

MOVEMENTS AND SOCIOCULTURAL THEORIES OF LEARNING



This comic is part of

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Our goal is to provide a small set of examples of how research on learning can help activists through learning and transformation.

We hope that with the examples of learning concepts applied in activist contexts, these ideas and the arguments around them should be made clearer for movements.

Also, we hope to highlight some of the innovative work coming out of the Learning sciences to a broader audience—

—including education researchers, comics people, communities,

and you!

As this work shows, ideas are not just abstract entities in the mind —

—but rather can be powerful tools for changing the world.

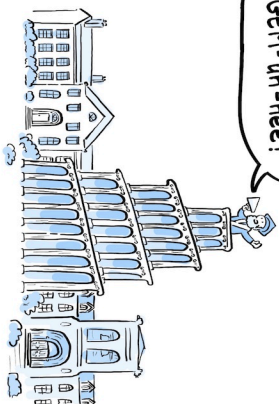
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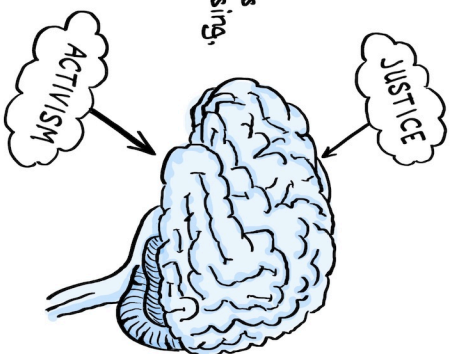
We know that learning theory rarely gets translated in ways that are *useful* to activists.

No, it's pronounced
heh-GET-uh-nee!

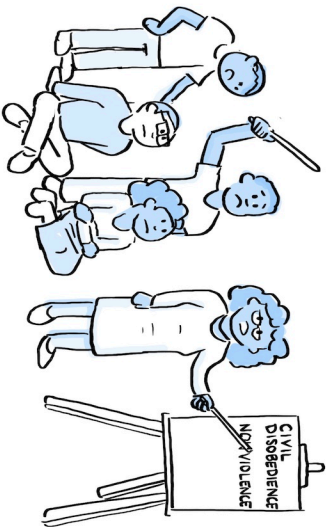


The research presented here takes a *sociocultural* perspective.

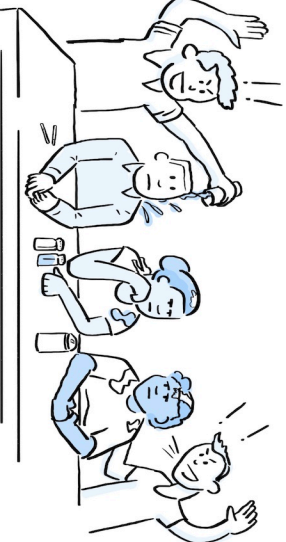
That means we see learning as not only about cognitive processing,



but about meaning-making, shifting practices, and the uptake of identities.



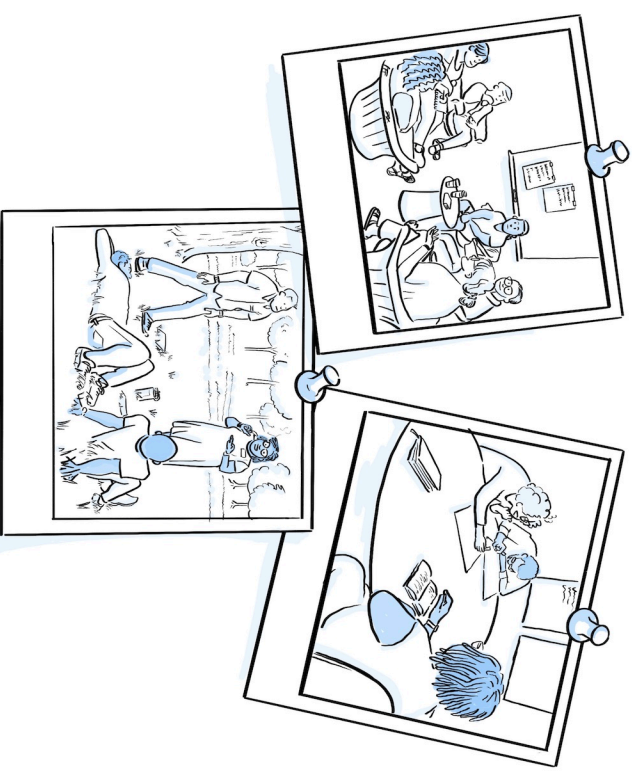
All learning happens in an embodied, social world and is shaped by culture and interaction.



In summer 2019, we hosted the Learning to Engage conference, a place for learning scientists to collaborate on our work for justice-focused research that centres learning and civic engagement.

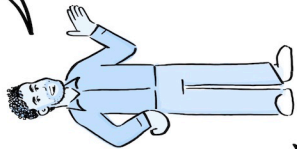


Funded by the Spencer Foundation, we spent a week thinking through how learning matters in community organizations, social movements, classrooms, and informal learning environments.



At the end of the conference, we committed to creating a comic that translates the research work we have done with different activists into a more useful resource that explains sociocultural theories of learning and contextualizes how they can be useful in other organizing spaces. The comics in this special issue attempt to do this work.

WHAT ARE THE LEARNING SCIENCES?



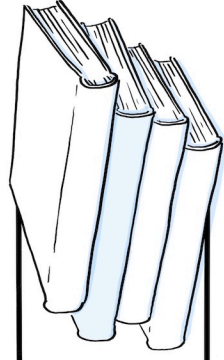
Tanner Vea
Co-organizer

The learning sciences is an academic field interested in how learning works and how to design environments to support it. Often, learning sciences researchers research classrooms and technologies for teaching and learning in school subjects.



Joe Curran
Co-organizer

But recently, some learning scientists have wondered: if our designs for learning always involve choices about particular ends for learning, whose ends are they? What consequences do these choices have for equity and justice?



In conducting learning research with social movements, the authors of this special issue take up the promise of learning as a way of understanding social movements. Like schools, movements involve pedagogical practices.

But more than that, learning offers productive ways for thinking about...

how movements form



how ideas of justice are co-constructed



how tactics get taken up



how communities change through political struggle



Our work here is to bridge the learning sciences and social movements. As academics, we think that the learning sciences bring really important insights into how people learn —

how they become radicalized,

how their emotion shapes their activism,

how young activists learn and collaborate with adults,

how small practices facilitate social movement action

how community is built among activists

how activists learn to create systems change

