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Union trainings, for whatever reason, are spectacularly dull. I can't be the only person who no longer wants to attend workshops, seminars, or trainings where people just rattle off a lecture to participants and *tell* them what to do and how to do it. I'm tired of being part of anything where group discussions aren't seen as important, participant experiences are overlooked, and the people "leading" the events completely dismiss or invalidate the needs of the participants.

I wish I could say that the pandemic has been the biggest problem, but every single union training I've participated in has looked the same. There's a PowerPoint lecture broadcasting all the information of the union, resources aren't provided ahead of time (despite requests), and it's very rare to hear more than one voice for the entire duration. Group conversations are seen as an afterthought, and very few of the activities are even planned ahead of time. The only difference the pandemic has made is that all of that has been moved online, making an already ineffective method of teaching worse.

Accessibility requirements of the participants go neglected. Even if you make requests ahead of time or ask for accommodations when you register, they still go ignored because it's "just not possible." Disabled people are still far more responsible for our own inclusion in these programs, being forced to explain to the organisers why their methods aren't working for us. When we try to point this out (in the politest of ways), the organisers are generally hostile to us.

In many spaces, members suffer disconnection because of language barriers. Most activities are completely inaccessible if you don't speak a certain language or if your fluency in that language isn't very good. Materials aren't provided in the native languages of the members, ensuring that they have access. Most unions don't even provide opportunities for language exchange. How do you participate when you're struggling to speak, let alone understand what people around you are saying?

Even in events hosted by people from education backgrounds or education-related trainings, accommodations go overlooked. Hostility remains the same.

Unfortunately, this behaviour can be found in the "most inclusive union in the world."

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It's exhausting to constantly feel alienated from the movements I *want* to support and believe to be important. It's infuriating to constantly have to fight with organisers, especially other anarchists, to get them to recognise that they need to make spaces safe and accessible to *everyone*. The number of times I've outlined suggestions on how we could improve engagement with members and the larger community, they always get sidelined for the same reason: "This isn't what a union does."

And yet they wonder why their engagement is low. I receive numerous emails from my own branch begging people to participate in events, to vote, to read the chat, to do *anything*.

different needs are all things that can be built into every single practice mentioned.

Making materials available in braille, ensuring that all spaces we use are made physically accessible, and taking sensory considerations into account when design spaces are all things we need to do.

It would be wonderful to see more people want to engage with pedagogy and learn about how it can be used to build community because it is so much more than just what happens in schools. There are so many more ways to utilise pedagogical theories to improve the structure of our movements and organisations.

It's how we learn, and we need to spend more time thinking about how *that* impacts the way we build our communities.

The few times I get to talk to participants in trainings that I can access, they complain about how hard it is to get people to engage with their branches when they need more people to support actions. They simply aren't putting the effort into making a *safe*, *inclusive*, and *accessible* space; they aren't using their institution to build a community. They're expecting people to join and support without meeting the needs of their members.

And this is where understanding that *education* helps build community and that pedagogical theory is actually pretty useful. Knowing a range of pedagogical theories isn't a fix-everything solution. However, being able to apply them to organisations and develop a framework for understanding how people learn can provide solutions for issues like low stagnation and movement co-option.

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Stagnation tends to occur because nothing *new* is really happening and the organisation has ceased to *adapt* to the world as it is. This has been one of the *biggest* problems with labour unions throughout their existence. Sometimes this is due to older leadership not making pathways for the younger rank and file to take over. Sometimes it's because the union keeps focusing on the same few projects without considering what the needs of the community really are, which often just tells members that they don't understand the community at all. Whatever the reason, if people get bored or stop seeing an organisation as relevant to their world, they start disappearing and leave to do something else.

Adapting is about understanding what your community needs; it's about listening to them and creating a space where they can achieve those goals. Are there a lot of parents asking for childcare so they can participate in events? Maybe it's time that you start doing *that*. Do you have a lot of members asking for language courses (*including* signed languages) but not sure where to find them? Make those connections! Are

there people in critical need of food? Start a food drive, an impromptu cook-out, or both.

Creating spaces where your community can come together and help each other out is one of the best ways to *learn* about your community and what they need and want to know.

Bringing something *new* doesn't always have to be difficult, either. Do you have additional space in your union office, if you have one? Build a small library, turn one of the rooms into a reading room, create 'gathering' spaces where people can just talk or hold reading groups. Hold events that support your members, even if they aren't inherently "useful" to union goals. Do you have a bunch of artists? Try to rent space for them to hold an exhibition. Are there a lot of actors or people otherwise interested in theatre? Try to help them get a venue to put on a show. Think people aren't engaging enough with each other? Put on a social event (and remember to include a number of events that aren't in *bars*).

If you're working on doing these things, you're using elements of critical pedagogy. You're providing people with spaces to be autonomous and bring their own perspectives to the learning environment. You're learning from them as they are learning from you, and you're allowing your members to feel *important* and *cared for*.

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Movement co-option tends to happen for *a lot* of reasons. Sometimes people want to build a career on the back of their "activist work," while others want to find a quick way to make some money. Politicians and political parties tend to co-opt movements in order to change, placate, or silence them. This happens *a lot*, and we've seen this repeatedly with movements like Black Lives Matter (now tied closely to corporate philanthropy) and a number of times where organisations "support" queer people with extensive Pride branding.

While it's difficult to *stop* this from happening, it is certainly worth trying to *slow it down*. And the easiest way to do this

is to *create a community space*. When people *know* the people in their community, they know who they can trust; they get to know those people, and they do so in a *variety* of contexts. Making those spaces decentralised further helps to decrease infiltration. Not everything *needs* to be done under the umbrella of one organisation or union.

Build the community. Work with people to create learning spaces, community centers, and gardens. Create spaces that, until we no longer need them, can help provide the assistance that our members need. Help develop spaces where people can more easily be creative. Make inclusive spaces where children can participate in the community instead of being siloed into schools, and make it *normal* for communities to look after each other.

Dismantle the structures that separate us.

And if you have more people who want to do something to counter the co-option that currently exists, give them space to research what it can look like and how it happens. Help them set up workshops where they can promote the skills of critical analysis to *all* community members. Work with them to disseminate resources and materials to the community so they can teach others.

By doing most of this, you're working on using elements of *social constructivism* and *constructionism*. Creating spaces for people to try and do something provides them with an opportunity to see how their experiences and ideas are related to each other. It also promotes community problem-solving, especially if everyone learns to openly reflect upon their experiences.

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Though not mentioned directly, everything I mentioned can easily be made accessible to all people. Building a space that encourages and supports multilingualism, ensuring your documents are in plain language, and working directly with *many* disabled people in order to accommodate their *many*