When educators attempt to make "community" a part of classroom learning: The dangers of (mis)appropriating students' communities into schools

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Based on the literature, we specify four defining characteristics of community.
- We explore educators' usage of the term community and the associated implications.
- We examine how PD artifacts, tools, and norms co-construct localized meanings.
- We disambiguate four alternative analyses that are often conflated with community.

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ABSTRACT

In this article, we explore the ambiguous associations of the term "community" within one professional development (PD) program that engaged teachers in using mobile technologies to learn about data. We argue that multiple meanings of "community" are embedded in competing ideological discourses that reproduce and/or contest relationships of power that shape the educational experiences of students of color. We examine how the norms, representational artifacts, and tools in the PD we studied co-constructed various meanings of "community." Lastly, we explore the implications of our findings for PD facilitators by disambiguating other analyses that are often conflated with "community."

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1. Introduction

The term "community"[1] "resonates throughout social policy, scholarship, popular culture, and everyday social interactions" and is embraced by groups with even wildly opposing and "competing political agendas" (Collins, 2010, p. 7). As Williams (1983) observed, it is a "warmly persuasive word" and is almost always used favorably (p. 76). In an era of top–down educational mandates (Au, 2011; Valenzuela, Prieto, & Hamilton, 2007) coupled with policies that claim colorblindness and meritocracy (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Forman, 2004; Lewis, 2001), a growing number of educators have attempted to ground teaching and learning within "communities" as an alternative to dominant educational practices.[2] Whether it entails building on local strengths and capital (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Yosso, 2005), creating learning environments that are matched to students' cultural practices (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995), or embedding teacher education within non-university settings (McDonald et al., 2011; Sleeter, 2008), "community" offers a powerful rallying point and medium through which to challenge oppressive and alienating practices. However, as a

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[1] Throughout this paper, we use the term community in quotation marks to make explicit that we are referring to a word that signifies ideologically laden and constantly contested meanings (Hall, 1996). When we use the term without quotation marks, we refer to a meaning of the word that attends to the four criteria discussed Section 3, "What makes a 'Community' a Community?"

[2] While we focus on left-of-center educational discourses that emphasize social justice, parallel conversations about "community"-based alternatives to dominant educational practices are also prevalent in conservative circles as evidenced by the evangelical Christian homeschooling movement in the United States (Cooper & Sureau, 2007).

construct, "community" is "elusive, vague" (Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner, 2000, p. 47), "rarely defined," "complex, contested, [and] fraught with ambiguity and assumption" (Lynn, 2006, p. 111). It "represents or gathers to it contradictory [and] mutually exclusive images" (Carey, 1997, p. 1). As Hill Collins (2010) suggests, the strong emotions that "community" engenders along with its malleability and fluidity make it both powerful and problematic. Leveraging its potential to resist dominant oppressive structures, practices, and ideologies, educators in a number of international and transnational contexts have employed the construct to understand the unique experiences, strengths, and needs of "communities" and students of color[3] (Crozier & Davies, 2007; Lee & Hawkins, 2008; Maina, 1997; Osborne, 2003; Roy & Roxas, 2011). In this paper, we explore how shared representational artifacts, common tools, and discursive norms in a teacher professional development (PD) program that we studied co-constructed localized meanings of "communities" of color within a larger structural and ideological context that promotes deficit assumptions about people of color (Valencia & Solorzano, 1997). Drawing from Lynn (2006), we argue that it is essential for educators who attempt to make "community" a part of classroom learning to understand that the multiple meanings of the term are embedded in competing ideological discourses. Each meaning implicitly or explicitly identifies the problem of societal disparities differently and thus offers distinct analyses of the causes and solutions for these inequities. With the intention of making a clearer and more conscious link between educators' instructional approaches to "community" and their implied or overt theories of social change, we disambiguate four distinct perspectives — the systemic-historical analysis, institutional analysis, culture of power analysis, and critical analysis — that are often conflated when educators attempt to make "community" a part of classroom learning.

2. Why community?

The physical and symbolic boundaries of "communities" are often porous, changing, indistinct, and "represent social distinctions and divisions affected by a myriad of factors, events, and social conditions" (Azzopardi, 2011, p. 180). Given that "community" is so burdened with ambiguity, why does it remain such a powerful construct in research and practice? If the lack of analytical clarity has incited some to see "community" as "a meaningless term evoked more for rhetorical or emotional reasons than for illumination or explanation" (Kirkpatrick, 1986, p. 2), why does it persist? We contend, along with Hill Collins (2010), that despite its ambiguities, the notion of "community" is a "major vehicle that links individuals to social institutions," is "central to how people organize and experience social inequalities," and is a catalyst for "strong, deep feelings that can move people to action" (pp. 11–12). These powerful qualities keep community at the heart of theories and practices of resistance. It is perhaps this potential to inspire engagement that prevents researchers and activists alike from discarding the construct of "community" despite its analytical vagueness.

Wrestling with the imprecision of the term and its associated consequences is not unique to the domain of educational scholarship. There have been consistent attempts, both internationally and

across disciplinary boundaries, to add clarity to the term without losing its emotive power. For instance, in his exploration of the political history of Ireland, Robson (2001) provocatively explores whether "community" diminishes and co-opts the power of class struggle, while Stables (2003), situated within the context of the United Kingdom, explores the value of conceptualizing schools as an imagined community in discursive space. Azzopardi (2011) explores questions about inclusion and exclusion in "communities" from the perspective of inclusive education in Malta. As elaborated below, scholarship on "community" in the field of social work in Australia (Lynn, 2006), disability studies in the United Kingdom (Partington, 2005), development studies in formerly colonized countries (Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Mohan, 2001), and nursing in Australia (St John, 1998), all provide valuable insights into the multiple meanings of the term and the associated complexities of the construct. While all of these scholars bemoan the nebulousness of the term, the acknowledgment of its power to move people to action pushes them to delineate it and redeem it rather than abandon it.

Paralleling usages of the term in education, St John's (1998) work in Australia provides a glimpse of the multiple commonsensical and professional meanings of "community" in the field of nursing. In her study, "community" was defined by practicing nurses in terms of geographical boundaries, target demographic groups, sites of resources for clients, and networks of people. It also referred to units of care such as schools, remote Aboriginal areas, and rural towns. Meanings of "community" that Lynn (2006) encountered in the field of social work in Australia include "sources of personal and cultural identity," "support systems," and "non-institutions" (p. 111). She adds that "community" is often used interchangeably with "problems" and is a "legitimizer" for outside interventions (Lynn, 2006, p. 111).

Within the field of education, "community" is a frequently used construct to understand the unique experiences, strengths, and needs of students of color. For instance, Osborne (2003) has extensively written about the importance of "community" participation and the role of teachers within and outside of the Torres Strait Islander "community" in Australia. Educational researchers such as Maina (1997) have explored "community" strengths that might inform the education of First Nations youth in Canada. These scholars emphasize that schooling has been instrumental in the colonizing project against people of color. They see a bridge between "communities" and schools as one way in which "community" knowledge, experience, history, and needs might be leveraged to transform the "material and symbolic power relations" (Bourdieu, 2001) that disadvantage people of color. Within the context of globalization and transnational movements, Roy and Roxas (2011) explore the misunderstandings between "communities" and schools that emerge for Somali Bantu refugee families in the United States, while Crozier and Davies (2007) explore parallel dynamics between schools and Bangladeshi and Pakistani families in the United Kingdom. Similarly Lee and Hawkins (2008) highlight the power of "community"-based educational programs for Hmong youth in the United States. These studies emphasize that when schools are not inclusive of the "community's" languages, practices, and knowledge, they tend to alienate students and their families and thus put these students at continued risk for failure in dominant educational settings. A growing body of scholarship that shares the epistemological commitments of Osborne, Maina, Roy and Roxas, Crozier and Davies, and Lee and Hawkins, reconceptualize "communities" as a source of learning, support, and agency for individual and collective empowerment. Bridging "community" and school is seen as an essential element of a larger struggle to make schools more equitable and just for students of color. While we share the vision and commitment of these scholars,

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[3] We use the term "people of color" (and "community of color" and "students of color") to describe people who are racialized other than White both in the global context but also more specifically within the United States. The term was given positive meaning in the anti-colonial writings of the Martinique-born, French-Algerian, Franz Fanon. The Civil Rights movement extended this terminology to emphasize self-empowerment and self-description (see Lutz, Vivar, & Supik, 2011, p. 11).

we also note that the meaning of "community" in much of this literature is taken-for-granted. The absence of explicit definitions or descriptions of the term make it exceedingly prone to ambiguities that may work counterproductively to re-inscribe rather than challenge deficit notions of students of color. To avoid such uncertainty, we clarify, in the section below, specific criteria for our use of the term.

3. What makes a "community" a community?

Rooted in a theoretical perspective that argues that people tend to refrain from explicitly racialized language within the "post-Civil Rights" era (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Forman, 2004; Lewis, 2001), we are particularly attentive to the ways in which "community" is used as an implicit placeholder for race. We are vigilant of usages that conflate or gloss over the important distinctions between these constructs. Such invocations of "community" erase the processes of racial formation (Omi & Winant, 1994) unique to race and racism. Building on these critiques of "colorblind" ideology, we therefore sought to develop a set of criteria that would distinguish the analytical power of community from the construct of race. Reviewing the literature on community for how it might be leveraged distinctly from race (while acknowledging their intersections) to address the persistent educational inequalities that exist for students of color, we argue that four criteria must be attended to when the term community is used: i.) members' mutual investment, ii.) member diversity, iii.) situated membership, and iv.) self-determined purpose.

3.1. Criterion I: members' mutual investment

For a group of people to be a community, the members must be able to articulate, at some level, how they are mutually invested in each other. For example, building on theories of social capital, Partington (2005) argues that communities are marked by principles of friendship, support relationships, and networks. He argues that these qualities of mutual investment are characterized by participation, trust, and shared social norms. That is, members of a community must have opportunities to be both creators and consumers of what they hold in common, and reciprocity must exist in the exchange of resources, supports, and services (Partington, 2005). Communities are "united by shared values," which are evident in feelings of ownership and loyalty (Strike, 1999, p. 47). Community also inspires a sense of family, pride, personal sacrifice, and a desire for collective betterment (Collins, 2010).

3.2. Criterion II: member diversity

A number of researchers have cautioned that the affirming associations of "community" promote the tendency to discount tensions, divisions, and struggles within "communities." Particularly from the perspective of an outsider, communities are prone to be seen as "stable, homogenous, and relatively fixed groupings of people" (Moje, 2000, p. 82). Assumptions about the familial and nurturing quality of "community" "conceal power relations" among members and erase important differences in the interests and needs of constituents based on age, class, caste, ethnicity, religion, gender, and more (Cooke & Kothari, 2001, p. 6). Moje (2000) argues that overlooking within-group diversity often leads to simplistic framings of "communities" as either a single problem to be solved, or as an idealized source of uniform resistance to oppressive practices and structures.

3.3. Criterion III: situated membership

Moje (2000) cautions educators against prescribing or presuming membership in communities. Particularly in large urban settings, she argues, multiple memberships shape the ways that people identify with various communities. Interacting with people as if they were members of a presumed, static "community" risks "essentializing and alienating" them (Moje, 2000, p. 103). Moving beyond perfunctory acknowledgments that people are members of multiple and sometimes competing "communities," educators must contend with the complexities that arise when people identify with multiple communities simultaneously and when communities interact and mutually shape each other (Moje, 2000). From this perspective, it is essential to allow for people to name themselves as members of particular communities according to the situation in which they find themselves. Surfacing and understanding these situated meanings of community and membership require interpretation through "the eyes, ears, minds, and hearts" of the members themselves (Orellana & Hernandez, 1999 as cited in Moje, 2000). Usages of community must allow for self-ascription and memberships that are multiple, intersecting, interacting, and hybrid.

3.4. Criterion IV: self-determined purpose

Echoing William's (1983) concern about the romanticized appeal of the term "community," Cooke and Kothari (2001) point out that the grassroots nature of "community"-driven change, which relies on local perspectives, knowledge, priorities, and skills, is often idealized as more sustainable, relevant, and empowering than change initiated by outsiders. They caution, however, that unexamined and "ritualistic" use of "community" and participatory processes can be "manipulative" and "harm those who were supposed to be empowered" (Cooke & Kothari, 2001, p. 1). For one, token "community" participation obscures how external forces and agents often drive the problems and solutions that are identified for "communities." It dresses externally conceptualized initiatives in the garb of local ownership and purpose. Second, Cooke and Kothari argue that by focusing on the personal and the local as sites of empowerment and knowledge, participatory approaches are prone to obscure the overarching historical, social, political, and economic processes that stratify society. Additionally, members of privileged groups who serve other "communities" are portrayed as "enlightened and omnipotent saviors" (Mohan, 2001, p. 162) or as "friends of people of color" (Thompson, 2003). There is a penchant for these individuals to see themselves as possessors of knowledge that must be given to those whom they seek to help (Freire, 2001). Such service or education is "unlikely to fix the range of deep-seated social problems that stem from multiple social inequalities" (Collins, 2010, p. 20). The language of assistance diverts attention "toward facile forms of amelioration" and away from "public policies that might address root causes of social problems" (Collins, 2010, p. 20). Dominant narratives also position working-class and poor youth of color and their "communities" as "deviating from the general configuration of a good, organized, and just society" and as persons who must be "integrated" and "incorporated" into a functioning society (Freire, 2001, p. 74). Freire (2001) urges teachers to guard against these paternalistic practices and to transform unjust societal structures in solidarity with their students, co-intentionally engaging in "the task of unveiling reality, […] coming to know it critically, [and] re-creating that knowledge" (p. 69).

Through the data segments below, we consider the tendency for dialogue about students' "communities," within the PD context we studied, to progress in a manner that erased the four criteria of

members' mutual investment, member diversity, situated membership, and self-determined purpose. We investigate the meanings about "communities" of color that emerge within PD spaces where educators express a commitment to make students' "community" a part of classroom learning, but where the term is not defined, examined, or problematized. In particular, we highlight the role of PD norms, representational artifacts, and tools in constructing such meanings. A unique theoretical and methodological contribution of our piece is that it complicates perspectives that White and middle-class teachers simply bring in and reproduce dominant narratives of "communities" of color in their professional spaces. Drawing from perspectives on situated meaning making (Cole, 1996; Greeno, 1998; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 2003), we show that individual and collective understandings about "communities" of color also emerge from the specificities of the PD. We highlight how tools, representations, and norms mediated the interactions of participants and were partially shaped in meaning by them (Cole, 1996). We also demonstrate how participants' sense-making in the PD was an "interactive construction of knowledge" as participants and facilitators built on each other's insights and interpretations through collaborative activities (Greeno, 1998, p. 8).

4. Methods

4.1. Description of context

The context of our study was a seven day PD for high school computer science, mathematics, and science teachers, in which they explored how they might use mobile technologies in the classroom to more deeply engage their students in collecting, representing, analyzing, visualizing, and communicating data. The PD was a part of a collaboration between a very large urban school district, and faculty and researchers in the departments of education, computer science, and statistics at a major research university. Both of these institutions are situated in a large metropolitan area on the West Coast of the United States. Recruitment information for the PD stressed that participants would learn more about "participatory sensing," a method of data collection and analysis in which students use mobile phones and web services to systematically collect and interpret data about issues important to them and their "communities." The information sent to participants also highlighted the promotion of civic engagement in students, the opportunity for teachers to learn from experts in the field, and support to create interdisciplinary projects at their schools the following year.

Some of the university partners in the collaboration had a long-standing relationship with computer science teachers in the local school district. The participants were recruited by asking members of this network to form teams with a mathematics teacher and science teacher from their school site and to then apply collectively to the PD. Four teams of three teachers and one team of two teachers were accepted into the PD. By researcher identification, the participants consisted of 9 males and 5 females, and racially 5 Whites, 2 African Americans, 5 Latinos, and 2 Asian Americans.

The facilitators of the PD were university-based teacher coaches, graduate students, and academic and administrative staff who were supported, at least in part, by the project grant. By researcher identification, the facilitators consisted of 3 males and 5 females, and racially 5 Whites, 2 Asian Americans, and 1 Latino.

One faculty member and four graduate students from the department of education comprised the research team. The team was one component of the larger project and attempted to situate itself as a "critical friend" to the collaboration, "asking provocative questions, providing data to be examined through another lens, and offering critiques" (Costa & Kallick, 1993, p. 50). As Swaffield (2004)

adds, a critical friend attempts to challenge expectations, play a role that is "interpretive and catalytic," and help "shape outcomes but never determine them" (p. 267–268). The three males and two females on the research team identified as African American, Chicano, multiracial, South Asian American, and Southeast Asian. Three of the five researchers were previously teachers in the school district that was involved in the collaboration. As researchers, all of our work is at least partially informed by theories of ideology (Gramsci, 1971; Hall, 1996), Whiteness (Frankenberg, 1993; Leonardo, 2004), critical race theory (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), and critical pedagogy (Giroux, 2011; McLaren, 1994). Rooted in these bodies of scholarship and having taught in similar schools as the teachers, we occupied a space of being both outsiders and partial insiders (hooks, 2000) to the experiences of both the teachers and facilitators in the PD.

The facilitators opened the PD with a presentation that was intended to develop a collective understanding of data that moved away from notions of data as decontextualized numbers. With a variety of powerful examples from marketing to people's online activities, the facilitators stressed that in the contemporary digital, networked society, everyone is constantly generating data as they browse websites, make purchases, or simply move around. They highlighted that traditional statistics is often inadequate in dealing with the huge amounts of data generated today, particularly diverse formats of data such as images and text as well as data that are linked to information about time and location. The PD was presented as an opportunity for teachers to integrate this emerging field of "data science" into their classrooms. The bulk of the PD centered around teachers using two mobile phone apps to collect their own data, working with a statistical software package to analyze the data, and discussing how they might incorporate their new learning into their own classrooms. The first mobile phone app allowed teachers to map billboard advertisements in various neighborhoods, and the second app allowed them to document their own eating habits throughout the day. The facilitators led the teachers in numerous conversations about how the curriculum and apps might allow students to address issues that are important and personally-relevant to them and their "communities." At no point during the PD, however, was a definition of "community" offered; nor was any time devoted to examine the affordances and limitations of this construct. Thus the recurring usage of "community" relied on facilitators and teachers' implicit and taken-for-granted understandings of the term that then collectively built on each other.

4.2. Data sources and analysis

The data sources for this study included fieldnotes of all seven days of the PD, which typically lasted approximately 6 h each day. The fieldnotes were taken by two members of the research team (approximately ninety single-spaced typed pages). In addition to fieldnotes, all large group discussions and presentations (approximately 10 h) were videorecorded. We made a content log of the video data, which included a chronological description of the participants and facilitators' statements demarcated by natural pauses or changes of topic.

We initially approached the analysis of the data through a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006). In the initial coding of the fieldnotes, "community" emerged as the most common code. A focused coding for "community" was then done on the corpus of video data, using the content log, with at least two members of the research team analyzing each segment of video. Any explicit or implied usage of "community" was noted and these segments of the video were transcribed. Using the transcriptions, and both the content log and the visual dimensions afforded by the video to

better understand context, our initial organization of the coded data resulted in multiple categories of "community" as physical space, institution, field of study, assumed commonality, and shared purpose, much like the findings of Lynn (2006) and St John (1998). Finally, three members of the team collectively watched all the video in sequential order and reviewed the results of the focused coding for any omissions or misattributions. Any such discrepancies were resolved through discussion among the researchers and by reference to criteria specifying each code.

In our multiple readings of the coded data, however, we were struck by how nuanced variations in the usage of "community" amplified race and class differences between the educators and their students. Our analysis, therefore, shifted to a discourse analysis approach detailed by Wetherell and Potter's (1992) study of racial ideologies.

Wetherell and Potter's (1992) approach to discourse analysis focuses less on stylistic and grammatical elements of discourse and is more concerned with "language use, what is achieved by that use and the nature of the interpretative resources that allow that achievement" (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, pp. 90–91). For instance, when the participants in the PD were discussing the types of billboard advertisements in different "communities," one teacher explained that she "gets sad" that her students are only exposed to ads involving health clinics and sexually-transmitted diseases. To understand what is "achieved" by this statement, from Wetherell and Potter's approach, requires it to be situated in: 1.) the conversations from which this statement emerged, which positioned the students' "communities" as relatively homogenous and in direct contrast to the teachers' "communities," 2.) the ensuing conversations that positioned teachers as having a responsibility to help students "fix" their "communities," and 3.) the pervasive ideological discourse that positions dominant groups as benevolent saviors (Mohan, 2001; Thompson, 2003). The process of analysis as suggested by Wetherell and Potter is cyclical: as understandings of particular themes develop, it is necessary to "go back to original materials and search through them again for instances" that could only then be seen as relevant (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 100). For instance, in our initial readings of the data, we coded a teacher's comment that "we [the teachers] need to educate people to be critical like we are" as an instance of the teachers making a distinction between themselves and others, but not as an explicit example of "community." As Wetherell and Potter argue, it was through the cyclical process of developing themes and analysis that it became evident that the presence of criticality in the teachers and its absence in students and their "communities" was a way in which "community" was being constructed by the PD participants. We engaged in such a cyclical process of analysis by moving between all the implicit and explicit usages of "community" in the PD and referring to the content log and video to better understand the contexts of their usages. Two broad themes that developed in our analysis of educators' usage of the term "community" with respect to their students were: 1.) "community as shared conditions," and 2.) "community as shared needs."

5. Findings

To introduce the curriculum's potential to learn about data and "real-world" issues, a considerable amount of time was devoted on the first day of the PD to a presentation that focused on examining billboard advertisements in different neighborhoods. Billboards, as data, allowed the participants to concretely engage with a variety of data formats, such as images, text, and global positioning system (GPS) coordinates. As one of two curricular themes throughout the PD, the conversations about the billboard advertisements spanned all seven-days.

To prompt a discussion on how location-tagged images of billboards can be used to engage in spatial data analyses that then encourage students to look at issues in their "community," the facilitator displayed a variety of advertisements that she had collected in a relatively wealthy beachfront neighborhood with a history of artistic and counterculture activities. The facilitator showed a vast range of advertisements that were present in the locality, including advertisements for movies, restaurants, strip clubs, museums, and electronics. Following the presentation, the facilitator asked the teachers for their impressions about the advertisements. Although one of the first teachers to respond commented on the diversity of the advertisements, and despite the assortment of billboards that was evidenced in the data that were presented, the teachers increasingly spoke, as we will show below, about "good ads" existing in their own "communities" and "bad ads" as prevalent only in the "communities" of their students. At no point was there a discussion on what made a "good ad" good or a "bad ad" bad. However, museums became the symbol of good ads, strip-club and public service ads became emblematic of bad ads, and electronics and most movie ads were largely seen as neutral. Billboard advertisements, as we demonstrate below, became the primary representational artifact through which the educators contrasted themselves from their students. In addition to naming advertisements as good or bad in the group discussions, the educators were later prompted to categorize the billboards with the mobile phone app. One categorization option was "vice." As a tool, the app thus made the language of "vice" salient to the educators' shared space. Undoubtedly, the educators entered the PD with their own histories and patterned ways of making sense about their students and their work as teachers. However, as elaborated below, and consistent with sociocultural perspectives on situated meaning making (Cole, 1996; Greeno, 1998; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 2003), the facilitators and teachers jointly negotiated a new collective meaning of "community" through the billboards as shared representational artifacts, the app as a common tool, and norms of communication that left assumptions about students and their "communities" unexamined. The dynamic and situated construction of the meaning of "community" highlights, as we will show, the *tendency* for PD spaces to problematically reproduce deficit notions of students of color, but also their *potential* to challenge the same.

5.1. Community as shared conditions

An artificial dichotomization of the educators' "communities" and the "communities" of their students occurred almost immediately after the facilitator's presentation about billboards. One teacher began by looking past the diversity of advertisements and attempted to identify billboards that epitomized different neighborhoods. He commented:

> [The ads] were very media focused. Entertainment. You have a lot of ads with movies and the arts, overall. So, that's interesting to see that type of advertising, where if you were to go into *other* neighborhoods, *you may not see those types of advertisements*. (italics added)

The characterization of other neighborhoods through simple binaries and assumptions was seeded here but was reinforced throughout the seven days. For instance, during the fourth day, one group of teachers said they consciously attempted to capture advertisements that were "particular" to a "community." However, none of the participants introduced or mentioned advertisements that were arguably specific to certain areas or a community — *local* film screenings, music and art performances, political events, or businesses — that could have disrupted notions of deficit in students' "communities." Instead, the examples of what was "particular" to a

community built on and extended the dichotomization of "communities" through the lens of "good" and "bad" ads. Responding to this comment, a facilitator attempted to problematize the participants' approach by emphasizing that they took pictures based on what *they* thought "typified" a "community." While the facilitator brought the subjective nature of such characterizations to the group's attention, as with other instances throughout the PD, subjectivity was tied to individual interpretations and did not explore how it also stems from the educators' positionality and relative power.

One of the facilitators extended the dichotomous representation of "communities" and alluded to class by suggesting that the advertisements "assume that the people in the area have disposable income" because the museum ads are not advertising "free open places that you can go." Soon after, another teacher stressed that the community had a role in challenging the presence of unwanted advertisements. It is particularly important to note that he referenced a poster of the movie, "Bad Teacher," which was prevalent throughout the metropolitan area at the time, as an example of an advertisement that the students' "communities" should resist. However, as with the conversations that followed, the group of teachers and facilitators glossed over the data they had at hand as well as their own experience with seeing a diversity of advertisements in multiple neighborhoods. The teacher's comments implied that the "bad ads" are in poor "communities" because of their lack of concern:

> I was thinking about the appropriateness of the ads. We were talking, about a week ago, about the Bad Teacher ad. […] Because I was wondering like this is wrong, but I wasn't exactly sure why. […] But, you know, some of the ads are obviously targeting one group, but the, you know, students or kids may be seeing those ads also. So, would the community be concerned about that?

Through non-responses by other participants and facilitators, and the absence of additional queries that problematized such statements, this question about the "community's" concern operated rhetorically to imply that the cause for undesirable advertisements was a lack of concern within the "community" itself. Additionally, this question and the absence of an interrogation about its associated assumptions must be understood in conjunction with the ensuing conclusions, on which we elaborate below, that teachers had a responsibility to help "fix" students' "communities."

While previous comments emphasized museum advertisements and other supposed assets in wealthier neighborhoods, the question about the "community's" absence of concern shifted the conversation to an explicit discussion of the perceived deficits in the students' "communities." For instance, another teacher further racialized the discussion by emphasizing that the ads were in Spanish:

> I'm just thinking about [the vicinity of the teacher's school]. Half or more [of the advertisements] are in Spanish. And they are all for community services. Hospitals and clinics. There is no museum ad.

References to non-standard forms of English and non-English languages in the United States is racialized (Shuck, 2006) and operates as a euphemism for race that offers "a more subtle way of hierarchizing social groups in the contemporary world (Phillipson, 1992, p. 241). The teacher's explicit reference to Spanish racializes her students as Latinos. She invokes, and extends within the shared PD space, stereotypes of Latinos as beneficiaries of "community services."

After an activity in which the participants examined a sample of "vice ads" in small groups, a participant explained the conflict she experienced with contemporary advertising:

> For me, when I look at something that's to me sort of perverted, I think I'm trying to understand where does it, how does it, at what point does it become perverted? […] And for me, to me, this movie ad, I feel like I'm looking at pornography, but to what extent? […] So, I felt disgusted, but why? Or uncomfortable, but why?

The teachers and facilitators' arguments did not stand in isolation. As seen, especially in the next two quotes, each of them subtly or explicitly built on each other. For instance, the teacher who made the comment about the Spanish advertisements built on the sentiment about feeling "disgust" over the "perverted" ads:

> I know that when I'm driving and I see ads, I judge the ads. And there are some that make me angry. Like, that should not be up there. […] I don't want to say that I don't like all of them, but a lot of them I'm really offended by. And I'm concerned as a society, for what some of those ads are telling our children about what's okay.

The anger and revulsion that the participants expressed quickly gave way to sympathy and pity for students who have to live in their own "communities":

> I think for me, when we're talking about [the neighborhood where the teacher's school is located] and the ads that are around that community, versus, maybe [the beachfront neighborhood the facilitator discussed], I get sad. I get sad that our students are only exposed to the ones involving clinics and STDs, [HIV] testing. […] Like I wish they had the same access that maybe a different community or a more affluent community would have.

On a number of occasions over the seven days, the teachers continued to use the billboards and other examples of data from the PD to draw sharp contrasts between their "communities" and their students' "communities." They lamented advertisements for medical marijuana that they would never want in their own "communities." Others explained how they used data on crimes in different "communities" to decide where to live. As these teachers' students were almost entirely Latino and African American (with a small representation of Asian Pacific Islanders) and disproportionately poor and working-class, all the images and accounts of students' "communities" are unambiguously raced and classed. However, "community" was used to describe more than these markers; it was experiencing the conditions that emerged from an amalgam of race, class, crime, sexual "vices," drugs, venereal diseases, lack of "high culture," and not speaking English. Students' "communities" were defined by the presence of these detriments, as the educators' "communities" were defined by their absence. This construction of "community" emerges from both the material conditions of poor urban spaces (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010) and the ideological construction of their members as deficient (Valencia & Solorzano, 1997). The participants' attention to the disparities in material conditions had the potential to prompt a closer analysis of the historical, social, political, and economic processes that create these deep inequities. In the context of this PD, they operated instead to reproduce ideological meanings of deficiency about "communities" of color.

"Community" as shared conditions stands in contrast to the characteristics of mutual investment, shared resources, and reciprocity that define community as suggested by Collins (2010), Partington (2005), and Strike (1999). Students were assumed to be permanent members of a static "community" that was defined by the ills of society. Nothing necessarily bound the group together outside of the conditions that they might collectively, but still variably, experience. The external attribution of "community" without self-ascription in this usage made it prone to essentializing and flattened variation within groups of people as argued by Moje (2000). The dichotomizing of groups also erased the strengths

within the "communities" of students and the problems within the educators' own "communities." As Cooke and Kothari (2001) and Mohan (2001) suggest, such a conceptualization prompts a unidirectional and paternalistic model of assistance for change.

5.2. Community as shared needs

The emergent meaning of students' "community" as a shared set of detrimental conditions was coupled to a meaning of their "community" as sharing a set of needs. For example, on the third day of the PD, the teachers proposed an advocacy project where students would create public service announcements that informed people in their "community" about days on which they might visit museums without paying an admission fee. This solution stemmed from a conversation that portrayed members of students' "communities" as being ignorant or not taking advantage of the museums that exist even in their own neighborhoods. As with other advocacy projects proposed by the participants, the causes for inequities in access rested largely within the students' "communities," and the solutions focused on imparting knowledge to these "communities." Neither the problems nor solutions seeded analyses of the historical, social, political, or economic processes that have led to and continue to create the inequities.

A shared understanding was interwoven throughout the participants' discussion that educators should make students aware of the detriments in students' "communities." The participants also expressed that educators should impart knowledge and critical thinking on students so that students might remedy the inadequacies of their "communities." For instance, within the first few hours of the PD, a teacher introduced the importance of getting students to "think outside of their four block radius, wherever they live, and on a global scale." To be clear, we believe that the purpose of educators includes engaging students in new ideas. However, the narrative that the students are confined in knowledge to the limits of their immediate neighborhood and that the educators are truly knowledgeable of global processes, falls into the trap, as Freire (2001) argues, of trying to impose what well-meaning individuals see as best on others. It precludes opportunities to "co-intentionally unveil reality" (Freire, 2001) in ways that begin with the insights and analyses of students and others in their communities.

As educators, the participants clearly contrasted their presumed role of imparting critical thinking on students from other approaches that might attempt to repress or curtail undesirable information. When participants expressed "disgust" about the advertisements and a concern about what the advertisements "are telling our children," one teacher cautioned again censorship and highlighted their purpose as teachers: "So, we need to educate people to be critical like we are." This statement identified the educators as collectively critical and it identified their students and the students' "communities" as lacking in this regard. As the participants named their role in imparting criticality, and in the context of a binary representation of "communities," they focused on the stereotypical deficits of poor people of color and how they might transform them through education. For instance, during an activity when the teachers were experimenting with the mobile phones, a group of teachers expressed concern about how advertisements affected consumption choices, and in turn, the home environment:

> How does the ad affect your consumer habits? So, looking to see, there might be a lot of beer ads. Is there a lot of beer in the house, or sugary drinks? Is there a lot of that in the house?

Through these assumptions, the participants created an identity where they saw themselves as helping their students make better choices that improved their own lives. Simultaneously, the statements obscured any potential analysis of power and oppression.

The narrative of helping students improve their "community," as opposed to engaging students in examining relationships of power that contribute to inequitable contexts, became especially strong as the days progressed. For instance, during the third day of the PD, a teacher explained what he saw as their role:

> And a specific plan on how to improve their community would be something that we could help with, teach the students to come up with a step-by-step plan of action.

In statements such as this, the "improvement" of students' "communities" was reduced to a simple blueprint that obscures history and power and focuses solely on individual choices and responsibility. These claims and suggestions attributed inequities to the ignorance in the students' "community," and positioned the educators as the ones who might impart the necessary knowledge on the students so that they might eventually integrate and incorporate themselves and others in their "community" into a "functioning society" (Freire, 2001, p. 74).

The recognition of the inequitable conditions in students' "communities", and the desire to address them, did not organically grow as a self-determined purpose from students, but was externally imposed by the educators who saw themselves as "enlightened and omnipotent" saviors (Mohan, 2001, p. 162). Nothing necessarily made the students, their families, and their neighbors a community with mutual investment. The notion of "community" was strictly the ascription of others. The presumed need that was placed on a "community" erased member diversity. This usage of "community" is particularly prone to Cook and Kothari (2001) and Mohan's (2001) critiques that it can be manipulative, cause harm, position historically more powerful groups as enlightened saviors, and attribute disparity to cultural differences while obscuring material and symbolic relations of power (Bourdieu, 2001).

6. Discussion

Recognizing and anticipating the usages of "community" as "shared conditions" and "shared needs" are critical in facilitating learning contexts for educators who attempt to engage students in issues that are important to them and their communities. As we demonstrated above, these problematic meanings of "community" were actively constructed in the PD space (albeit inadvertently), through tools such as the mobile app, through shared representations of billboard advertisements, and through the emergent norms and practices of the PD space that left assumptions about students and their "communities" unexamined. It is essential to interrogate how these usages of "community" are embedded in competing ideologies (Lynn, 2006). When the ideological nuances of the term are not surfaced, the "warmly persuasive" (Williams, 1983) usage of "community" can result in counterproductive outcomes that reinscribe inequitable relationships of power.

6.1. The need for classrooms to transform when attempting to make community a part of classroom learning

A deeper examination of students' shared conditions or needs could have potentially engaged more authentic meanings of community in the PD we studied. For instance, while museum advertisement and attendance are not inevitably germane to a broad group of people who happen to share physical space and some set of similar conditions, the museum-related disparities might have been genuinely relevant to the self-determined purpose of a community of students interested in particular art forms or a community of students interested in the distribution of public resources. However, these opportunities were missed as educators did not and were not facilitated to deeply interrogate their usages of "community as

shared conditions" and "community as shared needs" in light of criteria such as member mutual investment, member diversity, situated membership, and self-determined purpose.

We argue that educators are drawn to using "community" because of its positive connotations, but classrooms and schools rarely change in ways that make community-based learning truly possible. Every classroom has a multitude of overlapping communities. Learning in and about the community must entail classroom practices that are flexible enough to leverage and nurture these diverse and sometimes competing purposes. The teacher cannot ascribe communities or presume needs as was done in the PD. A classroom that authentically makes space for learning in and about the community must contend with the immense instructional complexities and challenges that accompany students' self-definition of community. Such learning requires drastic alterations of classroom power and practices. Educators enter the problematic space of false participation and disingenuous "community" empowerment that was highlighted by Cooke and Kothari (2001) and Mohan (2001) when they espouse the language of community but maintain hierarchical models of power that are currently pervasive throughout schools and classrooms. We do not suggest that such drastically reshaped spaces of learning are the singular appropriate model for classrooms, or that it is consistently possible or even desirable within contemporary institutional and structural constraints. If educators claim to engage in learning in and about the community, however, it must be accompanied by substantial changes in practice that build on members' mutual investment, diversity, situated membership, and self-determined purpose.

We acknowledge that the primary purpose of the PD was to use mobile phones to engage mathematics, science, and computer science teachers in learning about new forms of digital data. Connecting to students' "communities" was mostly meant to provide relevancy and interest for the students. Therefore, it was understandably difficult for the facilitators to anticipate the multitude of problems that would arise from the nebulous use of "community." We argue, however, that the lack of attention to "community" not only reproduced deficit understandings of students within the PD, but also fundamentally detracted from the PD's primary purpose. As seen in the findings, unproblematized notions of "community" allowed the participants to ignore, gloss over, and fail to interrogate data they had at hand. Rather than carefully considering issues with the collection, analysis, interpretation, and representation of data, their meaning making relied heavily on deficit constructions of people of color. A more nuanced understanding of community was critical, not only through a lens of racial justice, but also in terms of teachers' learning about data science.

Elaborating on the museum example that was central to the educators' discussion over the seven days, we suggest that a community analysis should have been used more judiciously when the educators recognized the disparities in shared conditions between groups of people. There were a number of alternative approaches that might have been more appropriate than an analysis that attempted to prioritize community. Below, we explicate four alternative analyses to community that are often problematically conflated and entangled within the discourse of "community" as apparent in the findings above. Recognizing that the possibilities and challenges that arise in each PD will be contextually specific, we do not offer these as prescriptions, but as lenses through which facilitators might examine their conceptualization and implementation of PDs.

6.2. Systemic-historical analysis

When educators employ the language of community, they often desire to engage with aspects of the systemic and historical processes of oppression, but in a manner that is more amicable. Such polite discourse often glosses over critical elements of power. In the museum example, for instance, issues of race could have been explicitly engaged through a systemic-historical analysis with questions such as:

1.How might Native Americans engage with museums, considering that these institutions played (and continue to play) a significant ideological role in the subjugation of their nations and cultures by portraying them as "dangerous and violent" and thus requiring annihilation, or, as "primitive and noble" and thus needing childlike protection (Denzin, 2013)?
2.How might African Americans experience museums given that they have often been excluded from representing themselves in such spaces (Cooks, 2007)?
3.How have racial segregation and the politics of urban renewal (Lipsitz, 1998) affected access to museums for people of color?

These questions explicitly engage racism, without the softening language of "community" that implicitly and problematically invokes race without ever naming it. As seen above, the undertone of race in "community" without explicit engagement with racism is likely to position educators as "enlightened and omnipotent saviors" (Mohan, 2001) to "communities" that share presumed needs.

6.3. Institutional analysis

Questions about the geographical location of museum advertisements can lend themselves seamlessly to an institutional analysis. The observed disparity in advertisements, and the very context of a PD focused on data, would have presented an ideal opportunity for the educators to more deeply collect and analyze data about the museum's outreach programs, exhibits, special events, and the demographics of its members and visitors. Such an analysis would have opened broader questions that even the American Association of Museums is acutely contending with: If current trends in U.S. racial demographics and museum use continue, "museum audiences will be radically less diverse than the American public, and museums will serve an ever-shrinking fragment of [American] society" (Farrell & Medvedeva, 2010, p. 5). While the educators touched on some conversations about access, the potential for institutional analysis quickly faded into prescriptions for what "communities" must do for themselves.

6.4. Culture of power analysis

As evidenced above, teachers in the PD continually positioned themselves as intermediaries who might "help students improve their communities." While this positioning reproduces problematic relationships of power, obscures the need for significant changes in social policy, and dismisses crucial systemic-historical analyses, it could provide a seed for their engagement with an analysis of the "culture of power" (Delpit, 1995). As Delpit would argue, gaining fluency in "high culture," while simultaneously understanding that its value is socially constructed and not inherent, allows students to better navigate the current realities of an inequitable society. Through the adoption of such an analysis, teachers are explicit that they are rooting their instructional decisions in their desire for students to be fluent in the culture of power and in their belief that such fluency is important for students. By stripping the allure of the language of "community," teachers can be candid that they are trying to do what they believe is best for their students in a manner that is rooted in a particular theory of change. It further mitigates the troubling contradictions that we saw in the PD when teachers prescribed how students should help themselves and their

"communities," but described their instructional decisions as if they emerged from the students' authentic needs and desires.

6.5. Critical analysis

A final alternative that we propose here, which was not introduced within the PD, is what we refer to as a critical analysis. In this approach, rather than attempting to have their students become fluent in "high culture," educators would engage them in examining why certain forms of art are dominant, how such status is maintained, and how seemingly neutral terrains such as art reflexively reproduce practices and structures of inequity and oppression (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). As scholars such as Yosso (2005) suggest, such analyses have potential for the exploration of rich forms of cultural capital within communities that can serve as alternative forms of expression, meaning making, and resistance.

We have named and delineated the systemic-historical, institutional, culture of power, critical, and community analyses to disambiguate usages of "community" that problematically conflate elements of each approach as shown in the findings above. These analyses do not imply a hierarchy. The value and effectiveness of each approach is dependent on a number of contextual school and classroom factors. While we do not advocate the consistent use of one approach over another, we push ourselves and other teachers and teacher educators to be highly critical of ambiguous and cheery usages of "community." We urge educators to clearly articulate how the construct of community, and the elements of members' mutual investment, member diversity, situated membership, and self-determined purpose are demonstrated in and resonant with their instructional choices and theories of social change.

7. Conclusions

The manner in which "community" as a set of shared conditions flattened diversity in whole groups of people, and "community" as a set of presumed needs prescribed paternalistic solutions to an abstract aggregation of people, highlight the problematic consequences of the haphazard incorporation of "community" into PD discussions on learning and schooling. It is essential to recognize that these meanings of "community" were not deficit notions of students that teachers simply brought with them into the PD space; they were collectively created and negotiated through the tools, representations, norms, and practices in the PD. Acknowledging this dynamic co-construction of meanings within the PD is both daunting and promising. It is daunting in that compels PD facilitators to take greater responsibility in how implicit and explicit shared meanings about students of color and their communities develop within these spaces. It is promising in that facilitators can work to co-construct meanings of students of color and their communities that name and address inequitable relationships of power by attending to factors over which they have a relative degree of control. These elements include the tools and the representational artifacts that are used in a PD, the creation of spaces to critically examine the multiple meanings of key terms such as "community," and the support for norms that encourage the consistent interrogation of assumptions in statements about students of color.

The teachers and facilitators' willingness to engage with issues of inequity and disparities between geographical areas and racial and class groups is commendable and is an important starting point in bridging students' communities and schools. If the construct of community is incorporated into spaces of formal learning, however, we urge that it is done in a manner that embraces the complexities and uncertainties that arise when students identify and define their

own communities. Pre-determined learning goals based on disparities, inequities, or injustices identified by educators are not necessarily rooted in students' authentic communities. They might be powerful learning opportunities that lend themselves to systemic-historical, institutional, culture of power, or critical analyses; however, clarity and distinction from community is essential. Each approach is embedded in a different theory of social change where teachers have unique responsibilities and purposes. The conflation of these multiple analyses lead to a re-inscription of inequitable relationships of power as seen above. By the same token, when students explore issues that are important to their communities and surface inequities along the way, teachers must be able to facilitate conversations to understand these disparities within the larger systemic-historical context. Otherwise, there is a tendency for teachers and students to highlight local choices and behaviors and to exclusively place responsibility on the members of the presumed "community" as seen in solutions proposed by the teachers in this study. Such localized campaigns lean toward "facile forms of amelioration" that obscure "public policies that might address root causes of social problems" (Collins, 2010, p. 20).

While we are firmly committed to bridging the divides between school and students' communities as argued by Crozier and Davies (2007), Lee and Hawkins (2008), Maina (1997), Osborne (2003), and Roy and Roxas (2011), we are equally cautious of the potential challenges of such work when it does not deeply interrogate the meaning of "community." As we argued above, educators must continually self-reflect whether their usage of community is characterized by members' mutual investment, member diversity, situated membership, and self-determined purpose. It is essential that educators move beyond the "warmly persuasive" (Williams, 1983) allure of community, intensely examine what is meant by the term, and carefully consider the implications for how students learn and how they understand themselves as social and political agents.

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