

May 3, 2019

I am writing to support the work of Daniel Fernández Fuentes in association with Fundación Cultura de Paz, titled *EDUC-ACTORS: From Context to Text. Rethinking Peace, Conflict-Transformation, Social Justice and Global Citizenship in Higher Education, through the Encounter with the Arts as Generators of a Culture of Peace*.

I am one of the co-conveners of the **Perils and Possibilities of Diversity Initiative**, an international educative cluster project involving the **Center for the Study of Genocide and Human Rights at Rutgers University**, the **Educational Studies Department at Seton Hall University**, and teachers at the **Neve Shalom, Wahat al-Salam school in Israel**. The work that Daniel has done is in line with the goals of this Initiative. Daniels work is highly valued by all of the members of this group for many reasons, one being the methodology of EDUC-ACTORS.

I have had the opportunity to work with Daniel for the past two years, and I am impressed by his work. I enthusiastically offer this support because Daniel has prepared and taught lessons for several of my classes. In the Spring 2018 semester he taught two lessons - one to first year students and one to fourth year students. In this current semester, Spring 2019, Daniel prepared and taught a lesson for a class of third year students. Each lesson was very successful. Daniel was engaging and inter-active as an instructor. After introductions, he provided a context for the lessons, and facilitated a lively discussion of important issues. The students were actively involved in each lesson. Daniel was relaxed and informal, calling students by their name, responding to their comments and engaging them to explore more deeply the topics being addressed.

The teacher education candidates in two social studies methods courses appreciated the fact that Daniel modeled what is referred to in the profession as Best Practice. There were objectives, pre-assignments, and an inter-active session followed by an assessment of the class. The focus on exploring conflict through art was powerful. For one of the classes he explained his radical anthropology approach. Students were requested to reflect on the Bosnian and Spanish civil wars before the session began. His work, *Amnesia*, was a moving experience for them. In de-briefing they reported that the seamless weaving of modern-day high school students, with historic reminders, and the interviews with two women survivors was engaging, emotional, and rational. Discussion focused on ways in which to examine conflict through the approaches Daniel demonstrated. It was agreed that the work would resonate with students.

The attention to detail that Daniel displayed in preparing his work and in presenting the lessons was evident to everyone. He planned carefully and well. The students in all sections were highly enthusiastic about the content of the lessons, and the interactive nature of sessions.

I appreciated Daniel's efforts with each class. His ability to address the different nature of each group, and his seamless infusion of image, video and written text were all well done. The topics that Daniel addresses are important and vital issues. They are not well met by traditional approaches. His ability to use art, oral history, language, and technology in thoughtful and engaging ways holds great promise.

I have shared the analysis of Daniel's work with members of the Educational Studies Department at Seton Hall University. Today that department offered to invite Daniel to serve as a Scholar in Residence next Fall. We will welcome this opportunity to have him work directly with our students and faculty. Our hope is that he will be successful in securing the funding necessary for him to accept the invitation.

While in New Jersey Daniel will also be working with the Center for the Study of Genocide and Human Rights at Rutgers University. As co-conveners of the Perils and Possibilities of Diversity Initiative both schools anticipate deepening Daniels impact within the group. Daniel has worked often with teachers and administrators involved in this project. The opportunity to work for an extended period of time with students from both institutions and with area teachers and schools working with the Initiative will be beneficial for everyone involved. Daniels work will help to weave a stronger collaboration between Initiative members.

Sincerely,



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