

UCLA

UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Bringing Justice to the Public School System: Teachers Involved in Community Organizing and Social Justice Unionism to Transform Schools

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2g65h48t>

Author

Asselin, Chloe Valentine

Publication Date

2012

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Bringing Justice to the Public School System: Teachers Involved in Community
Organizing and Social Justice Unionism to Transform Schools

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Education

by

Chloe Valentine Asselin

2012

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Bringing Justice to the Public School System: Teachers Involved in Community Organizing and Social Justice Unionism to Transform Schools

by

Chloe Valentine Asselin

Master of Arts in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

Professor Sandra G. Harding, Chair

Over the past twenty years community organizing has emerged as an important new tool for education reform in the United States. However, teachers usually play a supporting role rather than becoming community organizers themselves working with parents, students, and the community to transform their schools. Furthermore, there has been growing attention to the need for teachers' unions to move beyond traditional approaches, to form coalitions with community groups and to practice social justice unionism. This ethnography analyzes the work of CO and TUO, two organizations in Los Angeles created by a group of teachers dedicated to both community organizing and social justice unionism. Analyzing interviews, observations, and documents of teachers in CO and TUO, I argue that the merging of community organizing and social justice unionism is a successful model to transform public schools and to counter neoliberal attacks on public education.

The thesis of Chloe Valentine Asselin is approved.

Carlos Alberto Torres

John S. Rogers

Kathryn M. Anderson-Levitt

Sandra G. Harding, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2012

TABLE OF CONTENTS AND LISTS

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS.....	ii
COMMITTEE PAGE.....	iii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
PROCESSES FOR TRANSFORMING PUBLIC SCHOOLS.....	2
Theoretical Framework.....	4
Community Organizing and Social Justice Unionism.....	6
METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH.....	8
Jonah and Dexter.....	11
Teachers as Transformative Intellectuals.....	13
MERGING COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AND SOCIAL JUSTICE UNIONISM.....	16
OBSTACLES.....	19
ORGANIZING IN RESPONSE TO NEOLIBERAL ATTACKS.....	25
VISIONS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE.....	28
TEACHERS AS ORGANIZERS.....	31
OBSTACLES WITHIN.....	35
CONCLUSION.....	37
IMPLICATIONS.....	39
REFERENCES.....	44
 <i>Diagram 1</i>	 13
<i>Diagram 2</i>	17

INTRODUCTION

Corporate education reform, including increasing test-based evaluations of teachers, intensifying standardized testing for students, and the weakening of teachers' unions, is driving education policy at the state and federal levels. These reforms are being led by neoliberal ideology, by which I mean the ideology of capitalism that is market-driven and encourages privatization, free trade, and deregulation. With the influence of neoliberal politics, education has become obsessed with accountability, privatization, management, and individual success that all lead to greater inequalities in our school system (Karp, 2011). Furthermore, these reforms ignore the role of teachers in preparing active and critical citizens and discount the intelligence and experience of teachers as professionals and intellectuals. Teachers must play a role in revitalizing public schools in order to better public education and counter neoliberal attacks such as the privatization of schools, the increase in budget cuts, the weakening of teachers' unions, and the test-and-punish approach to school reform. In order to counter these assaults on public institutions, valorize teachers, and improve schools, two possible solutions are community organizing and social justice unionism. Community organizing is a process that builds power within communities in order to enact change, and social justice unionism is the act of a union fighting to protect the rights of the entire working class rather than only the rights of its members.

This ethnography analyzes the work of CO and TUO¹, two organizations in Los Angeles created by the same group of teachers dedicated to both community organizing and social justice unionism. CO is a community-organizing group committed to social justice and antiracist education, and TUO is a caucus within United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) that is pushing the teachers' union towards social justice unionism. Throughout this paper, I build

¹ Pseudonyms have been used for all informants, organizations, and school sites in this study.

on the works of Paulo Freire ([1970] 1990, [1974] 2007), expanding on and incorporating many of his ideas and definitions. For example, when I use the term social justice I mean a reflective and critical process that uses dialogue and the analysis of power dynamics to lead to active involvement in radically transforming oppressive, discriminatory, violent, and exploitative systems.

The research seeks to show how teachers in CO and TUO are merging community organizing and social justice unionism to transform schools. First, I will introduce the concepts of community organizing and unionism, elaborate on the inner workings of CO and TUO, and show how teachers in both groups merge community organizing and social justice unionism. Second, I will analyze the obstacles CO and TUO face in trying to improve schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Third, I will argue that the two organizations have a social justice vision for educational reform created in response to neoliberal attacks on public institutions. Fourth, I will show how CO and TUO are challenging traditional notions of organizing and unionism. Finally, I will outline the implications of using community organizing and social justice unionism to improve schools. Overall, I argue that in merging community organizing and social justice unionism, CO and TUO are creating a new model to transform schools and the teachers' union.

PROCESSES FOR TRANSFORMING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

American community organizing as we know it today was shaped and molded by Saul Alinsky (1946, 1971) when, in 1940, he formed the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) to organize Chicago's working-class neighborhoods. Later, in the early 1990s, the IAF began to experiment with school reform efforts using community organizing which led to the creation of the Alliance Schools in Texas (Warren, 2001). These were "a coalition of over one hundred schools that were brought together to create new ways of assisting poor and working-class families to engage with schools to raise pupil achievement" (Shirley, 2009).

The Alliance Schools were the first to apply community organizing for educational improvement.

Fifteen years ago, only two books existed about community organizing for school reform (Shirley, 1997 & Orr, 1998), and one is about Saul Alinsky and the Alliance Schools (Shirley, 1997). Today, an estimated 500 community organizing groups are working towards educational change (Warren, 2011), five scholarly conferences on community organizing and school reform have been held at Harvard University, and a Special Interest Group (SIG) on the topic has been established in the American Educational Research Association (AERA) (Shirley, 2009). The largest organizing groups, including the IAF, the People's Institute for Community Organizing (PICO), and the Association of Communities Organized for Reform Now (ACORN), have hundreds of affiliates all over the United States working to improve schools.

A six-year multi-case study of seven different organizing groups in seven different cities in the US using both qualitative and quantitative research methods completed in 2008 found direct correlations between educational improvement and community organizing (Mediratta et al., 2008). Other research on community organizing in the realm of education includes case studies on how community organizers work to improve schools (Evans, 2009; Fabricant, 2010; McLaughlin, 2009; Oakes & Rogers, 2006; Orr 1999; Osterman, 2002; Putnam et al., 2003; Shirley, 1997, 2002; Warren, 2001; Warren et al., 2011). However, in all cases thus far, community organizers focus on organizing parents, students, and the community, while teachers only play supporting roles. There is a gap in the research regarding teachers acting as community organizers working with parents, students, and the community to transform their own school sites and school districts. There is a lack of case studies about teachers forming community organizations and acting as catalysts for school reform.

Another concept that has the potential to transform schools is social justice unionism, which links unions, teachers, parents, and community members as equal players in improving living conditions in urban neighborhoods through curricula that combat racism and ethnic prejudice as well as through the creation of an active and reflective teaching force and citizenry working to create democracy and social justice in schools and society (Johnson, 2007). In recent years, there has been growing attention to the need for teachers' unions to move beyond traditional approaches to recognize that teachers are professionals responsible for improving schools. Advocates of social justice unionism argue that today's teachers' unions will not survive unless they embrace social justice school reform (Peterson, 1999). While a framework for social justice unionism has been formulated, it "has not yet come together as a coherent program with the requisite solid underpinnings of theory and practice" and is being underutilized by trade unions (Fletcher & Gapasin, 2008, p166). Furthermore, few case studies show teachers' unions using social justice unionism for educational reform.

Scholars in the field of labor studies have written about organized labor working with community organizations to assist working people in response to neoliberal economics and globalization (Milkman & Voss, 2004; Voss & Sherman, 2000). Unions have had to turn to more radical activism, including massive street demonstrations and worker mobilizations, and have had to build coalitions outside of labor, including collaboration with advocacy organizations. Coalition building, it has been argued, is necessary for trade unions to undergo revitalization (Rogers & Terriquez, 2009). However, there are few studies about coalitions between teachers' unions and community organizing groups or about teachers' unions doing community organizing for school reform.

Theoretical Framework

I used a grounded theory approach to analyze field notes of my observations, interview responses, and collected documents while looking for patterns and salient themes.

Grounded theory is a way of arriving at theory from data by interpreting and explaining that data in an inductive manner rather than generating theory deductively from prior assumptions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). From my data, I found a critique of neoliberal ideology, a vision of social justice, a discourse around teachers as organizers, a need for a political and critical education, and a push for social justice unionism.

In thinking about the themes I discovered, I was drawn to Paulo Freire's concepts of critical consciousness, political education, and transformation. According to Freire, theory must be turned into practical knowledge in order to create an educated public that can act to transform their lives. As Freire says, "Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of [people] upon their world in order to transform it" ([1970], 1990, p66). Teachers in CO and TUO work with parents, teachers, students, and communities as equal actors raising awareness and then taking action against oppression, discrimination, and exploitation. Furthermore, teachers have a major role to play in Freire's notion of conscientização, or critical consciousness, which is "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" ([1970], 1990, p19). Teachers acting as community organizers can use their classrooms to politicize students and guide students to name inequalities in order to transform them. For Freire, "it is in speaking their word that [people], by naming the world, transform it" ([1970], 1990, p77).

Building on Freire's work, I see the teachers in CO and TUO as transformative teachers who are aware of societal inequities and consider schools as sites of political struggle. These teachers challenge oppression inside and outside of the classroom. Transformative teachers create spaces where parents, students, community members, and teachers can join together to combat the unequal and unjust educational system in the United States. Furthermore, transformative teachers understand that teachers' unions and collective teacher action can bring about social change (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985). Teachers in CO

and TUO are committed to organizing at school sites as well as throughout the district and to pushing the teachers' union to take on social justice issues more aggressively.

Not only are educators transformative as teachers but also as intellectuals who provide students with alternative discourses and critical social practices. Transformative intellectuals critique societal norms, reflect on their actions and words, make pedagogy political, problematize knowledge, build on daily experiences of students, and create the possibility for new forms of culture and new modes of communication. They are also counterhegemonic and collectively organize to challenge inequality and injustice while enabling students to be critical agents who have the tools to change and transform their lives (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985).

Teachers must provide a political education in schools that teaches students to critically analyze social norms, to question narrow ways of thinking and teaching, and to avoid compromising one's integrity for capitalist gains (Giroux as cited in Torres, 1998). According to Freire, a teacher must have technical and political competence, a thirst for knowledge, and an awareness of historicity and social constructions while teaching theory and practice (Freire, 1991). Education is political, and teachers must be aware of their personal politics and the politics of the community in order to teach students to be critically conscious citizens.

This research seeks to show how teachers in CO and TUO are merging community organizing and social justice unionism to transform schools, thus filling a gap in both organizing and labor literature and creating critically conscious, democratic citizens.

Community Organizing and Social Justice Unionism

There is increasing alarm in the United States about the declining levels of civic engagement that threaten American participatory democracy (Orr, 2007). Community

organizing and social justice unionism are strategies that can reinvigorate civic engagement in urban communities.

Community organizing refers to the process that engages people, organizations, and communities toward the goals of increased individual and community control, political efficacy, improved quality of life and social justice... The central feature of community organizing is that it is a process and strategy designed to build political power (Orr, 2007).

Community organizing groups do long-term work to develop the capacity and leadership of people to create change in their communities. They bring people together around a common cause, build relationships, identify issues of urgent concern, research issues and develop plans of action, build alliances, negotiate and hold accountability sessions with public officials, and collaborate with institutions to create and implement policy (Warren et al., 2011). Community organizing for school reform involves youth, parents, and community residents and/or organizations; builds power by organizing large numbers of people; emphasizes accountability, equity, and quality; develops leaders as a core activity; and uses direct action tactics to put pressure on decision-makers (Mediratta et al, 2006).

Another area on the decline in the US is organized labor, with union membership greatly decreasing across labor sectors due to employer resistance, neoliberal ideology, and a hostile political environment. However, a new labor movement is on the rise based around social movement unionism that is part of a larger movement for social justice rather than simply a labor union (Milkman & Voss, 2004). Part of this revitalization of labor unions has been a shift in teachers' unions from traditional industrial approaches to a more professional unionism that recognizes teachers as professionals responsible for improving their schools. Within the professional unionism trend, some advocate for an alternative framework for trade unionism called social justice unionism (Peterson, 1999).

Social justice unionism views itself as part of a broader movement for social progress rather than merely focused on narrow self interest. It calls for participatory union membership, education reform to serve all children, collaboration with community organizations, and a concern for broader issues of equality (Peterson, 1999).

A condition that encourages coalitions and collaboration is having a common purpose framed as a social vision for all working-class people (Tattersall & Reynolds, 2007). Coalitions are necessary as they extend the power of the union beyond their members and can foster union-friendly sentiment in society (Rogers & Terriquez, 2009).

Social justice is a widely used term with multiple definitions, and social justice education has a wide a range of definitions in the literature as well as manifestations within the classroom. In using the term “social justice unionism,” I build on the concepts of social justice and social justice education in order to show how teachers, parents, students, and communities can be true vanguards for educational change. “Social justice education encourages students to take an active role in their own education and supports teachers in creating empowering, democratic, and critical educational environments” (Hackman, 2005, p103). Social justice is both a goal and a process in that it encourages full and equal participation of all groups in society through a democratic, participatory, and collaborative process (Bell, 1997). “Social justice does not merely examine difference or diversity but pays careful attention to the systems of power and privilege that give rise to social inequality, and encourages students to critically examine oppression on institutional, cultural, and individuals levels in search of opportunities for social action in the service of social change” (Hackman, 2005, p104). Community organizing and social justice unionism reflect and build on these definitions of social justice and social justice education.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

As a former middle-school science teacher, I am interested in studying teachers who are successfully improving their schools. Since I had felt powerless in the classroom as a teacher, I was hoping to find tools that teachers might use to better their schools. After hearing a book talk by Mark Warren and Karen Mapp on *A Match on Dry Grass: Community Organizing as a Catalyst for School Reform* (2011), I was inspired by teachers doing

community organizing for school reform. My research began based on the following research questions: 1. Who are some of the teachers participating in community organizing for school reform in Los Angeles? 2. How do teachers participate in community organizing for school reform in a particular community-organizing group in Los Angeles? What organizing strategies do they use? 3. What issues are important to teachers in their discussions about school reform? Through a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), I was introduced to two teachers who founded both CO and TUO. I began to seek answers to my research questions through interviews with these teachers and through observing these teachers in meetings held by both CO and TUO.

After the first interviews with my informants, I realized my research questions needed to change for a couple of reasons. First, as a complete outsider to community organizing, I had basic questions that I needed to answer before being able to understand the complexities of CO and TUO. Second, a couple of participants mentioned the term “social justice unionism,” and I heard multiple informants mention the need to have “a vision” for schools and for UTLA. Therefore I adapted my research questions in the following manner:

1. How do teachers who are part of CO and TUO participate in community organizing for school reform in Los Angeles?
2. What vision do teachers have for their schools, their classroom, and the union?
3. Are teachers doing “community organizing” as it is defined in different books/articles, or is it another type of organizing, like teacher unionism or social justice organizing?

I used ethnographic research methods for this study, including interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. I used a purposive sampling technique (Merriam, 2009), in which I selected teachers based on the fact that they are leaders in CO. Only later did I realize that these teachers were also leaders in TUO. The research for this study includes three interviews with Dexter and Jonah respectively, who are two of the founders of both CO and TUO, participant observation of a two-day conference with the goal of creating a unified vision of school reform for LAUSD and UTLA led by CO and TUO, observation of a TUO

meeting in which future campaigns were discussed, an interview with a teacher, Kate, formerly part of TUO but now part of a community-organizing group in Los Angeles not connected to CO or TUO, and documents collected from both the conference and the meeting. Most of the interviews were done over the phone, except for one interview at Jonah's school site. I was able to see Dexter and Jonah in action at the two-day conference held at a public school in downtown Los Angeles and see Dexter lead the TUO meeting which was held at the UTLA headquarters. During the conference and the meeting, I participated in small group discussions with a few LAUSD teachers.

However, since I was a graduate student with a part-time job, there were limitations to my study. First, my personal schedule put a constraint on the number of interviews I could conduct and the number of meetings and campaigns held by CO and TUO that I could attend. Second, the short ten-week timeframe for fieldwork resulted in a limited number of interviews. During that time, I was also unable to watch more radical organizing tactics, such as a march. While teachers did organize a demonstration in front of the LAUSD board meeting to protest budget cuts during the time of my fieldwork, I was unable to attend. Moreover, I was unable to build as deep a researcher-informant relationship as I would have liked due to the short amount of time spent in the field. Third, I was only able to interview two teachers on multiple occasions, Dexter and Jonah, and both of them are white, male, high school history educators teaching in demographically similar schools. In our first interview about his work as a teacher and community organizer, Jonah told me, "There is also the complexity of being a white organizer in a community of color... I have to be very intentional and thoughtful of my organizing practices so that it isn't me coming up with ideas but a collaboration between all members present" (Jan 27)². Jonah and Dexter are both aware

² Direct quotations as transcribed from recordings of the interview with Jonah on January 27, the two-day conference on Feb 10 and Feb 11, and the interview with Kate. The interviews with Jonah on March 8 and May

of their positionalities as white, middle-class male teachers and consciously ensure that everyone around them is just as involved in organizing as they are. While Jonah and Dexter's race, class, and gender may affect the type of organizing and unionism work they do, no obstacles or reference to these, other than Jonah's comment above, were reported or encountered during my fieldwork. Due to the short ten-week timeframe for fieldwork, this paper is a limited view of the inspiring work CO and TUO are doing to transform public education in Los Angeles.

My study is also affected by the fact that I am a white, female, former middle school teacher completely new to community organizing. As a white middle-class teacher having worked in a school with similar demographics as Dexter and Jonah, I am able to relate to and understand their experiences and frustrations as well as their need to organize with parents, students, other teachers, and the community to improve their schools. However, I am new to Los Angeles, community organizing, and social justice unionism, so I may have missed some of the nuances involved with organizing in this particular city and with this particular teachers' union. Nevertheless, most researchers are simultaneously insiders and outsiders throughout their research, which can be beneficial at times and has costs at others (Wolf, 1996). In my case, the benefits of being an outsider included being able to ask more naïve questions about community organizing and constantly asking for clarification.

Jonah and Dexter

Jonah and Dexter are two LAUSD teachers whom I was able to interview on multiple occasions during my fieldwork. Jonah received his teaching credential from the University of California, Los Angeles fourteen years ago and immediately started teaching history at Davis High School where he still teaches today. Unlike Dexter, Jonah does not come from an organizing background. However, he learned to organize when he saw the need for

9, all interviews with Dexter, and the TUO meeting were not recorded and thus I present in these cases ideas recorded in my field notes but not direct quotes.

community organizing in Los Angeles public schools. With the help of a few other teachers including Dexter, this need led to the creation of CO. In his role with CO, Jonah is on the steering committee, he is the main support system to the staff member of CO, and he plays an active role in CO's student group at Davis HS as well as facilitating cross-school student meetings. As a member of TUO, he is an unelected volunteer on the steering committee, a TUO organizer at Davis and in the west area of UTLA, and a support to TUO's leaders. Jonah is also one of two UTLA chapter chairs at Davis HS.

Dexter got involved in antiracist work in high school and continued with it in college. He wanted to continue this work but do so in a way that was rooted in communities and larger structures, such as unions, so he joined Teach for America when he graduated from college and fell in love with teaching. As a teacher, he got involved with a labor/community strategy center that trained him in community organizing but with a conscious connection to labor as well. He took two years off from teaching to study urban and regional political economy. He came back to teaching in 1997 and knew he wanted to help build a labor/community approach within education. This realization led to his involvement in founding CO and in joining an alternative perspectives newsletter within UTLA that was later turned into TUO. He teaches history at Cali HS. Dexter is CO's cofounder/advisor to the steering committee and CO's student and parent organizer/advisor at Cali HS. He is on TUO's steering committee and also on the UTLA board of directors. He works to connect different school sites interested in organizing and working with parents and connects schools and parents to community organizations working on similar issues.

Jonah and Dexter are part of the group of teachers that founded CO and TUO because they believe in antiracist education, community organizing, and a teachers' union that fights for social justice. In order to better understand Jonah and Dexter's philosophies and reasons

for involvement in CO and TUO, I have included a table that shows their definitions of community organizing and social justice unionism.

Diagram 1

	Dexter (interview, May 8)	Jonah (interview, May 9)
Community Organizing	Working with communities in a democratic way to help the community build and exert power	Building relationships with people in the community to help to develop ideas and a base of people who want to push for certain changes in the community
Social Justice Unionism	A unionism that sees fighting for the entire working class, including but not limited to unionized workers (including middle class workers like teachers), as its priority. For a teachers' union, this means fighting for teachers, students, parents, and communities	A union or set of unions that work not merely for the working conditions of the union members but also for a broader version of social justice which takes into mind the interests of the community, meaning beyond just the members

Jonah and Dexter's philosophy is consistent with a belief in critical theory, progressive schooling, participatory democracy, liberatory education, and social justice. In response to my question about the beginnings of CO and TUO, Dexter responded, "Both TUO and CO came out of a political framework to make fundamental changes in the system. They come out of the political left that deviates from the system and builds itself outside of the system" (March 22).

Teachers as Transformative Intellectuals

Dexter and Jonah are teachers, community organizers, and transformative intellectuals. At a time when the teaching profession is being devalued through standardized curricula and testing that attack teacher autonomy, the weakening of tenure, and authoritarian management, teachers need to be respected as caretakers and engaged intellectuals. This means teachers make learning meaningful, imaginative, and critical in order to transform the lives of young people by providing students with the capacities necessary for self-determination and the motivation for civic engagement (Giroux, 2012). Teachers must have

autonomy, respect, collective power, and a salary that values the crucial work educators do to maintain the conditions for an aspiring democracy. As intellectuals, teachers make knowledge accessible to the public by teaching the public to think critically about social, cultural, economic, and political factors influencing their daily lives (Giroux, 2012).

As public intellectuals and community organizers, teachers create sites of transformative learning and public engagement given community organizing promotes democratic participation and civic engagement. Transformative learning teaches students to transform their frames of reference through critical thinking, self-reflection, problem solving, and dialogue in order to challenge cultural, social, educational, economic, political, or psychological codes and assumptions (Mezirow, 1997). “Researchers and those closer to the action agree that the consumerism, materialism, and hyperindividualism of American public culture are draining the life out of contemporary civil society” (Orr, 2007, p7). Building on transformative learning, community based organizing skills such as identifying grievances, developing potential solutions, and generating political power, need to be taught in school as they encourage democratic participation, which includes problem identification, research actions, coalition building, accountability sessions, and grassroots community organizing (Shirley, 2008). Through public engagement, students become critical thinkers and active citizens able to contribute to a participatory democracy in order to positively shape their own lives.

As teachers, transformative intellectuals, and community organizers, Dexter and Jonah use the organizing skills mentioned above to increase the civic engagement of their students and transform their lives. In his active role in CO’s student group at Davis HS and in facilitating cross-school student meetings, Jonah helps students make connections between their experience in the classroom and the political, social, economic, and cultural factors influencing their educational experience. During the two-day conference, students from

different CO student groups in multiple high schools throughout Los Angeles met to create a new campaign. Jonah said, “The CO students met for three and a half hours. I have been working with this student group for twelve years and I have never seen a group so engaged politically... They were connecting how the 1% plays a role in the economy but also in the classroom. The CO student chapter is starting a campaign called, ‘focus on our needs, not just our test scores.’ Students want to act to counter the privatization and attacks on schools” (March 8). Jonah facilitates an environment in which students can dialogue, identify problems, develop solutions, and act to change their educational experiences for the better.

At Cali HS, Dexter is part of a program that encourages students to find a problem in the community and solve it over the next two years with the help of parents and the community. Dexter describes the program as,

We still work with classroom standards, but we want to connect students to concrete work with the community... community organizations and businesses offer internships to students. Also, parents and children research community social justice issues together. Right now, ten students have paid internships with a health organization. They are going to do health surveys with the help of their parents. These are important social issues that could turn into pressure campaigns, such as healthy foods and school cafeteria lunches. Things will be uncovered (Jan 30).

Dexter and the other teachers at Cali HS are using the classroom to give students the tools to be active citizens of a participatory democracy.

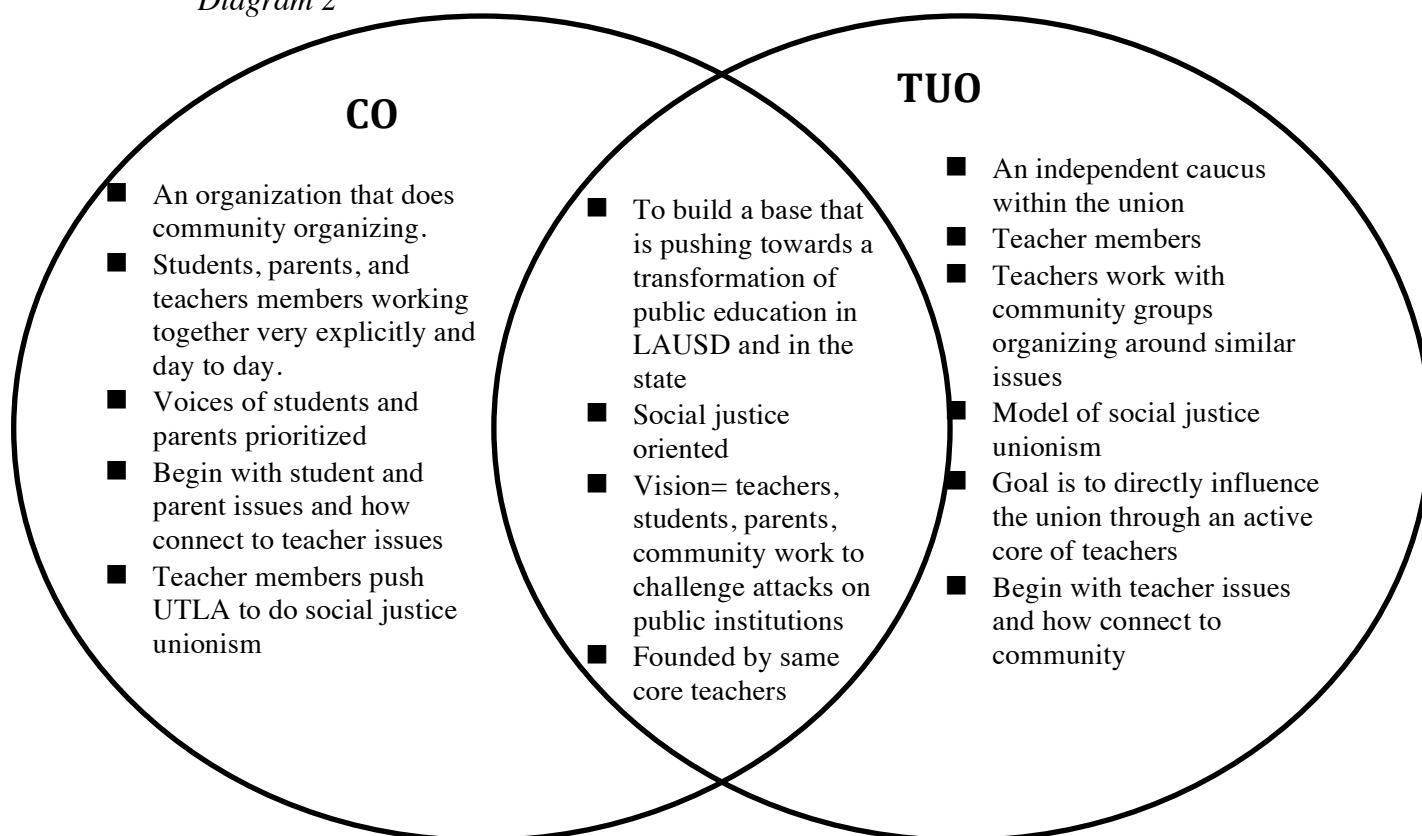
Schools are vital civic institutions with the potential to transform communities when they foster empowerment and engagement for rebuilding democracy. With teachers acting as transformative intellectuals and community organizers, schools foster a political education that examines the impacts of structural inequalities and power structures through student participation in political activities in school (Warren et al., 2011). Dexter and Jonah use community organizing and social justice unionism to help engage disadvantaged communities to achieve power and transform their educational experiences.

MERGING COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AND SOCIAL JUSTICE UNIONISM

CO was founded in 1999 in response to the rise of high-stakes tests. It was started by teachers who wanted to foster social justice unionism and who wanted the teachers' union to fight for social justice but who also believed in community organizing. It was initially a group composed of teachers who had already been fighting against racist California state propositions. The organization immediately started working with parents and students to organize around issues adversely affecting students, parents, teachers, and communities. In a conversation regarding the connection between CO and TUO, Jonah asked me if I was ever given the history of CO. I answered no and so he explained, "We recognized the need to build a movement in which we cannot only have teachers and teachers' unions, but also need to engage respectfully and humbly parents and students independent of the teachers' union. But a lot of us are active in the teachers' union because we believe in transforming it as well" (March 8). Jonah's description shows how CO was founded on principles of increased community engagement, parents and teachers as equal members, and an active and reflective teaching force. Back in 1999, a small group of teachers realized the need for community organizing for school reform with a connection to labor and so they created CO.

Dexter and Jonah were also part of the core group of teachers that founded TUO. TUO started as an alternative perspectives newsletter within UTLA approximately twenty years ago. It was a piece of literature produced by a small group of teachers with a vision to change the union. However, the group writing the newsletter did not do any organizing. Teachers in CO got together with those publishing the alternative perspectives newsletter in order to transform the newsletter into an organization that could recruit, campaign, and organize as well as produce literature; this organization is TUO. The table below shows the similarities and differences between CO and TUO.

Diagram 2



CO and TUO were both created to transform public education in Los Angeles through social justice ideology and practices by empowering parents, students, teachers, and communities to work together to influence policy. While I analyze both organizations together throughout this paper, CO and TUO are separate organizations that have different members with only some overlap and that run different campaigns. Community organizing and social justice unionism are part of both CO and TUO. However, CO does community organizing and encourages the union to do social justice unionism, while TUO does social justice unionism and pushes UTLA to have social justice at its core, which includes supporting community organizing. In an interview with Jonah, he described the multiple dimensions of his work as a community organizer. He is a community organizer working with students, parents, teachers, community members, and the teachers' union as individual groups or combined in different ways, such as parents and students organizing together or teachers and parents. He also organizes at the school site level as well as beyond the school

and across the city (Jan 27). The difference between CO and TUO is not in their social justice philosophy but in how much they engage students and parents versus teachers and the teachers' union. Both organizations want to transform public education through a social justice orientation working with teachers, students, parents, and the community to challenge attacks on public institutions. In both organizations teachers work beyond the classroom and connect to larger struggles in order to improve public education. However, CO prioritizes parent and student voices and needs while TUO starts with teacher voices and needs.

The involvement of teachers in organizing with parents, students, and communities as well as with the teachers' union is what makes these two organizations unique. In an interview with Jonah, he compared CO to another similar organization in Chicago. The comparison shows how teachers involved with CO have been able to merge teacher unionism and community organizing in a way that most other teacher groups have not.

There is a similar group as CO in Chicago that is at the leadership of the teachers' union, which is exciting, but they do not have a community-organizing lens that speaks to the same types of ideas that speak also to the teachers' union. They are more isolated from folks in their community because they don't have the support of the community organizing with parents, students, and communities. On the other side, unfortunately, a lot of community organizations that work with parents are on the wrong side. They push for privatization and charter schools, and don't mention anything about budget cuts. That is why there is a need for coalitions between folks and teachers' unions (March 8).

CO and TUO are the only groups in Los Angeles in which teachers organize with parents, students, and communities as well as with the teachers' union. Other groups are doing community organizing, social justice education, or teacher unionism, but none have teachers involved in both community organizing and social justice unionism like CO and TUO. Jonah highlights the need for both in emphasizing that students, parents, communities, teachers, and their unions cannot be isolated from one another because they are affected by the same attacks on public education including privatization and budget cuts and so must support one another in order to transform public education (Jan 27). In helping me understand

the connection between CO and TUO Dexter explained, “Many of us [teachers] have feet and/or hands in both organizations: many of us are the UTLA chapter chairs at our school sites and participate in the union through pockets of the union such as TUO, but then we also do CO type stuff [like community organizing]. Many of us do it because we believe in both. That is the connection between CO and TUO” (March 8). Teachers in CO and TUO use both community organizing and social justice unionism to transform their schools. Moreover, Dexter is part of a union planning committee that is trying to push UTLA to develop a parent-community organizing branch within UTLA; there would be full-time, paid organizers helping teachers organize at their school sites. CO and TUO are both pushing the union to merge social justice unionism and community organizing to help teachers improve their schools.

OBSTACLES

In merging community organizing and social justice unionism, CO and TUO are creating a new model to transform schools and the teachers’ union even though they must overcome large obstacles in the process. A major obstacle is that teachers often feel too overwhelmed, frustrated, and exhausted in their careers to do community organizing. In talking about teachers and organizing, Jonah said, “The biggest challenge is that it is exhausting, especially given the conditions that we teach in which are not the easiest conditions in the world. So that is a huge challenge. Obviously, trying to think up strategies and resistances within a context of constant budget cuts, constant attacks in the media on teachers and teachers’ unions and public education and the privatization threat is exhausting” (Jan 27). Teachers get tired after long work days in which they are constantly being attacked by neoliberal policies that make the job that much harder. Teachers at the two-day conference as well as at the TUO meeting also mentioned being too exhausted to find the energy to build relationships and leadership, have one-on-one meetings, create alliances, do research and

create plans of action, organize workshops and trainings, and hold policy makers accountable. Jonah told me that organizing and teaching can lead to an eighty hour work week (Jan 27); community organizing for educational reform takes very motivated, caring, and selfless teachers.

Not only are teachers exhausted, but there are also a limited number of teachers who even believe that actively transforming the teachers' union is possible. Edward, one of the teachers at the TUO meeting said, "People are not apathetic; it is just that they don't think we can make a difference. We need to draw people out of the classroom. We need to be political in and out of the classroom. We need to make people see that activism is working. A lot of people in the union have given up on activism" (Feb 23). There are many reasons teachers have given up on activism including a lack of resources to organize, disillusionment with union leadership, and the constant budget cuts. These issues are addressed in the following paragraphs.

Teachers are often limited in their ability to organize due to a lack of resources, members, and funding. Both Jonah and Dexter mentioned that there are no established networks for teachers to get the tools and skills they need to become organizers. Dexter stated, "Right now the major tool is informal relationships that are lateral between teachers. We help each other out and meet through CO or UTLA area meetings, and organizations like TUO that focus on leadership development. But it is difficult because CO and TUO don't have the capacity to help many teachers, so teacher support is independent and lateral. The work of TUO is limited" (March 21). Without the support of UTLA or another large organization that can afford to unite and provide resources for organizing to a large number of educators, teachers must rely on one another for information, resources and support. However, CO and TUO are small and limited in the number of teachers they can reach. Furthermore, the few organizations that exist are regionally focused so that certain teachers

interested in organizing may not have a community organizing group in their region with which they can connect. Most teachers that show interest in social justice activism lack the support needed to act, and CO and TUO do not have the capacity to support all of the teachers in LAUSD.

Due to these limitations, the leaders of CO and TUO believe it is necessary to engage the teachers' union as it is a massive institution with a much larger capacity than CO and TUO alone. Dexter says, "UTLA is too critical to give up on. We need to reorient a multi-million dollar organization if we really want to fight for justice. The district is geographically very spread out, it is huge with lots of people with a variety of skills and many are predisposed to engage in progressive politics. We need to use UTLA to get access to these people and make a change" (March 22). Jonah also mentioned the power of the union and explained to me that the teachers' union has access to 40,000 members whom it can help act for social justice; smaller groups like CO and TUO are not able to reach such a large number of teachers (Jan 27). Due to their small size, CO and TUO lack resources, members, and funding, making it difficult to create a large movement dedicated to social justice in public schools. Thus, they believe in working with the union in order to reach and support more teachers.

However, the leadership of UTLA has not committed to organizing for educational justice. Kate, a teacher who was part of TUO but is now part of another teachers' organization doing community organizing in Los Angeles, said, "I'll put it this way, there are parts of the union that care about the community and attempt to mobilize with parents, but it's a very small part. It is CO, which is connected to TUO; however, the big union, they don't care. They don't see their struggles connected to the working class struggles of our students" (Feb 22). She then gave an example from when she was part of TUO before she got too frustrated to continue working within UTLA,

We were urging the union to align itself on May Day, so we were trying to say like ‘yo. That’s workers rights day, this is a workers rights issue, we should align with it.’ Not only that, these cuts are directly affecting your students which the vast majority are immigrants so we need to unify our struggles if we are really going to get a reaction, you know what I mean, if we are really going to affect anything. And even though it passed in all of the union area meetings, the big union shut it down and their excuses were a) we don’t want to get muddled up in those immigration issues and b) oh, well the valley people won’t have it. So it was like, ok, one local district is going to hold the other seven of us hostage if the other seven of us are down. That doesn’t make sense. So it got to the point that I just got fed up with the union. Believe me, I am not saying that I don’t want a union, I am pro-union, but there is a lot of corruption and there is only so much you can take when you keep trying to push for change (Feb 22).

The leadership of the union focuses on teacher issues only and stays neutral politically in order to satisfy many of its members, which frustrates some teachers like Kate and can make them give up on activism within the union. In an interview, Dexter mentioned that the leadership of the union talks about activism but rarely acts on their rhetoric, thus making it difficult for teachers to be activists (March 8). Nonetheless, even with the lack of support from UTLA’s leadership, CO and TUO continue to push the union to take a stance and adopt a social justice vision for educational reform. As stated above, CO and TUO believe UTLA is such a large and powerful institution that UTLA is crucial to getting more members, more funding, and more resources in order to organize for educational justice.

However, even TUO gets frustrated with UTLA’s leadership’s lack of commitment to social justice. Dexter explained, “In our most recent meeting, TUO discussed moving away from UTLA and doing its own campaign like before. At the moment, UTLA won’t question the district’s budget or lead antiracist campaigns and focus on the influence of the market, so TUO is developing an independent campaign to put pressure on board members. We are not going through governance like we usually do. People are frustrated with UTLA. I am frustrated with UTLA” (March 8). Even though it is true that TUO gets frustrated with UTLA leadership and at times must work outside of the union, the teachers in TUO continue to try

to sway UTLA leadership to adopt a social justice vision for educational reform. Once again, teachers in CO and TUO believe the union is too crucial an institution to give up on.

Another obstacle CO and TUO face are the attacks from the right against unions, social movements, and public institutions that make the general public hostile to community organizing and labor unionism. Such attacks rooted in neoliberal ideology, on which I will further elaborate in the next section of the paper, create serious difficulties for CO and TUO. Jonah said, “A bunch of us teachers have been very harassed because of the organizing that we are doing whether that is with teachers or students or parents but particularly with students. I almost got fired my second year of teaching. For example, four years ago the students planned a sit-in, not a walkout, not trying to cause trouble, just a sit-in on campus essentially at lunch time, and the administrator turned the sprinklers on them” (Jan 27). Teachers who organize become visible to the media causing “trouble” for administrators who have to respond to LAUSD leadership who run the school district with neoliberal policies. At a time when neoliberal ideology has permeated all of society, organizing is a threat to the private takeover of public schools. Additionally, organizing gives citizens power to critically challenge the status quo, threatening what the Occupy Movement has labeled the 1%, who gained its control through neoliberal policies. Teachers who encourage critical thinking can stir up and organize students and school communities, thus threatening the neoliberal hold on power. People with influence never like to see an agitated public as it means a possible change in the existing state of affairs.

Neoliberal policies based in prioritizing private institutions over public ones have also influenced the budget cuts that have laid off public school teachers who want to organize. Jonah said, “We find, sometimes, that some of the younger teachers... are much more interested in some of the organizing and social justice issues, but they are the ones that keep getting laid off” (March 22). He then gave me an example: Davis HS used to have three

UTLA chapter chairs, including Jonah, his current co-chair, and a third teacher. This teacher used to be a student at Davis and then became a teacher and union rep because she was deeply committed to organizing. However, she got laid off, halting their momentum and energy to push UTLA to organize around social justice. Not only do few teachers participate in community organizing, but the budget cuts make the numbers even smaller. Teachers in CO and TUO constantly have to resist the assaults on public schools, unions, and teachers.

With so many obstacles to overcome, why do teachers continue to organize? I asked that exact question to both Dexter and Jonah in their respective interviews. Jonah replied,

When I find myself tired and burning out, I talk to others to find new strategies, or if they are in CO and TUO or folks that do political work then I talk to them to help me think about it in a bigger picture kind of way. For example, things can get better for teachers, but students are still stuck in a system that screws them over everyday. On the other hand, we can make some reforms in the school system, but there are still issues beyond the school that oppress community and folks (March 8).

In a later interview Dexter said, “Why do I keep going? It’s difficult to teach in LAUSD schools and to be a parent with a kid in LAUSD without taking action. I have organizing training so I see it as a long-term project rather than a short-term one. LAUSD needs a lot of change, but it is too critical to give up on” (March 22). Even though Dexter and Jonah were unaware of what the other had said, there are common themes in their responses. They are both adamant that the educational system has to improve for teachers, parents, students, and communities and that organizing is a way to do that. Moreover, both see community organizing and social justice unionism as a means to reach the long-term goal of educational justice, thus everyday obstacles do not discourage them from continuing their work.

While there are many obstacles to organizing, CO and TUO continue to believe that the union can be swayed to do social justice unionism. In one of our interviews, Jonah described a recent event when CO and TUO were able to get the union to take a stance on the side of social justice. With Reduction in Force (RIF) letters, sent in early March of this year regarding laying off teachers due to budget cuts, CO and TUO organized an action in front of

the school board on the day the board was making the decision about the letters. Not only do teachers lose their jobs due to budget cuts, but class size also increases with a decrease in staff. This change gives students fewer opportunities for individual time with a teacher and forces teachers to move around creating a lack of stability and consistency in school culture. A few days before the action, UTLA officially endorsed the action, thus taking a stance against budget cuts and against the attack on public education (Dexter, March 22). In merging community organizing and social justice unionism, CO and TUO are creating a new model to transform schools and the teachers' union even though they must overcome large obstacles in the process.

ORGANIZING IN RESPONSE TO NEOLIBERAL ATTACKS

Merging community organizing and social justice unionism is necessary due to the constant attacks on public education from the neoliberal, capitalist right. Jonah explained to me that organizing “is happening in a context of massive attacks on public education both in terms of resources and in terms of the concept of public education, and all of this is happening in a context of massive attacks on teachers and teachers’ unions more specifically” (Jan 27). For example,

The test-and-punish approach to school reform has already made it more difficult for schools labeled as failing to attract and retain well-qualified educators—thus, ironically, reducing the quality of education for students still further. Rather than increasing the incentives and supports for teaching in high-need schools, recent federal policy has encouraged states to lower standards for prospective teachers, despite evidence that doing so increases teacher attrition and reduces student achievement. Blaming teachers for the ills of high-need schools lets policy-makers off the hook and keeps the more fundamental problems of severe poverty, a tattered safety net and inequitable funding under the rug (Darling-Hammond, 2012, par. 20).

The test-and-punish approach comes from No Child Left Behind (NCLB), which puts sanctions on schools who are failing to make adequate yearly progress. Low-performing schools are subject to being closed, turned into charters, and reconstituted, which involves firing nearly half of the staff. The sanctions make schools and neighborhoods undesirable

places to work and live thus provoking the departure of teachers and families who have the options to do so. NCLB focuses on punishment rather than “address[ing] the inequitable distribution of state and local funds to schools; improv[ing] teaching and learning conditions in underfunded, high-poverty schools; or recruit[ing] and train[ing] expert teachers who will stay in these schools and stop the revolving door of untrained novices who leave children further behind” (Darling-Hammond, 2012, par. 6). The test-and-punish approach stems from a neoliberal ideology in which privatization, short-term contracts over long-term jobs, individualism, and expert knowledge over grassroots knowledge are solutions to improving schools.

At the two-day conference, teachers in my small group gave multiple answers to a question about naming the attacks on public schools which include: media attacks on teachers, budget cuts that increase class size and reduce resources, privatization, scripted curriculums that lack critical thinking, attacks on collective bargaining, attacks on the poor when cutting social programs and in the militarization in schools, standardized tests that delegitimize teachers and students, and institutionalized racism that criminalizes students of color and gives them an unequal education (Feb 10). Even though the majority of teachers, parents, and students may not be able to name the exact cause of these attacks or give a theoretical analysis of neoliberalism, they know what neoliberalism is, and they understand how these attacks affect them on a daily basis. Building on this knowledge enables teachers, parents, and students to name inequalities and to organize to challenge and change them.

Dexter and Jonah organize as a response to neoliberal attacks. Both have a clear theoretical and practical understanding of neoliberalism that enables them to apply Freire’s notion of praxis in their work with community organizing and social justice unionism. Throughout our interviews, both Dexter and Jonah described how right-wing politics

implicitly and explicitly discourage teachers from getting involved with community organizing and how these politics constantly attack public school teachers and their unions through test-based evaluations, scripted curriculums, budget cuts, and the weakening of tenure for senior teachers. They both believe in progressive programs based in social justice and community involvement to counter neoliberal attacks and policies. Their commitment to finding alternatives to neoliberalism is publically stated through the leftist speakers CO and TUO invite to speak at conferences, such as Bill Fletcher and Linda Darling-Hammond, who both denounce right-wing politics in support for social change to create a more just and egalitarian school system and society.

In order to help teachers, students, and parents think critically about the effects of neoliberalism on schools and unions and to discuss possible solutions and campaigns, CO and TUO invited a famous labor organizer and renowned UCLA professor to speak at the two-day conference. On the first night of the two-day conference, the labor organizer gave a speech on the need for social justice to be at the core of teachers' unions due to the attacks on public institutions. He said,

This notion that the private sector can do it better has so permeated the population that many of our own members of unions and community-based groups will repeat this mantra as if it is to say the sun will rise tomorrow morning. And it goes often unchallenged. Even some of us, if we want to be honest, will say, 'well maybe the private sector can do it better.' This has entered into the realm of public education... when we do question it for example when teachers' unions question it they often look self interested because it is only them that is responding. The other piece of this attack is this pay as you go. It's this notion that you only pay for what you use. And you see this as one of these right-wing libertarian notions therefore if you are not using public schools then why should you pay for them? If you are not using the cops, then why should you pay for them? If you are not using the library, then why should you pay for it? All of this helps undermine the very notion of public space and public service (Feb 10).

Neoliberal ideology has become common sense in the United States so that we, the people, are no longer able to see the effects of its policies on everyday life and thought. Privatization and budget cuts are seen as the solutions to improve public schools. However, this is the

culture of capitalism that values short-term contracts over long-term jobs, where job security is a negative thing, and in which there has been a devaluing of local knowledge in exchange for expert knowledge from above. On the second day of the conference, a UCLA professor gave a speech in which he encouraged a progressive alternative to neoliberal ideology that includes linking education to economic and community change, investing in individual and collective capacity, building institutions that promote trust and collaboration, and developing and valuing local knowledge and local problem solving (Feb 11). Community organizing and social justice unionism incorporate all of these aspects and so are progressive alternatives to neoliberal attacks on public education.

VISIONS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

There is so much money spent attacking teachers, the teachers union, and community organizing in favor of privatization and hyper segregation. Public school choice has also been attacking public schools. We need to create our own visions of school reform and transform our own schools. People need to create their own ideas and implement them (Iris- teacher presenter at the two-day conference, Feb 11).

CO and TUO merge community organizing and social justice unionism in order to carry out their common vision for school and union reform that puts social justice at the core of education and of the teachers' union. Social justice is part of both CO and TUO's missions that include challenging oppressive forces, redistributing resources, challenging corporate and management rights, and defending and expanding the rights of working class communities and communities of color (CO's website). This vision is provoked by neoliberal attacks on public institutions including privatization threats, budget cuts, standardized evaluations, scripted curriculums, and condemnations of collective bargaining. The responses to attacks on public institutions are driving the visions CO and TUO have for transforming schools; both organizations want to challenge right-wing attacks on public education. In focusing on these assaults, teachers connect their needs to student, parent, and community needs and all unite around issues of social justice. For CO and TUO this means that schools

truly meet the needs of working class communities, communities of color, and school employees.

At the TUO meeting, teachers discussed a new campaign to counter budget cuts. Monica said, “I am a long-term substitute teacher. My students understand that my job is unstable because some of their parents have unstable jobs too. This is an attack on all jobs. We have to connect our struggles so people can understand and find it relevant. Teachers are in a position that is the same as any other job that can be lost at any time. We need to connect to a larger struggle.” Edward then added, “We can’t forget the classroom. The classroom is a political space. It is not apolitical. People may not know what it’s like to be a teacher, but everyone knows what it’s like to be a student. We can connect to people that way.” Sylvia then concluded, “I really think we need to include the 99% in our slogan. We should connect with the 99%.” Teachers in CO and TUO use social justice issues, such as living wages, which are relevant to parents, students, and teachers, to guide their actions for transforming schools.

For education, a vision of social justice means schools are based on parent, student, teacher, and community needs and priorities. It also means creating safe schools with antiracist, antisexist, anti-homophobic, and anti-class biased curricula focused on the needs of the community, in which parents, students, and teachers have real decision-making powers; they come together on equal footing to take action against oppression. In response to the threat of privatization of his high school, Jonah said, “When schools are going through this process and going up for bid, we create what’s called a design team that designs a new vision for the school and a strategy for how to stop this” (Jan 27). This vision is rooted in uniting parents, students, and teachers to oppose a common oppression, in this case the privatization of a high school. Jonah was very active during this privatization threat. He said,

Davis was on a list to be reconstituted. Every teacher would have been laid off. Teachers don’t want that to happen. And then community, parents, students care

about this also because the kind of changes that come with that could impact community and the kinds of learning that happens on campus. In my role as the union rep on campus, I had meetings with just teachers, and in my role as an organizer I had meetings with parents and students... We needed everyone to be in this together and meet together. We had to push teachers to see it beyond their narrow interests and see how it related to access and equity for kids here and for the broader movement beyond Davis (March 8).

Jonah's work during the campaign against public school choice at Davis HS is rooted in social justice as it brings parents, students, and teachers together to gain awareness and then take action against a common oppression. Jonah is being a transformative teacher (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985) who has turned his school into a site of political struggle against a societal inequity such as the privatization of schools.

For the teachers' union, a vision of social justice means the union must defend all people adversely influenced by neoliberal policies and not only its members. It also means having a union that provides resources so that teachers and communities can organize, for leadership development, and for the building of relationships and alliances. In a speech on the first day of the two-day conference, a labor organizer invited to speak said,

[teachers] need to have a compelling vision that really speaks to the concerns that regular people have...The teachers' unions have to convince the public that they really mean what they are saying about educational improvement, education reform... there needs to be a reformation of teachers' unions that puts social justice at its core. Now this is obviously very controversial, but it means that the union can no longer see itself as simply defending people that happen to be members but it needs to see itself as the champion of education justice. It means it needs to be reaching out to community-based organizations (Feb 10).

This vision for the teachers' union is also held by TUO, as shown in the conversation between Monica, Edward, and Sylvia referenced above. All three teachers are searching for ways to relate teacher issues to community issues so that teachers can ally with communities to improve schools.

Moreover, Iris, a member of CO and TUO, who also spoke at the two-day conference, encouraged teachers to imagine a new UTLA grounded in working with community organizations:

We need to push our union to have a better strategy. Right now a lot of us are very worried that they do not have a strategy, that they do not have a direction, that they don't know where to go and what to handle. Yes, there are a lot of things that we have to worry about but these are the things that we need to focus on. We need to focus on putting resources into helping organizations, building relationships with organizations that are going to help us fight these sorts of attacks. It needs to focus on organizing, it needs to focus on leadership development. We have to invest in building a union that is going to be ready to fight these attacks, to counter these ideas. We cannot go along with the rhetoric that is being told from these corporations (Feb 11).

Iris is referring to the neoliberal attacks on public education and believes the union must be at the forefront of countering these threats. She also sees the union working with community organizations and organizing with communities through organizing tactics such as leadership development and relationship building. TUO pushes UTLA to focus on social justice issues, such as racism, privatization, budget cuts, living wages, and unequal and segregated schools, which relate to union members as well as communities in Los Angeles.

TEACHERS AS ORGANIZERS

In merging community organizing and social justice unionism, CO and TUO challenge traditional notions of organizing in education. In our first interview, Dexter said, "The political environment is such that there is both an implicit and explicit discouragement for teachers getting involved in organizing. There is a narrative around the impossibility for teachers to connect with community concerns. I disagree with that narrative. There are teachers involved in community organizing especially around social justice issues. These teachers are being intentional in their efforts to organize" (Jan 30). Jonah also mentioned teachers as community organizers, "A lot of us that came into this wanted to organize. We knew we wanted to organize before we started teaching" (March 8). Community organizing when initiated, facilitated, and/or supported by teachers means thinking of teachers as community organizers who work with communities to push for change; teachers are part of the educational community and will organize based on community needs rather than their

own. It also means making education political so that educational communities research injustices and take action against them (Freire, [1970], 1990).

Teachers who are community organizers challenge the traditional roles of educators who remain in the classroom and of organizers who come from the outside to help a community. Kate explained, “If you are a teacher organizer, it should not be only about you, it should be about the community and so part of being with the community is aligning with their struggles, so depending on what community you are in, that will be different kinds of organizing it will be different things” (Feb 22). Later in the interview she gave an example of teacher organizing saying that she would take “a contingent to May Day every year so we would hop on the metro with students and parents and go to May Day, and making that connection, our banner always said, ‘stop the war on working class people: education and legalization now’ ” (Feb 22). As a teacher organizer, Kate aligned with the struggles of the parents and students in her classroom and went beyond the classroom to partake in the May Day march. Iris, a teacher presenter during the two-day conference exclaimed, “It is not enough to be a good teacher. It is our responsibility as teachers to get out of the classroom and be part of something to transform this rhetoric. Like being part of CO or TUO...Teachers must work with parents and students” (Feb 11). CO and TUO give teachers the tools to go beyond the classroom and organize with parents, students, and communities in order to transform schools.

Both Jonah and Dexter have had success in organizing for school reform. As mentioned earlier, Jonah was very involved in organizing during the privatization threat at Davis HS. After a year of deliberation, Davis was not reconstituted. While other factors played a role in this decision by LAUSD, the parent, student, teacher campaign at Davis did help influence the change. Dexter was also part of a successful campaign when Cali HS was also threatened to be reconstituted. Dexter described the campaign as,

The district restructuring meeting happened without parents. This gave us a campaign. 20-25 of the most active teachers involved with the union called parents. We had a meeting with about 100 parents. We discussed what we wanted Cali to look like... Parents, teachers, and students made a list of demands they wanted from the district. They presented these at rallies, school board meetings, and to the district. Two million additional dollars were given to Cali for basic things such as computers, more teachers, a school psychologist. CO supported the work of the parents through its networking. We connected teachers and parents with other high schools to pressure the district to give money to other high need schools. We won. Parents were at the forefront, but with the support of teachers and students (Jan 30).

Teacher organizers make schools political sites and help organize parents and students around a common fight. CO teachers built relationships, created alliances, assembled parent leaders, developed a plan of action with parents, put pressure on policy makers, and supported parents and students who successfully campaigned for school improvement.

In CO, teacher voices and needs are not the priority, but teachers still help guide parent and student organizing since teachers have certain advantages in schools. Dexter says, “Teachers have privileges, there are power dynamics to consider, teachers are trained in public speaking, and they have information on how the district works. Organizing for teachers is a conscious and intentional process” (Jan 30). Teachers who choose to be transformative teachers create spaces where parents, students, community members, and teachers can join together to combat the unequal and unjust educational system in the United States. However, both Jonah and Dexter mentioned that teachers in CO had to be conscious of their privileged position and make sure to allow parents and students leadership opportunities. Dexter said, “Like every organization, CO has norms. We make it clear that teachers are an important part of this space, but that everyone needs to get a chance to speak. Teachers can’t control a meeting because they have more information or might know more about a specific issue” (Jan 30). Teachers in CO make sure that their group models the equality and justice they want to see in schools. Freire describes the importance of dialogue in order to create equal relationships between students and teachers so that there is a constant sharing of fellowship and solidarity through inquiry, critical thinking, and the unveiling of

reality ([1970], 1990). Teacher organizers in CO and TUO are partners to parents, students, and communities.

Teachers, students, and parents are all affected by changes to the school system.

Organizing brings these groups together to fight for a common cause. Jonah described how a charter school takeover affects the entire school community. He said,

When a school is taken over by a company, everybody gets laid off. The charter companies that do this start to kick off certain kinds of kids they don't want to have at the school anymore- low test scores, special ed, English language learners. The point is that we had to draw a line and say that this is not allowed to happen because it would be bad for teachers, of course, but far worse, it would mean that the public school in the community was no longer going to be public (Jan 27).

Teachers obviously do not want to lose their jobs, students do not want to be kicked out of their neighborhood schools, and parents do not want to send their children across the city for school. Community organizing brings teachers, students, parents, and communities together to transform schools.

The visions that teachers in CO and TUO have for school reform not only challenge traditional relationships between teachers and communities, but they also challenge conventional notions of teacher unionism that focus only on teacher needs. The labor organizer at the two-day conference gave a short history of unionism in the US:

The union movement that emerged after the McCarthy era and the Cold War had a very different view of what a teachers' union should be. They created tremendous organizations that represented the interests of teachers. But what was missing was the relationship between the interests of teachers and the communities that they served so that as the unions strengthened and won tremendous collective bargaining agreements this gap increased in size between the unions and the communities that they were supposed to be serving, such that the communities in many cases could no longer recognize the unions themselves (Feb 10).

TUO and CO's vision for UTLA challenges this notion through social justice unionism that links the union with teachers in order to defend and expand the rights of working class people and recognizes that parents, students, teachers, and community members are involved as equal players.

LAUSD teachers at the two-day conference saw their roles as teachers extending beyond the classroom to organize with parents and students. As we sat in a misshapen circle due to the auditorium seats, nine teachers and I discussed this question: how can we achieve an alternative vision for Los Angeles schools? Bobby replied, “We need to publically advocate for our students and their families and be actual partners. When we fight for our health benefits, we have to fight for their health care benefits as well. And if our union is on the front line wearing red UTLA shirts participating in their movements as well then it’s like ok, we are in this together.” Then Tonya added, “That salary and the union that you mention do give us social capital that many of our families don’t have. And we do have the responsibility to use that to help build that social capital for those families and those communities” (Feb 10). This group of teachers believes in urging educators and the union to organize around community interests as well as teacher needs. Union members at the TUO meeting also discussed campaigns that involved getting UTLA to organize around issues relevant to communities; teachers mentioned aligning with the 99%, linking local budget cuts to the Millionaire’s Tax, and making LAUSD’s budget transparent. They also want to have a teacher activist at every school who does not have to be a UTLA representative, but someone who can help educators organize (Feb 23). In merging community organizing and social justice unionism, CO and TUO challenge traditional notions of organizing and unionism in education.

OBSTACLES WITHIN

While CO and TUO are doing the best they can with the small amount of members and resources that they have, there are still a few obstacles to overcome within these organizations in order to more successfully improve schools. First, in an interview after the two-day conference, I asked Jonah what he thought about the conference. He responded that overall the conference was great, however he added, “We didn’t do a good job on focused

outreach and doing the kind of things that need to be done to get a real engaged turnout. It was exciting that a lot of people were at the conference, but we needed to have more parents, students, and teachers present. We needed a more focused outreach plan” (March 8). Without an outreach plan, CO and TUO will not be able to get the numbers they need for their campaigns to make an impact.

Second, while it seems that teachers in CO and TUO often work together as the leadership in both is similar, Ross, a teacher who attended the conference and was part of my small group discussion on day two, mentioned that he goes to TUO meetings often but has never heard of CO (Feb 11). This suggests that the two organizations mostly work apart, merging community organizing and social justice unionism in their own ways, and only come together during major campaigns and conferences. However, the leadership is similar in both organizations and teachers in both want to work with parents, students, and communities. Connecting teachers in one organization to the other could increase members and the number of school sites CO teachers are able to organize in.

Finally, in the interview with Kate, she mentioned feeling frustrated with TUO members because some believe in organizing around issues that affect all students and teachers including charter schools, while others disagree because charters are not public. Kate said,

We are against the privatization of education, but that doesn’t mean we are not going to link up with kids in charter schools to fight the militarization that is on their campus. So we have had arguments, I will say debates, with individuals, not the leadership of TUO, the leadership of TUO was very supportive in that we need to organize with all people, but certain people who were like ‘eh, that’s green dot (charter schools in Los Angeles), what are you doing there? Why are you going there?’ because there is youth” (Feb 22).

While Kate understands that pushback is not from leadership but from certain members of TUO, her frustration with these members and with the lack of support for organizing from UTLA membership led her to stop being a member of the group. With the low number of

teachers already participating in organizing for school reform, it is detrimental for CO and TUO to lose any members; both organizations must unite members as much as possible.

While it is true that certain dynamics within the organization can have costs to CO and TUO community organizing for schools reform, these costs are not major enough to outweigh the benefits and successes these organizations have had. These minor obstacles do not inhibit CO or TUO and would only make them stronger if addressed.

CONCLUSION

In merging community organizing and social justice unionism, CO and TUO are creating a new model to transform schools and the teachers' union even though they must overcome large obstacles in the process. While both organizations face many challenges due to a lack of resources, support, members, time, and funding, their small victories show how successful this new framework based on social justice can be for educational reform. CO and TUO show how teachers can be leaders in school reform efforts.

CO and TUO merge community organizing and social justice unionism in order to carry out their common vision for school and union reform that puts social justice at the core of education and of the teachers' union. This vision is provoked by neoliberal attacks on public institutions including privatization threats, budget cuts, standardized evaluations, scripted curriculums, and condemnations of collective bargaining. For education, a vision of social justice means making schools political sites built on parent, student, teacher, and community needs, priorities, and critical consciousness. It means creating safe schools with antiracist, antisexist, anti-homophobic, and anti-class biased curricula focused on the needs of the community in which parents, students, and teachers have real decision-making power in schools and with the school board. For the teachers' union, a vision of social justice means the union must defend all people adversely influenced by neoliberal policies and not only its members. Moreover, the union must take a stance against attacks on public institutions. It

also means making the union a champion of education justice thus having a union that provides resources for organizing by teachers and communities, for leadership development, and for the building of relationships and alliances. Having social justice at the core of education and teachers' unions is transformative because it gives parents, students, teachers, and the community the power to critically transform their educational experience into one that is just and equal.

Community organizing is crucial to education reform as it builds a constituency with power to demand school improvement and to hold educational systems accountable. It also supports the assertion that educational change cannot happen without authentic parent and community engagements in school reform (Gold et al., 2002). Organizing brings innovative solutions to district leaders through research and a combination of inside relationships and outside pressure, increases parent involvement and youth voices through problem-solving methods, develops new skills and counters feelings of isolation among educators, and increases democracy through leadership training for parents, students, teachers, and the community (Mediratta et al., 2006). Community organizing is key to school reform.

Social justice unionism is also critical to education reform as it encourages teachers to care about questions of educational quality and working people's solidarity. Activist educators teach egalitarian and participatory pedagogy, downplay professional expertise, push for community control of schools, and equalize relations between teachers, students, and parents. Only a coalition between teachers, trade unions, and parents groups can hold school districts accountable; social reform allows both teachers and students to achieve their full potential (Perlstein, 2004).

In merging community organizing and social justice unionism, CO and TUO challenge traditional notions of organizing and unionism in education. Community organizing when initiated, facilitated, and/or supported by teachers means thinking of

teachers as community organizers and transformative intellectuals who work with communities to build political power to push for change in the educational system. Social justice unionism means the teachers' union fights for the entire working class thus including not only the interests of its members but also the communities in which its members work. Parents, teachers, and students organize on equal footing creating an active and reflective teaching force and citizenry dedicated to democracy and social justice in schools and society.

Merging community organizing and social justice unionism has allowed CO and TUO to create a new framework for discussing school reform. While there are still obstacles to overcome, this model gives teachers the tools and skills necessary to improve schools. In describing the reason for the two-day conference, Jonah said, "This conference was intentionally both TUO and CO so that both organizations would build it together. A lot of us feel that the leadership of the teachers' union is not thinking through social justice strategy and not thinking through community organizing so there is a real need for TUO and CO to work together and push the agenda" (March 8). Teachers in CO and TUO are making small gains in Los Angeles merging community organizing and social justice unionism.

IMPLICATIONS

CO and TUO's model for transforming schools has implications for unionism, education reform, and teachers. If teachers' unions adopt social justice unionism, they will have more collective bargaining power as they join forces with community organizations and be able to exert more pressure to get equality and justice in schools. For example, TUO is discussing a new campaign working with parents and communities to pressure LAUSD to make their budget public in order to hold the district accountable to spending on real reform rather than on private companies and standardized testing. Teachers' unions can also support teachers in community organizing in order to counter attacks on public education and fight for equal education for all disadvantaged children in the US. TUO and CO both pressure the

union to create a separate branch solely dedicated to community organizing for school reform that would have full-time organizers and a budget dedicated to empowering parents, students, and teachers. Furthermore, social justice unionism and community organizing are tools that teachers can use to feel empowered in their classrooms and beyond; they give teachers the skills and resources to make changes at their school sites and in the communities in which they teach. Both Dexter and Jonah used their skills and resources gained from community organizing and social justice unionism to help prevent the reconstitution of their schools.

Community organizing and social justice unionism also create strong relationships between parents, students, and teachers which improves student learning as it makes parents and teachers partners in changing the system rather than having them focus on blaming one another. Parents at Dexter's high school have created a parent organization that involves parents in their children's learning through parent-student research projects, supports teachers and administrators in daily school tasks such as with the prevention of the criminalization of attendance, and organizes and teaches parents about their role in public schools. Finally, social justice unionism and community organizing ensure parent, student, and teacher needs are prioritized which leads to a more positive learning environment, democratic participation in schools, and a greater value placed on education. One of the panelists at the two-day conference was a parent involved with CO who said, "At Cali high when I talk about problem-based learning and extended learning, we are focused primarily on the whole child and the family and its relationship with education at that local school site... it's imperative that we take a critical look at each school and prioritize what are the values and what are the goals not only of student achievement but what does that community need and what the communities have to offer" (Feb 11). When parent, student, and community needs are spotlighted, community participation in schools increases and students learning improves.

Policy implications for community organizing and social justice unionism will depend on the context and constituency of the local community and their specific needs, which can include the creation of autonomous schools, providing healthy lunches, challenging state tests, creating safe learning environments, and offering college preparatory classes. However, there are overarching policy implications that can be generalized across school districts. Through case study analysis, it has been shown that community organizing for school reform makes significant contributions to increasing funding and resources to under-resourced schools, developing leaders among parents and community members, creating public accountability for public education, creating roles for parents in schools, improving school safety and school climate, and establishing high quality instruction and curriculum (Gold et al., 2002).

Nevertheless, community organizing groups face many of the same obstacles as CO and TUO such as being underfunded and lacking support. Therefore, community groups organizing for school reform, such as CO, and social justice caucuses in teachers' unions, such as TUO, need more funding to hire full-time community organizers who help communities work for school reform, invest in the development of local support organizations that provide help to organizing groups, and support the capacity of organizing groups to collect and analyze data as well as develop training resources and tools for action (Mediratta et al., 2002). Furthermore, organizing groups need funding to develop measures to show what organizing for school reform is achieving, including "increases in community participation in school reform efforts and the extent of neighborhood transformation that results from increased community organizing; the extent of instructional, organizational, and cultural change occurring in schools; and changes in student outcomes as a result of community organizing" (Mediratta et al., 2002, p 23).

A major policy implication of community organizing is that families and communities are actively involved in school reform policies. Adding the perspectives of families and communities to school reform values local knowledge, takes into account the dynamic between schools and their external environment, connects communities and schools, and builds the capacity for civic participation in the community to improve school climates and teaching and learning practices (Gold et al., 2002). Policy makers often turn to educational experts to drive school reform efforts, but community organizing shifts the paradigm to include the school and community in improving schools. Collective action in a community heightens accountability for policies that benefit those who have traditionally had the least power and influence; it creates the political will to address problems that would otherwise be ignored (Gold et al., 2002).

A key policy implication of combining community organizing and social justice unionism is that educators are at the forefront of school reform. Most of the research on community organizing highlights the pressure that external groups can apply on districts' accountability agendas (Fabricant, 2010; Mediratta et al., 2008; Mediratta & Fruchter, 2001; Orr 1999; Osterman, 2002; Putnam et al., 2003; Shirley, 1997, 2002; Warren, 2001; Warren et al., 2011), however, CO and TUO show the impact that teachers can have on school reform when teachers are the community organizers holding school districts accountable. Furthermore, social justice unionism shifts the paradigm away from educational experts coming to change school systems as it encourages teachers to become leaders and work with parents, students, and the community in the political as well as educational process of improving schools. Empowering teachers to work with school communities to fight for the needs of teachers as well as students, parents, and the community values local knowledge, connects communities and schools, builds the capacity for civic participation among educators, and values teachers as transformative intellectuals.

Social justice unionism not only improves schools, but it also encourages teachers' unions to change. Unions based in social justice promote self-organization and increase membership activity to stimulate member responsibility and action over leadership driven control. In order for members to feel capable of leading the union, unions must provide an internal, political education where members learn to build their power, develop leaders, express differences of opinion, debate, dialogue, and build organizing skills (Fletcher & Gaspin, 2008). Unions must also coordinate with other unions and create alliances with other unions to promote working class solidarity. Moreover, social justice unions recognize struggles beyond the workplace, such as securing voting rights, national health care, and affordable housing, as well as the persecution of immigrants. Social justice unions also encourage union and nonunion workers to play an active role in both workplace-based and community-based struggles (Fletcher & Gaspin, 2008). Social justice unions are models of democracy that reflect an active and participatory citizenship.

CO and TUO are two specific organizations in Los Angeles. Other case studies are needed showing how teachers around the United States are transformative intellectuals and community organizers improving their schools and school districts. Further research about organizations doing both community organizing within and outside of the teachers' union is also essential to understand how teachers can transform schools. Finally, it is crucial to have more research on how labor unions, especially teachers' unions, are using social justice unionism in the realm of education in order to analyze whether or not social justice unionism is an adequate tool for school reform. Community organizing and social justice unionism are key to successfully creating equal, just, community-based, participatory schools that form critically-thinking democratic citizens committed to social justice, tolerance, and liberation.

References

- Alinsky, S. (1946). *Reveille for radicals*. New York: Vintage.
- Alinsky, S. (1971). *Rules for radicals: A pragmatic primer for realistic radicals*. New York: Vintage.
- Aronowitz, S. & Giroux, H. (1985). *Education Under Siege: The Conservative, Liberal and Radical Debate Over Schooling*. South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey Publishers.
- Bell, L. A. (1997). Theoretical foundations for social justice education. In M. Adams, L. Bell, & P. Griffin (Eds.), *Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook*. New York: Routledge.
- Cushman, E. (1999). The Public Intellectual, Service Learning, and Activist Research. *College English*. 61: 3: 328-336.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2012, January 30). Why is Congress Redlining Our Schools? *The Nation*. Retrieved May 20, 2012 from <http://www.thenation.com/article/165575/why-congress-redlining-our-schools?page=full>.
- Evans, M. (2009). *Inside education organizing: Learning to work for educational change*. Chestnut Hill, MA: Boston College Ph.D. Dissertation.
- Fabricant, M. (2010). *Organizing for educational justice: the campaign for public school reform in the South Bronx*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Freire, P. (1990) [1972]. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Trans. Myra Bergman Ramos. New York: Continuum.
- Freire, P. (2007) [1974]. *Education for Critical Consciousness*. New York: Continuum.
- Fletcher, B. & Gapasin, F. (2008). *Solidarity Divided: The Crisis in Organized Labor and a New Path Toward Social Justice*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.
- Giroux, H. (2012). *Education and the Crisis of Public Values: Challenging the Assault on*

- Teachers, Students, and Public Education*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.
- Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company.
- Gold, E., Simon, E. & Brown C. (2002). Strong neighborhoods, strong schools: Successful Community Organizing for School Reform. Chicago: Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform.
- Hackman, H. (2005). Five Essential Components for Social Justice Education. *Equity & Excellence in Education*. 38: 103-109.
- Johnson, L. (2007). "We Cannot Avoid Taking Sides": Teacher Unions, Urban Communities, and Social Justice in Historical Perspective. In Finn, P. & Finn, M. (Eds), *Teacher Education with an Attitude: Preparing Teachers to Education Working-Class Students in Their Collective Self-Interest*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Karp, S. (2011). A primer on corporate school reform. Quoted by Valerie Strauss, *The Washington Post*. (Washington, DC). Oct. 27.
- McLaughlin, M. (2009). *Between movement and establishment*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Mediratta, K., Shah, S., & McAlister, S. (2006). *Educator Perspectives on Community Organizing for Education Reform*. American Educational Research Association. Retrieved from the Annenberg Institute.
<http://annenberginstitute.org/CIP/mott/presentations.html>
- Mediratta, K., Shah, S., McAlister, S., Fruchter, N., Mokhtar, C., Lockwood, D. (2008). *Organized communities, stronger schools: A preview of research findings*. Providence, RI: Annenberg Institute for School Reform.
- Mediratta, K. & Fruchter, N. (2001). *Mapping the field of organizing for school*

- improvement*. New York: Institute for Education and Social Policy, New York University.
- Mediratta, K., Fruchter, N., & Lewis, A. (2002, October). *Organizing for School Reform: How Communities are Finding their Voices and Reclaiming their Public Schools*. New York: Institute for Education and Social Policy.
- Merriam, S. (2009). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (1997). Transformative Learning: Theory to Practice. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 74: 5-12.
- Milkman, R. & K. Voss. (2004). *Rebuilding labor: Organizing and organizers in the new union movements*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Oakes, J., Rogers, J., Lipton, M. (2006). *Learning Power: Organizing for Education and Justice*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Orr, M. (1999). *Black social capital: The politics of school reform in Baltimore, 1986–1998*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.
- Orr, M. (2007). Community Organizing and the Changing Ecology of Civic Engagement. In M. Orr (Ed), *Transforming the City: Community Organizing and the Challenge of Political Change*. KS: University Press of Kansas.
- Osterman, P. (2002). *Gathering power: The future of progressive politics in America*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Perlstein, D. (2004). *Justice, Justice: School Politics and the Eclipse of Liberalism*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Peterson, B. (1999). Survival and Justice: Rethinking Teacher Union Strategy. In B. Peterson and M. Charney (Eds), *Transforming Teacher Unions: Fighting for better schools and social justice*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

- Putnam, R., Feldstein, L., & Cohen, D. (2003). *Better together: Restoring the American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Reading the World. Paulo Freire in Conversation with Professor Carlos Alberto Torres.*
Produced by ACCESS public television. Province of Alberta, Canada, 1991.
- Rogers, J & Terriquez, V. (2009). “More Justice”: The Role of Organized Labor in Educational Reform. *Educational Policy*. 23: 216.
- Shirley, D. (1997). *Community organizing for urban school reform*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Shirley, D. (2002). *Valley Interfaith and school reform: Organizing for power in South Texas*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Shirley, D. (2008). Promoting Participatory Democracy Through Community Organizing. In F. Peterman (Ed), *Partnering to Prepare Urban Teachers: A Call to Activism*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Shirley, D. (2009). Community organizing and educational change: a reconnaissance. *Journal for Educational Change*. 10: 229-237.
- Tattersall, A., & Reynolds, D. (2007). The shifting power of labor-community coalitions: Identifying common elements of powerful coalitions in Australia and the U.S. *WorkingUSA: The Journal of Labor and Society*, 10(1), 77-102.
- Torres, C.A. (1998). *Education, Democracy, and Multiculturalism: Dilemmas of Citizenship in a Global World*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Voss, K., & Sherman, R. (2000). Breaking the iron law of oligarchy: Union revitalization in the American labor movement. *American Journal of Sociology*, 106, 303-349.
- Warren, M. R. (2001). *Dry bones rattling: Community building to revitalize American democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Warren, M.R., Mapp, K.L. & The Community Organizing and School Reform Project.

(2011). *A Match on Dry Grass: Community Organizing as a Catalyst for School Reform*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Warren, M.R. (2010). Building a Political Constituency for Urban School Reform. *Urban Education* 46(3) 484–512.

Wolf, Diane (Ed). (1996). *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.