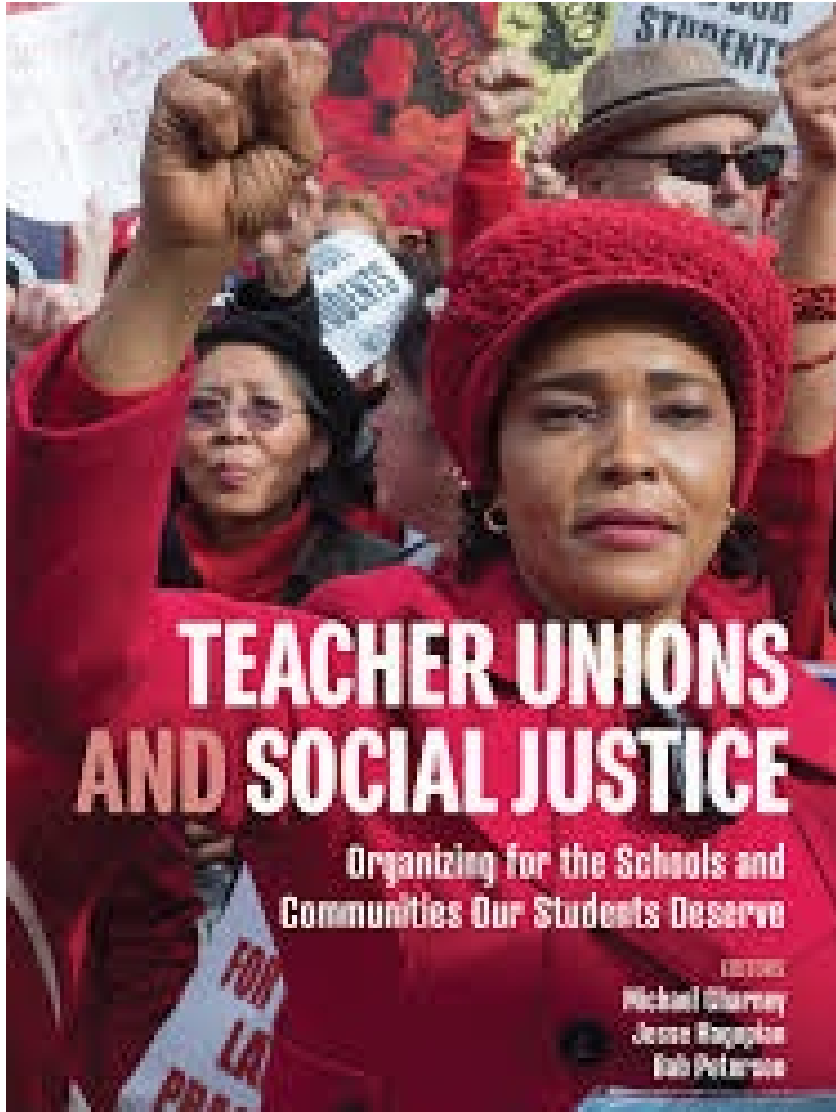




Teacher Unions and Social Justice

Session 3 of 4: Testing leaders, structures, and tactics that result in power building

Teacher Unions and Social Justice



- Rename Yourself in Zoom
 - Please include:
 - First and Last Name
 - Pronouns
 - State
- Example: Ceaser Chavez(he/him)-Arizona
- What are you looking forward to in 2026?



Entry Activity

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A SOCIAL JUSTICE UNIONISM CAMPAIGN? (ANSWERS IN THE CHAT)

Teacher Unions and Social Justice

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Honoring This Space

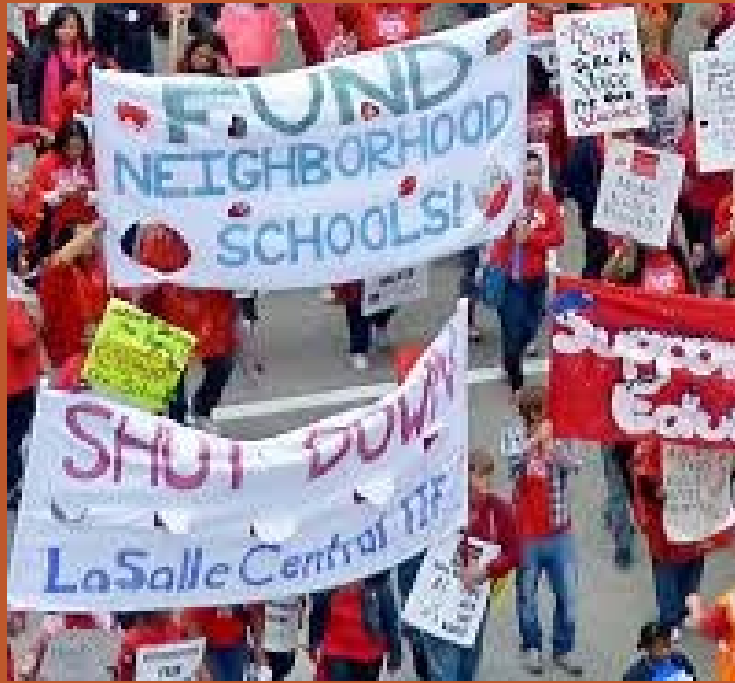
We begin by acknowledging that through a history of colonization and brutality, we are currently on the traditional lands stewarded by generations of indigenous people.

We honor these indigenous people, all elders, past, present, and emerging. We are called to learn and share these learnings about this tribal history, culture, and contributions that have been suppressed in the telling of the story of what we now call the United States of America.



Today's Agenda

- What is required in social justice campaigns?
- Exploring Cases of Transformation and Agency
- Assessing Readiness



What is Required in Social Justice Campaigns?

Revitalized Union Movement – pg. 239-240 Book

“Social Justice Unionism is an organizing model that calls for the radical boost in internal union democracy and increased member participation. This contrasts to a business model that is so dependent on staff providing services that it disempowers members and concentrates power in the hands of a small group of elected leaders and/or paid staff. An organizing model, while still providing service to members, focuses on building union power at the school level in alliance with parents, community groups, and other social movements.

Three components of social justice unionism are like the legs of a stool. Unions need all three to be balanced and strong:

- *We organize around bread and butter issues.*
- *We organize around teaching and learning issues to reclaim our profession and our classrooms.*
- *We organize for social justice in our community and our curriculum. “*



Conversation

15 mins - Pg 2 Resource Guide

Consider the following “requirements” for the Social Justice Unionism Organizing Model

- Internal Union Democracy
- Increased Member Participation
- Building Power at the School Site Level in Alliance with Parents, Community Groups, and Social Movements

What do each of those look like and what are the implications for you as you do your work?

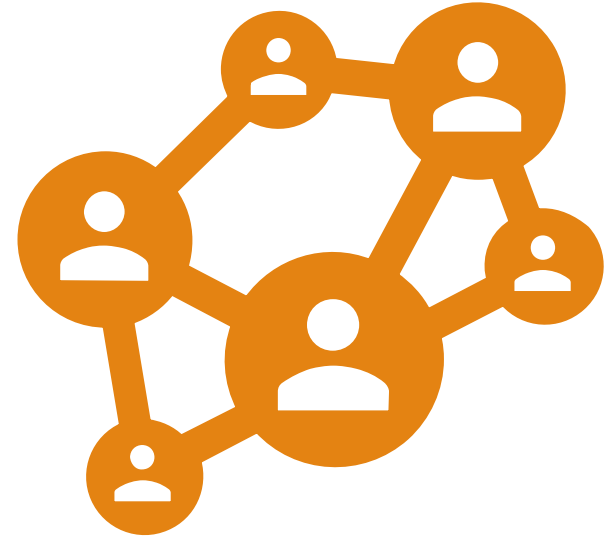
To what extent do these exist in the locals you work with?



Lessons from the UTLA Strike

pg. 255

“As word of our new mission spread, we attracted top-notch staff with organizing and campaign experience to work at UTLA. At the same time, we undertook the very difficult process of letting go of staff members who could not buy in to our new union vision. While this process was sometimes painful, we learned from allies around the country willing to share their experiences, that it would be a mistake not to clean house from the start. The talent and skills of our new staff have been a tremendous asset in building our union’s capacity and power.”





Exploring Cases of Transformation and Agency

Transformation of Teachers Unions

Transactional - a trade such as dues for services

Transformational - an interaction that changes those coming together such as how a community views the union after partnering on a tactic

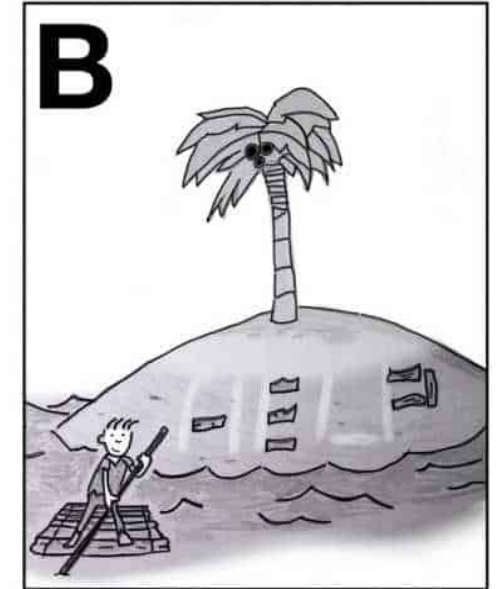
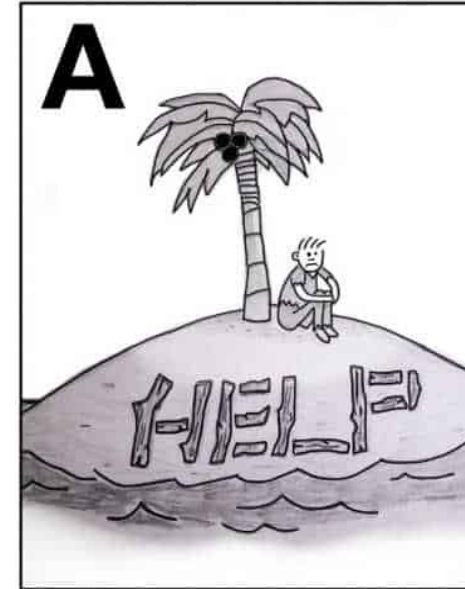


Agency within Teachers Unions

pg. 7 Resource Guide

Agency is the ability for an individual to decide they can act.

Structures and Structure tests are really a technical way of thinking about whether individuals have developed their sense of agency to the point where they feel they can do what is needed to win the fights they engage in.

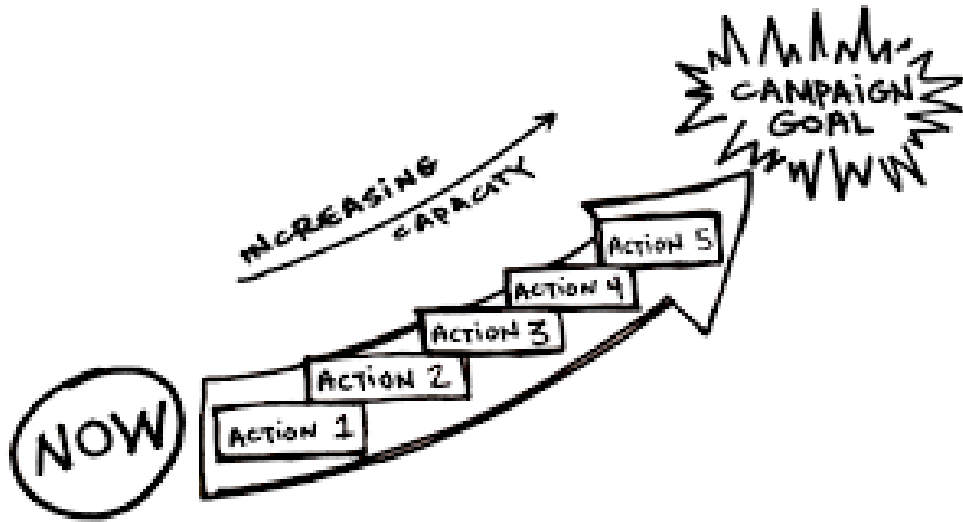


Structure Test
Chat -
Pg 423
Book (pg 8
Resource Guide)

- ☐ What do you notice about the table in general?
- ☐ What do you notice about the column on the left?
- ☐ What is the role of the staff person?

Case Studies: A Deeper Dive

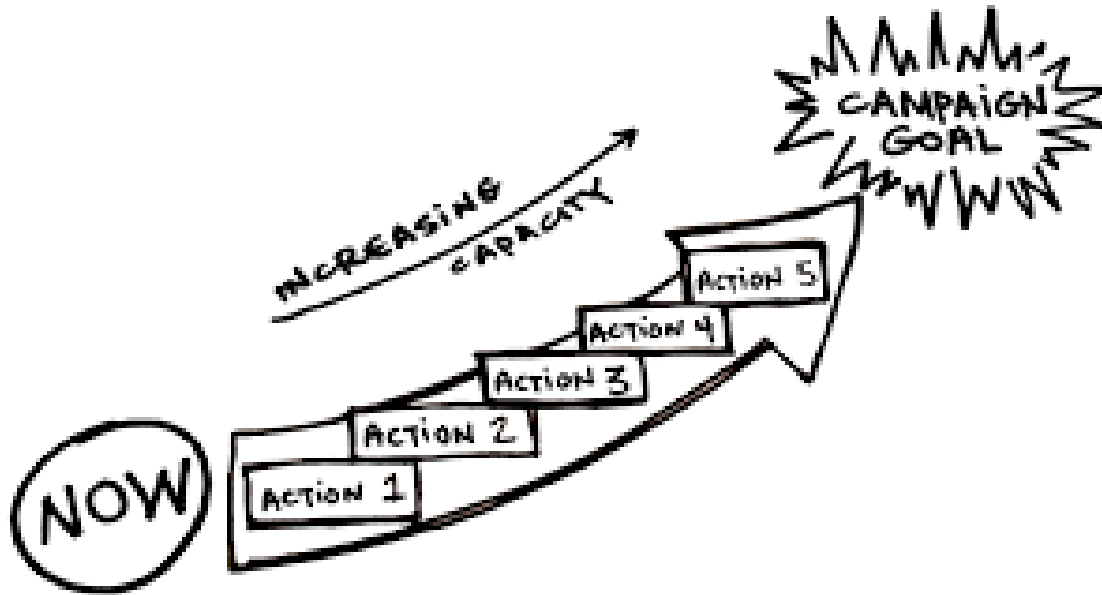
- NCAE: p. 227 (It's Not Magic, It's Organizing!)
- Arizona: p. 189 (You Need Rank and File to Win)



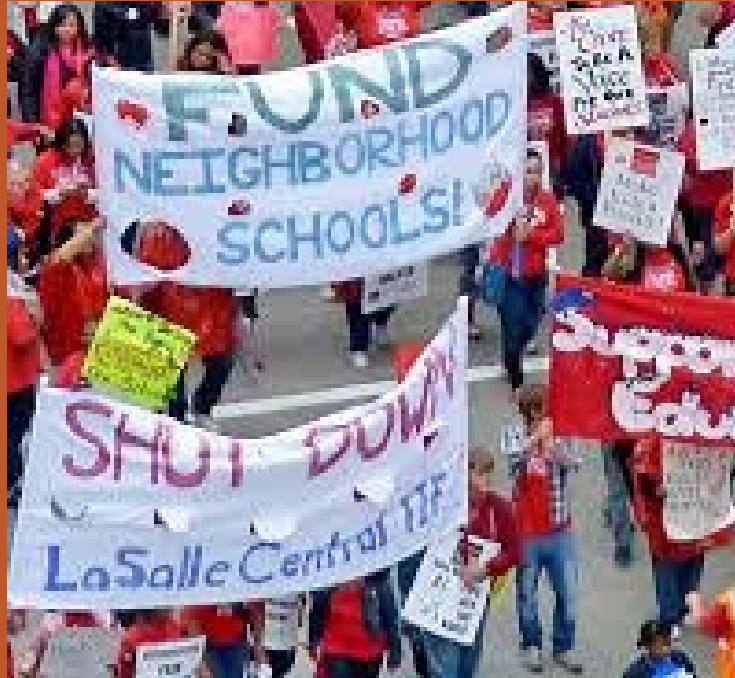
Social Justice Wins

Pg 10 Resource Guide

Zoom Room Discussion



- ❑ What are the key issues that this story “wins” ?
- ❑ What are the ways that they thought of leaders and structures? How did this transform their union?
- ❑ What are the small steps along the way (tactics or structure tests) that were put in place?
- ❑ What do you think are the specific roles that staff played in this story?



Are you ready?
Let's Assess

Self-Assessment Tool - Pg 19 Resource Guide

Social Justice Unionism Organizing Strategy Readiness Assessment

To determine readiness for using a Social Justice Unionism Organizing Strategy, locals should assess and reflect on four categories: general readiness and landscape, community/parent relationships, internal organizing capacity, and bargaining status. For each of the four categories below rate each readiness descriptors with a 1-4 in the small boxes, then use the larger box to do a brief SWOT reflection.

1 – Not yet

2 – Basic Understanding and Planning

3– Emerging Implementation

4 – In Place and Proven



Self-Assessment Debrief

How would you use this tool?

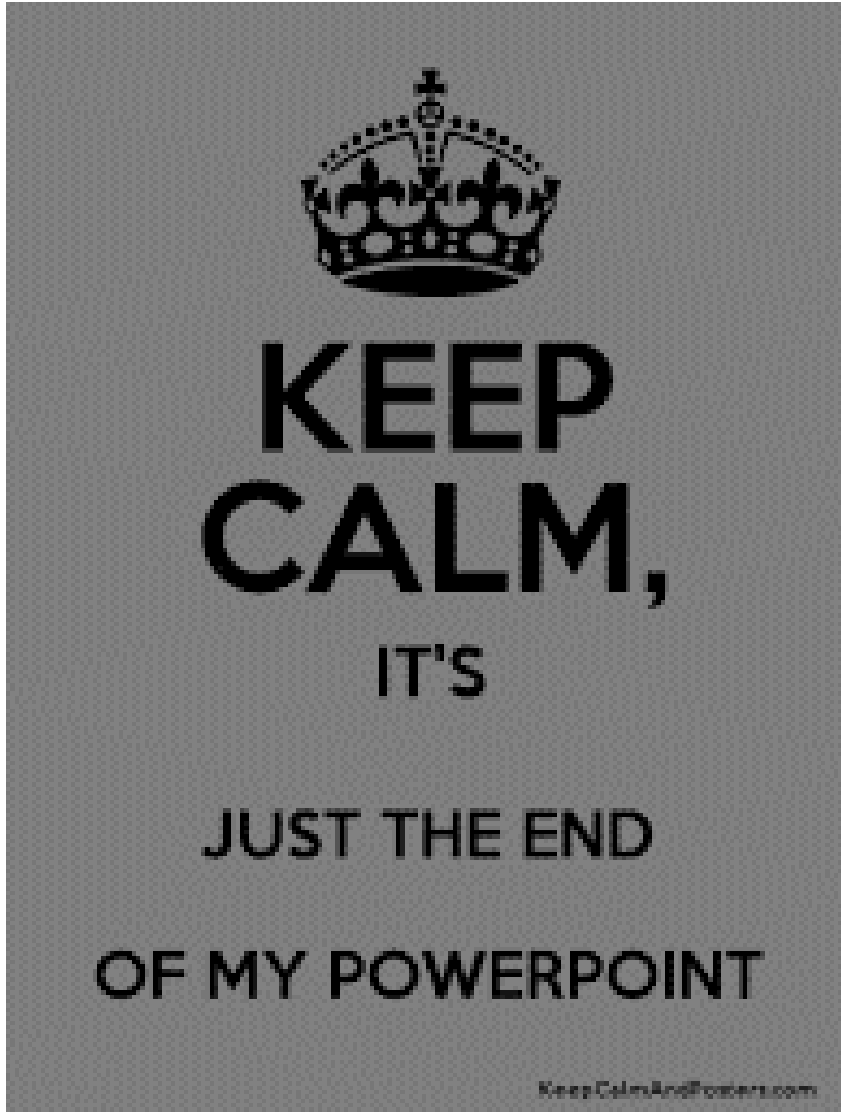
When using this tool with leaders, who might take a frank discussion about this tool personally, what kind of privilege might you need to consider? (Yours or theirs)

What did you learn about this tool?

What is your role in this self-assessment?



Taking you Home



Ending it Right

Next (and Final) Meeting

Thursday, January 29, 2026

2:30PM EST