TENSIONALITIES IN THE COLLABORATIVE INSTRUCTIONAL

DESIGN PROCESS

Abstract

This paper is a retrospective restorying of an instructional design project
in which members of a large urban school board collaborated with faculty
members of a large university to design and produce an interactive
videodisc.

This story has been told from a number of perspectives, but is reframed in
this paper as a process of culture-building in which the design family is
the basis of meaning and action. Conversation-based design is suggested
as the tool and the content of the family culture. In particular,
conversation is a cultural artifact revealing stories of tensionalities in the
design process that frame the theoretical constructs in this collaborative
model.

This is the story of a interinstitutional project created to design an interactive videodisc on questioning for preservice and inservice teachers. This project was described in 1991(Campbell-Bonar & Grisdale), and again from a more ethnographic perspective in 1992 (Campbell-Bonar & Olson). The latter framing of the project, as that of a culture-building process, paralleled both my developing understanding of the roots of my own instructional design praxis and a growing frustration with what I perceived to be the constraints of systematic instructional design models. The two came together for me as I became more comfortable with the narrative and biographical research I was encountering during my doctoral studies in 1991. Finally I began to unify, in the narrative sense described by Connelly and Clandinin (1987), my backgrounds in curriculum development, teaching, and instructional design by revisiting the design process for the disc in a series of narrative research conversations in the spring of 1993.

This paper attempts to extend the ideas contained in the culture-building paper (1992) by examining how folk models (Conle, 1990) are socially shared and reconstructed in the narrative. The sharing of teaching stories, or the creation of the content knowledge for the instructional plan, is a transformative social activity (Wexler, 1982). Britzman (1991) asserts that voice permits participation in the social world: The conversation in instructional design is a social activity because the discursive process involves the "social negotiation necessary for the production and interpretation of knowledge" (Britzman, 1991, p. 38); and it is transformative because "life review and the act of telling one's story (are) active components in the process of transformation" (Benmayor, 1991, p. 164).

I have elsewhere characterized the instructional design process as a collaborative conversation, a term I use both substantively and methodologically. Various persons taking turns at talking--this is the "web of expressive social activity" (Borland, 1991, p. 63) that situates the designers at the center of a creative, dialectical process in which life

experiences define the community of knowers. Elements of this knowledge community include the sharing of a multiplicity of meanings, values, imaginations, and histories, or what Miller (1992) describes as the "intuitive, the informal, the spontaneous, and subjective" (p 14). Sharing through oral personal narratives occurs naturally within conversation: This meeting in conversation is the "quintessential human act, the social moment wherein we establish ties, and where we have authentic recognition of the other" (Brody & Witherell, 1991, p. 263). This social moment is recreated each time two or more of the design team members come together in conversation, because the community now shares a social history, or a culture, which I have come to think of as reflective of a family structure. In this community, we set a place at the table for each other, making room for the voices of collective knowledge that "gives meaning and direction" (Schubert, 1991, p. 210) to the work of collaboration.

Making room is characteristic of a feminist stance in which fidelity to others is an overarching concern (Noddings, 1986). This story is fundamentally concerned with a community of story-tellers who practiced valuing and confirming the narratives of each other; building an enduring community of caring. Each conversation is a "return to community" (Benmayor, 1991, p. 166), a place where we are deeply engaged with each other's lives. This community became a haven where role definitions were fluid, where power structures were changed and rearranged through new narratives.

For me, narrative has become a both a cognitive and social tool that helps me understand my own transformation as an instructional designer and gives me ways to share that meaning with my collaborative partners – the faculty members with whom I work daily. In this sense, narrative is a relational tool with which I make connections to my past, to my working present, and to my anticipation of the future. It is clear to me that how I design has its roots in growing up in the home of a teacher, observing the social milieu of planning through my childhood, working in

collaborative curriculum teams that were framed by social context -- being inducted into the social culture of the teaching family.

The family is generally recognized as a social structure, in many ways unique to the culture it helps to define. The building and sustaining of the family of the designers was a process of culture-building (Campbell-Bonar & Olson, 1992). This family became an agent of the culture of collaborative instructional design by invoking the rituals and myths, the folk tales, understood by all to be strands of meaning that bound us together. Patterns of discourse, built over time, can be invoked at any time to remind family members of shared meanings and unique history.

Narrative is the primary scheme by which humans make meaning of events and name those meanings in language. Narrative is a meaning-making activity, meaning that become elaborated and reformed in the narrative re-telling with others. Katherine Borland (1991) talks provocatively about the rerstorying of original narrative as first and second level narratives, the second telling always reshaping the first. This is what happens in conversation.

Conversation gives character to every human family; it is a consummately social artifact created by the social interaction in which it takes place. Because it is so social, it is always generated and maintained in community. Families maintain their unique histories by building patterns of conversation over time, patterns that may seem strange to outsiders but that link the family together in nests of shared meaning. We built these patterns with the artifacts of culture, language and conversation and memory. We invoked these patterns with humor, special words and phrases, body language, and eventually with the artifact in which all the meaning resided--the videodisc. We participated as characters in each other's stories. We can contest each other's memories (Campbell, 1993), but in sharing the memory, validate it. We set a place at the table for one another each time we meet, in our collective memory we hold a place. We

can be apart and far away but family memory remains constant through time and distance.

I had come to see myself as the matriarch, the Mother, of this family. This is a feminist construct, based on the moral orientation described by Gilligan (1982), in which all my actions and choices came from personal commitment to the nurturing and protection of those with whom I am connected in care. I was responsible for the happiness of my family. I protected them from the attacks of the institutional authorities. I absorbed the demands of institutional accountability. Sometimes, I heard hard words and I re-shaped them into softer words that I could repeat to my family. I thought that the attacks I turned aside were not felt and that my family never knew about acts of destruction and disharmony. I thought we were all insiders and never outsiders and, most of all, it never occurred to me that I was not solely responsible for the functioning of my family in the larger social contexts in which we lived. It never occurred to me that this strategy was not one of power, or strength, but of fear--fear that naming the conflicts and challenges would give them power to harm the family.

But, in retelling our story in retrospective, reflective conversations years later, we all learned of the tensionalities that were part of the life of this family. Perhaps I was the only one reluctant to surface these. The process of reconstructing our project biography was cathartic in the way that family reunions often are occasions in which memories are contested and myths reconstructed in more inclusive stories--stories that then become the sacred stories of the family.

Questions of Personal Authority

On my first instructional design project, I was a graduate student on leave from a public school teaching position. Undertaking a second videodisc design project required a personal and professional reorientation for me. In the first project I had been most legitimately a teacher, authorized to work with that knowing-about as a graduate student assistant of a tenured faculty member. Implicit in this authority was an alignment

of expertise with the real knowledge communities. With the second project, however, I had stepped out of the shadow of these authorized communities and was on my own as the Faculty's instructional designer. Now I was required to author my own "calling card of expertise" (Haughey, 1993) which could be neither exclusively teacher-knowing nor designer-knowing.

For my third videodisc project, the collaborative process revisited in this paper, I was again to provide the instructional design expertise. On the first two projects, I had not been long out of the classroom, and felt especially comfortable in the content area. But now I had been out of the classroom for six years. I was uneasy about my practical content knowledge about questioning. I wondered how my own experiences of teaching would translate into working practice in this case. I felt more constrained by my instructional designer identity, which was interpreted by others as a set of definable skills, and, as a consequence, more accountable to a circumscribed (rational, technical, and systematic) model of instructional design practice. At a time when I thought I needed to model knowing-about I found myself in the middle of both a silent and a public dilemma. Publicly, I was expected to have and model instructional planning expertise by supporters of technological innovation, but at the same time denied that expertise by its detractors in the Faculty who were suspicious of a practice and a technology that was assumed to remove the relational aspects of "face-to-face" teaching. I experienced dual dilemmas--the familiar guilt of being an "impostor", and resistance to the academic culture of intellectual authority.

In the technical instructional design model I thought I was expected to have the content experts, that is, academic faculty, would tell me about teachers' questions and I would fill in the empty boxes of some predetermined design flowchart. In this model, certain concepts and activities would lead automatically to other sub-concepts and activities. These activities would be enacted not only in the actual design process (how to design), but in the emerging design itself (how to find out about

asking questions in the classroom). The process would effectively both de-skill me by denying my personal practical knowledge as a teacher/designer, and faculty by shutting them out of the instructional planning process.

All those involved in this project were from cultures that, sometimes, seemingly required conflicting allegiances. Me--immersed through my life in the culture of teaching, a teacher of French for a large urban board; and now, serendipitously, an instructional designer in a faculty of education. There was Roy--a Drama teacher who worked with team process, a teacher of Television Arts, and during this time, a graduate student in educational technology. There was Al--a Professor in the Faculty and the coordinator of practicum experiences for which this videodisc was intended. And there was Louise--a teacher, a coach of teachers; an expert in cooperative learning. There were others who formed the television and videodisc production crew--a director/producer, a graphic artist, a computer analyst, and a project supervisor who was himself once a television producer; supervisors and peer consultants from the school board; and teacher and students in classrooms. The perceived exclusivity of these cultures were the source of the tensionalities of false allegiances and of counterfeit acts, because we came to see that our personal allegiance was to the process and to each other.

My own story of teaching confronts my fear of being caught at counterfeit acts: counterfeiting the act of teaching, of speaking French well enough to teach it, of knowing-about teaching well enough to develop curriculum for other teachers of French; of knowing-about instructional design well enough to guide a videodisc project. Having too much fun, not doing the real work, not getting down to it--these are all my stories of tensionality and resistance in teaching, echoed in this story. Trying to work with the folk models of other cultures forced us all to uneasy accommodations of the explicit expectations of institutional accountability and authority.

The videodisc records the instructional design process in a way that the teaching act itself cannot be made permanent. Teaching acts were imagined, suggested, then captured on videotape as they happened, to eventually be matched with instructional and explanatory text and concept narratives. The way that we constructed those narratives depended on reflecting on each day's classroom footage to show us how questioning happened. Coming together again in retrospective conversation required a process of talking-back (Schon, 1983, 1987), in which conflicts were surfaced and examined. In telling this story we give voice to the shared dilemmas of collaborative process and instructional design that enclosed the making of the disc in the intuitive social context of conversation. We called these dilemmas, or shared crises of planning praxis, tensionalities of the collaborative instructional design process.

The Tensionalities of False Allegiances, Cultural Others, and Relational Obligations

This project was authorized by two institutions anxious to build practical working relationships. At the most impersonal level, the institutions sought the acculturation of one to the other--each would understand the aims, missions, and actions of the other more completely. One instrumental intention of this project was to enable the Faculty to become more familiar with the inservice education models into which their future graduates would be inducted. Another was to become more familiar with the teaching strategies encouraged by cooperating teachers with whom their students would be placed. Institutional agendas which sought the enculturation of the other included modeling the use of alternative technologies for teaching, and gaining the conceptual ears of inservice teacher educators. The school board, on the other hand, welcomed the opportunity to contribute substantively to the preservice curriculum, graduates of which were their new employees and immediate participants in inservice programs and workshops. There was no explicit acknowledgement from either institution, and certainly no description, of

the different underlying cultures of the public school system and the academic institution that studies it and tries to convey it in ways that pre-service teachers will understand and be able to use. It was up to the design team to deconstruct those cultures and try to reconstruct them, in a process similar to the second-level narratives that Borland (1991) describes.

And so, unintended by either institution was the culture-building that would contextualize and drive the process and ultimately lift it out of the reach of the authority and accountability of the institutions, alienating the new culture from its parents and setting up cultural dissonances with overlapping cultures--in particular, the cultures of instructional design and videodisc production. The emerging culture (Campbell-Bonar & Olson, 1992) came more fundamentally from the culture of teaching, and owed its allegiance to the classroom and those in it. The design process and content evolved, essentially, from the nesting of our cultural knowings-about teaching. These could not be fundamentally understood by cultural outsiders. Nor were they communicated in forms that were culturally convertible, as scripts would be to a television director. Consequently, the production phase of the project was bounded by the tensions of relational obligations (to conflicting cultures) and false allegiances acted-out. These tensionalities--between institutions, among cultures, and between insiders and outsiders within cultures--were nested one within the other containing, like Chinese Puzzle Boxes, layers of meaning and memory. The restorying of the collaborative process attempts to reveal these nests within nests, peeling back layers of meaning within memories: institutional authority and accountability within false allegiances; inside times and outside times within relational obligations; and counterfeit acts.

False Allegiances, Cultural Others

In our first research conversation we remembered how we implicitly accepted allegiance to the collaborative process. We initially described design team roles and responsibilities, as is good systematic

process: "if there were designers, it was you and Roy. If there were content experts, it was Al and me." (Louise, 1993, March 18). Roy spoke for us all when he declared:

> It was a situation where we recognized that there was something unique in the room and that we were willing to clarify everything and get it all on the table, and then get rolling. My allegiance was not to [the board], but to you [Katy], because I was working on this with you. (Roy, 1993, March 18)

The model of design and collaborative process was a culturally-based communicative model based on the cultural meaning we shared about teaching. As such it was not tacitly understood by the cultural others on whom we depended to translate implicit meaning into the explicit meaning of the public videodisc. As an example, Louise tells of a critical time, a period of initial culture-building in the first active design meeting, when we chose to brainstorm the topic of questioning. Brainstorming as an initiating process reflected personal practical knowledge, validating Louise as a teaching coach, and the use of non-valuative, collaborative conversation as design tool. She remembers that:

> ... I had confidence that I could do it. I've done it in other situations, but can I do it for this purpose? And then we did it. And it was working. And I remember (a cultural other) coming in, part way through that process, saying, "When are you going to start? That's enough of that. Now let's start the real design." And I can remember, from my point of view, feeling kind of like, I'd like to slam the door in his face. It was that outside enemy thing, right? Because we were humming along, and we were doing really important work. And I was very confident at that point, that we would be great. (Louise, 1993, March 18)

This cultural other, representing institutional accountability and authority, wanted forms of work valued in another culture. At this point we were able to resist a false allegiance to a practice foreign to our new culture of collaborative, conversation-based instructional design process.

While we rejected outright a blueprint model of design, the tensionality that later nearly broke us apart came from a false allegiance to a culture on which we depended to literally make our meaning public- the culture of video production.

In this culture forms of real work, like scripts for classroom videotaping, were meaningless as action plans to both the design process and the teachers and children who would enact it. From our knowing-about the way that questions actually happen in the classroom, we recognized not only the falsity but the danger of scripted and charted sequences. This doomed us to a conceptual struggle. We shared the sense of "dread that he was going to divert our agenda sufficiently so that it would undermine what we had been creating" (Al, 1993, April 15), a dread that started almost at the beginning of the production phase of the project:

> It started right at the beginning. That very first time, because [he] was really put out that we didn't know exactly which child, prior to getting there, should say what when and have them seated in a certain way .... He just didn't understand that what we were doing was going into the culture of the classroom. He wanted scripts.

> We weren't going to operate that way. (Louise, 1993, April 15)

After this first classroom videotaping session, we tried to make our design process fit the television production process in false and unproductive ways by reverting to scripting. Obviously, this betrayed our knowing-about the life of the classroom and the creative way questioning happens in that context.

This clash was disturbing because our tacit valuing of the unexpected process of teaching was so little valued by a culture dependent on the planned and the expected for its outcome. A mistake that we made was not acknowledging the authenticity of the culture on which we were depending for our content, and in not sharing that tensionality with each other for a long time. Al speaks for us all when he reveals his self-doubts about belonging in the classrooms, "I know I felt sufficiently inept so that

when he reacted that way it was bothersome to me" (Al, 1993, April 15).
In this case, we each tried to cope with a perceived attack on our
authority--authority to design our way, authority to make sense of the
classroom, authority to make authentic meaning. Louise describes how
we were almost overcome by the tensionality of false allegiance to the
culture of video production; but more importantly, she surfaces the more
dangerous tensionality of silent endurance:

> ... You're [Al] thinking you're inept, you're in the way, and you're
> standing on the cables, and he's getting mad ... and I'm thinking,
> "Well, I don't know how this goes, maybe his [way is right]," and
> I'm trying to protect the teacher; and you're [Katy] going home and
> thinking, "What have I done wrong?"... [managing the project].
> And Roy is going home and drinking ... [laughter] ... because he's
> now taking a posture of "Well, I'm just the boom operator". So
> [Roy] took the stance of, "I'm backing myself off from this,"
> because he was upset. (Louise, 1993, April 15)

Exploring the tensionalities of false allegiances and cultural others
now, in reflective collaborative conversation, reveals the existence of two
completely different processes, and many more ways of telling those
stories. For me, the story is one of shame that I, self-cast as the mother of
the process, was not aware enough of the destruction to act :

> ... We did a lot of shooting ... We started in April, we went out to
> sixteen classrooms, we were there for half a day in each classroom,
> that's quite a lot of time we spent actually shooting, and then in the
> studio after that. So ... when we said we loved every minute of it,
> that's not true! I mean, there was actually quite a lot that we didn't!
> (Katy, 1993, April 15)

 Louise, on the other hand, distinguishes one time from another, signifying
the time that was for her, the real work of collaborative process, "That's
true, but I really differentiate that time from the time the four of us spent
together .... when I think of us, that's what I mean ... and the project, for

me, is us. And [the time we were involved with video production], that's noise" (Louise, 1993, April 15).

Struggling with the tensionality of cultural others required us to insert ourselves between the camera and the classroom and between ourselves and cultural others. In this sense we see the moral dimension of collaboration. The demands of institutional authority, a subtext of the cultural other, seemingly denied the authority of the teaching culture on which we were dependent for our content, for our meaning. As members of the teaching culture, we knew that sometimes a planned question is not asked because it is not appropriate to ask it. We knew that some questions lead to different, unplanned questions, or to times when questions are not asked. We knew that the teaching was the important content and that it could not be meaningfully predicted, scripted, and neatly videotaped. Children who never volunteer suddenly have an answer; the linear culture of television production finds this confounding.

An example of the confounding which clouded the negotiation of entry into the classrooms was the issue of permission slips. The culture of television production understands the concept of permission as a legal necessity, so those who do not wish to be captured on videotape can simply be edited out later. For this purpose, legal waivers can be signed and collected just prior to the actual time of videotaping. We knew that this requirement had more serious cultural and ethical implications. Schools and school classrooms are a community in which many voices contribute to social rules. Legal waivers needed to be explained to the parental community, parents given an opportunity to seek additional information from the school administration and from the university, children given the opportunity to ask questions about their parts in the endeavor, and so on. What was known to us, was part of our knowing-about being in the teaching family, was unknown and foolish to the cultural other. The issue was forced by Louise, who:

> ... was an advocate for the teachers and the kids .... To you it was
> very important because you knew it was very important to

> principals and teachers and parents, that those permission forms
> get out there ahead of time ... but what he wanted to do was, on the
> day of the shoot, take out the permission forms and hand them out.
> And we said, "Well, what if it turns out that some kids can't be in
> it?", and he said, "We'll just edit them out." (Katy, 1993, April 15)

Relational Obligations

 The negotiation of this issue was one of the first required
insertions of care; and its resolution continued to shape the uneasy
relationship engendered by cultural others. At root, the issue of the
permission slips was an issue of_not caring enough to understand the
particular culture that was determining the substantive content of the
videodisc. This was a clear case of devaluing the culture from which we
came, communicated by action and toxic language. We speculated that the
personal schooling experiences of the individual who, by controlling the
camera, was controlling "everything you end up seeing" (Katy, 1993,
April 15) might be informing his cultural expectations of the classroom
and the interactions within it:

> ... his understanding of what teaching is probably stems from his
> own schooling. And if he grew up in classrooms where people
> were in five rows of five, where the teacher stood at the front ...
> that's the comfort level for him. And, of course, we weren't in
> classrooms like that. (Louise, 1993, April 15)

As a consequence, when he only brought one twenty-minute tape to an 80-
minute high school class, we felt he was saying, "You shouldn't need any
more than that. I'm the only professional in this room ...." (Louise, 1993,
April 15).

 Yet, being of another culture did not condemn one to being a
cultural other, in the sense of the tensionality described here. What was at
issue was a personal willingness to approach the other, to engage in a
caring relationship; to see and acknowledge the value of working within a
frame of cultural knowing. This was accomplished by another member of
the production crew, who occasionally had control of the camera, in

aesthetic acts of active valuing that somehow ameliorated toxicity. These acts made their way into the story of questioning as art, as narration, as "the camera resting lovingly" on a child, reflecting an ethic of care for us and for the classrooms we were in. A continued nurturing of each other, the teachers, and our partners in creativity, was a natural way of being in relation to each other, and part of the relational obligation of collaboration.

Carolyn Heilbrun (1988) talks about the issues that lie beyond the constraints of acceptable conversation. Women, she suggests, are particularly sensitive to the topics that might hurt the feelings of others and tend to "make nice" when hurtful or uncomfortable talk threatens to impact the peace. Yet, the story of cultural others emerges more strongly in each narrative conversation, and it is Louise who seems least afraid of confronting the truth. In the following excerpt Louise returns again to talk of the tensionalities that most affected Roy, who was himself part of the culture of television production. We saw him trying to bridge the two cultures by taking on production, design, and collaborative roles at once, intentionally inserting himself between cultures:

> You had a vision for what this would actually look like.... I had a confidence level about the teachers, and what we were trying to do, and the content, I knew that was in place. I didn't know how we'd access it or put it together ... but that may be why there were [more frustrating times] for you. 'Cause you knew the risk, right? You knew, if we don't get it right, we can't go back, we can't do this again .... So what I did was just keep focusing on keeping the teachers and the kids going, and getting what we wanted, and assuring and encouraging them, and saying, "This is great! You're doing great!" That, I saw then, as my role, because I didn't know how to fix the other. (Louise, 1993, April)

Inevitably, the tensions and demands of a false allegiance are played out in issues of power--power to deny the meaning of others and to make the meaning yourself :

> ... I always had the feeling that [he] didn't know what the hell we
> were doing. And didn't care, and so, if something flew by and he
> had a tape of it, good enough. And I can remember thinking, that's
> not the best example ... It would be nice to try something else but
> knowing that he wouldn't be available to that .... I don't think he
> knew what the hell we were doing at any point and certainly didn't
> value what we were doing. (Al, 1993, May)

Traditional team processes, of which instructional design teams are one model, tend to rely on the imbalances of power: Someone is in charge who makes design decisions that reflect the end-in-sight for the client. For Roy, the process nature of <u>this</u> collaborative endeavor, in which the meaning was made from the reflective editing conversations, engaged him in transformative questioning about how he had always worked with a team. As with Roy, I was forced to a deconstruction of my embodied knowing-about: instructional design, teaching, collaborating with teachers; making curriculum. These nested tensionalities required critical reflection for action on the ways I tried, and failed, to plan for the purpose of sharing meaning systems. I learn later, however, that I need not take sole responsibility for what is not surfaced.

Nests of Meaning: Inside Times and Outside Times, Institutional Accountability and Authority, and Counterfeit Acts

Meaning systems not shared and not valued, and certainly not enacted, becomes a nested story of tensionality that encourages me to reflect on my actions in unknown cultures. I have to accept that the meaning systems of the others might also not be part of my own story of collaboration. This is where memories are contested and reconstructed.

<u>Inside Times and Outside Times</u>

One such tensionality, surfaced almost casually in the first narrative conversation, became the story of inside times and outside times. This was a notion incompatible with my own understanding as design as

the sustaining of family. In this story, both Roy and Al tell of times in which they were not part of, and were even denied contribution to, the conversation.

Roy tells of "feeling left out" of an essential meaning system--the interactive, collaborative writing of concept narratives (Jamieson, 1993): "I felt left out of the process, in the writing aspect, that you two did .... The reason why I felt left out is... I knew you guys were laughing and joking and having a good time, but you were still working" (Roy, 1993, March 18). I immediately deny his experience, "Didn't we do that, all four of us, all together? 'Cause we were working in my office, all four of us, around the computer" (Katy, 1993, March 18). Roy insists, "I felt left out because I was left out of the company and the friendship. Not the work. I knew my level of contribution would be 'the', 'and', and 'or'" (Roy, 1993, March 18).

Louise shares this story with me, assuring me that no one is ever left out. Now some frustration punctuates Roy's story, because we will not accept his version as true. In fact, we reconstruct actual times and places to convince him that he was there: "You know, I don't remember it that way at all. What I remember is that the four of us working on everything, didn't we? .... Didn't we all crowd around in my office writing every little ..." (Katy, 1993, March)? Finally, Roy convinces us that he was left out of part of the process, the writing of the accompanying manual and, more importantly, the continued building of personal allegiances and the sustaining of the family that continued to mark this work. But he must provide evidence to make us believe that we could have created an inside time for ourselves, creating outside times for the others: "Didn't you guys write up a manual that went with it" (Roy, 1993, March)? And we must admit that we had forgotten this part of our story.

A story told once is nested into the stories told before, and are beginnings to the stories told around them. In this way the reflexive character of the retrospective narrative conversations reflected the design conversations. After Roy's story of being outside, I seek further evidence

that these outside times existed, "Now the other thing I remember is Al, after that, you called me and said 'I don't think that I need to come out to the classrooms' .... and I think that Louise and I tried to talk you into it ..." (Katy, 1993, April). Al confirms that he felt alienated in the classroom, "It was probably more of a reaction to the sense that I had that I wasn't contributing very much on the technical side or knowing the teachers, and with all these cables around I was in the way more often than not ..." (Al, 1993, April).

Later in this same conversation, I still try to fit stories of exclusion into my own collaborative story of total inclusion, this time wondering whether the exclusivity of collaborative processes might not be destructive to institutional authority (1993, April):

L: Oh, it's a club .... I mean, it was, wasn't it? But we would kind of come in like locusts....

K: ... and it might not be a positive thing to have in your work environment, necessarily. A collaborative group. Those are just some ....

L: Because it causes others to ... feel excluded....

K: ... and in a sense, you know, a collaborative group is kind of aggressive .... they're sort of inward looking and feeling, so in a sense we were aggressive too. You know, get out of our space ....

The next time we meet, I show that I am not only able to nest the inside times/outside times story with my own story of the fierce inclusiveness of collaboration, but that I can also nest Louise's story of reconciliation of times of energy and Roy's suggestion that a collaborative process means setting a place at the table so that even absent voices are heard:

Roy, at one point you said, "I felt a little bit left out...."You know, you guys are doing what you always did. You would talk, and I would listen." And then, later on, you said, "You did the writing, and I felt left out." And Louise and I spent a long time saying, "Everybody was there! What are you talking about?... We did this,

and we did this, together ...” And finally, you convinced us that there was a situation where Louise and I did the print support, and we did it alone....This comes up again, because Al is saying “I didn't want to go into the classrooms ... I wasn't happy there”.... it seems to me that Louise and I think that it would be awful, and we don't want to hear, if anybody at any time felt that they weren't completely part of this .... it's hard for us to hear that, and we sort of deny it for awhile ... (Katy, 1993, April)

Roy assures me that:

... we became so ... attuned to what the other people were involved in and thinking ... that even when you guys were working together, or when we were someplace else ... the understanding was that that person actually was really there. It's like we are four even though we are three or we are two ... (Roy, 1993, April)

Accepting Roy's and Al's version of events, we tell a new story of collaboration, which sustains caring relations with others, permitting outside times but requiring inside times:

Well, the definition of collaboration isn't joined at the navel or the hip and all walking together at the same time, it's in the product that you're doing, and every person collaborates with the creativity and ability that they can put forward to it. So, if someone wants to withdraw... (that's okay) ... but when someone withdrew from something they didn't withdraw from friendship. That's the thing that was always there .... (Roy, 1993, April)

We considered the social work of collaboration, creating and sustaining social relationships, to be the real work or product of the collaborative process. This leads to the fifth nested story of tensionality: institutional authority and accountability. It was not that the project goals of the institutional authorities were unclear or were in danger of not being met; but that the process of achieving those goals would forge and renew allegiances seen as threatening the integrity of their ownership. That is, collaborative processes are institutionally dangerous because by their

nature institutions demand one loyalty. But by its nature, a collaborative process demands a personal loyalty that will take precedence over false allegiances. While the relational obligations of the collaborative process did not, to us, preclude loyalty to other families (the teaching family, the instructional design family, the television production family, the family of university professors), the authority of the institution is feared to be undermined when its members find power and fulfillment in other fidelities.

Institutional Accountability and Authority

I grew up in the teaching family of my mother, the teaching home of this school board. In some sense, this inter-institutionally supported project was a way for me to reconnect with the family and home I had left (I thought only temporarily) five years before. That this process go beyond the mere production of an interactive videodisc was at first an implicit goal of mine, but later became the more important explicit goal of the group. My reentry into the family of teaching would be allowed only if my teaching pedigree was made explicit by my design praxis and honored by the others. This would be accomplished by valuing the conversation of teachers as design process, over the instructional design expert's extraction of knowledge from the content experts. Acknowledging my teaching pedigree served not only to move the collaborative design process along, but significantly contributed to the evening out of expertise in the design group (Haughey, 1993).

However, the authority of the institution that now owned my first loyalties - instructional design, television production, and preservice teacher education - suspected betrayal in my collaborative design praxis. Institutional fear of denied and renewed allegiances constituted a layer of tensionality for the group that was expressed as constant exhortations to be institutionally accountable, to "remember who you are working for." Actually, institutional accountability was enhanced because of the personal accountability to each other that is demanded by the collaborative process. We would produce a videodisc to be proud of

because to fail to do so for the institutions would be to fail each other. We would even out the expertise, and share accountability, because it was unthinkable not to honor and value each other's knowing. This process becomes a serious threat to institutional authority, however, because hierarchies of knowing-about are evened out in the process. Institutional authority can only be held as long as knowing is controlled as institutional property. But valuing is the praxis and product of the collaborative process, which may be why they are suspected. From the institution's point of view, and this, I think, is entirely unexpected, an interinstitutional collaborative process by its nature makes inside knowers and outside knowers. The institution never expected to be the outside knower--it is a serious threat to their authority and ownership of the expertise and perceived allegiance of their knowledge workers.

However, the institution can seemingly regain authority over the collaborative process by devaluing its products, and one of its products is the way that it makes meaning. This is the institution's story of not getting down to work, and of having too much fun. A visible point of attack is the social-ness of collaboration. Curiously, institutional authority was early established in a social setting, during which the project was formalized over lunch in a popular restaurant. Later, the legitimacy of working in a social setting, for example during a breakfast meeting at a restaurant, was strictly denied. Obviously, a social setting is a legitimate power setting in which one can be initiated into institutional accountability but is not permitted as a context to the workers themselves:

> We'd met a few times beforehand, and we'd talked about what we might want to do, and we'd met as a threesome over coffee, and I'd come to visit you downtown, and you'd come over here few times, and so we were already starting on the project, and we had it all worked out when we were actually going to meet, we were going to start in October ... And then [they] stepped back into it ....sort of went over the same ground again, but took possession of it this time .... going through this whole thing that we'd already

informally started to work out. It's kind of an accountability thing, I think, they have to be seen to be on top of this, so that we don't waste .2 [FTE]of your time, and just have fun. (Katy, 1993, March)

Collaboration-by-the-nape-of-neck <u>may</u> unintentionally lead to the creatively constructive blending of allegiances and the getting on with the real work of collaboration (which certainly includes having fun). More likely, however, coerced collaboration leads no further than the agenda-conversation described above, and a process which mitigates against the coming-to-know-about that collaborative processes can achieve. Coerced collaborative activities lead to counterfeit acts and contrived collegiality, the final story of tensionality.

Counterfeit Acts

Fundamentally, we understood our task much differently from the others that have been the focus of most of this discussion. The tensionalities created by the mismatches in intention, in understanding, and in doing were, for the most part, resolved by the pressing of the videodisc and its subsequent implementation. After all, who really cared how it had come to be made, as long as the authority of the institutions was intact and the process was seen to be accountable?

In the living of the process, however, we came regretfully to public accommodation where we played by false rules and engaged in counterfeit acts, because our commitment to our family, the family of teaching and questioning and making of a disc on questioning, required doing what had to be done to sustain the project. Louise finds a way to talk about the failure of the cultural others to engage in the making of a questioning disc as a personal act of transformation:

> You know, I was thinking, what if someone told me tomorrow, that I had to go to the Ford company, and do a laserdisc on, how they put upholstery into their cars, okay? You know, something just totally alien to me. Truly, in my heart of hearts, I don't believe that I would work any less collaboratively on a project like that. I mean, I would make it my business to get to know the people, and to be interested in their work, and to ask a lot of questions, and sort of throw yourself in ... and suddenly, it is interesting. That to me is the difference. If people involved in the process as well as the product, are people that are interested in other people, that makes a difference. That's the camera lovingly resting ... that's the words that come out in a dignified way, for people to say. That's the humor, do you know? (Louise, 1993, May)

And this fundamental failure is related to a relational obligation, fundamentally moral in its demands for actions based on a commitment to hold harm-less those with whom you are engaged in the work. I talk about how I failed in my moral, relational obligation to my family to keep them

out of the way of those who seemed to be sabotaging our story, while they assure me that their understanding of their relational obligation to me is to devolve the guilt and to place it on the shoulders of the real ones to blame. The real villains forced us into the counterfeit act of scripting, making insertion between the teachers and the production process necessary:

> That sort of resonates with my previous comment about not ever coming to find out what we had in mind, or getting involved, or meeting us halfway, or an eighth of the way .... I can remember when we were doing the shoots, thinking, that up to that point this project was marvelous, nothing short of marvelous. And then thinking, "Boy, we're right on the bubble here. And it could work, or it might not, and that is going to depend on how we get along with [others], and how we get them to do what we had in mind." But those were really, really difficult times. And every time we went out for a shoot I guess I had in the back of my mind that this might turn out to be a total wipe-out. When you armchair this stuff and you write out questions and classrooms are well-behaved and everything is just perfect .... And you start getting out into real classrooms and that's not the way they are, and so that's another source of concern, that we wouldn't get what we wanted. (Al, 1993, May)

Al, like Louise, tells the story of counterfeit acts from a personally transformative perspective, that of being in a dysfunctional family that must engage in cohesive public acts:

> It isn't always power either, per se, it's like a family that becomes dysfunctional, and frequently it's likely one abusive parent or something like that, where the family sort of adjusts to preserve the family structure. And so they will insulate the person or they will do all sorts of things ... and that's sort of what happened with this group ... We knew that we had to adjust ....it's the same kind of influence that a dysfunctional member of a family has. And it

comes off sort of as power, I guess, in the sense that his behavior
had undue influence on what we did. (Al, 1993, May)

Nests of Meaning in Collaborative Processes: A Postscript

New Relations, New Obligations, Fragile Cultures

In this paper, I have told a story of praxis, a second level narrative
that, in its retelling, brings me closer to the heart of practice with those
with whom I share a relational obligation. I count this time and this
memory as seminal in my final rejection of objectivist, rationalistic ways
of being, and of being with the world, in my daily work of instructional
design. In the context in which I now work, I am able to explicity value
the instructional development process with faculty members as
transformational in nature. This means that I quite purposefully enter into
each new design relationship with the relationship as my goal, and the key
new learnings that emerge from this relationship define and drive and
nurture the present project and the future teachinhg/learning praxis of my
client-friends.

Here is another story of collaborative cultures whose denouement
has yet to be determined. Again, the relations and tensionalities swirl into
each other like marble cake batter, staying distinct yet melding together to
make one new taste. These elements come from all the lives of the
individuals involved in this project and will sometimes overcome,
sometimes complement, and even fail to engage with each other as the
project progresses, but now I know that sometimes I have a choice in these
interactions.

This is also a story of acculturation and enculturation; inside times
and outside times. But in this story, the fragile collaborative cultures are
so jeopardized by the refusal of one individual to acculturate that, finally,
no accommodation could be made. In this story, an ethic of care for all
participants--clients, teachers, children, and team members--required me
to completely deny further entry to the Other.

This project involves one faculty member in the Faculty of Education, and a school with which she had developed both a research and a practice relationship over several years. Sandra also lives in this neighborhood and her childen attend the school. Over the years Sandra has brought her undergraduate methods classes into the school over 6 mornings as, with the teachers and children, they explore what it means to them to become language arts teachers. The preservice teachers have returned to the school themselves, in practica, to teach, and to continue to develop close personal relations with mentoring teachers.

Sandra works as a Partner with our Production Team and me over a period of secondment to develop a Web-based "virtual" practicum for future language arts teachers. Not only is she excited about pushing her own understanding of learning environments, but she wants to model new conceptual frmaeworks for her students and support her teacher-partners in using technology in their classrooms. On a practical level, Sandra realizes that cultures change and adapt over time, and that her school relationship may change quite profoundly in the next while with a new principal, several new teachers, her children moving closer to their secondary years—her changing and evolving role in the Faculty, as a community member, with the Public School Board and the political mood. Although Sandra has nested allegiances that do not ethically conflict, she still may be asked to withdraw from this school at any time. Therefore, the fragility of the collaborative culture was surfaced at the beginning of the project and has guided the design of the Web course, the planning of the videotaping, and the preparation of the school partners and the community.

On one such visit of project culture-building during which the Production Team accompanied Sandra and I to a school staff meeting to answer concerns about the project (and on the heels of another struggle over permission slips), the teachers expressed anxiety about being asked to speak sponataneously , on camera, about their practice. Sandra immediately assured them that if they were uncomfortable with that we

would not do it, that we would structure questions to which to respond, and schedule a safe, private interview during which Sandra would coach them over the shoulder of the cameraman.

On the first day of shooting, duirng which my careful eyes were replaced with those of Daniel, a novice instructional designer who I have mentored over several months, the morning's classroom videotpaing went very well until, as the children ran out of the room for lunch, the camera was suddenly turned on the teacher and she was asked <u>by the cameraman</u>, to tell him how she felt about the learning interactions that had happened. I was made aware of this violation of the integrity of the culture by Sandra's terse voice mail asking me to call her immediately. To prepare, I approached Daniel for his telling of the story: "He (the cameraman, the Cultural Other of the first project described) saw a good opportunity so he took it. He got some good footage".   Aaaahhh. He also caused a great rift in Sandra's relationship with her school, as first one teacher and then another called her at home to either withdraw from or express deep reservations about the project.

How can these tensionalities be prevented and repaired? By involving <u>anyone</u> who is to be part of the collaborative culture in every conversation, in every contact, in every context? Recalling lessons from last time, I had. But this time, I had not been able to insert myself between the relational, nested cultures of the school; Sandra in collaborative design conversation with me, Daniel and the team; Sandra-and-the-school; Sandra-in-the-Faculty; me-with-Sandra-in the school…and the alien and destructive culture of the Other, once again the culture of video production.

And, once again the Mother, I took this tensionality on as though I owned it, aware of my conflicting relational obligations to my team; to Sandra, engaging in tense, but private dialogue making clear the "zero tolerance" for "creative and spontaneous" decisions more integral to the culture of news media than to school-based collaborative projects. Faced

with anger and denial, I summarized the situation in a lengthy email message and copied his direct supervisor.

The second day at the school, the Other waited outside the door for the surprised teacher, and when he saw her insisted on "talking out" the misunderstanding, despite being told twice by Sandra that he was to leave her alone, not try to resolve a tensionality that if re-visited would cause more hurt. In the end, the teacher was confronted directly in the staffroom and, betrayed, withdrew with finality from the project.

Furious for, and with, Sandra I reiterated, this time publicly, that the teachers would <u>not</u> be contacted by anyone but Sandra and that we had decided to hold a teachers' focus group on camera instead of individual interviews since we were concerned with feelings of exposure, isolation; uncertainty about both personal expertise and the process.

In his final and combative act (deliberate?) to completely rend the fabric of the collaborative culture, the Other wrote a treatise on how inappropriate on-camera focus groups were in achieving the identified outcome and questioned the pedagogical judgment of those who had made the decision, which he sent to Sandra, all the team members, me, and his direct supervisor. In so doing, he denied the knowing-about of us all, teachers, teachers-of-teachers, and designers-once-teachers, insisting on false allegiance to a culture more attuned to the nightly news than learning environments.

Whose Authority? Whose Accountability?

Louise and I had lunch last week. As I told the story, her face registered sympathy, anger, empathy, certainty, and satisfaction. In hearing that I had been successful in pulling the Other off the project, forcing a deconstruction of the process with his supervisor, maintaining my integrity as One Who Knows (and must be obeyed!) about nurturing collaborative cultures, and the tension of intrusive cultures such as video

production in those cultures, she shouted "Yes!" and we both laughed in challenging our shared memory of bitter accommodation.

The victory was about more than moral or intellectual authority, about who has the power to define and protect collaborative cultures. Louise, always thoughtful, said, "You know, Katy, ultimately, he just isn't aware that cultures exist outside of his own understanding of the world. In that world, <u>he</u> is very clear about being the center. Everything filters through him, even if it's on its way to someone else, he has to own it first. He doesn't have the slightest clue what the problem is here, why Sandra and you and the school were so mad, because it has nothing to do with sound bites and being The Cameraman… He will only ever care about the product, and he doesn't know that process is more important." Examined this way, the victory acknowledges that the ultimate accountability in collaborative process is to the personal, for that is where we findthe sheer, sharp moral fidelity to relational process and the ability to see the process through.

Restorying: Collaborative Cultures

This account began with the realization that the tensionalities that shaped a collaborative process had to be acknowledged. I started by admitting that I was aware early of the tensionalities that were framing our classroom experiences and that I shared my anxiety privately with individuals in the family, who were all aware on some level of the cracks that were appearing. Yet, as in so many families, silence is a way of not bringing out of Pandora's Box the full wrath of something that will not be stuffed back in:

> Well, of course I was dealing with it day by day .... But what I did was worry about what it was that <u>I</u> wasn't doing ... It's not like these cracks sort of appeared at the end, they appeared right away, because Louise and I would talk about what was happening in the schools and why, and Roy and I would talk .... Roy actually wanted to leave the project at one point... (Katy, 1993, May)

Telling how much we were affected by nested tensionalities and how unwilling we were to acknowledge that, is a way for us to reaffirm our deep moral connections with each other. At the same time, the experience (and the telling of it) is transformational in requiring a re-orientation towards similar tensionalities in our continuing personal and professional families, and a "reformation and transformation of knowledge" (Wallace & Louden, 1994, p. 324).

Ultimately, the power of the metaphor of collaborative instructional design as the sustaining of family is that it locates such a process in a deeper moral and social context of care for those with whom you are entwined in important work. And as such, the collaborative endeavor is reflective of the lives of those engaged in the work. The personal and practical tensionalities in the lives of the members of a collaborative family are reflected on every level in the collaborative process and are nested in the doing of the work of the collaboration.

In practical terms, what can be done about these tensionalities, other than to acknowledge that they will occur? My new learning in this regard is reformational perhaps, rather than revolutionary. As an instructional designer, I must work with a technical team that, for the most part, relies on a culture of autonomy, confrontation, forced failures and individual insights: It is a culture embedded in the rational, the systematic, the template, not the con-templative (This culture is counter-intuitive to that described by writers such as Sherry Turkle (1984, 1995), who speaks lyrically of "bricolage", a construction that seems more faithful to collaboration). In many ways we depend on this culture to realize our projects. I'm coming to believe, though, that we must insist on the integrity of the meaning that is made in the design process and not trust that it will be faithfully interpreted by cultural others. In subsequent classroom visits, for example, I have insisted on delaying a project at all stages until I obtain witnessed, verbal "sign-off" from technical team members about the process of working with fragile school cultures. If, as in another recent instance, my partners are uneasy about the process, we

do not return to the field until we have heard our concerns acknowledged and all team members have agreed how the conflict will be resolved and the realtionships honoured.

Institutional authority and accountability will continue to frame the work that we do collaboratively among cultures. As I now work with faculty members from all Faculties at a large research-intensive university, I become more aware of these layers, or nests within each subject area, department, Faculty, and constituencies; as well as those of other communities such as parents and supporters, governance structures and corporations. I have learned to address these cultures and their stakeholders before a collaborative project begins, making them aware of the risks of collaborative innovation in teaching and learning <u>before</u> they occur, reminding them of the commitments that must be made for success; reporting throughout the process with an evolving narrative that relieves us all in the form of tangibility.

As I tell this story, I think about the nested families from which I come, and wonder about the families I will enter in the future. The stories I've told are all in the first person plural and are written from the standpoint of my nested personal and professional lives: lives as a single mother and new partner, a teacher returning to the profession, the daughter and granddaughter of teachers who lived teaching as a political act, the sister of feminists who continue to live out the political and moral dimensions of teaching; a member of a rational, technical culture that denies the contribution of intuition and experience. Writing these stories and having others read them has reminded me of how embedded I am in this narrative. I tell about the lives of other members of the QDisc family--they leave their schools, take on leadership roles, negotiate new relationships, build new houses, retire.... I write their stories forward while my own looks mostly back, always seeking the integrity that reframes my instructional design practice coherently with my teaching pedigree.

I am transformed by the cognitive effort to enact the narrative unity revealed. And in doing this I understand better why I had resisted the models of instructional design with which I was supposed to frame my own practice. These were models that denied the personal--the experiences brought to the plan by all members of the team, the designer, the content experts, the production crew. Even the learners' responses were anticipated. But a model of constant collaborative conversation required us to name those experiences and blend their meaning into the story of questioning in the classroom. In this process we learned about the kind of praxis that emerges from the intimacy and nurturance of a collaborative family. This restorying was not meant so much to take apart and examine the workings of such a group, but was a confirmational and afirmational process of nesting again into each other's lives.

I saw the design process as a sustained conversation which was reflected in the design itself. These were threads woven together to make the family tapestry. In this family, the artifact, the videodisc, became a secondary goal that would evolve from the process, rather than a product which would guide the process. This was demanded by the familial ties, the ethic of caring regard of the family.

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