

Dr Joe Norris appointed to the Department of Dramatic Arts

The Department of Dramatic Arts in the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts at Brock University is pleased to announce that Joe Norris will be joining the Department as of July 1, 2009. Joe has had a long history of teaching in, through, and with drama both at the secondary and post-secondary levels and is eager to serve the Ontario educational theatre community.

Joe has a series of 'teaching across the curriculum' units prepared that he is willing to share/teach and he would be enthusiastic to be able to collaborate with other educators in developing further such units. Some of his current lessons include topics as far ranging as working with a children's picture book on an Inuit legend, using drama in teaching language arts, and developing citizenship through collective creation, popular theatre, process drama and playbuilding.

While in Alberta Joe was a founding member and artistic director of Mirror Theatre, a social issues theatre troupe that devised productions based upon community needs. The group toured Alberta schools extensively and in their work examined issues of bullying, substance abuse, risky behaviour, exclusion, conflict resolution, and sexual behaviour. Using a problem-based learning orientation they presented scenes providing insight into specific social difficulties that the audience was then invited to discuss and to propose solutions for. Mirror Theatre group members also devised specific programs for conferences and were featured as keynote presenters at a number of Safe and Caring Schools events, the 2000 Qualitative Health Research conference, three conferences of the Western Canadian Association of Student Teaching, and the 1998 Western Canadian Conference on Human Sexuality.

As a solo presenter, Joe was invited to devise a program with students from the Faculty of Education of the University of Ontario Institute of Technology for the Ontario Teachers' Federation and by the Ontario Association of Deans of Education for the 2007 *The Teacher as Knowledge Creator Conference*. He also directed a group of teachers to be keynotes at the 2005 Atlantic Educators Conference.

Joe has previously served as research chair and the chair of the Theatre-in-Education network for the American Alliance for Theatre and Education, president of the Fine Arts Council of Alberta, president of the Alberta Teachers' Association, and president and founding member of the Educational Drama Association of Nova Scotia.

At Brock, he will be teaching undergraduate courses in drama-in-education and applied theatre, as well pursuing plans to create a Masters program for teachers and theatre practitioners committed to exploring theatre's potentials for direct application to education and social change. His upcoming book, *Playbuilding as Qualitative Research: The Mirror Theatre Process*, is based upon his extensive experience in arts-based research.

Joe looks forward to creating new partnerships with schools and social agencies in Ontario.

Joe can be reached at jnorris@brocku.ca

for more information about the Department of Dramatic Arts please contact the Chair, Dr. David Fancy, at dfancy@brocku.ca