Organizing Conversations that Build Power

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COMPETENCY: ORGANIZING

Competency progression level
Level 1: Foundational

Themes addressed
– Utilize organizing best practices
– Create conditions for continuous association growth and strength
ACTIVE LISTENING

GOOD TECHNIQUES

• Direct eye contact
• Acknowledge by nodding
• Smiling
• Saying “hmm, yes” etc..
• Mirroring
• Repeating back
• Asking open-ended questions and follow-up questions

BAD TECHNIQUES

• Talking over
• Interrupting
• No eye contact
• Checking phone
• Zoned out
• Making assumptions about what is being said
Organizing Conversations

There are different styles and different purposes

Examples:
1on1s
Recruitment
5 Step Conversation
Five Step Overview

Start with **Introduction**

What would make you open up and engage in a conversation? What do you need to convey?

- Confident, clear and concise
- We’re educators-be clear about that! Not strangers!
- State the “who, the what and why”
- Best ways of overcoming obstacles (ask questions, be personal, create urgency)
- Brainstorm the content of a strong introduction before doing it
Five Step Overview

Get the Story and Listen

Why did you become an Educator? How has it changed since you started?

What do you love about your job?

What is a challenging?

What do you think about the situation at our school or district?

Tell me more about that..
Five Step Overview

Polarize and Educate

How does that make you feel?

How does large class size effect morale in your department/classroom?

How does that effect the students?

Have you tried to do anything about it?

What could or has happened to educators/students because of this?
Five Step Overview

**Agitate:**
Are you ready to do something about it? Why? Why not?

**And Build a Vision:**

*Our union is only as strong as we are.*

It is about all of us coming together and using our strength in numbers to win things that are important to us, our students and community and stopping the forces that make a great public education more challenging.

What would it look like if....
Five Step Overview

**Ask for Commitment:**

*Can we count on you to join/participate?*

*If no/unsure what’s holding you back?*

*(Be Specific about what you are asking)*
Table Discussion

How do we carve out more time and capacity for having these important 1on1 conversations?
You’re Not Done...

Engage colleagues right away:

Can you talk to the other educators in your building today and discuss with them what we are doing and commit to taking action as well?

Which educators do you think you can talk to? Get specific names.

Set a concrete time for follow-up.
A Power Building Strategy
Last year...

113 locals and campuses participated in 2015

1,424 new members were recruited, exceeding the goal by 424. This is an increase of 24% from the same period in the prior year.

1000’s of 1/1 conversations took place, in support of ESEA reauthorization, organizing for college affordability, campaigns on Time2Teach, and state legislative policies.
Locals on tour in 2015

• Cambridge Education Association (OH) had 117 1/1 conversations and got commitments from 87 members.

• St. James Association of Educators (LA) doubled their membership and identified new worksite reps.

• Clark County Education Association (NV) enrolled 126 new members, increasing 2014 enrollment by 1,250%.

• East Orange Education Support Professionals Association (EOESPA) (NJ) reported a growth of 78 new members; several NJ locals converted fee payers to full membership.
Imagine...

If every local had carried out a 2015 Listening Tour program – the NEA and the state affiliates had the potential to recruit over 189,000 new members.
Goals for 2016 LT:

• identify new leaders and cultivate new activists

• engage members around issues they care about

• grow membership

• collect stories to promote our views on local, state and national issues

• identify and build a foundation of leaders and activists to participate in future organizing efforts.

• provide leaders an opportunity to learn new skills and programs

• support 2016 Affiliate agendas
2016 Expected Outcomes:

• Register at least 250 locals to participate in this year’s tour

• Conduct at least 100,000 one-on-one conversations with educators

• Recruit at least 1500 new members

• Identify dozens of new potential leaders and/or activists

• Gather stories and anecdotes that we can share with others to demonstrate the strong feelings our members have about student success and professional issues.
National Campaigns

National Issue Organizing

Community Schools  Charter Standards
New Educator Support  Degrees Not Debt
High Standards/Fair Testing  Workplace Respect
Sub-Contracting  Healthcare
Wages/Overtime  Student & Retired Organizing
Engagement: Preparing for Friedrichs

State and Local Organizing

State legislative
Bargaining
Salary and working conditions
School Board
2016 Campaign Structure

Locals join the tour by registering online

www.nea.org/listeningtour

• Local leaders drive the campaign using popular existing tactics

• NEA will provide toolkits, resources, strategic partnership, and training as needed by individual locals

• Every participating local is asked to set concrete goals that include membership recruitment and 1/1 conversations
Table Discussion

How could the Listening Tour or a similar strategy be useful for developing capacity and growth of your Local?
Session Outcomes

• Explore how to engage in 1/1 relational organizing “to scale” across the country

• Further develop our skills at 1on1s and our understanding of how these conversations can lead to membership growth, engagement and winning on the issues we care about
Please complete the evaluation for this breakout session!