
Salir Adelante: Collaboratively Developing Culturally Grounded Curriculum with Marginalized Communities¹

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In this article we discuss a collaborative research project meant to ground community members' voices in curriculum design. We argue that performing collaborative research with students and parents can better inform curriculum design decisions, particularly for communities whose identities, knowledge(s), and ways of being have been historically marginalized. Building from the culturally responsive curriculum literature, we have developed a culturally grounded curriculum development approach. We illustrate the approach through discussing a case of its development and implementation with an educational nongovernmental organization (NGO) that provides access to secondary school for Quechua (Indigenous) young women in Peru. This article reflexively reports the process of the NGO's collaborative inquiry project to cocreate meaningful educational opportunities with the students and parents. We then discuss dilemmas of interpretation that arose when incorporating community voices into curricular decisions, and how the collaborative curriculum approach can apply to formal and nonformal learning spaces in other contexts.

Indigenous students throughout the Americas face significant barriers to obtaining a quality education, such as inexperienced and inadequately prepared teachers, traveling long distances to attend school, and engaging with learning resources and materials that do not represent their identities and cultures (CEPAL 2014; Levitan 2018; Post 2002; Sumida Huaman 2013). These realities often cause alienation in school, where Indigenous children can be marginalized and "othered" by teachers and peers, in addition to being left out of or stereotyped in texts and lessons in nationally or regionally mandated curricula

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(Castagno and Brayboy 2008; Delpit 2006; Gálvez and Gavilán 2016; Shahidul and Karim 2015; Valdiviezo 2016).

Girls from Indigenous communities face additional levels of marginalization because societies still see and treat women as “less than” men (Ames 2013; Defensoria del Pueblo 2019; INEI 2017; Radcliffe 2002).² These realities lead Indigenous girls in the majority of countries in the Americas, including Canada, the United States, Mexico, Brazil, and Peru, to have higher secondary school dropout rates than their non-Indigenous counterparts (Shahidul and Karim 2015; Stetser and Stillwell 2014; UNESCO 2012). Although school leaders cannot address every factor leading to dropout, the alienation from school that Indigenous girl students experience is one area in which many schools can improve.

Implementing culturally responsive curriculum (CRC) is one viable way to address students’ alienation in schools and support their comfort, retention, and success (Castagno and Brayboy 2008; Curtis 1998; Gay 2010; Kanu 2007). CRC is defined as curriculum that acknowledges, honors, and builds on students’ cultural backgrounds and knowledge; it sees students’ cultures as assets (Paris 2012). However, developing CRC requires more research, especially when CRC initiatives are facilitated by individuals from outside of the students’ and parents’ culture—a common circumstance in education development work in Latin America, as well as in underresourced schools around the world (Castagno and Brayboy 2008).

One way to recognize and incorporate marginalized cultures into the curriculum when developing CRC is through collaborative educational inquiry, in which those traditionally with decision-making power—educational leaders, development workers, teachers—work with the community, namely students and parents, to make decisions about their education (Erickson 2006; Lassiter 2005; Wilson 2001). Such collaborative approaches are particularly beneficial for educators working with students and parents from marginalized contexts, as collaborative research can provide opportunities for individuals and communities at the margin to claim power and foster their agency to make decisions (Rodríguez and Brown 2009).

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However, research on the processes and considerations necessary to undertake community-grounded curricular decision making is lacking, even though many scholars advocate for including community voices in decision-making processes in schools (e.g., Delpit 2006; Holmes and Crossley 2004; Mitra 2007). This article begins to develop a process-oriented approach to CRC to address this gap, which we call culturally grounded curriculum (CGC) development.

To explain the CGC approach, we examine a collaborative community inquiry project undertaken with first language Quechua-speaking young women who are the first in their families to attend secondary school, and their parents, who live in rural communities in Andean Peru. The project was conducted as part of a multinational educational NGO's attempt to better understand Quechua (Indigenous) community members' meanings of success to create a curriculum more grounded in community values. Using this project as an example, we highlight the process of building a curriculum grounded in students' aspirations and parents' learning goals for their children. The main objective of this article is to discuss our process and to illustrate some ways of thinking that can support the development of curriculum that is grounded in the culture of a community. We see the lessons learned from this project as having implications for formal and nonformal educational spaces, particularly related to the process and interpretive issues of designing curriculum with members of marginalized communities.

One of the most salient findings from this project was the complexity and messiness of interpreting community members' ideas into curricular choices. In particular, we found that educators needed to interpret community members' ideas from multiple frameworks to construct a curriculum that was appropriately grounded in their ideas. Our previous scholarship on this project focused on theoretical and reflexive issues in responsive educational leadership (Levitan 2018), so this study focuses on the process of using a collaborative research approach to design curriculum and ground education in communities' cultures.³ The questions we address in this article are: What does a community-grounded curricular development project look like? What potential issues and dilemmas do educational decision makers need to consider when undertaking CGC design?

To highlight processes to contribute to theory, we write from a researcher/practitioner perspective. First, we discuss relevant literature about CRC and demonstrate how this article responds to and furthers the discussion about current tensions within the field of CRC. We then present our collaborative CGC framework. Next, we discuss the national context, local context, and project participants to provide rich descriptions of the many dynamics at play when collaboratively developing curriculum with marginalized communities. The methods follow, along with findings and discussion. We conclude with practical implications for implementation and avenues for further research.

Literature Review

Curriculum development is a complicated, intellectual process that is centered on epistemological concerns. The foundational question of curriculum theory is “What knowledge is of most worth?” which cannot be answered definitively or universally (Pinar 2011). Commonly, the decision of what knowledge is of most worth comes from education policy makers (Walker and Soltis 2009). Policy makers are often not from the same cultural background—and do not have the same epistemologies—as the students for whom they are designing curriculum. This means that curricular objectives are often based on the creators’ values and knowledge, usually people educated in dominant, Western canons (Delpit 2006). CRC is an existing framework designed to contest this common model.

In this article we define “epistemology” broadly as the ways in which people constitute knowledge, orient themselves to the world, and relate to their lived experience (Madjidi and Restoule 2008). Background knowledge, sources of wisdom, and the relative importance of different sources of information are all aspects of an individual’s epistemology. Finding ways to recognize and incorporate marginalized epistemologies in educational contexts is crucial to the continued development of culturally responsive work.

Advocacy of culturally responsive education for Indigenous youth has existed since 1928, though scholarship, policy, and advocacy on the subject only started growing in the 1970s (Castagno and Brayboy 2008; Faircloth and Tippeconnic 2013; Mackey 2018). However, culturally responsive practices have likely been a part of quality education since communities began educating their children (Ladson-Billings 1995b), and local examples of successful Indigenous curriculum exist (e.g., Qanatsiaq Anooe 2019; Torrez 2014, among others). Still, CRC is not widely implemented in schools, and it is often actively resisted due to epistemological differences between teachers, educational leaders, students, parents, and other community members; ignorance about others’ cultures; and misunderstanding what CRC is and how to create it in a practical and feasible way (Castagno and Brayboy 2008).

Gay (2010) defines culturally responsive education as schooling that recognizes, respects, and uses students’ background knowledge and identities as meaningful sources for creating high-quality learning environments. Culturally responsive education is comprised of many movements, including CRC, culturally sustaining pedagogy, and culturally relevant education. Each approach focuses on the need to not only incorporate but also value as an asset and place an emphasis on community members’ cultural backgrounds as a core facet of educational practice (Gay 2010; Paris 2012). Ladson-Billings (1995a) found that students perform better in schools that implement CRC.

In practice, culturally responsive educators provide opportunities for community members to rethink ideas of success based on their values (Ladson-Billings 1995a; Scanlan and López 2014). This practice is understood to be important in the culturally responsive leadership literature as well (e.g., González et al. 2006; Koyama and Bakuza 2017; Matthiesen 2017). CRC provides community members with opportunities to develop critical consciousness to recognize and rethink societal norms (Freire 2000). However, Castagno and Brayboy (2008) argue that more explicit focus on incorporating Indigenous epistemologies into curriculum is necessary. Epistemologies in any given culture are not monolithic or uniform. Just like culture, epistemologies are growing and changing (Paris and Alim 2014). Creating processes in which curriculum can be grounded in and responsive to the epistemologies and cultures of participants is a promising avenue toward socially just practices in culturally responsive education (Bartlett 2007).

Despite its goal to value students' culture as an asset, CRC is contentious with some researchers, who critique CRC's assumptions about what culture is (e.g., Donald et al. 2011). They argue that CRC assumes culture is a fixed entity instead of a fluid, constantly developing, relational, social experience. The assumption of a fixed culture in CRC leads to theoretical tensions. For example, Paris (2012) and Paris and Alim (2014) argue that existing conceptualizations of culturally relevant and culturally responsive pedagogy are unable to remain dynamic and critical in a constantly changing world. They use the term "asset pedagogies" to encapsulate the conceptualizations of education that center culture and identity in education. They argue that past ideas do not take into account the changing dynamics of culture nor critically engage with potentially problematic aspects of a particular culture. We wish to build on these caring critiques to carry forward the mission of asset-based education. We conceptualize our new framework as a process-oriented approach that ensures that education is grounded in community realities but that students and their families can, through iterative, collaborative curriculum design, continue to question and critically build on their realities as a means of working toward social justice.

Another potentially problematic assumption in CRC is that students and parents from nondominant communities may have fundamentally different goals and values than the dominant society (Castagno and Brayboy 2008; Madjidi and Restoule 2008). Before we interacted with the students and parents in the Peruvian Andes, we supported the assumption that dominant ideas and Indigenous ideas were antithetical and incompatible. Our work with the students and parents that follows has allowed us to question and productively complicate our understanding of this assumption as it relates to culturally grounding practices.

We now see culture as an open question. In this Andean community, members are learning and creating culture. It is messy and complex, and certainly

not fixed. However, this does not mean that culture is not grounded in community histories and traditions. So, we see our new framework as a way to ensure that community cultures are prioritized through ensuring that community members are driving the decision making. This way, they can build on their assets, instead of struggling against oppressive epistemologies in schools (Madjidi and Restoule 2008). Oppressive cultural and epistemological issues are common in many subjects in Peru, as well as in Indigenous communities around the world (Aikenhead and Jegede 1999; Gálvez and Gavilán 2016). For example, in science courses, Indigenous students in the Andes struggle to understand the physical world as a mechanical series of causes and effects, which is often the conception of the physical world in the Western epistemology of Newtonian physics that is taught in Andean schools, as the first author (Levitan) observed in his field notes. When taught as the only way to think about the physical world, this epistemology is oppressive, as it does not speak to Quechua epistemologies of an interconnected, relational physical world dependent upon mutuality and *ayni* (reciprocity, in Quechua). However, when students' epistemologies are valued first, and their truths are recognized, students can engage in learning from a place of strength, framing their learning as growing from their roots. To do so also requires engaging parents to ensure that community epistemologies are inherent within the curriculum, which is why we use a collaborative participatory approach with students and parents to drive decision making (Lassiter 2005).

Culturally Grounded Curriculum

A more responsive CRC design must, therefore, be a flexible process that incorporates community voices to better understand their knowledge, as well as their aspirations—in other words, entering into relation with the community (Donald et al. 2011; Savage et al. 2011). As there are multiple conceptions of CRC (e.g., Abdal-Haqq 1994; Gay 2010; Ladson-Billings 1995b), we call our conception culturally grounded curriculum (CGC). CGC is in alignment with—and adds a separate but complementary process-based approach and framework to—the inventory of asset-based education approaches, like Paris (2012). We distinguish CGC from culturally responsive and culturally sustaining education approaches as it is a process-oriented way to ground curriculum development in the voices of the community. We seek, through this approach, to reframe power dynamics and decision making to be more socially just, working collaboratively and equitably with the community (though still recognizing the ultimate responsibilities of the educator). We think CGC is especially relevant to educators who come from outside of a community, or who possess a different epistemology. We also believe that CGC can be transcontextual; it is a process that can be

applied in varied contexts where students come from the same or similar cultural backgrounds.

The CGC approach is built on five principles, in response to the current thinking about asset education (Paris and Alim 2014) with Indigenous communities:

1. Curriculum development is an iterative process.
2. Curricula and objectives are built with the community.
3. Curriculum content is grounded in community epistemologies.
4. Students are encouraged to critically question and value their realities and (re)make their world as a response to unjust structures.
5. Success is defined collaboratively and is meant to (re)make social and economic realities.

To fulfill these principles, we argue that recognizing and grounding curriculum in marginalized epistemologies requires listening to and interpreting community voices from multiple theoretical perspectives to understand the voices of the community (see also Levitan 2018).

Interpretive reflection is important because language is a symbolic mediator between an individual's motivations, experiences, understandings, and feelings (Van Manen 1990). However, because language is a limited method for sharing nonverbal experiences such as feelings and motivations, individuals must interpret what happens within verbal communication. For example, as will be seen in this case, the word "professional" can have different connotations to different people, and although no connotation is necessarily right or wrong, the implications for misunderstanding are vast, especially with individuals from different cultural backgrounds, and with different levels of vocabulary in the language of communication. The collaborative inquiry project we present is a stark example of the possibilities of miscommunication and misunderstanding due to misguided interpretations because of assumptions and epistemological differences, and how that may influence CGC development. This case is useful for highlighting issues that may be present, but subtle, in contexts with less extreme cultural differences.

One way to overcome communication issues is through recognizing one's own interpretations and then reflecting with others about their meaning. This can be an especially valuable practice when working with marginalized populations who may often feel unheard or misunderstood. Making the effort can be helpful, if done appropriately, and with an affect of reflective, intelligent curiosity and openness. To do this well, we argue, it is valuable, if not essential, to engage in theoretical reflection from multiple theoretical frameworks (Levitan 2018). As an example, in this article we interpret community voices from the perspectives of human capital theory and decolonizing and postcolonial theories,

which are the underpinnings for many educational initiatives in low-income contexts (Brodio and Manning 2002).

Interpretive Framework

Explicitly utilizing multiple theories to interpret empirical data in collaborative work is a fairly recent practice. Yet, such complex interpretive practices are shown to support responsive education (Levitan 2018). Interpreting data through multiple theories offers more nuanced understandings of the implications of others' words and actions while also recognizing that an individual cannot fully understand reality from another individual's perspective. An individual can understand reality from multiple theoretical perspectives, however, which allows for greater sensitivity to others' ideas and an appreciation of partial understandings. This leads to deep, practical, reflective, and responsive thinking. Building on our prior work—which highlights the need for multiple theories to understand the policy and practice implications of participants' voices, but which leaves the question of how to put multiple interpretations into practice open for further exploration (Levitan 2018)—we utilize the prominent frameworks of human capital theory and decolonizing and postcolonial theories that explicitly and implicitly influence how individuals from Western epistemologies construct educational values and aims. We then demonstrate how to create curricular goals from this multitheory approach. We necessarily explore these theories broadly, recognizing that they are complex theories with many facets and iterations.

Human Capital Theory

In this article we engage the human capital model of education and its relationship to economic development to analyze participants' voices. Under this model, student success is defined as academic success, which is an indicator of students' economic viability, employability, and ultimate contribution to an industrialized and/or knowledge economy (Bowles and Gintis 1975; Heyne-man 2003; Sweetland 1996). Human capital theory views justice as all citizens achieving financial stability through skilled work in a competitive market, and it sees education as a key element for ensuring that people have the skills necessary to make money and contribute to the economy (Sylvester 1999).

Human capital theory explicitly confronts the issue of marginalization—that individuals from marginalized communities do not have access to the goods and opportunities afforded by modern and contemporary societies, so they are stuck in impoverished situations (Becker 2009). Many individuals from marginalized

communities do not have financial capital to invest in a market economy, only their labor, and so, the theory goes, developing their human capital through acquiring skills and knowledge will allow them to enter the capitalist market in a meaningful way, enabling them to earn money, contribute to the economy, and get out of poverty.

In human capital theory, identity and culture are seen as less important than “objective” outcomes, like financial stability and health (Bowles and Gintis 1975; World Bank 2016). So, Indigenous values and ways of being are, at best, ignored for a focus on “developing” individuals through education to be able to contribute to the market economy and earn profit, and at worst, seen as “backward” and to be actively changed (Sylvester 1999). Human capital theory sees individuals as potential contributors to a market, and cultures are only of value when relevant to that market. For example, if one can commodify culture, such as artisanal goods, then it is valuable, but noncommodifiable facets of culture (ways of conversing, ways of relating) are irrelevant or a barrier to economic progress (Becker 2009). The fundamental assumption of human capital theory is that economics drives well-being and social justice. Although there is partial truth to this assumption—which is why the model has such staying power—it is hardly the whole story, and when overutilized it can be very damaging to human life and well-being.

Decolonizing and Postcolonial Theory

In contrast, decolonizing and postcolonial theories criticize development models like human capital theory for being colonizing and oppressive because they reduce culture, identity, and humanity to economic considerations (Sylvester 1999). Decolonizing and postcolonial theory broadly conceived examines the histories of colonialism and the mental, emotional, and physical oppression of colonial processes and focuses specifically on working against colonial impositions (Iseke-Barnes 2008; Said 2012; Smith 2012). Decolonizing and postcolonial theorists grapple with issues of identity, culture, and power in formerly colonized societies (Mignolo 2001; Smith 2012; Spivak 2006). They highlight that colonized regions, such as Latin America, Canada, and the United States, still have cultural impositions foisted upon them from the colonizing countries’ (usually European) values (Mignolo 2001; Quijano 2000). This is particularly the case through formal education, which imposes values, epistemologies, and ways of being onto students (Tikly 2004).

Although decolonizing and postcolonial theories are different projects and orientations, we discuss both in conjunction as a means of analysis. This is due to (1) our personal values and approaches in line with decolonizing methods and theories and (2) recognizing that participants’ voices speak directly to the

theoretical frameworks of postcolonial theories. Based on these reasons, we decided to include both as distinct but overlapping frameworks when working with the community, which is in line with our multitheory approach to analysis.

One of the goals of decolonizing and postcolonial theories is to work toward an unhindered consciousness (and epistemology) through a just education system grounded in community cultures and ways of being, where communities can self-determine their futures free of exploitation and oppression (Andreotti 2011). The focus of these studies is to ensure that rights of self-determination are enacted in different contexts, and that the complexities of gaining freedom in a colonized world are understood so that communities can move toward cultural sustainability and their own conceptions of a good life. Decolonizing and postcolonial thinkers see a good life as moving on from (in the case of Peru) the Western understandings of governance, science, and hierarchy (Mignolo 2001; Spivak 2006; Sumida Huaman 2013). However, other scholars criticize these theories for focusing too much on culture and identity, and not enough on the stark realities of material poverty that also plague nondominant individuals and communities in postcolonial societies (Sylvester 1999).

Human capital theory, decolonizing, and postcolonial theory are utilized, often implicitly, by Western-educated practitioners working toward their conceptions of social justice within the Global South, which is why we utilize these theories here. In this article we show that none of these theories can fully inform and be responsive to the lived experiences and cultures of the participants if practitioners and community members do not work collaboratively and justly together.

Context and Participants

Understanding the historical and sociopolitical contexts of communities is critical to CGC work. In the following sections we detail the national and local contexts of the students and parents with whom we work, illustrating how these contexts influence the experiences, relationships, and values of the participants.

National Context

Peru comprises three geographical and sociopolitical sectors: the Amazon jungle, the Andes mountains, and the Pacific coast. With most development occurring in Lima, the capital city on the coast (Adelman 2006; Cerron-Palomino 1989; FHI360 2018), Indigenous communities in the mountains and the jungle continue to struggle with a deep history of colonial exploitation and marginalization (Adelman 2006; Cortina 2013; Gálvez and Gavilán 2016). Numerous

Indigenous communities in the rural Andes are in extreme poverty, often living without electricity, potable water, or sewage (CEPAL 2014). Non-Indigenous peoples have long been attempting to force Indigenous communities to assimilate into the Spanish language, religion, and dress (Ibarra 2013; Moore 2014). However, Indigenous communities have maintained many of their traditions and have successfully fought for their cultural rights (Cortina 2014; Hornberger 2000; Valdiviezo 2016), even if many Indigenous communities still lack political power and resources (Moore 2014; UNICEF 2015). In addition to these layers of oppression—which affect both girls and boys—girls from Indigenous communities face a *machista* culture that places women in limited and gendered roles (Sara-Lafosse 2014; Shutte 1993).

Local Context and Participants

Our collaborative inquiry project takes place in the Urubamba Valley in the Peruvian Andes. The 14 young women student collaborators, who are between the ages of 13 and 16, attend secondary school in a small town of about 5,000 residents, approximately 90% of whom are Quechua. At least one parent of each student also participated, including nine mothers and six fathers, for a total of 29 participants. The families are from eight rural Quechua communities in the highlands above the town and are members of an educational NGO that facilitates access to secondary school by providing safe housing, supplementary education, nutritious meals, and tutoring for Quechua girls who would not be able to attend school without these supports. The NGO is a multinational (US and Peruvian) registered nonprofit organization originally started based on the idea of a young woman from a rural Andean community. The NGO focuses on ensuring that Indigenous youth in rural communities have access to high-quality education through a variety of initiatives, to support youth to overcome a number of barriers. For example, many students must walk between 2 and 7 hours to reach the secondary school from their home communities (Levitan 2015), so the NGO enables them to stay in the town throughout the week and return home on the weekends.

All of the participants speak Quechua as their first language. All of the students also learned Spanish in primary school. Most of the parents are primarily Quechua speakers, who have learned some Spanish through practice with their children. While working with the students and parents, we communicate primarily in Spanish, with some Quechua. The students serve as translators when discussion goes beyond the researchers' Quechua vocabulary and the parents' Spanish vocabulary. For this project, parents were most comfortable communicating via a Quechua-Spanish hybrid. Students would explain Quechua words parents used that NGO staff did not understand, and vice versa. Rarely

did students need to translate full sentences, so we feel comfortable with the information gathered. However, the issue of communicating and translating between languages adds further complexity to the process of incorporating Indigenous community voices into CGC design. It is likely that some valuable nuance was missed.⁴

Four other collaborators took part in the project. Isabella, the students' "house mother," is a Quechua woman in her thirties with a degree in teaching.⁵ Giovanna was a long-term volunteer from central Europe who is interested in women's empowerment and cofacilitated the focus groups. Levitan served as the director of educational programming and operations for the NGO, where he has worked since 2010. He is a white man of mixed ethnicity, originally from the United States. He came to Peru because a good friend asked him to help develop the NGO. The second author (Johnson) has volunteered with the NGO since 2015 and has extensive experience in curriculum design and student voice methods. She is a white woman, originally from a rural area in the Appalachian Mountains of the United States.

In this research we are outsiders to these Andean communities. Yet, due to years of living and working in the Andes region, our roles in the community as educators, and our friendships with many families in the area, we are also partial insiders. This outsider-insider identity means that we will be translating our experience through our own perspective based on our backgrounds but that we also have shared knowledge with the individuals with whom we work, which influences our methods of collaborative inquiry in CGC (Dwyer and Buckle 2009).

Method

To address the questions "What does a community-grounded responsive curricular development project look like?" and "What potential issues and dilemmas do educational leaders need to consider when undertaking community-grounded curriculum design?" we discuss our methods and approach for creating CGC with the community through a collaborative inquiry project. We then discuss the reflexive, phenomenological approach we took to interpret and understand potential issues and dilemmas that may arise when working with marginalized communities as cultural outsiders as well as the processes necessary for understanding how to ground curriculum in community voices and values.

Methodology

The inquiry project was performed as a qualitative research study informed by student voice research and collaborative ethnography (Campbell and Lassiter

2010; Erickson 2007; Lassiter 2005; Mitra 2007). As practitioner-researchers we see collaboration as the foundation for productive applied work and meaning making. There is also an ethical component to collaborative inquiry (Lassiter 2005). When historical processes have created a power imbalance between researcher and collaborator identities, unpacking and evening the power imbalance requires sincere collaboration with participants. To work against these imbalances, we deliberately emphasized collaboration throughout the inquiry project (Lassiter 2008). Our research questions arose from the students' conversations. The students were active consultants for every part of the four-step research process, until the writing phase. Parents took part in step 3.

Collaborative research requires researcher reflexivity and an ethical responsibility to the collaborators (Lassiter 2008). Our inquiry project was an adult-facilitated coinvestigation. Our student and parent collaborators were both "active respondents" and "coresearchers" during different phases of the research process (Toshalis and Nakkula 2012, 23). We explicitly situate our interpretive stances as they relate to power and voice here in response to Mansfield's (2014) call for more reflective leadership discussion when undertaking collaborative research.

However, this was not a collaborative effort in the purest sense (Lassiter 2008). When introducing youth to novel activities, a certain amount of guidance and facilitation is necessary. We also recognize our relative power as education leaders to make decisions based on knowledge of context and curricular options to which the students and parents may not (yet) have access. We did not, however, assume that we knew what the students or parents wanted or needed from an education. The question of "What is a good education for these particular individuals in this particular context and historical moment?" guides our curriculum development process. Through analyzing the positions of collaborators (and, critically, our own) within the relational dynamics that constitute this endeavor, we offer readers the opportunity to examine how our cultural frameworks influence our conclusions and choices when working collaboratively with marginalized community members.

Research Process

The collaborative inquiry project took place over 3 months (June–August 2014) in the middle of the school year. Prior to and during this research process, Levitan maintained a journal of field notes, which included reflective memos about his observations, impressions, and feelings during each phase of the project (Emerson et al. 2011). These observations are incorporated throughout the article.

The inquiry project stemmed from a weekly seminar at the NGO. Each Wednesday, one student introduces a discussion topic and brings a text, a

situation, or an important question to the group. The topics range from life skills, to jobs, to friendship. One week, a student asked her peers what their dreams were for the future. This prompted a rich conversation, which turned to what students thought was important for a good life. The conversation sparked questions for us, as well. For example, we contemplated our definition of success and if it was different than the students' definitions. We questioned whose definition of success was being used when designing curriculum. This was the impetus for delving into a more formal investigation of the idea of success, community aspirations, and what a good life means to students and parents.

We discussed the idea of performing research on success and aspirations with the students and parents as part of a curricular design project, and they liked the suggestion. This kind of collaborative work was not new, as the students and parents regularly play an active role in the NGO's operations. For example, the students helped to create the rules for the dormitory, and parents helped to maintain the dormitory and participate in a monthly meeting with NGO staff where they vote on all major organizational decisions. The organization's relational, collaborative, participant-centered dynamic supported the process of this research. For the purposes of this project, all participants were told that they were not obligated to participate, and anonymity was promised to those who wished.

Our research process occurred in four main steps: (1) With the students, we developed ideas for collaborative exploration, and we collaboratively defined terms, such as the students' aspirations and ideas of success. NGO staff then created a basic individual interview protocol based on this discussion. We held the first of three focus groups with the students to critique and make their own protocol. (2) NGO staff incorporated the changes into the protocol and brought it back for the students to fill out during the second focus group. (3) The students and NGO staff then interviewed parents, using the protocol we had collaboratively developed. (4) The third focus group with the students incorporated themes that emerged from the parent interviews. We introduced character profiles based on the parents' experiences and aspirations, and we had a conversation about what it meant to be a "professional." All interviews and focus groups were audio recorded.

Analysis

The students and NGO staff analyzed their understandings together to become more aware of the epistemologies embedded in the data. However, both authors also analyzed the data separately. After the collaborative analysis with students, we analyzed the transcriptions and Levitan's field notes using emergent coding schemes shaped by the research questions (Charmaz 2011). This

approach helped identify emergent subthemes (examples in parentheses), under broad categories such as: “aspirations” (professional, weaver, *ganadora*), “conceptions of success” (*salir adelante*, not farming, leaving the community), “counternarratives” (financial success vs. large family), and “values” (hard work, respect, culture). Responses were grouped according to similarity using constant comparison (Corbin and Strauss 2015). This process allowed us to pull out the salient themes of the interviews, as well as important differences between respondents. We then interpreted the coded data through the theoretical frameworks of human capital theory and decolonizing/postcolonial theory and compared the resultant implications of the analysis to inform CGC development. This was performed iteratively throughout the research process, as well as after all of the data were gathered.

To address the question “What does a community-grounded curricular development project look like?” we present our collaborative inquiry project as a reflective example. The description of our methods and the findings and analysis that follow offer a picture of the processes and issues inherent in developing CGC. To address the question “What potential issues and dilemmas do educational decision makers need to consider when undertaking CGC design?” we reflect on our process using phenomenological methods (Van Manen 1990). Phenomenological approaches allow researchers to build metanarratives through constant reflection on their experiences and the feelings, thoughts, and considerations that occur during their experiences. We collected our thoughts and reflections on issues that arose during the collaborative inquiry project through reflective journals to build metacontextual meaning and transferable knowledge. Once we completed the project, we then analyzed the themes and analytical orientations we considered during our experiences and their specific implications for this project, as well as the implications for others in different but related contexts.

Findings

As we see CGC as an iterative process, our findings and analysis are necessarily intertwined. We present findings for each step of the project and analyze the findings using human capital and decolonizing/postcolonial theories. Our discussion ends with a plan for developing CGC for the NGO.

Step 1: First Focus Group: “Que es ser exitosa? Queremos ser ganadoras.”⁶

In this first focus group—meant to create an interview protocol about success in Quechua communities grounded in the understandings of the students—

we presented a basic protocol (app. A) to give the students an example of how interview research usually works. We interrogated whether the questions made sense, what else students wanted to find out from their peers and parents, and word choice for the questions. The conversation that followed illuminated the many ways in which students conceptualized success.

For instance, in our example protocol we had written the Spanish term *éxito*—which is directly translated as “success.” However, the idea of *éxito* was confusing.

GIOVANNA: Is there anything else that you don’t understand [or think needs to be changed in the protocol]?

FABIANA: What is this word “success” [*Que es éxito*]?

GIOVANNA: Does anyone want to explain?

CARLA: How your parents push you, in what ways?

GIOVANNA: For example, what would you like your life to be like in 5 years? What would you like to accomplish?

CARLA: This would be more like *triumfadora* for us.

GIOVANNA: What do you all think?

LIZ: I would change it to *ganadora* [winner].

Students better understood *éxito* as *ganador(a)*, which means “winner,” and more specifically to this context, “earner.” In Spanish, *ganar un sueldo* means to earn a salary. Other words that the students mentioned were *campeona* and *triumfadora*, showing the complexity of the idea of success for these students. During the editing process the students discussed the different merits of each of the words, finally deciding on *ganadora* for its meanings relating to earning a salary. However, the idea of winning, beyond economics, was also present.

Analysis.—The distinction between being successful and being an “earner” is important for understanding the students’ orientations toward their goals. By the end of the first focus group, their idea of success seemed directly related to competition and economics, which seemed to directly relate to human capital theory (Heyneman 2003; Sweetland 1996). The shift in wording helped us to understand foundational assumptions about success and to orient our research to the students’ focus.

*Step 2: Second Focus Group: Trajes, Chakra, Valores, y Mas Preguntas*⁷

Suits and getting ahead.—The students made significant changes to the first protocol, and we incorporated their changes into the new document that we had collaboratively generated. For the second focus group, we asked the students to offer final edits and write down answers to the new questionnaire (app. A). To avoid “groupthink,” we asked the students to write their answers before discussing their ideas with each other. The first question investigated the students’ aspirations: “What are your dreams for the future?”

Becoming a professional and *salir adelante*—or to get ahead (usually with financial or professional connotation)—was an overwhelmingly common theme that emerged, with 13 of the 14 girls mentioning it: “I want to study and *salir adelante*”; “My dreams are to be a professional”; “I want to be a good professional and help my family.” The idea of professionalism, then, became our main theme for investigation. We did not assume that we knew how the students defined ideas such as “professional” and *salir adelante*, so we wanted to better understand the meanings from as close to their epistemologies as possible. Though becoming a professional was the clear goal of the vast majority of the students, what a professional was and what it meant to be a professional did not seem clear to the students, or to us. For example, during the second focus group, we asked what the students meant by professional. The students did not have a definition but said “lawyers,” “municipality workers,” and “doctors” are professionals.

Only one student wanted to work as a weaver, which is a culturally important job in Quechua communities. As noted in Levitan’s field notes, traditional clothes are woven, and the different patterns on clothes have important symbolic meanings. It takes a highly skilled weaver to be able to make clothes, so weavers are important for both practical and cultural reasons.

As we continued to discuss what it means to be a professional and what a professional did, the students did not seem to know much about what professional jobs looked like. When we asked what makes a professional different from other people, we were met with a long silence. Finally, one student said that professionals “wear suits” (*llevan un traje*). The others nodded.

Analysis.—In the students’ home communities, they often wear traditional clothes made from dyed woven sheep or alpaca wool that are well suited for the environment and important to Quechua culture. So, through a postcolonial lens, a desire to wear suits like professionals could be seen as a denial of their own culture (Said 2012). From a human capital perspective, this could mean that students were motivated to enter into salaried occupations (Becker 2009). This juxtaposition created a productive tension for us to explore further the role

of dress in the students' lives and created a problem-posing idea for curriculum design (Freire 2000).

Farming and professionalism.—What students shared contrasted with some of our own theoretical orientations of CGC and social justice from decolonizing perspectives. So, we deliberately asked the students about farming—another important job in Quechua culture and their communities—to better understand their values as they relate to traditional Quechua norms. When we asked them to consider whether or not a farmer should be considered a professional, the students universally replied “No.” Their collective negative response was both interesting and troubling, as it signaled that farmwork may be viewed as a less respected form of sustaining oneself and contributing to the community. It seemed that if the students wanted to be professionals, and they saw farming as not a profession, then the students did not value farming.

Analysis.—Initially, we interpreted the students' responses through a postcolonial lens and thought that the idea of professionalism was oppressive (Quijano 2000; Tikly 2004). Expertise like farming, which is essential for the students' communities and larger Quechua society, was seemingly less valued by the students. Because being a professional was a goal for most students, we interpreted the idea of the professional as highly valued. This means that, if farming is not a profession, students may be implying they do not value farming.

However, another interpretation is that farming is not understood as a profession because it is vital and integral to everyday life in the Andes. Through our years of living in and working with the community, we have observed that farming is a fundamental part of society. Many of the main Quechua celebrations revolve around farming and the earth. Most families have *chakra* (farmland), and most children and parents work the land to provide sustenance for the household. At the time, most professionals in the town, including the mayor, cultivated their *chakra*. These observations provide evidence that suggests how being a professional may imply working in a profession that is beyond one's fundamental responsibilities.

Because of these observations, it was clear that we needed a better understanding of what being a professional means to these students. We did not want to essentialize their understandings of professional. Postcolonial theory would see students' ideas of professionalism as evidence of a colonized mind influenced by neoliberal, oppressive, Western norms of corporations, suits, and salaries (Mignolo 2001; Quijano 2000; Said 2012). But, this would assume that the students were not agents in their own lives making their own decisions (Andreotti 2011). We therefore did not want to only view their understandings through a postcolonial lens. This would impose certain values on them (Tikly 2004). To better understand these ideas, we turned to the students' parents to try to uncover deeper understandings of what may be influencing the students' voices.

Step 3: Parent Interviews

After the second focus group, the students, Giovanna, and Levitan visited each of the students' communities over the course of 6 weeks to interview parents about aspirations, what a good life looks like, and success. Parents wanted their children to learn respect (seven parents) and responsibility (six parents). They also shared that they try to embody characteristics that they feel are connected to a good life, such as correcting mistakes (two parents), asking questions (one parent), being honest (two parents), and maintaining dialogue with others (three parents). One parent defined success as having a large family. (See table 1 for examples of parent responses.)

Analysis.—A major theme was material well-being. The parents, who are largely subsistence farmers, wanted to ensure that their children had more opportunity to gain educational experiences and access to jobs that were unthinkable a generation ago, which aligns with human capital development theory (Heyneman 2003; Sweetland 1996). As one mother said, "I insist that they finish their studies and become professionals—that they don't stay where they are. It doesn't matter to me if they want to study; I want them to be able to pick their jobs when they graduate so they must study." Twelve parents explicitly said that they wanted their children to become professionals and offered examples of what kinds of professions they wanted their children to enter. For many parents, a professional is someone who studies and has a degree (eight parents), works hard (four parents), has a stable career (five parents), and earns a salary (six parents). Four parents said that they need their children to become professionals and earn money so that they could support the family. Seven parents said that they do not want their children to stay in their communities and/or become farmers. Farming seemed antithetical to their definitions of becoming a professional. Another mother said, "I don't want my girls to be like me. I want them to salir adelante, to be better than [my husband and me] and not work in the fields, and that they study and go far away from [their community] because there is no future here." Though most of the parents' comments seemed to express negativity about their living situations, parents in casual conversation also expressed a great deal of pride in their culture and traditions when talking about artwork, festivals, and food—points that were noted in Levitan's field journal. However, during the interviews, parents did not express this pride. This contextual knowledge adds nuance to and complicates the information parents provided during the interviews.

The information gathered outside of the formal interviews was considered during the analysis. After interviewing the parents, the adult-researchers analyzed their responses independently. During the second focus group, we had found that general questions about professionalism were not helpful for

TABLE 1

Relevant Parent Interview Responses

Role	Key Ideas from Parent Interviews (Translated from Spanish)
Father	<p>I don't want them to be farmers. I want them to be professionals.</p> <p>I want them to think before they create a family and do what they desire.</p> <p>It is important to maintain dialogue with my children.</p> <p>Success means work.</p>
Mother	<p>I want them to be better, to leave the farmer's life. I want them to be professionals to rid the family of their poverty. I want them to respect their elders and continue to improve.</p>
Mother	<p>To come out as a professional and continue to study so as to have important responsibilities, a stable job, and triumph.</p>
Father	<p>I want them to have a professional career, to help the family economically, and to respect their elders. Success means someone who has a profession and completes their responsibilities.</p>
Mother	<p>Success means a professional, like a teacher or a good worker. It's important to me that my children become professionals.</p>
Mother	<p>I want them to have these values: respectful, responsible, caring.</p> <p>I want them to be professionals, and to be able to help the family with money, and their younger siblings to graduate and become professionals. I want them to be responsible, have respect for their elders and those younger, and work hard.</p>
Mother	<p>A successful person is someone who has more capacity and training. I hope that they become more educated and professional.</p> <p>Success is the idea of the professional person. School allows my children to be better, and come out ahead. I want my children to be responsible, honest, and remain in solidarity with others.</p> <p>I insist that they finish their studies and become professionals—that they don't stay where they are. It doesn't matter to me if they want to study; I want them to be able to pick their jobs when they graduate so they must study. They have to finish what they start.</p>
Mother	<p>It's important that my children go to university so that they can have more money and then help the family in return. My plan is to have them finish secondary school and go to university. I don't want them to stay on the farm.</p> <p>Success means someone who has studied and who earns money.</p>
Mother	<p>I want my children to be punctual, behave well, and to value their studies.</p> <p>I push my children to continue to study, so that they don't stay where they are.</p> <p>A person with a big family is someone who has success. Success in life means create a family.</p>
Mother	<p>With schooling my children will come out ahead. It can change their characters and improve their lives. I push them to come out ahead, to support others, and to have solidarity.</p> <p>I don't want my girls to be like me. I want them to come out ahead, to be better than [my husband and me] and not work in the fields, and that they study and go far away from [their community] because there is no future here.</p>

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Role	Key Ideas from Parent Interviews (Translated from Spanish)
Father	I want my children to do what they want to do. I also want them to become professionals, but they have to decide what they want to do. I want my daughter to ask questions when she doesn't understand something, and communicate more. I push my kids to study. I want them to learn to correct themselves when they make mistakes and have respect for their elders. Success means improve yourself. This is why I correct my children when they make mistakes, so that they improve.
Mother	I speak to my daughter about responsibility a lot. To be successful is someone who continues to study up to higher education. I want my daughter to become a professional.
Father	I want my daughter to continue to study, and with her studies make her life how she wants. A person who has success is a person who has a degree; once you have your degree you have success.
Father	I want my kids to learn more, and to decide on their own futures and dreams. I teach respect and honesty to my kids. Someone who reaches their dream is a successful person.

constructing meaningful dialogue with the students. So, to better understand students' conceptions of what it means to be a professional, we developed three character profiles based on the parents' more concrete ideas of professionalism and a good life (app. B).

Step 4: Third Focus Group: "Que significa ser profesional?"⁸

We used these three profiles to more concretely investigate students' understandings of professionalism. We presented three short depictions of women working different jobs—a lawyer, a sales clerk, and a farmer-entrepreneur—all jobs that the parents and/or students mentioned. The students read the three profiles and then discussed what they thought about them.

At first, the students presented a very clear understanding of which women were professionals and which were not:

LEVITAN: Are all three women professionals?

LOUD CHORUS: No!

LOLA: There is only one professional! It is Valeria [*The lawyer*].

The idea of a lawyer being a professional, as opposed to a small business owner or a sales representative, was consistent with the concept of wearing a suit that the students discussed in the second focus group. However, these clear conceptions of what a professional is became less clear as we interrogated the ideas further.

We asked the students why only one of the women was a professional. The students had a variety of ideas about the value of working in the fields or working in a store:

MANUELA: Valeria is the only one because she is the only one that works in a profession. She is a lawyer. The other one only works in her fields. Laura only works in a store.

MARIELA: Valeria is a lawyer and she has her profession

LOLA: Valeria is a lawyer and she is happy because she studied, because she has her career and her own clients.

FLORELA: Valeria has finished her studies . . . her primary, secondary and her university, and now she has a career.

LIZ: Valeria is happy because she accomplished her dreams and because she went to her practice.

Liz sees happiness as being a professional, although the profiles mention that all of the women are happy. However, the students do not say that working at a store or selling farm goods is a dream to be accomplished or that it brings happiness. Subsequently, we attempted to question this understanding and analyze its meaning.

GIOVANNA: What was [Valeria's] dream?

ALL: To become a lawyer.

ISABELLA: What were the other women's dreams?

YANET: Valeria is a lawyer because she has studied her career in a university. Laura has a store. Miriam sells her products.

There was significant reluctance to say that the other women accomplished their dreams. Later in the conversation, while the others are talking, Yanet tells Giovanna in an aside that Miriam might also be a professional. The conversation turns to questioning the students' assumptions about the other women:

LEVITAN: Could anyone else be a professional?

[Long pause]

JUANA: Laura could also be a professional . . .

ISABELLA: What does Laura do?

MANUELA: She has a store.

GIOVANNA: What would be Laura's profession?

[Long pause]

JUANA: She sells clothes.

FIONA: She is a salesperson.

LOLA: What she likes best is to have pretty clothes.

Based on how Lola discusses Laura's work, she seems to indicate that wearing and selling nice clothes is not as worthy as being a lawyer. The conversation then turns to the farmer-entrepreneur.

ISABELLA: To become a salesperson she might have needed to study, for example, marketing, or a technical career?

GIOVANNA: Yanet, why do you think Miriam is professional?

YANET: Because she produces organic products and sells them.

ISABELLA: What would you call this profession? How would you describe Miriam? What is she?

FLORELA: Producer . . .

ISABELLA: But she produces and sells right?

FLORELA: So, a businesswoman?

Even as Giovanna and Isabella attempted to solicit a general definition of a professional from them, the students were not convinced that the other women besides the lawyer were professionals. The conversation continued for a few minutes, and then Giovanna asked the students to boil the idea down.

GIOVANNA: You all mentioned a lot that you want to be professionals. So . . . what is a professional for you all? . . . Many of you said that you wanted to be professionals, and almost all of you said you wanted to go to university, so we want to know what professional means to you.

LOLA: To be a professional is to have your own . . . how do you say . . . your own work . . . and you don't suffer anymore.

JUANA: Maybe being a professional could be that she accomplished her dreams . . . and works.

FLORELA: I liked what Lola said.

NAOMI: . . . a career would be something more than what most people study, let's see . . .

LUCIANA: Conquer something that you like . . . to know more about what you like.

CAMILA: A career is . . . I don't know!

Analysis.—What most stood out to us from this conversation was that the conceptualization of a professional was still very nascent and loosely defined. The students do not really know what their dream—to be a professional—is or looks like yet. In this instance a responsive leader would be misled, perhaps, to assume that a professional in the students' understanding represents evidence of a colonized mind from ideas imposed by a Western-dominated society (post-colonial theory), or that students would be happy earning a salary at the expense of their culture (human capital theory). It also implies that listening to students' voices requires digging deeper as to the meaning of students' words, rather than assuming that the adult meanings of certain concepts are the same as the students' (Cook-Sather 2012). It also points to a need to fully understand the dynamics of culture and material well-being. At the end of the interview, the general consensus among the students was:

ISABELLA: What is the basic concept of being a professional?

MARIA JOSE: Achieve your dreams?

MARTINA: Accomplish your dreams!

Discussion

What Knowledge Is of the Most Worth for These Particular Students?

As educational leaders, we undertook this collaborative inquiry project to better understand what knowledge is of most worth to community members to inform curricular decisions. At the surface, the students' and parents' responses seem to be evidence that they want the material goods and opportunities that human capital theory predicts. Alternatively, an educational leader with a decolonizing and/or postcolonial perspective could interpret the community voices as expressing hegemonic and oppressive internalizations of neocolonial norms—a colonization of the mind (Said 2012). These lead to different ideas about curriculum.

For example, the vast majority of the students seemed to have a specific idea of a professional as being like a lawyer—someone with suits, a salary, and higher education. Parents largely supported this notion. So, from a superficial human capital perspective (Becker 2009; Heyneman 2003; Sweetland 1996), we could easily assume that knowledge that is of most worth to these community members is that which will assist them in attaining jobs where they will wear suits and earn a salary, such as Spanish and English language abilities, linear/critical reasoning, and mathematical skills. From a superficial decolonizing/postcolonial interpretation (Sylvester 1999), the students and parents do not seem to want to change the world and maintain their culture, like Ladson-Billings (1995a) argues is the goal of existing CRC work, so a decolonizing education would be seen as knowledge that is of the most worth here (Andreotti 2011). History classes that talk about colonial impositions and the value and importance of their cultural traditions are examples of curriculum that could support decolonizing parents' and students' aspirations. These two conclusions point to the complexity of interpretation and building curriculum based on community voice (Cook-Sather 2012).

There is also more to the students' words and ideas than can be understood superficially. A deeper understanding requires interpretation beyond the words in the conversations of this project. Five years of working with the community offers more insight into these expressed ideas. For example, the students are changing their world through education. As first-generation secondary school students from remote Indigenous communities, these students are going from a farmer's reality with very few life options to a new context in which they can aspire to many different lifestyles. This may be understood as opening their life choices and removing the oppression of limited life options (Andreotti 2011). It seems that, to these students and parents, becoming a professional changes

Developing Culturally Grounded Curriculum

their world and the world of their families. There was significant agreement between daughters and parents in their aspirations for professional jobs. For example, the students wanted to become ganadoras, and their parents wanted their children to earn money and send it home. As members of remote farming communities, the parents have been without access to many opportunities because of a lack of infrastructure and poverty. So, the opportunities presented by education and opening the door to a professional job are world-changing for the students, their families, and their larger communities. This interpretation draws out the complexity and messiness of understanding human capital theory and decolonizing and postcolonial theories in practice (Sylvester 1999); it is difficult to know what is world-changing and valuable knowledge for these community members without listening and interpreting what they say from multiple perspectives.

So, what knowledge is of most worth for these particular students? A decolonizing/postcolonial CGC orientation necessitates that knowledge that is of most worth includes the value and importance of their home culture and community, such as farming—an activity that is the basis for many festivals, stories, and artwork—so including the value of farming in a curriculum would be essential to CGC development in this context. However, as both students and parents want the students to become professionals, a decolonizing/postcolonial perspective becomes complicated. In this context, postcolonial analysis is assuming and perhaps imposing values on the community by suggesting that farming should be highly valued because of its cultural importance, regardless of how parents and students define professionalism. Another consideration is that, based on the interviews, the students do not have deep knowledge of professionalism. They know that being a professional is accomplishing their dreams, but they do not know the specifics of those dreams yet. This implies that incorporating learning items that are culturally sustaining (like farming) while also teaching about professionalism may not be incompatible, as the students need more knowledge to figure out their dreams. Providing the tools and knowledge(s)—of context and history, for example—to fulfill those dreams becomes the responsibility of the adults and teachers. The knowledge that is of most worth for these students, then, is broad and multifaceted.

Grounding Curriculum in Community Voices

Based on the above considerations, we found that a three-pronged approach to CGC is a particularly constructive method to address the tensions in interpreting community voice in this context. This section details ways in which we incorporated the collaboratively constructed knowledge to ground the NGO's curriculum in community voices.

First, it appears that students need to learn the skills and knowledge necessary to have opportunities to become financially stable and/or a professional (Heyneman 2003). Second, it is important that the students' education reinforces and honors their culture (Andreotti 2011; Gay 2010). Though not mentioned by parents or students, transmitting the importance of farming and other Indigenous knowledge as an asset is also necessary and should thus be reflexively discussed as compatible with the skills necessary to create financial stability—though this may be an imposition of values based on our own decolonizing and postcolonial orientations. We interpreted that students' and parents' ideas have been influenced by colonizing forces that value a Western epistemology and lifestyle over community epistemologies that value reciprocity, relational reasoning, and mutual hard work.

To ensure that this approach does not become oppressive, our third prong is to continue to collaborate with students to build and guide the curriculum. This allows us to find ways to develop education for financial stability that does not rely on cultural suppression, such as saying that you need to dress or act a certain way to get ahead, or impose our own values on the community. Instead, we can offer our viewpoints as ideas for the community members to consider for the curriculum. In fact, we find that CGC development should include annual or semiannual collaborative inquiry projects as part of the curriculum. Each year, educational leaders and teachers can update and continue to respond to the realities of students and parents. Performing these projects once or twice an academic year balances time constraints and other curricular obligations with the need for iterative exploration and offers students time to work and reflect upon the results of their inquiry. However, more research is needed for understanding how to schedule collaborative curriculum work iteratively throughout the school year. Still, we see this approach as the best way to truly be responsive in a changing society (Paris 2012). Including collaborative inquiry work into the curriculum can address potentially problematic aspects of cultural understanding in CGC without being oppressive.

We find this third prong to be the most important contribution to the idea of CGC—that continuing collaborative inquiry projects should be an integral and regular part of CGC development to ensure that curriculum is and stays culturally grounded. For example, our continuing work revisits concepts, such as cultural construction and identity, as students start to learn more. In addition, this question posing provides a forum to rethink ideas of success and the social world (Freire 2000).

Developing this three-pronged approach, much like the process of developing CGC itself, was a messy endeavor, and one that required continuous reflexivity, the constant checking and shelving of assumptions, and collaborative thinking between the researchers and community members. For example, our assumptions of the cultural importance of farming, based on our observations, were not

confirmed in our conversations with students and parents. The mismatch between our observations and what we encountered in discussions with community members, and the ambiguity of professionalism, required careful deliberation on whether and how these values could be explored in ways that responded to the community in a respectful way, addressed needs, and honored their identities. It was an insight only gained through this process.

In the end, we developed four curricular domains and accompanying practices in response to the community's ideas and our reflections:

1. Professional readiness:
 - a. Bring in female professionals to discuss their careers and experiences.
 - b. Explicitly tie course content to students' aspirations, such as professionalism, and present multiple perspectives on students' aspirations.
2. Cultural appreciation:
 - a. Have Quechua leaders discuss community histories and traditions.
 - b. Provide opportunities for students to teach "Westerners" (tutors, project directors) about their culture and history.
3. Becoming contributing community members:
 - a. Teach responsibility, punctuality (which is not a cultural norm, but was asked for by parents), and persistence.
 - b. Create lessons about both "professional" and Quechua values to create opportunities for comparative analysis.
4. Collaborative inquiry as a curricular aim:
 - a. Encourage students to take charge of their learning through collaborative inquiry.
 - b. Include collaborative curriculum development workshops annually to continue to build and update curriculum that is responsive to students' realities and assets.

Implications for Educational Practice

This project was undertaken in a nonformal educational setting. We did not have to contend or negotiate with formal national or district curriculum frameworks, which meant that we had considerable flexibility to develop curricula grounded in students' and parents' voices. This may be the ideal scenario for developing CGC, as it allows for community members to really drive decision making for all aspects of the curriculum design. However, we see this process as able to be used in formal educational contexts as well.

Performing collaborative community inquiry in more formal settings, like public schools, likely requires adaptations, however, as different contexts have different opportunities and challenges for engaging in these processes. Nonetheless, collaborative inquiry is a learning experience in itself that does not have to take time away from other educational pursuits. Adaptations for engaging in this kind of collaborative work in different educational contexts require further research but can include building content grounded in community members' knowledge, developing learning units that are based on cultural understandings of what is important, and placing cultural knowledge as the foundation of the epistemological orientation of the curriculum, as well as a critical comparison point to other conceptions of knowledge. Developing and implementing CGC in both formal and nonformal schooling contexts can be a valuable way to increase engagement and to get to know one's students and community context while also ensuring socially just approaches to education. The process of developing CGC through collaborative research with students and parents (and potentially other community members if there is time and resources to do so) is a valuable way to ensure that educators in various contexts are adequately responding to students' goals, needs, and perspectives.

Conclusion

We see an iterative, collaborative conception of CGC development as a promising avenue for incorporating marginalized epistemologies into curricular decisions. It allows curriculum development to be responsive to the particular students' and their parents' realities. In relation to the broader field, building collaboration and iteration into CRC as a fundamental practice furthers the overall mission of CRC and addresses some of its critiques of thinking of culture as a fixed entity.

Returning to the question of what knowledge is of most worth, it seems that there are several issues at play in this context. The first is the reality of material poverty in rural Indigenous communities and the promise, whether false or not, of material well-being through professional employment. Second, there is a danger in subsuming the students' and their families' Indigenous knowledge and culture with colonizing paradigms. A more comprehensive understanding of culture, therefore, is necessary, and is not fully comprehended in human capital theory or in postcolonial theory. Constructing curriculum via a multi-theoretical approach, therefore, is necessary.

Finally, educational leaders looking to incorporate community voices to develop CGC must consider how different theoretical assumptions and epistemologies influence decision making. Although the epistemologies of students and their parents were largely in agreement regarding professionalism, the two different

theoretical orientations we used to interpret how they communicated their ideas produced different understandings, and therefore different potential curriculum design decisions. Explicit or implicit reliance on such theoretical frameworks can lead to vastly different (potentially unwarranted) ideas about curricular aims that would most benefit communities. However, a grounded understanding of students' and parents' many meanings may not be possible from our epistemological distance, making this interpretive work necessary.

This article makes explicit some of the problematic assumptions in CRC and the difficulty of interpretation when attempting to collaboratively uncover meanings about education. It also furthers an iterative, collaborative, process-oriented approach to CGC to address the issues of responsive curriculum with marginalized epistemologies (Castagno and Brayboy 2008). Culturally grounded educators can work with community members to understand their realities and aspirations and to inform curriculum design decisions within these groundings. At scale, this can be a more complicated process, which is the subject of future research. Regardless, to allow for more culturally grounded decision making, it remains important that educators continue to reflexively question their own epistemologies and interpretive stances and to iteratively engage community members in discussion about education.

Appendix A

Student Focus Group Protocols

(Translated from Spanish)

#1 (created by authors)

1. Do you think it is important to study? Why?
2. Do you feel satisfied with your situation? Why?
3. Did your parents support you in your studies?
4. Do you have brothers?
5. Do they go to school? Why or why not?
6. Where do you imagine yourself in five years?
7. What does "success" mean to you, in your own words?

#2 (developed by students)

1. What are your dreams for the future?
2. Describe how you imagine your life in five years (working, studying, married with children, married without children, living somewhere else, etc.).
3. Do you think you are smart? In what ways?
4. How are you doing in school?

5. Do you think it's important to study? Why?
6. Do you feel that your life has changed since you started going to high school? Why?
7. Can you describe what your life would be like if you were not enrolled in school?
8. What does winning mean to you?
9. What does learning mean to you?
10. Do you feel satisfied with your life? Why?
11. What activities do you do that make you happy?
12. What would you change in your life?
13. Can you describe someone who is a winner?

Note: First appeared in Levitan (2018).

Appendix B

Three Profiles of Professionals

(Translated from Spanish)

1. Laura works in a nice clothing store in Cusco. She has a daughter and a family. She is from a farming community outside of Calca and goes to visit her family often. She gets to wear nice clothes every day. She is happy.
2. Valeria is a lawyer in Cusco. She has a nice office in Cusco and wears suits. She currently works in a law firm and has many clients. One day she wants to open her own law firm. She does not have any children. She is from a rural community outside of Urubamba. She is happy with her work, but does not get to go home often.
3. Miriam still lives in her home community outside of Marcuray. She grows organic vegetables and sells them to the hotels down the mountain, and makes money. She has a family. On the weekends, she goes to English classes. She is happy because she has a family and makes good money selling organic produce.

Note: First appeared in Levitan (2018).

Notes

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their support on this project. Although many people supported this work, any omissions, errors, or mistakes are our own.

1. *Salir adelante* directly translated to English means “to come out ahead.” The term’s implications are slightly different than the direct Spanish-English translation, as is discussed in the article. Our collaborators tell us that the Quechua term is *ñaupacman lloq’siy*.

2. For example, in Peru, girls are more often made to stay at home and help raise siblings (Ames and Rojas 2010). Indigenous women and girls also face greater risk of having violence perpetrated against them, both in school and at home (Defensoria del Pueblo 2019; INEI 2017; La Cadena 1992; Radcliffe 2002).

3. This article is part of a larger and ongoing project that examines how to collaboratively engage in educational improvement with Indigenous communities. As such, some parts of this article, including our description of participants, research context, methods, and some interview data, appear in other publications (e.g., Levitan 2018). Through this overlap, and by including novel data, we advance an original framework, analyses, and conclusions that complement and extend our previous scholarship.

4. Ideally the researchers would be fluent in Quechua, which they are studying. However, at the time of the research their Quechua was at the novice level.

5. All names besides the authors’ are pseudonyms.

6. What is it to be successful? We want to be winners/earners.

7. Suits, Farmland, Values, and More Questions.

8. What does it mean to be a professional?

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