation of dramatized data, RBT inspires change through interactive engagement with diverse audiences.”

UBC Research-based Theatre Cluster
<https://rbtcollaborative.ubc.ca/home>



**GRADUATE
SUPERVISION
AND
WELLBEING**

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CHANCE TO WIN A \$50 UBC BOOKSTORE OR
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LIGHT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED.

**DODSON ROOM
3RD FLOOR
IRVING K. BARBER
LEARNING CENTRE**

Supervisory relationships are crucial in shaping the wellbeing of graduate students. These relationships are also fraught with challenges.

This project builds upon the methods of research-based theatre to create dialogue and identify strategies to support and enhance wellbeing in graduate supervisory relationships.

See: UBC Research-based Theatre
<https://rbtcollaborative.ubc.ca/home>

Development of Don't Rock the Boat

- *Scoping review: published literature on graduate supervision & wellbeing*
- *Story sharing session with graduate students*
- *Script development sessions including playwright, graduate students, faculty, staff & Advisory Board*
- *Qualtrics online: anonymized freewriting about supervisory relationships*
- *Script readings: graduate students, faculty, staff feedback*
- *Script development workshops: director, actors & research team*



Actors:

Ingrid Boussillon

Tetsuro Shigematsu

Bahareh Shigematsu

Playwright:

Scott Button

Impact of the method

“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

Current Work

- Phase II filmed version (new title: *Rock the Boat*) now in progress
- 4 new vignettes focus specifically on inclusivity and diversity as well as student and faculty wellbeing
- Pilot scene now live in new online discussion format with 3 others in the editing process
- Development of facilitator guide and resources underway

Excerpt from scene “Zoom fatigue”

- Erika (graduate student) and Sandra (supervisor)
- Sandra recently taken over as Erika’s supervisor after her previous supervisor abruptly left
- Erika in need of reference letter from Sandra, but Sandra hasn’t responded for a long time
- Clash of methodologies adding tensions (qualitative vs quantitative)

Credits

- Erika: Agnes Tong
- Sandra: Bahareh Shigematsu
- Playwright: Scott Button

Workshop Structure

- Welcome and introductions
 - Participant choice of workshop audience
 - All graduate student or all faculty/staff vs mixed sessions
- View scene together & clarify any points of confusion
- Several brief poll questions to solicit immediate reactions
 - Adequate time for reflection crucial
 - Multiple choice polls → free form questions
- Discussion guided by facilitator

Scene Themes

- Addition of EDI elements widens scope of possible discussions
- Facilitator flexible in guiding discussion towards specific elements of scenes that resonate most strongly with participants
 - ▣ Gender/race dynamics
 - ▣ Power differential
 - ▣ Interpersonal communication
 - ▣ Conflict in methodologies (qualitative vs quantitative)
 - ▣ Systemic elements

Results

- Findings from our ongoing evaluation show participants:
 - ▣ Identify with the experiences of the central characters
 - ▣ Appreciate how the use of theatre enables them to discuss sensitive issues without having to divulge personal stories
 - ▣ Demonstrate enhanced awareness and understanding of challenging aspects of graduate supervisory relationships
- ***Special care/steps to ensure participant support required when offering online***
 - ▣ Additional moderator can be helpful
 - ▣ Follow-up and providing resources after workshop

Next Steps

- Refining facilitation guide to better enable participants to define and deconstruct systemic barriers to successfully addressing these challenges
 - ▣ Goal: guide participants to identify concrete actions they can take going forward
- Educational resource will be available soon for use in range of relevant settings
 - ▣ e.g., graduate student orientation sessions, faculty retreats, staff training
- Evaluate the impact of the educational resource

- For further information/contact:
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 - ▣ <https://rbtcollaborative.ubc.ca/news/featured-project/nov-8-2019-dont-rock-boat>

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