Global Perspectives on Social Movement Collective Action as Learning

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Abstract: This session theorizes learning in social action for the learning sciences. Bringing together scholars of social movements across the globe, including migrant justice movements in Japan, public school teachers' strikes, educational justice in South Africa and Mexico, participatory budgeting in Chicago, and LGBTQ2S+ youth organizing in the Midwest USA. These contexts help us to understand what and how learning unfolds through collective action and offers the learning sciences new theoretical and analytic frameworks for theorizing learning that challenge normative ideologies, practices, and worldviews.

Learning politics and politicizing learning

Scholars in the Learning Sciences are increasingly attending to questions about the political and ethical dimensions of our designs and our scholarship – what is our work for, whom does it serve, and how might it advance democratic engagement for equity (Esmonde & Booker, 2016; The Politics of Learning Collective, 2017; Philip, Bang, & Jackson, 2018). Work from this perspective can help us develop critically engaged relationships with communities and tools that can further progressive social movements to respond to racism, settler colonialism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-semitism, queerphobia, transphobia, ableism and other systems of injustice.

It is vitally important that we understand collective action—from Black Lives Matter to climate justice organizing to Indigenous resurgence to immigration fights—as locations of praxis where learning integrates insight and action. Social movements shape the political landscape and at their core they are collective learning processes (Choudry, 2015). From grievance construction to strategy setting to consciousness-raising and direct action, social movements enable and require participants to analyze, articulate, and act on the social world. Learning is foundational to social action (Curnow, 2013; Foley, 1999), and within the learning sciences, attention to learning in social movements and community organizing has increasingly begun to shape how we theorize power, politics, equity, and justice (Booker, 2017; Curnow, 2013; Curnow, Davis & Asher, 2019; Esmonde, Curnow & Riviere, 2014; Jurow & Shea, 2015; Kirshner, 2008; Meléndez, 2016; Philip, Gupta, Elby & Turpen, 2018; Teeters & Jurow, 2018; Uttamchandani, 2019; Vea, 2019, under review; Zavala, 2016). The papers in this symposium will illuminate and interrogate the learning processes in and across social movements. The papers in this session examine multiple scales of learning and action from contexts around the globe.

Authors will present papers for 10 minutes each, followed by commentary by our discussants. Time will be reserved for collective agenda setting to challenge the learning sciences to engage in theorization about learning and politics in service to a more just future. Questions include: How might the learning sciences centre the voices of social movement actors as educators and learners? How might these diverse movement contexts expand how the learning sciences analyzes learning or make us reconsider what counts as learning?

Expanding emplaced networks of (hidden) bodies toward collective agency

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In recent years, social activism has started to be studied as a site for multi-layered learning wherein learners' identities, epistemological development, and social relations are intertwined (Curnow, Davis, & Asher, 2019;

Esmonde, Curnow & Riviere, 2014; Jurow, Teeters, Shea & Van Steenis, 2016). In amplifying this strand of research within the learning sciences, we shed light on the collective learning demonstrated by a transnational activist group (Filipino Migrants Center or FMC) whose mission was to combat violence against migrant women. Based on cultural-historical activity theory, learning in and through social activism can be conceptualized as an activity that disrupts and alters the contexts that are creating social and historical dilemmas (Engeström, 2014; Gutiérrez, 2016). As our findings demonstrate, within the context of an urban entertainment district, the migrant women gathered in a local community park during the day to make their hidden bodies visible to the dominant community. Our conceptualization of body is guided by queer theory that illuminates *othered* bodies or *unintelligible* bodies that can be tacitly excluded from the normative materialization (Butler, 1993), and hence be masked and hidden in public places. We use the term *hidden bodies* to account for the fact that the migrant women in this study were working during the night, were stigmatized by the imposed stereotype that they were entertainers from a Third World country, and also domestic violence was once taboo.

In this paper, we address the following research question: How was a locally significant place (i.e., the park where migrant women congregated daily) transformed over time through the collective learning enacted by a group of activists? The data analysed for this article includes 1) four video/audio recorded dialogues between Author 1 and Author 2 as a representative of the FMC (each of these four dialogues lasted 120 to 180 minutes: total 649 minutes) happened between 2012 and 2019, 2) ethnographic field notes taken on activities at the FMC, 3) ethnographic field notes and photos taken during the shared walk and dialogue between Author 1 and Author 2 within the entertainment district wherein the FMC office was located, 4) on-site ethnographic interviews with two other members of the FMC (total 175 minutes), 5) policy documents regarding immigration and domestic violence between 2000 and 2019, and 6) collectively-written reports issued by FMC members between 2000 and 2019.

In our findings, we show how the park was transformed by people, but also, the park served to gather people for a collective action during the 20 years of activism. In addressing these women's problems, the FMC came to be connected with more and more people: organizations including the municipal government office, a local non-profit women's shelter, medical professional volunteers, and pro bono lawyers. Our findings show that the park was a place wherein integration of Filipino migrants into the local community happened over time — the place that had "a power of gathering" (Casey, 1996, p.25), holding together disparate and conflictual people and things. Specifically, our ethnographic findings demonstrate how local Japanese residents gradually showed concern and care towards Filipino migrant communities. Similar to what Teeters and Jurow (2018) depicted as relationships *de confianza,* that undergirded the food justice movement, our findings also demonstrate that a support network between the FMC and a local Japanese neighbourhood association was growing in the park and that moved the activism forward. Centralizing the activism led by historically unseen bodies and by bringing forward localized gender and migration politics, focusing on the history of Filipina migration in Japan, we hope to expand the currently dominant geo-political terrain of scholarship in the learning sciences.

Movements within the poetic and the political: Stories of everyday collective action within *Tutoría* networked communities of learners

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Educators, young people, and families have long been organizing to reclaim schools to advance their rights to learn and teach in ways that matter to them (Anyon, 2014; Kirshner, 2015; Zavala, 2016). While school-based organizing has often focused on economic, environmental, and social concerns, this paper examines a pedagogical movement - the movement and everyday actions of teachers, students, and families to design and develop a pedagogy called *Tutoría* (Rincón-Gallardo & Elmore, 2012). *Tutoría* has been called a counter-hegemonic pedagogy as it intentionally challenges dominant power relations in schooling. Instead it emphasizes learning as dialogic, within a larger learning ecosystem and community of learners (Brown & Campione, 1998; Cámara et al., 2018). For example, students often work in pairs with an object of joint attention where sometimes adults serve as tutors of students, other times students tutor peers and even adults. We ask: How and why do *Tutoría* participants learn and sustain a counter-hegemonic practice in two Mexican states in light of institutional frictions? Through reflective stories from movement actors, this paper theorizes connections between *social poetic* experiences of learning (Shotter, 2010) and renewed political possibilities in public schooling.

Drawing from sociocultural understandings of learning, this paper examines the dynamic nature of collective action and meaning-making within microlevel interactions, movements within and across spaces, and macro-level systems of policies and beliefs as people shape, and are shaped by participating in situated and

historical constellations of cultural practices (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Lee, 2008). Hence for purposes of this paper, *social poetics* refers to micro utterances-experiences that resonate with us, and draw us to respond; in our responding, close the distance between self and other as we further place us in our surroundings (Shotter, 2010; Bakhtin, 1990). We examine the Tutoría movement participants' narrated experiences of *social poetics* and its political implications for organizing learning at school.

This study comes from histories of collaborative work that has taken various forms since 2004 (Cámara et al, 2018). The stories gathered in this paper come from a larger study conducted in two states in Mexico. We draw from a subset of 93 semi-structured interview narratives from Tutoría movement actors - students, teachers, and educational leaders in two Mexican states to understand their experiences of social poetics and the possibilities such moments generated for them through the stories they told of their work. These stories span 14 school and communities, 11 in Zacatecas and 3 in Guanajuato, where the movement was relatively thriving while each state having distinct histories in the movement. All interviews were transcribed verbatim, then 3 members open-coded a batch of ten transcripts and collectively developed coding schemes through grounded theory (Charmaz, 2001).

Overall, we find that movement actor's stories focused on everyday poetic experiences in teaching and learning– and that these were both the substance and vehicle for renewed political possibilities at school. First, we find that it was both movement actor's social poetic experiences while teaching and learning and experiences of institutional friction that inspired desires for pedagogical change at school. Second, experiences of social poetics across a wide range of movement actors allowed for multidirectional re-mediation of power. Because social poetics was experienced by actors at multiple levels of the school system, students, teachers, and families were able to organize for collective action from within (1) microinteractions with each other, (2) classrooms, and (3) home-community-school relations. This paper offers theoretical contributions to how pedagogical movements to shift dominant relations of power are relationally maintained and scaled across multiple levels and places. It makes the case for a growing attunement to designs that re-organize power and expand political possibilities in public schooling (Vossoughi & Booker, 2017), and the importance of multilevel actors to sustain grassroots movements that restore, humanize, and reconfigure school and home spaces towards self-determination in locally consequential ways (Bang & Vossoughi, 2016; Gutiérrez & Jurow, 2016).

Latino immigrants in civil society: Addressing the double-bind of participation for expansive learning in participatory budgeting

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This article focuses on a study of participatory budgeting (PB), a process through which community residents are given the responsibility of determining how municipal funds will be spent on improvement initiatives in their neighborhoods. The emergence of PB in Brazil in the 1980's aligns with three distinct social-political movements emerging over the last 50 years. Studying by-products, such as PB, of social movements offers learning scientists a unique opportunity to identify and theorize on the transformative learning that takes place in the context of such social movements (Jurow & Shea, 2015; Meléndez, 2016). The PB process that served as the centerpiece of this research took place in Chicago's 49th Ward, a highly diverse community situated in the northernmost part of the city.

This study framed the 49th Ward's PB process—or PB49—as a form of deliberative democracy (Young, 2010). Deliberative democratic practices are characterized by the contemplative space they provide in which all residents and ideas are positioned as equal, relying on rational arguments to make decisions. PB49 included the competing interests of several actors—namely the Ward 49 alderman and staff, community members, and the researcher—each with different objectives and perspectives on the purpose of the process, who should participate, and how participants should be engaged. Centering on two iterations of the PB49 process, this study investigated the tensions in democratic practices that played out *in situ* when a historically underrepresented group—Latin American immigrants who were predominantly Spanish-language speakers—became involved.

The research question guiding the study explored instances when engagement in PB49 practices created moments of tension that either challenged or supported the inclusion of Latino participants in the PB49 process. In this context, *practices* refer to the situated activities that participants must engage in using tools and language —or artifacts—in order to perform the actions and roles required by an activity (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Adopting Wortham and Reyes' (2015) discourse analysis method for learning over time and events, the researcher coded the recorded interactions of participants at public meetings. The study findings revealed emergent tensions resulting from the talk-in-interaction between Latino participants as they attempted to engage in the practices of PB49. The author argues that in their collective attempts to engage in practices, individuals'

talk-in-interaction involved the double-bind of diversifying who was participating. Resolving this double-bind including creating a new activity structure to support the agentic participation of Latinos through a Spanish-Language Committee.

The thick description presented in this paper illustrates the expansive learning processes (Greeno & Engeström, 2014) that took place at the collective level, evidenced by groups of participants exhibiting qualitative changes in their agency to engage in the practices of PB49. This collective change emerged when participants had the opportunity to engage in designing for praxis (Zavala, 2016) that related to solving the double-bind of participation. Meanwhile, system-level learning arose through changes in practices as mediated through new artifacts, activity structures, and greater incorporation of new participants that includes role re-mediation (Bang & Vossoughi, 2016). The research found evidence of these occurring as Latino participants not only sustained their involvement over an entire cycle of PB49, but also began to use language suggesting that they themselves had begun re-mediating their roles vis-a-vis others in PB49 and the community. This type of language included making claims (Abrego, 1996) in the public-sphere. The author argues that claim-making by Latino immigrants in the PB49 process was a new type of language that mediated their dispositions to become historical actors as their political imaginaries began to be activated; engaging in what could be characterized as praxis.

Shifting education reform movements towards anti-racist and intersectional visions of justice: A study of a teacher's pedagogies of organizing

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#RedForEd teacher activism and teacher social movements are driving U.S.-based education reform in unprecedented ways. Through organized membership, progressive teacher unions offer expanded possibilities for educational change while simultaneously addressing interrelated issues of injustice, such as fair wages and access to healthcare (Rottman, 2012). At the same time, hegemonic interests tend to take precedence when diffusely organized groups come together to take action at a larger scale (Turner, 2007). Through close analysis of micro-interactional processes that contributed to teacher-led social movement alongside 50,000 educators, students, families, community members, and laborers, we situate our study within the Los Angeles, California teacher strike in January 2019 to examine the following question: What are the pedagogies of organizing that support diverse groups' learning of social issues impacting their community and themselves, while sustaining the interests and participation of marginalized social movement actors?

Drawing from a larger research project conceived and conducted by Author 1, we purposefully focused on the experiences of Makario, a justice-oriented high school teacher and lead union organizer, as a case study to analyze how his pedagogies of organizing facilitated the conditions in which coalitions were seeded, nurtured, and reshaped. Situated within historical site conducive to union-community partnerships, his pedagogies of organizing were jointly informed by fifteen years of prior union organizing experiences with epistemological roots in ethnic studies, Filipino transnationalism, and third world feminism, as well as the rise of progressive leadership in the teacher union who advocated for racial justice in addition to #RedForEd broader demands for economic justice. Utilizing 32 hours of video recording, ethnographic field notes, artifacts, and informal interviews as data, we employed cross-cutting analyses from linguistic anthropology (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2004) and raciolinguistics (Alim, Rickford, & Ball, 2016) to examine how situated teacher activism constructs, maintains, and/or transforms race relations through everyday practices. Through a shared analytic lens of language, the body, and the material environment with deliberate attention to race and power, we examined pedagogies of organizing as a discursive, dynamic, and embodied process that influences—and is influenced by—*what* the goals of the social movement are, *how* coalitions are built, and *who* the social movement is for.

The pedagogies of organizing that Makario embodied and enacted catalyzed cross-generational and trans-ethnic collective action that simultaneously and jointly shifted the broader goals of #RedForEd social movement towards anti-racist and intersectional visions of justice. Specifically, he developed and sustained the learning and collective action of marginalized social movement actors by 1) tailoring larger political issues to human-centered needs, interests, and emotions; 2) organizing physical spaces for collective action with deliberate attention to intersectional participation, such as access to chairs for elderly, printed chant sheets in multiple languages, and anti-racist poster signs; and 3) enacting emergent strategies that orchestrated collective action built around shared identities as laborers, with acute attention to his situated positionality and embodied presence.

Contributing to the burgeoning body of research in the learning sciences that has expanded our notions of learning to include learning within the context of community organizing and social movements (Curnow, Davis, & Asher, 2018; Esmonde, Curnow, & Rivière, 2014; Jurow, Teeters, Shea, & Van Steenis, 2016; Vea, 2019), we contend that Makario's intentional everyday practices contributed significantly to the quality and trajectory of mobilizing teachers alongside other laborers. At the same time, his pedagogies of organizing is influenced and reshaped by—and simultaneously reshaping—education reform movements in a largely anti-union context. We argue that teachers are essential for policy reform (Milner, 2013) and that an expansive notion of justice-oriented teachers' work can offer new democratic possibilities for education reform.

Toward productive intergenerational learning ecologies: Lessons from a youth-led social movement in South Africa.

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In this paper, I examine youth agency in the context of a youth-led social movement in South Africa, Equal Education. I consider the viability and effectiveness of Equal Education's equity-focused and youth-centric organizational model as an alternative to adult-centric ways in which the relations between educators and young learners are structured in formal school environments. This work responds to the growing calls for recognizing power in the learning sciences (Esmonde & Booker, 2017) by offering insights on how to structure youth-adult relations in ways that are consistent with equity goals (e.g., Kirshner, 2008; 2015; Watts & Flanagan, 2007), and providing a model for facilitating youth agency in ways that duly account for structural dynamics (Booker, 2017).

I draw on data from an ethnographic study of Equal Education, a youth-led intergenerational social movement that advocates for equality and quality in South Africa's education system (Erickson, 1992). From 2014 to 2016, I was a participant observer among members of EE as part of an international study that conducted research on organizing in six different cities. I administered surveys, conducted interviews, moderated focus groups, and recorded observational field notes. To show the utility of these data in providing insights on youth-adult relationships, I analyze these data using an adaptation of Evans' (1995) concept of embedded autonomy.

Equal Education is a "member-based mass democratic movement of learners, parents, teachers and community members striving for quality and equality in South Africa's education through activism and analysis" (Brockman, 2016). The group's membership is 7,035 activists, mostly black high school and post-high school youth residing in townships (low-income urban areas) and rural areas. In an effort to ensure that the organization was democratic and that core members – youth – had sufficient structural power to shape the organization's agenda, Equal Education adopted a democratically elected arm comprised of members from the organization's structures and bestowed this arm with the ultimate powers to make binding decisions on the organization's agenda and operations. The organization morphed from a non-profit operating in one province to a national movement with an organizational model that matches its claim as a mass democratic movement. Importantly, though, because Equal Education's youth members necessarily have to work collectively with the rest of the organization's adult community (parents, teachers, and staff) in advancing equality, the group's youth-adult alliance provides a rich case to understand the kind of organizational principles that facilitate young people's agency for a productive intergenerational learning environment.

I show that the movement's organizational model allows for youth to be relatively autonomous from adults while ensuring that learning goals for both adults and youth are embedded within the social ties. Regarding youth agency, this organizational model facilitates youth action in more structured and substantial ways than merely giving youth "voice" as much as become the norm in theorizing youth agency (McLeod, 2011). Moreover, I show how the degree of autonomy associated with this model has the potential to address adultism in formal school environments.

Given how such an organizational model has led to a social transformation of the capabilities and roles of youth within a policy process that conventionally privileges adults by shifting conceptions of expertise and learning identities, I argue that such a model has the potential to address challenges confronted by educators committed to acknowledging the role of learners in transforming learning ecologies and broader society (Booker, 2017; Valenzuela, 1999; Watts & Flanagan, 2007). Given its rich history of complex, yet successful youth-adult partnerships, the South African case offers a useful model of navigating challenging power dynamics within a global context such models largely remain elusive (Strong, 2018).

Educational intimacy, prefiguration, and learning towards social change: The case of an LGBTQ+ youth group

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This study presents findings of a multi-year critical ethnography alongside Chroma (pseudonym), an LGBTQ+-themed community-based social group for youth ages 12–20 in the Midwestern USA. Chroma contains a Teaching Committee (TC), consisting of Chroma members who offer educative experiences for teachers and youth-serving professionals about working with LGBTQ+ youth. The TC formed in 2015 as Chroma Youth wanted to explicitly engage in advocacy to improve LGBTQ+ youth's lived experiences and to help teachers and other youth-serving professionals better understand issues relevant to LGBTQ+ youth. Since its founding, the TC has trained over 1,000 adults across local and regional platforms (Dennis et al., 2019). As an adult volunteer for the TC since 2016 and a researcher, I was an "unusually observant participant" (Erickson, 2012, p. 239) in the space. This study understands learning as organizing possible futures (Gutiérrez & Jurow, 2016). I ask what kinds of social relations developed in Chroma's TC and how did those relations become consequential for youth's future-shaping advocacy?

This ethnographic study drew on audio recordings of 26 TC committee meetings, six trainings, and four extended worktime sessions that took place between June 2018 and June 2019. In examining youth's conceptual practices and their consequentiality (Hall & Jurow, 2015), I also sought to avoid a "damage centered" conception of youth activists (Tuck, 2009) and instead offer a more complex understanding of how their collective learning unfolded.

Findings revealed that TC meetings contained significant youth reasoning about gender and sexuality as well as rhetoric. This reasoning, however, developed alongside and through humor, accountability, and facetious self-deprecation. This collection of sociodiscursive practices together foster what I term *educational intimacy.* Inspired by queer-theoretic perspectives on the learning sciences (McWilliams, 2016), educational intimacy describes the intimacy that exists between people who work together towards shared desired futures, that is, who are learning together. Educational intimacy is not always present in learning environments, particularly for LGBTQ+ learners who are tightly policed in school classrooms (Kosciw et al., 2018).

This study theorizes how educational intimacy is consequential for learning as it supports prefiguration (Yates, 2014; Curnow, Davis, & Asher, 2019), in which Chroma youth make Chroma TC meetings into the kinds of sometimes-joyous/sometimes-difficult spaces that are typically denied to LGBTQ+ youth in school classrooms (Kosciw et al., 2018) — that is, the kind of space Chroma youth seek to bring about through their trainings and activism. For learning scientists, then, educational intimacy offers a new perspective on peer collaboration and adult facilitation practices that allow for deeper engagement and meaning-making. From the perspective of learning as future-organizing, educational intimacy offers an answer to Vossoughi and Booker's (2017) questions, "What is the role of play in prefiguration? Of love?" (p. 228). This study helps characterize learning in community-based groups towards social transformation that learning scientists should take seriously.

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