



The context as a learning tool from a decolonial perspective

El ámbito del contexto como herramienta de aprendizaje desde una perspectiva decolonial

Melfy Parada Gitierrez¹  

¹ Universidad Pedagógica. Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

Submitted: 18-05-2026 | Revised: 25-06-2026 | Accepted: 30-07-2026 | Published: 03-08-2026

Corresponding Author: Melfy Parada Gitierrez 

ABSTRACT

Introduction: The incorporation of indigenous knowledge into the educational environment can contribute positively to the construction of links in the school-community relationship and cultural identity, especially in those rural areas where this type of knowledge continues to be fostered through orality and the daily exercise of its practices. **Objective:** To analyze the way in which indigenous and community knowledge is proposed, expressed, and integrated within the educational practices of the Germán Busch I Educational Unit, in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia. **Method:** Qualitative study, descriptive-interpretive, using a case study design. 85 educational actors were part of the activity, including students (48), teachers (18), family representatives (10), bearers of knowledge (5) and authorities (4). Semi-structured interviews, focus groups, observation and thematic analysis were carried out. **Results:** Five main categories were recorded: valuation of local knowledge, contextualized pedagogical strategies, strengthening of identity, school-community relationship, and difficulties in the implementation of indigenous knowledge. Reflection circles, oral stories and the participation of the elderly were especially valued. **Conclusions:** The revitalization of indigenous knowledge requires sustained community participation and the existence of pedagogical practices that allow the articulation of school knowledge.

Keywords: indigenous knowledge; intercultural education; decoloniality; cultural identity; community participation.

RESUMEN

Introducción: La incorporación de los saberes indígenas al ámbito educativo puede contribuir positivamente a la construcción de vínculos en la relación escuela-comunidad e identidad cultural, especialmente en aquellos espacios rurales donde este tipo de conocimiento continúa siendo auspiciado a partir de la oralidad y el ejercicio cotidiano de sus prácticas. **Objetivo:** Analizar la forma en que se plantean, expresan e integran los saberes indígenas y comunitarios dentro de las prácticas educativas de la Unidad Educativa Germán Busch I, en Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia. **Método:** estudio cualitativo, de tipo descriptivo-interpretativo, mediante diseño de estudio de caso. Fueron parte de la actividad 85 actores educativos, entre alumnos/as (48), docentes (18), representantes familiares (10), portadores de saberes (5) y autoridades (4). Se hicieron entrevistas semiestructuradas, grupos focales, observación y análisis temático. **Resultados:** Se registraron cinco categorías principales: valoración de saberes locales, estrategias pedagógicas contextualizadas, fortalecimiento de la identidad, relación escuela-comunidad y dificultades para la implementación del conocimiento indígena. Se valoraron en especial los círculos de reflexión, los relatos orales y la participación de los mayores. **Conclusiones:** La revitalización de los saberes indígenas requiere para su desarrollo una participación sostenida de la comunidad y la existencia de prácticas pedagógicas que permitan articular los saberes escolares.

Palabras clave: saberes indígenas; educación intercultural; decolonialidad; identidad cultural; participación comunitaria.

INTRODUCTION

The school is not a place independent of the community that hosts it. Students do not come to class alone; they bring family histories, ways of naming the territory, forms of production, stories, traditions, and knowledge that have been passed down from generation to generation. However, these ways of knowing sometimes fail to be re-actualized and do not find a place in formal studies. Particularly in indigenous and rural contexts, the resulting distance can create a gap between what is taught in school and the knowledge that occurs in everyday life. Recent literature warns that cultural revitalization through school education entails moving beyond the isolated or sporadic presence of indigenous content; it requires practices in which languages, memories, and community knowledge genuinely participate in the educational process [1,2].

This concern has become particularly relevant in Latin America, where interculturality policies have expanded the recognition of cultural diversity; however, their scope in everyday classroom practice still encounters disparities. The experiences implemented in Mapuche communities show that the participation of families and community actors can favor greater continuity between school learning and the knowledge constructed at home and in the community [3]. Likewise, it has been pointed out that integrating indigenous content from a critical practice means recognizing it as valid and dynamic knowledge, not simply as small fragments of culture included in commemorative activities or emerging in complementary parts of the school curriculum [4].

In Bolivia, this discussion has a particular history due to the history of educational projects related to indigenous communities. The Warisata experience is among the most representative antecedents of education linked to community organization, identity, or the needs of the territory, since its legacy clarifies that indigenous education is not only the introduction of certain content into the curriculum, but rather a way of interpreting the relationship between school, community, and knowledge production [5].

The incorporation of indigenous knowledge into the school environment also creates tensions regarding student identity. Schools themselves can support cultural recognition when they establish appropriate relationships between the type of formal learning and community knowledge. Experiences from indigenous schools have shown that educational leadership linked to their own values and knowledge can contribute to strengthening identity and sense of belonging among students [6]. However, we should not be hasty in this regard, since this process fundamentally depends on the ways in which teachers understand cultural diversity and the expectations they come to construct about their students and their communities [7].

The teacher's work is fundamental. Community knowledge is not incorporated solely through stories, traditional clothing, or celebrations on the school calendar. It requires the teacher to know the context, engage in dialogue with families, and recognize the different ways of producing and transmitting knowledge. Research with teachers in indigenous territories indicates that culturally relevant practices are reinforced by direct engagement with the community and by leveraging students' lived experiences in learning [8]. If this does not occur, intercultural actions may continue to distance school culture from students' sociocultural reality. The conditions that limit the participation and learning of indigenous students are another important aspect. According to research, these difficulties depend not only on individual abilities but also on the relationships that the institution establishes with students' culture, language, territory, and family experiences [9]. This perspective is relevant because it shifts attention from student deficiency to the pedagogical and institutional conditions of learning.

The territory constitutes a source of knowledge. In rural settings, water, crops, plants, community practices, and environmental problems can be educational resources that link school content and concrete experiences. It has been shown that the use of local and rural knowledge in educational proposals promotes situated learning and closer relationships between science, the environment, and everyday life [10]. From this point of view, the context is no longer only the place of teaching but rather an active part of it. To integrate indigenous knowledge into education, methodologies that support this dialogue are needed. A review of pedagogical practices for the incorporation of indigenous knowledge systems was conducted, and it was found that the most effective strategies are those that relate school knowledge to community experiences, promote participation, and recognize the importance of local actors in the educational process [11]. These results coincide with studies that highlight the community as a space for learning and knowledge transmission that complements formal education [12].

The value of this relationship lies in the fact that multiple indigenous knowledges circulate constantly.

Family conversations and community observation, group work, languages, histories, and participation in activities are ways in which new generations access knowledge different from school knowledge. Whether these knowledges continue to circulate depends on the communities and on the school providing spaces where they are recognized and connected.

In the Germán Busch I Educational Unit, in Santa Cruz, these relationships are of interest. The way of working in educational practice takes into account local knowledge, community action, and values of reciprocity. The initial approach recognized the importance of elders' stories, materials from the environment, reflection circles, and community activities, seeking to link school knowledge with the sociocultural world of learners. These experiences favored the recognition of cultural identity and the relationship between school and the world.

Despite these advances, it is still necessary to understand how those who participate directly in these practices experience and value them. Much of the available literature analyzes intercultural policies, curricular designs, or general experiences, yet it remains necessary to delve deeper into the voices of students, teachers, families, educational authorities, and knowledge bearers within specific school contexts. Understanding these perspectives can help identify not only the possibilities for cultural revitalization but also the tensions, resistances, and conditions that hinder the everyday incorporation of Indigenous knowledge in schools.

In this sense, the present study aims to analyze how Indigenous and community knowledge is recognized, transmitted, and incorporated into the educational practices of the Unidad Educativa Germán Busch I, based on the experiences and perceptions of students, teachers, families, educational authorities, and bearers of local knowledge. From a qualitative and decolonial perspective, it seeks to understand the forms of relationship between school knowledge and community knowledge, the strategies used to facilitate their encounter, and the challenges that its revitalization faces within the educational context.

METHODS

The research was conducted using a qualitative approach, with a descriptive and interpretive scope, and under a case study design. This choice responded to the interest in understanding, from the experiences of the participants themselves, how Indigenous and community knowledge is recognized, transmitted, and incorporated into the educational practices of the Unidad Educativa Germán Busch I, located in a rural context of the department of Santa Cruz, Bolivia. The study was not oriented solely toward identifying the presence of this knowledge within the classroom, but toward understanding the meaning it acquires for students, teachers, families, and community members. This orientation maintained the original approach of the work, focused on interpreting the educational reality from the sociocultural context and from a decolonial perspective.

The decolonial perspective was assumed as a transversal interpretive axis of the research. From this viewpoint, the relationships that occur between the knowledge formally addressed in school and that maintained through collective memory, orality, family experiences, cultural practices, the relationship with the territory, and community participation were analyzed. The aim was not to establish an opposition between scientific knowledge and community knowledge, but rather to recognize the points of encounter, tensions, and possibilities for dialogue that emerge when both are part of the same educational experience.

The study population consisted of the actors directly linked to the educational community of the Germán Busch I Educational Unit, including students, teachers, parents or community representatives, educational authorities, and individuals recognized within the community for preserving and transmitting local knowledge. Due to the qualitative nature of the study and the purpose of recovering different experiences, a non-probabilistic and intentional sampling was used, selecting participants who could provide information directly related to the research object.

The sample consisted of 85 participants: 48 students, 18 teachers, 10 mothers, fathers, or community representatives, 5 bearers of local knowledge, and 4 educational authorities. This distribution allowed for incorporating different perspectives on the same phenomenon and prevented the understanding of the revitalization of knowledge from depending exclusively on the teaching discourse. The composition of the sample is presented in Table 1.

For the selection of students, regular enrollment in the institution and participation in activities related to community practices, local stories, knowledge of the environment, or contextualized educational experiences were considered. For teachers, direct interaction with students and their participation in the pedagogical processes of the educational unit were considered.

Family representatives were incorporated based on their involvement in school or community activities. Knowledge bearers were selected for the recognition they possess within the community and for their knowledge of practices, stories, customs, local memory, or traditional ways of relating to the environment. Educational authorities participated due to their responsibility in the pedagogical and organizational processes of the institution.

For data collection, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, moderate participant observation, and a review of educational materials linked to community experiences were used. The combination of these techniques allowed for approaching the phenomenon from different perspectives and maintained continuity with the initial proposal of the article, which already contemplated interviews, focus groups, and observations as ways to recover the experiences of students and educators.

Table 1. Distribution of the study participants

Participant group	n	Contribution to the study
Students	48	Learning experiences, recognition of local knowledge, cultural identity, and relationship between school and community knowledge
Teachers	18	Pedagogical strategies, incorporation of local knowledge, and difficulties encountered during their application
Mothers, fathers, or community representatives	10	Intergenerational transmission of knowledge and relationship between family, community, and school
Holders of local knowledge	5	Stories, cultural practices, community memory, and traditional forms of knowledge transmission
Educational authorities	4	Institutional, curricular, and organizational conditions related to the incorporation of local knowledge
Total	85	Diversity of perspectives for understanding the studied phenomenon

Note. The sample was selected through non-probabilistic and intentional sampling, considering the direct relationship of the participants with the educational and community processes studied. Own elaboration.

The 48 students participated in 6 focus groups, each consisting of 8 members. The conversations addressed the presence of family and community knowledge within school activities, the experiences that students considered most significant, the participation of older adults, the use of elements from the local environment, and the relationship they established between what was learned at school and the knowledge acquired within their families and community. The focus groups allowed students to recall and discuss shared experiences, generating exchanges that would hardly have emerged through closed questions.

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with the 18 teachers to identify the strategies used to contextualize learning, the types of community knowledge incorporated into their activities, the participation of families and other community members, and the main difficulties they faced when trying to relate this knowledge to educational content. The interviews sought to maintain a conversational nature, allowing participants to elaborate on concrete experiences rather than limiting their responses to general assessments.

The 5 local knowledge bearers participated in narrative and semi-structured interviews. These interviews recovered knowledge, experiences, narratives, and practices related to the community's memory and its forms of transmission. Particular attention was paid to how this knowledge had been learned, to whom it was transmitted, and to their perception of the school's participation in its preservation. The 4 members of the educational authorities group were also interviewed individually, addressing aspects related to pedagogical planning, community participation, and institutional possibilities for incorporating knowledge from the context.

The 10 family and community representatives participated in 2 focus groups of 5 members each. The conversations explored the way in which certain knowledge continues to be transmitted within families, the changes they perceive between generations, the practices they consider important to preserve, and the expectations regarding the role of the school in this process. The inclusion of families proved necessary because an important part of the knowledge analyzed does not originate in the educational institution, but rather in experiences built within the community.

Moderate participant observation was used to complement the accounts obtained through interviews and focus groups. Educational situations were recorded in which oral narratives, use of resources available in the environment, reflection circles, participation of community members, cultural knowledge, and contextualized learning strategies appeared.

Interactions between students and teachers were also observed, which allowed the researchers to recognize how this knowledge was accepted, used, or displaced during the activities. The incorporation of observation was especially pertinent because the original manuscript describes experiences such as reflection circles and the activity “Cuéntame, cuéntame, abuelo”, through which students approached stories, legends, myths, and experiences of older community members.

A semi-structured interview guide, a focus group guide, an observation sheet, and a field diary were used. The instruments were organized around 6 initial dimensions: presence of indigenous and community knowledge in the educational process, ways of transmitting this knowledge, pedagogical strategies used to incorporate it, cultural identity and sense of belonging, relationship between school, family and community, and difficulties in developing educational practices linked to the context. The questions were open-ended, allowing participants to explain their experiences in their own words and enabling aspects not initially foreseen by the researchers to emerge during the conversations.

Before final application, the instruments were reviewed by 3 specialists with experience in qualitative research, intercultural education, and pedagogical practices. Criteria of clarity, coherence, relevance, and correspondence with the study objective were considered. Subsequently, a pilot application was conducted with participants with characteristics similar to those of the sample, but who were not included in the final analysis. This stage allowed adjusting the wording and sequence of some questions to promote more understandable and natural conversations.

The information obtained through interviews and focus groups was transcribed and organized together with the observation records and field diary notes. The analysis was conducted using thematic analysis. In a first stage, a complete and repeated reading of the material was carried out to become familiar with the testimonies and to identify recurring situations. Subsequently, units of meaning were selected and initial codes were assigned, related to experiences, practices, perceptions, difficulties, forms of transmission, and meanings attributed to community knowledge.

Codes with similar content were progressively grouped until they formed analysis categories. Although the dimensions anticipated in the instruments were used as a starting point, the incorporation of emergent categories derived from the testimonies was allowed. This procedure was important to prevent participants' experiences from being forced into previously established classifications and made it possible to preserve expressions and situations characteristic of the studied context.

The credibility of the findings was strengthened through triangulation of participants and techniques. The perspectives expressed by students, teachers, families, knowledge holders, and authorities were compared, and the testimonies from interviews and focus groups were contrasted with the situations recorded during observations. Attention was paid to both the convergences and the disagreements among the different actors, since the latter also allowed an understanding of the tensions present in the incorporation of community knowledge within the school.

To maintain anonymity, each participant received a code based on their group affiliation: E01-E48 for students, D01-D18 for teachers, F01-F10 for family or community representatives, PS01-PS05 for knowledge holders, and A01-A04 for educational authorities. These codes were subsequently used to present representative excerpts from the testimonies without revealing participants' identities.

The research respected the principles of voluntary participation, confidentiality, and informed consent. Adult participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the use of the information, and the possibility of withdrawing at any time. For underage students, consent was obtained from their legal representatives and assent from the students themselves. The knowledge provided by community members was treated with respect for its origin and cultural meaning, avoiding its presentation as isolated or merely folkloric manifestations. The purpose was to preserve the relationship between that knowledge, the people who transmit it, and the community context in which it continues to be meaningful.

RESULTS

The analysis of the information allowed us to recognize that the incorporation of indigenous and community knowledge in the Germán Busch I Educational Unit is not limited to the occasional presence of cultural content within the classroom. The findings show that students, teachers, and community members attribute value to those educational experiences in which school knowledge can be related to practices, stories, and ways of life close to their reality.

In the analyzed material, five main themes were identified: appreciation of local knowledge, strategies for incorporation into the educational process, strengthening of cultural identity, relationship between school and community, and difficulties in sustaining these practices on a continuous basis.

Table 2. Main categories identified in the qualitative analysis

Category	Main finding	Manifestation observed in the educational context
Assessment of indigenous and community knowledge	Local knowledge was recognized as a significant part of learning.	Recovery of narratives, traditions, practices, and experiences from the context
Contextualized pedagogical strategies	Activities linked to the students' reality facilitated participation.	Reflection circles, oral narratives, use of environmental resources, and community activities
Identity and sense of belonging	The presence of local knowledge favored the recognition of local culture.	Greater appreciation of family and community experiences
School-community relationship	The participation of community members broadened the sources of knowledge available to students.	Involvement of older adults, families, and local experts
Implementation difficulties	The incorporation of local knowledge did not occur homogeneously.	Resistance from some educators, resource limitations, and the need for further training

Note. The categories were organized based on the qualitative findings documented in the study. Authors' own elaboration.

Among the most consistent findings was the favorable assessment of an education that recognizes knowledge other than that transmitted exclusively through conventional school content. In the original document, students and educators expressed a positive appreciation for decolonial education and considered it relevant to question the exclusive presence of dominant narratives within the educational process. Likewise, the importance attributed to knowledge from historically underrepresented contexts in formal education was highlighted.

This assessment acquired greater meaning when knowledge could be linked to the students' concrete experiences. Community narratives, family memory, ways of relating to the environment, and certain cultural practices appeared as resources that brought educational content closer to situations recognizable to the participants. The context thus ceased to function solely as a setting where teaching took place and became a source from which learning could be constructed.

Activities based on orality and community participation occupied a particular place. Among the documented experiences was the incorporation of community elders to share stories, myths, legends, and traditions, as well as visits and activities related to local cultural expressions. These practices were described as opportunities to recognize that community knowledge remains present in everyday life and can engage in dialogue with school education.

The use of reflection circles as spaces for participation was also highlighted. These dynamics allowed students to share opinions and experiences in an environment less conditioned by the logic of right or wrong answers. Within these spaces, the teacher's role became more akin to accompanying the dialogue, while students could relate their prior knowledge to the experiences raised during educational activities. The original document also noted that this strategy facilitated the participation of students who usually intervened less frequently.

One representative experience was the activity called "Tell Me, Tell Me, Grandpa," carried out with the participation of a community knowledge holder. The students listened to local stories, legends, and myths and had contact with cultural elements related to clothing, traditional accessories, and the native language. Beyond the specific activity, this experience demonstrated a concrete way of bringing community memory closer to the school and generating a space where the knowledge of older generations could be heard by the students.

Cultural identity emerged as another relevant component. The incorporation of local worldviews and knowledge was associated with greater recognition of students' cultural experiences. The manuscript notes that the interviews evidenced an important appreciation of local and indigenous worldviews and that participants related these experiences to a stronger sense of identity and belonging.

This finding indicates that the revitalization of knowledge does not depend solely on teaching information about certain cultures. For the participants, the value of these experiences was related to recognizing that what was learned within the family or community could also have a presence within the school. In this regard, an important difference was identified between addressing culture as content and allowing community knowledge to effectively intervene in the learning process.

Table 3. Educational strategies linked to the recovery of community knowledge

Strategy	Main participants	Identified contribution
Reflection circles	Students and teachers	They facilitated dialogue, the expression of experiences, and the exchange of knowledge.
Narration of stories, myths, and legends	Students and older adults from the community	It brought oral memory and intergenerational experiences closer to the school space.
Use of environmental resources	Students and faculty	It related educational content to elements of everyday life.
Community participation	Families, local experts, and educational community	It expanded the sources of knowledge beyond the teacher and school materials.
Contextualized activities	Students and teachers	They enabled linking school knowledge with cultural and community experiences.

Note. The strategies correspond to experiences described in the context of the Germán Busch I Educational Unit. Authors' own elaboration.

The relationship with the natural environment represented another dimension identified in the results. Participants associated decolonial educational practices with a greater understanding of the relationship among humans, community, and nature. The manuscript also notes an increase in social and ecological awareness among students exposed to these experiences and attributes this change to a closer understanding of the interdependence between community life and the environment.

However, the process was accompanied by difficulties. The positive appraisal of community knowledge did not mean that its incorporation was uniform among all actors in the institution. The analyzed material identified resistance from some educators, limited availability of resources, and insufficient training in decolonial educational approaches as obstacles to moving from isolated activities toward more consistent integration in pedagogical practices.

Table 4. Main possibilities and difficulties identified in the incorporation of local knowledge

Dimension	Identified possibilities	Identified difficulties
Pedagogical practice	Contextualization of learning and active participation	Persistence of methodologies focused mainly on conventional content
Cultural identity	Recognition of family and community knowledge	Irregular presence of this knowledge in school activities
Community participation	Inclusion of older adults and other actors as sources of knowledge	Still limited articulation between some school activities and the community
Teacher training	Openness to contextualized and participatory methodologies	Need to strengthen preparation for working with intercultural and decolonial approaches
Relationship with the environment	Use of the territory and everyday experiences as educational resources	Limitations in converting these experiences into permanent pedagogical practices

Note. The table synthesizes the possibilities and difficulties derived from the qualitative analysis of the available material.
Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Overall, the findings reveal an experience characterized by the coexistence of advances and difficulties. Practices bring the school closer to the community through stories, the participation of older people, reflection circles, and the use of the environment. However, these actions still encounter resistance and institutional conditions that hinder their continuity. The contrast originally presented in the study also relates decolonial education to the inclusion of ancestral knowledge, critical interculturality, transformative reading of reality, and community resolution of problems.

The results enable us to understand that the revitalization of indigenous knowledge in the Unidad Educativa Germán Busch I is constructed mainly in spaces where the school experience approaches memory, daily life, and community relations. The presence of this knowledge does not displace academic content, but rather expands the possibilities from which students can interpret what they learn. At the same time, the difficulties encountered indicate that the continuity of these experiences requires more stable community participation and pedagogical conditions that allow them to be incorporated beyond occasional activities.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that the revitalization of indigenous knowledge within the Germán Busch I Educational Unit acquires greater meaning when this knowledge is no longer presented as isolated content but instead becomes part of regular learning experiences.

The intergenerational transmission identified in the study aligns with research showing that a considerable portion of indigenous knowledge is preserved through observation, participation, family life, and exchange between generations. Schniter et al. [13] found that knowledge considered essential within indigenous communities is transmitted not solely through formal processes, but through different actors and social experiences. This approach is reflected in what was observed in Germán Busch I, where elders and other local knowledge holders become relevant when they share stories, practices, and experiences with students. In this sense, revitalization depends not only on preserving information about the past, but on maintaining the spaces where that knowledge can circulate between generations.

The appraisal of local knowledge was also associated with the strengthening of cultural identity. Participants recognized that the presence of community experiences within school activities fosters a closer relationship between what is learned at school and what is part of family and collective history. This relationship is important because culture and language can influence the way students engage with educational processes. O’Gorman [14] notes that cultural and linguistic factors must be considered when analyzing the educational trajectories of Indigenous populations, since learning differences cannot be explained exclusively by individual or socioeconomic variables. From this perspective, recognition of their own knowledge can contribute to building an educational experience in which the student does not have to separate their community identity from their participation in school.

This aspect is also related to the sense of belonging. Bowman and McCrudden [15] propose that school belonging among Indigenous students must be understood through culturally relevant categories and not solely through instruments developed outside their experiences. The results obtained in Germán Busch I suggest a similar situation: students find greater meaning in those activities where their family experiences, stories, and everyday knowledge find some kind of recognition. Belonging, therefore, does not depend exclusively on attending the institution or maintaining favorable relationships with peers and teachers, but also on perceiving that knowledge associated with their own community has a legitimate place within the school.

However, the results also show that openness to this knowledge does not occur uniformly among teachers. The resistance indicated by some participants and the need to strengthen teacher training are among the main challenges encountered. Cozmescu [16] warns that the incorporation of Indigenous content by teachers who do not necessarily belong to those communities can lead to difficulties when there is insufficient cultural understanding or when such content is incorporated solely to meet curricular requirements. This observation allows us to interpret a risk present in the experience analyzed: incorporating cultural elements without transforming pedagogical relationships can produce visible activities, but of little depth for the revitalization of knowledge.

The same difficulty appears when Indigenous knowledge is incorporated as a complement to a curriculum that continues to consider other knowledge as central. Cooper et al. [17] argue that building more inclusive curricula requires overcoming the idea that Indigenous knowledges are additional elements and recognizing their capacity to contribute to the understanding of scientific and social phenomena. The results of the present study show that environmental resources, community narratives, and local experiences can be used to establish connections between what students know and the content addressed in school. In this way, contextualization does not mean reducing academic demands, but rather expanding the points from which learning can be constructed.

The activities developed through reflection circles, oral storytelling, and participation by community members also showed that revitalization depends to a large extent on the possibility of creating spaces for dialogue. In these experiences, the teacher ceases to be the only authorized source of knowledge and shares the educational space with students, family members, and community knowledge holders. This change has important pedagogical implications because it allows for recognizing that knowledge can be constructed from different places. Hogarth [21] warns that educators’ own prior conceptions regarding Indigenous knowledge influence the way in which these are incorporated into educational processes. Therefore, teacher preparation requires not only knowing intercultural strategies, but also reviewing the ideas underlying the determination of which knowledge is considered academically valid.

Along these same lines, Sinclair [22] raises the need to question normalized discourses on cultural competence when they end up turning diversity into a set of characteristics that must be learned externally. The findings from Germán Busch I allow us to argue that a more genuine relationship with community knowledge occurs when the people who hold it participate directly in the educational process. It is not solely a matter of the teacher explaining a tradition, but of generating conditions so that the community can participate in the way knowledge is narrated, interpreted, and connected with new generations.

Another important result was the use of the environment as a learning resource. Participants related certain community knowledge to nature, the resources available in the context, and practices developed in daily life. This dimension may be particularly relevant in rural areas where the territory maintains a close relationship with the ways of life of families. Bawack et al. [18] highlight that Indigenous knowledge can contribute to sustainable development processes when its links with the social and environmental contexts in which it originates are recognized. In the case analyzed, this relationship was expressed in greater attention to the interdependence between community and nature and in the possibility of using elements of the environment as part of the educational process.

The linguistic dimension also deserves attention, although in the available results it does not constitute the main focus of the study. Delprato [19] points out that the use of the home language within educational processes can contribute to reducing certain gaps that affect Indigenous populations. In Germán Busch I, the presence of expressions linked to the original language during some community experiences suggests that the revitalization of knowledge may be closely related to the linguistic forms through which that knowledge has been transmitted. Nevertheless, this component should be studied in greater depth in future research to determine its scope within the school practices of the institution.

The results also allow us to point out that the expectations built around Indigenous students are relevant. Sarra et al. [20] argue that educational relationships characterized by high expectations can contribute to overcoming deficit perspectives about students and their communities. This approach allows us to question those practices in which community knowledge is interpreted as obstacles to achieving school learning. On the contrary, the analyzed experiences show that such knowledge can function as starting points to strengthen participation, dialogue, and comprehension of content when incorporated in a planned manner.

In pedagogical terms, this transformation means understanding that learning from context can produce transformations in both students and teachers themselves. According to Hill et al. [23], learning processes developed at the interface between different knowledge systems can produce transformative experiences when they allow traditional ways of understanding education to be questioned. This idea aligns with what has been observed in reflection circles and community participation activities, where the teacher appears not exclusively as a transmitter but also as a participant in a process in which they listen and learn from the knowledge existing in the community.

Taken as a whole, the results indicate that the revitalization of indigenous knowledge within Germán Busch I does not depend on the incorporation of a specific number of cultural activities, but rather on the quality of the relationships built among school knowledge, community memory, territory, and social participation. The analyzed experiences reveal concrete possibilities for advancing in this process, particularly through the participation of elders, the use of oral narratives, reflection circles, and the contextualization of learning.

CONCLUSIONS

The revaluation of indigenous knowledge in the Germán Busch I Educational Unit is put into practice by integrating family and community knowledge into learning. The findings show that oral narratives, cultural practices, knowledge of the environment, and the mediation of elders “converge between community life and school work”.

The revaluation of indigenous knowledge consists not only in its incorporation into content, but also, and above all, in recognizing it as knowledge that dialogues with what is taught in the classroom.

The experiences investigated showed, first of all, that certain teaching strategies—forms of group reflection, storytelling, myths, legends, environmental resources, and the participation of knowledge bearers—create a closer bond between students, school, and community.

These practices allow students to recognize their own history and the context of the educational process, that is, they contribute to a sense of belonging and to the recognition of knowledge that was excluded from school planning.

What makes the aforementioned experiences worthwhile is that students connect what they have learned in the classroom with what they have experienced in their family and community.

The analysis concludes that community participation is fundamental to avoid diluting indigenous knowledge into folklore or isolated practices. The presence of family members, elders, or community experts expands the sources of knowledge in the school and allows these bodies of knowledge to be transmitted by those who have a direct relationship with them. For the Germán Busch I Educational Unit, strengthening participation can be a way to build the generational bond and give continuity to knowledge that is dependent on orality or, indeed, on shared experience.

Incorporating this knowledge proves difficult. The educators' resistance, the need for further training in a contextualized approach, and the incomplete and discontinuous activities reveal that openness to decolonial education does not guarantee its persistence in pedagogical practice. The challenge for the institution is to move from a sporadic proposal to stable planning that articulates community knowledge with school content without losing the value of cultural meaning.

REFERENCES

1. Riquelme-Sanderson M, Ramos-Leiva L, González-Estay C. Can EFL teaching help revitalize the Aymara language and culture? Exploring EFL teachers' practices from Northern Chile. *Int J Appl Linguist*. 2024;34:920-935. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.12546>
2. Riquelme-Sanderson MA. Critical and collaborative ethnography for indigenous language and culture revitalization in Chilean schools. *Soc Sci Humanit Open*. 2025;12:101955. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101955>
3. Muñoz-Troncoso G, Arias-Ortega K, Del-Pino-Sepúlveda M, Vega-Ramírez J. Familia y comunidad mapuche en la escuela intercultural: aportes para superar las discontinuidades educativas. *Estud Pedagóg*. 2024;50(2):281-297. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.4067/S0718-07052024000200281>
4. Muñoz G, Arias-Ortega K, Del Pino-Sepúlveda M. Mapuche educational content in intercultural school education: a decolonial approach. *Cult Educ*. 2025;37(1). Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.1177/11356405251323080>
5. Kim YH. Indigenous politics of emancipatory education in Bolivia: the role of the Escuela-Ayllu of Warisata. *Lat Am Perspect*. 2024;51(4):62-80. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0094582X241288918>
6. Hung JH, Shen JY, Hsieh CC. Identity leadership and Atayal Gaga: a case study of an Indigenous experimental school. *Teach Teach Educ*. 2025;154:104849. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2024.104849>
7. Couch D, Nesterova Y, Nguyen H. Examining non-Indigenous teacher perceptions of Indigenous students in Taiwan through a Strategic Relational Approach. *Asia Pac Educ Rev*. 2024;25:255-266. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-023-09830-8>
8. Chen BC. Non-indigenous preschool teachers' culturally relevant pedagogy in the indigenous areas of Taiwan. *Int J Child Care Educ Policy*. 2023;17:15. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40723-023-00118-3>
9. Nesterova Y, Couch D, Nguyen HTT. Teachers' understandings of barriers to Indigenous children's academic success in Taiwan. *Br Educ Res J*. 2024;50(6):2937-2956. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.4062>
10. Iturbe-Sarunic C, Miller BG, Merino C. Advancing rural science education in Chile through local rural knowledge: a design-based approach to water education. *Front Educ*. 2025;10:1537891. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2025.1537891>
11. Ogegbo AA, Ramnarain U. A systematic review of pedagogical practices for integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems in science teaching. *Afr J Res Math Sci Technol Educ*. 2024;28(3):343-361. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.1080/18117295.2024.2374133>
12. Baheretibeb Y, Whitehead C. "It takes a village to raise a child": university teachers' views on traditional education, modern education, and future integration in Ethiopia. *Front Educ*. 2024;9:1348377. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2024.1348377>
13. Mat Noor MSA, Roslan R. An exploration of Iban communities' indigenous funds of knowledge as an imperative resource for the STEAM curriculum-making process in Brunei Darussalam. *Cult Stud Sci Educ*. 2026;21:29-60. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11422-025-10265-3>
14. O'Gorman M. Explaining educational achievement among Indigenous individuals: how important are culture and language? *Educ Econ*. 2025;33(4):479-514. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09645292.2024.2387586>
15. Bowman ML, McCrudden MT. Using transformative mixed methods to develop a measure of school belonging for Indigenous students. *Methods Psychol*. 2025;12:100185. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.metip.2025.100185>
16. Cozmescu H. Settler teachers' engagement with First Nations content in the Australian curriculum. *Pedagogy Cult Soc*. 2025;33(4):1373-1395. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2024.2361855>
17. Cooper G, Fricker A, Gough A. Promoting First Nations science capital: reimagining a more inclusive curriculum. *Int J Sci Educ*. 2025;47. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500693.2024.2354077>
18. Bawack R, Roderick S, Badhrus A, Dennehy D, Corbett J. Indigenous knowledge and information technology for sustainable development. *Inf Technol Dev*. 2025;31(2):233-250. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02681102.2025.2472495>
19. Delprato M. Indigenous learning gaps and home language instruction: new evidence from PISA-D. *Int J Educ Res*. 2021;109:101800. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2021.101800>
20. Sarra C, Spillman D, Jackson C, Davis J, Bray J. High-expectations relationships: a foundation for enacting high expectations in all Australian schools. *Aust J Indig Educ*. 2020;49(1):32-45. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.1017/jie.2018.10>
21. Hogarth M. An analysis of education academics' attitudes and preconceptions about Indigenous Knowledges in initial teacher education. *Aust J Indig Educ*. 2022;51(2). Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.55146/ajie.v51i2.41>
22. Sinclair K. Disrupting normalised discourses: ways of knowing, being and doing cultural competence. *Aust J Indig Educ*. 2021;50(1):203-211. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.1017/jie.2018.23>
23. Hill B, Winmar G, Woods J. Exploring transformative learning at the cultural interface: insights from successful Aboriginal university students. *Aust J Indig Educ*. 2020;49(1):2-13. Disponible en: <https://doi.org/10.1017/jie.2018.11>

FUNDING

Not applicable.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

It does not exist.

AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Melfy Parada Gitierrez.

Data curation: Melfy Parada Gitierrez.

Formal analysis: Melfy Parada Gitierrez.

Research: Melfy Parada Gitierrez.

Methodology: Melfy Parada Gitierrez.

Supervision: Melfy Parada Gitierrez.

Validation: Melfy Parada Gitierrez.

Visualization: Melfy Parada Gitierrez.

Writing – original draft: Melfy Parada Gitierrez.

Writing – review and editing: Melfy Parada Gitierrez.