Teaching organizational classism with imaginary situations

Drawing on participants' own life experience is at the heart of popular education, so why didn't we always do that in Class Action workshops?

Two reasons to use hypotheticals and case studies for problem-solving exercises instead of participants' own situations:

1. The topic is too unfamiliar.
   - Most people attending their first classism workshop don't frame their own life experience in class terms.
   - Unlike race and gender, class identities of coworkers and even friends are often unknown. Most of us guess wrong about who's who in some situations.
   - Asked to supply examples of classism in their organizations, most draw a blank.

2. The topic is too touchy.
   - If the group includes multiple people from the same organization, they may be uncomfortable making any critical comments.
   - In particular, almost no one will talk about organizational classism in front of their supervisors.

On the other hand, ALMOST EVERYONE ENJOYS BEING OPINIONATED ABOUT WHAT IMAGINARY PEOPLE SHOULD DO.

Dialogue, laughter, strong opinions and insights come up when responding to a hypothetical situation.

Exaggerating classist practices, even to an absurd degree, sensitizes people to the milder forms they see.

Participants are far more productive in coming up with next steps and solutions for themselves and their own organization's class issues after doing a hypothetical exercise.

Examples of Class Action exercises using hypothetical situations

- ☐ World's Most Classist Organization brainstorm
- ☐ Bystander response hassle-line – Responding to classist and other oppressive comments

- [ ] Scenarios for identifying classism and problem-solving - see examples in Organizational Classism workshop:
  - [ ] For an environmental justice group
  - [ ] For private school parents and teachers (needs typing up)
  - [ ] For foundation staff
  - [ ] For college administrators
  - [ ] For middle-class or mixed-class organizers