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Addressing the Learning Needs at Occupy DC

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine how learning can help the Occupy movement in Washington DC. It explores three questions. What are the learning needs of the movement? What educational content can help meet those needs? And how can education be practiced in a way that most effectively addresses the learning needs within the real world circumstances of the movement? Research methods include participant observation, surveys, interviews, focus groups, literature review, and primary document review. Data was coded into 11 outcome oriented learning needs and 3 educational orientations which are geared towards meeting those needs. This paper is organized by first looking at the background of the US Occupy movement; then describing research methods, my own involvement in the educational history of Occupy DC, findings in terms of learning needs and available educational content, and finally proposing processes for meeting learning needs. This paper concludes that an internal/community building approach, with a particular focus on healing and dialogue, was what could have been most helpful for advancing overall learning needs within Occupy DC, and outlines a proposal for developing a community support system, dialogue groups, as well as specific workshops related to healing and group dynamics and campaign strategy. This paper aims to also provide useful insight for the overall work of movement building, community organizing, social justice education, and social change theory.

Keywords: social justice, movement building, Occupy, training

Introduction and Background on the Occupy Movement

Each generation must discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it, in relative opacity.

-Frantz Fanon (2004, p.145)

The Occupy movement comes out of the context of growing wealth disparities and growing economic suffering following the 2008 financial crisis. Van Gelder (2011) described the Occupy movement as "[naming] the source of the crises of our time: Wall Street banks, big corporations, and others among the 1% are claiming the world's wealth for themselves at the expense of the 99% and having their way with our government" (p. 1). "We are the 99%" is a common Occupy message which reflects the fact that the average income of the richest 1% of Americans is over 34 times the average income of the bottom 90%, while the top .01% has almost 800 times the 90% (Gilson & Perot, 2011).

Inequality in the United States has been increasing over the last 30 years (Gilson & Perot, 2011). This is partially based in policy decisions. From a high in 1945 of 66.4%, the tax rate for the top income bracket has dropped to 32.4% in 2010. Among the 10 richest members of congress, all voted to maintain the most recent round of tax cuts on the wealthy. Corporate taxes, which amounted to over 30% of federal tax revenue in 1954, have dropped to under 10%, while payroll tax has risen from 10% to over 40%.   From 2007 to 2009, Wall Street profits rose 720% while the unemployment rate rose 102% and the average home equity dropped 35% (Gilson & Perot, 2011).

Additionally, there have been cuts to public funding for services targeting the working and middle class, and the influence of money in politics is supported by legal decisions such as corporate personhood (which gives corporations the same rights as people) and the Citizens

United ruling (which decided that money was speech). The 2008 financial crisis saw many lose

their homes, jobs, and investments while the government bailed out (with limited to no

regulation) the financial institutions most responsible for the crisis. These events are expressed

in the popular Occupy chant "banks got bailed out, we got sold out" (A. Batcher, field notes,

October 2011). This overall picture of increasing wealth concentration in the hands of the few,

which is supported by government intervention, led van Gelder (2011) to the conclusion

"[wealth] redistribution is exactly what has been happening for decades. Today's economy

redistributes wealth from the poor and middle class to those at the top" (p. 3).

Also, although the financial crisis began in 2008, there is a strong sense that it has not

ended and may not any time soon. Paul Krugman has chosen to label it as a sustained, so far five

year long, "depression" (Holland, 2012). Naomi Klein (2011) puts the crisis in an even broader

perspective, adding issues of the environment and cultural priorities,

> We all know, or at least sense, that the world is upside down: We act as if there is no end
> to what is actually finite—fossil fuels and the atmospheric space to absorb their
> emissions. And we act as if there are strict and immovable limits to what is actually
> bountiful—the financial resources to build the society we need (p. 47).

Klein (2011) further points out,

> The task of our time is to turn this around: to challenge this false scarcity. To insist that
> we can afford to build a decent inclusive society—while at the same time, respect the real
> limits to what the Earth can take (p. 47).

Responding to these issues, the US Occupy movement began in New York. Organizers

were connected to social movements internationally, including the Egyptian pro-democracy

struggle which overthrew the Mubarak regime and the anti-austerity protests in Spain and

Greece. Borrowing from the tactics of these global movements, New York created its own

General Assembly. The Canadian anti-capitalist magazine, *Adbusters*, called for a day of action

on September 17th, for people to "bring a tent," and occupy Wall Street, while the New York

City General Assembly set up the camp on the ground (Kroll, 2011). Taking inspiration from

New York, several Occupy sites sprang up. On October 15th, 2011 a global day of action was

planned which involved people in 951 cities in 82 countries protesting inequality, corruption, and

economics that **favor** the wealthy (Kroll, 2011). Since then the movement as a whole has been

under the "Occupy Together" umbrella (A. Batcher, field notes, October 2011).

The DC Occupy began in early October, before the global day of action on the 15th, and

was initiated by two separate camps. The first camp came organically from Occupy Wall Street,

and made its home in McPherson Square (a space already occupied by many homeless people).

The second camp, in Freedom Plaza, was initially planned as an anti-war protest on the 10th

anniversary of the Afghanistan War but changed its focus to stand in solidarity with the global

Occupy movement and resisting economic injustice as well as war (A. Batcher, field notes,

October 2011). Both camps in DC began with conflict over strategy, messaging, organizing

styles, social media tags, and some did not view Freedom Plaza as a "true occupation."

However, many participants in the movement (including me) went back and forth between

camps, both camps identified with Occupy, and the distinction became less relevant over time—

particularly after the camps were evicted.

The camps in DC, to an extent, had a focus on bank action that kept with the general

theme of the US Occupy movement. Bank actions included protests at banks, attempts to

temporarily shut banks down, and the Move your Money Campaign, which asked people to

move their money from banks to credit unions. Protests were also held at locations which

symbolized plutocracy. This included the Americans for Prosperity dinner (a group focused on

cutting domestic government spending), the Alfalfa Club (a dinner between politicians and the

wealthy), protests at the US Supreme Court around the anniversary of the Citizen's United

decision, and several actions on K-street (the heart of corporate lobbying). Major campaigns

were also developed around labor rights and union support, mass incarceration, debt, and

housing defense. There were several solidarity actions, such as marching in support of Occupy

Oakland after police crackdowns and marching in support of striking students in Montreal.

Other actions were conducted around issues of the environment, war, civil rights (particularly

after the passage of the National Defense Authorization Act), and Palestinian independence (A.

Batcher, field notes).

The camps themselves also held intrinsic meaning. The McPherson Square camp was a

very visible symbol of resistance on K Street. The Freedom Plaza camp also operated as a large

sign of people's outrage. Both camps played a major community building and outreach function.

People visited the sites, had critical conversations, and got involved with the movement. The

camps also offered free food, tents, sleeping bags, warm clothes, and educational events (A.

Batcher, field notes).

In early February, 2012, both Occupy DC camps were evicted. In the post-eviction

context, Occupy DC remained an active community—although the nature of the movement

changed. Sleepers in the camp went indoors to various locations in and around the city.

Committees and working groups still met, planned actions, and kept in touch through a

combination of email, social media, and the use of certain common spaces (A. Batcher, field

notes, 2012). This post eviction reality came to be dubbed "Occupy 2.0," and generally involved

people spreading from the camp into new neighborhoods (D. Grover, personal communication,

March 28, 2012).

This research examines both the pre-and post-eviction context of Occupy DC, with the

aim of figuring out how learning can be better promoted and integrated into the movement in

order to help it be a more effective social change and community building space.

Methods

The main approach to this research was participant observation. I spent most days at the camp while it was around, and spent four weeks (two at Freedom Plaza and two at McPherson Square) sleeping off and on in the camp. I attended General Assemblies and committee meetings, rallies and actions, and organized outreach. I also organized, participated in, and facilitated many educational activities; and started a free university working group (now called the DC Learning Collective). Throughout this experience I have kept field notes and emails which document my work. I also have access to the emails of the former McPherson Square training committee, and am on a listserv of trainers who support the movement nationally.

I conducted two needs assessments in order to identify learning needs. The first was a survey of 39 people. This was mainly information gathering and promotion for the Activist Sunday School that the DC Learning Collective put on. It involved a list of several options of what people could learn, and they could check off what interested them (see appendix A for the survey design and appendix B for the results). This survey was handed out in person on three separate days at both camps of Occupy DC.

A second needs assessment was conducted after the eviction. This involved focus groups with 4 Occupy DC working groups. This included roughly 8 members of the Peace House (people walked in and out), 7 members of Occupy Montgomery County, 5 members of Occupy the Hood, and 2 people who used to be involved in the Criminal Injustice Group. All of these focus groups were selected through collecting 42 email addresses of both working groups and individuals. I sent out a mass email inviting people to have a discussion about their goals and the steps they can take to achieve their goals, and said that this was also for the purpose of my research. 5 responded back, and I was able to schedule a meeting with 4 out of the 5. Between sending out my initial email and scheduling the focus groups, my contact with the Criminal

Injustice group left the group saying "it died a natural death" (although there were still meetings

and people involved). I thought it would still be interesting to get the perspective of people who

had left the group, so I asked if I could meet with him and some other members who had left.

We had a focus group of 2. For all focus groups, this needs assessment involved a roughly one

hour discussion in which I asked participants to list the goals of their group, select three goals

which they thought were most essential, and brainstorm steps for achieving these goals. I later

reviewed the goals and the steps and tried to ascertain what sort of learning could help bring the

steps into fruition.

Learning needs, curriculum, and the process for practicing education at Occupy were

further explored through interviews. This included many informal interviews and meetings

throughout my time at Occupy[1]. I also developed an interview questionnaire (see appendix C),

and conducted 5 more structured interviews with people who had given workshops for the

Occupy DC community. Interviewees were selected by recording all the educational events

since October that were scheduled by the McPherson Square training committee and also

recorded in my own notes (see appendix D for the list). I was able to identify 52 email addresses

of people who had given or organized workshops. I emailed all. 5 responded and scheduled

interviews.

Data was also collected from a listserv of trainers who had supported the Occupy

movement nationally, and from a regular survey of the Activist Sunday School which had an

attendance sheet that asked the question "what would you like a training on" (and was later

changed to "what would you like to learn about"). Finally, to develop my own curriculum

knowledge and gain a fuller appreciation for how to define and meet learning needs, I conducted

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[1] All interviewees have been given pseudonyms in this study, unless I am attributing a particular educational content
or process to them.

a literature review and primary document review of training materials.

Formal and informal interviews, field notes, the initial workshop interest survey, learning interests from the Activist Sunday School attendance sheet, emails from the national trainers' listserv, and needs assessment focus groups were all coded to identify outcome oriented learning need categories. To connect those outcome oriented learning needs with educational content, I found it useful to group the learning needs into 3 interconnected educational orientations. Content was identified through primary document review, personal experience as an educator and participant, and through consultation with other educators. Content was then connected to educational orientation categories, and the learning needs covered by that orientation (for a more thorough explanation refer to the introductions to the learning needs and the educational content sections of this paper).

All this data leads to the paper's conclusion, which creates recommendations for educational processes in the Occupy DC context.

Education and Movement Building at Occupy DC

At the beginning of the movement, there was a clear effort to have more than 1 training a day. Looking at the schedule created by the McPherson Square training group, there were 50 educational events between October 11th and November. In McPherson Square, early trainings were organized by the training committee which had a relatively heavier focus on nonviolent direct action (NVDA), de-escalation, and know-your-rights trainings. However, events ranged from health and food safety, to capitalism 101, to media training, to political theatre, to anti-racism, to teach-ins about the Arab spring, the Keystone XL pipeline, and many more subjects (see appendix D). Freedom Plaza did not have a training committee, but people would volunteer

to give workshops at the space, and there were many which happened in the first week, though that significantly reduced over time.

The number of trainings does not necessarily indicate the extent of those trainings' impact. Carlene Glazier described how "there was a lot of training at the beginning, but then people stopped showing up, and the organizers got tired" (personal communication, January 2012). Early in the movement I was focused on outreach trainings. At times it was a struggle to get participants (A. Batcher, field notes, October 2011). I also did not feel much support from organizers. At Freedom Plaza I set up my trainings with an organizer who did not communicate to others that my trainings would actually happen. I learned that to hold a training I had to create my own space for it. I had to just announce "outreach training is happening now! Meet me at the soapbox!" And sometimes I had to walk around the camp and convince people that it was worth their time to come. The actual numbers of participants I got ranged from around 5 to 10. I also discovered an interesting phenomenon at Occupy trainings. People have a tendency to walk in and out (A. Batcher, field notes, October-November 2011).

The number of trainings clearly declined at both camps. The McPherson Square training committee scheduled 30 trainings in November (down from 50 in October) and 12 in December, when the training committee became inactive. During this same period my own training approach was shifting. This began with noticing the limited accomplishments from outreach training and outreach organizing. I also had an interest in developing my strategy and nonviolent direct action training skills. And it was becoming increasingly clear that Occupy DC was having a lot of difficulties with its internal relationships.

After the initial two weeks at Occupy DC people often seemed tired and stressed. Some remarked about fights breaking out in the night (K. Demont, personal communication, November 2011) and difficulty dealing with "crazy people" (L. Marguez, personal communication, October

2011). I realized I could not appreciate what the sleepers in the camps were going through

without sleeping there myself; so I did, and that gave me a deeper appreciation of the learning

needs. During my stay I heard screaming at night. One morning I was woken up by a man

upturning a table in front of the McPherson Square kitchen. On another morning, in Freedom

Plaza, I inserted myself between a man who tried (and failed) to take the donation box and other

people who were chasing after him (A. Batcher, field notes, October to November 2011). While

all these events were going on, I switched my focus from Outreach to what I broadly classified as

"solidarity building."

I developed new trainings. The first was called "Nonviolence and Solidarity," which

explored the concepts of microaggression, identity, and empathy; and involved a lot of dialogue

(A. Batcher, field notes, November 2011). The second training was focused on triggers (the

moment someone starts to get angry) and de-escalation. This used a lot of role play. I was also

asked to mediate the splitting up of different factions within the Freedom Plaza camp, wherein I

used some nonviolent communication tools. I was later asked to facilitate two introductory

nonviolent communication workshops; one in the Peace House and one in the Mt. Rainier House

(activist houses which split off from Occupy). I was also asked to address racial tensions at

Freedom Plaza, where I encouraged dialogue and brought in anti-oppression definitions (A.

Batcher, field notes January-February, 2012).

These were rewarding efforts. Yet they felt very small in comparison to the scale of the

problems. I started thinking about not just focusing my efforts on meeting certain specific needs

through isolated workshops, but of integrating learning throughout the Occupy movement in a

way which could address multiple needs in the long term. In December I started talking about

creating a free university operating out of McPherson Square, and I started holding "Daily

Learn-Ins" (and daily was Monday through Friday, and eventually I also took out Wednesday),

wherein I would come to the McPherson Square camp, hold up a sign, make an announcement, gather people, sit in a circle, and talk about issues that were affecting the camp (A. Batcher, field notes, December 2011 through February 2012).

For the learn-ins (see appendix E for my initial learn-in proposal), some of the topics included community building, the struggles of women in the movement, balancing outside life with movement activities, inter-occupy cooperation, how to use the space post-eviction, and the process of unifying the movement around goals (see appendix F for a longer list). Meetings were usually between one and two hours. For the most part they would have roughly seven people. Occasionally numbers would be above ten or as little as three. These 'learn-ins' brought diverse people together. They generated conversation and ideas. Activities also periodically came out of the conversations, such as a man who decided to invite his congressperson to visit the camp, and people who organized a welcome to the New Year event. Additionally, people besides me started facilitating their own learn-ins. However, this activity was ultimately disrupted when the Occupy DC eviction happened (A. Batcher, field notes, December, 2011 through February 2012).

In terms of the free university, I found other people who were excited about this, we started a working group, and this working group spread ideas about the importance of education in movement building both within McPherson Square and DC educational institutions. Shortly before the eviction, the free university working group changed its name to the DC Learning Collective (DCLC) which had the dual goals of supporting the Occupy movement and going beyond the Occupy movement. Basically this meant promoting education which could support Occupy DC (and possibly other movements), and be used as a tool for outreach, building the local activist community, and connecting people together (A. Batcher, field notes, January-February, 2012). Essentially the DCLC was one representation of the overall Occupy 2.0

strategy of expanding the movement beyond the camp.

From the eviction of the camp in February to now, the DCLC has taken on a number of projects which involved both supporting and expanding movements. The main project I have been involved in, and the one which was most geared towards supporting Occupy DC, was the Activist Sunday School. We set up a number of events at a local nonprofit with rotating facilitators (see appendix D for a complete list of topics). These were generally two to three hour sessions, with 10 to 25 people. We tried to keep up with the learning needs of the Occupy community. Our first workshop was about strategy and tactics, which was the top ranked learning interest reported in the first needs assessment survey. Our second workshop was about Spokescouncils[2] and Affinity Groups, and was requested by the Occupy DC facilitation committee. Our third workshop was geared to support some members of the DCLC in putting on their own workshop, and we essentially provided a training for trainers space with this. Afterwards we made it a priority to address racism, sexism, and general oppression within Occupy, as people (including DCLC members) were increasingly commenting that these were issues. We continued with more history and strategy workshops, as that was an ongoing subject that learners were interested in, and many educators thought was important. We also started talking about doing workshops related to self-care when we started sensing that the movement was struggling with burnout. Ironically, logistical difficulties related to the organizers' own needs for self-care kept this from going forward. Then we put the Activist Sunday School on hiatus.

My experiences and other experiences explored through interviews, surveys, email

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[2] A spokescouncil is essentially a meeting among committees as opposed to individuals. The spokescouncil process involves committee members consulting each other on meeting agenda items and then designating a "spoke" who will represent that committee to the entire group.

reviews, and focus groups provide a lot of insight into Occupy DC's unique learning needs and the challenges of meeting those needs.

Learning Needs at Occupy DC

Many trainers have remarked on the importance of designing curriculum beginning from a needs assessment (Barbazette, 2006; Pareek & Lynton, 2000; Bell & Griffin, 2007). Needs assessments can be designed to determine specific performance gaps, whether a training is feasible, who is the audience for a training, what are the contextual requirements to make a training successful, what are the goals behind the desired improvement, and what does it mean to do a job or task effectively (Barbazette, 2006). A thorough needs assessment can help provide direction for both the content and the process for education which will be most relevant for the movement's success.

For the purpose of this paper, a learning need is a subject of study that supports the achievement of both individual and collective goals among participants of the Occupy movement. Learning represents change within the learners; and this change is directed towards some outcome. To help analyze the data, I have divided learning needs into 11 outcome oriented categories. These categories are social theory, planning, capacity building, resilient cooperation, inclusive processes, expanding the movement, spreading messages, effective resistance, cultural autonomy, content knowledge, and skill development. It is important to note that these categories can overlap and reinforce each other. For example, effective resistance often supports spreading a message. In the rest of this section I will examine these outcome/goal oriented learning categories and then explore how to meet them in the content and program sections.

Planning

Social movement strategy was the number one learning interest in the first needs assessment survey. Trainers on the national trainers to support Occupy email list discussed how tactics should fit the movement, that activists should consider the strategic impact of their actions, that there should be a power analysis, and a general sense that training in the Occupy movement needed to move more towards strategy over time. In Occupy DC there has been interest in developing both a grand strategy for social change and a more focused strategy for specific campaigns. Occupy Our Homes has run several anti-foreclosure campaigns in the DC area. The Criminal Injustice Group (CIG) has been running a campaign to boycott Wells Fargo and, during the focus group with former CIG members, we discussed the importance of having more short term campaigns as well. At the same time, there are groups like Occupy the Plan (now called The Strategists), which have been discussing grand strategy.

Allyson Kampa criticized the tendency to focus on campaigns as "not revolutionary" and mentioned the importance of delving into revolutionary theory to create a revolutionary movement. Kampa identified herself as coming from a Marxist perspective. She also described herself as a "scientific" and "not dogmatic" Marxist, and that the Bolshevik revolution is not appropriate now, indicating that she sees a need to develop new strategies to fit our current era (A. Kampa, personal communication, August 27, 2012). One participant in the activist Sunday School described "revolution" as what ze[3] would want a training on. I have been to many gatherings where statements like "end capitalism" are met with applause. At the same time Saundra Hyun described her attraction to the Money out of Politics conference because "it was not about burning down the establishment." Hyun further went on to describe how she saw the

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[3] Ze is a gender neutral pronoun this paper will sometimes use to replace she or he.

Money out of Politics group as pursuing something very realistic (S. Hyun, personal

communication, August 29, 2012).

For the purpose of addressing learning needs, whether someone seeks revolutionary

strategy or reform strategy, grand strategy and/or campaign strategy, the outcome sought is a

plan; a way to organize action to achieve desired ends.

Expanding the movement

Among participants at the Activist Sunday School, movement building was by far the

most requested subject matter. Some specified that movement building indicated "going beyond

DC" and "growing the movement." All needs assessment focus groups identified a desire to

connect with members of "the community." For Occupy the Hood, this meant residents of the

Anacostia area in Washington DC. There was discussion of holding block parties to get more

people involved and find local leadership. For Occupy Montgomery County, the group wanted

to connect with more Montgomery County Maryland residents, and to keep solidarity with

Occupy DC. For the former members of the Criminal Injustice Group, they wanted to work with

people who had been affected by the criminal (in)justice system, and were looking for those most

affected to take on leadership roles.

Both Occupy Montgomery County and the former members of the Criminal Injustice

group wanted to make their spaces into fun and supportive places to be. Both thought having

food at gatherings was a good idea, and wanted to offer child care/make them children-friendly

places. The former members of the Criminal Injustice group discussed the example of planting a

community garden while having music play and inviting people in as a good model for fun and

productive action. They also wanted to figure out how to plug in to what other people were

doing related to their community and issues.

The national trainer's list did not tend to focus on expanding the movement except for an early discussion about putting together a systematized approach for people joining an Occupy site or looking to start an Occupy site.

Resilient Cooperation

On the national trainer's listserv, and in my own experience when the camps were still active, how to handle barriers to community well-being was the most often discussed learning need. One of the trainers on the national list used the term resiliency, and I realized this term described the type of space people wanted. It was not just about working together, but working together with all the challenges of differences, of privilege and marginalization, of anti-social behavior, of police interference, of shifting attitudes towards the movement, etc.

One of the challenges for resiliency was basic physical and material needs. Money was part of this. Fundraising was a major concern for the Peace House as their main role was to make use of a property in DC which they needed money to keep. "Finance" was also written in the needs assessment survey. Other physical and material needs revolved around camping outside in the cold. In December there was a great deal of discussion about winterizing the camp. One Occupier I spoke with described himself as "too busy, thinking about how to survive" (D. Combes, personal communication, December 2011). The need for winterization skills was also identified in the national trainers' list. In addition to winter survival, there were general issues with the physical conditions of living in a camp. One Occupier reflected on how, "for most of human history, we have struggled with figuring out how to live outdoors," and how "living outdoors for an extended period really messes with your head" (J. Pressuti, personal communication, December, 2011).

There were issues of safety. Fights broke out with regularity (K. Demont, personal

communication, November 2011). Sofia Demaio discussed sexual assault in the camp (personal communication, September 5, 2012). When Wes Gares did a training at Occupy DC, he described happening upon an argument between a man and three women who were yelling at the man and wearing signs that said "womanizer," "sexual predator," and that the man had "violated community norms" (personal communication, August 17, 2012). A substantial portion of Occupy DC's funds were stolen by someone on the finance committee. On the national trainers' listserv a recurring topic was how to deal with disruption, mental illness, trauma, and substance abuse.

Lack of safety also connects to challenges with enforcing community standards. This problem was particularly compounded by distrust of police. It should be noted that this distrust did have basis in personal experiences with police harassment. Resorting to police to maintain community safety was generally lamented, though they had on occasion been called in. At the same time this distrust of police created incentives to not address violations of community standards because the movement did not have clarity in how to humanely handle anti-social behavior. Saundra Hyun argued that Occupy tried to break away from mainstream society and create a viable, healthy, and just alternative. But, because there were no rules, it broke down. Hyun said there were various attempts at creating rules to differing degrees of success but, in the end, these rules just created a "warped and fucked up society" (personal communication, August 29, 2012).

Now that the camps are no longer there, these learning needs around security are less dire, though still present. For example, Occupy DC had been renting an office space which they were asked to leave after someone kicked the door. One trainer described how "some are disruptive because it seems like it is their desire to disrupt." Another trainer described how "people are craving to be heard" and that sometimes people act to get heard at a time and place

which ends up being disruptive.   Isabel Corveno described how people feel like they don't have

a voice and are marginalized, and sometimes use that as an excuse to marginalize others

(personal communication, August 15, 2012).

Another challenge for building a resilient and cooperative community had to do with

conflict among the diverse group of people in the community. While the camps were operational

there were a number of complaints about homeless people who "don't do any work at the camp

but are just there for a meal." Some talked about how they were fed up with "the crazy people"

(A. Batcher, field notes October 2011-January 2012). Sofia Demaio described how Occupy DC

had a lot of racism, sexism, and ableism (particularly around mental illness) (personal

communication, September 5, 2012). The McPherson Square camp was placed where many

homeless were known to sleep, meaning that Occupiers were essentially claiming and

politicizing already occupied land. There were ideological differences. Saundra Hyun described

it as a place where "the more mainstream you were the more discredited you were" (personal

communication, August 29, 2012). Over time many women left the camp. One man, Jeremy,

who was very involved in the operations and physical structure of the camp, often spoke to me

about how there were divisions between the people who slept in the camp and the people who

came to GA but did not spend the night or do the work to maintain the camp (J. Abelson,

personal communication, December, 2011).

Many trainers saw awareness of privilege and oppression, and the development of an

anti-oppression identity, as key to addressing these issues. The question of, how do you actually

build solidarity, was raised both among national trainers and among people involved in Occupy

DC. National trainers remarked on how many people had never heard of the idea that racism

(and other forms of oppression) are structural as opposed to attitudinal. This was largely my

experience with discussing oppression both in trainings and in the daily learn-ins. Marco Schoon

argued that issues of privilege and oppression have a long history of undermining movements (personal communication, March 18, 2012). There have been multiple times at Occupy when I have heard offhanded use of derogatory expressions like "armchair activists," "pussies," and "don't be a little girl about it" (A. Batcher, field notes).

On the individual workshop survey, anti-oppression/collective liberation was second in the most wanted subject matter (behind social movement strategy). In the Activist Sunday School, some learning interests included: race, patriarchy and movement building, fighting personal prejudices, and experiences with challenging patriarchy on the ground. For the needs assessment focus group with Occupy the Hood, developing an anti-oppression awareness and identity was a desired learning objective.

Another learning need related to building resilient cooperation was group dynamics. In my own observation of Occupy DC, it was a collaborative community that fed itself, clothed itself, educated itself, built structures together, etc. All these processes however had struggles. In some Occupy DC circles I have seen people regularly direct critical remarks towards each other. Sometimes this tendency has been attributed to the challenge of trying to create social change under stressful circumstances, and trying to meet basic needs—like finding a job, a place to stay, and enough food to eat (A. Batcher, field notes, July 2011). Teambuilding can help both the movement and people in the movement to support each other and collaborate through these challenges.

Finally, burnout is another issue related to resiliency. Camping in the park and full-time unpaid activism is a major commitment. Many left the movement over time. And the movement itself experienced traumatic moments both in terms of a lack of safety and through events like the eviction of McPherson Square which saw much police violence. The weight of maintaining oneself and one's commitment to the cause in the face of such opposition is taxing.

Effective Resistance

In the individual workshop survey, nonviolent direct action was ranked fourth among the thirteen options of workshops people would like to take. At the Activist Sunday School, some of the topics people wanted to learn about included: how to win direct actions, how to plan, target, and execute an action to be effective and impactful, black bloc tactics, and affinity groups/allies in action. On the national trainer list there were a number of mentions of blockade trainings and anti-foreclosure work. Anti-foreclosure campaigns have been common at Occupy, both in DC and nationally, and blockade is a frequent anti-foreclosure direct action tactic. There was also mention about the importance of de-escalation related to nonviolent direct action and one trainer mentioned "developing an anti-oppression direct action training [through an] anti-racist lens."

In Occupy DC itself, some have talked about wanting to see more creative direct actions, to make actions more effective, and to come up with simple expressions of resistance that anyone can do.   Some have talked about wanting to learn from effective actions in the past. Generally however, in my experience, how to resist effectively was not as widely discussed as I have seen in other movements. My conclusion is this is because effective resistance is defined in relation to the goals, theory, and strategy that activists are operating from. With unclear goals there is limited ability to evaluate resistance, and a limited basis to discuss what makes it effective.

Cultural Autonomy

In the national trainers' list there was a lot of discussion about the importance of creating a culture of nonviolence. Arguments for this culture were outlined in a letter to the Occupy movement which stated that a culture of strategic nonviolence would require people to make clear agreements about which tactics to use, that strategic nonviolence was "impossible to

sabotage" because it involved "tactics that the state can't co-opt," and that the commitment to

creating a culture of strategic nonviolence was also a commitment to creating a culture of mutual

respect within the Occupy community (Swanson, 2012).

Conversations about the movement's commitment to nonviolence have been going on at

Occupy DC. While my experience with activism has been almost exclusively nonviolent[4],

philosophical conversations about violence are almost always deeply divided. I had a long a

conversation with a man who used to run the McPherson Square kitchen who was upset by some

of the symbols and rhetoric of violence he saw around the camp. He made it a major point to

talk about violence, specifically mentioning that advocating violence made us open to infiltration

from agent provocateurs who could use violence to undermine the movement and justify police

repression (J. Rosman, personal communication, October 2011).

Following a controversial action at the Americans for Prosperity Dinner, in which four

activists were hit by a car and a woman was pushed down the stairs, there was a well-attended

General Assembly in McPherson Square which mostly involved discussing the importance of

developing a culture of nonviolence, and healing from the violent nature of the society we live

in. In this discussion, I spoke about strategic nonviolence to add another perspective. Since

then, whether related to this discussion or not, I have not worried as much that violence could

break out like I did during the Americans for Prosperity dinner. But I have not heard a lot of

discussion about what it means to be nonviolent.

Philosophies about violence and nonviolence are controversial in movement spaces but to

me this debate identifies a broader need. The movement has to figure out what values it cares

about and how it advances those values within itself and the world. Cultural autonomy is the

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[4] Exceptions depend on the definition of violence used. I have seen protesters throw things, damage property, and insult police. I have not seen protesters use aggressive physical force against people en masse.

general outcome sought. That is, activists seek independence from status quo ways of making

sense of the world, understanding relationships, what it means to be a certain identity, etc. My

friend and collaborator in the DC Learning Collective, Juliana Barnet uses the term "liberated

zones" to describe specific spaces and times where there is experimentation in cultural resistance

(J. Barnet, personal communication, March 2012). Cultural autonomy is also expressed in

counter cultural symbols—political music, the red and black of anarcho-syndicalism[5], the raised

fist of the Serbian Otpur movement which deposed Slobodan Milosevik, and in the stories that

movement participants tell about movement life.

One element of cultural autonomy desired by Occupy DC is finding alternatives to the

criminal (in)justice system. This is reflected in the desire to not bring police into problems of the

camp. It was also a key goal expressed by the former members of the Criminal Injustice Group.

Two people at the Activist Sunday School also wrote down an interest in learning about

alternatives to police. Jenn Polish did a workshop on restorative justice, which she said was

really about "transformative justice." The difference was that the reintegrative focus of

restorative justice makes the assumption that society, as it is, is a good thing to be reintegrated

into, and that transformative justice was more appropriate for Occupy as it insists that society

needs to change (personal communication, September 5, 2012).

Spreading a message

In the various versions of needs assessments, spreading a message was rarely addressed

though not absent. At the Activist Sunday School, one person wrote about having an interest in

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[5] Anarcho-syndicalism is a social, economic, and political philosophy which rejects both capitalism and the nation-state. It views direct action from the workers as the main means of change. It promotes worker solidarity, autonomy, and cooperative social and economic relationships. It is sometimes symbolized by the colors red and black.

media, another in communication, and another in "appealing across the moral matrix," which I

understand to mean being able to connect with people who have diverse moral and political

perspectives. In the first needs assessment survey there were two categories related to spreading

a message. These were outreach[6] and media/messaging. 15 and 18 people respectively said they

were interested in those topics (out of a total of 39).

Despite this, there is a strong sense of the necessity of outreach, largely as a means to

expand the movement. For the focus group needs assessments of Occupy Montgomery County,

the Peace House, and Occupy the Hood, outreach was discussed. Occupy Montgomery County

had an interest in reaching out to Montgomery County's immigrant population. The Peace

House expressed a desire to let the surrounding community know about them. They also became

very involved in a 31 year peace vigil in front of the White House, and wanted to develop

messaging to talk about the Peace House at the peace vigil, and to talk about the peace vigil at

the Peace House. For Occupy the Hood, I came to two meetings, and both times they were

unveiling a new message and discussing how to make connections into the Anacostia

community.

The national trainer's list recognized a need around learning "how to engage with

community folks and labor." There was also a comment about how people haven't been thinking

about outreach, and that the best approach was to go into communities and listen. From my own

experience with outreach at Occupy DC, the importance of listening to people while doing

outreach reliably came up (A. Batcher, field notes).

Occupy Montgomery County, the former Criminal Injustice group, and the Peace House

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[6] Note, it may seem that outreach belongs in the "expanding the movement" section. However, I chose to put it in this section because learning outreach is really about gaining confidence with communicating a message, and that message is not necessarily about expanding the movement. It could be about awareness raising, fundraising, challenging certain popular notions, etc.

all also talked about developing their message. Occupy Montgomery County talked about

needing to do research in order to have an informed message. The former Criminal Injustice

group talked about needing to be able to discuss the alternatives to the criminal (in)justice

system. The Peace House discussed needing to have specific programs to invite people to.

Social Theory

There are a handful of very dedicated people who have spoken about the importance of

political education. Allyson Kampa described the learning needs she thought were important as

"knowing facts about the reality you're living," having "eyes wide open about the end game

vision," exploring the origins of economic crisis, and having a systematic and historical analysis

of capitalism and oppression. Kampa further went on to describe her belief that "some group

really needs to dig into theory" (personal communication, August 27, 2012). Part of this

involves articulating the context people are living in, and connecting that context into the global

political-economic order and its development throughout history. This need was also recognized

by the national trainers' network where there was discussion about the limited political education

among many in the Occupy movement. In DC, in the needs assessment survey, one person

wrote about wanting to learn "specific historical events." Another person wrote that ze was

interested in "policies and economic principles" and "how these affect the community."

On the first needs assessment survey, most of the write-in results indicated a desire to

learn theory with an anti-capitalist perspective. These included people wanting to learn about

"consensual governance/anarcho-syndicalism," "alternative economic models," how to "end

capitalism," and two people wrote in "anti-imperialism." Many of the voices for political

education were coming from a Marxist perspective (though not necessarily the same Marxist

perspective). On the other hand Saundra Hyun mentioned having opposition to Marxism and

Anarchism, and characterized many Occupy DC participants as "promoting their pet view of the world." Hyun was also interested in theory, and talked about the importance of content, fact, and valuing learning (personal communication, August 29, 2012).

Other theories that had been explored include Occupy the Plan using the theories of Gene Sharp. Horizontalism (or non-hierarchy) is a widely respected theoretical concept at Occupy DC. Anti-Oppression Theory is used to advocate for greater equality between the marginalized and those privileged relative to that marginalization.

Inclusive Process

On the national trainer's list, there was a decent amount of talk about challenges with meetings. One trainer commented on how most occupiers were not trained in consensus, that concerns, stand asides, and reservations, were not being presented, and that blocking was being misused[7]. The relatively common usage of blocking in some Occupy circles has led to the adoption of a modified consensus, such as consensus minus 1. In DC, consensus decision making is one of the more established practices. There has been much educational work around consensus and facilitation, including both workshops and regular introductions to the general assembly (GA) process at the beginning of many GAs.

In DC some have described the GA as a liberating space with an innovative process for making inclusive decisions (D. Grover, personal communication, February, 2012; S. Snowden, personal communication, March, 2012). Another sentiment I sometimes heard was "fuck the GA" (G. Long, personal communication, December, 2011; J. Gibbons, personal communication, December, 2011). There were some contentious GAs which took many hours, although these

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[7] Blocking is supposed to be extremely rare (only over decisions one might leave the group over).

were exceptions and not the rule. (A. Batcher, field notes, October-January 2011). Also, Hyun described how some of the GA processes, when taken out of the GA context, were much less effective. She was particularly talking about people's experience at the Money out of Politics conference, where people were looking to have informal and unstructured dialogue (S. Hyun, personal communication, August 29, 2012).

In DC, there have been some attempts to spread GAs into other neighborhoods. The Mount Pleasant General Assembly and Occupy Montgomery County have both done this, while Occupy the Hood has given this some discussion. At the same time, there are serious concerns about the facilitation process. One which warrants particular attention is that facilitation can actually disrupt inclusivity and reinforce oppression. Kevin Rocha stated, in reference to the GA, "they never left time for what black folks had to say" (personal communication, April, 2012). Jenn Polish described her experience of giving a training on transformative justice in which she talked about process being used to marginalize people and, during the training, a black man was almost shut down for speaking out of order (personal communication, September 5, 2012). One trainer discussed how there needed to be openness to more different forms of expression, and how norms could be changed "to make room for people rather than force them into 'our' process." Isabel Corveno also reflected this sentiment when she said "if you're trying to change the system you need to change the rules" (personal communication, August 15, 2012). Learning about how process tends to reflect the cultural norms of the group in power, how there is often conflict between process and inclusivity, and the importance of flexibility, are needs that are especially important when considering spreading the GA and the movement.

The Occupy DC facilitation structure faced particular difficulty when moving to a spokescouncil model. Part of the challenge was that the spokescouncil specifically existed to distribute money, and people started coming to meetings only when their committee wanted

money. This meant that money went to whoever happened to show up, and people became upset

with how funds were distributed after the fact because they weren't at the decision making

moment. Additionally people were uncertain about what constituted a committee (did it need to

be approved by the GA, was there a difference between committees and working groups, etc.).

This also meant people were uncertain about who was allowed to speak, and who was allowed to

get money (E. Mendes, personal communication, August 5, 2012). This created further

examples of process reinforcing oppression when Tania Rallis, who was black and female,

described trying to talk in the Spokescouncil as a representative of the women's caucus. The

largely white Spokescouncil debated whether she was allowed to speak at all because the

women's caucus was a working group and not a committee. Tania noted that "in the time they

spent talking about whether I could speak they could have just let me" (personal communication,

January, 2012).

On the National Trainer's list there was regular discussion of disruption. When I

facilitated daily learn-ins there were several times when people came in to the middle of the

space drunk and yelling. The national list also discussed structure. What this meant was often

not specified though I assume it included issues of facilitation, decision making, the distribution

of labor and responsibilities, and communication. While communication and the distribution of

labor were not frequently discussed in any needs assessment, they certainly were issues in the

camp. For example, at both Occupy DC sites, running the kitchen ended up being a more than

full-time job, which had a limited number of people qualified and willing to take it on. This

meant that one or two people would be stuck with constantly working (J. Goldstein, personal

communication, December 2011; A. Reagan, personal communication, November, 2011; J.

Rosman, personal communication, October 2011). The Peace House also indicated that much of

the work was done by three people.

In terms of communication and responsibility, Tania Rallis described her experience of looking for information and having great difficulty knowing who was responsible for it (personal communication, January 2012). How to get in contact with committees was often unclear. The general line was "committees meet after GA," but not every committee would meet after every GA. It took me over a month to get in contact with the McPherson Square outreach committee. The Freedom Plaza outreach committee did not exist until I started it, yet before I started it I spent a lot of time looking for this committee which people assured me actually did exist. Finally, it became clear that transparency was a major issue in Occupy DC after money was stolen from the finance committee.

Capacity Building

This category reflects many discussions among educators about learning to learn. Many involved in both the Occupy Movement nationally and DC have lamented about a lower desire for learning than what they would like to see. A particularly illustrative story came from Devora Liss who described a workshop about the tent city movement that swept across Israel in the summer of 2011, calling for social justice while protesting rising costs of living and the deterioration of public services. Liss believed that there were things Occupy could learn from this movement, but said that a lot of people just came to scream about Palestine (personal communication, August 29, 2012).

On the national trainers' list, one person described hosting a workshop where 30 people signed up but 8 showed. Another person expressed that there was a strong need for learning but that "every time you organize something ahead of time, try to do it well, someone else in Occupy will organize something for the same day." There were a few times when I had a training or 'learn-in' planned but found out that an action had been planned on top of it or that people were

busy discussing the crisis of the day. Another person on the national list raised the crucial

problem that people who take trainings often have more experience with the subject matter than

the general population, and thus are not actually the main target that trainers want to reach.

Allyson Kampa and Juliana Barnet both described activism in the US as particularly

focused on advocacy action, and did not tend to prioritize education. Barnet made this

conclusion based on her experiences with popular education in Latin America (J. Barnet,

personal communication, April, 2012). Kampa described this as being the result of a campaign

oriented activist culture which is more focused on the goals of the campaign rather than general

learning for the movement's overall capacity. Kampa further stated that it was important for

movements to have educators who actively promote the importance of education, and to have a

"division of labor" between organizers and educators (A. Kampa, personal communication,

August 27, 2012).

In addition to general attitudes towards learning, training for trainers was an often

discussed topic. Leah Hines mentioned several times that it was important for the movement's

capacity (personal communication, January, 2012). While trainers can help raise the overall

knowledge, skill, awareness, etc. of movement participants, training trainers *within the movement*

would have a multiplied effect. Plus, those who were trained in training could further their skills

to support other movements.

One of the main efforts of the national trainers' list was to organize a training for trainers

(T4T) in New York. Following this a number of trainings for trainers occurred related to the

Occupy movement. I went to two in Philadelphia. For both of these T4Ts in Philadelphia, and

for the T4T in New York, there was discussion about how people had very different skill levels

coming in to the training. One trainer described how it was problematic to have people at a

nonviolent direct action (NVDA) training for trainers with no previous NVDA experience. In

Occupy DC this issue was also a concern that greatly stalled the process of creating T4Ts. DC did eventually develop a trainer's network with regular **skill-shares** that explored how to use different training tools. However, this trainer's collective is facing the same problem of diverse levels of experience.

Another issue about training is the skill set of the trainers. One person on the national trainers' list remarked that "rusty trainers have more NVDA skills but not strategy." There were many questions about the content which should be focused on in T4Ts. There was also a desire to have more trainers who were people of color.

One difficulty in DC was that training for trainers was not high on people's list of things to learn. In the first needs assessment survey it was the lowest ranked of all options, with 6 people saying they were interested. Yet it was not a completely absent desire. At the Activist Sunday School, one person wrote ze was interested in training for trainers, and specified this was in the categories of anti-oppression, campaign plans, and facilitation. In the focus group needs assessments, Occupy the Hood expressed an interest in training for trainers. This was connected to a desire to raise consciousness of people in the area, and to have a day school. Occupy the Hood also discussed wanting to develop local leadership, which I saw as connected to the general outcome of building capacity—more people who can do more things.

Content Knowledge

The last two categories, content knowledge and skill building, are essentially catch-all categories for learning interests which do not fall into other areas. Content knowledge refers to a desire to comprehend a particular subject. Responses from this category come solely from the Activist Sunday School, and include "food justice issues," "change, eco-justice," "social justice," and "land rights, take back the land." I realize that some of these could, for example, be put into

other categories. Social justice might go in theory. "Take back the land" could be referring to the resistance approach of the organization of that same name. But this is unclear, and these learning interests are essentially outliers in the overall Occupy DC conversation (though certainly not absent from the space). To me this represents that Occupy DC does have a variety of perspectives and interests, and that it is important to be able to provide learning which can connect to that diversity.

Skill Development

For skill development, I am including a number of things which could be put in a variety of categories but were not expressed as outcome oriented. For example, one of the categories in the needs assessment survey was art and social change. 16 of 39 expressed interest in this. But "art and social change" does not say whether it is art for making a banner that will be used in an action or for creating a symbol for the movement or as a method of expressing frustration with the injustice of the world. The outcome sought is simply to build skills which could be widely applicable. In the world of art, creativity was also mentioned in the Activist Sunday School. Other skill related learning interests included computer classes, "computer software w/other devices for use in organizing," "organizing/policy," "medic," and "Spanish."

Educational Content

This section will outline broad directions for educational content which might be useful for Occupy DC. A lot of the content explored in this section is geared towards multiple learning needs. For example, listening skills help promote both resilient cooperation and an inclusive process. However, there is a tendency for curricula to address particular groupings of learning

needs. I have named these groupings "orientations," and they include capacity orientation,

internal/community building orientation, and external/advocacy orientation. For the purposes of

this study, capacity orientation primarily addresses the learning needs for social theory, capacity

building, content knowledge, skill building, and expanding the movement. Internal/community

building orientation primarily addresses resilient cooperation, inclusive processes, and cultural

autonomy. External/advocacy orientation primarily addresses planning, spreading a message,

and effective resistance. It is important to note that, just like with learning needs, these

orientations are always interconnected and the barriers between them are fluid.

Capacity Orientation

Capacity orientation focuses on the ability of movement participants to articulate values,

recognize barriers to their values, initiate activity, and comprehend the significance of their

activity. Theory is part of this. The ability to access critical social theory, theories of change,

and, to the extent possible, theories of what the world can be, create the awareness necessary to

devise and implement plans for change. Attitudinally, confidence and the willingness to face

fear help promote the ability to initiate action, and both these attitudes are fostered by supportive

spaces. Capacity is also built via spreading the knowledge, skills, attitudes, awareness, and

language which help the movement function. Training for trainers is geared towards this, as is

establishing a movement culture which values learning.

To explore theory, many use popular education methods which derive theory from

experience (Freire, 1993; Horton, 1997). This can be done in informal conversation groups

(such as the daily 'learn-ins'), and can be aided by materials. Walda Katz-Fishman uses a

timeline of US social movements from Project South which participants can look at and reflect

on how their own movement experience fits into the whole (personal communication, April 29,

2012; Project South, n.d.). Bill Moyers Movement Action Plan provides an overview of how social movements tend to develop (Moyers, McAllister, Finley, & Soifer, 2001), which can also aid in understanding people's experiences in movements. I have also explored peoples' experiences with privilege and marginalization through using privilege checklists. These originate from Peggy McIntosh's white privilege checklist, which outlines several invisible advantages white people gain from being white (McIntosh, 1990). Many other forms of privilege checklists have been adapted from this, and are easily found online.

Of particular interest for Occupy DC is discussion about capitalism as the current political and economic context we live in. Understanding the system helps create awareness for how to address the system. The theoretical framework of dialectical historical materialism (sometimes called scientific Marxism) provides a basis for critiquing capitalism (Laaman, 2008). Structural functionalism is a contrasting theory that focuses on the roles social systems play and their tendency to maintain themselves (Keel, 2012). I have seen capitalism explored through relating current and historical events to both these perspectives. Occupy participants may also be interested in exploring political-economic theory from an Anarchist perspective and from more recent perspectives such as David Korten, who advocates for free market anti-capitalism (Korten, 2009) and the process of global relocalization (the opposite of globalization) which is advanced by the Post Carbon Institute (n.d.).

Nonviolence theory is also relevant to Occupy DC. Central to strategic nonviolence is the pluralistic model of power which views political power as not isolated to money and weapons. Strategic nonviolence also involves understanding nonviolent action as intentional resistance, that resistance indicates there is at least one opposing force who is likely to try to undermine and/or repress the movement, and that there are inherent costs to such repression (what is also known as the paradox of repression) (Sharp, 2010). One way I have looked at

strategic nonviolence theory is by creating a timeline and asking people for examples of nonviolent social movements. This provides a basis to look at strategies which were used in those movements, and also helps to gain a sense of the theories of power, resistance, and struggle that underlay those movements.

Nonviolence as a way of life has theories which explore not just how change can happen nonviolently but how violence is deeply embedded in society. Nonviolence as a way of life can use religious identity as a call to nonviolence (Butigan, K.), which makes it somewhat inaccessible for those who do not identify with the particular religion in question. One possible secular look at nonviolence as a way of life is Nonviolent Communication (NVC). Although most often presented as a practical approach to relationship building and conflict management, NVC assumes that the cultural values behind what and how we communicate are often violent. These include tendencies to judge, blame, demand, and dominate (Rosenberg, 2003), which create a sense of power over (as opposed to power with), and dehumanize and alienate. Exploration into nonviolence as a way of life is useful for thinking about how to create a healthy community and how to maintain nonviolent discipline during heated actions.

Another theory which explores society wide dehumanization is anti-oppression theory, which describes the prevalence of oppression in society, and how it constructs relationships of privilege and marginalization in many identity categories (Hardiman, Jackson, & Griffin, 2007; Johnson, 2006). Exploring these relationships requires developing and clarifying language. In particular, it is important to define the "isms" (racism, sexism, ableism, etc.) as society wide phenomena which also operate on an individual and group level, but that oppression is distinguished from prejudice because it is everywhere and backed by the power structure (Hardiman, Jackson, & Griffin, 2007; Bell, 2007; Johnson, 2006). It is also important to state that, because isms depend on society wide power, there can be no such thing as reverse

oppression (i.e. racism or sexism or any ism). The connection of oppression with the power

structure also often leads anti-oppression theory into critiques of capitalism (Johnson, 2006).

Finally, anti-oppression theory addresses how to resist oppression (Bell, 2007; Johnson, 2006).

This learning is helpful for any group that seeks both justice and inclusivity. Also, if the struggle

is for empowerment of the marginalized, anti-oppression theory helps to conceptualize what that

means.

        In addition to theoretical understanding of the world and how it might be changed,

capacity is based in the likelihood that people will put their theories into practice. There are a

number of qualities which promote taking initiative. Goal setting is one skill with broad

application. Having a target to aim for builds clarity about what to do, naming a goal is also a

step towards committing to a goal, and having a goal allows for evaluating progress towards that

goal. Confidence is also important. I have done confidence training which involved

participants' examining what they had power over. The flip side of confidence is fear. War

Resisters' International (2009) promotes discussing and analyzing the consequences of fear and

how to face fear. Confidence and skill is also built through practice, both in the field and in

simulations. This can be done in a training room which can also be a supportive environment.

Support can encourage people to take on activities they would not normally do. Supportive

simulations are often done with direct action training (A. Batcher, field notes). I have done this

with canvassing training. George Lakey has given workshops where participants take risks by

publicly speaking on a soap box (Wiesner, 2012). Nadine Bloch recommended taking improv

classes as a way to make people better leaders (personal communication, December, 2012).

Debriefing after activities is also very helpful for people to process what they are feeling after a

challenging experience.

        The capacity of a movement is expanded not just by the theories and practices that

participants learn, but by participant's ability to spread those theories and practices further. Knowing the content they are teaching is one important facet of training for trainers. So is the ability to create activities where participants can explore content, ideally using a variety of methods which meet a variety of learning styles. Confidence with group dynamics and facilitation is also very helpful. So is being able to sequence activities in a way that builds towards achieving specific learning goals which are relevant to participants' needs.

       Theory, trainer training, goal setting, confidence building, knowledge building, and skill building, are all things that can be learned in the Occupy DC space, but there is the big challenge of whether people are interested in learning this. There are some curricula which might be helpful. First, one challenge is that people's main experience with education is what Freire (1993) called the banking concept of education, where teachers deposit knowledge in the students' heads like a bank deposits money. Many critique this system, and many have had a lot of disappointment—even trauma—within the field of education. Being explicit that the educator is operating from an alternative educational model might be helpful. It might also be helpful to acknowledge the differences in learning styles and experiences that people have. Knowing one's own learning style, combined with goal setting, can greatly increase ownership of learning, value in learning, and rate of learning. And all of this increases the movement's capacity.

       Finally, expanding the practices of the movement is also achieved by expanding participation in the movement. Both Occupy Montgomery County and the former Criminal Injustice group members outlined one method for growing the movement. This involved figuring out what is already happening related to a group's issue focus, where social justice activism might further be developed, and how different initiatives could support each other. Coalitions can be built for campaigns that have a similar focus. There is also possibility for solidarity actions and for people in one group to build relationships by attending the actions of

another. Partially these issues can be explored in a strategic planning session, which is outlined

in the external orientation section.

Internal/Community Building Orientation

Internal orientation refers to education which focuses mainly on the healthy functioning

of the community. One major function of the internal focus is discussion and decision making.

Consensus has been the model for Occupy, and the more people learning familiarity with the

process the more smoothly it will run. From what I have seen, consensus education involves

learning standard practices and practicing decision making using the process. I have seen

decision making be explored through cooperative games, quick decision activities (where

participants are given a scenario and a time limit to decide how they would behave), and

exploring nightmare facilitation scenarios (A. Batcher, field notes). Another way to build

comfort with facilitation involves a group simply rotating the facilitator role.

Being confident with a specific process does not however overcome problems inherent in

the process. In facilitation training I would dispel the notion that there is a "right way" to

facilitate, acknowledge that there can be conflict between process and inclusivity, and present the

idea that process is only a tool and not sacrosanct. I would also note that it is very hard to please

everyone because meetings frequently have people with competing interests and preferences.

But the process does not supersede the purpose of the process and, if someone is expressing that

a particular process (the GA for example) does not meet their needs, inclusivity demands a

discussion of this fact (perhaps at that moment or perhaps later). The ability to be flexible during

the process will be enhanced by increasing the facilitators' ability to empathize with the reasons

the process may not work for people. Anti-oppression awareness and relationship building skills

are helpful for this.

Relationship building has wide applications in the internal orientation. It is a central challenge of any group that different people will have different histories, interpretations, agendas, etc. At times there will be friction. Going beyond the friction and learning to value differences involves figuring out, without judgment, why someone acts and views the world the way ze does (Rosenberg, 2003). Active listening is a useful way to focus on, delve into, and better understand someone else's point of view (Grohol, 2012). A facilitator can create an empathetic practice space by asking people to discuss personal subjects. Such dialogue has the greatest risk and learning potential when people have a conflict with each other. Beyond listening, developing the abilities to separate observation from judgment and to make specific achievable requests that are not demands is helpful (Rosenberg, 2003). This will make processes less prone to disruption by unmet needs for inclusion, and strengthen the meaningful relationships of people in the group.

Listening can go beyond interpersonal relationships, into building solidarity among diversity. Partially this means exploring people's experience with oppression, and that is often risky dialogue. Fortunately there are methods for facilitating safety. This often begins with establishing a welcoming atmosphere. The diversity welcome, wherein a facilitator welcomes many identities into the space, is one way to do this (Guynn, n.d.). Safe space guidelines are a practice which I have seen in many workshop settings. Based on my experience, guidelines are best when they are specific ("respect each other" is not specific). Guidelines also need some method for accountability; and they are more or less pointless if the facilitator does not model accountability. Large group dialogues about difficult topics would ideally have highly skilled facilitators who represent diverse identities and have strong relationship building, group dynamics, and anti-oppression awareness; but the desire for the ideal can also prevent much needed discussions from actually happening, and I would err on the side of more dialogue.

Another method for exploring difficult topics that, in my experience, works very well and requires little facilitation is small group (3 to 10 people) circle process. This involves people sitting in a circle and talking with guidelines they agree upon, a heavy focus on personal storytelling, and usually some element of ceremony which creates a sacred feel in the space (Pranis, 2005). In every iteration I have seen circle process used, it builds appreciation, empathy, and closeness among the group. Also, restorative circles or peacemaking circles are used as alternatives to many elements of the criminal (in)justice system (Pranis, 2005).

There are definite learning needs related to anti-social behavior. The process for dealing with anti-social behavior would ideally involve both restoring a person to the community and transforming the issue so as to best prevent the violation from happening again. Samantha Rider recommended being very open about what happened, and delving into the conditions which made it happen (personal communication, July 2012); for example, the violent conditioning and the triggers which are a part of our culture. At the same time, the healing of the injured needs to be prioritized and, if this is not a process that the injured wants, it is not the process to pursue (S. Demaio, personal communication, September 5, 2012). Demaio and Schoon both described the importance of setting clear boundaries with people who have committed anti-social behavior, but of also not dehumanizing them (S. Demaio, personal communication, September 5, 2012; M. Schoon, personal communication, August, 2012).

Building a community which takes an alternative approach to anti-social behavior is one major element of cultural autonomy, especially when autonomy from the criminal (in)justice system is widely sought. It is consistent with building a culture of nonviolence—a culture which opposes reproducing the violence of our social order. Discussing attitudes about what is violence, what is violent action, and what is effective action are ways that many trainers address this (War Resisters' International, 2009; Hunter, n.d.), often using variations on a tool called

spectrums, barometers, cross spectrums, or nonviolence sociograms. Such exploration can help

to clarify community standards or codes of conduct. Other forms of cultural autonomy can be

explored through workshops on art, storytelling, theatre, and perhaps even workshops on

creating symbols for Occupy DC or various working groups within the movement. Courses

could also be explicitly about examining cultural values. Theatre of the Oppressed provides

engaging methods for exploring oppressive cultural systems and ways to resist (Boal, 1993).

Teambuilding is another field to explore for the internal orientation. Cooperative games,

trust building, and appreciating the different roles that people take on when working together are

all parts of this. I have seen meeting roles explored (such as facilitator, vibes watcher, scribe,

etc.) direct action roles explored (arrestable, support, media liaison, etc.), and affinity group roles

explored (depends on the AG) (A. Batcher, field notes). I imagine this could also be expanded to

roles people take on in the community (planning actions, taking out trash, being a shoulder to cry

on, etc). I have also seen roles explored by looking at typologies such as Myers Briggs.

Training for change uses its own typology of East, South, West, and North (Lakey, n.d.). My

personal preference is Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory because it acknowledges

culture as a factor in who we become (Tirmizi, 2008). Finally, a related teambuilding and

relationship building practice I often use is sharing appreciations. Regularly trying to notice the

abilities of other people and share genuine appreciation for those abilities helps create a sense of

camaraderie.

External/Advocacy Orientation

The external or advocacy orientation is specifically focused on achieving social change

goals which extend beyond the internal life of the movement. Nadine Bloch discussed the

importance of developing a mission and setting goals which will help to guide strategy and

evaluate progress (personal communication, February 5, 2012). One useful tool for setting goals is the SMART acronym, which stands for specific, measurable, activating, realistic, and time-specific. This helps to make goals actionable and able to be evaluated (Bell, Russell, Swoboda, & Lungo, n.d.).

Strategic assessment can also help inform goals, and there are many strategic assessment tools. Problem tree analysis involves identifying a problem, the affects of the problem, and the roots of the problem. Pillars of Power focuses on analyzing the institutions which hold up the problem or regime that the movement opposes. Spectrum of Allies identifies different stakeholders in an issue and how supportive or oppositional those stakeholders are (War Resisters' International, 2009; Bell et al., n.d.). SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) focuses more on the internal state of the movement than most tools, and can be used to help a group understand where it can expend the least amount of energy for greatest results (where there are opportunities and strengths) and what they need to watch out for (weaknesses and threats) (Renault & Schultz, 2012). SmartMeme uses a point of intervention tool which examines both physical locations and ideas which construct the problem that a movement is trying to address (smartMeme strategy & training project, 2012a). All of these tools can be used to figure out who to influence, who to resist, and where to intervene.

Movement goals operate on multiple levels. The movement itself has long term goals which are built up by more medium term campaigns, and medium term campaigns also need to be built upon short term goals which manifest into specific actions. A movement will not have the capacity to achieve all of its goals at once, which means some goals and campaigns may be prioritized over others (Bell et al., n.d.). Actions are needed to achieve goals, which can be organized into strategic steps and prioritized. Every action can have a timeframe, budget, and people committed to bringing it about. This entire process of setting goals, examining strategic

tools, and creating a work plan helps to create informed and coordinated action (N. Bloch, personal communication, February 5, 2012).

There is campaign curriculum which includes mapping out decision makers around a policy the movement wishes to change and then figuring out who influences the policy makers and who is trying to influence policy makers in the opposite direction as the movement (smartMeme Strategy & Training Project, 2012b). Such analysis brings a group's planning efforts to a very specific level, which can help visualize a process for concrete change (M. Schoon, personal communication, April 2012). Curricula also examine the vast diversity of tactics that activists can use to grow their power, recognition, and influence. Gene Sharp (2012) catalogues 198 forms of nonviolent action into broad categories of protest and persuasion, social noncooperation, economic noncooperation, political noncooperation, and nonviolent intervention. Additionally, there are many valuable community/movement building tactics which can propel a campaign. The general goal is to escalate tactics over time so they move from less to more oppositional as the movement proves its own legitimacy and the opposition appears increasingly in the wrong (M. Schoon, personal communication, April 2012; Bell et al., n.d.).

Movements, campaigns, and actions also have a messaging element. SmartMeme uses a narrative power analysis which explores the stories that help uphold the status quo and the stories which can be used for change. This narrative power analysis is then used for messaging, picking targets, and developing visual images which succinctly tell the movement's narrative (smartMeme Strategy and Training Project, 2012c). "99%," and "we are the 99%" are examples of succinct narratives that Occupy has used. The book *Made to Stick* uses the SUCCES (Simple, Unexpected, Concrete, Credible, Emotional, Stories) framework which can be used to help develop attention grabbing "sticky" ideas that motivate people into action (Heath & Heath,

2007).

In protest actions, messages are spread partially by the action itself. Messages are also spread through signs, banners, street chalk, projected images, etc. For Occupy DC, a creative example of imaging and messaging was the giant tent of dreams which was erected over the statue of General McPherson when we heard the camp would be evicted (A. Batcher, field notes January 30, 2012). Powerful images are also created through shots of dedicated protesters facing aggression. This is one of the reasons why many nonviolence advocates argue for explicit commitment to nonviolence which dramatizes the difference between police aggression and peaceful protest (Swanson, 2012). In general, it is important to plan an action's image, and how that image will advance the campaigns message, ahead of time (The Ruckus Society, 2003).

For a broad-based movement like Occupy, messaging is also spread by every person who decides to write a sign, silk screen a shirt, accept an interview, plan an action, or post on facebook. For everyday outreach actions one key lesson is to identify the goals/what to ask for. A person doing outreach also needs to think about whom ze is trying to reach. For quick and accessible messaging practice I gave a soapbox speaking workshop which involved asking participants to form a message by answering 4 questions: what would you like to speak about? Why is this important to you? Why might this be important to other people? And what would you like people to do about the issue (A. Batcher, field notes, October 2012)? SmartMeme advocates that spokespeople practice message discipline and, in interviews, try to keep moving discussion towards the message (smartMeme Strategy & Training Project, 2011).

Other skills that are helpful for spreading a message include communication skills such as rapport building, persistence, confidence, enthusiasm, empathy, knowledge of the subject matter, and being able to connect with one's personal inspiration around the message. I have practiced these largely through role play during canvassing trainings. There are also principles

for being a media liaison. This largely involves writing press releases with concise descriptions

of events the movement is putting on, generating a list of media contacts, and contacting that list

at particular designated times (The Ruckus Society, 2003).

For the purposes of planning protests or direct action, scouting is useful. Scouting

provides a sense of the physical conditions for the action. This can include noticing

opportunities for hanging a banner or displaying a projected image, traffic patterns, building

entrances, the presence of security, the logistics of getting to the action, etc (Leonard, Downey,

& BW, n.d.). A common component of nonviolent direct action (NVDA) training is to discuss

the roles people take in an action (i.e. arrestables, support, media liaison, etc.). Simulating direct

action can help fine tune the details of an action, and creates a lot of energy and enthusiasm.

Simulations also explore the likely actions of police. This can help the fine-tuning process, and

prepare activists for scenarios of violence. Some particular elements that NVDA training might

explore include looking at the visual image of the action, documenting the action (and the

activities of police), discussing the action with media, and acts of solidarity during the action

(such as singing, chanting, or praying). NVDA trainings also often include a legal element. This

generally involves telling activists what they could possibly be charged with, arrested for, and

sentenced to, what their options are, and what their rights are. The laws themselves are specific

to the region where the action takes place (A. Batcher, field notes).

De-escalation is another common element in NVDA training. This is training people to

take on a "peacekeeper" role, which is designed to intervene in violent or potentially violent

scenarios. I have seen it trained through role playing scenarios where escalation is likely. De-

escalation can also involve looking at specific individual and group de-escalation tactics such as

surrounding a person in a v shape and slowly moving them out of the space. Peacekeeper

training is also often used for marshalling large marches, where marshals take on the dual role of

moving people along and handling any disputes or disruptions which might arise (A. Batcher, field notes).

Creating a Movement Building Educational Program for Occupy DC

Learning for movement building is not the same as education for movement building. Learning is an organic process that movement participants will undertake by virtue of their participation. Education is actually an intervention into this process. This intervention can be made for several reasons, but learning does exist independent of education and, for education to play a successful role in the movement, it needs to focus on supporting the organic learning process movement participants are already going through.

My initial attitude towards education at Occupy DC struggled with this concept. I wanted Occupy DC to be a place which valued learning more than I perceived it to be. I was struggling to get people to come to educational events and I assumed this meant they did not value learning. Now I think that is a false assumption. More accurate is to say that people did not necessarily believe that a particular modality for learning represented the best use of their time. The traditional classroom setting is almost always invoked when the education label is used. But also, for an Occupy DC participant, why sit in a class or workshop when the movement is providing so much real world experience to learn from?

I have realized that Occupy DC could actually be considered one giant experiential workshop, out of which a great deal of learning was inevitable, and participants were eager. At the same time there are reasons to add educational interventions into the experience. In Occupy DC there were key lessons that movement participants were struggling to learn on their own— such as how to have a just process for dealing with anti-social behavior—and there were a

number of ways that education could help facilitate that learning. For example, some Occupy

DC participants might have been developing deep insights into the problem of enforcing

community standards, but their insight might not have been shared because there was no real

structure for sharing. Education provides such a structure. Education can also share insight from

people who have done past fieldwork that the current movement can learn from.

But how can education intervene into the organic learning process in a way that best

supports the continuation of that process? What are the most strategically key content and

methods? One difficulty is that answers to these questions will change as the movement

changes, and the movement changes rapidly.

My conclusion is that, for the camp, if Occupy DC is seen as a giant workshop, the

potential for learning was severely stunted by the lack of a safe space. Workshops require some

amount of safety established. People need to feel they can express vulnerability, build trust,

open themselves up to ideas that challenge their sense of reality, take risks, face fear, be creative,

be collaborative, challenge their mistakes without challenging their sense of worth, etc. When

there are sexual assaults, fights breaking out, and many people who feel excluded from the

community's process, it is not a safe space. Learning is disrupted, not just in educational

settings, but probably even more so in the organic learning process.

For the camp, my conclusion is that the most useful content for educational intervention

was around building a safe space. This is content essentially coming from the

internal/community building orientation, and includes anti-oppression awareness, dialogue and

listening skills, teambuilding and collaboration, flexibility in the decision-making process,

making community standards present in people's thinking, finding humane ways to address

violations of community standards, and learning that community health requires more group

processes than just decision-making. I want to particularly point out learning needs related to

healing from trauma and oppression, which I suspect are common needs in movement spaces. Movements are based in the traumatic suffering of war, poverty, exploitation, marginalization, abuse, imprisonment, hatred, etc. Participating in a social movement is a response to trauma which recognizes systemic sources of pain and makes a choice to change things. Yet that choice does not automatically undo pain. I also want to point out that, for the purpose of social movements, healing needs to be transformative as opposed to restorative. This means not focused on reintegration into society but on the transformation of society.

As for the process of learning this, Jenn Polish described a need for "dialogue" in the camp (personal communication, September 5, 2012), and I think dialogue is a good way to conceptualize a safe and healing community building process. Circle process (which was very similar to the model I used for 'learn-ins') is a very effective way to involve people in dialogue. It is easy to learn. There are usually few guidelines for discussion and it can largely be facilitated with a single prompt. It could be possible to set up multiple dialogue groups using circle process, especially if facilitation was begun by people who had a relatively high level of anti-oppression awareness, awareness of group dynamics, and self-awareness. There have been people involved in Occupy DC with those qualities.

One trainer on the national list also raised the idea of there being a community discussion space which was separate from the GA. I believe it would have greatly aided the camp to have a discussion space with no decision making agenda, yet still able to influence a separate decision making body. I believe this separation is important because dialogue and decisions require contrasting methods of facilitation. For decision making, there is often a focus on getting to a decision as quickly as possible, and greater pressure is put on facilitating to a decision when there are a lot of people involved. For dialogue, there is a need to hear multiple points of view, *especially the points of view that are less represented in decision making*. The commonly used

consensus decision making process does not work well for this.

If dialogue groups and a community discussion space were integrated into the culture of the movement, it could increase the safety and resiliency of the community, and this would be a strategic intervention that could open up a great deal of learning potential. Further educational interventions could have also been helpful. Debriefing after actions can have a lot of learning potential. It could also be good to have peer study or research groups who try to learn about specific subjects. Occupy Our Homes has done a lot of research related to housing defense. The former members of the criminal injustice group talked about the importance of learning about alternatives to the criminal (in) justice system. Occupy the plan is researching strategy. It would be great if those groups could also give educational presentations to the larger community. Study groups could also sponsor occasional workshops based on subjects they want to explore.

I think one of the key practices however has to involve education that is not just based in what people are interested in studying. There also needs to be an ongoing assessment of what type of learning will be particularly useful for the movement. I think the focus group needs assessments were the best model for this that I experimented with. Having occasional hour long conversations about the goals, visions, and challenges of working groups provides a sense of what is going on. This is a role that is best for some sort of learning oriented or community building committee to take on (and there are a number of possible groups who could fit this role). And then, based on an ongoing needs assessment of working groups, this committee can find trainers and workshops which will best meet the most pressing needs.

The next question is, will people come to educational events? In my experience, the answer depends a lot on outreach. If an event seems particularly interesting to people, or is particularly focused on burning issues in the community, they might come with little to no outreach. Otherwise, talking to people and publicizing online (on facebook, for example) are

probably required to get a significant number. For a major event or program to get a big crowd,

efforts need to be made to contact the diversity of working groups, telling people that this is

important, and those working groups need to plan to attend. Each of these levels of outreach

represents different amounts of work, and the organizers of the educational program or event

have to ask how many people they want compared to the amount of effort it will take. If the

educational program or event is important enough to the wellbeing of the movement (which I

believe the community discussion space, dialogue groups, and needs assessment based

workshops are) then it makes sense to go all out with outreach, get the program off the ground,

and do everything possible to embed the program into the movement culture.

It is important to note that this vision for meeting Occupy DC learning needs has so far

primarily focused on the camps, which no longer exist. I do this for a few reasons. First, the

issues that were present at the camp are still present in the post camp world. They are just less

obvious. Second, I do not believe that Occupy will be the last use of a broad based community

creation tactic, and those who wish to employ such tactic can be aided by knowing what they are

getting into. Third, I think there are insights found in looking at the learning situation of the

camp that could have broader applications. For example, it may generally be good to have both

a dialogue space and a planning space and to think of them as serving separate roles. It may also

be helpful to realize the extent to which transformative healing is an actual learning need within

movement culture.

Still, the actual process of addressing learning needs is different for Occupy 2.0 than in

the camps. The practices which are easiest to translate from one setting to another are the needs

assessment based workshops, study groups, and workshops that are based in what someone is

interested in exploring. For full time movement spaces (such as the Peace House), community

discussions and dialogue groups are more doable. For the overall Occupy 2.0 context (which

includes both full-time and part-time activists), one approach could be to have dialogue groups

that are not linked to a particular working group, project, or physical space but are linked to the

desire for healing, social transformation, anti-oppression, and the struggle of being an activist.

To actually get these dialogue sessions off the ground, I might try to create a specific one

or two day workshop geared towards making the movement operate more effectively. This

would primarily be done through healing, anti-oppression, and group dynamics work, but this

would all be presented in the context of being vital for the movement. The actual content would

focus on acknowledging the suffering of the world, and that movements are born from suffering;

acknowledging that we still see, experience, and spread suffering in the movement; looking at

common ways that marginalization is maintained (i.e. focusing on process over dialogue, sexual

harassment, and derogatory language); exploring how group dynamics do not have to reinforce

those tendencies; discussing how community standards might be enforced in a way that protects

those violated, maintains relationships, promotes openness and commitment, and builds support;

and a sense of process for how we can address these issues in the future. I think key here

however is not to put too much pressure on the event itself as the way to solve the issues of the

movement. The point is to open a process by helping people see that issues of healing,

oppression, and group dynamics are legitimate and have greatly affected the movement; that

there are ways to address those issues; and that addressing those issues is a priority.

The intended outcomes of this workshop would be finding members for dialogue groups

and the adoption of simple practices that can make decision making bodies more humanizing.

This would include check-ins, appreciations, acknowledging the need to balance process with

inclusivity, and to adopt a more flexible attitude towards process—perhaps making the decision

to create separate spaces or time periods for dialogue and planning. This workshop would also

be embedded in creating structural supports for the community prior to the actual start of the

workshop. These structural supports include finding and training facilitators for dialogue groups, finding and creating a list of activists who would be willing and available to consult working groups with whatever difficulties they are facing, and helping to find or establish a transformative mediation group who will intervene in cases of extreme violation of community standards. Then, at the workshop, all these structural supports will be made available to people.

Another useful educational intervention which warrants at least a daylong workshop could be strategic planning. Such a workshop would particularly look for working groups to come so that people could apply strategic planning tools to their actual projects. This workshop would focus on outcomes related to campaign building, short and medium term goal setting, and creating a work plan. This workshop could also possibly include (or it can be part of another workshop) mapping out who is doing work related to a group's chosen issue, who might be interested in getting involved, and what are ways people can get involved. These lessons would have been particularly useful around the time of transition to Occupy 2.0 and the eviction of the camps. Establishing goals and work plans in a space which involved multiple Occupy groups would help keep these groups connected, make each group spend less time struggling with what to do, and create targets that these groups can use to create a sense of success. Beyond this, I think having study groups which delve into theory and analyze movement tendencies is crucial for the success of the next uprising.

Conclusion

I want to point out that the focus on healing, anti-oppression, and group dynamics which I am walking away from this study with actually surprises me. I began my work at Occupy DC focused on outreach. I saw a need to advocate for the importance of learning more generally,

and I primarily saw this as a way to enhance actions. However, once I delved into the data, I realized that Occupy DC had deeper issues with the cohesiveness and inclusivity of the movement, that this was limiting the potential of the movement, that strategically dealing with this problem would have ripple effects throughout the movement (and beyond), and that healing actually was a legitimate social change outcome.

One of the challenges with activism is the activist label. It is often used to assume a very external orientation. The point is not to feel better, but to change the world. And yet, this is an artificial division. In the first place, becoming an activist in and of itself entails some amount of healing. It entails recognizing the existence of suffering, going beyond a self-focus into seeing that suffering is often a collective experience produced by collective institutions, and most of all it entails the willingness to resist those institutions even in the face of an overwhelming sense of power imbalance. The need for activists to face fear and struggle against their internal oppression is intense, and I doubt anyone gets to this point without beginning a process of healing. Creating a more openly supportive environment with a socially transformative healing intention is a way to find more activists and encourage braver action. Also, healing is not just about internal development. In a suffering world, it is a social change achievement—especially if it has a transformative as opposed to restorative focus. Even if we consider Occupy solely as a reform-oriented advocacy movement for economic justice, economic justice cannot be established without healing from class oppression!

The quest for economic justice has to struggle against the sense that wealth, education, and social position are legitimate determinants of human worth. These ideas dominate society and are deeply engrained in us, even if we think we reject them. And the movement itself needs to promote healing from this oppression, which includes both structural and ideological elements. Also, class oppression is highly correlated with race oppression. And, if we look at

class oppression as not just being about income and education, but as primarily about social

roles, class oppression becomes more obviously connected to gender roles, age roles, ability

roles, and all forms of oppression. Thus, the actual task of economic justice is a lot bigger than

protecting social services and campaign finance reform. And, if Occupy is a revolutionary

movement, than it needs to challenge and heal from the concept of inferiority and superiority in

all its incarnations.

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Appendix A: Occupy DC Workshop Survey

What dates do you plan on being in the DC area during the month of January?

Please check the types of workshops you would like to attend in January.

Social Movement   Nonviolent Direct   Nonviolence
Strategy ___   Action ___   Theory ___

Anti-oppression/Collective Liberation   Community Organizing;
(anti-racism, sexism, classism, etc.) ___   Relationship Building ___

Constructing an Issue
Campaign ___   De-escalation ___   Media/Messaging ___

Arts and Social
Change ___   Street Theater ___   Outreach ___

Facilitation ___   Trainer Training ___

Other (please specify) _____

So we can keep you informed about workshops being offered, please provide
contact information:

Name: Email:

Phone:

Appendix B: Survey Results

Total Surveys	39
Social Movement Strategy	25
Nonviolent Direct Action	19
Nonviolence Theory	16
Anti-Oppression/Collective Liberation	22
Community Organizing; Relationship Building	20
Constructing an Issue Campaign	9
De-escalation	16
Media/Messaging	18
Arts and Social Change	16
Street Theater	10
Outreach	15
Facilitation	13
Trainer Training	6
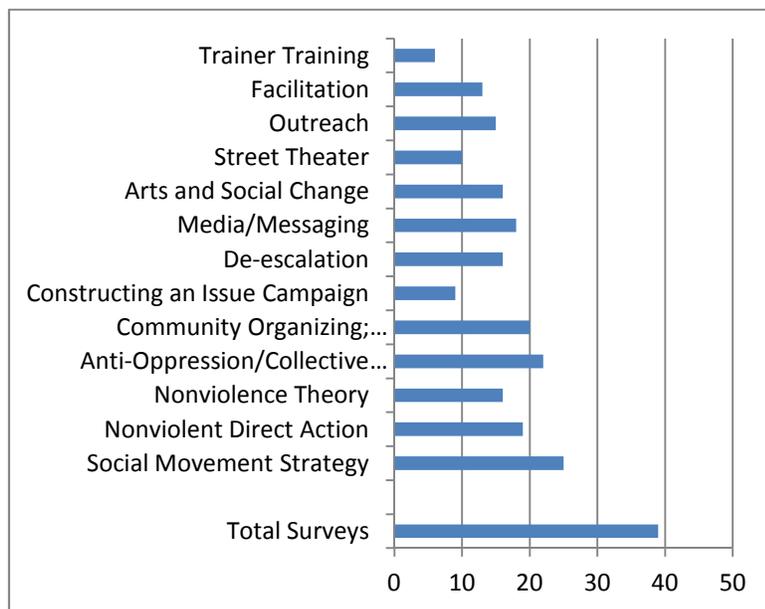
Write-in responses:

1 marked Facilitation and wrote "how to train other facilitators"
1 offered training for "domestic violence and other violence against women issues"
Specific historical events
Spanish
Policies and economic principles/ how these effect the community
end capitalism
Finance
Consensual governance/anarcho-syndicalism
Computer Classes

Appendix C: Interview Guide

Interviewee:
Date:

What educational work did you do at Occupy DC and what was your goal?

What worked well, and what did not?

What kind of learning do you think would be most useful for Occupy DC?

What format or method for implementing this learning would be most useful?

Appendix D: A non-exhaustive List of Occupy DC Workshops

Title	Day
Legal Observing Trainings	11-Oct
De-escalation	12-Oct
NVDA	13-Oct
NVDA (what is power)	14-Oct
Health and food safety	14-Oct
Capitalism 101	14-Oct
Social Movement Strategy Teach-inwith #OccupyDC @OccupyKSt	15-Oct
Facilitation Training	16-Oct
Teach-in: Anti-Oppression training	16-Oct
Know your rights	16-Oct
Teach-in: Know Your Rights	17-Oct
Teach-in: Non-Violent Direct Action (Occupying Space)	18-Oct
Teach-in: Communicating Nonviolently When Someone is Doing Something You're Not Enjoying	18-Oct
Teach-In: Government Corruption	18-Oct
Poltical Education: DC funding and housing issues	18-Oct
Teach-In: Anti-Racism	19-Oct
Know Your Rights Trainings	19-Oct
Teach-in: Twitter 101	19-Oct
Poltical Education Discussions: Tar Sands Action	19-Oct
Teach-in: De-escaltion	20-Oct
Teach-in: Non-Violent Direct Action (March Tactics)	20-Oct
Teach-in: Media Training	21-Oct
Poltical Education: Financial Literacy	21-Oct
Teach-in: Police Liason	22-Oct
Political ed: Lessons from social movements of the 1930s for today's activism	22-Oct
Political ed: From the Arab Spring to Occupy DC	22-Oct
Political Theater Nuts and Bolts	23-Oct
Class consciousness and People of Color solidarity discussion by Occupy the Hood.	23-Oct
Poltical Education: Theatre of the Oppressed	23-Oct
Teach-in: Nonviolence Training: Direct Action in L.O.V.E.	23-Oct
Know your rights	23-Oct
Poltical Education Discussions: Immigration Rights	23-Oct
Sisterfire Freedom songs workshop & sing-a-long	23-Oct
Teach-in: Outreach 101	24-Oct
Roots of the Crisis: Make Wall Street Pay!	25-Oct
Teach-in: Outreach 102	25-Oct
Teach-in: Tar Sands and The Keystone XL Pipeline	26-Oct
Anti-Racism Training	26-Oct

Teach-in: Non Violent Direct Action "Street Tactics"	27-Oct
Robin Hood Tax – What is it and what could it do for people?	27-Oct
Student Debt Teach-In	28-Oct
Teach-in: Police Liason	29-Oct
Teach In: What is the Robin Hood Tax?	29-Oct
Teach In: Economic Solutions for the 99%: Creating Community Wealth through Time Banking	30-Oct
Criminal Justice System Open discussion/Teach-in	30-Oct
Facilitation Training	30-Oct
Financial Crisis: Why we Occupy	30-Oct
Legal Observing Trainings	31-Oct
Outreach 101	1-Nov
Teach in: Climate change and climate justice	2-Nov
Political Discussion on the Situation in Iraq	2-Nov
Outreach 102	2-Nov
Union Basics and the Problem of Inequality	3-Nov
Occupy the Workplace: Lessons from the Republic Windows and Doors Factory Occupation	5-Nov
How family farms are impacted by corporations	6-Nov
What's that you say? Radical Cheerleading Practice! Woo!	6-Nov
Teach-in: Occupy K St, Not Palestine	6-Nov
Homelessness 101: an Introduction to Housing Rights	8-Nov
Tips for Winter Survival	9-Nov
Teach-In: Outreach 102	9-Nov
Teach-In: Nonviolence and Solidarity	10-Nov
Street Tactics/Direct Action/Nonviolence Workshop	12-Nov
Financial Crisis: How we got here, Where we are going	13-Nov
How Do the Police Relate to the 99%?	13-Nov
Teach-in: Sexism and Occupy	13-Nov
Criminal Justice discussion	13-Nov
Learn-in: Professors as Students of Occupy DC	14-Nov
Democracy for the 99 percent: The corporate campaign to strip away our voting rights	15-Nov
Teach-in Rally on Education, Jobs, and Infrastructure	17-Nov
Teach in: Egypt Solidarity in preparation for the march on Saturday	18-Nov
Teach-In: Since the Revolution in Egypt	19-Nov
Poetry Writing Workshop	20-Nov
Radical Cheerleading Practice	20-Nov
DC Housing Teach-in	20-Nov
Teach-In: Street Team & Legal Observers	23-Nov
Science Literacy teach-in	26-Nov
Connecting the Dots part 1	26-Nov
Teach-in: History of Dr King's Campaigns	27-Nov
Labor Lab: Listening to Occupy DC	2-Dec
VZ vs. the 99%: How the Occupy Movement is Changing the Rules of the Game!	3-Dec

Abortion Rights Teach-In	3-Dec
Smashing states or building communities: the nature of radical transformation	4-Dec
Difficult Dialogue Training	4-Dec
Restorative Justice Training	10-Dec
Teach-in: "The Nation Demands Social Justice: A Summer of Protesting in Israel"	10-Dec
Cooperatives, Religion, and the Occupy Movement	11-Dec
How Private Prisons Affect Washington DC Teach – In	18-Dec
GA Tech TeachIn - Community building part of GA	20-Dec
Teach-In Conflict Resolution	21-Dec
Facilitation Training	29-Dec
General Assembly - Community building Teach-in on Affordable Housing Action	3-Jan
General Assembly - Community Building Teach-in Corp Personhood	4-Jan
General Assembly - Community Building Teach-in Corp Personhood	5-Jan
Discussion: "The Democratic Party vs. Social Movements"	7-Jan
Economic Democracy: Another Life is Possible	7-Jan
Can We Evict the 1 Percent? Creating a new politics and a new economy	8-Jan
General Assembly - Library Community Building	13-Jan
Okinawa's ClosetheBase.org delegation visiting McPherson Square and Freedom Plaza	25-Jan
Mental Health First Aid Workshop Part 1	4-Feb
Mental Health First Aid Workshop Part 2	5-Feb
More Tools for Your Toolbox: Strategy and Tactics*	5-Feb
What the H*ll is an AFFINITY GROUP and how Does a Spokescouncil Work?*	12-Feb
Super Informal Games and Activities Skillshare*	19-Feb
What Now? Healing and growing community within the movement	25-Feb
Building Inclusive Community: Mainstream and Marginalization in Our Movements*	11-Mar
Lessons in Movement Building: How it Happened in the Past*	18-Mar
Lessons in Movement Building: How it Happened in the Past Part 2*	25-Mar
Relating with Children without Marginalization: Childcare for Radicals*	1-Apr
Money Out of Politics - Unite the People (MOP-UP) Conference	14-Apr
Radical Cheerleading Practice	21-Apr
Self Determination in the Belly of the Beast*	29-Apr
Mothers day discussion: Celebrating Motherhood, Confronting Patriarchy*	13-May
War, Propaganda and Class Struggle*	27-May
Rethinking Masculinity and Femininity*	17-Jun
The US Iran and Imperialism*	14-Jul

*Indicates this was part of the Activist Sunday School.

Appendix E: Proposal for Daily Learn-ins

This is a proposal to have daily learn-ins at Occupy DC. These are conversations directed towards learning the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that participants are interested in as part of their process of advocating for the 99%. The goal of these learn-ins is to help integrate educational reflection into the daily operations of Occupy DC. The structure will be highly learner directed (based on their own sense of need), designed to follow the experiential learning cycle, and geared towards creating a perpetual relationship between action and reflection. The learn-ins can also help lay a foundation for a Free University of the 99%, by providing continuous educational activity which raises awareness of all educational activities, and the learn-in acts as a needs assessment (participants will be thinking about and discussing what they wish to learn and how they wish to develop, which can lead to other educational activities beyond the daily learn-in). To help this educational process, I will provide a description of what I believe will be an effective model of facilitation based on my own experiential learning and popular education training and experience.

Four Types of Meetings: I think there can be four types of meetings which may be part of the daily learn-ins, **1: Meetings which involve generating topics, 2: Meetings which do not involve generating topics, 3: Debriefs 4, Best Practices.**

Meetings which involve generating topics:

1: Introductory check-in (10 minutes): Do a round asking, "what is your name and, in your involvement at Occupy, what have you been preoccupied with lately?" The purpose of this question is to get everyone's voice into the conversation and to help ground the topic generating conversation in participants' own experience.

2: Brainstorm topics: Ask participants to speak out, popcorn style, about what they would like to discuss and learn about. Generate the list on a whiteboard, then copy that list onto paper. This can be an ongoing list.

3: Check where the energy is (2+3 should equal around 5 to 10 minutes): Ask what people are most interested in talking about today. Notice where people seem to have a stronger emotional reaction or enthusiasm. You may need to make a choice. Explain that these are daily learn-ins, and that every topic that has a lot of energy behind it will eventually be discussed.

4: Experiential round (20 minutes): Do a round. The precise prompt will differ depending on the selected topic, but try to phrase the question in a way that encourages storytelling. For example, if the topic was solidarity in the camp, a sample prompt may be "talk about a time when you had a strong sense of solidarity here, or a time when you had a sense of disunity." The purpose of this round is to get everyone's experience into the conversation, and to start the conversation from a place of experience as opposed to from a place of ideas.

5: Open discussion, reflecting on and connecting to each others' stories (30 minutes): invite participants to comment on what stood out to them and what they resonate with. This will probably very naturally move participants along the experiential learning cycle. They will reflect

on the stories, on how these stories affect them, and will start to make generalizations. Pay attention to when the conversations starts moving more and more towards generalizations. A generalization might be "Solidarity seems to be built when people help each other" as opposed to "I remember feeling a greater sense of solidarity when this person helped me out."

6: Action planning (30 minutes): Once the conversation is firmly in a place of generalization (people are talking less and less about their experience, you have found a handful of rich ideas, and it is starting to feel like time to move on) ask participants "what can we do about ____," with blank being the topic. An example, "what can we do to help build solidarity in the camp?" Ideas will be generated. Find one to focus on by checking where the energy is (akin to #3 on this list). **Ask if there are participants willing to commit to this action**. Find something people will commit to -note, it can be very small (as small as just having a conversation with someone). On a whiteboard write down "who, what, when, where, why, and how." Work with participants to fill in those details. An example of how this may look:

Who: Dan, Jenny, Alfredo
What: Create a kitchen sign up. Ask people to sign up to volunteer at the kitchen.
When: Create sign up tomorrow. Ask people Tuesday at 11:00.
Where: at the camp
Why: Because kitchen staff is very stressed, that stress moves throughout the camp, and promotes disunity
How: Speak to people in a friendly and inspiring way. Explain that we all depend on the kitchen, and that you don't need to know anything about cooking to help (you can wash dishes).

7: Select a time and place for debrief (5 minutes). Make sure someone will facilitate a debrief (the third type of meeting).

There is a lot of learning inherent in this design including, getting in touch with our experiences, delineating between experience and conceptualization, creating a space which encourages equal participation (this model encourages inclusivity more than the GA model), realizing a general structure for action planning, practicing the link between experience, action, and reflection, and all this is in addition to whatever is learned about the specific topic under discussion. The weakness of this design is that it is geared towards small groups (no more than 10). In fact, at 10 participants, I would split the group into 2 groups of five. The good news is, that isn't hard to do. This design does not require a lot of facilitation experience (it is simpler than the GA model), and can be simplified below:

1: Check what's on people's minds (in your involvement with Occupy, what have you been preoccupied with lately?)
2: Figure out a topic to talk about
3: Everyone tell a story about that topic
4: Talk about what these stories bring up for us
5: Figure out an action we can do (and fill in the details; who, what, when, where, why, and how)

People can be trained in this model of facilitation, or they can be given the simplified version of the model, try it out, and see how it goes.

Meetings which do not involve generating topics:

These would be exactly the same as the generating topics meeting, the only difference is that steps 1 and 2 are skipped. The facilitator can pick a couple of topics which have previously been raised, and then check where the energy is. This will probably be the most common type of meeting. It still is probably a good idea to occasionally have topic generating meetings, in order to keep the topic list fresh.

Debriefs:

These meetings I think would not be part of the regular daily learn-ins, but would happen at some point after actions, set up by the people who acted, and most likely facilitated by one of the actors. The purpose of these meanings is to maximize the learning which comes from action, and to help refine future action.

1: Find out how the experience went for people. Ask questions like: what happened, how did you feel, and what was going through your mind.

2: Make a list of what worked. You can also make a list of what could be improved upon, although there is strong research which suggests that only focusing on what worked is actually more effective (the reason being, we are hyper-sensitive to what does not work do not need to brainstorm it. But a lot of times we do not even discuss what went well, and such discussion can help us focus on what we are able to do, and builds our confidence).

3: Discuss, if we were to do this action again, what would we do?

4: See if people want to do this action again, a different action that was inspired by this action, or no action.

5: If people want to do an action, conduct action planning (steps 6 and 7 of the basic meeting structure). Figure out who, what, when, where, why, and how; and a time and place for debrief.

Best Practices:

This type of meeting is inspired by when people from OWS came down and introduced their process called "Think Tank," wherein they had a discussion, recorded people's ideas, and they are intending on transcribing those ideas and posting them online. I felt this was an interesting practice, but that they were generating way too much data to go through. I thought, instead of having every meeting recorded, record and post online one meeting which comes at the end of a week involving continuous action and reflection, where people are actively thinking about what are the best practices for the movement. I think this best practices meeting would ideally happen on a Sunday or Monday (usually there is a lot of action on Friday and Saturday, and Sunday and Monday seems like a reflective time), but the best practices meeting would only take place after the daily learn-ins have gone on for at least a week. (to be continued)

Appendix F: Learn-in topics (non-exhaustive)

12/19 Social Movements, 15 people

12/20 Corruption, 10 people

12/22 Community Building, 7 people

12/26 Women in Occupy

12/30 Is Occupy a political movement or a social experiment, 6 people

1/2 Process of unifying the movement around goals/demands

1/5 Balancing life with activism

1/6 Diversity, 6 people

1/10 What preoccupied with, 7 people

1/18 Empowerment, 7 people

1/20 Communication and financial transparency, 5 people

1/23 Media

1/26 Inter-occupy cooperation, 6 people

1/27 What preoccupied with, 3 people

2/8 How to use the space post-eviction, 6 people

Nd. Starting a local Occupy, 7 people

Nd. Occupy and elections

Nd. Corporate interests

Nd. Media