

## **Call for Participants:**

### **“Flipping” the Theatre and Performance Histories Classroom**

**Co-organizers:** Natalie Alvarez (Brock), Kim Solga (Western), and Jenn Stephenson (Queen’s)

It might be counterintuitive to ask how we might “flip” classrooms dedicated to the study of theatre and performance histories toward more active learning models. The assumption often is that theatre and performance classrooms *are* active by virtue of our discipline of study. But beyond research-creation assignments and scene studies, generating moments of student-driven inquiry and knowledge creation is often a challenge in courses on theatre and performance histories, particularly those scheduled in lecture halls, which by their very architecture reinforce asymmetrical and passive learning models. Moreover, the prospect of relinquishing one’s position as the primary “source” of knowledge in the classroom might be a terrifying prospect if the assumption is that prior knowledge of cultural histories among students is a necessary prerequisite.

If interrupting the wearisome din of our own voices in the lecture hall were not motivation enough, a recent *New York Times* article reported that “a growing body of evidence suggests that the lecture format is not generic or neutral, but a specific cultural form” that “offers unfair advantages to an already privileged population” while “discriminating against others, including women, minorities and low-income and first-generation college students.” When our studies of theatre and performance are driven by an abiding investment in how performance might imagine and bring into being more democratic futures, is the lecture format methodologically appropriate? Are there more effective, and more ethical, ways to “deliver” the “content” of theatre and performance history?

This session gathers together instructors of theatre and performance studies (beginning as well as experienced) for a knowledge and skills sharing workshop on ways our pedagogical methods might effectively model the forms of ethically-minded performance we teach. We will ask:

- What strategies might we use to decentralize the primary site of learning in our lecture-format classrooms? What strategies are already working in other contexts, and how can they be effectively adapted for theatre and performance studies?
- (How) could these strategies actively model forms of both performance creation and citizenship founded on non-hierarchical collaboration and productive dissensus?
- Can a flipped performance history classroom work towards decolonial pedagogical paradigms?
- Students are often skeptical of flipped classroom practices. What strategies can we use to bring students “onside” and help them recognize and take advantage of the value in these learning models?
- Many theatre and performance history classes are programmed in lecture hall-style classrooms. How can we use flipped classroom strategies to work effectively within these spaces in a more collaborative mode?

**Length:** Three hours, with one 15-minute break.

**Structure:** Literature and web materials on the “flipped” classroom will be shared with participants eight weeks prior to the working session. In the first 90 minutes of the session, participants will be asked to report on one active-learning strategy they have chosen from the literature and web material provided. In the second half of the session, participants will be broken into groups to share individual course syllabi, specific learning topics, or modules, and collectively devise structures, assignments, or exercises that effectively “flip” the learning moment.

Following the workshop, the strategies and ideas generated in this session will be posted to a wiki as a permanent resource for seminar participants.

Interested participants should email Natalie Alvarez, [nalvarez@brocku.ca](mailto:nalvarez@brocku.ca), to register no later than **January 15, 2016**.