What Is Community-Based Qualitative Research?

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Introduction

As Chapter 1 discussed, many different models of research entail conducting research within community settings and/or building collaborative relationships with community members. CBQR builds on many of the aforementioned models and designs and employs many of the approaches discussed in Chapter 1. To provide some clarity, this chapter delineates key elements of the CBQR model, as well as offers examples of course work that incorporates the model and projects that use this approach to conduct research.

Learning Goals

After reading this chapter, students will be able to:

1. Identify core concepts underlying the community-based qualitative research (CBQR) model and be familiar with their theoretical/philosophical origins.
2. Apply core concepts to aspects of the design and implementation of CBQR projects.
3. Discuss important elements of CBQR, and explain how these can be integrated into specific components and processes of the project.
4. Describe particular projects and initiatives that have used a CBQR design or related model, and explain how they are collaborative, critical, and transformative.

Core Concepts

This section introduces central concepts at the heart of community-based qualitative research (CBQR) and discusses some of the theoretical underpinnings of these concepts. In addition, examples of what these core concepts "look like" in the practice of conducting research within communities is provided. Knowledge of these core concepts can help researchers employing this approach better understand how to design projects that integrate key attributes.

Praxis

The concept of *praxis* has its roots in Aristotelian philosophy. Aristotle identified praxis as one of the central activities, along with *theoria* and *poesis*, of human life (Aristotle, 2004). Praxis refers to practical knowledge

with the end goal being action, whereas *theoria* refers to theoretical knowledge and a search for truth and *poesis* to poietical knowledge with an emphasis on production (Aristotle, 2004). Within education, the concept was elaborated on by Paulo Freire (1970), who viewed praxis as a liberatory act, involving a combination of reflection and action upon the world "in order to transform it" (p. 36).

Researchers who have been concerned with taking critical stances on important social issues have described praxis as "critical and collective inquiry, reflection and action focused on 'reading' and speaking back to the reality of the world" (Cammarota & Fine, 2008, p. 2). In this sense, the concept of praxis requires scholars not just identify or describe social problems but also become actively involved in challenging existing conditions and "speaking back" to inequities and injustice. For many researchers, this demands more than just theorizing about issues and problems but also suggesting solutions or alternatives, ideally in dialogue and collaboration with community members and marginalized populations. Authentic critical praxis often also involves active participation by researchers on behalf of ameliorating social problems. Many researchers have spotlighted the collaborative nature of praxis and its merging of theory and practice. In their description of community-based action research (CBAR), Howard Rosing and Nila Hofman (2007) define praxis as "an integration of community-based research for the purpose of empowering community partners, their stakeholders, and our students" (p. viii). In their view, praxis "can take place only when theory and practice are integrated in particular cultural—that is, economic, political, and historical—contexts" (Rosing & Hofman, 2007, p. viii). It is also important to acknowledge that these contexts both enable and confine the resources available to participants and the activities they engage in (Glass, 2001). Praxis is "marked by . . . [a] dialectical interplay between the way in which history and culture make people even while people are making that very history and culture" (Glass, 2001, p. 16).

In CBQR, praxis means that researchers engage in reflective practice on their experiences related to the issues and topics under study, as well as on those relative to the experiences and perspectives of participants and community members. In addition, researchers engaging in praxis connect the issues at the heart of their study—be they youth civic engagement, early literacy development, or housing—to local conditions and resources, as well as to the larger social and historical contexts in which they are situated. Praxis also necessitates that researchers take active stances within the research process and participate in the development of solutions to educational and social problems. This sort of praxeological learning develops "in the course of being reflexive of ongoing events and changes of human lived experiences" (Hwang & Roth, 2005, p. 9), as well as part of realizing "possibilities inherent in lived experiences" (Hwang & Roth, 2005, p. 19).

Communities as Intellectual Spaces

The notion of communities as intellectual spaces (CIS) is similar to funds of knowledge theories (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005), as described in Chapter 1, that view households and families as rich storehouses of knowledge and skills that can be used to inform instructional content and practices within schools and educational institutions. The CIS concept grew out of discussions among a group of progressive scholars in

a variety of areas, including community informatics, educational research, sociology, and Latin@ studies, as well as among community leaders and activists, who were engaged in community-based critical inquiry in the Humboldt Park/Paseo Boricua area in Chicago, Illinois. This group was interested in convening a forum for various individuals and community constituencies to come together and participate in dialogues related to relevant community issues. These discussions were meant to cut across disciplines and explore cultural, social, educational, and/or economic intersections of various issues. Dissatisfied with current approaches to describing community knowledge and inquiry, the group introduced the concept of community as intellectual space:

> The concept of "community as intellectual space" is based on the premise that if individuals are to understand and create solutions for problems in complex systems, they need opportunities to engage with challenging problems, to learn through participative investigations, to have supportive, situated experiences, to express their ideas to others, and to make use of a variety of resources in multiple media.
>
> The aim of communities as intellectual space is to bring people from all walks of life together to develop "critical, socially engaged intelligence, which enables individuals to understand and participate effectively in the affairs of their community in a collaborative effort to achieve a common good" [as quoted in John Dewey Project on Progressive Education, 2002]. ("Community as Intellectual Space: Preliminary Program," 2005, Symposium Overview, para. 2)

The CIS concept shares a lot in common with Antonio Gramsci's (1971) notion of organic intellectuals, which he positioned against traditional intellectuals trained in universities and mainstream educational institutions. In elaborating this concept, Gramsci was "arguing for a situation where all human beings are intellectual" (Radhakrishnan, 1987, p. 205), as well as outlining how "different sites of social practice can be transformed into sites of adult learning" (Mayo, 2007, p. 424). The organic intellectual that Gramsci (1971) describes is engaged in transformative education as a form of counterhegemonic activity and views education as a means for subverting the status quo and challenging oppressive social structures.

For those conducting CBQR, the CIS concept instructs researchers to recognize the capacity of communities to participate in collaborative and critical inquiry toward the amelioration of issues and conditions impacting their lives. It demands that researchers think in more nuanced ways about community knowledge and avoid viewing communities as monolithic and homogeneous entities composed of individuals with identical and uniform experiences and perspectives. The concept of CIS goes further than approaches that simply acknowledge or respect community knowledge and regard community members as capable of identifying issues and problems but as lacking in the type of intellect or skills to address these issues sufficiently. Rather, communities need to be recognized and embraced as sites of learning and often as "spaces of resistance" (Rinaldo, 2002) that regularly engage in counterhegemonic activity and counterstorytelling, where individuals draw from their experiences to provide an alternative narrative to mainstream and majoritarian narratives (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001). As part of CBQR projects, researchers need to integrate structured and situated forms of and opportunities for critical inquiry and discussion into the project, as well as ensure that multiple

voices, experiences, and expertise are part of these dialogues.

Engaged Learning

Central to any CBQR project is the notion of engaged learning, whereby learning occurs as part of authentic participation in “real-life” settings, which usually refers to settings outside of a typical classroom. Although there is not a common definition or sole theory/theorists associated with engaged learning, the concept is rooted in Vygotskian theories of social learning (Vygotsky, 1978), John Dewey’s progressive philosophy of education (Dewey, 1916/2009), and experiential learning theories (Kolb, 1984). To provide some clarity, Stephen Bowen (2005) offers up a taxonomy that provides four ways of thinking about student engagement, particularly as related to college course work: “engagement with the learning process,” “engagement with the object of study,” “engagement with contexts,” and “engagement with the human condition” (p. 4; Duster & Waters, 2006).

According to engaged learning theories, learning is more meaningful when it is connected with and practically applied to current activities and events; when learners are involved in collaborative learning activities and interactions with others; and when individuals have opportunities to be involved in projects that address and develop solutions to complex problems and issues. Engaged learning has become a central tenet of many university and college curricula and offerings as higher education institutions have often been faulted for being insulated from reality, offering decontextualized learning experiences, and lacking engagement with the communities that surround them. Within engaged learning, learners are viewed not as passive consumers of information but as active participants in creating new knowledge. Engaged learning theories are affiliated with instructional approaches such as small group work, service learning, and project-based learning.

Within CBQR studies, researchers serve as engaged learners at all steps of the process. Students involved in community-based studies have multiple opportunities to apply concepts toward understanding and addressing actual problems in authentic settings. Rather than learning about research methods “in a vacuum,” students are acquiring research skills within ongoing research activities. Researchers involved in these projects are gaining knowledge about a variety of topics and issues through active participation in community projects and dialogue with community leaders, stakeholders, and residents, as well as those with expertise and firsthand experience related to these issues.

Elements of Community-Based Qualitative Research

CBQR projects can take many forms, and certainly no formula exists for conducting a study. As we learned in the previous section, some guiding concepts should be attended to throughout the project. In addition, researchers should be mindful of how their project integrates certain essential elements, which are common to all CBQR studies. Although the research design, topics and issues addressed, data collection and analysis approaches, and day-to-day research activities of each project are unique and varied, some shared aspects differentiate these types of studies from other qualitative models. This section reviews some of these

elements.

Collaborative

CBQR studies are inherently collaborative, involving dialogue and debate among research and community partners. Authority within community-based projects is shared, and the viewpoints and contributions of all members are valued and sought through formal and informal means to inform the design and implementation of the project. A few guidelines for ensuring that projects are collaborative and that input from group members is integrated into all stages of the project are as follows:

- Research members are viewed and regarded as *equal partners* at all stages of the project; the distinct knowledge and skills of research group members are used to improve understanding of various dimensions of the topic under study.
- *Opportunities for discussion and dialogue* are provided throughout the project. Differences of opinion that will inevitably arise are not considered impediments or obstacles, but they are valued as helping to highlight the complexities of specific social and educational issues.
- *Leadership in the project is shared*, although it may be helpful to have one person designated to manage activities. Group members should be called on to share their expertise and oversee specific project elements. Decision-making processes should adhere to a consensus model, where all members of the group have the opportunity to voice their opinions and inform and influence decisions.

Critical

Community-based qualitative researchers maintain a critical stance on the topics and issues they study. However, this does not mean that everyone working on the project must view the topic in the same way but that members must resist the urge to posit simplistic explanations to multifaceted issues and problems. Some principles that can help guide research group members in this critical process are listed as follows:

- *Challenge status-quo narratives* related to the topic under study; this requires that research group members question dominant discourses that often view individuals as solely responsible for their economic conditions and for social inequities, as well as shun deficit-oriented thinking related to low-income and minoritized families and communities.
- *Provide alternative voices* through processes of counterstorytelling (Solórzano & Bernal, 2001), which entails searching for and eliciting multiple perspectives related to the topic and examining how intersections of various factors and characteristics, such as race, gender, class, religion, sexual orientation, and/or age, function to shape individuals' perspectives and experiences.
- *Connect what is happening in local communities to larger societal conditions*, and investigate how broader policies, global events, and historical shifts impact conditions and resources available to community residents.

Transformative

A primary goal of CBQR projects is to use findings to enact changes and make improvements in programs and policies related to the issue under study. In addition, projects aim to have an impact on perspectives and practices of research group members. Such transformations can be achieved by incorporating the following principles and practices into the project:

- Engage in *transformative pedagogies* where research group members have opportunities for teaching and learning at all levels. Learning and teaching should occur as part of a bidirectional process, where all research group participants are viewed as capable of both sharing expertise and acquiring new knowledge and skills.
- Bring about *changes in perspectives and practices of research group members*; participation in research projects and involvement in community settings should also lead to enhanced and amplified understandings of concepts relevant to the study.
- Be *action-oriented* throughout the project and remain conscious of the ways that research findings can contribute to improved conditions and resources for community members and community organizations involved with the project. As much as possible, projects should also focus efforts on developing products and materials that can be used by community partners after the project has officially ended.

Community-Based Qualitative Research Models, Projects, and Initiatives

There is no “one way” to conduct community-based research projects. Some might take place as part of a formal study, such as funded research, or research for a dissertation or thesis project. More often, CBQR projects are undertaken through formalized university–community partnerships, through an institute or an initiative founded to conduct and promote this sort of research, or within college course work, where community-based research activities are integrated into course activities and assignments. This section outlines a few course-based models and share project examples that can help inform the design and implementation of CBQR studies.

Description of Course Models

Many college courses, across social science disciplines at the undergraduate and graduate levels, include research and fieldwork experiences that involve students in working with community organizations and partners. Some courses might mandate that students complete fieldwork hours, whereas others could require that students compile a final community-based project. Projects might be conducted individually or as part of teams. Students might be exposed to particular community organizations or partners through presentation

in class sessions or community visits; in some cases, students might be expected to identify a community institution with which to work. These types of community-based "add-ons" are part of an **experiential course-based model** to CBQR.

Another model is called the **immersive course-based model**, which exposes students to community resources, organizations, and issues. These courses are held within community settings, thus, facilitating multiple opportunities for students to be engaged with community residents. Class sessions might also include guest speakers from the community and/or scheduled fieldwork. This immersive model is much more intensive than the experiential approach because it includes the surrounding community as a classroom for the investigation of multiple issues.

Project Examples

Each CBQR project is unique as it is developed in response to particular community interests, needs, and conditions. As the chapters that describe research design (Chapter 4) and data collection (Chapters 5–6) will demonstrate, a formula for how to conduct a project does not exist. A few examples of projects follow, which provide a sense of the range of possibilities for CBQR studies; these sample studies are drawn from actual studies completed for immersive course models and as part of partnership research.

Assessing Instructional Technology Resources

Two doctoral students enrolled in an immersive summer community-based research course were interested in completing a project in the area of instructional technology with a focus on youth attending a local alternative school. They interviewed community leaders and youth about technology needs and talked to a teacher at the school about technology resources related to her teaching. They also mapped out community locations where technology resources were available to residents and youth. From these interviews and discussions, they found that students attending the school did not have regular access to computers and that they were primarily using smartphones for computing. They thus identified a need for support for students' use of web-based resources to conduct research for assignments, complete assignments, and manage and share projects. They developed training modules and job aids that could help students use technology resources more effectively, as well as helped teachers develop a site for an e-portfolio, which could assist seniors at the school in preparing, organizing, and submitting elements for their final senior portfolio, which was required for graduation. Although the collaborative project was able to create some concrete deliverables for the school, some challenges associated with this project included staff turnover and a shift in the focus of the senior portfolio. It is not uncommon in a CBQR project for the staff members that researchers are working with to leave the organization for another position as staff and teacher turnover in the intense, and often stressful, settings of community-based organizations and alternative schools can be high; pay and compensation are usually low in such organizations, leading to issues in retaining quality staff.

Supporting Urban Agriculture and Science Initiatives

A doctoral student in adult and higher education who also held a position at a center dedicated to supporting the development and capacity of nonprofits and governmental agencies was enrolled in an immersive summer community-based research course and intrigued by the community's efforts in the area of urban agriculture. In 2006, a report identified the community as a food desert or as lacking in food security for its residents (Gallagher, 2006). Other research in the area of public health documented high rates of diabetes and obesity in the community (Whitman, Williams, & Shah, 2004). These reports spurred community efforts to establish community gardens; students at the school conducted their own research project and submitted a grant and received funding to build a greenhouse on the roof of the school. As part of her project, the doctoral student worked with the science teacher at the school to understand better how the teacher integrated hands-on science activities into instruction and how students were involved in community science projects, such as the greenhouse and the community garden. She regularly observed classes and met with the teacher, and helped organize visits to the school by university engineering professors and students who presented on their work in the area of solar and water energy in South Africa; she also planned visits by the students to campus for further discussions with engineering faculty and students. She identified grants that might help support the school's urban agriculture curriculum and projects. The project allowed the graduate student/researcher to gain insights into the implementation of project-based learning and how to use the surrounding community as a classroom for the application of science topics and the exploration of a variety of health and social issues. The project also enabled the initiation of some university–community partnerships and facilitated academic mentoring of high-school students, exposing them to postsecondary options in the area of science and engineering.

However, despite these successes, the researcher encountered some challenges, including difficulties in communicating with school staff; for example, one campus visit needed to be rescheduled at the last minute because of a school nonattendance day, an oversight on the part of the teacher that caused frustration for the graduate student/researcher who had spent considerable effort planning and coordinating events for the day. Some grants and requests for proposals that the researcher forwarded to school staff were not applied for due to time constraints. These sorts of issues can be pervasive in some projects, especially if community partners are overwhelmed by their current workload and do not have adequate time to devote to the research project. It is important at the outset of the project to establish procedures for communication and to ensure that the project is not an additional burden for community partners. It is also helpful to designate one person to be "in charge" of communication and scheduling, someone who can send out and follow up on e-mail messages, as well as make sure the deadlines are met.

Intergenerational Mentorship and Advocacy for Young Mothers

A professor who had been conducting ethnographic research at a nearby community-based organization and grassroots alternative school wanted to build on some of her previous research findings from studies with young mothers attending the school to develop programming and initiatives that could further support this group. To this end, she met with the assistant principal of the school, who also oversaw the program for parents at the school. They identified a need for additional support and motivation for enrolled parents,

particularly authentic mentors who have had similar experiences. They collaboratively designed and implemented an intergenerational mentorship program for young mothers at the school, which entailed recruiting program graduates to serve as mentors for current students. These mentors provide presentations to parents at the school that detail their familial and educational experiences, as well as share challenges they have faced as a young mother; mentors are also matched with a student whom they work with throughout the year, and they meet monthly with their mentee to offer additional support and encouragement. Sessions might entail simply going out to lunch and discussing postsecondary goals; mentees have also shadowed their mentor at their job or college site. Some sessions are more social in nature, involving a family outing to a local museum. Throughout the project, the academic researcher worked with the director to convene focus groups to gather insights from students related to what they were seeking in a mentor; they also elicited regular feedback from mentors regarding their work with their mentee. They developed and provided training for mentors, created program materials and handouts for mentorship sessions, and organized and oversaw program activities and events. The professor-researcher also applied for grants and funding to help provide financial support for the program; she received a sizable grant that allowed the program to provide stipends to mentors and funded training activities and family events. At the end of the school year, mentors and mentees were interviewed by another member of the research team, a doctoral student in clinical psychology concurrently completing a master's degree in educational research and who was conducting CBQR for her final project.

High school students presenting their work in the area of urban agriculture to local educational leaders.

Since the mentorship project was ongoing when this text was published, challenges are still being assessed. However, throughout the initial year of the project, coordination of some mentor/mentorship sessions was problematic. School staff needed to provide ongoing follow-up with some mentees due to persistent

communication issues; one mentee did not show up for a scheduled meeting, whereas a few others canceled sessions a few times. These inconsistencies are not surprising given the often turbulent lives of young mothers and the many responsibilities they are faced with; they often lack transportation resources and may not have regular access to a phone. Furthermore, some mentorship pairs "clicked" better than others. The research team provided orientation activities at the school site so that mentors and mentees could get to know one another in a group setting before meeting individually, but this did not always assure that individual sessions would be successful.

Young mothers involved in the Atabey mentorship program at graduation.

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Related Projects

The areas of community informatics and CBAR share much in common with CBQR and, thus, offer some other examples of projects that would be appropriate for the CBQR project. For example, Ann Peterson-Kemp's (formerly, Ann Peterson-Bishop) work in community librarianship spawned many projects in line with a community-based research approach; in collaboration with the Puerto Rican Cultural Center (PRCC) and Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos High School (PACHS) in Chicago, she helped develop several community-focused projects: youth attending PACHS were trained in cataloguing methods and helped catalog the PRCC's extensive library collection (Bishop & Molina, 2004); another project involved community activists and

residents working with a graduate student from the University of Illinois to create a book-to-prisoners project that developed a procedure for sending books to incarcerated family members of local residents (Bishop & Bruce, 2009).

At DePaul University, students in Rosing's (2007) applied ethnography class conducted a study that involved community-based research at corner stores in the Austin neighborhood of Chicago. The project built on an existing university–community partnership in the area of food systems and work by a campus center focused on service learning (this initiative is described in the following section). Students conducted regular observations at local corner stores as a way of gaining insight into their function within the community, as well as "their distinct role in processes of social, economic, and racial inequality in the U.S." (Rosing, 2007,p. 3). Students also interviewed owners of the stores and prepared a final report that was shared with community partners. These projects "served as a means to inform and think critically about policy decision-making and grassroots efforts towards improving food access in a neighborhood that has long been underserved by the corporate retail sector" (p. 1).

Initiatives

Many CBQR projects are supported by institutional centers and initiatives that can provide important and essential instructional and financial resources. Although many such initiatives exist—and the number is growing—some that standout as exemplary in the field are described as follows.

Photo of "Sea of Flags," a mural by local artist Gamaliel Ramirez, on Paseo Boricua, Chicago.

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Irwin W. Steans Center for Community-based Service Learning and Community Service Studies, DePaul University, Chicago, IL

The Steans Center grew out of the Office of Community-based Service Learning, which was founded in 1998. The center takes an interdisciplinary approach to academic service learning through the establishment of collaborative community partnerships with organizations across Chicago, as well as in other locales (for example, students studying abroad have been able to engage in community-based research with local organizations, such as nongovernmental organizations [NGOs], in Merida, Mexico). The mission of the center, as stated on its website, is to develop "mutually beneficial relationships with community organizations to engage DePaul students in educational opportunities grounded in Vincentian values of respect for human dignity and the quest for social justice" (https://steans.depaul.edu/About/IrwinWSteans/Mission). The types of collaborative learning that they offer to the student, and to partnering organizations, encompass the following types: direct service, where students provide direct services, such as tutoring, to the organization; project-based service, which involves student in a direct effort that "results in a tangible product" of use to the organizations at the end of the project, such as a website or strategic plan; community-based research, where students contribute to an organization's research efforts; and advocacy, which entails students participating in ongoing campaigns "addressing critical social, economic and political issues in Chicago and internationally."

The center has received recognition for its work with the Puerto Rican Cultural Center from the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Partnership Award and The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars' Civic Engagement Award. The center also provides faculty fellowships to support faculty projects and facilitate the integration of community-based research into their courses. In addition, they offer a minor in community-service studies.

Institute for Community Research, Hartford, CT

The Institute for Community Research, or ICR, was founded in 1987 by Jean S. Schensul as a nonprofit research institute "to develop research partnerships and conduct applied and action research with communities and organizations in New England and beyond" (http://www.incommunityresearch.org). The ICR's website specifies that the institute

employs 40 full- and part-time staff, including youth researchers, professional researchers, and community professionals. The mission of the ICR is to conduct “research in collaboration with community partners to promote justice and equity in a diverse, multiethnic, multicultural world.” It works to support community-based research partnerships and to conduct a variety of forms of research to address complex issues, promote positive changes, and help communities “access resources and develop the skills needed to direct and control their own futures.”

The types of research that are conducted by the ICR include basic research, intervention research, participatory action research, and cultural conservation and development. Projects have covered topics such as HIV/AIDS risk and infection patterns, depression among older persons, and sexual identity and support of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) youth. The ICR has developed training materials for its community-based PAR approach with a focus on work with youth and girls. In 1996, the ICR created the Youth Action Research Institute (YARI), which emerged from its previous work on youth-led action research. The institute provides training to youth in ethnography-based action research, as well as support for their development of research projects for investigating issues of importance to their lives. YARI also works with teachers and other educational practitioners to help them integrate action research methods into their instruction and programming.

The ICR has received funding from private foundations and federal grants to support research projects, and it has been recognized as leader in the field of collaborative and participatory research. Researchers and community partners have published research articles, reports, and training materials; presented work at conferences; and convened and hosted forums, youth summits, and exhibits devoted to a variety of issues and topics, from youth drinking to Bosnian weaving.

Community Informatics, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Illinois, Urbana–Champaign, IL (UIUC)

The field of community informatics (CI) seeks to explore and understand how “communities access, create, organize, and share information” as well as examine “the types and qualities of connections between and among communities” (http://www.lis.illinois.edu/academics/degrees/specializations/ci). At UIUC, a certificate in

CI provides graduate students and faculty in the area of library and information sciences the opportunity to engage in CI course work and research within community settings through various partnerships with organizations in East St. Louis, Missouri; Chicago, Illinois; North Champaign, Illinois; and rural Illinois, as well as in West Africa. The program takes a project-centered approach, which “helps students apply what they are studying to real-world situations that involve community partners in meeting local needs.” Students also can develop sustained relationships with community partners, continuing projects after course work has ended.

Students enroll in core course work in CI, as well as complete electives on topics such as community engagement, civic entrepreneurship, and social justice in the information professions. They conduct collaborative projects with community members and other students and faculty that focus on the development of information services and networks that can meet the diverse needs of a wide range of community partners. One particular project that emerged from this CI work was the development and use of software tools to create community inquiry labs, or ilabs, which could help community residents and leaders collaborate with researchers and students across spaces, and address particular issues and concerns (Bishop & Bruce, 2009). A particular initiative that has emerged from the CI program has been the Youth Community Inquiry (YCI) project, which involves work with youth in diverse underserved communities (Bruce, Bishop, & Budhathoki, 2014). Through various projects, youth conduct research, develop podcasts, produce video documentaries, and use GIS/GPS technologies to examine and address a multitude of social issues.

The Public Science Project, The Graduate Center of the University of New York. New York, NY

The Public Science Project (PSP), directed by María Elena Torre and Michelle Fine, was borne out of decades of PAR work at the City University of New York (CUNY) and has tackled a range of issues, from heteronormative violence to educational inequity, through the design and implementation of research meant to push at the boundaries of existing power hierarchies and challenge status quo explanations of inequality. Initially organized as the PAR collective, the PSP brings together diverse groups of individuals and stakeholders—youth, activists, community leaders, elders—to impart knowledge and challenge one another within the inquiry and research process. Although the PSP uses

both qualitative and quantitative methods, and is most associated with PAR/YPAR designs, its projects possess many elements of CBQR. Projects are deeply rooted in the community and often situated within schools and community-based organizations; most projects have diverse and robust advisory boards composed of community members, youth, elders, and activists that help ensure that researchers and projects are "accountable to the needs and desires of local communities" (http://publicscienceproject.org/about/history/).

The project hosts a series of methods camps and seminars to share knowledge and experiences and "develop a shared critical language of social theory, feminist theory, critical race theory and methodology" (http://publicscienceproject.org/about/history/). Participants immerse themselves in appropriate and relevant readings, and they collaboratively develop research questions and identify appropriate methods and approaches for data collection and analysis. These approaches include in-depth interviews, participant observation, web-based research, slam books, focus groups, and problem identification webs. One PSP research project, The Fed Up Honeys (described in Chapter 1), involved young women on the lower east side of New York City in examining and challenging stereotypes about women that proliferated in their neighborhood. Another project collaborated with youth pushed out of their high school to examine the politics of the GED. The Morris Justice Project brought together mothers within a community in the Bronx, New York, along with other community members who were concerned with the unjust policing of their sons, to investigate and document community members' experiences with the police and challenge discriminatory policing policies and practices (http://morrisjustice.org/research-b). The PSP's studies and projects have resulted in numerous publications and other products, such as manuals, "back-pocket" guides, curricula, presentations, and ad campaigns. Details and findings from various projects are featured on the PSP's website.

The PSP also offers summer institutes in critical participatory action research, aimed at graduate students, scholars, and members of community-based organizations and designed to introduce participants to the theory, practice, and ethics of critical PAR to help them integrate it into their scholarship and organizing. PSP projects and activities receive funding from a variety of sources, including local and national foundations.

Paseo Boricua Research Group/Course, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb,

IL/Chicago, IL

The Paseo Boricua Research Group (PBRG) grew out of my own effort to provide immersive community-based research experiences to my graduate students. By building on my existing relationship with The Puerto Rican Cultural Center, located in Humboldt Park, Chicago—where I had worked as a practitioner, researcher, and activist—in 2008, I offered a summer research course at the PRCC. This course provided students with the opportunity to conduct ethnographic fieldwork in a variety of community settings, including a café, a newspaper, an aerobics program, and an Afro-Caribbean music group, to understand better the processes of knowledge and skill acquisition at each site (Johnson, Stribling, Almburg, & Vitale, 2015). In addition to completing fieldwork at a particular site, students were introduced to community programs and organizations; interacted with local residents, community leaders, and youth; and participated in various community settings and activities, such as the annual Puerto Rican parade. They interviewed community leaders and key personnel and participants at each site. In class sessions, discussions focused not only on what they were learning at each site but also on their roles as researchers within the community. After the class officially ended, students wanted to continue some of their work and presented their experiences as researchers at an urban ethnography conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The course continued to be offered in subsequent summers, and over the years, the focus of the class shifted to include more participatory approaches and the development of research projects that could foster reciprocal research relationships with the community and community-based organizations. Of particular interest were the ways that graduate students in the course could support the community's efforts and work with youth. Enrolled students participated in discussion groups with community youth to learn about their experiences and challenges, as well as interviewed teachers and practitioners who regularly work with community youth. Students then worked individually or in teams to develop proposals and projects that addressed topics relevant to youth such as community engagement, social-emotional learning, transitions to postsecondary educational and professional activities, and intergenerational mentorship.

Students were encouraged to continue their involvement with their projects after the class through volunteer activities and opportunities to enroll in an independent study to implement projects. Each year, a few students enrolled in the class joined a group, called the Paseo Boricua Research Group, which sought to document course activities and successes and understand better the design and delivery of course work in community-based research. In 2012, this group conducted a series of focus groups with former

students, which has resulted in two article manuscripts and numerous presentations at national and local conferences.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the core concepts and key characteristics of CBQR. We learned about how concepts such as praxis, communities as intellectual spaces, and engaged learning inform the design and implementation of community-based research activities and projects. We also became aware of important elements within CBQR and learned that to be in line with a community-based approach, projects must be collaborative, critical, and transformative for all partners involved in the project. This chapter also provided examples of projects that use a community-based qualitative approach and of institutional initiatives and programs that support the design and implementation of community-based qualitative projects and that purvey ongoing training to those interested in conducting such research, including graduate students, faculty, youth, and community partners.

Key Terms

Experiential course-based model 27
Immersive course-based model 27

Activities for Reflection and Discussion

1. Evaluate the sample projects described here by using some of the core concepts detailed at the beginning the chapter. How did the project embody principles of praxis? In what ways was the project mindful of the notion of communities as intellectual spaces? How did the project demonstrate engaged learning? Could you also apply these concepts to a project you are currently involved in?
2. Consider a memorable learning activity in terms of the elements and attributes of community-based qualitative research projects and activities. How was it collaborative, critical, and/or transformative?
3. For a project you are interested in conducting, reflect on how you will integrate core concepts into design and list key collaborative, critical, and transformative activities that will be included as part of the project. See Handout 2.
4. Examine the institutional websites from some of the initiatives described in this chapter. What information is included about the history and background of the initiative? What sorts of details are provided about the design, implementation, and findings of particular projects and studies?

How are the voices and perspectives of community partners highlighted?

Handout 2

CBQR Core Concepts and Elements (Example)

	Design	Data Collection and Analysis	Dissemination/ Write-Up
Praxis			Use research to address social problems and issues
Communities as intellectual spaces	Researchers attend community events; identify skills and knowledge		
Engaged learning		Research activities take place in authentic settings in the community	
Collaborative	Develop research questions collaboratively	• Develop interview questions with groups of teachers and staff • Conduct interviews as teams • Analyze data in teams	
Critical		Researchers connect findings to larger structural factors and conditions	
Transformative		Provide opportunities for discussion and reflection of how research has transformed researchers' points of view and perspectives	Use findings to create new programs

Handout 2

CBQR Core Concepts and Elements

	Design	Data Collection and Analysis	Dissemination/ Write-Up
Praxis			
Communities as intellectual spaces			
Engaged learning			
Collaborative			
Critical			
Transformative			

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