



Theoretical and Conceptual Background

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Education and the Social Sciences**

By: Laura Ruth Johnson

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Introduction

To improve our understanding of community-based qualitative research (CBQR), it is important to review some related models and approaches, as well as to examine the views of learning and teaching that inform it. Several models, such as participatory action research (PAR), youth participatory action research (YPAR), and service learning and community-based action research (CBAR), share much in common with CBQR. In addition, particular ethnographic designs, such as collaborative ethnography (Lassiter, 2005) and reciprocal ethnography (Lawless, 2000), are instructive in their focus on a sharing authority with participants during the research process. This chapter will also identify and discuss key theoretical concepts and frameworks related to learning and teaching within community contexts that inform CBQR, such as funds of knowledge theories (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005), experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and counterstorytelling (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001; Yosso, 2005).

Learning Goals

After reading this chapter, students will be able to:

1. Identify and describe research approaches related to community-based qualitative research (CBQR).
2. Describe community-based research models related to CBQR.
3. Discuss the strengths and challenges associated with research methods and models that use participatory and/or collaborative approaches.
4. Discuss views of teaching and learning that inform participatory and collaborative models of research, and explain how these function within CBQR projects.

Introduction to Related Models

The models and designs associated with community-based qualitative research (CBQR) are generally part of the interpretive family of approaches within research in education and the social sciences (Erickson, 1986). In opposition to positivist research, which attempts to determine a single “truth” or answer to a research “problem,” interpretive approaches recognize that there are multiple perspectives on a particular issue or phenomenon and seek to identify the local meanings and particulars of a given phenomenon, be it reading instruction, health literacy, or civic engagement. CBQR designs also draw heavily from critical and activist

research paradigms in that the intent is not just to reveal or uncover multiple and divergent community perspectives but also to produce some solutions and responses that are meaningful to the community, as well as often to involve community organizations and members in the design and implementation of research projects.

Although the positivist tradition is most associated with quantitative methods, and interpretive with qualitative approaches, many of the participatory and action research designs described in this section also use quantitative methods, and quantitative data do have a place within community-based qualitative studies. For example, surveys and other demographic data can provide useful background and context, as well as offer an overview of trends and patterns related to community attitudes and behaviors that can be probed and examined more richly through qualitative data collection, such as in-depth interviews and detailed and sustained observation and participation in various community settings. The models reviewed in this section include participatory action research (PAR), youth participatory action research (YPAR), service learning courses, community-based action research (CBAR), and collaborative and reciprocal ethnography. In addition to providing an overview of key characteristics and approaches for specific designs, each section also highlights some exemplary studies and projects related to each approach.

Participatory Action Research/Youth Participatory Action Research

PAR is a research approach that challenges more traditional, positivist paradigms, which view research as objective and value neutral (Hall, 1992; Lather, 1986). PAR approaches are theoretically grounded in the work of Paulo Freire (1970), particularly in the way that they focus on action and transformation as central to research, and in the ways in which they seek to raise critical consciousness among research group members. Antonio Gramsci's (1971) work has also been influential to PAR, particularly his notion of "organic intellectuals," whereby intellectuals are created within the working class (p. 5). His view of education as a dialectic process, and exhortation to develop a "praxis of present" (in Lather, 1986), has helped shape the theory and practice of PAR. Other models that have inspired and informed PAR include popular education, a movement begun in Latin America and affiliated with Freire's work. In the United States, a prominent popular educator was Myles Horton who founded the Highlander School in the 1930s in Appalachia, which involved community residents in educational efforts and activism on behalf of their communities and their concerns (Horton & Freire, 1990). PAR projects usually have a critical, social-justice orientation, paying special attention to race, gender, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation, and the ways in which these might function to marginalize certain groups (Hall 1992; Lather, 1986). Researchers such as Michelle Fine and her colleagues have spent decades developing PAR and YPAR approaches "to generate evidence that can be used in specific state and local policy debates and in local organizing campaigns on a wide range of educational justice concerns" (Fine, Ayala, & Zaal, 2012, p. 686). As part of their work with the Public Science Project, they have used them to investigate a variety of issues, such as mass incarceration, the education of immigrant youth, and sexuality education (Fine et al., 2012).

PAR researchers acknowledge the inherent subjectivity in all research endeavors and take an activist

stance within the research studies they undertake. What particularly sets PAR apart from other forms of research—within both the positivist and interpretive traditions—is that research purpose statements, hypotheses, and questions are not designed *a priori*, or before entering a research setting. Rather, PAR researchers work with community organizations and members to identify salient and germane issues and topics, and they collaboratively design and implement the research study. Even more significant is PAR's focus on action and transformation, of research participants, as well as the conditions and contexts that impact their daily lives. Therefore, a PAR study would be interested in not just exploring gender stereotypes and oppression that impact women of color within a specific community, but also they would connect this oppression with larger social structures and shifts, such as gentrification and community displacement, and speak back and challenge the stereotypes, as did the PAR group the Fed Up Honeys when they created stereotype stickers and wrote a report titled *Makes me Mad* (Cahill, Rios-Moore, & Threatts, 2008). Another example of PAR is the work of Andrea Dyrness (2012) with immigrant mothers. In this study, she did not merely investigate the inception and implementation of a small school but instead worked collaboratively with immigrant mothers instrumental in founding the school, forming a research group called Las Madres Unidas (Mothers United). The group worked together to conduct interviews and focus groups to gather various perspectives on the implementation of the school. Their identification of ways in which parents' voices were silenced and ignored facilitated advocacy efforts on the part of the women, and ultimately, it led to the establishment of a parent education center at the school.

Central to PAR is the notion of **praxis** or the “dialectical tension, the interactive, reciprocal shaping of theory and practice” (Lather, 1986, p. 258). PAR aims to build reciprocal research relationships with individuals and communities toward the development of emancipatory knowledge:

For praxis to be possible, not only must theory illuminate the lived experience of progressive social groups; it must also be illuminated by their struggles. Theory adequate to the task of changing the world must be open-ended, nondogmatic, informing, and grounded in the circumstances of everyday life; and, moreover, it must be premised on a deep respect for the intellectual and political capacities of the dispossessed. (Lather, 1986, p. 262)

Thus, within PAR, research and theory must be grounded in and generated by the everyday realities and struggles of participants, as well as rooted in respectful and reciprocal processes and research relationships.

In PAR studies, community members are not viewed as “research subjects” or even as “primary informants” or “research participants,” but serve as co-researchers and partners in the research process. For example, In the work by Dyrness (2012), mothers developed research questions, led focus groups, and presented research findings at class assemblies and conferences. Similarly, the Fed Up Honeys were engaged in the collective analysis of research findings that were used to design the sticker campaign and a website (Cahill et al., 2008). These aforementioned activities point to the pedagogical aspects of PAR, wherein research is viewed as an opportunity to impart research skills to individuals and communities who have often been marginalized or left out of the research process. Therefore, within PAR studies, a university researcher might be involved in teaching workshops on various aspects of data collection, facilitating practice interviews and focus groups,

and leading data analysis sessions. This collaborative process requires that university researchers—who are typically used to being “in charge” of a project—part with control and authority at all stages of the research process and that they empower co-researchers to implement and lead the project. Similarly, community members and co-researchers will be looked at to share their knowledge and expertise, about the community and relevant issues, with community researchers (McIntyre, 2008). This shared authority may also mean co-authoring research articles and book chapters (Irizarry, 2011) and presenting as a group at conferences (McIntyre, 2008).

The role of the researcher, then, can be “complicated” within PAR projects because researchers are often positioned as researchers and as activists and concerned community members, as both insiders and outsiders, and as inhabiting political and social spaces in ways that are “unsettling” within more traditional research paradigms that urge neutrality and distance (Stovall, 2006, p. 98). Often, within PAR projects, university researchers become advocates for co-researchers and their issues and concerns. They can also be seen as “crossing the line” as researchers when they engage in advocacy efforts and align themselves with marginalized groups. For example, Dyrness (2012) was at times “disciplined” or “chastised” by the administration at the school she was working with because she was considered too closely affiliated with the mothers who, through their research, were challenging the process of inclusion at the school (p. 216).

In PAR, the products of the research are not limited to research reports and articles, but they might also include curricula, public service announcements, action plans, advocacy efforts, and/or media campaigns. Research findings are also often used to design new programs or to refashion existing community services to meet local needs better. For example, a youth group that Alice McIntyre (2008) worked with developed a community clean-up group, which entailed creating a logo and T-shirts. Given that PAR is interested in “individual and collective well-being” (McIntyre, 2008, p. 40), the purpose of the research is not just to generate products, or to contribute to “generalizable knowledge,” but also to lead to the enrichment and betterment of group members and the larger community and societal context. Research dissemination takes more public forms, such as on websites and within community meetings. The research is meant to engage diverse audiences, beyond academic scholars, including youth, community residents, practitioners, policy makers, and the broader public.

Although PAR can be an effective means for conducting transformative research and enacting change, several researchers have spotlighted the “messiness” of PAR and urge that researchers allow themselves “enough space to withstand the bumps and bruises that characterize humanizing experiences of reflection, action, and change” (McIntyre, 2008, p. 37). Despite researchers’ best intentions, and the enthusiasm and commitment of co-researchers, sometimes the projects do not affect the change sought at the outset of the project. And although PAR is premised on building reciprocal relationships between academic researchers and co-researchers, and emphasizes “equal” roles of power within the research project, in some cases, academics can reproduce the unequal power hierarchies that they are trying to disrupt through the process of PAR (Nygreen, 2013). For example, Kysa Nygreen (2013) reflected on the ways that she initially glossed over her role in silencing youth voices and privileging her own agenda in her youth research group. She

concedes that her candid discussion of some of the ways her project was unsuccessful, and her reflection on her tacit role in propagating deficit discourses about youth in her study, might provide fodder to the detractors of PAR, yet she avers that PAR can be “strengthened by our willingness to write honestly and self-reflexively about the ethical, political, and intellectual dilemmas of the method” (Nygreen, 2013, p. 16). Others have also acknowledged and grappled with the inherent “speed bumps” entailed in conducting such research and exhort researchers to be mindful of obstacles and dilemmas at all stages of the research (Weis & Fine, 2000). Some of the aforementioned difficulties that researchers face in PAR projects stem from the fact that the research is situated within a larger societal context that privileges certain racial, gender, class, and educational categories over others. These hierarchies and hegemonic relationships can certainly be replicated within PAR projects if researchers do not constantly interrogate and critique their positionality and practices.

Emerging from the tradition of PAR is YPAR, which as the name indicates focuses specifically on youth as research partners (Cammarota & Fine, 2008). Many of the researchers mentioned conducted projects with youth, but they did not explicitly refer to their study as YPAR, which is a more recent term. Because of its pedagogical aspect, PAR seems especially appropriate for work and research with youth. Ernest Morrell (2004, 2006) has referred to his work as “youth-initiated research,” whereby youth become critical researchers through their exploration of issues pertinent to their lives, which are also topics of their choosing. Other notable examples include the work of Shawn Ginwright and Julio Cammarota (2007), who have examined the role that praxis-based community organizations can play in engaging youth. Jason Irizarry (2011) employed YPAR to engage “Latino youth in urban schools in meaningful, co-constructed research while enhancing their academic skills” (p. 6). To do this, he taught a course in a public high school, where students were involved in researching their experiences within schools, and used this to challenge deficit discourses that position low-income youth of color as “problems.” His findings were intended to inform the knowledge and practices of teachers and schools, as well as to be part of professional development efforts, and they were published in a book where each chapter was coauthored (Irizarry, 2011). Many who use YPAR view it as both an ideology and a methodology (Irizarry, 2011), where youth are positioned as producers of knowledge and research is viewed as a means of resisting the status quo.

Community-Based Participatory Research

By building on PAR design and approaches, community-based participatory research (CBPR) uses a collaborative, partnership approach toward conducting research, and it “recognizes the community as a social and cultural entity” that involves community partners in all aspects of the research and “in the process of creating knowledge and change” (Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 2001, p. 184). CBPR acknowledges community strengths and resources and uses these as the foundation for a research study; as in PAR, co-learning and capacity building among researchers, and community partners are integral components of the act of conducting research. Mostly employed within community health research, CBPR aims to develop “effective translational practice” (Hacker, 2013, p. 2), which involves forging and strengthening equitable relationships between academic researchers and community members. Interventions that are developed through CBPR are intended to be relevant and responsive to community concerns, as well as part of iterative

and cyclical processes of data collection and systems development (Hacker, 2013).

CBPR uses a variety of nonexperimental methods, including qualitative and quantitative approaches, as well as approaches associated with evaluation research. CBPR has been used to examine issues such as the impact of immigration enforcement on immigrant health in Everett, Massachusetts (Hacker et al., 2011), health-care disparities (Wallerstein & Duran, 2010), and the relationship between teen suicide and drug use (Hacker et al., 2008). As with other participatory models, some challenges included the time required to form and develop partnerships and relationships with community members, as well as the potential lack of respect for and value placed on such research within the academic arena.

Collaborative and Reciprocal Ethnography

Ethnography, or the study of cultural phenomena and human societies and behavior, usually involves intense observation and participation—also referred to as “fieldwork”—on the part of the researcher in particular settings, which are often localized communities (Geertz, 1973). However, very early anthropological work often did not include this sort of immersion, and it was critiqued for being inauthentic and produced by “armchair ethnographers,” who had limited participation in the contexts and with the groups they depicted in their writings (Heath & Street, 2008; Malinowski, 1922/1961). As fieldwork has become an integral component of ethnography, others have been critical of “the myth of the lone ethnographer,” wherein research is viewed as a solitary endeavor and the sole purview of the researcher, when in fact, they assert, ethnographic research is always a collaborative process involving dialogue with participants (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Lassiter, 2005). Increasingly, ethnographic researchers have called for increased participation and involvement within the settings and communities where they conduct their research, as well as self-reflexivity regarding their own positionality in relation to participants (Abu-Lughod, 1993; Behar, 1996).

Some ethnographers have exhorted researchers to move beyond mere participation and self-reflexivity for the sake of the researcher only to more explicit and deliberate collaboration, where collaboration is part of the research design rather than just an incidental outgrowth of immersive participation and fieldwork that is a feature of most ethnographic work (Lassiter, 2005; Lawless, 2000). These researchers seek to upend traditional researcher/subject power hierarchies, urging instead for collaborative ethnography, which involves a shared process and dialogue among ethnographers and community members and research participants (Lassiter, 2005). Under this model—much like PAR and YPAR described earlier—those often referred to as “subjects” or “informants” are viewed, and treated, as consultants and co-intellectuals, who possess mutual authority and vision with the academic researcher. These researchers critique most ethnographic work as inauthentic and irrelevant as it produces “academically-positioned narratives” rather than “community-positioned” ones (Lassiter, 2005, p. 4). They call for work that involves an ongoing conversation with community members and cultural groups, where dialogue plays a central and primary role, not just during fieldwork but also during “all phases of the research process,” from design to write-up (Schensul & Schensul, 1992, p. 162).

Some researchers have described this type of ethnographic research as “reciprocal” ethnography:

“Reciprocal ethnography” will occur when and if they (researcher and participants) are able to cross paths and engage in dialogue and discussion openly about the subject matter they are each writing and thinking about, recognizing and embracing the potential to take their conversations beyond their current perceptions. (Lawless, 2000, p. 200)

Lawless (2000) differentiates her notion of “reciprocal” from “reciprocity” in that it involves not just an exchange of goods, such as presents or material resources, given to research participants as a token of thanks for their time. Rather, true reciprocal ethnography is premised on an “exchange of ideas and meaning” and includes “emergent dialogue in field research that is then carried into scholarly writing” (Lawless, 2000, p. 199).

In collaborative and reciprocal ethnography, consultants are involved in co-processes of co-interpretation and reciprocal analysis, collaborative writing and editing, and serve as readers and editors, members and facilitators of focus groups, participants in community forums, and authors of co-authored texts (Lassiter, 2005). The finished products of research projects are written to be accessible, as well as publically and locally available. In this way, the research process also serves to “cultivat[e] co-citizenships” and enable

wider possibilities for collaborative engagements in the very specific context of cooperatively conceived community–university research partnerships: that is, between and among community- and university-situated constituencies, where students, faculty, and members of local communities have opportunities to research, learn, work, and act together in the framework of care and responsibility for the communities they collectively inhabit. (Campbell & Lassiter, 2010, p. 378)

The type of democratic civic engagement entailed in these projects is not just related to activity and place—for example, that the research takes place within a particular community setting—but also to purpose and process, that the research is intended to address multiple audiences and contribute to social equity, and that the process involves a “reorder[ing]” of the conventional hierarchical and unidirectional relationship between “the researcher and the researched” (Campbell & Lassiter, 2010; Schensul & Schensul, 1992, p. 166)

Some examples of collaborative or reciprocal ethnography include Elizabeth Campbell and Luke Lassiter’s (2010) work in Muncie, Indiana, where students and ethnographers worked with teams of community advisors to remediate a former community study that ignored the African American residents; “The Other Side of Middletown” brought together students, researchers, and various community constituencies to engage in important conversations about race and difference (Campbell & Lassiter, 2010). Elaine Lawless (1993) created co-produced texts with women in the clergy by participating in intimate discussions with them about their daily lives and work, as well as about their families and personal lives, including successes and challenges. Through these discussions, they “worked through and toward an understanding of their own experience(s)” that helped her “envision” her final work (Lawless, 1993, p. 59). As part of the research, Lawless attended the clergy women’s existing lunch discussions, collected life stories from the women,

and established “book work” groups that allowed for discussions and explorations of the women’s stories and experiences. The goal in all these collaborative projects is to embrace multiple voices and integrate “community and consultant commentary into an ethnographic text” (Lassiter, 2005, p. 136). In the eyes of some researchers, this sort of process “moves beyond mere bureaucratic rubber stamping and toward an increasingly difficult engagement with differing visions, agendas, and expectations” (Lassiter, 2005, pp. 136–137).

However, as in the case of PAR/YPAR, this sort of ethnographic work is often marginalized in the field as not serious or rigorous research and viewed as siding with participants instead of maintaining the objective stance many associate with research. Some view the projects as social work rather than as academic research; for this reason, engaging in collaborative ethnography can often be “unprestigious” and “professionally risky” (Lassiter, 2005, p. 151).

Course-Based Models

Much of the community-based research currently taking place is connected with specific course work and campus-wide initiatives aimed at increasing community and civic engagement on the part of students and the broader institution, and it is designed to build community–university partnerships. Many of these initiatives were developed in response to critiques of academic institutions as ignorant of—or even worse, insensitive to—community needs and concerns, as well as separated from the “real world” in an “ivory tower.” Many universities and colleges were viewed as mining and exploiting surrounding communities for research opportunities but not sharing or purveying adequate resources to compensate communities for their time and efforts. Increasingly, higher education institutions have been charged with providing real-world and engaged learning experiences to students to prepare them better for their professional lives after college in a variety of contexts.

Service Learning. Service learning can be integrated into courses as part of a volunteer requirement or a class project that involves engagement in a community setting; sometimes these projects are aligned with course objectives (Vogel, Seifer, & Gelmon, 2010). Increasingly, service learning has been integrated into the mission of schools, particularly those with a religious affiliation and an explicit social-service mission. Research has found that at institutions with high levels of service learning, faculty are often provided release time to enable the planning and implementation of service-learning projects (Vogel et al., 2010). Several institutions, such as DePaul University, have institutional service-learning requirements for students, as well as designated service-learning courses. Other service-learning opportunities might be provided through alternative spring breaks, where students take trips to be involved in direct service volunteer projects in high-need areas, for example, to build houses in New Orleans post–Hurricane Katrina. For these sorts of service-learning initiatives to be successful, and to institutionalize efforts, colleges and universities develop infrastructure and dedicate resources for service learning, such as a center that coordinates initiatives and course work and provides professional development and support for faculty (Vogel et al., 2010). Nationwide, the Campus Compact, an organization founded in 1985 by a group of university presidents and now a national

coalition of 1,100 college and university presidents, helps support institutions in developing community partnerships and service-learning initiatives (www.compact.org). Service-learning projects are intended to be more than volunteerism or community service, as well as aligned with learning objectives, but they are not necessarily focused on collaborative research.

Community-Based Action Research (CBAR). CBAR is a term developed by Howard Rosing and Nila Hofman (2007) that “encompasses a variety of community-focused research, including community-based research (CBR), community-focused experiential learning (EL), and participatory action research (PAR)” (p. vii). According to Rosing and Hofman, these approaches share “an underlying commitment to engaging undergraduates, faculty, and local community partners in building intercommunity ties through the goal of improving the lives of members of marginalized communities” (p. vii). In these courses, the emphasis is on advocacy and conducting research “for and with” community partners rather than just on student-centered research or civic engagement projects that merely generate descriptions of community settings or that only benefit student learning (Rosing & Hofman, 2007). The intent is to provide college students with authentic experiences within communities, while building university–community partnerships, and developing something of use to community stakeholders. CBAR shares much in common with aforementioned service-learning and community-service initiatives as part of required course work, yet what sets CBAR apart from many service-learning projects is that it emphasizes a critical perspective on the larger societal conditions within which projects are situated, thus, enabling “students to critically evaluate their sociopolitical surroundings” (Rosing & Hofman, 2007, p. viii). Whereas many volunteer and service-learning initiatives involve students in community service as part of a one-day project, CBAR entails sustained participation and engagement in community settings and sites, and it is anchored in specific course work. Furthermore, it aims to empower community entities and stakeholders toward the achievement of positive social change and betterment of the local community.

An example of a CBAR project includes a course focused on access to food within a low-income neighborhood on the west side of Chicago, which involved students in conducting research at local corner stores (Rosing, 2007). Another CBAR project took an asset-based approach to challenge deficit-oriented and stereotypical views of low-income communities and youth of color by bringing together teenage boys from Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn, New York, and premed students from Cornell University to document healthy places in the community (Beck, 2007). One research group used urban geography and mapping approaches to address gentrification within a particular community (Curran, Hague, & Gill, 2007).

Although CBAR has proven to be a successful model for enacting change through course work, nevertheless some challenges are associated with CBAR. Some researchers have pointed to the essential need for sufficient preparation for students prior to beginning projects and to be wary of how, if not implemented properly, projects might reinforce or reproduce the negative stereotypes that they are attempting to challenge (Hofman, 2007). Furthermore, to be successful, adequate preplanning and preparation on the part of faculty members is necessary; this additional preparation requires more support from institutions in terms of funding and release time (Hofman, 2007).

Community-Based Learning and Research (CBLR/CBR)

A model that is strongly associated with service-learning is community-based learning and research (CBLR) or community-based research (CBR) (Dallimore, Rochefort, & Simonelli, 2010; Stoeker, 2013; Strand, Marullo, Cutworth, Stoeker, & Donohue, 2003). According to Elise Dallimore, David Rochefort, and Kristen Simonelli (2010), “CBLR focuses on engaging faculty, community-based organizations, and students in partnerships to actively meet academic-learning and community goals” (p. 15). It arose out of similar concerns that motivated service learning, a desire to build and formalize academy–community partnerships and engage in research for the public good, as well as a belief that the university was “largely failing in its efforts to prepare students for lives of social responsibility and civic and public engagement” (Strand et al., 2003, p. 2). Key elements of CBLR are “community engagement, learning by doing, and guided reflection” (Dallimore et al., 2010, p. 17).

CBLR and CBR involve outreach to organizations and communities, as well as learning and research with groups that are “disadvantaged” and “disenfranchised” (Strand et al., 2003). The model is rooted in some of the aforementioned research and learning models, such as popular education (Freire, 1970; Horton & Freire, 1990), action research (Lewin, 1951), and participatory action research (Fals Borda, 2006). It employs an “active learning and problem-centered pedagogy” (Strand et al., 2003, p. 10), which validates local knowledge. Dallimore and colleagues (2010) also identify three models of CBLR. In the direct service-learning model, students provide regular direct service to a community-based organization or nonprofit, for example, tutoring or mentoring. Throughout the project, students are expected to engage in ongoing guided reflection. In the second model, project-based service learning, advanced students are involved in consulting with a community partner to lend their expertise (usually aligned with course content) to help partners develop solutions to an identified problem that they might not have time or resources to address. For example, at Northeastern University, in a “consultation skills” course, students “assess organizational needs, conduct benchmarking data, and then provide recommendations for organizational change” (Dallimore et al., 2010, p. 18). To sustain projects, work from previous students is built on by students in subsequent classes. The CBR model involves more collaboration with the community partner, where much of the work on a project would be conducted in collaboration with the partner, and the emphasis is on capacity building so that partners can continue work and initiatives after the CBR project has ended.

In sum, although much attention has been paid to civic engagement within academic institutions, many have pointed out the need for more research on engaged scholarship, as well as the context and conditions that support engagement on the part of academic scholars (O’Meara, Sandmann, Saltmarsh, & Giles, 2010). Researchers have also called for clearer definitions of the “scholarship of engagement” and have highlighted the need for redefining promotion and tenure policies to allow for this sort of community engagement and collaborative research to expand “what counts” as scholarly research (Israel et al., 2001; Saltmarsh, Giles, Ward, & Buglione, 2009).

In sharing these various models related to CBQR, it should also be pointed out that these are not meant

to be an exhaustive list of community-based approaches in the area of research, teaching, and learning. Furthermore, there is much overlap among aspects of these models, and they are certainly not exclusive or singular examples of the ways in which civic and community engagement have been integrated into scholarly research and university course work and initiatives. Although some features might be particular to the specific models mentioned, many shared concepts and terms exist.

Views of Teaching and Learning

In addition to the aforementioned models, some particular concepts and views of teaching and learning provide a theoretical and philosophical foundation for CBQR. These notions challenge traditional views of where knowledge resides and how individuals gain skills and expertise. These views of teaching and learning can help academic scholars reconceptualize their research and teaching, as well as offer an essential grounding for the design and implementation for CBQR projects.

Funds of Knowledge

By drawing on Vygotskian and sociocultural theories of learning and development, a group of educational researchers developed the concept of funds of knowledge to describe the everyday practices of households and families (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). It initially emerged from a project—"The Tucson Project"—which involved extensive ethnographic interviews with working and middle-class Mexican American households in Tucson, Arizona (Vélez-Ibáñez, 1983), and documented the important resources, networks, knowledge, and support that were exchanged among households. This study inspired researchers to explore further "the transformative effect of knowing the community in all its breadth and depth" and provided the foundation for the Funds of Knowledge Project (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005, p. 3). This project aimed to develop collaborative relationships between researchers and teachers with the goal of documenting and describing knowledge and practices employed in the families and households of students in their classrooms, as well as with the goal of using these to transform classroom instruction. To gather data, teachers visited households and communities and used ethnographic methods, such as participant observation, in-depth interviews, life history narratives, and reflective writings.

The funds of knowledge concept asserts that families and communities are repositories of significant resources and knowledge, as well as sites for the development of important skills and practices for individuals, including adults and children. In particular, the project sought to identify such sources of knowledge and practices among low-income and minority households, which traditionally have been viewed through a deficit-perspective focused on weaknesses rather than on strengths. Underlying the concept of funds of knowledge is "a critical assumption . . . that educational institutions have stripped away the view of working class minority students as emerging from households rich in social and intellectual resources" (González, Moll, Tenery, et al., 2005, p. 90).

The notion of funds of knowledge provides an important antidote to deficit-oriented perspectives that focus

on what certain families and communities lack, and labels that classify entire communities as “impoverished” and “disadvantaged,” as well as those who reside in these communities as “at risk.” A funds of knowledge perspective also assists researchers and practitioners in moving away from “cycles of poverty” rhetoric that has characterized some research and policy aimed at low-income, minority families (Moynihan, 1965) and that has pathologized communities and families as sites of numerous social problems that are transmitted intergenerationally. In contrast, a funds of knowledge approach views families and communities as repositories and purveyors of valuable resources, skills, and knowledge. Such a concept is an important one for those interested in conducting CBQR as it helps orient researchers toward community strengths and assets and in viewing communities as contexts for teaching, learning, and development.

Experiential Learning

Another important concept involves views on how individuals learn. Some researchers and theorists have highlighted the role of everyday experiences within the learning process and have called attention to the way individuals’ experiences provide the context for gaining new knowledge and skills (Kolb, 1994; Lewin, 1951). David Kolb (1984) draws on the work of John Dewey (1958), Kurt Lewin (1951), Jean Piaget (1952), and others to describe “how learning transforms the impulses, feelings, and desires of concrete experience into higher-order purposeful action” (Kolb, 1984, p. 22). Experiential learning views education as a lifelong process that is not confined to the realm of classroom instruction, acknowledging the “critical linkages that can be developed between the classroom and the ‘real world’” (Kolb, 1984, p. 4).

According to experiential learning theorists, this sort of learning should be conceived as a process rather than viewed in terms of outcomes; a central assumption of experiential learning is that ideas are not “fixed and immutable elements of thought but are formed and re-formed through experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 26). Experiential learning is a continuous process, rooted in one’s experiences, and it involves an interplay between expectation and experience and the resolving of tensions between divergent ways of viewing the world. In this view, learning requires adaptation and relearning rather than the simple intake of facts and information. Experiential learning entails a transactional relationship between learner and environment, objective and subjective experiences, and social and personal knowledge. Finally, reflective observation on one’s experiences is a key component of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984).

Experiential learning notions are integral to CBQR as this type of research is premised on an interest in the ways that individuals’ distinct experiences can serve as contexts and foundations for learning. The central tenets of experiential learning, related to the role that experience plays within the learning process, also help researchers structure the research process to be grounded in the everyday realities of participants and co-researchers. Furthermore, experiential learning’s premise that thought and ideas are dynamic and flexible can help researchers question their *a priori* assumptions and take-for-granted theoretical frameworks and view knowledge as malleable and open to change.

Situated Learning/Communities of Practice

Situated learning theory posits that learning occurs through individuals' participation in communities of practice (CoP)—or a group of practitioners who share an area of expertise or profession—and through “legitimate peripheral participation” in that CoP (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). These communities can exist in the workplace, in a larger community setting, or in virtual space. Early work in CoP examined Yucatán midwives, Liberian tailors, navy quartermasters, butchers, members of Alcoholics Anonymous, and dieters in Weight Watchers (Brown et al., 1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991). A primary component of situated learning is *in situ* learning or “learning by doing.” Learning is viewed as “an integral part of a generative social practice in the lived-in world” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 35). Thus, learning occurs in authentic activities, or the everyday activities and social practices, of individuals engaged in a CoP. As part of legitimate peripheral participation, “a person’s intentions to learn are engaged and the meaning of learning is configured through the process of becoming a full participant in sociocultural practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29).

This body of work is also interested in the ways in which meaning, practice, community, and identity intersect to inform processes of knowledge acquisition. Within this model, meaning refers to “a way of talking about (changing) ability—individually and collectively—to experience our life and the world as meaningful” (Wenger, 1998, p. 5). Practices involve shared historical and social frameworks that “can sustain mutual engagement in action,” whereas the concepts of community and identity provide a means of “belonging” and “becoming” within the learning process (Wenger, 1998, p. 5). This work also highlights the difference between explicit and tacit knowledge, or those practices and behaviors that are declared and known and others that might be more taken for granted or implicit.

Situated learning theory can help those interested in conducting CBQR pay attention to the ways in which particular settings and contexts are teeming with practices that reflect particular sociocultural histories and experiences. A focus on *in situ* learning also helps researchers identify learning that takes place outside of formal classroom settings, as well as the ways that individuals acquire knowledge and skills in everyday activities. Finally, as John Seely Brown, Allan Collins, and Paul Duguid (1989) point out, “because tools and the way they are used reflect the particular accumulated insights of communities, it is not possible to use a tool appropriately without understanding the community or culture in which it is used” (p. 33). Thus, a CoP perspective assists researchers in exploring how conceptual tools, such as learning strategies, are influenced and shaped by such “accumulated insights,” as well as a respect for and interest in a larger community setting.

Critical Pedagogy and Problem-Posing Education

The critical, liberatory pedagogy articulated by Brazilian educator and theorist Paulo Freire (1970) has been extremely influential in shaping critical perspectives on teaching and learning, particularly in the area of adult education. Freire’s theory faulted traditional “banking” educational approaches—where information is deposited into students and the emphasis is on rote learning—as creating passive objects and instead urged for a problem-posing education that uses education to help students identify and reflect on the generative themes and issues in their lives, with the ultimate goal of taking action to transform the world around them.

This process of identification, reflection, and action also requires that teachers not replicate hegemonic and dominating colonial practices, where they are the ultimate authority within the classroom. Instead, under a problem-posing approach, teachers serve as facilitators, and they assist in the “constant unveiling of reality” (Freire, 1970, p. 68). Instead of merely acting as information “depositors,” who assume that students know nothing, critical educators engage in a dialogic process with students where they are jointly educated, in which students become teachers and vice versa.

Freirian notions of critical pedagogy are particularly relevant to the research process necessary for conducting CBQR. In particular, the dialogue and collaboration that are integral to problem-posing education are also essential components of CBQR. Moreover, Freire’s (1970) emphasis on education as a process of transformation provides a model for how to reconceptualize research projects to enact changes that can benefit communities and research participants.

Counterstorytelling and Counterspaces

Critical race theory (CRT) and LatCrit draw from critical theory “to examine the multiple ways that African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, Chicanas/os, and Latinas/os continue to experience, respond to, and resist racism and other forms of oppression” (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano & Bernal, 2001; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009, p. 662). In addition, CRT and LatCrit are interested in the intersectionality of various forms of oppression; LatCrit, in particular, addresses issues often not tackled by CRT, such as language, immigration, ethnicity, culture, identity, phenotype, and sexuality (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001). Both use a methodology called counterstorytelling, which is

both a technique of telling the story of those experiences that are not often told (i.e., those on the margins of society) and a tool for analyzing and challenging the stories of those in power and whose story is a natural part of the dominant discourse—the majoritarian story. (Yosso et al., 2009, p. 662)

Related to the technique of counterstorytelling is the notion of counterspaces. These are safe places for minoritized individuals to build community and “cultivate . . . students’ sense of home and family” (Yosso et al., 2009, p. 677) and often serve as sites for nurturance and restoration from oppression, as well as settings that promote resilience, resistance, and transformation (Haymes, 1995; Solórzano & Bernal, 2001).

Examples of such counterspaces have included social groups and activities that Latinos/as might construct in college where they can speak Spanish, or celebrate certain cultural symbols, and position their cultural knowledge as valuable (Yosso, 2005; Yosso et al., 2009). The concept is similar to bell hooks’s (1990) notion of “homeplace,” which was articulated to describe African American women’s domestic spaces, where women could find solace and recuperate from the injustices of racism exacted by the outside world: “one’s homeplace was the one site where one could freely confront the issue of humanization, where one could resist” (p. 42). Others have also spotlighted the emancipatory potential of counterstorytelling and counterspaces (Fernández, 2002).

The notions of counterstorytelling and counterspaces are relevant for community-based qualitative researchers because of their emphasis on privileging the narratives of marginalized groups and individuals. Furthermore, CRT and LatCrit's analysis of the power and hegemony functioning within public, majoritarian spaces and narratives and how counterstories and counterspaces represent acts of survival and resistance are instructive for those interested in conducting research that can challenge mainstream ways of knowing. Research has examined how communities and institutions can serve as counterstorytelling contexts and counterspaces (Johnson & Rosario-Ramos, 2012), and it has examined the specific ways that those from marginalized communities serve as "holders and creators of knowledge" (Bernal, 2002). These sorts of studies provide exemplars of how researchers can seek to uncover what Yosso and García (2007) have referred to as "community cultural wealth" (Yosso et al., 2009, p. 677).

Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed theories and models related to CBQR. In particular, this chapter discussed participatory research approaches, such as PAR, YPAR, and reciprocal ethnography, as well as models that are often anchored in college course work, such as service-learning models and CBAR. These approaches and models share many commonalities with CBQR, most notably, their commitment to collaborative inquiry with particular communities and community-based groups and constituencies. Although these participatory and course-based based models offer many benefits to researchers and students interested in community engagement and collaborative research, they also pose some challenges related to implementation, as they often require significant time, resources, and coordination to be successful. CBQR has also been informed by various views of teaching and learning, including experiential learning theories and critical pedagogical approaches. Other related concepts we learned about involve views of communities that are asset-based and that regard communities as repositories of knowledge and rich sites for the acquisition of skills.

Key Terms

A priori 4

Praxis 5

Activities for Reflection and Discussion

1. Examine informal learning: With a partner, share something that you have learned outside of a formal educational context, such as school or a training/workshop. What did you learn? How did you learn it? How was the process different than learning in a classroom setting?
2. Discuss some of the research models discussed in this chapter: PAR/YPAR, collaborative and

reciprocal ethnography, and community-based models. What do they all have in common? What makes each model unique? What are the advantages of each model? What are the challenges associated with each model? Use Handout 1 to organize information.

3. Identify a community–university partnership or initiative on an institutional website or through a program that you are involved in. What sorts of models did they follow? How do they address or integrate the views of teaching and learning articulated in this chapter?

Handout 1

Comparing Research Models

Research Model	Characteristics	Key Concepts	Advantages	Challenges
PAR				
YPAR				
Reciprocal Ethnography				
Service Learning				
Community-Based Action Research				

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