UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Team Teaching Relationships: Teachers' Stories and Stories of School on the Professional Knowledge Landscape

by

Annie Davies

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Elementary Education

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled TEAM TEACHING RELATIONSHIPS: TEACHERS' STORIES AND STORIES OF SCHOOL ON THE PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE LANDSCAPE submitted by ANNIE DAVIES in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

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DEDICATION

In loving memory

of my parents

who cared about education

ANNIE THOMSON COLLINS

and

DANIEL JOHN COLLINS

Abstract

Adopting Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) conceptualization of the professional knowledge landscape of schools, this narrative inquiry centers on the team teaching relationships of two experienced Grade 1 teachers as they collaborate with one another and with their colleagues on the staff of Riverview Elementary School. The narratives developed show teachers as being situated on two distinct places on the professional knowledge landscape: the in-classroom place and the out-of-classroom place. This study draws attention to the shaping forces at work on the professional knowledge landscape—forces that shape and are shaped by teachers' personal practical knowledge, their lived experience of collaboration and the particular politics of the times.

The pilot research that frames the narrative beginnings of this study reveals teachers' stories of team teaching as being representative of both "phenomenon and method" (Carr, 1986). The telling of stories primes the research process and sketches the changing landscape of Riverview School over a thirteen year period, 1982-1995. A set of terms: secret stories, sacred stories and cover stories (Clandinin and Connelly, 1995) illuminates particular dilemmas for the Riverview teachers as they encounter a changed institutional narrative pertaining to shared decision making and teacher collaboration. The changed institutional narrative in turn sets up a changed story of school. The study reveals the way school stories are constructed to serve a new story of school.

As the landscape changes the terminology of the landscape also changes. Teams of teachers and teacher teams meeting on the out-of-classroom place are quite different from team teaching (Shaplin, 1964), as it was first understood, as an activity of the in-classroom place. In this study the teachers can be seen to live cover stories, on the out-of-classroom place, in response to the politics of the landscape but within a research relationship operating at a level of trust, they reveal their secret stories. These teacher stories provide a new entry point for teachers' voices to be heard and for teachers' knowledge to shape new possibilities on the professional knowledge landscape of schools.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I Narrative Beginnings 1
Multiple Reconstructions: Collaborative re-storying 10
My Letter to Jon 11
My Letter to Mike 18
My Letter to Terri 23
My Letter to Linda 29
From Conversations and Letters to Research Questions 37

CHAPTER II Situating the Inquiry 44
Situating the Inquiry in the Literature of Teacher Knowledge Studies . . 50
The Nature of Knowledge 51
Teachers' Knowledge 52
Story 54

CHAPTER III The Inquiry Finds a Home 58
The In-classroom Place of Tom and Liz 63
Introducing the Participants 65
My Letter to Tom 68
My Letter to Liz 76
Narrative Connections: Compatibility and Complementarity 84

CHAPTER IV Team Teaching: Stories of Practice 87
The Game Show: A Story of Creativity 87
The Theatre: A Story of Improvisation 94
Science: A Story of Collaboration 99
An Off Day: A Story of Renewed Energy Through Conversation . . . 102
A New Format for Reporting: A Story of Collaborative Inquiry . . . 105
Negotiating Dilemmas: Aaron's Story 110
Understanding the Stories of Practice 115

CHAPTER V The Circle of Relationship Widens 129
A Team Meeting: Tension on the Out-of-Classroom Place 131
My Letter to Carol 135
Finishing the Curriculum: No Time to Smell the Roses 144
The Writing Classroom 146
Introducing Similes: A Story of Creativity 150
Curriculum Connections: Team Teaching with Carol 152
Understanding the Stories of Practice 155
My Letter to Jane 160
Difficulty with Math Tubs: A Story of a Challenge Accepted 169

CHAPTER VI A Year of Tension: Stories of the Team Meetings 172
My Story as Researcher 173
Carol's Story 184
Jane's Story 190
Liz's Story 195
Tom's Story 200
Thinking About Teacher Professionalism and Cover Stories 204

CHAPTER VII A Changed Story of School: Dilemmas on the Landscape 209
A Shift in the Meaning of Teaming 216
Changing Landscape: Changing Roles 223

CHAPTER VIII Understanding Team Teaching: Understanding the Landscape 233
Penetrating Cover Stories 235
Relational Trust and the Research Process 247

References 257

CHAPTER I

Narrative Beginnings

Edmonton, September 1994—a student once again. Excitement and uncertainty all rolled up together. In classroom introductions I hear myself say, "I'm starting my doctoral work. It's about team teaching." I am anxious to begin but where is the beginning? How shall I start my narrative inquiry?

I smile patiently—knowing things will come to me in their own good time. I relax into my classes. Dr. Jean Clandinin talks of constructing personal narratives (Mitchell, 1980; Sarbin, 1986) and I find myself back in my early childhood stories (Robinson & Hawpe, 1986). Clear pictures of first days in British schools come into focus. Invited to write, I story my experience as a poem. I feel free to attempt a creative re-telling, to experiment in narrative form. For me this is play. And Greene (1994) notes, "the postmodern imagination is thought to be poetic as well as critical: rich, free, playful, confronting open possibility" (p. 458). In playing with my words, with my life, I tease out first threads (Chatman, 1990). I find direction.

A New School

home from work...
his back to the fireplace
my father stands...serious
I'm not asked to recite a nursery rhyme
today he seems not to notice me—

my mother brings tea
they talk—
his spoon stirring in sugar

"Bill's son can read
he's just six
he can do things Robert can't
Robert is nearly seven—
he's a long way behind—
we must find a better school"

already my father knows of a school
I hear new words
fees, nuns...
what are those?

and a journey by train
for both of us

"Oh good", I think to myself
I love trains

I have my last turn
on the nursery school rocking-horse—
I won't miss him
his tail is half gone
I say goodbye...
chattering about shopping
for my uniform
even though I don't know
what a uniform might be

in grey blazers
with royal blue trim
Robert and I stand proudly—
mom gives our shoes
one last shine with a duster
she adjusts my hair ribbon
checks for clean faces...
my father says,
"Look after your sister"
Robert nods

we cross the canal bridge
to get to the station...
and even though I'm five
Robert holds my hand
giving a little tug
when I slow down
I won't look for barges on school days—
mom gives him a smile of approval
we both smile back
loving our adventure

at the station
we buy tickets
Liverpool to Blundellsands—return
the ticket collector punches them...
on the platform we see big girls
in the very same blazer
mom chats with them
I see them nodding
they will look after us
on the train ride home
then mom will meet us

our train stops
at many stations
mom says their names
we repeat them...
when the big girls stand up
we know our stop
"This won't be hard", mom says
and the big girls say,
"Don't worry, we'll take care of them"

more walking
we see a sign
mom reads aloud
"Ursuline Convent School"
it seems like the castle
in my fairy tale book
special yet mysterious
I know I will like my school

My poem reminds me of my sense of adventure, of positive feelings towards change, of new family plot lines in response to lived reality. Remembering my stories of new beginnings, I trace my personal and professional growth. I locate myself in the inquiry.

In class I write a second story. It jumps the years. It crosses an ocean. It is a mother-teacher's story (Kennedy, 1992). With my Canadian daughters entering Grades 1 and 2, I return to full time teaching. In returning, I become a first-time team teacher. This story comes to mind because it was a troubling experience. I felt like a beginning teacher once more. I lived with feelings of discomfort and uncertainty for the entire school year. I felt inadequate, in this new role, much of the time. In telling this story pseudonyms are used to provide anonymity for my colleagues. Likewise throughout this thesis pseudonyms are used for all participants and all schools named in the inquiry.

A Story of Mandated Team Teaching

1982 a new school—a sense of excitement. I'd wanted a change—needed it—for many reasons. This was my first time back in the classroom after twelve years as a physical education specialist, seven of those teaching part time. I toured the school with Sue, the principal. I'd worked with her briefly five years previously in the role of a special project teacher. Together we taught games to children who were poorly coordinated and needed more experiences. In telling me about the

position in Grade 3, Sue mentioned I'd be teaching physical education, some language arts, and some math. This sounded perfect.

The school was beautiful—less than a year old with a spectacular view of the river. The view sold me. I didn't stop to think that I had no experience in an open area school. As well, I didn't know the school was committed at the Grade 3/4 level to a new concept of Individually Guided Education. I knew I would be working beside Mike, a young Grade 4 teacher. I was impressed with the feel of his classroom and the engagement of the children. His manner gave me a sense of security as I envisioned our teaming relationship. But the teaming relationship was more than I'd bargained for. Mike and I were to be part of a five member team. We would join two other teachers, also new to the school, Terri and Linda and their Grade 3/4 children. Then after recess Jon, the assistant principal and project visionary, would join the team so that we could regroup the children into five instructional groupings.

The idea was that we would come to know all 110 children and they would be taught by all of us. Our team had been carefully chosen to include a specialist in each core subject: language arts, math, science, social studies and I was the physical education specialist. In theory this plan ensured a first class program for children, based on each subject specialist leading the team planning. At first there was security in this for me. Mike knew the math curriculum and gave us a monthly outline. Terri was a science whiz with great ideas. Linda was full of enthusiasm sharing

language arts possibilities. Jon headed social studies and facilitated our team planning meetings. He made all of us feel we had knowledge and expertise. And we did...but because this plan wasn't ours, we were less and less able to work through difficulties as they arose. I wondered about the tracking of children—how report cards in math would be written when I didn't teach any of my class in this subject. I'd volunteered to teach a special needs group of Grade 4s.

I remember a Christmas craft project planned as centres. I was constructing candles out of toilet papers rolls and covering them with a goopy substance made from powdered detergent. After the fifth group had gone through I was exhausted and bored. Yes, I'd worked with all of the children but did I like it—no! Clean up was horrible, so was starting and finishing according to schedule and sending kids in so many different directions. Did I know these children? Did they know me? Did they like this? Did I?

Our weekly planning meetings were lengthy. My husband finally said, "Look, you have to tell them you're leaving at six o'clock whether they've finished or not." Our meetings weren't calm affairs. Differences were voiced regarding individual philosophies and questions raised about what was right for children. I had nagging doubts about my ability as a language arts teacher but was unable to voice my fears in this new situation, where so much seemed to be expected. I'd made a commitment to teaming. Once underway there was no turning back. My only safe

place was the gym. A place where I could live out my role as expert, playing my assigned part in the team teaching script.

The five member team lasted one year only. We learned from the experience and organized quite differently the following year. Two teacher teams seemed more manageable. I teamed up with Terri. I moved over to her open area, a double classroom with a moveable curtain. Each of us had Grade 3 but we worked with the children as one class with two teachers. We had much in common and different strengths too. We were no longer new teachers in a new school. We could build on our knowing and be open and honest with each other about areas of uncertainty. We came to know our children and to laugh a great deal with them. Our teaching excited us. It was another beginning.

Writing my story of mandated team teaching triggers a story of choice in team partners. I think of my second year at Riverview and my desire to continue team teaching in a more manageable way. To work as a two-teacher team, at one grade level, was compelling. After careful thought and much discussion with Jon, Mike, Terri, and Linda a new configuration was arrived at and approved by the principal. Teaching with Terri proved exciting and challenging. Recalling this experience I feel compelled to phone Terri. After all, if I am going to reconstruct a story of our teaching together to read to my university classmates, then I must run this idea by her. Our telephone conversation becomes my next in-class story.

Remembering Team Teaching

It's almost ten years since Terri left Riverview School to start her family. She hasn't returned to the classroom yet, but my call made an unexpected space for conversation. After a few minutes of the usual informal pleasantries between friends, our conversation took the tone of inquiry.

T: It's funny you've called Annie, because I've been thinking about teaching again, now that our youngest is in kindergarten—but I've wondered if I could do it? I wonder if I'd have the same energy? My mom asked me if I thought I'd be a better teacher after having three kids? I'm not sure if I'd have the patience and I wonder how much things have changed?

A: You'd be fine Terri. You can still work in the way you like to with kids. I know that I relate differently to them and to their parents because of my own kids...I think I understand more. I question more. I'm more concerned about doing what's right for them and helping them to make sense of their world. That began for me in 1982 with you. Remember, I'd just returned to full time teaching myself. That first year was pretty disastrous for me. I had all kinds of questions but was too afraid to ask them. Getting to work with you, the following year, was the start of figuring things out. How do you remember that time?

T: I got frustrated a lot that first year, Annie. I had a hard time making my points understood. The sharing didn't fit with my sense of what sharing is. You and I had things in common and similar energy levels. We seemed to give each other energy—it wasn't draining. We had different strengths too and bounced our ideas off one another with ease.

A: That's right Terri and I remember how honest we could be. We were both uncertain about teaching language arts but we set about learning.

T: Annie, that second year was so amazing—finding new ideas and making them grow—constructing integrated units. I can almost feel the energy now—the kids energy and ours too—knowing we were on to something and loving the feeling—knowing the kids were getting the best we could offer.

A: I sure missed you, Terri when you left to have your first baby. When I think about our teaching, I think about the spaces we made for each other. I was amazed by what you did—I learned so much and I'm sure our enjoyment was obvious to the children. We trusted one another's knowing. Best of all, I remember the laughter...and it's still there whenever we meet.

T: Do you remember, Annie, we said we'd team again one day? Maybe that dream will come true. I guess I'll have to sub first and then go part time.

A: Well, you just tell me when. In the meantime I'll write our story. Writing will help me to figure out team teaching relationships.

In reading this story in my university class, I think about the need to invite the teachers in my story of mandated team teaching to offer their accounts (Mishler, 1986b). I realize my story telling is but one telling. While I was troubled by my experience I try to imagine the retellings of Jon, Mike, Terri and Linda. I know I must talk at length with them in order to better understand and uncover the dilemmas of knowing (Lyons, 1990; Noddings, 1991) for each of us. I see the opportunity for a mutual reconstruction and in this process lies the possibility to generate questions that may frame my inquiry into team teaching.

In a three week period (October 28 to November 20, 1994) I visit Jon at his school; Mike, Terri and Linda in their homes. Our conversation is easy. A bond

exists between us as former colleagues at Riverview School. As I write about our "sustained conversations" (Hollingsworth, 1994), I am mindful of a fidelity to relationships (Noddings, 1986). I must honour the collaborative spirit of each tape recorded meeting (Mishler, 1986b; Noddings, 1991; Oakley, 1981). My transcriptions represent the willingness of Jon, Mike, Terri, and Linda to tell their stories; to engage in collaborative work for education.

In all stories there are omissions (Steele, 1986), whether by forgetfulness or by the details chosen for inclusion. In these stories, I invite my former colleagues to go back in time, to reflect on experience. Of course there are details unremembered and as I sit with four typed transcripts from individual tapes, each one running for over an hour, I select segments of conversation to help me make meaning of this experience. As I do this, I consider my fidelity to each person. This prompts me to write a letter to each one as a way of giving them back their words mingled with my thoughts. In this way my research text becomes collaboratively negotiated (Eisner, 1991), open to their scrutiny, response and final approval. Like Brown and Gilligan (1992) I seek to ground my work empirically "in experience and in the realities of relationship and of difference, of time and place" (p. 23).

I present my letters, to Jon, Mike, Terri, and Linda, prefaced by a poem, a snapshot capturing each colleague in the present so that readers can reflect on their storied lives, their narrative sub texts nested in my story.

Multiple Reconstructions: Collaborative re-storying

Visiting Jon

"Come at 8:30, this Friday
you must see my school"

we walk the halls
pausing at open doorways
so many teacher teams
paired collaborations
friendly smiles
happy kids—
Hallowe'en art everywhere

"What a lovely school
for your third principalship—
I'd be happy
to work here,"
I say

you smile...
we enter your office—
turning on the tape recorder
you
cast
your
mind
back...
thinking carefully
speaking thoughtfully

My Letter to Jon

Dear Jon,

I enjoyed my visit to your school on October 28 and was really interested to see so much team teaching. You told me your building is the same age as Riverview School. I thought you must feel quite at home in this setting; a similar setting to

Riverview with teaching areas suited to teams of two, with folding curtains to divide the space as needed.

I want to thank you for the additional time you spent with me in subsequent conversations. When I brought my writing over to your house, I planned to drop it off but instead you invited me in. We chatted about it, at the kitchen table over home-made wine. We got together again, during Christmas vacation, for the final revision. In that conversation I believe we arrived at a mutual re-storying of our work together.

Our various conversations got me thinking about the way in which we all lead storied lives. And yet in the 1982-83 school year we did not share our past experiences. We did not speak of our hopes or our fears. Did professional concerns take up the space leaving little room for our past or our futures? Or was it simply our reticence in the early stages of coming to know one another? Now we can tell our stories. And this is how you storied your life experience prior to our teaching together at Riverview:

> I grew up on a farm in South Dakota. I went to a one room country school for the first eight years. I loved going to school and being around people. When I got through high school in 1957 everyone was encouraged to go to college and after graduating I taught junior high and high school and, at the same time, began graduate studies. Three years later I got my masters and was appointed as the principal of a small elementary school. We were working in an innovative way, with team teaching and differentiated staffing, at a time when Individually Guided Education became a reality in the U.S.A.. Because of what we were doing, our school was encouraged to become part of a network of IGE schools. We got a lot of headlines from the State Education Department about our work.
>
> After five years in that school, I was appointed as principal of an IGE school for six hundred students, Kindergarten through Grade 8. After two years the State Department hired me as an IGE facilitator. I travelled the state and got involved with the Kettering Foundation, conducting IGE workshops for them. Because of my work I was invited to do a doctorate at the University of Nebraska and continued to conduct professional development sessions in IGE schools in that state. I got my doctorate in 1977 and taught for four years at the University of Wyoming, working with student teachers, teaching undergraduate methods courses and graduate courses too.

Hearing your story, Jon, makes me think about the plot lines in our lives and about the unexpected twists and turns along the way. Events, both personal and professional, cause sudden shifts in life's composition. The challenge for you in coming to Alberta was that of restorying yourself in changed personal circumstances, in a new country with new dreams. The connections you made in this part of the world, in your consulting work, proved helpful. You began again.

> I got a call, at the University of Wyoming, saying there's a position as assistant principal at Riverview School. I came on the scene in September 1981. The school was already underway.... It was my perception that Sue wanted a multi-aged team teaching school—she wanted Riverview to be a lighthouse school in the system.... When our teams were put together it was planned that I would work with the 3rd and 4th grade.... I'd not been in an elementary classroom for fourteen years. The first year I was there I was teaching over 70% of the time and also trying to learn a system. It was very stressful for me but it was a good school and good people...that was my salvation...I was there to learn the whole system of administration...so that eventually I could get my own school, which I desperately wanted.

Reading this now Jon, I realize the difficulty of composing a life, in a new context, as you worked towards your goal of becoming a principal. Like me, you parachuted into a plot line in someone else's story. Was it Sue's story? Was it a system story? Was it a North American story of innovation in education, representing the swinging pendulum of change? Was it all of these? As you continued telling your story I realized you did not see yourself as a project visionary for our five member team. As well, you did not see us as being involved in Individually Guided Education. You explained:

> When I came to Riverview it wasn't because of IGE, I wasn't going to bring that into my workplace...it wasn't my role but there were people on staff...who thought that I was going to be IGE'ing Riverview School. They thought this because I did two workshops, on Individually Guided Education, for a group of principals in the system.... I didn't want to be labelled Mr. IGE—I wanted to be a good educator—to promote excellence in education and to use processes that are effective and positive.
>
> I have no idea where the five member team came from.... It was carrying forward what we had done in my first year at the school.... As we evolved it's my perception that Sue always said, "Whoever's

here will team teach", and she would interview someone and my expectation would be that she would put that right in front of each applicant—team teaching—possibly multi-aging like the university demonstration school.... The expectation from Sue was teachers would make it work. She never really verbalized that, but Sue would kind of make you guess what she wanted and you always knew that it was out there but she wouldn't come out and say, "Thou shalt". I have a sense of working very hard and of everything being totally new and of just trying to keep sanity.... We were all probably into survival mode.

You make me think, Jon, of how little you knew of Sue's story: her history in teaching, the scope of her personal practical knowledge, the expression of her beliefs in her image of Riverview School. And of course, given her untimely death, there is so much all of us will never know.

Your story led me to the Kettering Foundation IGE literature, disseminated by the Institute for Development of Educational Activities (1975). I was fascinated to learn that John Goodlad was the director of this research program—a five year project in 18 schools in Southern California. I spent a whole day reading the materials in their training kit for schools. This has helped me to understand how your old story of IGE Consultant, which was known in the system, was at odds with your new story of becoming an administrator. I now understand IGE as part of your lived experience and how certain aspects of it entered into the work of our team as you shared your knowledge of innovative methods.

Talking with you also helped me to think about the issue of team leadership. I storied you as the leader but you described your leadership in terms of facilitation. You explained your belief in "emerging leaders". You saw Mike in this light and trusted his ability; a trust based on your observations working with him the previous year.

J: Mike's leadership was just emerging. That's the way he is.

A: So...if there are five of us there and we're doing our work—is there a leader?

J: Facilitation is a form of leadership. The notion of facilitating the team is still leading the team but allowing for individual skills and emerging leadership to happen. It's hard to collaborate, and at the same time encourage teachers, without telling them what to do...but individual team members need to

> be accountable and I say this and it's based upon more than just our experience on that team. As I have looked at teaming, and probably I've been exposed more to the two teacher teams, I know teachers right now that are going through the problem of trying to keep focus and one not wanting to tell the other one what to do. And so the team is becoming semi-dysfunctional because no one is taking charge and being accountable and saying, "This is what we've got to do. Let's get it done."... And so a leader has to emerge and do that, for the team to be successful.
>
> When I talk about somebody needing to take charge of a team that goes back to the notion of self-image psychology that says somebody has to be accountable. If it doesn't get done they are responsible. So if Mike was going to be the one that coordinated the math tubs, then he would be making sure that everything was in place. That's what I mean by being accountable. Someone has to take charge and be accountable for the various parts.

As I read this excerpt, Jon, I am able to see the accountability built in to the specialist roles on the team but I am thinking hard about what happened when I saw myself as expert in one curriculum area and therefore by definition my knowledge in other curriculum areas was not at the same level. This posed dilemmas of knowing for me. I was living out the old story of expert within a new collaborative framework. As well, my understanding of leadership was rooted in the old story. To me you were the leader because of your administrative designation. But you explained:

> I was merely trying to facilitate.... Getting everybody to come to consensus or agreement was the toughest part of that whole notion of the team. I never viewed myself as the idea person or the leader in terms of what we needed to do but I did share my experiences as a teacher and a principal—IGE being part of them and achieving your potential as being part of them. I think of myself as a practical person, a practitioner not an academic.
>
> And I believe very strongly that in order for teachers to be able to work together...you have to be compatible. If you're compatible you can grow together and work together and forgive each other and it will work. But if you're not compatible it can just be a year of frustration.... That's the thing that's so hard. Can you know until you're put together whether you're compatible?

This issue of compatibility is an important one, Jon, and we talked about the models for team teaching, in this school system, coming from the university demonstration school. I think we uncovered something important in the following exchange:

> A: The university demonstration school was that notion of, you come to a teaming school, we put you together and away you go.... I don't think they ever had much to do with the notion of compatibility. They just put people in and it was an expectation—you will be able to do this.
>
> J: Another expectation too was, you won't stay long. You'll do it for a few years and you'll be gone. The people they got were what I call up and comers, the go-getters. So they're there for personal advancement and they've got to prove that they can do this...and can then move out into leadership roles and I think that's different...

It is different Jon, but it is also difficult—difficult because this story of mandated team teaching, of high stakes relationships has a very different plot line from the plot lines of teachers at Riverview. You mentioned that a lot of what we were doing was based on the university demonstration school and, in fact, you saw it as the model for Riverview. Perhaps mandated relationships in one context can be sustained if the stakes are high enough in terms of advancement. Those who view from a distance see a model that seems to work, a model suggesting that good things will happen when good teachers are designated in team teaching relationships. But your experience, Jon, suggests the importance of a storied knowing of one another as contributing in important ways to the notion of compatibility. You explained:

> I really believe it all gets down to personalities and where you are at that time in your life—what's going on, because family life, outside interests—all of that has an impact.... Teachers have to want to work together. If a teacher does not want to team teach, you can't make it happen...and that's O.K..

I believe this too, Jon, and by talking together about our lived experience, by mining this story for new insight and by writing about it, perhaps new ways to live stories of collaboration in teaching will be possible. I'm thinking of your reflections on what you learned along the way. I imagine them guiding you now:

> I've been very lucky. I think I'm one of the luckiest educators that there could be because of all my experiences. They're all part of who I am.

> And in our experience of teaming at Riverview, we evolved to the fact that a two teacher team was best and was the most efficient...two teacher teams make more sense, whether they're graded or whether they're multi-aged...the two teacher team allows you to be very familiar with your responsibility group...I guess we didn't know when we began and had to find out—maybe there hadn't been enough research done.... I was just of the opinion by the time we were done that it's just too hard to try to coordinate five people on a daily basis where there has to be so much common planning.... I've come out of the experience of coordinating five people, of trying to coordinate and have a full understanding of all those kids—I think it is impossible. It's something I wouldn't do...it's too cumbersome. I'm a pretty strong advocate now, of two teacher teams...I really believe that teachers should keep kids for more than one year. I think there's real value in that.

That's my ideal too Jon. I like having the opportunity to experience continuity of person, place and program with children and to do so in a team teaching relationship. I guess I've been working on these ideas for the past twelve years, at Riverview School and now in my doctoral work. Thank you so much for being part of this work. I look forward to sharing it with you.

Cheers,
Annie

Visiting Mike

"Come on Saturday—
my girls will be playing
we can talk"

I drive half an hour
westward out of town
the Rockies clear—
lightly dusted
with the first snow of winter
but in warm afternoon sunshine
we tour your yard
I say, "Hi!" to your kids
the twins now in grade three
their sister in grade five

I marvel
at this spectacular location

over tea in the kitchen
we talk of your new job
another vice-principalship
in the city...
you tell of dreams
of your own school—
we speak of present realities

comfortable in the living room
you turn on the tape recorder
we reconstruct
that first year together...
intense honesty
punctuated by shared laughter

My Letter to Mike

Dear Mike,

It was great to see you on November 5, to catch up on our lives and talk about our first year teaching together. I was fascinated to hear your story of coming to Alberta in 1981 and being assigned to Riverview School, as a substitute teacher, during the first year of its operation. Your work with the children impressed the administration and they hired you. I can imagine how happy you were to secure your first teaching position, after five years in business in Toronto. It must have been discouraging to find teaching positions so hard to come by in 1976 after graduating with an Honours B.Sc. from the University of Guelph and a B.Ed. from Queens. Luckily you were immediately chosen as a participant in a year long training course in business management. You pursued this interim career path, demonstrating a level of commitment resulting in frequent promotion. As we spoke, you also provided background which helped me to understand how our five member team came to be:

> When I came to Riverview, Sue and Jon saw an opportunity...Sue worked so hard to keep me on permanent staff and Sue was reasonably powerful, well known and well respected.... Somehow she arranged it.... Basically Sue handpicked the staff.... She never seemed to direct...she encouraged innovation. I had no sense that she had some

> grand plan other than she wanted top people doing top things.... One of the things she liked about me was the fact that I was willing to take some risks.
>
> Jon was a large impetus in trying to do stuff together, in my substitute year, and I was agreeable. We talked about multi-aging so it was in our heads that year before you came. We wanted to do 3/4 stuff together.... It was kind of fun and we were enjoying it.... As we went into the next year the idea was, maybe we would have four classrooms but it wasn't a definitely articulated plan.... It's possible Sue wanted to start modelling a different kind of teaming in the building...so she encouraged it.... I was excited about doing it. I had no problem about doing it with five people except that I'd never done it before. I was willing to try anything. I'd only been in the classroom for six months...so that whole five way team arose out of the interaction from the year before and wanting to continue something along those lines and being excited about it and seeing an opportunity. Sue was supportive enough to say, "Run with it".... I'm not so sure she said anything to Jon other than, "Carry on."

Your story, Mike, helps me to see how team teaching was cutting edge practice at the time. And yet even though open area schools had been in vogue for fifteen years, so little had been written about this form of teacher collaboration. There must have been stories of team teaching and yet it seems the only ones voiced were those about the university demonstration school. As I see it now, if Riverview was to be seen as a lighthouse school, we as teachers, needed to either emulate the expert practice of the university demonstration school or co-construct an alternative model of team teaching. Perhaps that's what we were doing? Our work was a collaborative exploration of possibilities but nobody named it as such.

I told you how puzzled I was about the issue of team leadership and we explored this topic at length. Unlike me, you remembered many leaders: the administrators as well as our team members. In this next excerpt, from our conversation, you make a connection for me between leadership and voice:

> I think there were a lot of leaders.... I remember times when I was very strong about some things...I was the youngest...I was single, new to the game and excited.... Terri also had some strong ideas...and single, yes. Linda was at the other end of the spectrum, closer to retirement. She was an amazing lady. She was willing to take

risks.... She said, "I'll go on this train...I'll try. I'll learn". She was always willing to get in there.

I could see being perceived as a leader because I was there, excited and I talk a lot...I see Terri pushing a whole lot of stuff...particularly with social studies and science...I probably was a leader but not consciously. I was excited about what was happening...having the youthful energy and not having the other commitments in my life....

Sue was the leader. She was not specific but she encouraged the risk. Jon was the leader because he was the team's administrator but he wasn't *the leader.* All of us contributed to what was going on.

While you recognize multiple leaders, Mike, you also speak of an additional need to have a team member take on "the facilitative administrative role." You explained:

You need to have someone who is a leader...not someone who will exclusively say, "What I say goes", but someone who is willing to take the reins and say,"O.K. we have to make a decision about this or we have to go in this direction...." Someone has got to be the leader. Now you can call that facilitation but I think it's a little more than facilitation. The others will have enough respect to say, "O.K., he says 'Stop'—we'll stop. If she says, "Stop", we'll stop".... At some point someone has got to have the ability to say, "No, we're going to make a decision and that's it and we're going to go forward with it." And you need to have someone who is clearly that person. Now there's possibilities that, that can change. Sometimes it can be another person who is wise enough at the moment to say, "Hey guys no, we've got to stop here...you're all off track." But there has to be someone who is wanting to take that facilitative administrative role.

You can assume that different individuals have expertise and will lead in different areas, but when it comes right down to it, you have to have someone who is going to finally make some kind of decision, who is going to keep the group on track—who is going to lead the group. You have to have a leader and I know this is contrary to everything the school board is saying. They're saying it should be like what we lived and that a leader simply sets up the environment and lets people go with it. It's not good enough—because there's a sense of morality behind it. Is this good for kids? Someone's got to

> say that. How are parents going to view it? Somebody has to have that over-riding responsibility.

Mike, when you talk about needing someone to have the "over-riding responsibility" for the group, something which Jon also mentioned, is this a retreat back to the old story of decision-making and leadership that we have all experienced? In times of struggle we might look to this as a solution. But is it collaborative? I certainly was looking for that kind of leadership in our first year together. It was how I understood systems. I had no stories of collaborative leadership to guide me. I'm thinking now that collaborative leadership is perhaps different from Jon's sense of emerging leadership which may create an imbalance in relationships. When I think of collaborative leadership, I have an image of teachers engaging in a process of mutual negotiation that embodies your notions of respect for persons, collective wisdom and, most important, a sense of what is moral. Do you suppose our group of five achieved collaborative leadership at the end of our first year? Did we reorganize guided by the aspect of "morality" you are bringing forward? I remember saying to Jon, "I will not get up in the gym and tell parents this is the best thing for their kids!" Did we have the collective wisdom, of which you speak, to arrive at a decision which mutually benefitted children? Did we demonstrate respect for each other? Was it collaborative leadership? What do you think? I believe we acted in concert. We negotiated possible solutions to our dilemmas. We listened to each other. We did not seem to need someone to have "over-riding responsibility". It took a whole school year to reach the point where it was possible for each of us to imagine a new chapter in our teaching and turn the page on our experience of mandated team teaching. Your reflections on this are powerful:

> You can't force the marriage. You have to have a group of people who agree to go in with a sense of what it is they're going to go into. We didn't have that. Everyone was coming at it from different perspectives and that's where a lot of the clashing came from. What made it work for the kids was the fact that we were very professional.... Each of us had a lot of strength to bring to what we were doing. As a result good things did happen. We were professional enough not to tear ourselves apart but it was very tough on all of us to get through that year.... We were all at very different life stages but if we had gone into it knowing that.... I didn't really know about your kids...and the fact that you hadn't taught as a classroom teacher for 12 years. To me you were an experienced teacher, so was Terri and certainly so was Linda. I was the baby—I thought you knew exactly what you were doing.

> That's where today if you want to develop something like that...don't go to teachers and say, "You two have to work together." That's not going to work either—somehow the people involved in a teaming situation have to recognize...there's some real advantage to it.... They have to want to work together.... They also have to understand each other. Somehow they'd have to come to know each other...their strengths, their weaknesses, their fears and...get to sit and talk.... We didn't have that opportunity.

You are telling an important story Mike. These reflections on your experience need to be shared; your voice needs to be heard:

> The five member team didn't work...because the personalities involved were thrust into a scenario that they really didn't want to be in. It was partly what they wanted but not wholly what they wanted. It was *more* than what they wanted...I've never looked back with regret or feeling really upset.... It was a time to take risks, an environment to take risks...and it was very energizing.... And I was thinking I was doing the right thing because it was innovative, new and exciting.... I still think of myself as being quite young at 27 and energetic and thrilled because I'm teaching. I'm in the job I really wanted to be in and in a school that was wonderful to me with excellent people, excellent surroundings, very supportive...that energy has never left me and I'm thankful....

Your sense of, "It was <u>more</u> than what they wanted" rings so true for me too. Like you Mike, "that energy has never left me and I'm thankful". I'm also thankful for our phone conversations. You've helped me to think harder about the complexity of collaboration. I look forward to giving you this letter, to receiving your response and to our ongoing conversations.

Best wishes,
Annie

Visiting Terri

a fifteen minute
Sunday morning drive
north of the city
to your farm—

snow new fallen
slippery crisp
in November sunshine

I turn on rural roads
feel the grip of gravel
park—
amid familiar farm buildings
and knock

your kindergartner greets me
intent on shovelling snow
his sister and brother—
grade three and grade four
busy at the table
making cards for their dad

we talk—they talk
you tell of volunteering at their school
we catch up on lives
amid smiles and laughter
then lunch all together
in the kitchen

a couple of hours slide by—
I turn on the tape recorder
we remember and laugh...
laugh and remember

My Letter to Terri

Dear Terri,

I've just been going over the transcript of our November 13 conversation, smiling again in all the places where our laughter appears. Laughter is such a part of our narrative way of knowing and in the words of Sewall (1994), "laughter is relationship...laughter lives in story" (p. 199) and truth comes to us "on the heels of good laughter" (p. 279). You're helping me to corral the truth. How's that for a good farm metaphor?

In trying to unpack this story it's come to me how little any of us knew of one another. Sketchy fragments of your past were part of my knowing; those first connections that cemented our friendship. But I had no sense of the sequence of your teacher education or of your teaching experience. It was great to finally hear you tell this story:

> I did my degree in physical education at Brock...then a year in Britain...gave me an advanced diploma in outdoor education...through the University of Liverpool at I.M. Marsh College.
>
> I did my year of teacher training when I came home, in Toronto—U of T.... The one thing that teacher's college did is instilled responsibility and commitment.... I really liked my elementary practice teaching. I was a physical education and science major.... I subbed around in Ontario for a while.... I knew I wanted to teach but I just didn't feel—you know that feeling of belonging...I had enjoyed my time in England so much and everything seemed to work out just about right there, and seemed to fit me—and there didn't seem a lot that fit when I came back.
>
> I came to Alberta in 1980 and found a school board with an Outdoor School...I went for an interview and was hired. I really enjoyed my two years at the Outdoor School. I felt very productive there. I felt like the kids were getting everything I could give them...I was very committed to what I believed in—I had beliefs that were very strong and I was willing to stand up for them.... That's probably something I do a lot and at that point did too much and therefore wasn't really willing to bend....

You remind me, Terri, of our strong physical education connection and our shared passion for outdoor education. I remember your stories of white water canoeing and your amazing sense of adventure. I liked that. I'm also thinking about "the having of strong beliefs". I have them too but tend to be quite silent, voicing them only when I'm at the end of my tether. I certainly reached that point by June of our first year. I laughed after reading this excerpt from our conversation:

> A: I couldn't continue for another year...I outright said, "I will not do it." I'd felt a real sense of being silent that year but when it got right down to it at the end, I was very clear. The real capper was when Jon said in order to continue and maintain the staffing of the team, we had to pick up Grade 2s.

> Well that just did it. I said, "There is no way I'm going to do this with Grade 2, 3 and 4...I will not get up in a gym full of parents and tell them this is the best thing for their kids." And once I had said that much—

T: Annie said something—Oh, we've got to do this (laughter). Everybody—do this.

Your teasing reminds me of another quote by Sewall which seems fitting. "By laughter we create and recreate ourselves...laughter keeps us in our relationships" (p. 181). I guess at times Terri I wasn't "willing to bend" either but I believe, as a team, we came to respect and accept each other's strong beliefs. I've got us a bit off track here but I want to return to your story of coming to Riverview School. You explained:

> I had applied for a transfer from the Outdoor School because I was getting married...I remember being really impressed with Sue and the new school. Sue always made you feel pretty special. Don't you remember everybody in that school talking about how Sue had hired the best teachers? She took me on a tour and...talked about working as a team and she asked me lots of questions...but I don't recall ever knowing what the teaming situation was going to be. I don't recall five...and at that time I felt really good about teaming because I'd just been working in one.
>
> There's a lot to be gained if the team works out and I knew it was a possibility that teams might not work out because I'd been through that at the Outdoor School.... Good ideas weren't supposed to come from somebody who is first year there, right...

I'm thinking now Terri, that your lived experience of teaming at the Outdoor School prepared you in some ways for the Riverview experience. You were used to working with male team partners and had experienced their varied response to your ideas. You had also worked in a team of six. In contrast, my experience working alone as a physical education specialist gave me no stories to live by. But as a parent I'd been aware of team teaching from a distance. My eldest daughter had just completed Grade 1 at the university demonstration school. I'd been impressed by what I saw. Her Grade 1 experience with two teachers in a double classroom was very positive. In this way I had come to believe team teaching was good for children. Seeing from a distance however, did not prepare me for our five member team.

You and I wondered together about whose vision of education we were enacting. There seemed to be multiple visions, each one dependent on an individual plot line and in the absence of knowing or understanding the various plot lines, we experienced puzzlement and collective frustration:

T: Interesting to know whose vision this was...I always thought it was Jon's. This was Jon's deal.

A: Sue was just opening up the opportunities for teachers to come together...to have a lighthouse school in the district...she's trying to do a lighthouse story, Jon's trying to do an administrator's story, and—

T: And we just want to teach children as best we can.

A: The biggest thing I see wrong was there was definitely a plan of how we were going to work and I would like to have been in on that plan...to come together and say, "Look we're five teachers, how is it that we can manage these children?" and that didn't happen...

T: My frustrations were from the situation we had been put in—recognizing that it wasn't the best for everybody...I think I probably felt a lot of conflict that year...like to do things my way (laughter).... I think Mike was of the same disposition, where he wanted to make his point known.... We were both strong and vocal about things. It's just that I don't think either of us had the experience to cope with it. I'm talking about life experience not just teaching experience.... When you're young and keen like that you want to do the best you can and you can see all these exciting possibilities and I'm sure Mike saw this. He could visualize what these five classrooms could look like and how they were going to interact and he really wanted to make that work....

But I'm not sure that something like that should work. What's the point of it working? What benefit are the kids going to get out of it? If a team of two seems to work really well, why put kids in a team of five where there is more instability, more inconsistencies...these are little kids....

A: As I think about it now the five person team was actually two pods of two with Jon slotting in...not having a classroom assignment and what that did, when he came in, it moved into five groupings—so it took away the sense of community. There was no longer a classroom community of Terri's kids. There was no longer a classroom community of what Terri and Linda might be together. So Jon slots in and we're this configuration of no community and nothing was fixed.

T: And nobody knows where they belong....

In this passage Terri, you bring up the notion of having life experiences as well as teaching experiences to cope with collaboration. I'm thinking of the distinct lack of stories for us to live by. Perhaps our story can be a guide for other teachers? Our story demonstrates the nested nature of life experiences and teaching experiences. I'm thinking of this now in terms of your observation about Mike being able to "visualize what these five classrooms could look like and how they were going to interact." Did this ability come from his previous experience as a sales manager for Simpsons in Toronto with a staff of forty-eight? He told me about managing timetables and thinking about store floor plans and traffic flow. That kind of lived experience is part of his embodied knowing. Those skills are part of who he is. I must ask Mike if his vision of the interaction of the five classrooms was based on shifting his knowledge from a known context, the department store, to his new situation in a school.

You've made me think of educators holding theoretical visions for education versus educators holding visions grounded in practice. If practice is to shape theory then our stories of team teaching are all the more important in terms of a better understanding of collaboration.

The issue of teacher compatibility was raised by Jon and we also talked about it:

T: I don't know how you determine how people are compatible to teach if you haven't had some kind of previous experience.... So much just has to be the right people together and that doesn't generally happen by accident....

A: There has to be some knowing...it's like any relationship.... What are the things that connect people and what are the differences that bring about this thing called compatibility because you don't want two people that are entirely the same.

T: That's what was perhaps difficult for Mike and me.

A: Too much the same?

T: Yes, I think so—without the experience that goes along with working together so closely.

A: Strong ideas (laughter).

T: I must have been really awful to work with.

A: I don't think so...you've got this element of honesty.... When something was not going right you would say, "This isn't right."

T: Maybe I didn't do it in the best way.

A: No.... Sometimes I was surprised —but you were right about it and you would say, "Wait a minute, we have to talk about this," and so you did exactly what Jon says has to happen in teaming.... But you didn't say..., "We have to *do* this." You would say, "Stop, we have to *talk about* this," so then we would figure it out.

T: I would be a whole lot different going back now, than I was 12 years ago, because I know more, not just about teaching...but just about life.

I hope you will return, Terri, as a mother-teacher. Perhaps we could both parachute back into Jon's plot line and team teach once more. I'll leave you with that thought and I'll look forward to seeing you soon.

Love,
Annie

Visiting Linda

we sit at the kitchen table
coffee pot perking—
your husband in the living room

glued to the football game
"Retirement is great,"
you say

we share news
of former colleagues
and stories of your grandchildren
"How are your girls?"
you ask—
remembering them as babies

pouring coffee
you tell of your four children
as little ones
watching from this kitchen window
their school playground...
going out the back gate
when they counted ten kids
to be safe with

"Living this close
was such a help
when I left so early
for my own teaching days"

"Tell me about that"
I respond
as my tape recorder
captures experiences
lived
and
retold

My Letter to Linda

Dear Linda,

I really enjoyed our kitchen table talk on November 20—finally having the opportunity to hear you story your teaching career and wishing I'd known enough to ask twelve years ago. You made me think of how much teacher education has changed from your one year of training in Moose Jaw, in 1947. I can imagine the challenge of one-room schools in rural Saskatchewan in your first years of teaching.

The booming building trade brought you and your carpenter husband to Alberta, where you started your family. You returned to full time teaching, high school physical education, when your youngest child was a year old. I think of how hard that must have been. You spoke of "feeling guilty leaving home at 7 a.m. and returning at 7 p.m.." You made a decision, as a mother-teacher, to work part-time and found work for a few years with Kindergarten and Grade 1 youngsters. You talked about learning a lot. You learned from other teachers. You mentioned a Grade 1 teacher who was angry about a mandated basal reading series:

> It was the first time I'd ever come across anybody rebelling against it. The Grade 1 teacher was absolutely livid because supervisors used to come in and we would have to be on a particular page by February 14 and if you weren't, you caught hell.

You also talked about learning from children when you worked half-time at a Jewish school with Grade 1:

> You could do anything you wanted. It was really fun...you had these really sharp kids...it was the most wonderful experience. I knew this was good training...I wanted to get into full time teaching again with the public system. I was also doing in-services.

Your words Linda, tell me so much about your ability as a curriculum maker and also your desire to be current as an educator. You were a teacher, a mother, and a wife—pretty amazing I'd say! You were even juggling roles in your first year back as a full-time teacher. You taught two different kindergarten classes with your youngest child participating in both. Your early stories remind me of all the juggling in my part-time years, and also of the increased pressure I experienced, returning to full-time teaching at Riverview.

Our talk moved on to our first year together at Riverview School. You shed light on Sue's story, her story as a principal shaping a new school:

A: So tell me how you got to Riverview.

L: Sue phoned me and asked me if I'd come. Is that how you got there? Sue had worked with me in an educational opportunity project for high needs schools...trying to loosen up Grade 1.... She knew of my work in other schools too. That's the reason she asked for me...I'd put my name in for a transfer...she took

me around and then she sat me down and asked me all the stuff that I wanted to order. I just had this wonderful time...

A: Did you know about this five member team?

L: No idea. She just said, "Would you be interested in team teaching?" Of course I'd done so much team teaching, that's all I did at my last school. But little did I know that there was going to be five of us...five was a bit much, wasn't it?

A: So whose idea were we doing?

L: I think it was Sue's. Sue wanted multi-aging.... That was her intent. Now why we did the five thing, I don't know...maybe it was Sue's plan taking it from...my work team teaching at Hidden Valley School. Three of us went to every in-service we could possibly go to... We loved working together and I think that's really the thing. We were three different kinds of people.... We would go over to the university demonstration school and see teaming. Our principal was ready to try new ideas and he would let us go.... We tried multi-aging. We tried all sorts (laughter). Sue saw us do it.... She was an area superintendent then.... When I talked to Sue, she did talk team teaching and she did talk multi-aging and we did talk about the teaming at Hidden Valley. But I had nothing to do with setting up the timetable.

A: But three of us parachute in and there is a timetable, so my thinking says, "If there's a timetable, there was a plan and if there's a plan...."

L: It must have been Sue. It had to be Sue...I think it just grew.

I love this story, Linda, of your invitation to Riverview School. It says so much about the importance of relationships, of comfort levels for both teacher and principal, and Sue's knowledge over time of your practice. She knew you as an innovator in the area of language arts. Your innovative ways were cultivated by your principal at Hidden Valley. As well, you were fortunate to work with a former principal of the university demonstration school just prior to your appointment at Riverview. You described him as "a fantastic principal" who taught you that "everybody has to learn". I really believe you modelled this too, Linda, throughout

the final eight years of your career at Riverview. Your patience shines through in this next excerpt from our conversation as we discuss collaboration:

A: Jon brought up the notion of compatibility.

L: I just think it is *so* important. It's imperative...it can make or break a team. Trying to work in a team when there is no compatibility is useless.

A: In teams where you worked, how did you get together?

L: Little by little we would start to plan together.... We became very good friends.... One of the things that we did at Hidden Valley School was we went to in-services, went after school to classrooms that were doing team teaching.... We would go and talk to teachers. We would come back and brainstorm ideas we wanted to implement. I think that was important—three of us going instead of me saying, "Oh, I've been there and this is how it is."

A: On our team of five were you thinking at any time, this is pretty crazy?

L: Oh yes, of course...I guess I kept hoping it was going to come together.

A: But maybe Linda, could you live with more of an exploratory feel to this than me?

L: Oh I'm sure...because I've been through it.

A: You were patient with the players.

L: That's right, I thought it would come together.

A: —or not.

L: —or not (laughter). The kids enjoyed it and that was the main thing.

A: Mike and I said there were moments of brilliance—some very exciting things and I learned a lot from everybody.

L: Oh yes, this is what it's all about.

A: Maybe learning is hard?

L: I think it is. Egotistically we want to sit back and think we kind of know it.... As far as I'm concerned, even to that last year of my career, I kept learning. I don't think you ever stop learning in teaching.

Your words, Linda, dispel notions of teacher experts. Instead you remind me of teachers researching their practice together, in collaboration, in conversation. You remind me that this takes time. In your story of Hidden Valley School, I am able to see a team teaching script written and negotiated by three teachers who chose to be in relationship. The theories all of you subscribed to shaped your practice and you were fully supported in the change process by your principal. Your story makes me think of "a readiness" to work in this way. You were ready to collaborate, ready to engage fully in necessary conversation, ready to arrive at a mutually constructed plan for children. Your previous experience guided you as this next excerpt shows:

L: I didn't really feel there was a leader. Jon maybe, if there was anybody I guess, but we certainly had a lot of discussions.... Mike and Terri both had strong ideas...I saw you as very open...ready to learn and try different things...but so often it can become terribly, terribly confusing to incorporate what anybody's doing because it's working for them and it doesn't work for you.

A: As the teacher with the most experience, how did you see those team meetings?

L: The planning was good for me. I like that kind of thing...I like to banter back and forth with teachers finding out—

A: That was not frustrating for you?

L: No, I didn't find that frustrating. I knew you did and I knew Terri did.... You would say, "How can we do this?" and then we would say we could divide them into 4s or into low,

middle, high. We were switching those kids back and forth.... I think there was a lot of good learning ...but we were floundering at times...

A: Say more about the floundering.

L: We floundered in movement of kids...loss of time and loss of kids at times. Not knowing exactly where they were at...I think that's one of the drawbacks, the tracking of kids.... One of the big pluses I felt was that the kids enjoyed school. I really think they had a good time...

A I think we did have good stuff happen but it was too hard to do it.

L: And I think one of the reasons it was too hard to do it was because...if you are going to do something like that you've got to be harmonious and you have everybody—not so much they have their expertise in a subject matter but they have to have an expertise in maybe creativity and maybe organization. I think that's important in a team. If you get people who are not ready to be flexible then I think it can be disastrous for the teachers.

You seem to be suggesting, Linda, other vital elements that are part of harmonious team teaching relationships: flexibility, creativity and the ability to organize. These personality traits, for you, transcend subject matter knowledge. Are these traits all part of what it means to be compatible? Are they part of the knowing that needs to be in place in order for teachers to choose a team teaching relationship? I must think hard about this as well as the issue of readiness for team teaching.

I don't think I was ready for our five member team and perhaps Terri and Mike were situated similarly. You laughed when I told you that not one of us could story your thoughts of the experience that year. We wondered if you were silenced by it? Baffled by it? Now I know differently. I know your story. I wish I had known it then.

A: You were the person who had the most experience of this kind of teaching...so I'm thinking I would like to have heard more from you—

L: (Laughter) I've never been one to push. I don't think you can push people into doing something. It has to evolve. Everybody has to feel really comfortable.

A: I think of those meetings. I think it was good that we were allowed to feel comfortable, to go at things behind the closed door.... If I think about what I learned that year, I learned to be honest about what I knew.... It became clear to me what I didn't know.

L: In our meetings there was a lot of intensity but I felt we came out with a plan and we did know where we were going. I liked that.... I learned a lot about planning.... If I was by myself...I would go by the seat of my pants and I don't think that's the ideal way to teach.... I learned a lot about physical education. The kind you taught and the kind that I taught were as different as night and day. I learned a lot about science. Terri was...so enthusiastic and just so wonderful about it. In fact even to this day, I tell my grandchildren all the stories that Terri told....

A: Part of my story—how I was brought up...was very much this business of harmony at all costs.... If there was going to be a problem, my mother had it all smoothed out before it ever happened. So I think when I got into our meetings...I was just trying to smooth things out.

L: (Laughter) Make it work, right.... The thing is, I thought, I know I'm going to go back and do pretty well what I want to do as far as the kids are concerned...and I don't like confrontation. I can really get uptight about it especially if I happen to be in it. Maybe that's the reason I wasn't in it. I just thought okay that's fine (laughter), I'll just go ahead, I'll go back and do my thing...

A: You talked about personalities. How do you describe your personality as a teacher...as a colleague?

L: Peace at any price. I was not an aggressive person.... Everybody has to learn...I don't want to push...sharing yes, pushing ideas, no.

A: That should be a poster (laughter).

L: You do find it out as you go along—this is the way teaching works.

Yes Linda, "You do find it out as you go along." Your wisdom is quite wonderful. Your comment has been echoed in conversation with Jon, Mike and Terri. We all learned. Our year together is a chapter in each of our stories—part of our lived experience shaping subsequent chapters in our ongoing text as teachers. This re-storying, this re-visiting, this re-visioning of our past experience gives rise to new questions and the possibility for insight.

I'll close by sharing these words by Mary Catherine Bateson (1994):

> Men and women confronting change are never fully prepared for the demands of the moment, but they are strengthened to meet uncertainty if they can claim a history of improvisation and a habit of reflection. (p. 6)

I'm sure you relate to this Linda. Now I'm looking forward to my next cup of coffee and our continued kitchen table talk as you review this letter.

Love,

Annie

In the process of writing these letters I learn the importance of teachers' multiple accounts and I am reminded of my original story as simply one telling. I learn to engage in "real talk" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). I also learn that our mandated team teaching configuration proved troubling not only to me. In that first year, in the absence of knowing one another, each of us chose to remain silent. Yet relationship is central to our "ways of knowing" (Belenky et al, 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Lyons, 1983, 1990). In relationship we construct knowledge through "genuine dialogue" (Noddings, 1991). These collaborative narrative reconstructions

(Polkinghorne, 1988) serve as pilot research reminding me that "narrative is both phenomenon and method. Narrative (Carr, 1986) names the structured quality of experience to be studied, and it names the patterns of inquiry" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994a, p. 416). In research conversations (Mishler, 1986; Oakley, 1981) conducted in the present yet grounded in the past, I find a beginning (Sarbin, 1986). The storied context of Riverview School frames my research endeavour[1] and guides my questions. As Carr suggests "the historical past...functions as background for our present experience" (p. 3).

From Conversations and Letters to Research Questions

My letters allow new conversations. There is amazement as each of us reads the storied accounts of the others. It becomes a learning experience for all (Hollingsworth, 1994). We come to see that in our first year together, there was neither the time nor the space for our teachers' stories. Mike's words sum up the experience:

> We were never able to pull it together as a team. We were never a team that year...none of us were really happy with what was happening.
>
> (Conversation, November 5, 1994)

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But what does it mean to be a team and what might be involved in pulling it together and being happy with what is happening? The Riverview stories are an awakening (Clandinin, 1991). I awaken to the complexity of teachers' collaborative relationships on the Riverview landscape. I make a connection with the conceptual framework devised by Clandinin and Connelly (1995) in their book *Teachers' Professional Knowledge Landscapes*. I realize that I can frame my narrative inquiry into team teaching relationships by making use of their comprehensive set of terms which map out the professional knowledge landscape. Their terms offer an alternative discourse for exploring the significance of stories in understanding teachers' professional knowledge. I am familiar with these terms due to my ongoing involvement with their research program as a graduate student.

In their book, they elaborate a metaphor of a professional knowledge landscape which is both intellectual and moral. They imagine it to be positioned at the "interface of theory and practice in teachers' lives" (p. 4). They note that teachers spend part of their time in an "in-classroom place" with children and part of their time in an "out-of-classroom place" interacting professionally with others. Clandinin and Connelly see these as two "fundamentally different places" on the landscape and suggest that there are moral and epistemological dilemmas for teachers as they cross the boundary between these places many times each day.

Clandinin and Connelly (1996) talk about the out-of-classroom place in the following way:

> The place on the landscape outside of our classrooms is a place filled with knowledge funnelled into the school system for the purpose of altering teachers' and children's classroom lives. Teachers talk about this knowledge all the time. We all make reference to "what's coming down the pipe"; "what's coming down now"; "what they will throw down on us next". In these metaphorical expressions, we hear teachers express their knowledge of their out-of-classroom place as a place littered with imposed prescriptions. It is a place filled with other people's visions of what is right for children. Researchers, policy makers, senior administrators, and others, using various implementation strategies, push research findings, policy statements, plans, improvement schemes, and so on down what we call the conduit into this out-of-classroom place on the professional knowledge landscape. (p.25)

In their work, Clandinin and Connelly (1995) document the way in which different stories are told in different places on the landscape. They define "secret stories, sacred stories and cover stories" (pp. 3-15). Secret stories are teacher stories of the in-classroom place—stories of practice generally shared with particular colleagues and recounted in safe places on the landscape. Sacred stories (Crites, 1971) are stories derived from deeply held beliefs. They are taken for granted; they go unquestioned. In education, the theory-driven view of practice shared by practitioners, policy makers and theoreticians has the quality of a sacred story. The sacred story of theory-driven practice is imbued with a sense of what is moral. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) note:

> Material enters the landscape from the conduit with a moral orientation. Nothing enters the landscape value-neutral; nothing is

> there for interest's sake to be discussed and understood as such. Everything comes with a moral push with which teachers are expected to do something. (p. 11)

This "moral push" is the result of the sacred story. Theory rains down on the out-of-classroom place in the form of stripped down research conclusions. Schwab (1962) refers to these stripped down research conclusions as a "rhetoric of conclusions". This rhetoric of conclusions translates to policy prescriptions which in turn, becomes a strong shaping influence on the professional knowledge landscape and results in cover stories being lived and told on the out-of-classroom place. Cover stories are teacher stories lived out as teachers move from the safety and secrecy of the in-classroom place to the prescriptive environment of the out-of-classroom place. Cover stories reflect certainty, success and a view of teachers as "experts".

To live on the landscape as a teacher is to experience certain other stories which are connected to secret, sacred and cover stories. Clandinin and Connelly (1996) discuss "teacher stories, stories of teachers, school stories and stories of school" (pp. 24-30). As previously explained, teachers can tell secret stories or cover stories relating to their work on the landscape. These stories are not viewed as good or bad but rather provide a narrative representation of what is lived on the landscape. As well stories of teachers are frequently told on the landscape by children, parents, other teachers, administrators and system officials. Similarly, school stories about a particular school can be recounted by any number of individuals. Stories of school, however, are usually shaped specifically by the

administrative hierarchy of a school district. At this level the sacred story of theory-driven practice becomes a strong shaping influence for a particular story of school to be imagined and lived out. Such a story of school can be voiced on the landscape by system administrators and school principals. A story of school can be seen as a powerful story with the potential to shape school stories and teachers' stories of practice in significant ways. Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) terminology allows me to better understand these story types—the ways they interconnect and act as catalysts for multiple stories.

For the Riverview teachers their secret stories of classroom life remained untold, so intent were they on telling cover stories on the out-of-classroom place. The cover stories told by the Riverview teachers indicate practice in line with specific theory-driven school board policies relating to open area schools. The teachers' acceptance of a new theory-driven reform agenda of team teaching exemplified its status as what might be seen as a sacred story shaping the professional knowledge landscape of their school. In the literature relating to this reform, open area schools were given the status of "pilot and lighthouse schools" (Matheson, 1971, p. 7) schools on the cutting edge of innovative practice. The Riverview staff took on the lighthouse script as their story of school. It was a powerful naming of an organizational narrative (Polkinghorne, 1988). The lighthouse script also shaped school stories told on the professional knowledge landscape—of the principal hand-picking the Riverview staff—"hiring the best of everybody". But teachers named as

"the best" or as "experts" in school stories of Riverview were caught in a plot line composed for them—of "top teachers doing top things"—of "teacher experts" making things work—of teachers loyal to their principal—of teachers demonstrating moral responsibility, honouring their commitment to children, to parents and to one another. By honouring the lighthouse plot line, through telling cover stories, each teacher upheld the story of school. The lighthouse story remained intact and a school story evolved of a group of subject area specialists successfully living out an innovative model of team teaching.

In team meetings held after school in the privacy of a conference room, a place on the margins between the in and out-of-classroom places on the professional knowledge landscape, the story of the genuine struggle to work as a team was lived out. The conference room provided a safe place for real talk. Mike and I discussed this:

> A: I remember Jon saying, "We're behind closed doors and you can go at it in here, but you don't take it out."
>
> M: I can understand that though because there were people on staff that did not want the five member team to work. The reason is, then they would feel it would be imposed upon them...that was a whole other thing that was running as well.
>
> A: Jon figured the more it got to look like the university demonstration school, that was good because it was a major lighthouse.... He said Sue wanted Riverview to be a lighthouse school.... It's possible that this team teaching concept could have worked, but it couldn't work with the particular personnel at that time.
>
> (Conversation, November 5, 1994)

I am now able to see a cover story as a complex creation, created to serve a story of school, but in its creation other teachers' stories remain untold. These teachers' stories and the way in which they are situated in relation to a story of school and school stories interest me. I want to try to understand how teachers' stories of team teaching are composed and lived out on the in-classroom and out-of-classroom places on the professional knowledge landscape. How do school stories of team teaching get constructed? How do teachers' stories and stories of teachers fit with school stories and stories of school?

CHAPTER II

Situating the Inquiry

Currently the notion of teamwork is seen as an innovation in the business world. It is part of the language of successful organizations but many organizations fail "to provide the know-how and support to make teams successful" (Murphy, 1994). In education the notion of building a more collaborative culture in schools has been in vogue since the early 1980s (Devaney & Sykes, 1988; Lieberman, 1988) but team teaching predates this notion by approximately twenty years. Team teaching is a particular term describing an innovative alternative approach (Miles, 1964; Rogers & Shoemaker, 1971; Shaplin & Olds, 1964) to the organization of student instruction. Shaplin (1964) defines team teaching in the following way:

> Team teaching is a type of instructional organization, involving teaching personnel and the students assigned to them, in which two or more teachers are given responsibility, working together, for all or a significant part of the instruction of the same group of students. (p. 15)

Team teaching came into being in the late 1950s with the concept of open plan schools pioneered in the United States and in Great Britain. Smith, Peck and Weber (1972) note the "demand for revitalization of the schools can be traced roughly to late 1957 when the Russians put the first Sputnik into orbit." They also observe that during the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s there had been little substantive change in

American schools or in the training of teachers. York (1971) cites John Goodlad as pinpointing the beginning of team teaching:

> At a meeting held in 1955 in the office of the Ford Foundation for the purpose of discussing teacher education in a new frame of reference... Goodlad and the others who met with him viewed team teaching as an alternative structure to both the self-contained classroom and departmentalization, a structure that would offer maximum flexibility in grouping teachers and students. (p. 13)

In Canada in the latter half of the 1960s new schools were built with an open area design based on schools in California. The purpose of the design was to provide the opportunity for the flexible grouping of students. This radical reform of school buildings gained momentum in the building boom of the 1970s, altering the physical context in which teachers were situated. It was Gores (1971) who predicted "the double-loaded corridor, egg-crate, back to back design will finally be put to rest, replaced by larger zones of flexible space" and in "an in depth study of open area schools" (Canadian Education Association, 1973a) it was reported:

> Much has been learned about open plan schools during this study, and no answers have as yet been found for some of the questions that have emerged. There is at least one definite conclusion...and that is that most school systems intend to carry on building some type of open plan facility...it seems a fact that open plan schools, in some form, are here to stay. (p. 7)

In this way school design acted as a catalyst for teachers' collaboration and while there was opportunity for the flexible grouping of students, as my pilot research with the Riverview teachers suggests, team teaching also proved problematic for teachers involved in the innovation.

Early research on the response of Canadian teachers to the changed circumstances they found themselves in was limited and mostly numerical in nature—the result of "simple questionnaires" (Carson, Johnson & Oliva, 1973). Nicholls (1983) draws attention to the fact that "schools are handicapped in innovation activities by the weakness of the knowledge base of new educational practices." She notes that "it is rare for an educational innovation to be backed by solid research" (p. 8). And Cantrell (1973) from his involvement in the Canadian Education Association (1973a) study of 63 school systems across Canada, stated:

> I don't think we have been into this long enough that teachers really have explored all the avenues they might.... In our visits we would find the open plan most effective mainly from Grades 1 to 6...the biggest problem, probably that teachers are experiencing in open area is team planning time.
>
> (Cantrell, Interview April 5, 1973)

Research from the United States and Britain in the first two decades from the inception of the team teaching movement proved limited in nature. York (1971) stated "the literature concerned with team teaching is scant and is seriously deficient in controlled research" (p. 13). It was difficult to get a handle on team teaching, it seemed, due to its complexity.

University educators in Alberta (Carson, Johnson & Oliva, 1973, 1974) called for more evaluative research to be done as particular problems for teachers were revealed in school board reports in the 1970s. Disadvantages listed by the Canadian Education Association Open Area Study Committee (1973b) included: the

consideration of teacher personality, knowledge and compatibility in teacher selection, the formation of teacher teams, increased teacher workload, and increased record keeping. Strangely, little was done to address reported difficulties regarding the lack of clarity of the innovation (Gross et al, 1971) and the lack of relevant knowledge, skills and abilities on the part of teachers. Rather, in the particular school district in which my research into team teaching takes place, one of the first open area schools, built in 1968, came to be perceived by educators "as a model that other schools might strive for" (J. Hauge, Personal Communication, March 12, 1995). This school, named in my narrative beginnings as the university demonstration school, was storied as a lighthouse school in the district from its inception.

Its particular role as a school demonstrating exemplary practice for pre-service teachers "gave prestige to the teaching staff who were specially chosen and perceived as master teachers" (J. Hauge, Personal Communication, March 12, 1995). The manner in which team teaching was lived out in this school served as a demonstration for other teachers in the system. As well teaching at this school became a stepping stone to administrative appointments in other schools. This was how the ideology of team teaching and multi-age grouping spread throughout this particular school system. It occurred in spite of findings (Nicholls, 1983) that, "an innovation that is appropriate for one school may not be so for another, and what works in one school may not in another" (p. 17).

As a teacher initially caught up in this ideology, I tried to find my way in collaborative ventures with teachers at Riverview School over a twelve year period. Searching for ways to work with colleagues has become a narrative theme for me. I have worked with a number of team partners, male and female, experienced teachers as well as those in the early years of their careers. My experiences, however, were not always plain sailing because different teachers define collaboration in different ways. Nevertheless, I find team teaching compelling because for me, it has everything to do with cultivating teacher relationships and learning together for the benefit of children. Reflecting on the experiences that bring me to this inquiry I think of problems I encountered along the way in living out team teaching. Certain events, concerning difficult moments within relationships, still remain with me. Those moments stand as testimony to the fact that team teaching is a complex undertaking. I discovered that successful and satisfying collaborative relationships are not always easily achieved even by teachers who choose to work together. For me teacher collaboration has nothing to do with the current terminology of "teamwork" in the business world, in which notions of efficiency abound. Yet the ideology I was initially caught up in can be seen to be shifting and changing over time.

I believe in teacher collaboration but I also believe it is time for new research stories to be told—teacher stories as a different form of representation (Eisner, 1991)—that show how collaboration is lived on the professional knowledge landscape.

It is lived by team teachers in their in-classroom places; it is lived by teams of teachers in the out-of-classroom place as they meet, for example, in grade group configurations. And for a school staff in these current times, collaboration, however it is understood, is voiced as an ideal for which to aim. Collaboration is a sacred story sent down from theory and policy to be lived out in practice.

Teamwork becomes a system goal (Griffiths, 1964; Owens, 1973) an expectation—a catalyst for school stories and stories of school. As such there is a pressing need for the narrative accounts of teachers—for team teaching stories typically silenced in the process of previous research endeavours (Guba, 1968; McLaughlin, 1976) because, as Nicholls (1983) observes, "the climate in most schools does not encourage teachers to admit to colleagues any lack of knowledge or fears about their ability to cope in a new situation" (p. 72). Acker (Personal Communication, April 22, 1996) also discusses the silencing of stories in her current research with primary teachers and women academics. She notes:

> I think the actual suppressed stories may be even more gloomy. We can't see schools and teachers as in a world of their own without recognizing their situatedness in political and economic realities.... Why is it that there are these layers, with sacred versus covert stories? Why is it necessary to tell a cover story? I have been pondering some similar issues...I have a category that I think of as the "public face" which is a kind of shared school story for public consumption.... But there isn't a clear separation between what teachers "really believe" and "the story" either. I have to think more about this.

Acker's construct of a "public face" is congruent with Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) notion of a cover story. She too sees the complexity and recognizes there are

people who have apparently "been too hurt or too scared" to tell their stories (S. Acker, Personal Communication, April 22, 1996).

I believe that the hope for constructing new knowledge lies in the meaning to be found in teachers' stories. In order to understand teachers' stories I need to understand the knowledge contexts in which teachers' stories are lived, as well as the knowledge that is expressed in their stories. My research is, therefore, situated within the field of teacher knowledge studies and will add to the knowledge base in the area of teacher collaboration (Cooper, 1988; Hollingsworth, 1992, 1994; Lieberman & Miller, 1984; Nias, Southworth & Yeomans, 1989).

Situating the Inquiry in the Literature of Teacher Knowledge Studies

Fenstermacher (1994) in his review of the literature in the field of teacher knowledge asks a key question: What do teachers know? My immediate answer was, "Teachers know a lot!"—a claim based on my experience as a teacher for 30 years, my engagement as a teacher researcher for the past ten years, and my involvement in collaborative research projects with university teachers and student teachers (Clandinin, Davies, Hogan & Kennard, 1993). Upon further reflection, I thought about my knowing that reaches back to reconstructions of childhood stories (Davies, 1994) and the meaning those hold for me—knowing that I understand best through Dewey's (1916, 1934, 1938) conceptualization of experience as lived and

knowledge as constructed and reconstructed. At the close of his chapter Fenstermacher answers his own question:

> There is much merit in believing that teachers know a great deal and in seeking to learn what they know, but that merit is corrupted and demeaned when it is implied this knowledge is not subject to justification or cannot or should not be justified. (p. 51)

Such is his challenge to researchers in this field, a challenge that I believe can be answered but perhaps not in the language of warrant (Toulmin, 1958) that Fenstermacher suggests. To arrive at an understanding of teacher knowledge it is first necessary to inquire into the nature of knowledge, then to move into a discussion of practical knowledge and a language of practice that "looks at teaching from the inside" (Elbaz, 1991, p. 1).

The Nature of Knowledge

As I think about the nature of knowledge the following definition by Hamlyn (1967) is helpful:

> Epistemology, or the theory of knowledge, is that branch of philosophy which is concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge, its presuppositions and basis, and the general reliability of the claims to knowledge. (pp. 8-9)

Epistemology concerns itself, therefore, with questions of what we know and how it is that we know or have come to know. Fenstermacher (1994) discusses two primary conceptions of knowledge, formal and practical. Formal knowledge, in his view, can be established at a high level of confidence; it is also referred to as scientific

knowledge, theoretical knowledge, propositional knowledge or, according to Bruner (1985, 1986), paradigmatic knowledge. This conception of knowledge he explains "has been the mainstay of Anglo-American epistemology from the time of Plato until the present" (p. 21). Practical knowledge, the area in which my inquiry is situated, has received little attention in the history of Western Philosophy. Fenstermacher refers to it as "performance knowledge" (p. 25) but it is not at all clear that Connelly and Clandinin's (1985) view of teachers' personal practical knowledge fits with Fenstermacher's description of performance knowledge. It is, therefore, important to look to the work of scholars who focus their attention more directly on teachers' knowledge.

Teachers' Knowledge

Lyons (1990) refers to the relative infancy of this field of research:

> Although researchers, educators, and scholars have argued that knowledge and values are important dimensions of teaching, implicit in a teacher's sense of mission and critical to a conception of practice, there is a remarkable absence of good descriptions of how they are involved in teachers' lives or in their growth and learning.... Teachers' thinking... appeared for the first time in 1986 in the third *Handbook of Research on Teaching*. (p. 161)

Teachers' knowledge began to be conceptualized as "practical knowledge" in the landmark work of Elbaz (1983). Elbaz worked with Sarah, a high school teacher, over a period of two years. She revealed, in an open-ended unstructured way, what Sarah knew and believed about her work. Sarah's knowledge was practical,

experiential and shaped by her purposes and intentions. Connelly and Clandinin (1985), building on the work of Elbaz, defined the concept of personal practical knowledge. This concept and other related concepts such as story, image, narrative, narrative unity and embodied knowledge are all central to the Connelly and Clandinin (1988, 1990) research program and are foundational to my work. The research program of Connelly and Clandinin has occupied a prominent position since 1985 in the field of teacher knowledge. Clandinin, in Russell and Munby (1992), gives a sense of the scope of the concept of personal practical knowledge:

> To speak of teachers' knowledge of schools and classrooms as personal practical knowledge is to capture the idea of experience in a way that allows us to talk about teachers as knowledgeable and knowing persons. We see personal practical knowledge as in the person's past experience, in the person's present mind and body and in the person's plans and actions. It is knowledge that reflects the individual's prior knowledge and acknowledges the contextual nature of that teacher's knowledge. It is a kind of knowledge carved out of, and shaped by, situations; knowledge that is constructed and reconstructed as we live out our stories and retell and relive them through processes of reflection.... We see this storying and restorying of each of our lives as going on in our work as teachers and researchers. (pp. 125-126)

For me this definition lives in the retold stories of the teachers of Riverview School and stands as an example of possibility in my research. As well, Connelly and Clandinin (1990) and Eisner (1991) suggest new possibilities for the manner in which researchers and practitioners may productively relate to one another. While Fenstermacher (1994, p. 12) warns of the risk for this research program "being blurred by its own abstractions", he also recognizes that "this program offers both

conception and method that tap what appears to be an important and frequently ignored type of human knowledge." Herein lies the promise of this research in which the concept of story is central in the inquiry process (Barone, 1992).

Story

Carter's (1990) scholarship in the area of teachers' knowledge and her ongoing interest in the place of story in teaching and teacher education (Carter, 1993) allow her an insider's view of the centrality of story in knowledge studies. She writes:

> Stories capture...the richness and indeterminacy of our experiences as teachers and the complexity of our understandings of what teaching is...this attraction to stories has evolved into an explicit attempt to use the literatures on "story" or "narrative" to define both the method and the object of inquiry in teaching and teacher education. Story...is now...a central focus for conducting research in the field. (p. 5)

It is Carter's view that "the most vigorous line of work in our field today is that focused on teachers' personal stories" which are framed "within a context of a teacher's life history" (p. 7). Carter's view resonates with Connelly and Clandinin's (1995) position. They, too, see teachers' knowledge in terms of teachers' narrative life constructions but they focus attention on the professional knowledge contexts of schools—to those specific stories of the in-classroom place and the out-of-classroom place and to dilemmas caused as teachers move between the two places.

Teachers tell secret stories, sacred stories and cover stories—all of which reflect their knowledge. To be attentive then to the "complex nexus of stories" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) of the landscape is to begin to understand the professional knowledge context as a narrative knowledge context. Teachers' narrative life constructions can be understood in terms of specific shaping influences that impinge upon them yet, at the same time, teachers in their actions also shape both the in-classroom and out-of-classroom places on the professional knowledge landscape. They story their own lives as teachers as Elbaz (1991) notes:

> Story is the very stuff of teaching, the landscape within which we live as teachers and researchers, and within which the work of teachers can be seen as making sense. This is not merely a claim about the aesthetic or emotional sense of fit of the notion of story with our intuitive understanding of teaching, but an epistemological claim that teachers' knowledge in its own terms is ordered by story and can best be understood in this way. (p. 3)

Elbaz shares a common belief, as does Bateson (1989), that "storytelling is fundamental to the human search for meaning" (p. 34) but her sense of teachers' knowledge as being "ordered by story", therefore by experience, offers a conceptual shift in the theory/practice relationship—a shift that validates and recognizes teachers' personal practical knowledge.

Reading Elbaz I make a connection with the work of narrative theorist Carr (1986). He suggests "narrative is our primary way of organizing and giving coherence to our experience" (p. 65). I feel more comfortable with his view of "organizing" experience than with Elbaz' notion of ordering experience. I resonate,

too, with Crites' (1986) sense of "recollecting the past out of my interest in the future" (p. 163)—the push towards the future is important. I think of the stories of the Riverview teachers. I think of teachers' stories, school stories and stories of school that are yet to be told. The words of Clandinin and Connelly (1995) remind me of the research that lies ahead on the professional knowledge landscape—a landscape that is both intellectual and moral—a landscape where, "...teachers know their lives in terms of stories. They live stories, tell stories of those lives, re-tell stories with changed possibilities and re-live the changed stories...as teachers they are characters in their own stories of teaching which they author" (p. 12). And Greene (1994) notes:

> Fresh modes of qualitative description sometimes linked to storytelling, begin to mark the documentation of life in classrooms. There is increasing concern for...the type of dialogue that allows individuals intentionally to disclose themselves to one another without the intervention of quantitative or even diagnostic frames. (p. 448)

As a researcher I think hard about my purpose (Barone, 1992; Carter, 1993) in constructing a storied inquiry that may be considered as work *for* education. The words of Noddings and Witherell (1991) also speak to this sense of purpose:

> Stories are powerful research tools. They provide us with a picture of real people in real situations, struggling with real problems.... They invite us to speculate on what might be changed and with what effect.... Most important, they invite us to remember that we are in the business of teaching, learning and researching to improve the human condition. (p. 280)

Improving the human condition is indeed a lofty goal but to engage in new conversations by reflecting on "the complex nexus of stories" told on the professional knowledge landscape is a first step in identifying what it is that might be improved. But telling stories is not necessarily an easy task and Greene (1994) cautions, "The release of multiple, hitherto unheeded voices cannot but pose problems for people fixed upon clarification, universalization, and a capitalized "Truth" (p. 448).

My pilot research speaks to the promise and the purpose of storytelling as a way to illuminate team teaching relationships—to better understand teacher collaboration. While I situate myself within the research program of Connelly and Clandinin, considered by Carter (1993) to be "one of the leading research programs in the tradition of teachers' stories" (p. 8), I remain open to the scholarship of other research programs in the field of teacher knowledge.

CHAPTER III

The Inquiry Finds a Home

> Access and entry are sensitive components in qualitative research, and the researcher must establish trust, rapport, and authentic communication patterns with participants. By establishing trust and rapport at the beginning of the study, the researcher is better able to capture the nuance and meaning of each participant's life from the participant's point of view. This also ensures that participants will be more willing to share everything, warts and all, with the researcher. Maintaining trust and rapport continues through the length of the study and long after, in fact.
>
> (Janesick, 1994, p. 211)

In discussions with my advisor, Clandinin, (September 29, 1994) about where I might locate my research I spoke of:

> My need for a setting where I feel comfortable, my need to be in relationship with the teachers in my study and to be with teachers who believe in team teaching. I said that I wanted to be at Riverview School and I knew that Tom and Liz were teaming. I wondered if they would be interested in a research relationship.
>
> (Journal Entry, October 16, 1994)

My advisor suggested I take time to think hard about this possibility. I thought about my knowing of Tom and Liz and wrote:

> Tom loves thinking about his teaching, writing about it and enjoys collaboration. Liz is passionate about her work, interested in professional development and collaboration with her peers. I have always admired her commitment and her real sense of the continuity of her program.... When Liz talks about children she does so with a deep sense of what is morally right for them.... In working with Liz

> on the P.D. Committee for four years...I admired her ability to listen hard to others, to speak with a sense of personal conviction and to collaborate in order to facilitate real learning experiences for her colleagues.... I see my relationship with Liz, to date, as a very professional one.
>
> (Journal Entry, October 16, 1994)

I thought about the shared knowing Liz and I have, of Tom in his vice principal role, a new role for him when he was appointed to Riverview School in 1990. But my relationship with Tom goes back to our prior involvement in a community of teacher researchers (Hogan, 1988), our participation in an alternative practicum program (Clandinin et al, 1993), and our membership in a local writing project, affiliated with the National Writing Project in the United States. These collaborative experiences connect Tom and me as writers and as teacher researchers. A bond of trust results. The more I thought about Tom and Liz, and about our "friendship and collegiality" (Bateson, 1989), the more I believed their Grade 1 classroom could be a rich research site. My thoughts resonated with Clandinin & Connelly's (1994b) view that "it is not research method that creates possibilities but the existence of mutual inquiry relationships" (p. 44). My journal documents the beginning of our story together:

> I visited the school on Monday October 3. I'd gone there at recess to ask the staff to participate in a survey for one of my university classes. I received a great welcome and was delighted. Tom was eager to hear how things were going for me and I thought I would just casually explore the possibility of working with him and with Liz. He was very excited at the prospect and straight away insisted that I come to the classroom at 10:45—the time when he would begin his day with

> Liz. He told me how thrilled he was with his teaching and with the team teaching experience....
>
> Once inside the classroom...I felt an immediate sense of being at home.... Tom and Liz seemed genuinely pleased to have me there.... Their teaching reminded me of a conversation between friends. They smiled a lot as they interacted with each other and with the children. They were having fun in a relaxed learning environment....
>
> (Journal Entry, October 16, 1994)

I was delighted when Tom and Liz accepted my invitation to join in the research. *My* questions about team teaching relationships became *our* questions reflecting the promise the questions hold for all of us as reflective practitioners (Schön, 1983, 1987), as co-researchers (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990) in a newly formed knowledge community (Craig, 1992). Tom and Liz felt comfortable engaging in a collaborative inquiry. I explained that my proposed work was also part of a larger study funded by SSHRC under the direction of principal researchers D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly. I spoke of the book *Teachers' Professional Knowledge Landscapes* in which the authors had already mapped out a conceptual framework and a set of terms to talk about the landscape. I told Tom and Liz that we would be using this set of terms to focus on their work in their "in-classroom place" and their "out-of-classroom place" with a view to understanding how teachers negotiate shared spaces on the landscape with colleagues.

I also negotiated my access and entry to the school with the new principal, Glen, and with the assistant principal, Heather. I provided a copy of the proposal

for the larger SSHRC study as well as a copy of my successful proposal to SSHRC for research funding for my work. Both Glen and Heather were supportive of my research presence and gave permission for me to work with the Grade 1 teachers in their classrooms, at their grade group meetings, at staff meetings, and on professional development days. Since the larger SSHRC project had already been approved by the school district it was a minor formality for my name to be added to the ethics approval (October 10, 1994) in order to begin preliminary visits to the school on a one day per week basis. Tom and Liz were willing for me to engage in participant observation in the in-classroom and out-of-classroom places at the school for the purpose of generating field texts. They were willing to engage in research conversations (audio taped and transcribed) with a view to capturing their reflections on their practice, their planning of future activities, their life stories, stories of children, stories of particular teachers, school stories on the professional knowledge landscape and stories of the school. They understood that as a narrative researcher the narratives of experience that I would construct would capture their experience and represent their voices as well as my own. They understood the research text would be mutually constructed and made available to them for their response on an ongoing basis. They chose their own pseudonyms and signed informed consent forms that included an "opportunity to withdraw clause". I chose the pseudonym Riverview School in order to guarantee its anonymity. In this way my inquiry found a

home—an Alberta home in a large urban elementary school, Kindergarten to Grade 6, with close to 600 children.

In entering into a research relationship with former colleagues, I am welcomed back to Riverview School in a new role. I carry with me cumulative stories of the school, school stories and teachers' stories—stories representing the "shifting frames of reference that define acceptable knowledge and inquiry" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1994a, p. 414)—stories representing "a community...constantly in the process of composing and recomposing its own autobiography" (Carr, 1986, p. 163).

For some, the decision to locate my narrative inquiry at Riverview School might seem an obvious limitation—but I view my lived experience, over the past twelve years at the school, as a *research practicum*—a practicum preparing me to better understand the shaping forces at work on the professional knowledge landscape. Questions posed by Greene (1994) support my thinking about my chosen research site. She asks:

> What does location or vantage point have to do with the processes or results of inquiry? Is neutrality or lack of bias ever conceivable? Is disembodied inquiry, or inquiry devoid of prejudgement, possible or desirable? (p. 425)

With Riverview as "home" I believe the human and passionate elements of research that Janesick (1994) describes can find expression:

> Becoming immersed in a study requires passion: passion for people, passion for communication, and passion for understanding people. This is the contribution of qualitative research, and it can only enhance educational and human services practice. (p. 217)

The In-classroom Place of Tom and Liz

My first visit to Liz and Tom's classroom (October 3, 1994) just weeks into the school year set the stage for preliminary research to take place. From that point in time, I visited the school at least one day each week, until April 26, 1994, when my time in the school increased to a minimum of three days per week until the end of June.

Liz and Tom's classroom, a double teaching area with a retractable curtain, is located on the main floor of the two-story school. It originally opened onto the library but, in the early days of the school, this proved unworkable. A wall was constructed as a sound buffer, leaving an open space at each end that serves as an entrance to their teaching area. Liz and Tom's classroom is, therefore, a classroom without doors, a classroom open to view by parent volunteers, by other teachers and their classes as they come to and from the library, and by administrators. Because of this quirk of design, the in-classroom place occupied by Tom and Liz can be seen as being less private, less safe, than the majority of other teaching spaces in the school. Visitors to their classroom can simply enter or leave unannounced and this is common practice. The lack of doors, in this way, acts as an invitation for anyone to visit—to "pop in" to this Grade 1 area. While Tom enjoys being "in the centre of things" (Conversation, November 25, 1994), Liz recognizes that "sometimes you really need the door closed...you wish you had one" (Conversation, August 11, 1995).

Once inside the fully carpeted, well equipped classroom, the impression is one of colour, light and space. Children's artwork is displayed around the room and mobile pieces hang from the ceiling. The long wall of the classroom, parallel to the buffer wall, features two blackboard areas each with two large windows on either side. The view to the outdoors features a hillside with a natural bush area and an adventure playground. The retractable curtain, when pushed back against the long wall, acts as a mini-partition—an indicator that the teaching space is two classrooms. On either side of this mini-partition each teacher has their personal desk area with a filing cabinet. The far corners of the room, opposite the classroom entrances, serve as two meeting areas. These areas are large enough for both classes to be accommodated, seated on the carpet.

The classroom furniture consists of blue, yellow and orange trapezoid tables which can be arranged in twos, to form hexagonal tables, for groups of children. The tables can also be placed in innovative arrangements according to need. The children's chairs are yellow and orange in colour, adding to the bright appearance of the classroom. Two sink units, with cupboards, frame the entrances to the classroom and opposite each of them, a portable shelving unit houses the individual tubs containing each child's personal books and supplies. The children's coat area is located in the main hallway outside the library, thus maximizing the in-classroom space.

Introducing the Participants

The team teaching relationship of Tom and Liz gave me my starting point. They had both been on staff at Riverview School for four years prior to making the decision to work together. Their story of coming together as team partners is a story of choice which they tell in the following way:

> T: I remember Liz coming into my office last year and just saying...if she moved to Grade 1...that she'd really like to work with me because she just thought that we could work well together.
>
> L: We just had a sense—we didn't know to what degree but I knew that I would be very happy to work with Tom....
>
> T: When Liz came into my room...I was probably flattered...but I thought, you know, we'll do it. The biggest issue for me was my administrative role.... I have felt in the past I wasn't really teaming because of times when I'm doing administration and my partners need to teach on their own.
>
> (Conversation, May 3, 1995)

Tom cast aside his reservations about juggling administrative time and teaching time, and according to Liz, both she and Tom "learned to team within minutes of being together" (Conversation, August 11, 1995). This was readily apparent from the moment I saw them working with their group of 48 children.

For administrative purposes the children were divided into two responsibility groups. Tom was responsible for 25 children and Liz had 23, including 4 special needs youngsters. For Liz this teaming opportunity marked a return to teaching Grade 1, after eight years as an Early Childhood Services (ECS) teacher. This new

assignment allowed Liz to continue teaching many of the children she had taught in ECS (the term used in Alberta for kindergarten). When the children came together in a large group setting Liz already knew 22 of them and their families. The children also knew Tom, in his role as an administrator, because of his visits to their classrooms the previous year. These levels of knowing allowed the children to feel at ease in the large group setting.

A third classroom teacher, Carol, also worked at the Grade 1 level. Carol was in her second year at the school. She taught by herself with 27 children. I listened to Carol talk about her practice and beliefs in the weekly meetings of the Grade 1 teachers, meetings commonly referred to in the school as "team meetings". A fourth teacher, Jane the teacher librarian, also attended the Grade 1 team meetings. Jane was in her tenth year at the school. Part of Jane's teaching assignment was to provide 90 minutes of daily release time for Tom, in order for him to assume his administrative duties.

At first I timed my visits to the classroom to coincide with the beginning of Tom's teaching day at 10:45 a.m.—the time when his administrative time in the office concluded and Liz and Tom's team teaching began. Prior to morning recess, Liz and Jane were responsible for the children. During this time the retractable curtain was closed, thus dividing the open area space into two separate classrooms. While each teacher taught alone, they cooperatively planned a similar program for the children in the content areas of math, printing and spelling. This arrangement

was mutually negotiated by Liz, Tom and Jane. After recess, at 10:15 a.m., both classes came together for physical education in the gym. Following this lesson the children returned to the classroom to meet Tom for the first time in the day. The coming together of Tom and Liz coincided with the opening of the curtain and the continued opportunity for the children to remain together for instruction, as one large group, under the direction of two teachers.

The complex web of relationships in which these teachers found themselves, forms the heart of my work. Participating with all of them[2] allows me to, first of all, document the team teaching relationship of Tom and Liz on their in-classroom place and then to examine the complexity of the Grade 1 team's relationships on the out-of-classroom place on the professional knowledge landscape. In much the same way as Brown and Gilligan (1992) "we came to the way of working...that centers on voice and that offers a guide into relationship with another person" (p. 21). Sustained conversations in which the teachers' voices are heard and their life stories told, are critical to my unfolding narrative inquiry.

The individual accounts of each teacher's narrative reveal the ways in which the teachers have been shaped by their lived experiences. Similarly the landscape of Riverview School and a changing story of school, given the arrival of a new principal, exert a shaping influence on the teachers. They, in turn, continue to shape the context as they live out their practice.

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[2] Informed consent was also obtained from Carol and Jane. The pseudonyms used were their own choice.

The teacher narratives, which I present in the form of a letter to each participant, were recounted at the end of the 1994-95 school year, at a time when I had developed a trusting relationship with each of them. The letter format provides a means of giving back their story in a manner enhancing continued relationship.

The narratives of Tom and Liz precede my stories of their team teaching relationship on the in-classroom place. The narratives of Carol and Jane precede the storied accounts of the Grade 1 team's relationships on the out-of-classroom place.

My Letter to Tom

July 26, 1995

Dear Tom,

School has been out for a month now and I'm sitting surrounded by my field texts reflecting on my time with you at Riverview. The task at hand, that of creating my research text, seems much like piecing together a jigsaw puzzle.

We did not talk about your life experiences until close to the end of the year. We took a couple of mornings (May 9-10, 1995) to talk in your office before your teaching day began. You spoke openly, reflecting the trusting relationship that exists between us. In the past few days you reviewed the transcripts of our conversations and thought about the way your narrative has shaped you as a teacher. We chatted about this over the phone and you were willing for the other members of the Grade 1 team to read the material I had pieced together. Sharing your story in this way allows them to come to know you better. As well you model for them the power of the storying process. Because you are able to risk telling your story it allows them to trust the process too—to trust in conversations.

Your story began in this way as you spoke of your position in the family:

T: I was fourth of five. I barely remember my older sister living at home because she went off to nursing training when I was still in

elementary school and my next sister went off to nursing school as well. So when I was really young we had...family camping trips and Christmas with the house full of people. We lived in a very small house in northwest Calgary.

A: So you were born in Calgary?

T: Yes in 1952...my mother always said our house was too small and she hated it because she was a stay-at-home mom.... My brother...was three years older.... He, being the first boy, had to sort of break in the parents in terms of boy things. He always felt like I had it easy and I always felt like my little brother had it the easiest. I'm still quite close to my second sister. We talk to each other quite often on the phone...but I'm not close at all with my oldest sister and I think it's simply because she never lived at home...that I can remember. I remember our camping trips, when we had the whole family, but sometimes you don't know if you remember it or just know it from photographs....

What I do remember very strongly is my relationship with my younger brother Dennis. He was born when I was in Kindergarten or Grade 1...I spent a lot of time with him because the older ones were already off into their other adventures. My older brother and I didn't spend that much time together. He was just different than I am and still is. We didn't have a natural friendship, whereas my younger brother and I—I sort of looked after him...because by then my parents were old and tired. My father had this big ulcer when I was in about Grade 9 or 10 and all these months off work.... I did things with Dennis ever since we were really young. The famous family stories are that we did all these puppet shows and I wrote the stories and got all the puppets and produced these shows. He was the one I told what to do. You know, "Get this, get that—close the curtain, open the curtain." He was sort of the stagehand who put posters all over the house. And I remember playing school with him and playing in the backyard with wagons and trikes....

A: And where is he now?

T: He's in Calgary. He's an electrical engineer and we talk to each other on the phone.... You know how you have that connection

> with some of your friends, if you didn't see each other for a year, you'd pick up the phone and the conversation would almost carry on. Dennis and I are like that. We're just close.... You know we don't see each other a lot now—once every second month or so. And we try once a year, just the two of us, to go out to dinner and a movie. So we've always had that closeness and I think it's partly because I did all that stuff with him...that maybe Mom and Dad would have done if they were younger or didn't have so many children.... Even through university...I left home for a year, and when I came back my parents were glad because they had this poor kid at home who was in junior high and early high school and at least I was someone that he could share rock music with and go to movies with.... Maybe that was part of the reason I was interested in teaching because I did those kinds of things with Dennis.

Your story of Dennis is an important one—one that Liz and I were unaware of and yet it is full of narrative themes—themes that you scribbled down in the margins of the transcript. You identified the following "caring for someone, teaching, playing, collaboration" and clearly your family stories of the creativity of the puppet shows are an early indicator of your talent for improvisation with others. You speak of experiencing feelings of connection and closeness, derived from spending time with Dennis and I see those aspects lived out in your team teaching relationship with Liz.

You continued your story in this way:

> I'm one of those people who can say I always wanted to be a teacher.... It seems to me that's just what I always thought I would do. I liked school from Grade 1 on.... I can remember each teacher. I can remember what I liked about them. My Grade 1 teacher was amazing.... She had the boys' choir from Grade 2 to Grade 6. We won at festivals all the time. We thought we were the greatest because of her.... I remember unique things we did.... I just enjoyed school and I could imagine myself doing what these teachers did.
>
> I was in Grade 1 to Grade 9 at the same school, and then Grade 10 to Grade 12 at the local high school so I had two schools.... It's all part of the thing about consistency...I still have a friend I've known since kindergarten and we went to the same church as well and our parents knew each other. I still see her once in a while. In fact I've got two friends that I've known since then and their parents are still in the same

houses.... You know I think that doesn't happen for as many kids nowadays. So in a way I've lived that old fashioned ideal of the white picket fence family.

My dad was...an electrical inspector for the city.... He loved learning. He was involved with the home and school association, scouting and the church board.... He knew the school principal personally...and he knew the church minister and so on. So we had that sort of feeling that we had to be good everywhere. In school...the teachers knew my brother and sisters...they knew my mom and dad. My parents, in particular, were quite well respected....

I went off to a regular high school program and took Music 10 which was taught by the music director of my church. He knew my mom and dad intimately. He had both my sisters in music and so the first day of class when he's doing the role call, he comes to my name and he looks up and says, "You're not?" And I said, "Yes I am". "Well I'm sure you'll be one of the best singers in here".... There was this legacy that I had to live up to. He knew my family.

This "legacy" that you speak of constituted a set of high expectations that you responded to in a positive way. We talked about the superb teachers you encountered—teachers remembered long after their retirement as outstanding educators. And certainly your experience of continuity in your home and school life is something you value and cherish. I asked you about the connection between your early musical experiences and your sense of yourself as a musician and a teacher. You continued your story:

Well certainly it goes back to my early childhood with boys' choir and the church choirs and in the home. My parents were both involved with the church choir and we had family Christmas parties where they used to invite all these people and we sang and did that sort of old fashioned stuff that people don't seem to do much anymore...and it was about Grade 8 or 9 when I started playing guitar. I remember writing my first song in Grade 9. I remember singing it for Mom and Dad in the kitchen and the influence was, of course, pop music: the Beatles, Gordon Lightfoot, Joni Mitchell, Neil Young and all those people were writing at the time and Simon and Garfunkel were another big influence.

> I was in a little group and we wrote some of our own songs.... We sang at school functions and sang in the festival once and did some freebies around town. We had these notions we were going to become a famous group.... I also sang on my own somewhat and then for a long time that experience wasn't connected to my notions about teaching. The way I remember it, I didn't ever want to teach music. I knew I didn't, partly because I quit piano lessons when I was younger. To teach music it seemed like most music teachers play piano. I played guitar and played by ear and made up songs but to me that wasn't what you do to teach music. Music was a personal thing. It was this personal freedom that I experienced playing around with words and lyrics and tunes.... So I was aware of this creative energy.... My parents thought it was great and they encouraged me because they were musical and I was the one kid that ended up pursuing some of that. They gave me a lot of support in that sense but I do remember them also reminding me, that my chances of making it in the music business were pretty slim and I had to think of other work.

I'm smiling now, Tom, over the ever practical, common sense view expressed by your parents regarding your career. I'm taken by your sense of personal freedom and creativity—the shift from the writing of scripts for puppet plays to the writing of popular songs. Your writing has always been there—your delight in improvisation played out in performances on more public stages. It was no surprise to me to hear of your interest in English literature but your story took an unexpected turn—the plot line you imagined in high school was not to be. You explained:

> In high school...I really enjoyed language arts classes.... At that time my school was a leading edge school...it was the best high school in the city. At least that's what we all thought. There was a creative environment... and that's when I was thinking, oh I'll be an English teacher, because I'd sit in my classes and think, I can do this. You know you read a poem and then you have this class discussion—so I'm looking at it from the perspective of one of the students who enjoyed that—not realizing that three quarters of those high school kids were sitting there thinking, this sucks....
>
> I went off to university intending to be a high school English teacher...but after my first round of student teaching, that's when I decided I didn't want to be in a high school at all... I had a disastrous couple of weeks and came to the realization that half the kids didn't

care. They didn't want to be there.... They didn't have enthusiasm.... I went home feeling I just can't do this. At the same time I landed a summer job in a day care center.... I loved working with little kids and that was my first experience of little ones. I started learning songs I could sing with them. I had never done any entertaining for children. I really enjoyed the enthusiasm and the energy and it was about that time that the province brought in Early Childhood Services. All of a sudden I could teach little kids and still be a teacher....

I switched my university program...picked up some of the early childhood courses...then I ended up teaching ECS. It just worked out in the politics of the times, that I could get into being a real teacher and get into the school system, with no intention of ever teaching grades.

What intrigues me, Tom, as you tell your story, is the fact that you recognize your high school as being on the cutting edge. It was a place with a creative environment—a place where you continued to be stimulated as a learner. Knowing your love of learning I can see how hard it must have been to encounter high school students who didn't care about learning. I realize how deeply you felt this and also recognize your enjoyment in being around young children with enthusiasm and energy.

It amazed me to find out that your first job with the school system in 1977 was at a lighthouse school—a particularly innovative one, even for those times. We talked about your experience:

A: So you were in on the ground floor in a new school with learning communities, multi-aging and individually guided education ideas.

T: Right. That was all the talk.

A: So did that have an impact on you?

T: It did and it didn't. Some of what happened was we didn't really know how to fit ECS into all of that...but I heard all the talk. I was part of all the staff meetings and I was included in everything but I didn't really have to work in it.... We tried to include ECS a little bit, like the principal wanted us to, and

> we tried to work with open area stuff but it just never quite worked.

As you continued your story, you spoke of another time when events both personal and professional caused sudden shifts in the composition of your life:

> I was teaching ECS and I had this short-lived, two year marriage. I got married when I finished university...and almost the minute we got married, we knew it just wasn't right.... We kept at it for two years but it wasn't working. We split up and that was hard. I had a year of real pain and that was about the time when I thought I should get back to my music. I phoned my friend Doug who I knew in high school.... At that time he was promoting bands and recording them so I thought I would ask him what was going on. He came over...and we sat and talked and he said, "You know I've had in mind for a long time this children's story and I'd like to put music to it".... He sat in my living room and told me the whole story...and he said, "Now this is where songs should be." It was really neat to listen to him and I said, "Yeah that's great, so let's do it." He came over every day and we'd work through until two in the morning and we wrote an entire musical during the summer of 1979.
>
> It was fun. I loved it. I loved being in the recording studio. For me...it's just in my soul I guess. You know when...you've got the headphones on and you're singing harmony to yourself and you've got this whole band playing...I mean I loved it. I just loved it.

This collaborative project, Tom, allowed you to put together your writing and your music. You reached an even wider audience through the subsequent distribution of the tapes and through local theatre productions of your musical. Your enjoyment of this work seemed to get you back on track—easing the pain of separation. I'm wondering now whether you turn to your creative side to bolster your spirits when life throws a curve ball your way? Certainly, you turn towards trusted friends. In the safety of relationship, you imagined a new plot line for yourself.

I asked if you connected your writing with your teaching and you explained how that evolved:

> Teaching ECS I didn't really see a connection between my teaching and my writing...I played songs in the classroom with kids...and that's all. For quite a long stretch I didn't really do that much writing. I

remarried and it was when I met up with you in a research project in 1987 that it gave me a way to write classroom stories. By that time I was in my third school teaching a Grade 1/2 class. I eventually moved into the grades after five years of ECS teaching.

All this time I never really saw my writing as being part of my classroom work...then teaching Grade 1/2 we're all of a sudden writing. A colleague on staff gave me the book *Writing: Teachers and Children at Work* by Don Graves and said, "You ought to read this. You'll enjoy it". I remember taking it home for Christmas and reading the whole thing and getting excited. And that's when it started to connect for me that I can write for me, as a teacher, and that I can teach children about writing.

I always felt I was a writer, even though I really hadn't done much, but I had this background. The Graves book really brought it all up and all this theory, like these articles you've loaned me and all that business about stories and knowing what we know. All of that has fuelled this passion that I have for writing that I didn't know what to do with before. The only thing I thought of before, is writing a hit song...or a novel. I've always said I could write a hit song. It's in me somewhere. I just haven't done it yet. And then all of a sudden this work with the children meant I could write articles about kids.

Getting back to journal writing, about my teaching, was really good for me because I had written in a journal when I was younger. When the kids were writing in the classroom, I kept track of what they were doing by writing down little conversations I had with them that I thought were interesting.

This part of your story, Tom, is where we connect and it's interesting for me to reflect on the fact that both you and I encountered Donald Graves' book at about the same time. Here we are ten years later, still on the cutting edge of things—still wondering, asking questions and writing storied accounts of our practice. Just last week, you sent your second book off to your publisher. Maybe a hit song will be next!

Writing to you in this way reminds me of my earlier letters to Jon, Mike, Terri and Linda. I'm thinking once again of the importance of taking time and making space for this kind of conversation. I realize this is not easily accomplished. Conversations will not start until there is a trusting relationship—a level of comfort.

This storied knowing of one another builds from initial relationships and contributes to new ways to live out stories of collaboration in teaching.

Your experience with Liz on the in-classroom place mirrors the hope expressed by Mike in my first story of Riverview. He explained, "...somehow teachers have to come to know each other...their strengths, their weaknesses, their fears and...get to sit and talk." To do this beyond the confines of the in-classroom place remains the challenge—a challenge you have been mindful of throughout the school year, as you encountered dilemmas on the out-of-classroom place.

By storying your life experiences and your teaching experiences, their integral connectedness reveals a personal shaping force that guides you as you encounter the myriad of forces continuously shaping life on the professional knowledge landscape of Riverview School. The complexity is immense. The stories lived this year, on the landscape, have been captured in our conversations and now the re-storying begins. I look forward to our continued collaboration in the re-telling process. In the meantime, enjoy the rest of the summer.

Love,
Annie

My Letter to Liz

August 18, 1995

Dear Liz,

I really enjoyed our afternoon together last week (August 11, 1995). We talked for a couple of hours about your life experiences. We've shared many stories during the year, stories that popped out in conversation, as we tried to make sense of particular situations and events on the landscape. However, it was fascinating for me to listen to a chronological account of your life experiences. You began your story in this way:

> I was born in Lethbridge in 1960; I'm the youngest of three. My brother Michael is seven years older than I am and my sister, Diana, is five years older. My parents were both teachers and when I was in Grade 1, in Lethbridge, Dad was principal of my school.... He

progressed very quickly through the system. I don't think he even taught for more than four or five years....

In 1967 we moved to the Crowsnest Pass and my father was Superintendent of Schools. It was a really good move for him but a terrible move for my mother. Mom found the move hard because she was very involved in the Lethbridge theatre.... She acted in many different pieces and I was even in one. My father did set design.... They were very involved.... My mother also had a T.V. show when I was two or three...a local talk show....

My mother's parents lived in Lethbridge...and my grandmother spent a great deal of time with me, when I was little, because Mom was so involved in the community.... Mom didn't teach those years when I was first born but she went back to teach part-time when we got to the Crowsnest Pass. She took special education students.... She found that very challenging but, more than that, in Lethbridge she was used to having her mother around. My grandmother would be over all the time and my grandfather would help too.

Because of the move Mom felt very lonely. She missed her parents and her close friends. Dad was extremely busy and Mom was expected to be the socialite...and entertain school board personnel. The first couple of years were very hard for her but she didn't let the family know. Our house was always a happy place and Mom was involved and interested in our lives, our friends and our schooling.

We moved into a huge home...built in the 1800s with almost a football field front yard.... Dad built massive swings out of telephone poles, so all of it was quite spectacular for a child. The entire neighbourhood was in our yard all of the time.... I always had lots of friends. For me, the move was wonderful.

Your story of the move to the Crowsnest Pass has me thinking hard of the sacrifices and adjustments to be made in job advancements. I wonder how your grandparents storied the move? I feel for your mother. She was uprooted from her family and cut off from the theatre scene she loved so much. Your comment about "the terrible move for my mother" is poignant. I can only imagine the sense of loss she must have felt. And yet for you, as a child, the experience was wonderful. You continued your story:

I spent from Grade 2 to Grade 6 in the Crowsnest Pass.... My biggest memory was getting to school...I had to go down the highway...under the overpass, over a creek, down by the park that led along the creek and up a flight of stairs that led to the school. It was a walk we did morning, noon and night....

In my elementary years I was always an average student and it was probably because I didn't really apply myself. I remember my Grade 5 teacher was wonderful. She was just one of those spectacular all-round teachers but she died of cancer the next year.... I don't remember her being ill or being away. She must have been horribly sick...but she certainly didn't show it. Her students just loved her. They gave her parties...a surprise party for her birthday. She was quite fabulous. Then in Grade 6 we moved to Calgary, in the middle of the year, and I was a hellion that year....

Dad got a job with Alberta Education in building services and he was in charge of South-Central Alberta. It meant a lot of travel but it was a very good job. My mom was happy to come to Calgary. She got a job in Airdrie as soon as we moved and she taught in Airdrie, in elementary, right up until she retired. My grandparents continued to come and visit us all the time and of course, when we were in the Crowsnest Pass, we went back and forth to Lethbridge a lot. My grandmother plays a very prominent role in my entire life. I'm the youngest of all the grandchildren and for whatever reason Nana and I were very close—closer than any of her other grandchildren. My Mom and I are close too and we're quite similar. Dad and I also have a special relationship and my whole family enjoy getting together...Christmas has always been the Norman Rockwell of Christmases every year....

The building of close relationships seems to be a narrative theme for you Liz. You experienced a particularly close relationship with your grandmother and also with many friends in your elementary school years. You also seem to adapt to change very readily, even to the point of being a "hellion" in your new school in Calgary. Friendship continues as a theme for you throughout junior high. You enjoyed the social side of school life. You explained:

In junior high school I had a couple of very memorable teachers.... They were the ones that went with us on ski trips...and did crazy things.... I met my best friend on the ski hill. She was the blonde

bomb-shell that was new in school and the other girls didn't want to talk to her because she was too pretty...I felt sorry for her on the ski hill because she wasn't able to ski.... She and I have a history together from that point on. We're the kind of friends that five minutes after seeing each other, we're back into it.

I was always very artistic...like my sister who went to art college. I did a lot of art work because my mother really challenged us over the years and really helped us in areas we were interested in. She encouraged drama as well as art. I wrote a fair bit in junior high—lots of poetry...but all of that was kept very private. When I came home I would open up a journal and write. I also wrote myself many letters that I was to open later in my life. I've got this box of very private things and some of them say, "Open when you're 22", "Open when you're 25" (laughter), "Open when you're 30". I've stuck to it...and there are still one or two left that I haven't opened. The letters are just preachy letters—they're so funny (laughter). "Don't complain to your children when they leave things on the floor" (laughter). And then I wrote when something happened in my life that was quite profound or scary, like when my grandfather had his first stroke....

Reflecting back on junior high I was probably one of those very obnoxious—in the right crowd—cheer leader types for those three years. I always did fine, never excelled in anything.... I just wanted to be part of the crowd...

I'm taken Liz with your early sense of wanting to be "part of the crowd"—your desire for community. Your creativity in art and writing is evident, as well as your developing sense of humour. Then there's your reflective side—your engagement in writing to make meaning of profound events in your life. Generally your fun loving nature prevailed particularly in high school:

In high school I had a whole bunch of boy friends...I was way too social (laughter), everything counted on my friends.... My mother and father sat me down and said, "Okay, now what do you want to do?" I said, "Well, be a teacher." It never occurred to me that I would do anything else, never.

In the meantime I got involved with my school drama group.... My drama teacher for those three years was someone I admired...I just

> loved him...and I would be at school early in the morning to make sets, or paint or practice and many nights I'd work late too. My teacher was exceptional. He knew kids. He knew how to deal with them. He could be extremely fun-loving but when it came to business—you'd get to work "right now" and "don't fool around" and "smarten up and if you can't, you're out of here".... I took drama as often as I could. If I didn't have it in a particular semester, I'd be there anyway working in the theatre.... I just wanted to be a part of the group. I never starred in anything. I was never good enough to take a lead role but I always had spot parts. I was always there to be the jack of all trades and do whatever. We were a wonderful group together.... Those years are very memorable.... If I wasn't in the drama department, I was usually in the art department. They made up two different art courses for me so I could continue to go to classes in art after I'd done Art 10, 20, 30. I would just go and draw or paint whatever I wanted....

As you tell this story from your high school years I am taken by your desire to be part of the drama group. Your admiration and respect for the drama teacher caused you to commit endless hours of your free time to the group's productions. The creative energy of the group captivated you. You experienced collaboration and made a place for yourself because you were passionate about the experience and dedicated to the group. You told me that being passionate about something translates, for you, to giving of your best. You felt you gave of your best when you acted as a team player. I see this as another narrative theme that finds expression in your work at Riverview School.

As well I see the influence of your parents' involvement in the theatre. You experienced the performing arts, as an insider, at a very early age. Your parents also composed their lives as educators and you seemed to know you would become a teacher as if by osmosis. Is this similar to the "legacy" of the family that Tom talks about living up to? These shaping influences are fascinating. You continued your story:

> After high school I took a year off and worked in a day care...Grandma and Grandpa moved to Calgary to be near my parents due to Grandpa's failing health...Grandma didn't want to put him into a home. Finally he got so ill he was hospitalized and he died.... In the meantime I was spending a lot of time with my grandma trying to keep her spirits up. I would stop at her house just about every day to

pick raspberries and visit with her, have tea and play games.... Our relationship really grew over the years she was living in Calgary.

At the daycare I was a jack of all trades.... I was the cook and the cleaner and I learned a lot about little kids. I hadn't had a whole lot of exposure to little kids up until that year and then when I finished there I got a summer job with special needs kids.... Boy did I have my eyes opened! A lot of the kids were autistic...I had one girl who was schizophrenic.... I had no experience with those kind of kids and was just thrown into it. I learned a lot. I enjoyed it. Mom thought it was great and was pleased I was doing it. It was a really good experience for me.

The next year I went to Mount Royal College to upgrade for university. I did so well I was quite amazed. I went back and worked with special needs kids that next summer...I went into second year at the University of Calgary—enjoying my life and having a great deal of fun. I was enrolled in Elementary Education—majoring in language, reading, and psychology.... I worked hard and I was a really good student....

In my fourth year I met John, my husband.... John was very active politically.... He was involved in the Students' Union and I became involved too. After university John and I were very active in Ron Ghitter's campaign to become Alberta premier. I was the media lady. I did a whole newspaper for him for the Conservative Convention and John did a lot of convention stuff too. It was funny because my brother was on the other side of the convention floor working for Don Getty.... We had a wonderful year doing that. That was a pretty powerful thing and my brother had been Joe Clark's executive assistant when Joe Clark was Prime Minister so I had political interests prior to meeting John.

As you storied your experiences following high school, I thought about the level of caring evident in your relationship with your grandmother. You also learned a lot about little children that year and about special needs youngsters. You were willing to risk tackling anything—even politics. As a jack of all trades you continued to broaden your experience and derived a great deal of enjoyment in the learning process. Your love of learning has continued as your career has taken shape. You storied your teaching experiences in this way:

In 1982 there were 368 graduates from the University of Calgary's Faculty of Education. Six of us got jobs right away.... It was a horrible year to try and find work.... I applied to all the rural school divisions. I went out to Ponoka County for an interview and got a job teaching Grade 1 in Rimbey. I remember the first directive, "Here is your Mr. Muggs book. We expect you to do every single page in the reading series.... At Thanksgiving you should be on page 67."... You should see my lesson plans for that year. I must have worked five hours every single night.... I showed them to Tom and he just couldn't believe it but that first year went beautifully. I was on my own for the first time and loved small town living.

The following year I found an old farm house and moved in with a new teacher who was coming on staff.... It worked out really well. We had lots of adventures...got snowed in many times and had to go to school by snowmobile. At the end of the year I got married and applied for a teaching position with a large urban school board in Alberta. I was hired as a temporary teacher...in an open area school teaching Grade 1 in the morning and Grade 4 in the afternoon. I learned a lot because they weren't even thinking about the Mr. Muggs series and I was just as happy.... I used a lot of literature...lots of poetry.

The following year I transferred to a very high profile open area school. I taught Grade 1 with three really strong teachers.... These three teachers were experienced, very vital, very wonderful and very giving. They taught me the ropes...they were cutting edge kind of people.... We worked as a four person team, in two teams of two, collaborating in planning.... I was happy to be in a really powerful school...a really up-beat school with great people...I learned a lot from them.

Then at the end of the year there was a change. There were only three Grade 1 classes. I was out the door unless I accepted an ECS position. I said, "You're kidding!". I didn't have any idea of ECS philosophy— nothing. I'd never taken any of the early childhood courses but I accepted the job. I teamed with a teacher who was extremely "old-school".... I was in ECS for four years at that school. I got better and better each year but felt the need for a change.

> In 1990 I came to Riverview... but after another four years teaching ECS I found it was pretty hard, physically and emotionally to keep going, particularly in the light of all the government cutbacks to the ECS program.... In the meantime my grandma died. She died May 19, 1993 when my first child Rachel was only two months old. That was very, very hard.
>
> This year Grade 1 was just a breeze, partly because of the way we taught and because of Tom's influence. The grade change was good for me.

Following your two year stint in a rural school, Liz, where you experienced a traditional approach to teaching, you were placed in schools you describe as "powerful and up-beat". I remember our conversation (May 5, 1995) when you spoke about your first year teaching in the city and your admiration for a young principal who taught you "how to become a team player". You recalled a powerful incident when he said, "Liz, you have to learn to shut up!" You told me you were "always piping up" and you needed "to mature in order to learn". You described this event as "an excellent lesson" and the principal as "the best one you ever had". Knowing this story, Liz, I understand how your ability to listen was shaped. It is a quality I have admired from a distance, as a colleague on staff—a quality I have come to understand and appreciate more fully in reading the transcript material collected over the course of this school year. And as I listen to you, Liz, I reflect on your ability to learn, in relationship with others.

Your story of having to accept an ECS position exemplifies for me the way a simple reality, such as student numbers, can interrupt and dramatically change a narrative plot line that felt secure. Perhaps such experiences, Liz, allow you to cope with the inevitable uncertainties in life. As I think of this, I am reminded of the words of Mary Catherine Bateson (1989) who says, "...adjusting to discontinuity is...the emerging problem of our era" (p. 14) and in response to this she sees us "engaged in a day-by-day process of self invention" (p. 28). You had to reinvent yourself as an ECS teacher, composing a new chapter for yourself that lasted for eight years. And in this past year you have lived another chapter with Tom, a chapter now held on pause, as you expect the birth of your second child in just a few weeks. As your story changes Liz, so too do the stories of the Grade 1 team members. They too must adjust to discontinuity by composing new chapters for themselves in the upcoming school year. Our conversation caused you to reflect further. You said,

> I don't think people reflect that much on their own lives. They've lived them. They've experienced certain things. They look at some

> of those experiences as being profound and life changing but they may not look at the sequence of events...as affecting them as much. They just remember the events that took place.... A lot of times we don't look at our histories as being something that would change our lives or our way of thinking.

And this is why we need to tell our stories, Liz, and hear the stories of our colleagues, in order to understand the shaping forces that find expression as teachers live out their practice. As well, stories connect us. We become closer and can articulate what that closeness means, as you were able to do, after Tom shared his narrative:

> I was interested in Tom's history. I knew some things but not as much as I read. I found it fascinating, 'specially family connections. I was interested in reading about what he'd done. I look at us as being soul mates. We both feel the same and look at life the same way. A lot of people can be good team partners but perhaps not as close as we are....

It is this closeness, this experience of relationship—of friendship and collegiality that I hope to come to understand better in the re-storying process that will unfold in the pages to follow. As always I look forward to our ongoing conversations as our work together progresses.

Love,
Annie

Narrative Connections: Compatibility and Complementarity

The individual narratives of Tom and Liz reveal the ways in which they are shaped by their lived experience (Mishler, 1986b). In coming together, particular narrative threads mesh, allowing a unique shared story of team teaching to be lived out.

Creativity is one such common thread. Tom's creativity as a writer and musician is matched by Liz's flair for drama and art. Their artistic natures suggest compatibility while their range of talents suggest the potential for a story of "complex complementarities" (Bateson, 1989, p. 75) to be lived out. Their narratives reveal the way in which their creative energy finds expression in settings where improvisation is called forth within collaborative relationships. Both Tom and Liz experience collaborative endeavours within their families, in their schooling and also in their teaching careers. Closely tied to their experiences of collaboration are their experiences of special relationships: close relationships with particular family members, long standing relationships with school friends and successful collegial relationships. The elements of risk and trust are lived out within the span of these relationships. Such experiences allow Tom and Liz to risk committing to a team teaching relationship and at the same time accepting my invitation to engage in a collaborative research relationship. Their intuitive sense of the potential of their teaming relationship is rewarded. They come to see each other as "soul mates". For them to be "soul mates" is to understand compatibility as well as complementarity within relationship.

Creativity, improvisation, collaboration and relationship are representative of shared narrative threads which symbolize Liz and Tom's compatibility. As they live out their practice together, the narrative threads described act as shaping influences in the shared story they compose in both the in-classroom place and the out-of-

classroom place on the professional knowledge landscape of Riverview School. In thinking about their shared composition I am reminded of Bateson's (1989) words:

> One of the striking facts of most lives is the recurrence of threads of continuity, the re-echoing of earlier themes even across deep rifts of change. (p. 8)

It is my intention to reveal recurring "threads of continuity" first of all by reconstructing stories of practice in Liz and Tom's in-classroom place.

CHAPTER IV

Team Teaching: Stories of Practice

In order to understand Liz and Tom's team teaching relationship, I present six stories of their lived experience in the in-classroom place. In reconstructing their experience, I draw on: my field notes, our taped conversations (Mishler, 1986a, 1986b), and letters between us. These stories allow me to foreground three aspects of their mutually constructed practice: creativity, improvisation and collaboration. As well, these narrative unities reflect Liz and Tom's need for conversation, their capacity for collaborative inquiry, and their thoughtfulness about their practice.

The Game Show: A Story of Creativity

On my first visit to the classroom, October 3, 1994, I witnessed the world of *The Game Show*, a special reading activity devised by Liz and Tom. I was struck by their energy—energy that drew the children into an exciting learning experience. At that point in time I did not know the origin of such a unique activity. Months later, Liz explained:

> Tom and I were sitting in the classroom one day and I was saying, "Tom, we've got to figure out a way to get these kids looking more closely at sight words.... They've memorized so many of these books; they're not really looking at the words".... I was looking for something that would hold their attention for at least two weeks because we were trying to work on a number of words that were showing up in their daily life, as well as their literature. We had

> children who weren't reading at the time and I didn't feel we could pass by and hope that they would learn through their writing. We mulled it around and we came up with a couple of ideas for little games...I said, "Let's give them some incentive. Let's make this into a game show". Then the two of us just took off. We thought of the game show doors and the wheel and then, of course, guests hosting it.... It was fun. It worked.
>
> (Conversation, August 11, 1995)

In Liz's explanation, creative ideas are generated in conversation—ideas aimed at motivating children in their learning. In this instance it is Liz who envisions a game show as a context for learning and Tom who develops the ideas with her. *The Game Show* isn't a lesson from a book. It is particular to Tom and Liz. It is particular to a problem they talk through together in the safety of their in-classroom place. They are at ease talking about children who aren't reading yet; they are at ease mulling things around.

With Tom in the role of *The Game Show* host and Liz as Tess, the hostess, the children enter the imaginary world of a T.V. game show. Simple costumes quickly donned over their regular clothing enhance the improvisation. On one level Tom and Liz could be viewed as living out gendered roles but that is not their intent. They adopt these roles in order to focus on teaching sight words and out of their concern for the children's learning. In living out the improvisation Liz recognizes that an assistant role does not fit for her. She notes, "I started giving Tess a more equal role" (Conversation, August 11, 1995). Intuitively Liz deals with this issue, on her own terms, within the context of the improvisation. For a couple of weeks

the children live the experience, as audience and contestants, for thirty minutes each day. They learn their sight words in a far from conventional way as indicated in the following examples sketched by my field notes.

(Liz dressed in a knee length, green kimono stands in front of the children.)

L: Tess can't walk up and down in front of the camera if you [sit] here.
(The children move back to provide more room).

T: (Tom enters) Welcome to *The Game Show*, and I am the —

Class: *Game Show* Host

T: Today's game is called *Name That Word.*
(Tom is dressed in a navy-blue vest with orange felt flowers attached).

L: Who is ready to read these words?
(Eleven kids are out at the front, each with a new sight word: Sunday, Saturday, Monday, Wednesday, Winter, Fall, Spring, Summer, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday. Contestant reads the words, class repeats.)

T: How many points did they get Tess?

L: This next game you can get seven more points if you do a good job.

T: Today's new game is called *Sentence Scramble.* This is very challenging. The words we have are out of order and all the contestants have to do is get them in order. Tess will help them while we sing *The Game Show* song.

L: The audience did such a good job, I'm going to give them a point. (Liz moves the pointer from 14 to 15 on her dial card). Seven points for this team for figuring out this sentence.

T: Let's read it all together.

Class: [My] [friend] [is] [singing] [on] [Friday]

L: Oh bonus point, 23 points. I'm going to choose a few more quiet contestants.

T: This is just as challenging as the last one we did.
(Liz works with the kids as they order the words).

Class: [I] [see] [Pam] [read] [on] [Monday]

L: We can decide who's going up to *The Game Show* doors today.
(The children have 25 points. Behind the three doors are the prizes. Two children are chosen. They open door #1 of the three doors. Tom shows the "Applause" sign and the "No Talking" sign to the audience.)

Child: (Reads the prize card) Twenty minutes of games on the field.

T: Tomorrow we'll play *Sentence Scramble* one more time.

Child: Say goodbye to—

Class: *The Game Show* host.
(Tom leaves; Tess stays. Tom comes back without his vest on, resuming his role as classroom teacher. Liz leaves to remove her kimono. By removing their costumes out of sight of the children, the imaginary world of *The Game Show* is preserved.)

(*The Game Show* is over).

(Field Notes, November 9, 1994)

The Game Show can be seen as an invitation to learning—an invitation for the children, whether they are members of the audience or participants, to become involved in a variety of different ways. Both Liz and Tom take equal responsibility

for directing and conducting the activity. Tom uses his musical talent to lead the audience in *The Game Show* song while Liz works with the contestants. Tom and Liz reward success with points accumulated by the classroom community and a daily prize that includes everyone. *The Game Show* ends with the promise of what lies ahead for the following day. New games that focus the children's attention on mastering an increasing number of sight words are continuously devised, by Liz and Tom, over a two week period. One week later I observe *The Game Show* once more.

(Tess, dressed in her kimono, arrives. She gives the children points for sitting nicely.)

L: We have 2 points now. How many points to 25? I'd like you to welcome *The Game Show* host by saying—

Class: Welcome to *The Game Show*

T: We have some big changes today. We have so many words we need three pocket charts to hold them.

(Tess holds a card with the letters K.S.S. written on it, an acronym for *Kids' Sentence Scramble*, a new game. Tom has the sentence stick which looks like a magician's magic wand. Each contestant thinks of a sentence by looking at all of the sight words displayed in the pocket charts. The contestant picks other children and whispers to each of them to find a particular word. The children then face the class with the word cards in the correct order of the chosen sentence. The class reads the sentence).

Class: | Today | | it | | is | | snowing |

L: Five points, good job. Your job audience, is to be thinking of a sentence.

T: They all have sentences in their mind. I can see it in their eyes.
(Karla, the next contestant picks three other children. They get in a huddle, arms around each other. They each find a word in Karla's sentence. The sentence is displayed.)

Class: 

L: We get to choose another person who has a *K.S.S.* in their head.

(The words 

are displayed , by four contestants, for the class to read.)

L: Should they get one more point to make 25 for being so attentive?
(The point is awarded. The prize is chosen.)

Child: The prize for today is 

T: You hang on to the prize card until your teachers get here.

L: (Sings) Goodbye Mr. *Game Show* Host (Tom leaves).

(Sings) Say Goodbye to Tess.
(Tom returns as Liz leaves and leads a song with his guitar until Tess gets back).

T: I'm still looking for some people to join the song.

L: (Returns) Can you sing that one more time. It sounds so nice.

(Field Notes, November 16, 1994)

The Game Show acts as an umbrella heading for creative reading activities which are constructed to meet the needs of the children. The activities allow the children to experience collaboration as they learn their sight words.

With daily prizes to be earned, the children's motivation remains high. However, Tom and Liz, while watchful of the children's level of engagement, are also attentive to their own sense of the rhythm of their practice (Clandinin & Connelly, 1986). On sensing a slight downturn in the level of creative energy they require for *The Game Show*, Tom and Liz plan a new activity, *The Theatre*. *The Theatre* is based on a different aspect of the language arts curriculum. Liz explains:

> *The Theatre* was just a natural progression, simply because we needed a change and we were talking about story sense and structure, character and plot. It was just natural to go from the television to something live to let the children act stories out. *The Theatre* just naturally happened.
>
> (Conversation, August 11, 1995)

Tom and Liz prepare the children for the disappearance of *The Game Show* by explaining, during the final show, their invitation to Lethbridge to do the show there. Tess and the host leave with the promise of returning. *The Game Show* concludes with the children wanting more, yet experiencing the rhythm of beginnings and endings. Liz talked about their awareness of how children could be learning gendered roles and this concern was addressed in their planning:

> We just wanted to mirror what a game show would be like but in a teaching manner and basically follow through on some concepts we wanted to cover. What do kids know about game shows? They know

> they are run by one person and there's often someone who's assisting. But in our game show I'm not necessarily assisting. I'm teaching. I'm doing as much as the host. *The Game Show* is a brief interlude in the life of our classroom. Similarly in *The Theatre*, I was the stage manager...and while we deliberately reversed the obvious leadership roles, we were still both teaching. Our intention was to make learning fun and have fun ourselves....
>
> (Conversation, June 25, 1996)

The Theatre: A Story of Improvisation

Typical of a theatre visit is the experience of being ushered to one's seat—then sitting with an air of expectancy waiting for the performance to begin. This was the experience created for the Grade 1 children on the day when Tom and Liz first introduced *The Theatre*. In this activity gender roles were deliberately altered with Liz taking the lead based on her considerable experience of theatre productions.

There was no announcement to the class that *The Game Show* was being replaced. Instead, the children experienced the joy of surprise. On leading back to the classroom after gym, Tom, acting as an usher, met the children at the door. The lights were off in the classroom and some tall cardboard trifolds stood in the meeting area, transforming it into a stage.

My field notes continue the story:

> "Welcome to the theatre, welcome to the theatre," Tom repeated as he sat the children down on the carpet on his side of the classroom. Liz said, "The audience isn't quite ready yet." She continued to talk to the children using the words: lobby, auditorium, etc.—the real language of the theatre. Tom provided some guidelines for theatre

behaviour, "If we don't come in properly the theatre may not open. Nobody goes back behind the stage."

The flow of conversation between Tom and Liz is easy. Liz has a big black hat on...in her role as the stage manager.... She says, "Tony Top-Hat is here. Tony Top-Hat has an activity for us today."

Tom has four cards in his hat, each with a story title. Liz picks the card *Someone is bothering me*. She explains that she must now invent a story that fits this problem. The improvisation begins with Liz, in the role of a child, crying and pouting. She tells of being pushed on the playground and that she kicked Joey. Tom, in the role of another child, asks her questions that prompt the story being filled out.

Liz smiles and says to the kids, "See how easy it is. We just made it up. We didn't know what was going to happen." Lots of hands go up wanting to try—kids sit very quietly hoping to be chosen. This mood has been established in *The Game Show* from the previous week. Jonathan is chosen. Liz suggests that for the first time Jonathan should have an adult partner. He chooses Tom. Jonathan picks a card, *My sock is lost*. Liz says, "One of us will help you with the problem. You have to come up with something that's happened to you before." I write on my note pad *very Deweyan*.

The actors play out their improvisation and Tom helps to conclude with, "I think that's the end of the story. It's a short little story".... He recaps important points that bring out the idea of main character, mood, and story problem. Liz continues, "The stage manager is going to choose the actors. Tony Top-Hat will help the actors to plan the next scenario."

Tom plans with the actors while Liz talks to the children using more theatre language, then announces, "Oh, I think they're ready—*My Toe Hurts*, Scene 1." Following this scenario Tom explains there will be four new cards tomorrow and that the children can work up to plays using more that two characters. He invites the children's input, "You can think of other stories that will work." Both teachers are full of huge smiles. They have clearly enjoyed themselves as much as the children.

(Field Notes, October 17, 1994)

These field notes, written on the first day of *The Theatre*, reveal a classroom rich in language experience. By assuming different roles, both teachers engage the children. Simple props such as hats are sufficient to transport all members of the classroom community into the imaginary world of a travelling theatre company.

As Tom and Liz develop an innovative means for the children to understand story structure, the children come to realize they have stories to tell—to act out through improvisation. As *The Theatre* is played out, over a two week period, the children also take on the roles of stage hands and set designers. One week later, the on-stage scenarios feature the performance of Halloween items. As the children arrive back from the gym, Tom meets them acting once again in the role of an usher.

T: Front row seats, second row seats, third row seats, some people need to move to the fourth row.
(Liz arrives—she waits on stage.)

L: Audience, show me you are ready. (Liz gets her hat on). The set designers from last day have done an excellent job.
(Liz pins, onto two large trifolds, pictures painted by the children: ghosts, pumpkins, and a moon. She chooses four more set designers to paint additions to the scenery)

L: Remember—big pictures—huge. Now, I need some stage hands.
(She chooses five kids and asks them to bring a chair to the stage.)

T: Are you ready? Tony Top Hat wants to know.
When the stage manager adds something it's usually pretty good.

L: I have four baby pumpkins for the set and two rubber bats. Are the actors ready? I want to hire someone who's never been a pumpkin before.
(Liz chooses five kids who put pumpkin masks over their faces.)

L: We need a director.
(Class practise recitation, Five Little Pumpkins.)

L: We have to do a slight modification before we do this.

(Liz explains how Danny, a physically challenged child in a wheelchair, can play his part).

L: Director, you get everyone started.
(Class does the performance, which is followed by a new play of a Halloween song "One Little, Two Little, Three Little Witches". Liz asks for more stage hands—makes a haystack with two chairs, a ditch with another two chairs, while four children are still making the scenery. Liz carries on alone. Tom has disappeared).

L: Tony Top Hat had to go somewhere.
(Jenny is chosen as the first witch. Jenny chooses two more kids for witches. Liz hands out a plastic spider, a snake and puts a black cape on Jenny.)

L: Audience, can I see your eyes please. These three witches are going to do the whole production.
(I note the importance of songs in the learning process, songs the children learn and use later as reading text. All hands go up to be chosen to do this play a second time. Meanwhile Tom returns).

T: Sorry I got called away.

L: We're trying to make this play a bit more interesting by adding more actions. What can the actors do?
(The children's ideas are always invited. After the second performance *The Theatre* is over for the day.)

L: If you were a stage hand move the chairs back.

T: Get through, gently—carefully.

(Field Notes, October 26, 1994)

In this segment of classroom life, it is interesting to note that, even though Tom was called away, "the show went on". Tom's disappearance resulted from Carol's rehearsal in the gym for a Halloween assembly. She could not get the microphone to work and Tom was the only person familiar with the new sound system. Carol needed immediate help and Tom provided it. Liz simply continued with the children. In this way, Tom's absence was not disruptive for the children, but he had to adjust to the personal discontinuity his absence caused. He knew Liz could continue on her own, at that particular point in time, but he recognized that without her, he could not have left the classroom. This incident foreshadows the unexpected pull of the out-of-classroom place on Tom during his teaching time. At such times, of necessity, Liz adjusts to Tom's absence and she appears to do so with ease. It is like another improvisation for her, based on Tom being needed elsewhere. For Tom, such interruptions cause him to describe the day as "rough around the edges" (Conversation, October 26, 1994). This feeling foreshadows dilemmas that exist for Tom in his teacher/administrator role—tensions he feels as he moves back and forth between the two distinctly different places on the professional knowledge landscape.

After a two week period, *The Theatre* concludes in a manner similar to *The Game Show* with Tom and Liz switching activities at a high point for the children. In a planning meeting they reflect on the experience:

> T: The little plays are getting good. Now it's time to stop but when *The Game Show* comes back, they're going to be so excited. We're stopping while they still love it.... I thought, maybe we should warn the children that there was going to be a switch. I said to them, "I got a call the other day from Lethbridge. *The Theatre* might be going there." Somebody said right away, "That's where *The Game Show* is. Maybe *The Game Show* can come back?"
>
> L: We said, "Not a bad idea. We'll have to give them a call and find out." We'll see how they react on Monday because we're going to start *The Game Show* again.
>
> T: Liz and I have talked a lot about *The Theatre* and it helped us think about what *The Theatre* was all about. We have been *The Theatre* but we're not teaching drama....
>
> L: I bet the children's writing, *The Theatre* and *The Game Show* all blend together eventually so that by Easter time they're going to be sitting up there, reading their scripts and directing their own plays. What makes this so unique is that not everyone would feel comfortable doing it. I wouldn't be as inspired if I didn't have Tom to work from. I've taught 12 years and never had anyone like Tom.
>
> T: I wonder if I could do this again with another teacher?
>
> (Conversation, November 4, 1994)

Science: A Story of Collaboration

The imaginary worlds of *The Game Show* and *The Theatre* are playful interludes between lessons in different content areas. As Tom and Liz make the

transition to the world of science, their conversational style continues. They explore, with the children, particular concepts from the mandated science curriculum. As well they strive for a productive learning environment. For Grade 1 children there is much to learn about classroom expectations. My field notes allow an up close view of the way in which Tom and Liz orchestrate a 30 minute science lesson. The lesson begins with the children sitting on the carpet on Tom's side of the classroom.

L: I need you flat on your bottoms. I have to tell you what's really bothering me. I see lots of girls braiding and playing with other people's hair. (Tom sends Cameron to a table away from the carpet).

T: Rule #1. Listen to the speaker.

L: I want to see all of your eyes.

T: (Gentle reminder) We can't do science unless you co-operate. This is really bothersome to me that people aren't paying attention.

Tom reviews what they've done so far using one child's notebook. With Jessica's book Tom shows the children that she is going page by page "always on the next page".

Liz and Tom's voices trade off in easy conversation as the science concept is explained. Tom writes a title on the board, *Fall Changes to Winter*. He relates this to the heavy snowfall of that weekend. Liz takes over. She creates a vocabulary list which the class reads: frost, snow, slush, water, air is cold, trees have no leaves. While Liz works on vocabulary, Tom goes to talk to Cameron one on one. The work he needs to do with Cameron does not disrupt the classroom. Cameron is being helped towards more appropriate behaviour.

Returning to the front of the group, Tom explains how to record personal observations on a double page of their science

notebook. The children will draw a picture of Fall and a picture of Winter. Liz continues saying, "Imagine you've taken a picture with a camera of a Fall day. What do you see in your picture?" She asks for suggestions telling the children to draw from their knowing. The instructional time ends with the following brief reminders:

T: You're taking your time. This may take two or three days.

L: Scientists look.

T: Remember, two different pictures.

L: Do one today, sitting in your colour groups (arranged seating for each class).
(Kids get to work. All of this teaching in 13 minutes).

Tom's kids are now seated at their tables on his side of the classroom. Liz pulls the curtain—a symbol that work time is quiet time. Liz explains to me, "A lot of the children are still in play mode at this time of year."

I roam around chatting with kids, helping them to make a start and trying to learn names. Erik is drawing a tree. He also shows underground water going to its roots. Erik draws from his knowing as Liz suggests. Danny tells me, "That's what they do to grow." Standing up, he adds "I'm going to copy my tree from outside." I'm impressed that he has picked up on Liz's comment that "Scientists look." Taking his book and pencil with him, Danny walks to the window.

Liz visits a number of children as they work, "How are you doing Amber?" She sits with Scott, discussing with him that she wants him to use a pencil for his drawings and not felt pens. My impression is one of amazement at the work being done, the atmosphere, the quality of the work. Liz tells me, "I'm much more relaxed and way happier this year."

(Field Notes, October 17, 1994)

For Tom and Liz, teaching together is an "easy conversation"—the product of listening to one another intently, with a mutual understanding of what needs to be accomplished. This science lesson is not unlike *The Theatre*. The working title, "Fall Changes to Winter", allows for experiential learning in much the same way that an improvised story is created around the title "My Toe Hurts". Tom and Liz compose a teaching script based on the starting point of a simple phrase. They build from there in a relaxed manner, each in tune with the other—each in tune with the children—the children in tune with them.

An Off Day: A Story of Renewed Energy Through Conversation

It is easy to tell stories of *The Game Show* and *The Theatre*, stories reflecting Liz and Tom's high energy and delight in these experiences. It is easy to story a successful science lesson. Equally important however, are stories that focus attention on the shifting nature of energy in teaching—those moments when a downturn in energy acts as an indicator of a problem to be solved.

One Friday afternoon at the end of November, Tom and Liz talked at length in their planning meeting about frustrations caused by the lack of focus of a number of children during independent reading time. They spoke of children "fooling around". Such behaviour distracted Tom and Liz from listening to other children reading. This contributed to, what Tom described as, "an off day". Their open, honest conversation in the planning meeting resulted in a complete restructuring of

the reading period. They grouped the children in reading teams of various sizes—teams with youngsters at approximately the same level, who they believed could work well together. They created a binder, with the groups listed, so that anecdotal comments could be recorded as each teacher worked with a group. As well, group lists could be given to parent volunteers and their written comments could contribute to ongoing student evaluation. Tom and Liz decided that one of them would listen to a group reading while the other acted as a supervisor for the remaining teams. They would switch roles on a daily basis. On formulating this plan, they felt a shared sense of optimism with regard to putting the new plan into action. A couple of days later both teachers reflected on the power of this particular planning conversation. It led them to talk further on the nature of their teaming relationship:

T: One of the things I was thinking about on the weekend...our learning styles or whatever you want to call it—personality types and so on—it seems that Liz and I both need to talk about things in order to figure out what we think.... I almost feel like I have no idea what I think until I've had a chance to talk about it. So if we have a vague feeling of a problem with something specific, like how reading is going—I'm not even sure I know what the problem is and then Liz and I sit down and talk. That helps me sort it out. We're both like that it seems.... On Friday we had some concerns.... Once we talked about them, we felt better.

L: We just didn't know the answers until we talked it through.

T: Exactly, and then we had the answers quite specifically.

L: It takes a lot of time though, doesn't it?

T: Yes it does.

L: But it's not work—it's a little chat with a friend about how your day went—like at the dinner table with your husband. It works really well and most of the time we reflect on what we've done to see if there's something we should have been doing....It just helps us rethink what we've done and why we did it.

T: It's a teaming situation I haven't had for years. It's something different this year.... It's been unusual for me and it's good because then it gives me a definition of what teaming is, to carry with me...a definition from experience.

L: It's a complex thing to think—well why does it work?

T: It's not a surface thing...it's underneath.

L: Well this is why it's so important, for you, Tom, as an administrator, to realize that this doesn't work just because you're placed in an open area with another teacher.

T: You can't just designate it.

L: No you can't.

T: It's so easy once you're in the office to say well we're just going to mandate it. We're just going to tell people that they're teaming. It's easy to say that because you're there and you're trying to think of how the whole school should be but you have to remember! Even at the beginning of this year we didn't have any idea that our teaming would work out so well. I think we've just realized in the last month....

L: Good teaming comes down to: Do you like your team partner? Do you trust them? Do you respect them?... We happen to trust one another. We respect each other but the key thing is we really like each other and that makes a big difference. I've really liked a lot of my other team partners, but I never had enough time to sit down with them and talk. No, maybe it was because their learning style was somewhat different. I somehow felt uncomfortable with

> some talk that we had, whereas with Tom...I've never felt uncomfortable.
>
> (Conversation, November 28, 1994)

Talking about the "off day" caused Tom and Liz not only to rethink their practice but to verbalize: their need for talk, their valuing of talk and the level of comfort they experience in conversation with one another. In conversation Liz and Tom feel their energy returning. As well, the success of the changed format of the reading class results in a renewed sense of energy in just a few days. Tom explains:

> I was working today with five kids and I said to Liz, "This group is perfect together." In fact I left them for a minute and they just carried on. And one of them turned to me and said, "You see we don't need you." Truly! They're working and they know exactly what they're doing. The reading group was just perfect....
>
> (Conversation, December 2, 1994)

A New Format for Reporting: A Story of Collaborative Inquiry

Tensions can emanate from the practice of teaching on the in-classroom place such as those described in the story of Liz and Tom's "off day". Tensions can also be created by stories told on the out-of-classroom place—stories that reach in to the in-classroom place in the form of policy changes.

On the topic of reporting student progress, stories were rife in the out-of-classroom place of Riverview School. Teachers were well aware of a government

story of the demand for more effective reporting of student achievement. They heard a system story of concern about teachers' stress during reporting periods and there were media stories of parents who found teachers' lengthy written comments difficult to understand. As well, there were other media stories about the "feel good" curriculum and complaints that only positive comments are made about children's progress in elementary schools.

Within the school, a call for "working smarter" and "reducing teachers' stress" prompted the Riverview staff to attempt a new format for their report cards. They were willing to try a "point form" style of reporting. I was interested to hear Liz and Tom's story of the first reporting period.

L: The whole school is trying to do point form.

T: Trying to do it more simply. In the long run this is going to be less work than it's been for me before. We spent a lot of hours this past week and then this weekend but I'm feeling like it's going to be easy once I get started. We're looking through the children's work and agreeing on what should be considered a good job. We've just done that and I haven't done that with a team partner before. That's the difference.

L: We're assessing our children on the same things which is really important. Carol's assessing her Grade 1s differently but that's because she's doing her program differently.

T: So much is anecdotal comments we've written in class on a daily basis, as the children work.

L: We spent four hours Tuesday night, working through all of these little blurbs that go on our report cards. We worked very hard at making sure that the language was very specific, but that it was parent friendly and that they understood what we were doing, as

well as us covering curriculum information. Although it's fairly scanty, on the report card, this was a lot of work. We have pages of comments. This is all new to me.... I was very nervous about doing point form. Tom felt it would help me, as well as himself, to talk about what skills we're looking for and how we would put that into a point form.

T: We like our style of program compared to using worksheets or readers. It's meaning based. We were going through the Program of Studies and we kept saying, "We're doing what it says...using language for a purpose, fostering enjoyment of language, using language for meaning."

L: Our program is for the children. Meaning making is the most important thing. What we're going to do this weekend is go home with all of our children's work and start doing a few report cards and bring them back and say, "How are we doing?"

(Conversation, November 4, 1994)

Confident of the support of one another, Tom and Liz treat the new format for the report card as an interesting experiment. Engaging in the process, however, they encounter a new dilemma. The tone of the report card they construct together concerns them. What they arrive at is at odds with their own deeply held beliefs regarding reporting to parents. They talk this through together:

L: My concern and Tom's concern is, when you read the report card you don't get that little anecdotal comment, he's just enjoying school so much and he's really enjoying his friends or he participates very well.

T: It's just not as friendly.

L: It isn't friendly. I would like to give it to a parent who I trust and say, "This is the format and I'm working through this. How would you read it?" But as Tom was saying, he thinks this report card is far more accurate.

T: But the thing is you could still say,"I'm really enjoying George's contribution to the class."…. As I read this report card, it almost sounds kind of cold but then I thought maybe that's okay because that's what we've been asked to do—make these report cards rigorous…. We're too nice in elementary; that's the complaint. The "feel good curriculum" is a quote I heard on the radio. That's what elementary is and that's what some parent group was complaining about…. We've been hesitant to say what the children are not able to do…. The complaint is that elementary teachers say "everybody's good" and "everything is fine"…. We've tried to always be positive...and that's part of the reason this class is happy…. We're happy with them and we say, "You're the greatest class", and so on. And yet you still have to state clearly how things are. Maybe that's the part we haven't done…. It needs to be stated…. Maybe I like this better because they are clear statements…. Do we need to be friendly on a report card? Do we need to say, "I love having George in my class?"

L: I'm going to say that. I'm going to say it and not write it. I just want parents to know that I value their child and when I read through that report card it sounds like I know them fairly well academically but...it just isn't personable. But I want to see what a parent thinks. If the parent reads this and say "Yeah I can really see that my child is doing, a), b), c), d), e). This is great. It's clear." Then I'll say, "Great!" and I'll just change my direction slightly when it comes to interviews. I'm going to spend more time talking about how they're doing, where they are, if they're enjoying school, looking at their work...just a bit more personal. I would hope that all parents would understand with my manner and the way that I treat their children that I care deeply about each and every one of these children.

T: We're here to teach them something. We're not just here to like them. Right. They're not paying us to like their kids. (laughter)

L: But in order for the children to learn, we have to like them. Right.

T: Exactly. That's why it's a mixed up thing…. It's very confusing…. They expect us to like the children, indeed to love them—yet you've got them for ten months and then they're gone

> out of your life. What does that mean? That's not human relationships. You don't like someone for ten months and then they're gone. There's a lot of issues attached to what it means to be a good elementary school teacher.... If children like their teacher they do better and if the teacher likes them they do better—so we think—but maybe that's not true—maybe we just think that's true.
>
> L: I do believe it. I think it's very important.
>
> T: There are six hundred children out there who have called me teacher. What does that mean?
>
> L: We've had a stake in their lives. We've shaped their lives and they will say, "I remember my Grade 1 teachers. They were great. We had so much fun".
>
> (Conversation, November 9, 1994)

In this excerpt from a planning meeting the requirement for a more rigorous report card creates new dilemmas for both teachers. In conversation Tom questions previous practice and weighs up the benefits of making clear statements. Liz becomes a sounding board for his questions and wonders. Liz holds fast to an ethic of care (Noddings, 1984). It is important for her to find a way to express the depth of caring she feels for children despite the new mandate for a more rigorous approach to reporting. The story of the first reporting period has a happy ending, celebrated over lunch in a local restaurant on interview day:

> L: We've had good interviews.
>
> T: Yes—very good interviews.
>
> L: Jonathan's mom feels the way our program is run allows all of the children to experience success—which is so wonderful because he's

such a bright child. Quite often, it's those parents who are your toughest.

T: That's what you keep hearing, that we're not challenging smart kids.

L: I think we are challenging kids.

T: I think we are.

(Conversation, November 25, 1994)

Negotiating Dilemmas: Aaron's Story

I first heard about Aaron, a child in Liz's responsibility group, one lunch hour. Liz was late joining Tom and me for our taped lunch-time conversation in the classroom. She had received a call from an upset parent explaining that her son did not like school. When Liz finally joined us, I asked what she was planning to do about the situation:

L: I'm going to talk to Aaron this afternoon, one on one, to find out why he's so unhappy about school and hates it. He doesn't want to come back.

T: Maybe something happened today on the way home, that we don't know about?

L: Remember, yesterday, the lunch room supervisor took away his big bag.... I have a feeling that's his soft toy for sharing. He's had it since he was two.

T: He was hitting people with it. Does his mom know about his behaviour?

L: I told her—she knows.

T: That contributes to a child not liking school.

L: We'll work it out. He's a very bright boy.

(Conversation, November 9, 1994)

As Liz and Tom spoke about this problem, neither of them were drawn into an emotional response. The conversation intrigued me. I felt for Aaron and watched him carefully that afternoon. I jotted down notes of my observations:

> Aaron seems not to be able to listen. He makes strange noises; he is always on the edge of the group. As Tom reads a story he is chewing on his shirt. He rocks side to side. Now he is on his tummy—feet in the air. All the other children are sitting. His legs are constantly moving—swirling and kicking in space.
>
> As the art activity is explained he is playing with his hands, picking at a piece of tape, playing with it during instruction. He watches Liz as she demonstrates the technique of obtaining a rubbing. Her actions help him to be attentive. His lips are moving now, as he rocks and bumps back on the heat register. His hand reaches up to the blackboard ledge and touches some pens. He slides them around intent on them. Tom tells him to be attentive to Liz....
>
> Following the instruction session, Aaron stands against the wall, away from the others. I ask what's wrong. He comes to me and tells me he doesn't have a partner. I help him to find one. We three collect rubbings together. In my company, all is well. We sit by two children who are well into their project. Aaron has difficulty getting organized. I encourage his patience.
>
> He learned during the art activity to be less impulsive, to slow down and take more care. He worked beautifully with supervision, support and in conversation.
>
> (Field Notes, November 9, 1994)

Following the art lesson, while Tom read a story to the children, Liz took Aaron aside. She spent time with him trying to get to the root of his unhappiness. She made a pictorial note of Aaron's responses to her questions and sent it home to his mother. On this particular day, conversation helped Aaron to meet his needs: the conversation with me, the conversation with Liz and the conversation Liz hoped to initiate between parent and child. Aaron's difficulties caused me to reflect further in my weekly letters to Tom and Liz:

> As I watched Aaron I wished his mom could see her son's behaviour in relation to his peers. School is such a different experience for a young child. I thought too, of the many conversations I've had with teachers about "on the edge behaviour"—the way youngsters position themselves in a group. I noticed Jenny, always so close—never on the edge. Why do some children write an on the edge script for themselves? Aaron didn't have a partner for the paired art activity. This wasn't a surprise. When frustrated he did silly things, like dumping his tub out to look for scissors. When successful, with support, he was capable of a perfect job. With an adult all to himself he was fine. As one of 23 or 48 he experiences difficulty and perhaps this is the part the mom can't know. With his mom beside him at the kitchen table, Aaron's work would be terrific. I'll keep an eye out for him now. By the way Liz, I thought your note home to his mom...gave him ownership of the conversation he needs to have.... You made a space for conversation that isn't the parent and teacher solving Aaron's problem, in his absence.
>
> (Letter, November 12, 1994)

As Aaron's story became a focus of my attention, my written response to Liz and Tom prompted further conversation, drawing us back to Aaron's continuing story. Tom had mentioned Aaron in regard to a connection between "on the edge behaviour" and difficulty with friendships. I wrote:

> I wonder what Aaron will teach us? The opportunity to watch him carefully has me thinking hard, wondering about his learning and his ability to find his place in your classroom community.
>
> In the social studies lesson based on adults' jobs in the school, Aaron was not able to give his attention to your teaching. I sat with him afterwards and with the help of Brady and Adrienne they showed their work to Aaron and we talked about it. They were both drawing the role of the assistant principal, the same as Aaron. Aaron however had a patch of brown, a patch of green and was colouring a cloud blue. He held his crayon with all of his fingers wrapped around it. This was a surprise given his ability with scissors in the art lesson on rubbings. He told me he was doing the assistant principal outside. We talked about where we usually find her. The two other children had drawn her in her office. After our chat Aaron started to draw a person.
>
> To date the process of Aaron finding his place in the classroom community is in the painful stage for the mom. It seems this could take time and patience to work through. I see your patience Liz. Aaron's mom is lucky that you are calm and clear in what you say and do. I know this isn't easy for you or for her. Aaron has a lot to learn.
>
> (Letter, November 17, 1994)

Just as conversation proved useful for Aaron in helping him through his difficulties, so conversation with Tom proved helpful to Liz as she made sense of her professional responsibilities with regard to Aaron and his parents. The following conversation between Tom and Liz on interview day stories Tom's supportive presence:

> L: Aaron's mom was in today and she's not too worried about his behaviour. She feels he'll come around, so I told her my concerns. She seems to be well aware of the fact that he can't stay in one spot for more than a few minutes but she's not concerned. I'll try to get him to be a little more responsible for one or two behaviours and then I'm not going to push it because his mom would be upset if I did.

T: Is she supportive? When you say she's not concerned does it mean...she doesn't care?

L: No, she's very supportive. She's spent a lot of time in the library the last couple of weeks looking through books on behaviour management, Attention Deficit Disorder and different kinds of psychosomatic behaviours. She doesn't feel that he has any kind of learning disorder or disability...but she does feel he has a hard time concentrating because that's his learning style and she said, "If that's his learning style we can't change it." I said, "Well I want him to be a part of our community. He's on the outside. He doesn't participate. He often doesn't have anyone that he can work with." She said, "He's happy. Don't worry about it." Her concern is that he's learning. My concern is, he's not producing work but she said, "He's producing work for me at home."

T: This is where you're never sure, because a child like Aaron who is only in November of Grade 1 may be okay by Grade 3 or he may be one of those children who isn't handing in assignments in Grade 5 or junior high.

L: So how far do you go?

T: First of all, I think you've done your part—being accountable for your classroom, your teaching, you've told the parents, you've documented it.... It would be worse if you said everything was...okay...and then next year's teacher let's say, or two or three years down the road, another teacher says, "What's happening here?" So at least you've done what's right for your classroom. It could be they'll have big problems when Aaron gets to junior high but...he might be just quite wonderful.

L: As long as she hears me—that's what worries me. I just want her to know. I've invited her to come and just watch him.... They're going to do some kind of behaviour modification at home and hopefully he'll keep learning.

T: I guess this is one of those points where I can see all sides of the issue.... I know my own son, the oldest...finished Grade 12 with university entrance...but in Grade 1 he didn't know what he was in school for, except it was a good place to be with his friends.

> He ended up needing ritalin and was on that for three or four years. He wasn't a model student in any way and turned out fine...so you have to be careful with panicking.
>
> L: I think the reason the mom's not in a panic is that she says her mother remembers her, as a child, being very similar. By Grade 2 they were almost ready to throw her to the wolves and then she just came around. So she's hoping this happens with Aaron. You can't make parents feel powerless.... They have to feel that their child is happy, valued and doing okay. Aaron is happy. I value him. He does do work. It's just not to his potential.
>
> (Conversation, November 25, 1994)

In this conversation the trust that exists between Liz and Tom allows Liz to voice her concerns about Aaron. Tom listens hard, posing questions that allow Liz to explore her thinking. He validates the professional decisions Liz arrives at and shares a family story as a way of helping Liz to think through the situation. In retelling her story of the interview Liz works through her concerns and eventually restories her relationship with Aaron as one in which Aaron is happy, valued and is, at least, producing some work.

Understanding the Stories of Practice

In telling these six stories of practice, certain recurring themes come into focus for me: creativity, improvisation and collaboration. These three themes shape the plot lines of the lives of Tom and Liz and find expression in the ongoing story they compose as team teachers. As such, I want to pay close attention to the way in which these narrative themes, as expressions of each teacher's knowledge, are lived

out across the six stories of practice. To do this it is necessary to think about each teacher's lived experience separately.

Tom

When I think about Tom's creativity, certain snapshots of his experience come to mind. I picture the puppet plays of his boyhood. I see him writing and performing scripts with his younger brother. I imagine him strumming his guitar, composing songs, and performing with his high school friends. I picture him in the recording studio with his headphones on, amid a sea of microphones, creating an entire musical. In these snapshots, Tom is not alone. His creativity is the product of relationships. In each picture, I see his energy; I see his love of performing. It is not surprising, therefore, to see Tom's classroom as a "stage". His classroom becomes a stage in the stories of *The Game Show* and *The Theatre*. In these activities, Tom is both teacher and performer, creating an environment in which learning takes place.

For Tom, creativity and improvisation go hand in hand. Improvisation as a narrative thread has its beginnings in Tom's childhood play: playing school, playing with puppets, playing in the backyard with wagons and trikes. Tom's experiences playing with his brother allowed for constant improvisation. Improvisation continues as a theme in Tom's musical endeavours— playing the guitar and writing songs. While still in school he experiences "personal freedom...playing around with words

and lyrics and tunes" (Conversation, May 9, 1995). His experience in the recording studio was such that he spoke of his ability to sing harmony as an ability "just in my soul". In this way the art of improvisation, for Tom, can be seen as a form of embodied knowledge representing inventiveness— inventiveness shaped by the contexts in which he finds himself.

It is no surprise that Tom's inventiveness finds expression in his teaching. It can be seen in Tom's roles as *The Game Show* host and Tony Top Hat in *The Theatre*. As Tony Top Hat, Tom models the art of improvisation for the children. He acts out various characters in the scenarios of *The Theatre*. His inventiveness as a performer is balanced by his inventiveness as a teacher. Tom's inventiveness also shapes the teaching of science. The story of the science lesson is a story of collaborative improvisation. In conversation with Liz, an improvised teaching script is crafted based on the title "Fall Changes to Winter." Tom is both leader and follower. He picks up on cues from Liz. He listens; he responds. His engagement in the unfolding science lesson, as with all other lessons throughout the day, is similar to that of following the lead of another musician in an improvisation. Improvisation, as a theme, is present in Tom's persona. It is embodied and inextricably linked to his early stories. For Tom, creativity and improvisation go hand in hand with collaboration. These narrative themes are closely woven. All three find expression within the context of close relationship.

For Tom, the story of his life is one of close relationships—relationships with his younger brother, his school friends and with colleagues. These experiences of relationship allow Tom to be open to collaborative possibilities—to be open to Liz's invitation to become team partners.

The six stories presented reveal Tom's lived experience of collaboration as multi-faceted. *The Game Show*, *The Theatre*, and the story of the science lesson reflect his participation in innovative approaches to curriculum interpretation. The story of the "Off Day" reflects the aspect of trust, allowing for open and honest conversation. Such conversation causes Tom to reflect on the need for talk in order to figure out classroom dilemmas. Within relationship, a forum exists for his thinking. Tom explains:

> I almost feel I have no idea what I think until I've had a chance to talk about it... I'm not even sure I know what the problem is and then Liz and I sit down and talk. That helps me sort it out. We're both like that it seems.
>
> (Conversation, November 28, 1994)

In conversation, Tom recognizes his compatibility with Liz—a compatibility that allows mutual problem solving to occur.

In the story of the new report card, Tom engages in a collaborative inquiry—an inquiry geared towards a change in classroom practice. In conversation, he reflects on the nub of the problem:

> We've been hesitant to say what the children are not able to do.... We've tried to always be positive.... And yet you still have to state clearly how

> things are. Maybe that's the part we haven't done.... It needs to be stated.
>
> (Conversation, November 9, 1994)

Attempting to sort out his thinking, Tom bounces questions off Liz, questions such as "Do we need to be friendly on a report card?". Response from Liz pushes his thinking, causing him to reflect on the complexity of what it means to be a good elementary teacher. In the story of the new report card, what could have been a stressful process, becomes an interesting inquiry.

The final story, Aaron's story, reveals Tom's role as a supportive presence for Liz as she works through a dilemma concerning a youngster in her responsibility group. The level of trust, between Tom and Liz, contributes to talk that reflects a caring relationship. Tom listens, receptive to Liz's concerns. His caring response cements their relationship causing Tom to realize, "It's a teaming relationship I haven't had for years. It's something different this year" (Conversation, November 28, 1994). Tom's comment suggests the power, for him, of his team teaching relationship with Liz (Lieberman & Miller, 1984). Within this particular relationship Tom lives out his knowing of the world in his classroom. Turning now to Liz, the same narrative themes, creativity, improvisation and collaboration, remain in focus.

Liz

When I think about the creativity Liz demonstrates in her teaching, I am drawn back to her narrative. I imagine her, as a little girl, watching her mother performing in theatre productions and watching her father constructing stage sets. I think of the encouragement Liz received, from her mother, to pursue her talents in art and drama. She attributes her passionate involvement in the arts to these early experiences. Given this narrative plot line, it is not surprising to see Liz's embodied knowledge of the arts lived out in the stories of her teaching.

In the story of *The Game Show*, Liz, in the role of Tess, creates games and motivates children in their learning. In the story of *The Theatre*, this creative activity, according to Liz, "just naturally happened. It was just a natural progression" (Conversation, August 11, 1995). But this natural progression has everything to do with Liz's narrative, her lived experience of theatre productions and the connections she makes in her teaching. In the story of *The Theatre*, Liz can be seen performing various roles, using props, creating sets and directing productions.

Improvisation seems to fuel Liz's creativity. Her ability to improvise was honed in her years as a drama student. In the story of *The Theatre* Liz improvises constantly. Necessary props are quickly imagined in the Halloween play. An improvisational quality also marks the daily conversations of practice that Liz engages

in during periods of instruction. In the story of the science lesson Liz follows Tom's opening lead. After he talks with the children about a heavy snowfall, Liz creates a vocabulary list based on the conversation. Liz listens and follows a cue—in following, she sets up the next cue for Tom. Such improvisations are ongoing throughout the day. The ease of conversation is an indicator of a high level of collaboration— collaboration that appears similar to many of Liz's stories of social relationships—social relationships first modelled by her mother.

In the family's Lethbridge days, the social calendar of Liz's mother was extremely full. As well, Liz's mother modelled her sense of place in the local community. Liz developed an awareness of this aspect of her mother's personality and recognized the similarity between her mother and herself.

Friendships with other children were encouraged when the family lived in the Crowsnest Pass. As the youngest child Liz had her own friends but also associated with the older friends of her brother and sister. She remembers, "The entire neighbourhood was in our yard all of the time.... I always had lots of friends" (Conversation, August 11, 1995). Such experiences shaped Liz's gregarious approach to life. Changing schools in the middle of her Grade 6 year did not faze her. She found it easy to make new friends and become "one of the crowd". By high school Liz laughingly remembers herself as being way too social. Yet the social

side of Liz's personality was tempered by her desire to work hard in the drama group. Liz learned that she could work hard, in collaboration with others, and have fun too.

In her early teaching years Liz learned about being a team player. She experienced feelings of collaboration and community in a school she described as "powerful...a really up-beat school with great people" (Conversation, August 11, 1995). One year was particularly memorable. It was the year when she taught Grade 1 with three other teachers who she described as "experienced, very vital, very wonderful and very giving...they were cutting edge kind of people." In relationship with these teachers Liz lived out a story of collaboration. Collaboration became something Liz aimed for and, over the years, she recognized it could take many forms.

In telling her narrative, Liz stories herself as a team player seeking collaboration. Given this narrative theme, it is no surprise to find Liz working in this way in the six stories of practice presented. In the story of *The Game Show*, Liz is at ease generating ideas in conversation with Tom in order to arrive at mutually constructed activities. Working collaboratively, a complementarity of roles (Bateson, 1989) is evident within the collaborative relationship. As well Liz comments on the motivational quality of their working relationship. She explains, "I wouldn't be as

inspired if I didn't have Tom to work with. I've taught 12 years and never had anyone like Tom" (Conversation, November 4, 1994). In her work with Tom, Liz experiences a level of compatibility that is new to her and I am reminded of Bateson's (1989) words:

> When we are fortunate...we have many friends, men and women, and work along side many different kinds of people, learning and teaching in complex complementarities. But a few relationships become so central that they structure the sense of the whole. (p. 75)

In the story of the science lesson, a different example of working collaboratively is revealed. Liz leads the teaching of a portion of the lesson while Tom spends time helping one child to understand their expectations for classroom behaviour. On such occasions Liz values the complementarity of their teaching roles. She recognizes "give and take" in relationships. Her experience of collaboration is such that she voices, "I'm much more relaxed and way happier this year" (Conversation, October 17, 1994).

In the story of the "Off Day", while Liz reflects on the amount of time taken up solving classroom problems collaboratively, she does not begrudge the time. Liz does not see it as work—rather she sees it as "a little chat with a friend." She feels comfortable talking; talking allows her to feel relaxed and happy in her teaching. Liz sums up the success of her collaboration as being predicated on three key factors.

She explains, "We happen to trust one another. We respect each other but the key thing is we really like each other" (Conversation, November 28, 1994).

These three factors can be seen in the story of the new report card. Because Liz trusts Tom, she is able to reveal her initial nervousness about the new point form process for student report cards. In conversation with him, her nervousness quickly changes to optimism as she experiences enjoyment in what becomes a collaborative inquiry. Liz explains, "What we're going to do this weekend is go home with all of our children's work and start doing a few report cards and bring them back and say, 'How are we doing?'" (Conversation, November 4, 1994). As the conversation about the new report card continues, Liz speaks from the heart about her beliefs. She feels heard by Tom. She also listens. She listens in a manner respectful of his professional concerns, yet secure in her own beliefs. Liz's strengths, as a listener and a speaker, play a part in her ability to sustain collaborative relationships. Once again I am reminded of Bateson's (1989) words:

> Men and women often do their best work in tandem, with a clear sense of common direction and a degree of complementarity that allows not only a division of labor but contrasting approaches to the same problem. Work relations of any kind are enlivened by difference combined with mutual commitment. (p. 78)

In the final story concerning Aaron, Liz's strengths as a listener and a speaker allow for an ongoing negotiation of a classroom dilemma. In the story Liz is calm

and clear in her actions. She listens respectfully to Aaron's mother, offering response that is open and honest. She listens carefully to Tom's story about his son and to Aaron's mother's story of her own childhood. Listening and thinking deeply, Liz tempers her response to Aaron. She restories the dilemma by concluding, "You can't make parents feel powerless.... They have to feel that their child is happy, valued and doing okay. Aaron is happy. I value him. He does do work. It's just not to his potential" (Conversation, November 25, 1994).

Liz is thoughtful about her relationships with children, their parents and her colleagues. For Liz to work with others, whether they are children, parents or teachers, is a strong theme. In the six stories Liz can be seen living out her knowing of the world—living out a plot line in which themes of creativity, improvisation and collaboration find expression. In working with Liz and Tom I have come to think about their lives as "ongoing improvisations" (Bateson, 1989, p. 241). Thinking about these stories, I connect with Bateson's (1989) words:

> The visions we construct...will involve an intricate elaboration of themes of complementarity—forms of mutual completion and enhancement and themes of recognition achieved through loving attention.... The compositions we create in these times of change are filled with interlocking messages of our commitments and decisions. Each one is a message of possibility. (pp. 240-241)

The visions Tom and Liz construct on the in-classroom place, as Bateson suggests, involve an "intricate elaboration of themes of complementarity". However,

their work on the in-classroom place, as team teaching partners, represents only a partial view of their relationships on the professional knowledge landscape. In their daily work, they move between the in-classroom and the out-of-classroom places. On the out-of-classroom place, they are required to be part of other collegial groups coming together for particular purposes. One such group, referred to as the Grade 1 team, meets on a weekly basis for the purpose of team planning.

Team planning, as an expectation on the out-of-classroom place, is very different from the team planning Liz and Tom experience within their team teaching relationship on the in-classroom place. This new use of the phrase, "team planning", on the Riverview landscape, I believe, is connected to the language of the business world—to notions of teamwork in that milieu (Scholtes, 1988). As such, the concept of teams of teachers is new and can be seen to be co-opted from the field of business, as some sort of educational panacea, at a time when "systems of education are everywhere in ferment...[with] editorials about the flaws of education systems from London to Manila" (Bateson, 1994, p. 9). Closer to home, Bateson's view is echoed by the Superintendent of Elementary Education in the school district in which Riverview School is located. In conversation with me he explains:

> Education has come under the microscope of late. Society generally is frightened by what's happening. More and more communities are saying, "Back to the basics. Maybe we'd better return to what was.... What was in place for me worked pretty well, so maybe that's what we'd better stay with and maybe I'm not as eager to allow you to use my child or my school as a guinea pig for you to exercise some new innovations."
>
> In the late 1960s, early 1970s it was easier to be innovative...the climate was right for doing that. The climate is not as right for doing that

> anymore, quite the opposite.... We're outcome-focused now...and that focus, that paranoia about outcomes...has narrowed the parameters within which teachers are going to innovate. Innovation has been stifled as a result of the political climate surrounding education.
>
> All of a sudden I've seen the power go upward to provincial, national, international levels—national curriculums, international standards—all those things. I've seen the power go downward to parents and school communities. I've seen the power go outward to business and industry. As educators, our professional knowledge...has been marginalized.... As practitioners we've lost control of our practice and everybody else is telling us how we should do our job. Never mind that we know what we know, our public is saying, "Pretend not to know what you know and do it this way".
>
> Right now, even the most innovative teacher still has to assess children in a certain way at a certain time and publish those results...has to teach a certain thing at a certain time and comment on that in relation to grade level—all those restrictions are flying in the face of what we know about how children learn. We're back to describing childrens' progress and assessing their performance according to a lock step structure. Alberta Education, the people that hold the power, tell us that's how it will be.
>
> I remember working in the school system when we were an autonomous school district doing what we knew was best for children. All of a sudden I, as Superintendent of Elementary Education...get my orders. I bring them forward on behalf of Alberta Education. Here's the monitoring, the supervision, the inspection that I'm supposed to carry out so that they can meet the commitments to their goals in their three year education plan. All of a sudden I've lost control of this and it's frightening for teachers and I think as a result of that, teachers are coming together. There's a synergy...there's strength in that and maybe this will help us in these difficult times. Maybe if we organize our schools in this way, we'll be able to survive this.... I think teachers have got to try to come together—get hold of their profession and find strength in each other.
>
> (Conversation, May 12, 1995)

The superintendent not only describes the politics of the landscape, but he suggests the coming together of teachers as a means of survival in difficult times. And

Wheatley (1992) declares, "It is well known that the era of the rugged individual has been replaced by the era of the team player" (p. 38). This coming together of teachers is not driven by notions of organization for instruction in the in-classroom place; there is no connection with Shaplin's (1964) definition of team teaching. Teachers coming together as the superintendent suggests, "to get a hold of their profession and find strength in each other" (Conversation, May 12, 1995) appears, in this school district, as a rationale conveyed to school principals for increased collegiality in their schools.

Tom and Liz are required to respond to this new expectation for collegiality. They are required, by their principal, to meet with Carol and Jane to form the Grade 1 team. The title "team" is simply conferred on them. The distinct differences between team planning on Liz and Tom's in-classroom place and team planning on the out-of-classroom place, when they were joined by Carol and Jane, became apparent to me when I first attended one of the weekly team meetings of the four Grade 1 teachers. The story of this meeting is an important one. It foregrounds the complexity of the interaction among the teachers as they try to live out a new administrative expectation regarding team planning by grade level.

CHAPTER V

The Circle of Relationship Widens

Before I tell this story of the out-of-classroom place, it is necessary to situate it in context. At the beginning of the school year, the new principal, Glen, made his expectations clear to the Riverview teachers. He spoke of the importance of team meetings with a particular focus on team planning by grade level.

Prior to this time, team meetings occurred on an informal basis. The picture was one of diversity. Team teaching partners met on a daily basis, grade groups came together based on need, and teachers, working collaboratively in other configurations, often scheduled weekly meetings at local restaurants. Teachers chose to work in groupings in which they felt comfortable and productive. A social aspect prevailed.

For Glen, the belief that "a school should be marching in step" (Conversation, May 24, 1995) was central to the story of school he wished to create. In a tape-recorded interview with me[3], he expressed his philosophy and expectations on the subject of team meetings in the following way:

> I've said to the teachers, "I want you to team plan." I don't want unit plans from every teacher. I prefer to get them in teams.... I think

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[3] The formal participation of the principal in this study was limited to a single interview (May 24, 1995), approximately one hour in duration. However, Glen (pseudonym) chose to involve himself informally in our work by joining a number of the tape-recorded conversations with Tom, Liz and me in Liz and Tom's in-classroom place. Glen signed an informed consent form and his comments were made available to him for his revision and final approval prior to the publication of this work.

> teaming is the only way to go because teaming is more effective—more efficient and efficient is going to be a big word in our system in the future. Teaming makes for better collegiality. It's more professional. It's safer for teachers in light of public criticism. Group decisions are easier to defend...teachers make better decisions because they're making group decisions. It's the old stuff—two heads are better than one, four heads are better than two.
>
> Teaming is something I've always thought was smart. I thought it was natural for teachers to team. I would like us to move toward even more teaming in certain grades next year. It's only common sense to me that you team. Teaming means team planning and working collaboratively in terms of not only curriculum planning, but in terms of professional development for oneself. To talk over educational issues with your team is healthy. To make group decisions for kids is healthy.
>
> You've got to work together as a school staff—that's a given. I'd be shocked if anybody disagreed with that. You've got to keep together philosophically. If you're not, you're going to have rifts. And what the new principal does is always gather a group around him that philosophically marches in tune. I've told the staff when we're recruiting for new people from now on we're talking teaming and they must be ready for that and that's my expectation. Teachers have got to realize their responsibilities also lie outside their classrooms. The school has got to grow with the times.
>
> (Conversation, May 24, 1995)

In this conversation Glen emphasizes that, in his story of school, teachers' responsibilities lie outside their classrooms as well as inside. Glen's story of teaming, as "the only way to go", is a school story shaped by his knowledge of the system, shaped by the politics of the times, and shaped by his experience. Glen's expectations set the stage for teachers' stories to be lived out. The Grade 1 teachers leave the safety of their in-classroom places. They meet each Wednesday at

lunchtime. Following one such meeting (October 24, 1994), I capture the tension that was evident to me in a narrative reconstruction of my experience.

A Team Meeting: Tension on the Out-of-Classroom Place

I met with Tom, Liz, Carol and Jane in the science room, the room closest to the staff room, on the second floor of the school. The school bell had gone at 11:45 a.m. but the meeting did not begin until 12:15 p.m.. It took some time for the teachers to dismiss the children and collect their lunches from the staffroom. They seemed in no rush. I spoke to Carol and Jane earlier in the day—hoping they would feel comfortable with my presence. I did not take my tape recorder. I felt the need to gradually ease into this new research situation. We sat on stools, at one of the long science tables, in a room that wasn't home to any of the teachers.

The meeting began with a discussion about creating a joint approach to the writing of report cards. The discussion was in response to a suggestion by the administrative team. Liz proposed an opening paragraph discussing philosophy and the place of "play as a very important part of learning". As she spoke, I heard the underpinnings of early childhood philosophy. Carol and Tom, however, were concerned that such a statement would take too long to create. I could see their thinking being shaped by the general call for elementary teachers to "work smarter" on report cards.

Carol expressed her fears about the increasing number of children in Grade 1 classrooms due to budget cuts. As a result she saw the need to simplify the reporting process. She said, "I have 27 children in my class and I can see the numbers going up to 35. Let's keep the report card simple. Let's deal with skills. I want parents to see skills and concepts. Why are we making extra work for ourselves?"

Liz responded quickly, "If I was a parent I'd be ticked off with that. That doesn't sit well with me but I'll accept it, if it's a team decision."

After an awkward pause, Tom changed the subject by suggesting, "Let's look at math. What kinds of skills will we evaluate?" This brought the conversation back to Carol's request to deal with skills and it provided an opening for Jane to contribute to the conversation.

"I can only do what is right for me now," Jane said anxiously. I understood her comment. I knew from previous conversations that Jane was new to Grade 1 math and struggling to cope with a new curriculum. Her comment highlighted another aspect of the difficulties the teachers faced. How could these teachers arrive at a joint approach? Jane and Liz were working on the same content in math, in the interest of maintaining continuity for the children involved, while Tom was involved in his administrative duties. Carol, on the other hand, with her separate classroom, was working in a different way. She was integrating math and language arts. Seemingly unable to reach any consensus, the tone of the conversation changed and

Carol's sense of frustration was revealed in her comment, "The push for this teaming thing is making me crazy." I wondered how the other teachers felt. I was aware of the tension existing among them on this out-of-classroom place. How different the conversation seemed from my experience with the conversations of Tom and Liz in their in-classroom place. There were silences, shifts in focus and, from my perspective, efforts to smooth things over by changing the subject.

Carol's comment about teaming led Jane to change the topic yet again. She spoke of teachers who found "soul mates" in their teaching. She described them as "sharing a personality". Carol's next comment appeared to shift the focus yet again. She said, "I have this great expectation of myself and my students." She did not elaborate but went on to share some ideas on place value in math. Liz was most interested. The tension eased as the teachers talked briefly about the math curriculum.

Jane said, "I saw an idea, in a book, for teaching place value all year through. It makes so much more sense to children."

Liz responded, "I could do that."

The supervision bell at 12:35 p.m. interrupted the most comfortable conversation that had occurred in the 20 minute period. Liz stood up to go on duty. I offered to do it for her and left the teachers talking. As I walked away, I thought about this brief meeting. It had not felt comfortable. I had not felt comfortable. I wondered about the comfort level of the teachers.

In order to understand this story of the out-of-classroom place, I want to think about it in terms of an agenda driven, for the most part, by administration. In contrast to the teacher-directed agenda of Liz and Tom's in-classroom place, the agenda for Grade 1 team meetings becomes the agenda of the out-of-classroom place; an agenda set by administration. My story of the Grade 1 team meeting reveals tension among the teachers rather than the promise of better collegiality. To understand the tension, I want to give equal attention to each teacher's narrative (Biklen, 1995).

The narratives of Tom and Liz, already presented, reveal narrative themes which find expression in their practice. In parallel form, I now introduce the narratives of Carol and Jane in order to show how they are positioned in relation to Tom and Liz and in relation to Glen's story of school. My letters to Carol and to Jane allow me to re-tell their stories and tease out narrative themes. As well, stories of their in-classroom place allow me to make connections between their practice and their life stories. As Acker (1995) suggests, "Research that includes teachers' personal narratives and works to understand their motivations and perspectives creates pictures of teachers who develop strategies and take actions that make sense in the context of their lives and interpretations of situations" (p. 128).

My Letter to Carol

September 22, 1995

Dear Carol,

A number of weeks have passed since we met in the summer holidays to talk about your life experiences. You invited me for lunch at your house July 24, 1995 and we ended up talking our way through supper too! You were keen to read the transcript of our conversation when it was completed. You said, "I think I might learn something about myself." I think both of us learned about ourselves and each other as we read the transcript and talked further. It felt safe for such talk in our homes.

I was keen to hear your early childhood stories knowing you were the seventh child in a family of nine—two boys and seven girls. As well, your memories of growing up on a farm in Central Alberta intrigued me. You began your story in this way:

> I was born in 1952. My family farmed land originally settled by my grandfather, an immigrant farmer from Czechoslovakia. Our farm was very isolated. The closest neighbour with children was three or four miles away and, in order to see them, you had to walk. Parents didn't chauffeur you around in those days. We did a lot of walking in the summer time and that's how we met up with friends but there weren't many my age. I created my own games and my own entertainment much of the time. If I wasn't playing by myself, then I was playing with my sisters and brothers because there were nine of us and we created a phenomenal amount of games. In the wintertime, it was building igloos and playing in the hayloft. In the summer, it was down in the coulees playing robbers, or Indians and cowboys in the cliffs. We climbed trees and built playhouses and treehouses. We were always into something. There were combines and we used to make them into ships and play pirates. We were constantly using our imagination.
>
> We loved to act out songs. One of my sisters liked to be the lead singer and I was backup. I was the umpah, umpah in Running Bear and we would laugh ourselves silly pretending we were the latest movie star or actress. We spent a lot of time doing that. We used to do a lot of

creating, using a lot of imagination and I think that plays a role in my teaching.

You identify creativity and imagination as narrative themes in your life story, Carol, and I see a connection between the creation of games with your brothers and sisters and your current interest in creating board games for children. It does not surprise me to hear you have formed your own company to market your games.

While you talk a lot about creativity and imagination in your life story, isolation also appears as a recurring theme. The isolated location of the family farm made it difficult to develop relationships with other children. As well the lack of children your age contributed to early experiences of solitude. You continued your story recalling memories of your first year in a one-room school:

> My dad or my oldest brother had to drive us to school. The school was five miles away and I was the only child in Grade 1. Because of that, the teacher put me into Grade 2 skills. After I learned to print that year, she was teaching me how to write. I was spelling words in Grade 2 that were not required of Grade 1 because, let's face it, she was teaching 12 grades with most of my family in her class. We were a good part of that class.
>
> The following year, Dad pulled us out half way through because he didn't think the quality of education was very good. He said, "That's it. I pay taxes. I want better schooling for my children. They can go into town." He drove us into town for the remaining half year and the following year buses were supplied because the one-room school closed down.
>
> My Dad was an astute man. He could see things and he wasn't afraid to speak up if he felt it was better for somebody else—never for himself, never. Change to him was change for the whole, not for the individual and that's one of the reasons why I really respect him. I know I've adopted his attitude. I feel I will wave the flag for a cause.

As you tell your story, Carol, your father represents a strong image for you—an image to live by. Like him, you aren't afraid to speak up for what you believe is right. Like him, you believe in change in terms of new possibilities which improve the system. Improving "the system" is a narrative theme which allows you to embrace change and to set new goals for yourself. I see you living this out in your teaching. "Quality in education" is as important to you as it was to your father.

I can imagine how hard it must have been to be the only Grade 1 student in a one-room school. Like your father, you believed the move to the town school would be beneficial. You were unaware of the disappointments that lay in store for you. You continued your story in this way:

> Going to school in town was tough on all of us. I'd only been to town a couple of times in my life because, basically, as children we stayed at home. Going to the town school was scary. There I was in Grade 2, facing all new faces.
>
> I wanted friends. I wanted friends desperately because I didn't have them. The prime thing then was, not how I was going to perform academically, but who was going to be my friend. And I remember being able to pick someone to play with me at recess time. I remember that as if it was just in front of my eyes to this day. I was standing at the front of the room and the teacher said, "Pick someone to play with." I picked Gail because I thought she was nice. She said she would play with me and she did. But she had her little group of friends and now I was butting in on an established group. That holds a lot of importance for me. It might not sound like much but that plays a very important part or it sets everything up for what happens later on in my life because it really didn't work out. I wanted Gail to be my friend and then the group she was in wanted her as their friend. Naturally she kind of migrated back to her original friends. I wanted to be invited into the group but when that didn't happen, I was too shy and insecure to figure out how to make a place for myself. School was the only place where friendships could happen because after school we went home to the farm.
>
> I can't remember getting a friend until about Grade 5 when we moved to another farm. My friend lived a mile down the road. She was the only one my age living close by. She was in a grade lower than me even though she was the same age. She had her own set of friends in that grade—again I'm an intruder, moving into a set group, and I have to pave the way for myself. I have to prove myself.
>
> I tried my best but at some point I gave up. My attitude, by the time I got into my career, was, I'm not going to prove myself. I'm here to do my job, I like my job and I'm good at my job.

I can see, Carol, that your story of wanting friends in Grade 2 had a lasting impact that was reinforced in your experience of friendship in Grade 5. Your

metaphor of being "an intruder" is a powerful one in terms of your relationships. It becomes a shaping force in your narrative. You found it difficult to make a place for yourself within groups that were already established. These early experiences undermined your confidence. You wanted a friend. You wanted to be "part of the crowd" but the childhood politics of playground relationships seemed to subvert your best efforts. I can imagine the hurt you felt at such an impressionable age. I understand the coping strategy you arrived at—a strategy whereby you did not try to prove yourself to others but rather focussed on your "job" in the in-classroom place.

When I asked you about your decision to become a teacher, you storied it in this way:

> I knew I was going to be a teacher when I was really young. I always knew. I had no other thought enter my head because that's who I was. That's what I went around doing. I went around teaching everybody. My sister started piano before I did. I started two years later. I ended up teaching her. It was just that natural thing of wanting to teach. I literally used to get my sisters in the bedroom and wouldn't let them out until they learned their math—not until they grasped whatever they were supposed to grasp. You see as soon as they asked for help, I would help them. But they didn't catch on sometimes, very readily, and so (laughter) I found myself having to go over the same territory several times and they'd become frustrated and want to quit. I just said, "No you can't quit. You haven't learned this yet" (laughter).

Your story, Carol, allows me to see your passion for teaching as another narrative theme. You didn't allow your sisters to give up. You wanted them to be successful. You had standards right from the start and this sense of vocation is played out in your practice. You continued your story by touching on your teacher education experience at the University of Alberta:

> By the time I started university in 1969 I was quite a loner (laughter). I was starting to enjoy this way of life. It was safe. I didn't have to worry about what people thought. I had friends but I'd only let them in so close. I was going in for high school science at first because I thought the sciences would be fun to teach. But because the chemistry courses were very difficult for me, I switched into elementary science. The elementary route also seemed to offer more flexibility. When you go into elementary you are a generalist so the specialty didn't really mean anything at that point. I took reading courses. We were taught the skills that were required for elementary children. We were taught the phonetic skills they

should know. You went from consonants to vowels. You took vowels in a certain progression because some were easier to learn than others. We took grammar and language skills. Art was a minor. When I did my practicum, when I was actually in the schools, everything was wonderful. I loved it—loved it all.

I met my future husband in my second year and I got married at the end of my third year. My husband had just finished law school and he was articling. The following year I finished my B.Ed.

You described university, Carol, as uneventful, apart from being "Queen" one year for the Chemical Engineers. As soon as your university classes were over, you obtained a temporary contract with a large urban school board. You taught for the last three months of the school year. An unexpected incident proved troubling to you. You spoke of it in this way:

Everything was fine with the kids but I had a disagreement with another teacher. It wasn't even significant. The teacher had seniority and who was I, this little whipper-snapper just out of university, to even dare speak my mind and offer an opinion. I didn't understand any of this political stuff—seriously I didn't. My lack of social skills was a big factor—not reading people properly—not understanding that there are certain political games one must play. I spoke my mind bluntly and honestly and that's not the thing to do. I have learned that since, although I'm still not good at playing the game.

When I first started doing that I didn't really like who I was because I felt like a hypocrite. I've only just realized that people do it all the time to survive. They live a cover story. I didn't know that. That's when I started to learn that that's part of surviving. School contexts can be highly political. That's what I learned in that first three month contract.

Your story, Carol, is the reverse of Liz's story. When Liz "piped up" with her beginning teacher's enthusiasm, her principal helped her to temper that enthusiasm. He helped her to cultivate a new story of herself as "a team player". You came to understand your story as a lesson in survival on the out-of-classroom place. You began to understand cover stories as we talked together about them.

After a year of substitute teaching you obtained a first year contract. You were keen to live out your story as an energetic beginning teacher but once more you

found the story being lived out at your school to be highly political. You talked about this experience and about the confusion you felt as a young staff member:

> The year I walked into my new school the principal and vice-principal were going at it neck and neck. The V.P. was vying for the principal's job and so I walked into a place where you had to join a camp. Is it the principal or is it the V.P.? Again, more political games. One teacher, with a lot of seniority, took me under her wing. I felt safe with her. I thought, what is this all about? I got into this job to teach.
>
> I didn't understand inter-relationships on the job. I had no clue. No one taught me that at university and I had not learned it growing up. I was not prepared for it. I thought all I was going to do was go in there, teach and do a real good job—a job they would be happy with. I was a hard worker and I didn't expect someone to say, "Great job". I just thought that's par for the course. I'm privileged to be here and have a job—that's the work ethic I got from my dad on the farm.
>
> As children, we all had responsibilities and we weren't paid for them. You know, you fed the animals. Those animals were your bread and butter and you weren't late feeding them. You knew the importance of everybody's role in keeping that farm going. And so when I entered the work field, my philosophy was, I'm but one part of a whole. It's my job to keep up my end of it by being a good teacher—doing the best job possible.
>
> On the farm no one went around politically saying, "Great job, Carol feeding those chickens. You know those feeders look good and the hen house is clean. Keep it up there girl." You know, we didn't do that. It was just understood and so I was very unprepared for the attitude that met me. I soon found out it wasn't the hard worker and the conscientious one that got ahead. It was the diplomat, it was the political gamer, it was the one who smiled, laughed at the right jokes, showed up in the staff room, stayed after school, didn't necessarily work in their room like me.
>
> I was learning things that I really did not know happened, that my dad couldn't teach me. He didn't have to go to the wheat mill and say, "Hey John, geez, heck, do you ever look good today there bud." They took his wheat. They needed his wheat. It was not until later that I thought, Dad you did not send me out into the world prepared. All my sisters and brothers have one of the best work ethics you'll ever find anywhere—hard

> workers, perfectionists, best at what they do, but again lacking in the relationship thing. Lacking in this diplomatic, game building kind of thing. We just didn't develop those skills.

Listening to your story Carol, I'm aware that from your earliest teaching days you experienced the out-of-classroom place as fraught with difficulties and highly complex. The in-classroom place was your calling. It was the focus of your attention. It was a safe place on the landscape where you worked conscientiously with limited concern for relationships on the out-of-classroom place.

You spoke of the lack of preparation, in your teacher education courses, for events and relationships on the out-of-classroom place. Surprisingly, you did not hold the university accountable for helping you to awaken to the expectations in teaching that lie beyond the classroom door. Your teacher education program prepared you to play your part only in the in-classroom place. Consequently you wanted to compose your life as a teacher in that place. Ensconcing yourself in your in-classroom place, by choice, caused you to write a teaching script for yourself on the margins of the professional knowledge landscape. Your commitment was towards the children in your care and their parents rather than towards the events and relationships on the out-of-classroom place. You understood playing your part as a teacher as being similar to playing your part in the smooth operation of the family farm. Your lived sense of being "but one part of a whole" served to guide you. The poignancy of your statement, "Dad, you did not send me out into this world prepared," remains with me. Yet I see you live out the family work ethic in your practice.

In your early teaching days you turned to your husband to help you make sense of events on the out-of-classroom place. You continued your story:

> I remember coming home from school one day very confused about how certain people acted on the job. I remember asking my husband, "What's more important—you do your job and you do it really well, better than anyone else, or you get along really well with everyone." You can guess what his answer was, "Getting along." So quality took second place to getting along with everybody and that just blew me away. To me that wasn't what was so necessary. And yet it's the most essential thing on the job, as my husband said—the most important thing—getting along with people. I'm learning this as an adult.

Your husband alerted you to the importance of collegial relationships on the out-of-classroom place. As a beginning teacher, you found his response hard to

comprehend. You wondered how the work of the in-classroom place could take second place to relationships on the out-of-classroom place. To you, "that wasn't what was so necessary." Shaped by your narrative, you were prepared for your in-classroom role rather than a more diversified role encompassing a broader view of what being a teacher might involve. Throughout your career you have continued to make sense of the role of "teacher" in light of the various contexts in which you have found yourself. The ever changing landscape seems to add to the complexity.

Returning to your narrative, thoroughness and task completion are narrative themes that you identify in your family story. We talked about these themes in this way:

C: I'm a very skill-oriented person. I do believe in skills and I do believe in steps...children need them. To me they need a progression of skills—everybody does. I'm a stickler on step progression and organization. I'm not sure where this comes from—the only thing I can think of is my mother when she had us wipe windows. You just didn't wipe a window. You made sure you didn't leave a streak. And my dad had that attitude that things need to be done, so do them—you know the work ethic. I think those things combined. My mother gave me thoroughness—task completion probably came from my dad.

A: So this is...an embodied sense of knowing. You understand this and you are going to be thorough with youngsters.

C: Yes—absolutely. Children need to be able to leave my room with something concrete: 26 letters, the vowels, the th's and sh's. If I don't do that job, that means they get to Grade 2 that much further behind. The more time that goes by that these kids don't grasp those concepts, the harder it is. The more fear sets in. The more insecurity sets in. The more "I can't" attitude sets in. So I feel as a Grade 1 teacher it's my job to make kids believe they can learn those letters. They can all learn those sounds and, once they do, they can string them together and read.

As you talk about your beliefs, Carol, I get a strong sense of your feeling for being accountable. You are determined to play your part, by preparing children thoroughly, for the work of the next grade. You understand the graded system and the mandated curriculum requirements. This knowing shapes your practice—shapes your dialogue with parents:

> When I talk about the academics to parents, I'm talking about straight-forward skills. The skills are tools. Once children master the skills, they act as stepping stones to higher levels of learning. The sky's the limit.
>
> What I do need to accomplish, with children, is a certain attitude and that is, let's put our best foot forward, produce as high a quality of work as we can, take pride in what we do and strive to do it the best we can. Academics to me is a state of mind. It's a philosophy. It's a belief that you can strive to become as high a level thinking person as you want to be.

As you tell your story, Carol, I think about Tom's notion of "the legacy" he had to live up to—the high expectations that he responded to in positive ways. For you, Carol, there were also high expectations—standards of excellence to live by that you learned growing up on the farm. That embodied knowing is part of who you are as a teacher. As well, your years of teaching, including eight years teaching Grade 1, have helped you to articulate your philosophy.

I certainly enjoyed my morning visits to your classroom in May and June. Working together, sharing stories of our families, stories of our lives, has cemented our friendship. We did not have this kind of relationship as colleagues, on the staff of Riverview School the previous year, when you first joined the staff. We met only on the out-of-classroom place—never in the safety of your in-classroom place. Now we know there is much that connects us. There is much that we try to make sense of in our conversations together.

Writing to you makes me aware of the need for integrity in this research process. I hope that the retelling of your stories in these pages does not compromise the spirit of trust in which the stories were told. These are important stories, Carol. Your stories act as catalysts for the telling of more teachers' stories concerning the professional knowledge landscape of schools. I look forward to your response and to negotiating the final form of this letter.

Love,
Annie

Writing to Carol, and piecing together her narrative, I become aware of recurring themes—themes of isolation, creativity and conscientiousness. These themes find expression in Carol's in-classroom place—the place where she focuses her attention—the place where Carol feels secure as a teacher with commitment to

children and their parents. Her narrative also reveals her long standing sense of confusion and lack of preparation for the politics of the out-of-classroom place. For Carol, stepping out of her in-classroom place to fulfil Glen's mandate for team meetings foreshadows the likelihood of her experiencing difficulties on the out-of-classroom place. Encountering the close team teaching relationship of Tom and Liz also foreshadows possible rejection for Carol.

Carol's narrative stands in contrast to the narratives of Tom and Liz. The contrast between Carol's narrative themes and the shared narrative themes of Tom and Liz also serves as an indicator of potential difficulties with compatibility among the Grade 1 team members.

Before moving to stories of the team meetings, it is important to gain further understanding of Carol's life on her in-classroom place. The following four stories of her practice allow a closer look.

Finishing the Curriculum: No Time to Smell the Roses

Towards the end of April, Carol and I were supervising the Grade 1 children on the hillside playground. It was a lovely afternoon and the children appreciated the chance to play. It was an unexpected break in the usual routine of afternoon activities for all three Grade 1 classes. Carol told me how hard her class had been working. She felt they needed some down time—some time to smell the roses. She told me she had finished the Grade 1 curriculum and most of her students were

average or above average. She said, "They're ready for Grade 2—for the lower students all I can wish and hope for is the light clicking on before the end of June. That's my biggest wish, but I'm still pushing the others by saying—How much further can we go? We still have two months. Let's not quit" (Field Notes, April 26, 1995). Carol's comment about finishing the curriculum surprised me. I wondered what prompted her to set such a goal for herself. I also wondered what she was planning for her class in the two months remaining in the school year. Because Carol seemed tired that afternoon, I did not question her further.

I remained puzzled by Carol's push to complete the Grade 1 curriculum, two months in advance of the year end, but it was not until late October that I heard her story. In the comfort of my living room Carol explained:

> After my first year at Riverview [1993-94] I thought I sent a pretty good group into Grade 2. I was proud. I was pleased and yet in September [1994] a colleague told me the children had forgotten everything. I thought, wow these kids were pretty solid at the end of the year. Maybe that's why I pushed my class faster this past year, to give me more *review* time. I was bound and determined the children weren't going to forget...but I'm not going to do that again. It was too exhausting for the children and for me. A lot of the exhaustion I mainly attribute to trying to do the best competent job I could. The government also wanted top-notch students. All I could think of was how top-notch can I make this class? How far can we go if we push ourselves and we keep up the pace? I got panicky over the government's push to produce top quality kids. I felt pressure for the first time.
>
> When we did science, it was hands on. It was fun. It was good stuff but there was always that written follow up. The amount of written work we did was not required. In social studies we were writing too. It was creative but it was intense. I've realized there are other ways of doing it. You can still engage children in activities that are just as

> important. In language arts I'd finished what was required of me. I was satisfied. Looking at the children's story writing, I thought okay they can tell a basic story but I knew they could go further.
>
> Up until last year I hadn't felt the need to keep pushing but because these kids had achieved a tremendous amount, I was reaching higher. But when I pushed the children like that there was no time to smell the roses...I think I drove them too hard.
>
> (Conversation, October 23, 1995)

As Carol told her story, I finally understood her rationale for finishing the curriculum early, in order to spend time *reviewing* the year's work. Pressured to play her part, by a colleague and by government expectations, Carol found little time to smell the roses. Those voices from the out-of-classroom place shaped her classroom practice.

The Writing Classroom

In early May, Carol struck up a conversation with me in the staff room at recess. The topic was writing. She told me she had some very good writers and she was wondering about new challenges for them. She saw me, a former Grade 3/4 teacher, as someone who might offer some concrete suggestions. Intrigued, I replied, "If I come to your classroom at writing time we can figure out together what might be possible." My field notes document my first visit to Carol's classroom:

> It is writing time and Carol is editing children's work. She is sitting at her desk with three kids in line. I look at the rest of the children as they work. There is a lot of writing going on—a volume of writing and a quiet writing atmosphere. The children are going from first draft to good copy. Carol briefly explains her writing philosophy to me and I remind her that I noted the good writing from her Grade 1 class the previous year. She too remembers our conversation about

> the work she displayed on the hallway bulletin boards. This work on the out-of-classroom place allowed a view of her children's achievement. Her display invited conversation.
>
> In my first brief visit to Carol's room, I get a feel for her as a teacher. As far as suggesting new challenges, what seems appropriate is simply keeping the children writing. I suggest building up to small response groups to increase the number of children who can share their work. I have a good feeling about my visit.
>
> (Field Notes, May 16, 1995)

In the days that followed, I accepted Carol's invitation to work with her for the first hour and a half each morning prior to joining Tom and Liz. I listened to her children reading, I edited their stories with them, I led writing response groups and read a chapter book to them. I joined the classroom story Carol had scripted since September and, together, we shaped some new literature-based experiences for the children in the six weeks remaining of the school year.

I wondered how Carol achieved the level of success in writing I observed. The thought of what had gone before interested me. Many months later Carol filled in the details of her story of teaching writing, as she sat in my living room. She was comfortable with the tape recorder and began in this way:

> Right from the beginning of the year, I do a lot of preparation for writing. I create a lot of imagination...a lot of visualizing...through drama, drawing, art work, discussion, having fun in the classroom and dropping a lot of inhibitions....
>
> I do story writing and the children watch me. They see where I get my ideas. They see a little bit of me. I do a lot of sentence building. I say, "Give me your idea. Let's put that in a sentence." I write their ideas on the overhead projector. They see them and read them. These are the fundamental, step building, things that I do with

> children. It probably doesn't sound exciting does it? But the thing is, when the children go to do their writing, they understand an idea. They understand a sentence and a thought.
>
> When "houses" was our theme, I wrote a story at home one night, about a house. I read it to the children the next day. The elements of story writing I wanted to present at that point were merely sequencing of ideas—coherence and the basics: Who is in the story? Where does the story take place? What's the problem? How does it end?
>
> Once a theme is built, let's say fairy tales, then I build the atmosphere physically with bulletin board displays and fairy tale art work. I read fairy tales and talk like a witch and act like a fairy (laughter). When I do that I'm just living it. Creating a story just doesn't happen with pencil and paper. Stories are a part of our lived experience in the classroom. That's when the children start to create their stories. That's when the ideas flow.... When I've done sufficient background work, I don't have kids with difficulty. If the children have the necessary skills to allow their ideas to flow, that's all the confidence they need.
>
> (Conversation, October 23, 1995)

As Carol spoke I saw her classroom as rich in stories—stories based on carefully constructed, thematic experiences, shared within a classroom community. While the children chose their stories freely, the themes and skills Carol focussed on shaped possible story topics. Carol covered the same ground as Tom and Liz. There was character, setting and plot. There was talk of the beginning, middle and end of stories as well as story problems. Carol used an interactive approach and modelled writing in a similar way to that suggested in Graves' (1983) approach which also shaped the practices of Tom and Liz. And yet it was the Graves' approach, presented in a stripped down form by a system consultant, that caused Carol to react strongly and to reject Graves' work on self-chosen topic writing. She often hinted

at this but I sensed it was not an easy story for her to tell. Finally, in the safety of my living room, Carol confided in me:

> A few years ago I had some self doubt about how I was teaching writing. I remember a consultant who was promoting the Graves' approach. He brought fancy writing folders to our P.D. day. He showed how the children wrote down titles for ten topics they wanted to write about—anything from cats to space ships. The consultant said, "If a child starts this story about a cat and then does not want to finish it, that's okay. The child can go on to a new topic and it's fine to leave a story unfinished because it can be finished at another time."
>
> I couldn't believe this. Young children don't do that. They don't go back. They're on to the next thing! I thought, what are we creating here? Poor task completion—I think so. I remember challenging the consultant with some pointed questions. He didn't like me to ask those questions. He thought he knew everything. He was espousing someone else's ideas without really any thought to it at all. In his nice way he suggested I didn't know anything. I didn't like the ideas he was sharing and I didn't want to accept them and I didn't. At my school, which was a high needs school, children were used to Kraft Dinner and five hours of television every night. His ideas weren't going to cut it for those children. I needed to image their world with exciting ideas, great things—not Kraft Dinner and The Simpsons.
>
> A few days after his visit I shrugged off the experience—and went on my merry way (laughter). But when consultants tell teachers, "This is the way!" and everyone embraces it—then I think I may be the only one not embracing it. When I feel like that, I don't tell anybody what I'm doing in my classroom. I have long given up on anybody listening to what I have to say (laughter). Some of the things that I do, I don't share because I think other teachers will look at my work and walk away saying, "Oh she does *that*!"
>
> (Conversation, October 23, 1995)

As Carol told this story, I recognized the way in which she had come to live a cover story as a teacher of writing. Initially open to new ideas, Carol listened to

the consultant but found his suggestions in opposition to her narrative knowing. To accept unfinished stories from children was at odds with Carol's sense of task completion learned from her father on the farm. For Carol, the consultant's generic ideas did not seem to fit a "high needs" school context. Rejecting these ideas, Carol found herself silenced and alone, living out her own beliefs about the necessary fundamental steps in the teaching of writing. By silencing her own knowing, Carol learned to avoid potential criticism from colleagues on the landscape. It was her way of surviving on the out-of-classroom place.

Introducing Similes: A Story of Creativity

One morning towards the end of May, Carol told me she would be working on similes with the children. I was both surprised and intrigued. I hadn't imagined Grade 1's using such techniques in their writing. I had often heard Carol talking about skills in the Grade 1 team meetings. I recalled a meeting (February 8, 1995) when Carol listed a host of skills she had covered with her class: -ing endings, -ed endings, homonyms and so on. At that meeting Tom and Liz appeared surprised. Tom said, "We haven't done any of those things formally. In the long run we are covering the same things but we don't have in mind a particular progression of skills." This conversation seemed to help the teachers to make some sense of the differences between their programs—to understand the range of practice being lived out in their Grade 1 classrooms.

Whenever I heard Carol speak of her practice it was always on the out-of-classroom place, stripped of context. An impression of formal lessons or traditional teaching came to mind. This perception stayed with me until I was able to spend time in Carol's classroom. As I watched, I realized her practice was far from formal—far from traditional.

Carol began a lesson on similes by reading Jack and the Beanstalk. The children sat close to her on the carpet. She asked questions along the way. When the story was over she explained the morning activity would be to draw the giant. She said, "I'm going to show you how to draw a fabulous giant by using similes for the body parts." Drawing a large head on chart paper Carol said, "His nose is like a tea-cup". She drew the tea-cup nose, and as she mentioned other facial features, the children eagerly offered their suggestions (Field Notes, May 24, 1995):

- ears as big as a window
- eyes as round as a plate
- eyeballs the colour of an elephant
- mouth as wide as a truck
- teeth as pointy as an upside down mountain
- hair dark brown like a bear and straight like spaghetti
- eyebrows as bushy as a rabbit's tail

With each suggestion Carol added to her picture. The children's excitement grew into a buzz of chatter and laughter—hands waved with new ideas. Carol gave

a reminder, "Let's come back to some calmness here please. Let's make good use of our time." Carol waited. When the children were calm, she continued, "Your imagination is limitless. Imagine you're designing this giant for the next Disney movie."

Drawing the giant, the children chattered with excitement in the language of simile. In the days that followed, Carol reminded them to try writing similes as a way of adding detail to their stories. In this way, the children began to experiment with similes and to delight in having their similes recognized when they read their stories to the class.

When Liz asked me, "What goes on over there?" (Field Notes, June 6, 1995) I was able to share stories of Carol's in-classroom place—stories that began to shape new perceptions of Carol's practice among her Grade 1 colleagues.

Curriculum Connections: Team Teaching with Carol

A few days after the lesson on similes, I was helping Carol to edit the children's stories. They were revising first drafts and working on a best copy in the form of an illustrated book. Stephanie brought her story to me. She had chosen to write about a giant. The story was so good, it prompted me to ask Carol, "Do you do response groups?" (Field Notes, May 30, 1995).

Carol replied, "Will you show me how you do it?"

The children gathered at the carpet and I explained, "As Stephanie reads her story, I want you to think about the things you like about her writing. It's really important for a writer to hear what an audience thinks about their work."

The children loved offering "I like..." statements and Stephanie enjoyed being in charge, receiving the response from her peers. In discussing one child's response to the ending of her story she said, "I'm going to write a second chapter for this story, telling what happens to the giant. I know about chapters because I read chapter books."

Stephanie's comment immediately triggered a connection in my mind. I thought of a book written by Hughes (1968), called *The Iron Man*. I knew it would be perfect to read to the children. As a story in five chapters, the children could learn about chapters. The poetic style of Ted Hughes and his use of similes would also be fitting, as well as the fact that the main characters in the story are giant creatures.

Each morning I read a portion of the book and Carol and I engaged the children in a discussion about how chapters work—how they begin—how they end—how the writer introduces a problem to be solved. One morning (June 6, 1995), as I entered the classroom, Carol was mixing paint for the children to do a painting of the Iron Man. My field notes continue the story:

> Carol has decided, because it is a rainy day, that the children need the calming activity of painting. She has mixed a gun metal grey shade

> and added gold for effect. I start reading *The Iron Man* while Carol continues with art preparations. She joins the group when she's ready.
>
> As she explains the art activity, I throw in a suggestion which she readily picks up on. I say, "Have you ever had the Grade 1's draw with yellow or white chalk before they paint? It keeps their drawings big?" I tell her that the waterproof quality of the chalk is good too—the kids don't lose their drawing when they apply their paint. I demonstrate and then Carol shows the children how to sponge the paint onto the paper. She also suggests they use chalk for the Iron Man's coloured eyes. The whole introduction to this work is improvised with Carol receptive to suggestions and eager to suggest new possibilities along the way. She gets black conté crayon out for outlining and accentuating further details. The children begin.
>
> (Field Notes, June 6, 1995)

A few days later Carol displays the large painted figures of the Iron Man on a hallway bulletin board together with each child's written response to Ted Hughes. Their letters, beautifully printed on blue paper begin,

> Dear Mr. Hughes,
>
> I like...

And while the children liked their work, I too enjoyed my involvement with them and with their teacher. In my field notes I wrote:

> 8:30 - 10:00 a.m. Team teach with Carol in her Grade 1, class.... She tells me she enjoys this experience.
>
> (Field Notes, June 6, 1995)

Understanding the Stories of Practice

In telling these four stories of Carol's practice, certain recurring themes come into focus for me: isolation, creativity and conscientiousness. These three themes shape the plot line of Carol's life and find expression in her ongoing story as a teacher. As such, I want to pay close attention to the way in which these narrative themes, as expressions of Carol's teacher's knowledge, are lived out across the four stories of practice.

When I think about the isolation Carol experienced, particular snapshots come to mind. I picture her remote farm house, in Central Alberta, and the insular nature of her early childhood years. I imagine her as the only Grade 1 child, in a rural one-room school, with few children even close to her in age. I see her standing alone, shy and insecure in front of the Grade 2 students in the town school, desperate for a friend her own age. I see her being marginalized by the established friendship groups of other children throughout her elementary years. I picture Carol struggling for many years with her sense of being "an intruder" and finding strength, within herself, to cope as "a loner". It is not surprising, therefore, that Carol is comfortable with the relative solitude of her life as a classroom teacher.

This solitude is evidenced in the story of Carol teaching similes when Liz comments, "What goes on over there?" (Field Notes, June 6, 1995). As a colleague teaching the same grade, for an entire year, Liz has no clue of the life of Carol's in-classroom place. Similarly, in the story of the visit of the writing consultant, Carol

withdraws to the safety of her classroom. She tells nobody about her rejection of the consultant's ideas. Of necessity, she become secretive about her own approach to the teaching of writing in order to avoid potential criticism from colleagues. It is also a telling remark when Carol confides, "I have long given up on anybody listening to what I have to say" (Conversation, October 23, 1995). Carol's experience mirrors Acker's (1995, p. 115) finding "that voices can...clash or be silenced by hostile surroundings or other voices (Delpit, 1993)". Finding her teacher knowledge rejected by the consultant, Carol maintains the strength of her convictions by continuing to teach writing in the way she believes is best for the particular children in her high needs classroom.

Carol allows the children's work to speak to her success as a teacher. Her hallway displays of writing and art validate her teaching and draw forth the response of colleagues on the out-of-classroom place.

When I think of Carol's creativity, it emanates from solitary times on the farm when, as a young child, she created her own games and entertainment much of the time. Then with her brothers and sisters she was part of the creation of a phenomenal number of games in and around the farm. Imagination was key in Carol's play with singing and acting a source of fun and laughter. It is no surprise that Carol's classroom mirrors her childhood experiences. There is fun and laughter behind closed doors.

Carol also writes for the children and in sharing her writing the children learn more about their teacher. A bond of relationship develops. Carol invites children into a lived world of fairy tales by acting out various roles: witches, fairies and giants. She builds an exciting classroom environment by integrating fine arts and language arts. She knows that "creating a story just doesn't happen with pencil and paper" (Conversation, October 23, 1995). Carol's approach is an integrated one as evidenced in her creativity in teaching similes. Her approach encourages the children's imagination and their engagement in learning.

Teaching with Carol in the final six weeks of the school year, I observed her intuitiveness as a teacher. I marvelled at her knowing that painting *The Iron Man* would have a calming effect on the children on a rainy morning. Her intuitiveness was a catalyst for her creativity as a curriculum planner. Together we pooled ideas as to how the children might approach the art activity. In the absence of any lesson plan, we enjoyed improvising. Carol spoke of this experience in the following way:

> With you, I was learning new stuff. Here I was so secure in my teaching. My program was good but I want new ideas. I want to be challenged too. I want to be excited. I want someone to say, "Have you tried that?" I enjoy that. Never at any point did I feel like an observer—that's what I liked about our teaming situation.... At no point did I sit on the outside. I was always part of it and that's the dynamics we had. Those are the dynamics that need to be addressed. What are the true dynamics of teaming? At all points in that situation...you're all in it totally.
>
> In most of my teaming situations I haven't experienced those dynamics. I never at any point felt I was losing my special rapport with the children. I was having fun and enjoying every minute of it

> and looking forward to it. I was willing to share and say, "Come on in. Be with us. Let's have fun." I never felt threatened. I was learning. There were things to discover. You challenged me. There wasn't complacency.
>
> (Conversation, June 21, 1996)

For Carol, conscientiousness as a narrative thread, has its beginnings in her life on the farm. A strong work ethic modelled by her parents contributes to Carol's view of how success in life is achieved. Carol learned to work hard. She learned "the importance of everybody's role in keeping the farm going" (Conversation, May 24, 1995). She accepted her responsibilities and fulfilled her duties on the farm, knowing the high standards of perfection and task completion expected by her parents. Carol understood her father's fine reputation as a farmer as directly related to his work ethic. In this way, conscientiousness for Carol can be seen as a form of embodied knowledge that finds expression in her teaching.

Carol's narrative also reveals her childhood passion for teaching. She persevered until her sisters were successful. From an early age Carol was accountable and would not let her sisters give up. Similarly in the opening story, *Finishing the Curriculum: No Time to Smell the Roses*, Carol lives a story of accountability. Pressured by a comment from a colleague and by government expectations, the only thought in Carol's head was, "How top-notch can I make this class? How far can we go if we push ourselves and we keep up the pace?" (Conversation, October 23, 1995). In this way, Carol responds to the expectations

of the out-of-classroom place by living out her narrative knowing of what it means to "teach and do a real good job—a job they would be happy with" (Conversation, July 24, 1995). But in reflecting on her story, Carol realizes, "It was exhausting for the children and for me.... I felt pressure [from the government] for the first time...." (Conversation, October 23, 1995). Carol's reflections on feeling government pressure mirror Apple's (1982, 1986) notion of "intensification" which Acker (1995) explains as being "basically the pressure to do more work in the same amount of time formerly allowed...intensification for teachers results in cutting corners, destroying sociability and leisure, and displacing goals away from providing quality service to simply getting [things] done" (p. 108).

For Carol conscientiousness in any task, whether it was wiping the farmhouse windows or caring for the chickens, connects with her sense of "a progression of skills". This belief can be seen in the story, *The Writing Classroom*, when Carol gives an account of the "fundamental, step building things" she does in teaching writing.

In the four stories presented, Carol can be seen living out her knowing of the world (Steele, 1986)—living out a plot line in which themes of isolation, creativity and conscientiousness find expression. Close relationships occur only in her in-classroom place and not on the out-of-classroom place.

In presenting Jane's narrative, the picture of the Grade 1 team is complete. The four teachers can be better understood as they come together on the out-of-classroom place of Riverview School (Casey, 1995).

My Letter to Jane

October 5, 1995

Dear Jane,

It was great visiting you today. We talked about your life experiences over lunch. We looked at the transcript of conversations between us, which took place in May and June 1995 just prior to your retirement from Riverview School. Your retirement marked ten years of teaching at the school in the capacity of teacher-librarian. Our relationship as colleagues spans that entire period. We've shared many stories over the years: stories of our families and stories of our teaching that popped out in conversation. However, it has been fascinating for me to piece together a chronological account of your life experiences. You began your story in this way:

> I was born in Calgary in 1938. My early childhood years were spent on my father's farm which was close to the city. After the war we lived in downtown Calgary in a pioneer home originally owned by my mother's parents. They had come to Calgary from Ontario in 1902. My father continued to farm and to enjoy his winters in the city. In the growing season my family joined him on weekends and school holidays.
>
> My mother was a teacher. She met my father when she was teaching in a one-room school close to Calgary. He had homesteaded in the area since 1910. He had come from Iowa, with his father, to file a land claim at the age of seventeen. My mother always said, "He was a good catch!" He was fun loving and well respected in the rural community.
>
> My mother taught for 11 years before she married. She started to teach when she was 19. She taught in rural schools out in the wilds

of Alberta where a lot of young teachers first went to hone their skills. School houses were in the middle of nowhere and teachers from prairie towns and from Eastern Canada came out west for employment. Some didn't know how to ride horses or didn't know anything about the west and the winters, let alone the curriculum and the expectations of teaching from Grade 1 to 12.

My mother's sister and brothers were also teachers and they lived next door to us. They certainly shaped my childhood experiences.... They were often at our house eating or just talking after school. That was the context I grew up in. There was lots of school-teacher talk, but what that did to me was make me resolve not to be a teacher (laughter). I was always being told by my relatives, "Oh you'll be a teacher too, won't you. You'll be a teacher like your mother. Your family is all teachers." I would always say, "Oh no I'm not going to be a teacher." It just seemed like the right thing to say (laughter) so that I wasn't just lumped in with the teaching family. My mother didn't pressure me to become a teacher but I don't think she was surprised when it happened.

All through my growing up years my mother didn't teach. She was an "at home mom" like all moms were expected to be. I remember my mother reading Anne of Green Gables to me when I was about five years old and I could read when I began Grade 1. My mother taught me and that was considered special.

I developed a strong love of reading and spent a lot of time at the public library. I went to the children's section by myself. The library is a solitary experience where you're with these books—choosing and taking as long as you want in a private world linking me to readers and the world of reading.... I found reading was wonderful especially when I was at the farm, feeling there was nothing to do. It transported me away from our bleak little farmhouse where the wind blew incessantly and there was dust, dirt, and mud.

My mother tutored my brother and I and others. She always had a collection of our friends or nearby neighbours' kids who had problems with school. She had a huge volume of paper costumes that she had used for all the different Christmas concerts through the years. We would play endlessly with the teaching stuff that she had accumulated. That made childhood fun.

Your childhood, Jane, featured many friends playing and learning together under the supervision of your mother. I imagine her creating an at-home classroom environment. Your home was like a one room school complete with your mother's teaching materials. She shaped the environment you grew up in together with your uncles and your aunt. You were immersed in teacher-talk and in teaching and learning.

You spoke of sustained friendships both at school and at home:

> I met Norma, Doreen and Joan in Grade 1 when I started school and we were friends right through to Grade 9. We played at each other's houses and a lot of times we played outside.... Groups of us would go out, even in the dark, after supper. We'd go to skating rinks. That was our big social place. Our neighbourhood was safe and parents didn't concern themselves. Shopping was also a big thing because my house was only a block from Eaton's and we spent a lot of time in and out of stores.... There was Woolworth's, the Metropolitan and jewellery stores to dream over and lots of Saturday afternoon movies.
>
> At the end of Grade 8 all four of us went to a school just for Grade 9 students. We walked to and from school together every day. We all played on the basketball team...that was the most intense year of our friendship.
>
> I had a very lucky childhood with a lot of money put into music lessons and a lot of tolerance for my love of sports. I had neighbourhood friends too in different grades and one of those friends has been a life-long friend. My city friends were never part of the country. They didn't come to the farm because we had a very small house and people didn't drive their kids to other places. It wasn't done. That wasn't considered a worthy use of gas and that's partly the war and the depression.... My farm friends were not a part of my city life. I still have farm friends today. We love to see each other and just gabble away like crazy. My childhood friends have remained important to me as shapers of my early opinions and shapers of my life.

At the insistence of your parents, you went to an academic high school. There, a dynamic English literature teacher had a strong influence on you. You talked about his "brand new expectations". He wanted you to delve into literary

criticism. To do this, you visited the main downtown library. There, a now famous librarian, Georgina Thompson, introduced you to the stacks—introduced you to books you had no idea existed. You were thrilled that a new use for libraries had presented itself. You described this event as "the key to your academic success". For you, Jane, going to the library was synonymous with "making an academic choice". Your love of libraries continued throughout your student years, at the University of Alberta, where you felt at home in the Rutherford Library. In the down time from your studies you played on the university basketball team and sang in the mixed chorus. You continued your story:

> I did a B.A. in psychology. I was going to be a social worker and save the world but instead I married a teacher. I became pregnant right away and in the early 1960s it was expected that you only return to work when your children were in school.
>
> I was at home for nine or ten years with three children. During those years I taught swimming. One day my husband said, "If you like teaching, why don't you go back to university and become a teacher?" When I actually bit the bullet and said, "Yes, I think this is the right thing to do," I was already 29 years old.
>
> I went back to university for my B.Ed. and began teaching in a junior high school. I was in social studies and language arts and I found it difficult. There was a lot of marking and the curriculum was changing at that time. We were going into an inquiry approach. We were learning how to help children to be interested in their own learning—choosing things they wanted to pursue. That was a whole different learning style for me. I taught for four years until the birth of my fourth child and became an "at home mom" once again.
>
> One day I heard a program on C.B.C. Radio about school librarianships. I decided that junior high was no place to grow old. In fact, it was a great place to grow old. You grew old really fast (laughter). It felt like an albatross descended on my shoulders in September and stayed there all year, digging his claws in, while the mountains of work piled up around me. After listening to this program I ended up thinking about the library—thinking, this is perfect—this is exactly me. I have always hung out in libraries. I knew I was a natural. Seeing it could be combined with a teaching career, I took a diploma in school librarianship.

Your story, Jane, allows me to see the serendipitous way you eventually found your niche in teaching. Your love of libraries and the shaping effects of living continuously in an environment with teachers, are narrative themes, which allowed new possibilities in your life. I am reminded about Tom's story and the way in which the politics of the time can suddenly shape a new plot line. For you, new initiatives relating to school librarianships allowed you to author a new chapter in your teaching career—an elementary school chapter. You continued your story:

> In January 1978 I got my first position as an elementary school teacher-librarian. It was a perfect situation. It was half time—only library, and I learned a lot. A year and a half later I moved to a new elementary school as a full time teacher-librarian and stayed for five years. In each case, I think a librarian is taught by the staff as much as by outside forces, although at that time a big army of supervisors and consultants were forever putting on workshops. There would hardly be a week go by when I wouldn't be at an after-school workshop. There would be workshops on curriculum or library related activities, such as, how to team teach particular units of study. In the early 1980s it was recognized that schools had to buy into the idea of a teacher-librarian co-operatively planning and teaching units of study with classroom teachers. This was necessary in order to bring in the information literacy component. It was the glue that held the library together for a long, long time.
>
> Those were great learning years and I was very fortunate to come through at a time when there was maximum attention to this kind of training. A large group of teacher-librarians came through at that time and then went on to be models for the next group.

Your love of learning, Jane, comes through as a narrative theme in your story. Despite the demands of a busy family life, you made time for learning. You took advantage of in-service training opportunities and, among other things, you learned about team teaching. You learned ways to collaborate and from that point in time collaboration became a narrative thread in your teaching. Your comment, "Those were great learning years" allows me to see multiple shaping forces in your story of becoming a teacher-librarian. You were shaped by a positive political climate favouring your new role, you were shaped by school system consultants and by teachers in the particular elementary school contexts in which you worked. You were also shaped by a mandate for teacher collaboration. It was required that you team teach a unit of study with each classroom teacher in the school. This was a challenge

you came to enjoy in your ten years at Riverview School. You storied your experience in this way:

> I came to Riverview in 1985. I knew the school had a good reputation. People all over the city were looking at Riverview with envy. I felt really happy. It wasn't very much into the school year, probably the first or second day, when the term "lighthouse school" came up. I had no idea what it meant. I thought, it just means a school where people are doing things which are new and energetic. I felt that energy level too. There was certainly pressure to maintain the excellence that went along with being a "lighthouse school", whatever that was. I think it has to do with the kind of teachers and the whole aura of the school or the atmosphere that teachers sense. They perceive a certain standard to be met and proceed to come up to that—to do something beyond just excellence in teaching—to be innovative adapting curriculum.
>
> I had no idea what kind of library would be expected in a "lighthouse school". I just went ahead doing whatever I felt needed to be done. It's hard to say whether I shaped anything or whether "the lighthouse" shaped me. I would really lean to the "it shaped me" side of things because I had come from a very different background. I had come from a high needs Grade 5 and 6 school and had no experience with Kindergarten to Grade 4. I had no experience with young children. I was quite willing to allow whatever needed to be done to be told to me and to work into it that way. I think the school shaped me in terms of expectations. Teachers tell you things. Make sure you include so-and-so's poetry in the collection. Karla Kuskin, Judith Viorst and others, and somewhere else I heard about Myra Cohn Livingston's poetry. I put the bits and pieces together and said to myself, "Oh I'm getting a handle on who the good poets for children are and the kinds of things teachers want here. What teachers want here is different from what they wanted at my other schools." Teachers would come down to the library saying they wanted to improve part of their program and we'd share ideas. I suppose that's a reflection of being a so-called "lighthouse school". It's also just being a good teacher.
>
> I wouldn't call myself a curriculum leader. I don't think I would ever describe myself that way and I don't think that's the mandate of a teacher-librarian. It's just saying, "Well, these are the kinds of

> materials that are available—will they work with what you've got in mind?" And then somehow, together, we would shape a unit of study.

As you spoke of your experience at Riverview, Jane, I see you as being open to new possibilities. Guided by the situation, you shaped your role in collaboration with each of your colleagues. You eased into working with young children; you were open and responsive to teachers who wanted to improve their practice. You were aware of your ability "to get along with people" and I see this lived out in your practice at Riverview.

In annual school reports your principals consistently described the library as "the hub of the school." In your unassuming way you explained, "I hope it is the hub of the school. I hope they're not just saying that as something that sounds good." (Conversation, June 21, 1995).

Reflecting back on your leadership in the role of teacher-librarian, I believe you lived out a "lighthouse" plot line. You involved yourself in innovative projects such as school wide themes and together with colleagues you constantly planned exciting curriculum adaptations. You became highly respected in the community of teacher-librarians and among your colleagues. Perhaps this respect is not unlike the respect gained by your father as reeve of a rural district in Alberta or the respect accorded your mother for her distinguished career as an educator. You told me about her return to elementary teaching when you first started university and then after retiring at age 65 she became the principal of a Montessori school. To earn the respect of one's colleagues seems to be a family plot line.

Your work at Riverview supported the story of a "lighthouse school" for a period of nine years. In your final year the story of school changed; your role changed too. While your position had always been as a full time librarian, you had been assigned certain responsibilities for providing some preparation time for teachers. This type of relief teaching was undertaken in the library—negotiated with the principal and with teachers. The relief time you gave was always connected with your areas of expertise. You continued the story of your final year—a story of unexpected change that coincided with the arrival of a new principal:

> In September [1994] my timetable changed from what I had been led to believe. In June I had been told that it would be the same as the previous year. That led me to have a very comfortable summer, thinking I would be giving library related preparation time—whatever was needed. To suddenly find out, from administration, that I would be teaching for an hour and a half every day, in Tom's Grade 1

classroom, was quite a shock. I didn't like it. I felt resentful because it was just handed to me the afternoon before school started. A collaborative decision would have been better, as well as having the summer to prepare myself.

Tom wanted to maintain his language arts and his teaming with Liz and I didn't want to interfere with that. A friend of mine said, "Take math," and I said, "Math? I have no background in math." Then I thought, yes, I'll take math because it meets the time frame very well and it would be the kind of situation where I wouldn't necessarily be working closely with someone else. I would be able to do my own thing. I knew I didn't have time for teaming with Liz and Carol because of my other responsibilities.

This year was a big departure for me—because I felt I was split. My loyalties were with the Grade 1 classroom. I was grappling with a whole new curriculum—getting my head into what it was that math was to Grade 1 children. I spent a great deal of time assembling and creating all of the materials necessary for a hands-on approach to learning. I was also struggling with issues of evaluation, reporting and conferences. All of this was completely new to me.

In living out your story of teaching Grade 1 math, Jane, you were parachuted into a new story of relationship with Tom and Liz in their in-classroom place. In the out-of-classroom place, you also participated in the Grade 1 team meetings. The complexity of what was required of you is mind-boggling. I can't help thinking about it in terms of another "albatross"! However, despite initial frustrations, you ended the year feeling positive about the experience. You also expressed the following viewpoint, "Teaching .7 as a librarian and .3 as a classroom teacher was a real challenge. If I was just starting as a librarian, I don't think I could manage it. It would be very difficult to do." (Conversation, June 1, 1995)

It is interesting to note that this viewpoint was expressed by the teacher-librarian who replaced you. She is now living out a new story of school as expressed in the principal's Annual Report 1994/95. In his report Glen describes the school as having "a strong academic focus". In terms of staffing you were delighted to see your position reinstated to full time, for the 1995/96 school year. For the first time in the history of Riverview the teacher-librarian would be assuming responsibility for a new "technology plan" for the school. This change did not surprise you, given the politics of the times. In reflecting on your seventeen years as a teacher-librarian, you explained:

> Things have changed a lot as the years have gone by. We have seen the literature portion of the librarian's expertise eroded somewhat. Now we're moving into an intense technological phase.

Perhaps the new librarian is wondering, what kind of a library is expected in an "academic school"? Do you suppose the new story of Riverview School will guide her? I guess we'll hear many teachers' stories as the year progresses. I look forward to our ongoing conversations, Jane, and to your response to this letter over more cups of tea in the kitchen.

Love,
Annie

Writing to Jane, and piecing together her narrative, I become aware of recurring themes—themes of collaboration, successful relationships and a love of learning. These themes find expression in Jane's library related work. Sharing her in-classroom place, with each teacher in the school, she collaborates with them, valuing their diverse styles. Her love of learning and her ability to get along with people serve her well.

The library is a place where Jane feels secure but that security is shaken when she finds herself responsible for a curriculum area in which she has no teacher preparation. For Jane to step from the library into Grade 1 mathematics foreshadows the likelihood of her experiencing some difficulty on the landscape. As a relieving teacher she is positioned differently. She is not a classroom teacher with experience of the entire Grade 1 program. This fact makes it difficult for her to contribute, in meaningful ways, to the various discussions of the Grade 1 teachers. Stepping from the safety of the library onto the out-of-classroom place, Jane encounters new dilemmas as she tries to fulfil Glen's expectations for team planning. Fortunately she

has worked collaboratively in her role as teacher-librarian with Tom and Liz over a four year period and with Carol for one year. This level of knowing is at least comforting. However, the fact that Jane is resentful of the situation she finds herself in, does not bode well for successful collaboration. The following story allows a glimpse of Jane in the Grade 1 mathematics class as she encounters new dilemmas in classroom management.

Difficulty with Math Tubs: A Story of a Challenge Accepted

I noticed Jane sighing a great deal at the end of her math lesson. "I sigh a lot these days," she said. (Field Notes, November 16, 1994). Jane told me her math lesson, using math tubs, had not gone well that morning. She felt as though she had been "putting out fires" the entire time. She didn't like the feeling. Part of the problem was due to the fact that she reorganized the children into new "tub groups". She structured each group very carefully based on her knowledge of the children and their relationships with one another. Jane explained, "Joanna is so helpful to Kim and she's a good influence on Tyson, who misses a lot of school. Those three work well together but I need to keep Cameron away from Tyson because they clashed early in September. They're both pretty demanding. Then Jason is used to having his own way so sparks can fly if he's with Cameron or Tyson. These three boys can wear a bit thin on their peers so it's good to change the groupings."

Juggling all of these elements, Jane drew up the new groups. She said, "It didn't occur to me to spend time talking about this with the children. I should have let them have some time together playing a game or doing something familiar. Introducing new math tubs at the same time as new groups wasn't a good idea!"

Jane had placed self-directed activities in each of six tubs. She expected the activities to occupy the children for half an hour. Some groups, however, finished very quickly, others needed more time and Jane could barely cope with the deluge of questions and requests for help. By the time the recess bell rang she was exhausted and frustrated.

Later in the day, I talked to Jane in a quiet corner of the library. She confided, "I feel totally inadequate as a math teacher. I'm too busy trying to cope with classroom management issues and there's no time to get to know these children. I'm secondary trained—this isn't a grade I'd choose to teach. I don't know the math manipulatives well enough and I don't have my own materials. My room is bereft of stuff. I've got five books outlining different approaches that teachers have given to me—so there's lots of help from others but it's still hellish. Math tubs in particular take a huge amount of time to get organized. I spend a number of hours in school each weekend, trying to stay on top of things, but I still feel as though I'm spinning my wheels" (Field Notes, November 16, 1994).

Jane and I talked further about the math tubs and the lack of available time for collaboration. She explained, "Liz and I touch base with each other, we decide on the content of the tubs together, but there's no time for extensive planning because

Tom and Liz plan after school each day. At lunchtime, or after school, I'm planning research units with other teachers. I have to be self-sufficient—that's the only way teaching Grade 1 math can work for me" (Field Notes, November 16, 1994).

I asked Jane why she had chosen an approach using math tubs. She replied, "Most teachers here have always used tubs and Liz is comfortable with this approach." In hearing her perception, I realized the power of other teachers' stories in shaping Jane's practice. She was all the more certain of the appropriateness of the math tub approach when a colleague on staff, who had recently taught Grade 1 said, "Of course I used tubs." This snippet of information, stripped of a classroom context, added to Jane's anxiety as she concerned herself with shaping a first-class program for the children. She was somewhat relieved to hear my stories, of the difficulties I first encountered, using math tubs when I came to Riverview in 1982.

Our conversation helped Jane to relax. She said, "I can make my math tubs better by tomorrow. I can modify them. After school today I'll fix each tub to fit 30 minutes of time. Tomorrow will be better. Maybe this will be good in the end" (Field Notes, November 16, 1994).

This story, two and a half months into the school year, gives some indication of the exhaustion and frustration Jane was encountering. The weekly Grade 1 team meetings can also be seen as having the potential for additional stress—stress felt by each member of the Grade 1 team as my next set of stories indicate.

CHAPTER VI

A Year of Tension: Stories of the Team Meetings

Writing about the Grade 1 team meetings presented an ethical dilemma for me (Eisner, 1991). Because each teacher had confided in me, during the school year and in the months that followed, I realized I could piece together a story of their teaming experience but could I divulge their secret stories, told within the safety of each of our relationships? Were their separate stories mine to tell when they had not been told on the out-of-classroom place to the others? Would the teachers want their stories told? Was this too risky? Why tell their stories of the team meetings? Was I clear in my purpose?

The very day these questions were running through my mind, Carol happened to call. She asked how my work was going and I explained my dilemma. "Can I even tell this story?" I asked.

"You've got to!" Carol said. "What good will you do for teachers if you gloss over our struggles and tell only good stories?" (Telephone Conversation, November 5, 1995).

Carol invited me to her house that night to talk further. We reviewed sections of our transcript from the summer of 1995 in which she talked at length about her experience as a member of the team. Carol's story was my starting point; she was opening the door for stories of the team meetings to be told. Listening to Carol, I realized it was important to present each teacher's account along with my own and

to negotiate very carefully the final written text (Eisner, 1991). This process is illuminated by Clandinin and Connelly (1994b):

> Participant stories are lived and told, retold and relived in ways that could not be imagined with certainty at the outset of any particular collaboration. Within each particular collaboration, the working relations, the stories and the part participants play in each others' stories are continually renegotiated. (p. 4)

I spent time with each teacher in the following weeks asking them to reflect on the story they had lived in the 1994/95 school year. Their accounts follow mine.

My Story as Researcher

My first experience of the Grade 1 team meetings was like a template for the meetings that followed. There was always tension—sometimes less—sometimes more. At no time in the entire school year did it seem appropriate for me to broach the subject of tape recording the meetings. As well, I kept my note taking to a minimum and tried to make my research presence as unobtrusive as possible. While I had many questions, I knew it was inappropriate to ask them on the out-of-classroom place given the existing tension. Therefore, in the early days of my research, Tom and Liz became a sounding board for my questions about the team meetings. We talked together in the safety of their in-classroom place at the end of each of my weekly visits. Later in the year, Jane and Carol also shared their perceptions in lengthy taped conversations—again those conversations occurred in their in-classroom places, at local restaurants or in the safety of our homes. How

different the talk was, on those occasions (Noddings, 1991), as stories were shared in an atmosphere of trust.

It was Liz who first responded to my questions, early in the year, about the team meetings. She took time to reflect at home—to respond by way of a letter to me. She wrote:

> I find these meetings quite frustrating and am very grateful that Tom is there to ease the strain. I have learned over the years that it is important to say what you believe and listen to others give their philosophy. I try hard to listen and be supportive of the teaching strategies of others and I will continue to work on this. That is one of my goals for this year. Carol has her own way and that is best for her but, because my way is different, I plan to stick up for what I believe in, when it is important, and not sweat the small stuff.
>
> (Letter, November 5, 1994)

Liz spoke openly with Tom and me in the safety of their in-classroom place. She told me about a meeting which I had missed:

> We were all sitting around discussing report cards and Carol said, "What are you doing in your room in language arts?" So we talked about our author study and how our children are learning through various ways of writing and reading and through *The Game Show* and *The Theatre*. And the entire time it was "Hmm! Hmm!" It felt quite negative.... I said, "And you're working in themes and how's that going?" "Fine." I was interested in finding out but there was no offer from Carol of what she was doing in her language arts program. I really feel that what Tom and I are doing is great and I want to share ideas with Carol, but I'm not sure the sharing will go both ways.
>
> (Conversation, November 4, 1994)

As Liz spoke, she was able to reflect further on the situation in conversation with Tom:

L: All of us have to recognize how important it is to take what we are, to take what we've learned, and to find what works for us and accept that we're all going to do it differently and know that that's okay....

This year it's working so very well for Tom and me. I'm just so pleased that that's the case. We're pretty powerful together but I don't want anyone to assume that we're a cold shoulder to anybody else. Carol's all by herself. It's important to take that into consideration. If she wanted to be involved in our program, by all means, we would find a way but the timetable makes that difficult.

T: It's a shame we're not working together with Carol.... If the three of us were talking like this, it would be really neat to do *The Theatre* and *The Game Show* altogether sometimes.

(Conversation, November 4, 1994)

This exchange between Tom and Liz foreshadows the events of the whole year. Comfortable conversation eluded the group in their team meetings and collaboration was limited.

I recognized Tom felt many pressures from his multiple roles and responsibilities. There was pressure from Liz to act as "a buffer" in meetings (Conversation, November 4, 1994), pressure from his new principal to implement the goals and objectives discussed at administrative meetings, as well as the personal pressure Tom experienced as he worked towards a promotion from vice-principal to assistant principal. If a team meeting went well, Tom would report the success to Glen. Tom explained such an occurrence:

T: The team meeting on report cards and interviews, (November 16, 1994), was fascinating because it was very cerebral—about standards and individualization and so on. I think it's important that Glen knows that teachers in this school are talking like that because administration wonders whether teachers are pursuing that kind of thinking, in their team meetings, rather than simply talking about how to deal with tomorrow.

L: It was probably one of our better meetings because nobody was really attacking anybody which was quite a positive thing. We haven't had that before....

(Conversation, November 18, 1994)

Hopes of "better meetings", however, faded when Carol's frustration caused her to leave a meeting, prior to Christmas vacation. She subsequently went to see Glen and the assistant principal, Heather, to talk about the difficulties she was experiencing in the team meetings. The closeness of Liz and Tom's relationship made Carol feel like an outsider. The new year brought with it a commitment from Liz and Tom to work at resolving the situation. They talked openly with me in the safety of their in-classroom place. While Liz spoke about the particular situation with Carol, Tom spoke in generalities which reminded me of his earlier comment, "I do have in the back of my mind that I'm part of the administration team" (Conversation, November 18, 1994). I realized that in team meetings Tom's dual roles of teacher and administrator were being lived out simultaneously. I recognized this was not easy for him. Liz and Tom explained the nature of the problem as they understood it:

L: The problem is there's not enough sharing. And if the sharing's going to happen then time has to be spent to do that. Unfortunately time is very short. I understand the issue of being an outsider and I don't want that to continue because I think that's very unfair if that's how Carol's feeling.

T: And maybe that's the thing to remember when there are problems or issues that come up in terms of the teams getting along...you need more time for conversation and it's hard to fit it in.... And some of Carol's issue is, "Let's stay on the agenda at lunchtime." Time is restricted for everybody. If we're going to meet then let's make sure we accomplish something. Maybe we just have different definitions of what accomplishing something means.

(Conversation, January 4, 1995)

While Liz saw a need for sharing practice, Tom felt it was necessary to establish an agenda in response to Carol's needs. He was willing to structure the meetings for the sake of harmony. But establishing an agenda was also problematic, as Liz pointed out:

L: Carol wants to list all of the skills in science and in art. She also wants to list all of the skills in the water unit for science, which we haven't even thought about because we're not there yet.... She wants all the skills listed so that she can start teaching to the skills and that way at the next report card time she can write up comments.

A: Do you want the skills listed?

L: No. I look at what the curriculum wants me to address and Tom and I plan a fairly cohesive unit that's going to meet the kids' needs.... This meeting today is not going to be that useful for me I don't think. Maybe it will. I don't know. Maybe it'll be fine but...that's Carol's request. That's what she would like us to do.

T: And she would like us to stay on topic.

(Conversation, January 4, 1995)

Listening to Tom and Liz, I sensed their willingness to go along with the agenda requested by Carol in order to smooth things over. But for Liz the usefulness of such a meeting was questionable. Liz understood Carol's teaching story as being very different from her own. She knew their stories were competing ones but, to avoid conflict, a cover story came into play. Liz and Tom listened hard to Carol, responding to her needs. Following the meeting, I wrote in my journal:

> The team meeting felt like Tom, Liz and I were all on our best behaviour. It's not real conversation when this kind of feeling exists. Were we three listening in an inauthentic way—a way that silences the possibilities that are part of real conversation?
>
> (Journal Entry, January 4, 1995)

Tom and Liz were anxious to improve relationships yet their "experience-based" approach to curriculum was so different from Carol's "skills-based/accountability model". Their teacher stories were very different as were their narratives. It seemed as if the teachers were destined to run into road blocks in the absence of conversation concerning the range of practice that was evident. Liz and Tom shared the following experience:

> L: We were getting really excited about...having a mini-conference on art with sculptors, weavers, painters and wood carvers. The children would choose the thing they're interested in and produce a piece of work. We'd have an art show, sell the work and make a little bit of money for a worthy cause. Tom and I were getting really excited about this and going, "We'll go to art galleries and get people to come

> in," and Carol said, "I can't do that. It would take too much time from my program."
>
> T: "I've got all my science and social studies skills to cover," she said.
>
> L: It just shows how different Carol's way of thinking is. Every time we get together, she wants to talk about how we're getting our skills to our children and how we're teaching them.
>
> (Conversation, January 13, 1995)

In conversation on the in-classroom place, Tom and Liz came to an understanding of Carol's story of teaching. They knew her position as it related to their own. Safe in their in-classroom place, their conversations with each other and with me allowed them to make sense of the situation. From time to time Liz drew Glen into conversations on teaming when he visited their classroom informally at the end of the day. Her relationship with Glen was such that it allowed her to openly express a view opposing mandated teaming on the out-of-classroom place (Conversation, February 10, 1995). Glen always listened but continued to voice his expectation that teacher professionalism would bring about successful team planning on the out-of-classroom place. Glen explained:

> My job as principal is to pick a staff that will have some chemistry.... I expect professionals and adults to get along well enough to team and to plan. I expect that.... If you've set goals with the staff and share some common understandings about the organization and practice, then the teachers that are recruited throughout the years should be of like mind....
>
> You get some successful teams but it's only through the dynamics of effort.... The successful teams I had in my other school were solely due to common work ethic as well as mind set. You've got to be motivated to put your time and effort in.... I just can't imagine

> teaching all by myself and not talking to others about their practice. I just can't. I don't understand how you'd ever survive.
>
> (Conversation, February 10, 1995)

By the beginning of February, relationships appeared to be improving but by the end of April tension mounted once more, this time in regard to curriculum interpretation. In frustration, Liz again told Glen, "Mandated teaming doesn't work!" And Glen once more repeated, "If you're a professional, you can do it" (Field Notes, April 26, 1995). But Jane expressed a different viewpoint, shared only with me, as we talked together in the safety of her librarian's office:

> It's asking a lot of people to relate well to everybody that you're in close contact with. This team partner that you get along well with and then the outside person who's feeling outside. It's a real balancing act to bring in this person. I notice that in the Grade 1 team because the personalities aren't at all alike. Those three could not be intermixed. They could not teach just as well with this person or that person. I think teaming is a finely tuned craft. It just works well, very well, for some people who think alike. So we spend a lot of time in the Grade 1 meeting trying to get it straight what each teacher means. Tom and Liz never argue. They present a united front because they've thought things through together. It's a very intimate relationship. A deep understanding goes on between team partners.
>
> (Conversation, June 1, 1995)

Jane's position on the landscape, as Tom's relieving teacher, drew her into relationship with both Liz and Tom. Jane planned her math with Liz and frequently talked to Tom about the progress the children in his responsibility group were making. Jane's relationship with Tom and Liz encompassed both the in-classroom and the out-of-classroom places. She recognized Liz and Tom's special team teaching relationship on the in-classroom place. She knew, too, how hard it was for

the Grade 1 teachers to author a new teaming script on the out-of-classroom place in the absence of relationship. She understood clearly how Carol was positioned relative to Tom and Liz. She explained her view of the situation:

> It's an uneasy relationship. I know that to be the case. When two people work very closely and a third person does their own thing but is pulled into a total planning situation, I think a "them against me" mentality comes into play a little bit. .. On the other hand, Carol feels very confident about her program and justifies it and defends it and rightly so.
>
> But I think there's probably a little bit of jealousy there, that the relationships aren't close between the three of them and yet it's an impossibility at the same time.... The two working together have chosen each other...and they're excited about their program. They're talking about these same mutual children over and over again and so, for the other teacher, there's always that feeling of being left out.
>
> (Conversation, May 2, 1995)

In this conversation, Jane names the teaming relationship on the out-of-classroom place as "uneasy". But this uneasiness is only discussed with me in the safety of her library office. Similarly, Liz can voice her frustration concerning the Grade 1 team meetings in the safety of her in-classroom place as she talks to Glen, Tom and me. Yet on the out-of-classroom place, the teachers remain silent and thus live a cover story. Glen, however, capitalized on an opportunity to tell a very different story of the Grade 1 team (May 3, 1995) when he interrupted a team meeting to ask Liz if she told me about "the great accolades for the Grade 1 team" at the meeting of the School Advisory Council the previous evening. Liz answered, "No," at which point Glen explained to me how the parent representative for Grade 1 had presented some

video clips of the children working in Carol's classroom and in Liz and Tom's classroom. The parent also presented a two page written report to be placed on file. Glen told me how delighted he was with the presentation and the way it was received. In her report, the parent noted:

> I am very pleased with the quality and content of the Grade 1 program. Each teacher has a wonderfully unique way of keeping the children interested in learning.... The teachers have put a lot of thought into selecting activities to enrich the Grade 1 curriculum. Incredible progress has been made in spelling, reading and printing. I give the teachers a tremendous amount of credit for making such an effort to address the individual needs of each child.
>
> (Parent Report, May 2, 1995)

While the parent did not use the language of a "team of teachers" at any point in her report, it was Glen who restoried her account. I pondered the difference in the accounts in my journal:

> The parent storied "good teaching" while Glen storied "teachers working as a team"—Glen tells a school story that does not reflect what is actually lived by the teachers.
>
> (Journal Entry, May 30, 1995)

Glen's story of the "great accolades for the Grade 1 team" told on the out-of-classroom place can be seen as a cover story. As a positive story, it appeared to relieve the tension for the four teachers and Tom felt much better about the Grade 1 team (Field Notes, May 30, 1995). As the school year came to a close, Carol felt my research presence was bringing the Grade 1 team together (Field Notes, June 7, 1995). She explained, "Because of you, I'm appreciating Tom more. I'm just

getting comfortable with Tom and Liz" (Field Notes, June 13, 1995). Similarly Tom commented, "Carol's become more comfortable with me.... When the two of us are together in a room or in the hall it's feeling better now than before" (Conversation, July 7, 1995). And Jane noted, "We, as professionals, can cover a lot of feelings that we might be having about a situation. We go along with the situation to keep things rolling and to keep peace and harmony" (Conversation, June 13, 1995). And Liz, as she reflected on the year, explained:

> We make for a very interesting study.... Here you've got four teachers, two who learned to team within minutes of being together and a third who is slowly coming into the fold.... There's a lot to Carol that is very likeable and I'm starting to see more of her true personality. Every once in a while I see little glimmers and I think, "Oh I like those little glimmers." And so I'll just keep on trying to learn more about her. I think we're starting to know one another a little better and we're beginning to build a trusting relationship.
>
> (Conversation, August 11, 1995)

In Liz's reflections on the relationships of the Grade 1 team, she considers her own teaching story with Tom. She recognizes how the four teachers are positioned on the landscape in relation to each other. Liz knows, as do Tom, Jane and Carol, that there is no place for a story to be told on the out-of-classroom place of teachers not getting along. The teachers tell stories of marginally improved relationships—they tell me these stories in safe places on the landscape.

I could conclude my story of the team meetings by reiterating Glen's point, "If you're a professional you can do it" (Field Notes, April 26, 1995). I could say the teachers were all professional and their professionalism ensured the telling of a

story of successful teaming on the out-of-classroom place on the professional knowledge landscape of Riverview School. But to conclude in that manner is to tell the cover story. Instead I want to present each teacher's story and think about Glen's call for teachers to be "more professional" (Conversation, May 24, 1995) on the out-of-classroom place. His call has everything to do with effectiveness and efficiency as outcomes of teacher collaboration. This rhetoric of professionalism sets up the cover stories each teacher felt obliged to live. The following accounts by Carol, Jane, Liz and Tom reveal their knowledge of the Grade 1 teaming situation.

Carol's Story

It was during the summer holidays when Carol first talked to me, at length, about the team meetings. Sitting in the sunshine in her backyard, she storied her sense of the meetings. She spoke of her difficulty in finding her place as a member of the Grade 1 team and her subsequent feelings of exclusion:

> C: We met every Wednesday and more or less decided at the meeting what was going to be discussed. Tom mainly was the one who said we're either going to discuss report cards or, if there was something Glen wanted us to talk about, we would talk about it: ordering materials, class lists, Christmas concerts. It's amazing that actually our agenda was really from the outside—not so much from the inside. So could we sit down and discuss our own topics? Not really. It seemed like there was always something that we were supposed to discuss and get settled.... We hardly touched on each other's programs. I couldn't tell you to this day what Tom and Liz did. They wouldn't know what I did. Did we get into each other's style of teaching? No.
>
> A: But were you okay with the meetings?

C: For a while I was. Then as Tom and Liz became very close, I became uncomfortable. There wasn't the same compatibility that those two had, that I could contribute to or fill out. Three is a very difficult equation especially when there's a closeness in the physical classroom space and that lends itself to an emotional and intellectual closeness...and they talked about each other's kids...and again, that's a total shut out because I'm sitting there and I can't say to them, "Oh did Jason ever drive me nuts today".

A: Yeah, because they don't know Jason.

C: I'm thinking, I go through a whole day all by myself in my classroom. No one can take my group; there's no down time for me. It's very draining energy-wise and you two are going on about your kids and how exhausted you are and I resented that. There was no acknowledgement of the fact that if they were tired and having a hard time coping with some things, what about me in my classroom by myself? We agreed we would get together. Very rarely did we ever get together for anything.... All I could see was them getting closer and closer and me off doing my own thing, by myself.... I felt very hurt. I felt shut out. You don't have the same acceptance. You don't have the same level of importance. That's what it is. You don't rate. How can you? There's just you.

(Conversation, July 24, 1995)

While Carol saw the possibility to gain acceptance by following Liz and Tom's program, this was not an alternative she could accept. She explained:

> I'm very confident in my ability as a teacher. I had been into school in August and I had spent a lot of time getting my program ready. Liz and Tom decided on a literature-based program when they got together in September. Would they have wanted me to do exactly what they did? Did they not find that was their unique thing? Did they not want that to remain with them in a way? I couldn't have come in on their act.
>
> (Conversation, July 24, 1995)

The compatibility of Tom and Liz, combined with their different approach to the Grade 1 curriculum, contributed to Carol's growing sense of unhappiness. She explained:

> C: By the time Christmas came, I'd had my fill of it. I was keeping my feelings inside. I should have said, "You know I really feel like I'm on the outs here. I'm a third party, a third wheel and maybe it doesn't have anything to do with you, but I'm really feeling that way," and just let it out—just tell them that I was bothered.
>
> A: But you couldn't say that to them?
>
> C: No, I couldn't. It's that whole fear of more rejection. I didn't know how to approach them. I didn't know the right words to use. I was afraid they would take a direct approach as confrontational.
>
> (Conversation, July 24, 1995)

Despite the fact that Carol did not feel able to speak to Tom and Liz, she felt it was necessary to tell Glen that she could no longer participate in the team meetings. Glen listened. He told Carol that he felt the team would be able to work things out. Carol also talked at length to Heather, the assistant principal, who assured her of her support in working through the difficulties. After the Christmas holidays, the team meetings resumed uninterrupted until the end of the school year. For Carol, a certain level of tension continued to exist even though relationships appeared to improve.

Carol's questions, posed on that July afternoon as we sat together in the sunshine, have remained with me. She asked:

> How do you have teaming and collegiality when you don't know one another? How honest is a team situation when you're thrown into it and you're under pressure to make it work? How honest can you be in that situation?
>
> (Conversation, July 24, 1995)

Some months later, Carol and I returned to these questions. Our relationship and Carol's interest in telling her story allowed for a new level of frankness. In the safety of her family room one evening in November, Carol confided:

> If the picture is that teachers aren't getting along in a team, it's like a marriage and a divorce. Who is at fault? You don't want that story, so you cover it up. I don't even think there was a Grade 1 team. Why don't we establish that. There was no team. It was a facade. It was simply four of us coming together on Wednesdays and making the best out of that.
>
> Failed honest communication was probably the number one factor in our difficulties but it was only part of the problem. The physical structure of the team was part of the problem—the fact that Tom and Liz were side by side and I was in a separate classroom was another factor. A threesome is a very difficult situation when the bond between two people is so strong...Liz and I are both very strong individuals—that also contributed to the problem.
>
> I think Glen saw the team for what it was. He breathed a sigh of relief though, in that we were all competent. Nobody was upset with what we were doing. Tom and Liz were good at the program they were doing, Jane was successful with her math, and I was doing a good job of my program. The parents were happy. We were competent teachers and we were able to pull it off.
>
> (Conversation, November 5, 1995)

In this conversation, Carol tells the story of the team meetings as she saw them being lived out by the Grade 1 teachers. Rather than perpetuate a story of

successful teaming on the landscape, Carol wants her story to be retold and in the retelling she is hopeful that some good will come of it. She explains:

> I want this story told because I feel that I'm a good teacher and yet by the same token, I feel that is overlooked. I don't present an image of a person who blends into a teaming situation like some other people do. That's a big strike against me. It seems to knock my level of competency down. I think it's unfair. It's not right and it will be a disservice to both children and parents if teachers are going to be evaluated on the basis of how they fit into a teaming situation.... To survive as a teacher: you don't rock the boat, you keep your mouth shut, you go with the flow.
>
> (Conversation, November 5, 1995)

In telling her story, Carol draws attention to the issue of teacher professionalism on the in-classroom place and on the out-of-classroom place. Carol knows she is a good teacher in her in-classroom place but feels her professionalism in that context is overlooked because she does not blend easily into a teaming situation on the out-of-classroom place. Carol believes she is seen as being less of a professional based on the evaluation of her performance on the out-of-classroom place. Carol also knows that "to survive as a teacher you don't rock the boat, you keep your mouth shut, you go with the flow" (Conversation, November 5, 1995). In other words, Carol knows the importance of living a cover story on the out-of-classroom place as contributing to her professional status on the landscape.

Glen's story of team planning creates unexpected dilemmas for Carol. The lack of compatibility she feels with Tom and Liz is intensified by her narrative. As a result of Glen's team planning mandate and the team teaching relationship of Tom

and Liz, Carol finds herself in the position of "intruder" once more. Feeling rejected, she relives the uncertainty of her early childhood stories regarding finding her place in a group. Her response to the situation is twofold. She focuses her attention on her in-classroom place where she feels safe and her identity as a teacher is not threatened. Then under pressure to make the team meetings work, Carol lives a cover story on the out-of-classroom place from January through June, 1995. Her words, "We were competent teachers and we were able to pull it off" (Conversation, November 5, 1995), speak to the success of the cover story. Carol, however, remains troubled by the call for professionalism on the out-of-classroom place—troubled by what she had to do to survive on the landscape. Remaining silent (Brown & Gilligan, 1992), she was unable to voice her concerns about teaming situations. Yet in the safety of her backyard, when the school year was over, Carol explained:

> Teachers go to others for ideas and stimulation and innovative methods. At some point we are all collaborating but we do it differently. You don't need to mandate that.
>
> You see that teaming mandate can be very detrimental to a good teacher— beginning or experienced. You can hurt a teacher beyond repair...if she's looked upon as someone who's not teamable. But before we even can come to some definition of what team planning or collaborating is all about—before we can even move to that...we need to develop trust.
>
> (Conversation, July 24, 1995)

Carol sees mandated collaboration as both unnecessary and potentially harmful. She also knows that an atmosphere of trust is a prerequisite for diverse

forms of collaboration that teachers engage in as professionals. Carol's teacher knowledge mirrors Bateson's (1984) view that "you cannot run a complex society totally without trust" (p. 130).

Jane's Story

During my research visits to Riverview School, Jane and I often talked about team teaching and about teams of teachers working together. She offered general perceptions based on her observations of teacher teams over many years at the school. It was not until after her retirement that I asked Jane to story her particular experience of the Grade 1 team. For Jane, the experience of membership in a grade team was new and her limited role, as Tom's relieving teacher, brought with it added complexities. She spoke of her experience with the team as we sat at her kitchen table one Sunday afternoon in November:

> I was a fringe member...just interested in the math aspect of planning. I was never really eager for the Grade 1 team meetings because I had so many other meetings connected with the library. I don't think I ever looked that happy (laughter). I think the lateness of the start of meetings was a sign of our reluctance to meet, after our first very uneasy meeting in September, when we didn't even establish what we were going to do at meetings. When Wednesdays rolled around, I remember feeling—here we go—what are we going to get up to today? Do we rush into this? No! Our meetings were always terribly unpredictable.
>
> Nobody felt comfortable taking leadership. Tom took some sort of leadership role...but it wasn't a formal acknowledgement of that role for him. We perhaps looked to him for leadership because he was tactful and diplomatic in his analysis of things. He was an administrator and yet I don't think he felt comfortable doing this

> because he was moderating between his relationship with Liz, who was new to Grade 1 and might have assumed leadership, and would have in any other situation, because she has a leadership quality about her that others go along with. She's very good in a leadership role. But in this circumstance, because she was new to the team, I don't think she felt like asserting herself against Carol, who had taught Grade 1 for many years. Carol's a leader too, but she couldn't assert leadership either because she immediately sensed her program was not the way the other two were going—not at all.
>
> (Conversation, November 12, 1995)

New to the team, Jane found herself in the middle of what she saw as two distinctly different Grade 1 programs, Carol's program and Liz and Tom's program. She attempted a peacemaking role in the team meetings when discussions proved difficult. She explained:

> There were difficult moments that peppered every meeting.... The meetings were caught up in creeping around each others' personalities. Then we would get into the time wasting factor—the aggravation of it where we're trying to mesh personalities. I was playing the peacemaker because I don't like to get into conflict with people.... I like to have interesting conversations and leave it at that—keep it nice—and at the end we're still respecting each other. But playing the peacemaker was not well received (laughter).
>
> Agreeing with any of them could be dangerous—to be too much on one side or the other. My point of view could be different too and then none of us agreed!
>
> You couldn't call us a team. We were four individuals coming together—trying to make sense of things. We were a ship without a captain, holding meetings that weren't really classroom oriented. It was definitely stressful, with far too big an agenda to handle and no resolution to lots of issues. The meetings were a problem. There's no doubt about it.
>
> (Conversation, November 12, 1995)

For Jane the concept of a team of teachers seems to involve more than simply meeting on the out-of-classroom place, at defined times, according to an administrative expectation. The "difficult moments" Jane experienced in each meeting she attended reveal the inability of the group to work together collaboratively at that particular time (Werner, 1988). Yet despite difficulties in communication, the Grade 1 teachers continued to follow the expectation of their principal and Jane found herself "trapped in a script" (Heilbrun, 1988, p. 42) she did not write. She explained:

> I never liked the meetings. Only out of a sense of duty did I attend. To abandon the group would be a very hostile position for any one of us to take, although I was close to that at times. I really didn't feel my role was that strong and that I was doing any good. If I didn't go at all, would it really matter? But part of an elementary teacher's dedication is doing what's right, doing what the principal has dictated. If I said, "I'm not coming anymore," then relationships would be broken and feelings hurt.
>
> (Conversation, November 12, 1995)

Jane's story of herself as a professional prevented her from voicing her feelings. Despite frustration, Jane attended the meetings for the duration of the school year, exempting herself when meetings were solely on issues that did not concern her, such as examining the new science curriculum or reporting on language arts. Living a cover story, she also saw a down-side to the required teaming on the out-of-classroom place. She explained:

> When I first came to Riverview, I really sensed there was a collegial spirit where everybody went out of their way to include everybody.

> I don't see that anymore. People scurry off in their own little grade groups. The team thing actually interferes with collegiality in the school because teams of teachers are meeting every day. Lots of people comment on this, "Too bad we've lost the camaraderie we used to have at lunch hour or after school."
>
> When I first arrived here in '85, the staffroom was a place to go after school. There were always people there—getting a coffee, staying for a chat, going back to their rooms to do their work. There was time for general socializing and everybody could feel that there would be somebody there to talk to. Now you could shoot a cannon through the staffroom most noon hours and after school. Certainly after school—lights are off—coffee pot too, and first thing in the morning as well because the teachers are in school but they are so busy. They are in their classrooms getting ready—team planning at some of these times. So I think we miss out on the camaraderie aspect.
>
> (Conversation, June 1, 1995)

Jane is aware of the changing landscape. She also senses that a formalized structure for teacher collaboration might be working against collegiality on the out-of-classroom place which she noted in times past. The once bustling staffroom, Jane notes, has given way to a professional knowledge landscape where Riverview's teachers can be seen in team meetings: prior to school, at lunch hour and after school. To outsiders, this view of the landscape could translate to a changed landscape, more professional in its character—a landscape reflecting a more "academic school".

As a retired teacher, Jane can tell her teacher stories but she is aware of the risk involved, for colleagues still on the landscape, as they choose to tell their stories. In this regard she mentions Carol:

> This is a bold move on Carol's part to share this story. It's the kind of thing that needs to happen in order for us to move on as an educational community—caring for each other as well as for the children we teach.... We need to learn how to do that so that it isn't so stressful and we can do a better job with children. It would be interesting if teacher training was able to help people to work better together.
>
> (Conversation, November 12, 1995)

Jane understands the risk Carol is taking as she abandons her cover story, in favour of telling her secret story. Jane tells me, on a later occasion, "Carol is courageous. She is opening things up so that we can take a closer look and acknowledge the realities of that teaming situation" (Conversation, January 5, 1996). For Jane, the lack of leadership was problematic for the Grade 1 team. "We were a ship without a captain," she explained and "nobody felt comfortable taking leadership" (Conversation, November 12, 1995). Yet Tom and Liz were already living a story of collaboration independent of notions of leadership—a story of collaboration based on relationship and the complementarity of their narratives.

In telling her story, Jane reveals the complexity of how the teachers were positioned on the landscape in relation to one another. She and Tom had multiple roles, Liz was a newcomer to Grade 1 and Carol was relatively new on staff. As well, the team teaching relationship of Tom and Liz shaped the stories that were lived and told by all four teachers. When tension arose, Jane attempted a peacemaking role because, as she explained to me earlier in the year, "I don't like to have a noon hour conflict with anyone," (Conversation, November 16, 1994). Jane's cover story

was shaped by her sense of professionalism on the out-of-classroom place. Only in retirement could Jane say, "You couldn't call us a team," (Conversation, November 12, 1995).

Liz's Story

The trust existing between Liz and me allowed for easy conversation. She always spoke candidly even on the most difficult of topics. When I phoned Liz in mid-November 1995, to talk further about the team meetings, she was eager to tell her story. "Come over in the morning while my baby's asleep," she said. Over tea and muffins, at the kitchen table, Liz began:

> I think the difficulties we experienced were because of a number of things. We were told to team plan and it wasn't a choice that all four of us would have made. The meetings actually caused rifts. Left to our own devices, I think we would probably have been able to get together more comfortably and we would have done it without the problems that arose.
>
> Glen believes team planning is something teachers must do but he doesn't seem to realize that it can really put pressure on people.... Other problems were to do with personalities and teaching styles. When teaching styles are different, you run into problems because you don't attack things in the same way. How can you talk about language learning if you're approaching it differently, without there being discrepancies and conflict? It's not that you can't talk about it, but if you're trying to come up with some sort of end product, like a common report card, and you're coming from two different angles, it's difficult. And with time constraints on top of that, you really run into problems.
>
> I never felt comfortable in those meetings. If there was a pregnant pause, I'd always ask a question or say something harmless like,

> "How are things going in science?" But it always seemed to develop into something horrendous. I got to the point where I didn't want to talk. I didn't want to ask anything because if I did, I'd cause more problems or I would start something off. Carol could also be closed-mouthed at times.... Carol and I are two different personalities, both of whom are quite stubborn and that doesn't help. I wasn't willing to budge a whole lot at times.
>
> Tom would be the one who would often end up leading the meetings even though he didn't really want to. Nobody wants to be leading a meeting when they're not feeling comfortable about it. Tom recognized he had a role to play as a teacher and a role to play as an administrator. It was hard because he knew Glen's expectations and felt pressured to make things work.
>
> (Conversation, November 23, 1995)

Liz felt uncomfortable at team meetings but she had no idea of the level of Carol's discomfort until things came to a head just before the Christmas break. Liz stories the incident in this way:

> Tom and I had no idea that Carol was as upset as she was. At one meeting she said, "That's it! I've had it!" and she left. We were just flabbergasted.... We didn't realize she went to see Glen until he came to our classroom that night and said, "Carol's very upset. She feels like she's the third wheel in this group. She feels you're leaving her out. I want you to solve this problem. It's your job to make it work."
>
> I was annoyed that Carol had gone to Glen, but I also understood how she felt. She was the third person but it wasn't just that. It was also about personalities and teaching styles.... Tom felt he had to go and speak with Carol and be very up front about how we were feeling. I decided I didn't really want to, I knew I'd probably just get angry.... Tom thought it didn't make sense for both of us to go because he felt it would appear confrontational. That suited me just fine because I didn't want to confront Carol.

> When Tom spoke to Carol, she was calm and she explained about feeling excluded. She felt she'd been heard.... After Christmas we were trying to heal the wounds, and as the year progressed, Carol seemed much happier.
>
> (Conversation, November 23, 1995)

As Liz attempted to live out Glen's team planning expectations, she also engaged in conversations with him during his informal visits to her classroom. She voiced her philosophical concerns and tried to convey, to Glen, a sense of her experience. We talked together about one such occasion:

L: I told Glen it doesn't work saying that everyone has to team plan. I said, "If you mean they have to sit down and plan their practice and plan their programs together, it's not going to happen."

A: And what did he say?

L: "Yes it will." And I said, "Well if you're insisting that it will, then people will do their best to accommodate you, but I don't believe it's going to be that attractive."

A: In that situation a cover story starts up where everybody looks like they're doing what Glen wants.

L: Exactly, and people are unhappy and you have dissension.

A: It's just like going through the motions. So if this is what the principal wants—if he looks out and surveys the landscape, he'll see team meetings but what does it mean?

L: For those people who don't intend to team plan it's a waste of time because they're getting together when they could be doing their own thing and that's really too bad.

A: How was Glen when you tried to tell him those things?

L: He believes he's right.... He knows I'm being up front with him but he sees it as the right way to be.

A: So if you're a professional, you'll make this work and that's what every single one of you did.

L: But nobody wanted to be there. That's probably it, in a nutshell. We just didn't want to be there...but I'm really good at making it look as though I'm doing what Glen wants and that suits me (laughter). Glen knows where the problems are in the school, but teachers must fix them. So you say, "Okay"—you smile and off you go. If it can't be fixed, that's why you smile and say, "Okay—it's fixed," even though there may be cracks all over...maybe the entire staff does that too.

A: So then the expectation for team planning gets cover stories going.

L: Um hum and then the superintendent says, "Look at Riverview School, they're all teaming. They're all doing what they're supposed to be doing."

(Conversation, November 23, 1995)

In this conversation, Liz helps me to better understand the cover story she lived out in response to Glen's expectation for team planning. She knows hers is not the only cover story on the out-of-classroom place. Yet, in the safety of her in-classroom place, her relationship with her principal is such that she can express her view that this form of collaboration does not work. Glen listens but consistently affirms his expectation for team planning. Liz understands that her cover story, and the cover stories of her colleagues, allow school stories to be told that support Glen's story of school. She imagines the school story reaching the superintendent. She imagines his response to be, "Look at Riverview School, they're all teaming.

They're all doing what they're supposed to be doing" (Conversation, November 23, 1995).

Liz also recognizes how Tom is positioned. She says, "It was hard because he knew Glen's expectations and felt pressured to make things work" (Conversation, November 23, 1995). Liz also feels pressure to make things work and, like Tom, she knows there is no place for a story of conflict on the out-of-classroom place. But the potential for conflict is ever present, particularly when Glen requires the Grade 1 teachers to arrive at some kind of common report card. Because the teachers "attack things" in such different ways, this task can be seen as problematic. In the absence of trusting relationships, the difficulties are all the more pronounced. Glen's story of school contributes to the tension felt at the team meetings and Liz knows, "Nobody wanted to be there" (Conversation, November 23, 1995).

Liz's admission surprises me. In my role as researcher, I believed the story of the Grade 1 team to be that of a group of teachers working through difficulties in order to improve their situation. In constructing this story, I realize I was imposing my story of how I would respond in their situation, thus turning my story into their story. In the absence of their teacher stories, I realize my research story of the Grade 1 team meetings could be merely an account of well played out cover stories. I realize how my telling—my research story—can so easily translate to a rhetoric of conclusions in support of a particular school story relating to team planning and teacher professionalism. Some readers might ask if living a cover story as a way of

responding to a principal's story of school, such as Liz's cover story in response to Glen's story of school, is being professional. It seems that teachers like Liz and the other members of the Grade 1 team have little choice, in this instance, as professionals and as Acker (1995) notes:

> Teachers are seen to adopt a variety of sometimes subtle strategies.... Instead of professionalism being taken for granted as a gold standard and a good thing, a radical view is substituted (following writers such as Larson, 1977), a view in which professional claims are seen mostly as mystifications useful to those who make them.... In the climate of increasing state interventions in the name of educational reform, "being professional" becomes increasingly unrealistic and even irrelevant. (pp. 108-109)

Tom's Story

It was late November 1995, when Tom and I met to talk about the team meetings. He suggested conversation over a meal at a seafood restaurant. With the tape recorder in the centre of the table, we began. "This could be a very short story", he joked, but our conversation lasted over two hours. Tom told me he didn't find it easy to talk about the meetings, but because of the trust existing between us and his part in negotiating the final draft of this research text, he was at least comfortable with the process (Hollingsworth, 1994). He began his story in this way:

> I knew right from the start it would be difficult to work this group together but I was hoping our meetings would bring us together as a collegial team. I could have taken the leadership role but I went into it saying to myself, "I'm one of the teachers." Except I never am, just one of the teachers, in other people's minds. With Liz, I was, and we were simply enjoying doing our own thing. I believed,

> because of the way Liz and I worked, that part of the reason we would all get together was just to talk about practice. Liz and I don't need an agenda in a small group setting. We learn through genuine conversation...but there was something going on between Liz and Carol—just vibes!
>
> The power of my relationship with Liz and also being part of administration shaped things. Maybe that's the contribution I made to the difficulties we experienced in our meetings, that I didn't recognize at the time. Once you're wearing an administrator's hat, some teachers aren't sure whether they can trust you or not and there's other things attached to my administrative role, like teacher evaluation.
>
> (Conversation, November 22, 1995)

While Tom felt the tension in the group, he was unaware it was escalating. He explained:

> Liz and I were going along just fine and all of a sudden, just before Christmas, Carol was mad about something. We didn't know what it was. She spoke to Glen first and then spent a long time talking to Heather [the assistant principal] because she trusted her. Carol told Heather she was trying to collaborate with us and we wouldn't collaborate. It was partly true. One time Carol said, "Let's talk about what you guys are doing," and Liz started laughing and said, "Oh you don't want to know," because it was too hard to explain. In a way Carol was right. We weren't collaborating very well. Heather talked to me—reminding me I'm not just a teacher, I'm an administrator. She said, "Can you communicate with your teachers or not? You'd better go and talk to Carol."
>
> I was pretty annoyed that Carol hadn't spoken to me and I told her, "There's no way that I would ever try to exclude anyone—that's not me." As we talked, Carol raised issues that I hadn't thought about before—the perceptions she had of me as part of administration and Liz and I as this tight team that she wasn't part of. Who else could Carol go to but the other administrators?

> Carol and I didn't talk for long. I didn't really approach it like I should have done, but she was happy that we talked. She gave me a hug.
>
> (Conversation, November 22, 1995)

The conversation between Tom and Carol alleviated the difficulties sufficiently to allow meetings to continue as usual after the Christmas holidays. Tom explained:

> After Christmas Liz and I were trying hard to work with Carol—trying to get some understanding about where she was coming from but I experienced a continuing sense of frustration...because of the emotion that Carol brings to things. With Carol I never knew for sure what was going to happen next. It was unpredictable.... For me that's frustrating because you want to get together, enjoy your meeting, make the decisions and get on with it.... As a classroom teacher, I might feel like I could say, "I'm teaching with Liz and that's it!".... As an administrator I can't do that. I tried to work on harmony and tried to bring the team together. I like people to live harmoniously. We were all polite to each other, recognizing we viewed the world differently...I thought that Carol didn't understand what Liz and I were doing. I felt she was also critical of our work.
>
> (Conversation, November 22, 1995)

For Tom, throughout the remainder of the year, there was always a certain level of tension. I asked:

A: Could you have fixed it?

T: No. We couldn't have fixed it—not last year.... Something happened. It's this thing about relationships—how things click or don't click—and it seemed like it could never be fixed.

A: Was there any benefit in going through that last year?

T: Probably, but that's because of all of us being professional. Now I feel we have a sense of having the same underlying goals and objectives because we've shared our stories in this

> research work. Carol knows we respect who she is and what she does as a teacher.
>
> As a school principal would I do it differently? I would want teachers to work together because they want to work together.... I would talk about teaming because I do see the advantages. I think I would encourage groups to get together because I believe we learn with our peers.... What worries me is that teachers can simply respond in ways that make administration happy. If I'm meeting with grade groups, I don't want teachers to set up a facade.... What I'm thinking now is, what can I learn from my experience? How will I bring teachers together? It's very complex.... Maybe that's the main message in this research work that we've engaged in together.
>
> (Conversation, November 22, 1995)

In telling his story, Tom sees his position on the landscape as contributing to the difficulties experienced by the Grade 1 team. The strength of his relationship with Liz as well as his administrative designation caused Carol to feel uncertain in relationship with him. Tom understands why Carol is unable to speak with him about her difficulties. He recognizes the lack of trust existing for Carol at the point in time when she decides to speak to Glen. While Tom's position as an administrator shapes the perceptions of his colleagues, it also shapes him. He explains, "As a classroom teacher, I might feel like I could say, 'I'm teaching with Liz and that's it!'.... As an administrator I can't do that" (Conversation, November 22, 1995). In order to uphold the story of school Tom tries "to work on harmony" and tries "to bring the team together" (Conversation, November 22, 1995). Heather, the assistant principal, also reminds Tom of his role as an administrator. Her response, "Can you

communicate with your teachers or not?" (Conversation, November 22, 1995) calls into question for Tom what it means to be a good administrator. Overcoming his feelings of annoyance, Tom clears the air by talking to Carol. Their conversation prevents a story of conflict among the Grade 1 teachers from becoming common knowledge on the out-of-classroom place. Various calls for professionalism, as a teacher or as an administrator, keep the story of conflict under wraps and diffuse the situation to the point where, as Tom says, "We were all polite to each other, recognizing we viewed the world differently" (Conversation, November 22, 1995). This politeness symbolizes the cover stories lived on the out-of-classroom place by the Grade 1 teachers. Brown and Gilligan (1992) in their research work note a similar pattern of politeness. They note, "It took a very long time to exercise a modicum of courage to speak about this absence of authentic communication...being nice to everyone was a familiar standard" (p. 220). As an administrator Tom knows he does not want teachers to set up a facade. He recognizes the complexity inherent in teachers' relationships on the out-of-classroom place.

Thinking About Teacher Professionalism and Cover Stories

In listening to the stories of Carol, Jane, Liz and Tom, I hear, for the first time, statements refuting the cover story I saw each teacher living on the out-of-classroom place. I am surprised by Carol's statement, "There was no team. It was a facade" (Conversation, November 5, 1995). And by Liz's explanation, "Nobody

wanted to be there" (Conversation, November 23, 1995). And Tom's comment about a teaming relationship that "could never be fixed" (Conversation, November 22, 1995). Jane too mentioned, "You couldn't call us a team" (Conversation, November 12, 1995). In each of these statements resides a secret story quite different from each teacher's cover story and the school story, constructed by Glen, of "the great accolades for the Grade 1 team" (Field Notes, May 3, 1995).

Glen's story of school sets up the teachers' cover stories on the out-of-classroom place and in the name of professionalism cover stories are successfully lived out by each teacher. But there is a cost involved in living out professionalism in this way. Tom, Liz, Carol and Jane experience feelings of pressure, frustration and stress. Their feelings find expression in the tension and unpredictability of their team meetings. Glen's new school story of team planning is specific to the out-of-classroom place and specific to issues of job intensification on the broader landscape. He makes this clear in his statement, "Teachers have got to realize their responsibilities also lie outside their classrooms. The school has got to grow with the times" (Conversation, May 24, 1995). For Glen, "to grow with the times" appears to be connected with his particular mandate for increased teacher professionalism on the out-of-classroom place—professionalism which finds expression in successful team planning by grade groups.

"Growing with the times" is also connected to Glen's goal for teacher thinking to be made visible on the out-of-classroom place in collegial dialogue relating to

practice. In support of this goal, Tom shares with Glen a school story about a "very cerebral" conversation engaged in by the Grade 1 team which proved teachers were talking about broader issues than "simply...how to deal with tomorrow" (Conversation, November 18, 1995). Dealing with tomorrow can be thought of in terms of the specific matters of the in-classroom place. Teacher professionalism in this milieu is simply expected as part of the calling to become a teacher. This sense of vocation goes unstated and is understood by teachers in terms of a deep moral responsibility for the children in their care. Teacher professionalism on the in-classroom place is highly personal and connected to each teacher's knowledge. For Tom, Liz, Carol, and Jane, their professionalism on the in-classroom place can be seen in the stories of practice already shared. As well, their narratives reveal their sense of teacher identity—their calling to the profession. Their professionalism on the out-of-classroom place, in part, means living out their characters in the story of school as it is constructed for them by Glen. Their professionalism on the out-of-classroom place is thus shaped by the hierarchical structure of the landscape.

In this inquiry Tom, Liz, Carol, and Jane can be seen moving back and forth between two distinctly different places on the landscape. As they compose their lives as teachers, they can be seen, in the material already presented, to live out different stories of professionalism in both the in-classroom and the out-of-classroom places. There is a personal sense of what it means to be a professional and there is also an institutional sense that is understood by these teachers in terms of their positions in

the hierarchy. To look at these teachers' lives as they move between the two places allows a new understanding of teacher professionalism as it is shaped by the landscape—shaped by Glen's story of school and shaped by the institutional narrative of the school system.

The politics of the times can be seen to shape the out-of-classroom place, creating cover stories in that milieu. Under the banner of professionalism, team planning becomes a requirement on the out-of-classroom place. Glen is clear about the rationale behind this call for collegiality, "It's more professional. It's safer for teachers in light of public criticism. Group decisions are easier to defend...teachers make better decisions because they're making group decisions" (Conversation, May 24, 1995). Glen's words convey a sense of the out-of-classroom place as being suddenly less safe for both teachers and administrators. Responding to Glen's statement, Jane reflects on the relative safety of the in-classroom place, as she sees it, versus the trickier landscape of the out-of-classroom place to which Glen draws attention:

> Glen says group decisions are easier to defend. I've never really worried about defending my practice. Maybe Glen worries about it a lot? He's on the other end of things and has to defend what we do. Maybe we never get to hear half of what he defends.
>
> There's a lot more pressure being brought to bear and it does have to do with the media. The perception out there of how accountable as teachers we should be and yet we always thought we were accountable. Maybe it's the scrutiny that is being given to so many aspects of our profession.... Teaching is getting to be a very demanding and stressful occupation.
>
> (Conversation, June 13, 1995)

As Glen stories the landscape from his perspective, Jane comes to see, more clearly, public criticism as part of the politics of the times. Given Glen's position on the out-of-classroom place, team planning can be viewed, through Glen's eyes, as a safety mechanism—a means for defending, justifying and shaping the practice of the Riverview teachers.

As the landscape changes, the story of Riverview School changes and the rhetoric of conclusions translating theory into practice also changes. Thinking about these changes and trying to make sense of them causes me to reflect on my knowledge of the politics of the Riverview landscape over time.

CHAPTER VII

A Changed Story of School: Dilemmas on the Landscape

As a teacher on the staff of Riverview School for a period of twelve years (1982-1994) I have come to understand the Riverview landscape from a historical perspective. Now as a researcher, my work has coincided with the coming of a new principal and a changed story of school. The original lighthouse plot line revealed in the early stories of Jon, Mike, Terri, and Linda was confirmed for me by the school district's Superintendent of Elementary Education. He explained:

> I remember when Riverview School was going to be built and decisions were made around who was going to be the principal.... The charge—the expectation for Sue was..."It's going to become a lighthouse school, Sue, and you go and get the very best teachers you can get." It's no different now when we build a school...you get the key person in terms of the principal, and say, "Now here's your charge." But you can only get people that are good to do it. Principals in new schools are on the cutting edge in the first place and the key is to sustain that and cause it to continue to grow over time.
>
> (Conversation, May 12, 1995)

The story of Riverview School as a lighthouse school was sustained on the landscape for a period of thirteen years (1981-1994), throughout the terms of three principals who preceded Glen. My position on that landscape allows me to see how each principal constructed different school stories to sustain the story of school.

In researching my story of mandated team teaching (p. 4) in the 1982-83 school year which I experienced together with Jon, Mike, Terri, and Linda, I have

come to understand the way in which the political climate of the times made possible the living out of particular stories. In a climate supportive of innovation, the first principal, Sue, could encourage cutting-edge practice—practice resulting in a school story, told on the landscape, of a five member team of subject area specialists working together successfully. As Mike looks back on his experience, of the 1982-83 school year, he notes, "It was a time to take risks, an environment to take risks...and it was very energizing...I was thinking I was doing the right thing because it's innovative and it's new and exciting" (Conversation, November 5, 1994). The story of the five member team would be just one of the school stories told at the time, in support of Riverview as a lighthouse school.

In Jane's narrative, already presented, she draws attention to the school stories she heard on the broader landscape prior to her arrival at Riverview in 1985, during the term of the second principal. She explained, "I knew the school had a good reputation. People all over the city were looking at Riverview with envy" (Conversation, June 1, 1995). As a new staff member Jane was quickly made aware of the story of school. She recalls, "It wasn't very much into the school year, probably the first or second day, when the term lighthouse school came up. I had no idea what it meant. I thought it just means a school where people are doing things which are new and energetic.... There was certainly pressure to maintain the excellence that went along with being a lighthouse school" (Conversation, June 1, 1995). Jane's narrative also pinpoints curriculum innovation as a school story

supporting the lighthouse plot line. She notes, "teachers perceive a certain standard to be met and proceed to come up to that—to do something beyond just excellence in teaching—to be innovative in adapting curriculum" (Conversation, June 1, 1995). School stories of curriculum innovation served to sustain Riverview's lighthouse plot line as they found their way onto the broader landscape. The stories were told by the principal, by system consultants and by numerous teachers who visited the school to view innovative practice.

In the term of the third principal (1987-1993), the lighthouse plot line was sustained by continuing the previous innovations and by adding a new thrust—innovative professional development. Teachers formed self-chosen special interest groups and conducted their own inquiries. This development was viewed as cutting-edge practice and school stories of the success of self-chosen professional development contributed to a consistent image of a lighthouse school. It was during this innovative phase that both Liz and Tom were selected, by the principal, to join the Riverview staff in September 1990. Tom was heavily involved in teacher research at the time and had just published his first book of teacher stories. Liz was involved in a system professional development initiative. As Tom and I talked about 1990, we saw that team teaching was no longer mandated or even considered as an innovation at Riverview School. This observation was also substantiated by the superintendent of the school district who noted that over time it was realized that team teaching could not be mandated (Personal Communication, May 12, 1995).

Rather it was simply accepted by administration as one way in which teachers might choose to work together. Tom noted:

> T: Riverview has always had a lot of team teaching.
>
> A: But team teaching was no longer a big deal because Liz said...when she was hired teaming wasn't even mentioned.... Instead the principal was very excited with her interest in professional development. He was on a different school story— innovative P.D. and Liz came in as a P.D. leader. She immediately was a representative for the school. So the principal was seeing a P.D. thrust as very much to do with a lighthouse plot line so he didn't ask Liz about team teaching.
>
> (Conversation, July 7, 1995)

In the third principal's annual reports, required by the system, each one concluded with the following statement, "I am certain you share my pride in this system lighthouse school which truly enhances student achievement through innovative creative staff members" (Principal's Reports, 1988 through 1992). The principal, in his reports, gave back to the system the story of school as it had been given to him. In his reports he selected school stories which continued to support a lighthouse plot line.

When Glen assumed the principalship in September, 1994 it is reasonable to believe that the changed story of school was, in part, shaped by the politics of the times. As previously noted by the Superintendent of Elementary Education, "Innovation has been stifled as a result of the political climate surrounding education" (Conversation, May 12, 1995). In the 1994-1995 school year the system was reeling

from budget cuts (between 1993 and 1996, the province reduced funding for K-12 education by 15%) and wide ranging provincial government mandates concerning education (Young, 1996b). The new mandates shifted the locus of control away from local autonomy. School districts in Alberta were also faced with demands for more rigorous accountability—accountability in terms of student achievement as well as fiscal accountability. A right-wing "quality education" movement in Alberta, spearheaded by reform-minded parents, was also front and centre in the media. The changed political landscape (Young, 1996a) can, therefore, be seen as shaping the backdrop of Glen's story of school at Riverview.

It is also reasonable to believe that Glen's story of school is linked in some way to a story of school suggested to him by his superiors. Just like Sue, the first principal, Glen would have been given "a charge" for Riverview School. As well, the changing institutional narrative of the school district would also shape his story of school. This connection was made clear to me by the superintendent. He explained how a new institutional narrative is created and disseminated:

> We're into a time when we have been examining issues around collaboration, shared decision-making, entertaining teacher voice.... As a group of superintendents we began the exercise ourselves by saying, "This is what we believe as leaders...." We gathered together a collection of guiding documents...and we published a document—a leadership commitments document. As a group of superintendents, we said, "Before we go out and do our work with principals, let's make sure that we understand and have a common understanding of this language we're using...."

> My associate superintendents spend time posing the kinds of questions that cause principals to reflect on their practice...so they more clearly reflect what we have committed ourselves to.... Principals are talking with their staff members...and we're all engaged in these discussions on current thinking—on best knowledge—and we're trying to piece together what this means.
>
> (Conversation, May 12, 1995)

Given the superintendent's story, it is likely that Glen would interpret the expectation for collaboration and shared decision-making, held by his superordinates, thus creating the possibility for new school stories to be told on the Riverview landscape. The rhetoric of conclusions, which Glen creates in support of team planning (pp. 117-118), can be seen as his interpretation of a new institutional narrative pertaining to shared decision-making and teacher collaboration. He declares, "Teaming is the only way to go because teaming is more effective—more efficient, and efficient is going to be a big word in our system in the future" (Conversation, May 24, 1995).

For Glen to also talk about Riverview, in a new way, as an "academic school" (Conversation, May 24, 1995), can be interpreted as a politically astute move, given the dramatically changed educational landscape of Alberta. An "academic school", as a new story of school, seems to encompass the expectation of accountability voiced on the broader landscape by stakeholders in education. Glen can, therefore, be seen as authoring a multi-faceted story of school with a new thrust for team planning, increased expectations regarding professionalism (Young, 1996a) on the out-of-classroom place, and talk of Riverview as an academic school growing

with the times. As Glen voices these beliefs, he departs from the previous lighthouse script.

Other factors could contribute to Riverview's changed story of school but it is readily apparent that no matter what story of school is constructed, the requirement for teachers to make it work comes into play. School stories are then constructed in support of the story of school. Glen's story of "teaming as the only way to go" gives rise to his construction of a school story of "the great accolades for the Grade 1 team." I am reminded of Heilbrun (1988) who notes that "power consists to a large extent in deciding what stories will be told" (pp. 43-44).

Glen's story of the Grade 1 team is a very different story of teaming from that of my initial stories of the five member team lived out on the landscape of the 1982-83 school year. Glen's story of teaming on the out-of-classroom place bears little resemblance to my story of team teaching on the in-classroom place. But in these two situations, school stories of successful teaming are constructed to serve, not only a story of school voiced by the principal, but also an institutional narrative—a system story, as well. The school stories of successful teaming in the 1982-83 school year and in the 1994-95 school year are cover stories shaped by the principal's story of school which can be seen to change according to new government or school district policies.

A Shift in the Meaning of Teaming

The response to the politics of the times in the school district under study (ATA, 1993), gave rise to new expectations for teams of teachers or teacher teams to come together on the out-of-classroom place. The term "teaming" in this particular school district can still encompass team teaching as it was previously understood, as an organizational structure for teaching and learning on the in-classroom place (Shaplin, 1964), but the new thrust is for teacher teams to engage in collaborative decision-making on the out-of-classroom place. A subtle, but powerful, shift in the meaning of teaming becomes evident—a shift Tom and I discuss in the following way:

> A: At the system level teaming is a buzz word. It's new. What I'm seeing is that...it's nothing to do with the old story of team teaching of 30 years ago which was very much to do with kids. It seems this is to do with teachers' survival.
>
> T: Yes, and you have to support the system. If you're going to go anywhere, you've got to believe in the system and support them no matter what...and I had never thought in those terms as a teacher...I thought we were there for the kids and I hadn't really understood the whole system until lately.... I think a lot of classroom teachers...don't know how the system works.
>
> A: This is very true.
>
> T: And so that's what being a team player is all about—it's sort of saying, "Yes, you're part of Riverview School, but you're also part of the system..." It does have implications for us.... They want us to be faithful to the system. If the system says we're going to do something, then you do it.... I think it's bigger than we realize...and Glen's very much a system player because of his years of experience. He does see that bigger

> picture. I don't have a problem with learning about that system perspective. I think what we want to do is still be analytical about what we're hearing...and try to figure out what it means. At times, we don't know what it means and in fact it has changed a lot in the last year....
>
> A: This teaming stuff is not easy, is it?
>
> T: No. So what makes it so hard when the system story makes it so simple?
>
> (Conversation, July 7, 1995)

Tom's question is thought provoking. The system story calling for collaboration and shared decision-making that appears so simple, can be seen as being shaped not only by the politics and the policies of the times, but, as the superintendent of the school district notes (Conversation, May 12, 1995), by "guiding documents", "current thinking", and "best knowledge". In the superintendent's story, the underlying assumption appears to be that theory drives practice. "Best knowledge", gleaned from the field of educational research, yet stripped from the research contexts from which it was derived, arrives on the Riverview landscape in the form of a rhetoric of conclusions, interpreted by Glen. As a system player, Glen consistently strives to uphold the institutional narrative which shapes the story of school and the school stories told on the Riverview landscape. As a junior administrator, Tom wrestles with Glen's expectations on the out-of-classroom place.

Both Liz and Carol, from their position on the landscape as classroom teachers, remind Glen that the system story of teachers' decision-making in

collaboration is not an easy one to live out, particularly when it translates to mandated teacher relationships within grade group configurations. Liz knows that mandated relationships are problematic; she also knows that trust develops over time. In the safety of Liz and Tom's in-classroom place both Liz and Glen are comfortable sharing their thoughts about trust with Tom and me:

G: We've got good people in this system. We should be able to trust them automatically without having to spend two years finding out what they're all about.

L: It doesn't work that way.

G: But it should.... You should be able to trust a colleague and what they're about.... You should be able to trust them professionally. Can you?

L: Yes, but that's completely different.

G: As you get to know people, you trust them on different levels.

L: I agree that we have to be able to trust each other at the professional level and I would hope to trust anyone in this building, but that doesn't mean I would be able to work with them and have my own comfort zone which is really, really important. For Tom and me, trust is so important and we trusted one another the day we began team teaching.

G: As a staff stays together that trust builds up...and even in teacher training you can start people off on the right foot. We don't, in teacher training, talk about that to my knowledge. I think it's got to start there. You don't go into your little cubicle and teach for 20 years any more. It's gone. It's been gone for years. So, that's what I was trying to get at with you when I said automatic trust—you've got to do that.

(Conversation, June 20, 1995)

In this excerpt from Liz and Glen's conversation I am aware of the knowledge each person holds. Knowing that Glen values her as a teacher, Liz can risk voicing her opinions in her in-classroom place. Tom, on the other hand, because he is positioned differently, cannot speak as candidly. He listens thoughtfully while Liz speaks freely about dilemmas surrounding collaboration. She can accept Glen's notion of automatic trust only as it relates to her acceptance of the professional competence of her colleagues. This level of trust is what professional ethics is all about. Liz understands this and knows it would be unprofessional for her to think otherwise. She trusts all teachers at Riverview to do their jobs, in their in-classroom places, based on the competence conferred on them by their teacher education programs and their lived experience of teaching over the years. Liz understands automatic trust existing in the absence of relationship. It exists in the absence of knowing one another.

In the stories of Tom, Liz, Carol and Jane this "professional trust"—this "automatic trust" of one another as experienced teachers—is evident. These four teachers can be seen to honour the diversity of each other's classroom practice. They know they are all good teachers on the landscape. This is apparent when Liz says, "Carol has her own way and that is best for her..." (Letter, November 5, 1994). Jane comments, "Carol feels very confident about her program...and rightly so" (Conversation, May 2, 1995). Carol, in turn, explains, "Would [Tom and Liz] have wanted me to do exactly what they did? Did they not find that was their unique

thing? Did they not want that to remain with them in a way?" (Conversation, July 24, 1995). Tom, Liz, Carol and Jane demonstrate automatic trust of one another by honouring each other's diversity. This automatic trust of one another is just one facet of professional trust. It holds no promise for relationship in and of itself. This level of automatic trust holds no guarantee of successful collaboration.

The question can be asked: What level of trust is required to work as a team of teachers on the out-of-classroom place? It is Liz who makes the case for relational trust as being the basis for collaboration—the kind of relational trust she experiences in her team teaching relationship with Tom. For Liz, Tom, Carol and Jane the development of relational trust within the Grade 1 team can be seen as problematic. It is Carol who asks, "How do you have teaming and collegiality when you don't know one another?" (Conversation, July 24, 1995) and it is only at the end of the school year that Carol notes, "I'm just getting comfortable with Tom and Liz" (Conversation, June 13, 1995). Liz echoes similar sentiments when the school year is over, "We're starting to know one another a little better and we're beginning to build a trusting relationship" (Conversation, August 11, 1995). For Liz automatic professional trust is quite separate from the relational trust she identifies as being necessary for collaboration to be successful. For Liz teaming is relational—it is to do with feeling comfortable with one another—it develops over time. As Liz explains her point of view, Glen can be seen to change his mind. He concedes there are "different levels" of trust and that "as a staff stays together, trust builds up"

(Conversation, June 20, 1995). Glen knows teachers' relationships on the out-of-classroom place are important. He knows teachers can no longer isolate themselves in their in-classroom places, but it is Liz who helps him to acknowledge different levels of trust and their connection with successful teaming. In the safety of Liz's and Tom's in-classroom place Glen is open to figuring things out in conversation. Liz can risk speaking her mind, given the trusting relationships she has developed with Tom, Glen and with me. But this conversation on the in-classroom place would be unlikely to occur on the out-of-classroom place. Liz's understanding of professional ethics precludes her from voicing such thoughts on the broader landscape. It would be equally unlikely for Glen to entertain such a discussion on the out-of-classroom place. Such a conversation would likely be shut down.

The out-of-classroom place, then, can be seen to have a shaping influence on the expression of Liz's teacher knowledge. A code of professional conduct pervades the out-of-classroom place—a code of ethics, defined by the Alberta Teachers' Association, and understood by experienced teachers such as Liz, Tom, Jane, and Carol. They know they cannot challenge Glen's authority in public. By living cover stories on the out-of-classroom place, they do not challenge the sacred story of the hierarchical system of which they are a part. Attentive to the code of ethics, the Grade 1 teachers view themselves as "being professional" and yet it can be seen that this view is at odds with their more deeply held beliefs. Clearly, as Young (1996a) notes, there are "various assumptions about professionalism".

Glen is free to express his knowledge in both the in-classroom and out-of-classroom places. The knowledge he expresses is sanctioned by a current institutional narrative as well as by his own narrative knowing. He shapes and filters the stories being told. Glen understands the changed role for teachers and expects teachers to demonstrate increased professionalism in their classrooms and outside of their classrooms. For Glen, the call for professionalism on the landscape as a whole is paramount. He explains:

> I don't even think we should have to talk teaming. I think that should be a given, that teachers are expected to collaborate. But I've got teachers on staff who are uncomfortable with that. Something's going wrong at the university level...they're not exposed to it. I don't think they understand what the concept is.... Why do you team? Because it makes the job easier. That's what I think.... So you see I don't think it's a question so much of personality, as it is a question of philosophical bent and understanding of the role. It's something more important than, "Do you and I get along?".
>
> (Conversation, May 24, 1995)

Glen feels teachers should understand the expectation for collaboration as an outcome of their teacher education programs. Such programs, however, tend to focus on life in the in-classroom place thus ignoring the very real demands of the out-of-classroom place on the landscape. Glen's comment can be read as a criticism of teacher education programs in their failure to take into account teachers' changing roles. Of necessity, teachers live on the whole landscape, not just in their in-classroom places. Glen's phrase "understanding the role" is an important one. "Understanding the role" seems to take precedence, for him, over matters of

relationship. Yet for Tom, Liz, Carol and Jane issues of relationship, as indicated in their stories, have everything to do with successful collaboration. It is one thing to be told to collaborate and quite another to actually live out such a story on the whole landscape.

Changing Landscape: Changing Roles

As the Riverview landscape changes, teachers' roles also change. As well, teachers' job descriptions on the broader landscape of the school district, as well as provincially (ATA, 1993), convey the reality of job intensification (Young 1996a). Glen explains:

> When principals put out postings—when they say teaming is required, what they want is a person who is flexible—who knows that they can be thrown into any kind of a mix and will try their darndest to make that mix work and get along with their colleagues, hand in glove, for the benefit of kids. That's what principals are looking for and you can call it what you want, teaming or collaboration...it's somebody who knows there's more effectiveness and efficiency by working together in a group...it doesn't necessarily mean team teaching per se as it does sharing responsibility, sharing workload and planning for the kids....
>
> (Conversation, May 24, 1995)

In this explanation a very different connotation of teaming is evident as Glen explains "it doesn't necessarily mean team teaching per se". Yet teaming for Tom and Liz means team teaching based on their choice to work collaboratively. Tom and Liz make their choice based on the value they believe the experience will hold for them and for the children in their care. Their experience is relational (Brown & Gilligan,

1992; Noddings, 1991). It is based on the fact that they like, respect and trust each other. Their successful team teaching relationship is based on the complementarity of their narratives and not on notions of efficiency. They explain:

> L: Team teaching certainly isn't efficient. We have to confer and talk on every subject all the time. Whereas when you're all by yourself you just do it. It takes half the time. The only way it would be more efficient is if Tom planned all the social studies and I planned all the science and we didn't talk about it [but] we wouldn't be comfortable dividing up the work.... Maybe at the admin level when Glen divides everything out and says, "Tom look after this. Heather will you take on that? Report back, give me feedback," then that is efficient but that's like a hierarchy.... I don't think team teaching is about saving time. That's not a reason for saying we're going to team, because it'll save time. It actually consumes more time but there are advantages.
>
> T: We've talked a lot about the pluses but it takes a lot of time to get to those pluses. There are pluses and minuses [in teaming], and on the minus side is that whole issue of time. In our case it's a social thing.... When you like each other, like at the end of the day it helps me to talk about the day and what happened.... It's all mixed up together, the relationship and the work.
>
> (Conversation, June 20, 1995)

But at the Grade 1 team meetings there is no mix of relationship and work and in the absence of relationship there is frustration and, at times, animosity.

The story of Liz and Tom's successful team teaching could be told by Glen on the out-of-classroom place, but as noted previously, the stories chosen to be told on the broader landscape of the school district are those which sustain the story of school. Tom and I discussed this point after the school year was over:

A: Glen really wants to talk about the Grade 1 team. He doesn't want to talk about Tom and Liz and team teaching. He knows that you're a good team. But I feel as though the story he wants to talk about is, "We're all on board here." Glen wants to tell a story of the Grade 1 team on the out-of-classroom place.... The funny thing I'm seeing is the huge difference between your in-classroom team teaching and the reality of the larger team on the landscape. The story Glen wants to talk about is the story of the larger team. He wants that story to work and he promotes it. Am I out to lunch?

T: No I don't think so. So what you're wondering is do we live up to what he thinks we live up to?

A: Maybe it's not unlike my first story with that five member team back in 1982. Everybody tried their darndest to make it work but there was an undercurrent of the realities of the situation.

T: Yes, and from the outside that team might have looked like a dynamite team.

(Conversation, July 7, 1995)

Together Tom and I reach an understanding of how difficult it is for outsiders to penetrate the cover stories lived on the landscape. Glen's story of "the great accolades for the Grade 1 team" is also a cover story. He is intent on fulfilling "the charge" given to him as the new principal of Riverview. He is committed to creating a story of teachers being "on board" to counteract a view that too many of his teachers are "flying solo" (Conversation, May 24, 1995).

When teachers like Tom, Liz, Carol and Jane live out their stories of teaching on their in-classroom places, there is little need for any kind of shared narrative. But when these four teachers come together on the out-of-classroom place to live out

Glen's story of team planning, within the parameters he specifies, they find themselves living cover stories. Their cover stories are created to comply with Glen's story of school. While it is possible the teachers may not fully understand the changed story of school created in response to "the charge" given to Glen and to the institutional narrative, they do understand the expectation of "being professional" on the whole landscape. They understand their cover stories as being enacted for the benefit of outsiders such as immediate colleagues, parents, and the senior administration of the school district.

In similar fashion to the principals who preceded him, Glen is able to tell a school story of a successful team of teachers. When Glen sits down with his superintendent, he can give back to the superintendent school stories in support of the institutional narratives first given to him as system goals. He can respond to "the charge" given to him as the new principal of Riverview School and he can discuss the progress teachers are making towards the goal of shared decision-making in collaboration.

Carol's statement, "Glen saw the team for what it was" (Conversation, November 5, 1995) indicates a level of knowing held by those inside a situation. In conversations with Liz, Carol and Tom in safe places on the landscape, Glen was only too well aware of the dilemmas faced by the Grade 1 team. In safe places Tom reflected further about teaming and the meaning held in Glen's statement about

Riverview teachers being "on board" (Conversation, May 24, 1995). Sitting in his backyard when school was out for the summer, Tom said,

> If the whole school is kind of together that's probably good and yet together on what? What should we be "on board" about? Like basic rules whether you can run in the hall or not? Where does it stop? Because we're not "on board" in terms of classroom things and then in the big picture of school goals we are. I've come to think, and I'm thinking more and more...as a teacher and as an administrator, that everyone is going to be different. Teachers need to be treated just like we want to treat our children—as individuals.
>
> (Conversation, July 7, 1995)

Tom realizes the level of teacher diversity existing in the in-classroom places at Riverview School. His thoughts are echoed by Carol when she explains:

> We're taught to treat children individually. We're taught to meet their needs...but are teachers' needs being addressed? If there are teachers out there who want to teach alone, who are secure and competent and this shows in the results of their students' performance—don't force them to team...don't black mark them if they're not in a team. If I choose to be in a team, good—but give me the choice.
>
> (Conversation, June 21, 1996)

Both Carol and Tom speak of honouring teacher diversity and Tom addresses the complex notion of a school being "together". Yet "together on what?" remains a dilemma for him as his questions pour forth in the safety of his backyard.

While Liz and Carol could express their views to Glen, as classroom teachers, Tom found himself shaped by his position as a junior administrator. Of necessity he was attentive to directives from both Glen and Heather, positioned as they were above him. While Tom was shaped by the administrative team of Riverview School,

he was also shaped by system training sessions for junior administrators. As a result of those experiences Tom understood that "if you're going to go anywhere you've got to believe in the system and support them no matter what" (Conversation, July 7, 1995). For Tom, his position on the administrative team of Riverview allows him a better understanding of the out-of-classroom place on the professional knowledge landscape. Yet this better understanding is coupled with Tom's emerging sense of being faithful to the system—faithful to the changing institutional narratives and cautious about voicing his teacher knowledge on the broader landscape. In the safety of our research relationship, Tom explains his new sense of knowing in the following way:

> You can be in opposition to what's going on as a classroom teacher even if all you do is disagree intellectually...whereas when you're in administration...you're part of the system saying this is what we're doing. Your official stance is that you agree with it.
>
> (Conversation, January 4, 1995)

Tom understands what is being required of him on the out-of-classroom place. He is shaped by his knowledge of his administrative role but in the safety of his team teaching relationship with Liz, and within the ethical guidelines of our collaborative research project, Tom can be analytical about the changing landscape. On the out-of-classroom place Tom is thoughtful about how he is positioned as a junior administrator and, of necessity, he is diplomatic in his response to colleagues. Tom

knows that for teachers to know what's happening on the landscape is all the more problematic when administration changes in a school.

The language of the landscape changes with the arrival of a new principal. The word teaming takes on different connotations. It no longer means team teaching per se but it refers to teacher teams or teams of teachers. Glen's interpretation of teaming—his response to system goals—gives rise to new dilemmas for Tom, Liz, Carol and Jane on the out-of-classroom place of Riverview School. Yet on this out-of-classroom place these four teachers silence their knowledge in the name of "being professional". Their knowledge, however, can be captured within the parameters of this inquiry. In our research relationship, a safe place is negotiated between the in-classroom place and the out-of-classroom place. The teachers talk within the safety of their relationship with me. They tell stories they could not otherwise tell. They speak with increasing candour in safe places off the landscape: in their homes, at kitchen tables, in their backyards, at restaurants and in my home too. Liz tells me, "As human beings we want to be heard," (Conversation, November 25, 1994) and Carol speaks with passion and eloquence. She, too, wants to be heard (Brown & Gilligan, 1992):

> Glen wants to give the impression of a really strong collegial team but you know he doesn't have to.... We're creative individuals—do you think we want to give that up so we can be one happy little team without individual juices flowing?
>
> (Conversation, June 12, 1995)

Tom and I also trade questions:

> A: Can you have a story of difficulty on the landscape? Whether you're a principal or any kind of administrator, you can't go saying, "There's difficulty here". If you do are you seen as someone who's lacking in some way?
>
> T: You're not a strong leader or you don't have a vision.
>
> A: Do we simply filter out certain stories and just tell the good stories?
>
> T: Yeah, everything is fine (laughter).
>
> (Conversation, November 22, 1995)

I learn from Tom. We learn together. I find myself picking up his language. I hear myself saying, "But what does it mean?" When I say this we laugh some more and I think back to Sewall (1994) "Laughter is relationship...laughter lives in story" (p. 199) and truth comes to us "on the heels of good laughter" (p. 279). Laughter permeates my relationship with each of the teachers. I think of the stories shared in our work together and the risks taken. Tom was the first to share his narrative, then Liz, Carol, and Jane, trusting the process, could share their narratives too. In that sharing came understanding (Hollingsworth, 1994)—an understanding of each teacher by the others and a new respect for each individual's story—the beginning of relationship. And it is Jane who notes:

> It's terribly interdependent, this team thing, this planning and interaction, the staffroom, the social side of things. It's our life that we're living out here. We need to enjoy ourselves. It makes us better teachers and happier people. I don't think you just go into a school and go into a classroom and do your thing. That's not what it's all

> about. It's important to relate to your colleagues but it isn't something you just automatically come out and do well.
>
> (Conversation, June 1, 1995)

Jane, like Liz, knows what is at issue here. She aspires to the same goals as Glen but she recognizes that to be in relationship with one's colleagues is not automatic. Jane speaks to the complexity of what it means to be a teacher on the whole landscape.

The complexity of the four teachers' lived experience of the whole landscape—the dilemmas they encounter—can be seen as a product of interwoven stories. The complexity, I believe, has to do with a changed story of school, with school stories, teachers' stories and the uneasy relationships resulting from a mandated configuration designed in support of an institutional narrative.

Believing in the research process Tom, Liz, Carol, and Jane have, over the course of a two year period, entrusted me with their personal and professional lives. They would not define our relationship as being one of "automatic trust"—rather our relationship has grown over time as stories have been shared and a research text created from my field text in the manner suggested by Clandinin and Connelly (1994a):

> Research texts are at a distance from field texts and grow out of the repeated asking of questions concerning meaning and significance...a research account looks for the patterns, narrative threads, tensions, and themes either within or across individuals' personal experience... because collaboration occurs from beginning to end, plot outlines are continually revised as consultation takes place over written materials and as further field texts are collected to develop points of importance in the revised story.... Just as the researcher's relationship to

> participants shapes the field text, the researcher's relationship to the inquiry and to the participants shapes the research text. (p. 423)

My research text, as narrative, lies before me—a text designed "to capture the participants' experience and represent their voices" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994a, p. 423)—a text negotiated at every stage. And now, I revisit these stories, combing through carefully chosen words, teasing out the points of importance. What do I now know? What do these stories teach me about team teaching relationships on the professional knowledge landscape of Riverview School? How do I finally shape a research narrative with which readers will resonate (Barone, 1992) and at the same time remain thoughtful of my "privileged position of interpreting the life events of others?" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 27).

CHAPTER VIII

Understanding Team Teaching: Understanding the Landscape

Thinking back to the narrative beginnings of my research work at Riverview School and the stories told, by Jon, Mike, Terri, and Linda, of the 1982-83 school year, I marvel at the way in which the pursuit of a narrative inquiry into team teaching has sketched the Riverview landscape over a fourteen year period (1981-1995). As Carr (1986) suggests, "the historical past...functions as background for our present experience" (p. 3) and "any part of a story acquires its significance from the narrative whole to which it belongs, so any particular story depends for its sense on the larger narrative context of which it is a part.... What the individual is, is thus a function of his or her place in a historical setting" (p. 115). To understand the experience of Tom, Liz, Carol, and Jane, it is therefore necessary to pay attention to the storied context of Riverview School and the "complex nexus of stories" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) I encountered in my research process. Stories of the landscape are inextricably linked to stories of these teachers' lives.

The teachers' stories of team teaching and teacher teams already presented speak to the continually changing professional knowledge landscape of Riverview School. The school can be seen to change over time, shaped by the story of school and school stories told on the landscape. As the Riverview landscape changes, the language of the landscape also changes. Teaming is reconceptualized in this

particular school district and shapes new interactive configurations for teachers on the out-of-classroom place of Riverview School. As Lieberman (1988) notes, "new roles for teachers are appearing, often without examination of the consequences" (p. vii). The term "teaming" is broader in scope than the original concept of team teaching as defined by Shaplin (1964), which focussed on the instructional organization for students. The various configurations constituting team teaching were lived out on teachers' in-classroom places.

In my research on the Riverview landscape, team teaching has continued over the years as a matter of teacher choice and team teaching still remains a viable option in Glen's new story of school. While team teaching, on the in-classroom place, is encouraged by Glen, it is not mandated as it was in the term of Sue, the first principal. At that time (1981-83) Sue lived out "the charge" given to her by her superiors. She hired teachers committed to the concept of team teaching on the in-classroom place. Those teachers continued to explore ways in which team teaching might work for them as staff came and went on the Riverview landscape.

As I think about the stories of Jon, Mike, Terri, and Linda and the way in which they tried to make sense of the mandated team teaching situation they found themselves in, I see similarities with the mandated team planning stories of Tom, Liz, Carol, and Jane. In both settings, in the absence of trust—in the absence of knowing one another—cover stories were lived out on the out-of-classroom place. I now understand cover stories as being part of the landscape and not necessarily devious

in nature. And as Wheatley (1992) explains, "Each of us is a different person in different places. This doesn't make us inauthentic" (p. 34). Fenstermacher, cited in Clandinin and Connelly (1996), also notes "cover stories are an important way of living teacher stories and their uses might profitably be taught in teacher education programs" (p. 29). As I think about cover stories, I see them in terms of a means of survival on the landscape. Carr's (1986) words help me to make sense of this phenomenon as he explains:

> The chaos and confusion of everyday reality can often be countered by adopting a pre-given role. To do simply what others, or society in general, expect of me in my role...such a solution can be a consoling and comforting one in a difficult situation. (p. 92)

Clearly, to penetrate cover stories offers an important view of the landscape. When such stories are shared as research text, much can be learned about the complexity of the changing landscape and its impact on teachers' lives.

Penetrating Cover Stories

In the 1982-83 school year I lived a cover story from the inside, in the way Carr suggests. In the 1994-95 school year I watched the cover stories of Tom, Liz, Carol, and Jane. I learned how difficult it is to penetrate teachers' cover stories. The cover stories of Jon, Mike, Terri, Linda, and myself held for a period of twelve years and have only come to light because of my research. Based on a strong level of relational trust (Buber, 1970), as colleagues for a number of years, our secret

stories could eventually be told. As well, the intervening years made it easier to risk telling our stories. Stories are told in relationship; stories are told to those deemed "insiders" to a situation. I was an insider with Tom and Liz in their in-classroom place, but I found myself positioned quite differently in the Grade 1 team meetings. Tom describes his sense of this state of affairs in the following way, "You're on the outside. It's quite different watching it than living it.... Sometimes you see things that the 'livers' don't see...but sometimes you miss it.... Insiders have stories nobody else knows" (Conversation, November 22, 1995). How did I penetrate the facade of teachers' cover stories? What part does fidelity to my relationship with each teacher play in my story as researcher? And what about levels of trust? Are cover stories revealed when participants see their teacher stories as being significant—as being connected to the larger landscape and concerned with the question of "how to live one's life as a whole and with questions about the nature of individual existence, character and personal identity" (Carr, 1986 p. 73).

It took time for me to become an insider to Tom, Liz, Carol, and Jane's stories of the out-of-classroom place. It did not happen until the school year was over and the four teachers could gain some distance from their lived experience. In any event, I see myself as being invited to be an insider at that moment in time when Carol could risk committing herself fully to our collaborative inquiry by stating, "What good will you do for teachers if you gloss over our struggles and tell only

good stories?" (Telephone Conversation, November 5, 1995). At that point in time Carol saw that telling stories might make a difference to teachers' lives.

As an insider, my narrative accounts of all eight teachers' stories are revised stories—stories revised by the re-telling of each teacher's secret story. My revised story, as a research text, has everything to do with the level of relational trust built over the duration of this narrative inquiry. In the absence of relational trust, my research text would unknowingly take the form of a narrative account of well choreographed cover stories. The cover stories of all of the teachers serve to document the way in which they managed the epistemological dilemmas encountered in moving between their in-classroom places and the out-of-classroom place on the professional knowledge landscape. It was Jon who noted, "We were all probably into survival mode" (Conversation, October 28, 1994). To survive on the landscape necessitates the living out of cover stories and it can be seen from the teachers' secret stories that mandated collaboration is difficult. Jon's words, "Teachers have to want to work together" (Conversation, October 28, 1994) are echoed time after time by Tom, Liz, Carol, and Jane. The question needs to be asked, "How might collaboration work?" Can new ways to live collaboration be envisioned by listening to teachers' stories—by hearing experienced teachers like Linda saying, "Teaming has to evolve. Everybody has to feel really comfortable" (Conversation, November 20, 1994).

Re-reading the stories of Jon, Mike, Terri, and Linda, I find myself reflecting on the practise of mandated relationships. I think back to the 1982-83 school year. I think of the team meetings in which I was involved and how related they were to matters of teachers' collaborative practice on the in-classroom place. The agenda of our five member team had everything to do with the mutual construction of the best program possible for children. In contrast, Carol's words about the Grade 1 team meetings stay with me. She explained, "It's amazing that actually our agenda was really from the outside—not so much from the inside" (Conversation, July 24, 1995). Carol's words convey the sense of a changed landscape with an "outside agenda"—an agenda associated with Glen's story of school, as sanctioned by the institutional narrative of the school district. The downside of this outside agenda can be seen in the teachers' lack of knowing of one another's practice.

In theory, for teacher teams to meet on the out-of-classroom place, is seen, by Glen, as being symbolic of "growing with the times" (Conversation, May 24, 1995). And yet when such relationships are mandated, theory does not translate easily into practice since "trust and rapport are the foundation for building collegiality in a school" (Lieberman, Saxl & Miles, 1988, p. 154). The call for teachers to grow with the times causes me to wonder what it means to be a teacher on the whole landscape. It is not enough for Tom and Liz to be in relationship in their in-classroom place as team teaching partners. It is not enough for Carol to work successfully in her closed classroom setting. It is not enough for Jane to simply take

on an in-classroom role, as Tom's relieving teacher. In Glen's story of school, teachers must demonstrate their professionalism in their classrooms and outside of their classrooms. Glen's expectations are clear but in the absence of relationship Tom, Liz, Carol, and Jane struggle within the boundaries of Glen's story of school. In their struggle to respond to Glen's expectations, it can be seen that "professionalism is a form of liberty that is not simply conferred" (Devaney & Sykes, 1988, p. 4). As well, Cooper (1988) notes, "If teachers are told what to be professional about, how, when, where and with whom to collaborate, and what blueprint for professional conduct to follow, then the culture that evolves will be foreign to the setting" (p. 47). The teachers' narratives attest to the changed role for each of them on the out-of-classroom place. As Carol says, "It was simply four of us coming together on Wednesdays and making the best out of that" (Conversation, November 5, 1995). Such was the extent of their professionalism.

What do I learn as I listen to these teachers? I learn about professional respect—respect among colleagues. It is, I believe, related to Glen's notion of "automatic trust" and yet it is more. It's not a blind trust in the absence of knowing but rather a trust honouring diversity. Carol speaks of her knowing of Liz in the following way, "Liz feels confident in her ability as a teacher and rightly so...she's got a positive reputation from ECS. Last year a lot of parents told me she's a great ECS teacher, and she is" (Conversation, November 5, 1995). Carol's knowing of Liz comes to her vicariously as Liz is storied on the landscape by parents. Such

stories give Carol an enhanced sense of Liz as a professional, and yet Carol has limited first hand knowing of her. At the end of the school year Carol comments, "I couldn't tell you to this day what Tom and Liz did. They wouldn't know what I did" (Conversation, July 24, 1995). For Carol, professional respect of colleagues can exist in the absence of first hand encounters with them.

All four teachers display this form of disconnected professional respect in their individual accounts of their team meetings. They try to be polite, but in the absence of trust the out-of-classroom place becomes filled with uncertainty—uncertainty causing both Liz and Carol to be "close-mouthed at times" (Conversation, November 23, 1995). For Tom, the Grade 1 team meetings were "unpredictable and just difficult" (Conversation, November 22, 1995), a view also shared by Jane. Similarly for Jon, Mike, Terri, and Linda, their meetings were also difficult. For all of these teachers, an unpredictable landscape can be experienced as an unsafe landscape. Small wonder that cover stories become a response to changing expectations for increased teacher professionalism on the landscape.

Team meetings create the illusion of a team of teachers fulfilling their professional duties on the out-of-classroom place and outside observers on the landscape see the cover stories being lived out. The teachers' cover stories give the appearance of connection and professionalism. This illusion of relationship, based on professional respect, falls short of the level of trust that the teachers in this study know is the fundamental underpinning for collaboration.

To "feel comfortable" is an innocuous enough teacher phrase. It echoes and re-echoes in stories told about teaming relationships on the Riverview landscape. It captures the tacit knowing (Polanyi, 1958) of those teachers who understand the nature of collaborative relationships—teachers like Tom and Liz. From the outset the mutually negotiated team teaching relationship of Tom and Liz holds promise. Simply stated Liz recalls, "We just had a sense—we didn't know to what degree but I knew that I would be very happy to work with Tom" (Conversation, May 3, 1995). Liz's description of this "sense" represents her tacit knowing—knowing that serves her well in her teaching story with Tom. Liz's teacher knowledge serves as a catalyst for the success of her team teaching relationship with Tom.

Liz and Tom cannot name what they knew would make their team teaching relationship work on the in-classroom place. But as colleagues, on the Riverview staff for a period of four years prior to team teaching together, they developed a sense of connection over time. Similarly Tom and Liz had an embodied sense of the potential for difficulties to be encountered, on the out-of-classroom place, in the Grade 1 team meetings. Tom's tacit knowing regarding the relationships of the Grade 1 team foreshadows the story lived out when all four teachers met to fulfil the expectations of their new principal. Tom recalls, "I knew right from the start it would be difficult to work this group together" (Conversation, November 22, 1995). And Carol also knew, early in the school year, that "there wasn't the same compatibility that [she] could contribute to or fill out" (Conversation, July 24, 1995).

Jane, too, sensed an uneasiness in the first team meeting and from that point on a "reluctance to meet" (Conversation, November 12, 1995). This kind of teacher knowledge, silenced in the process of living out mandated relationships, serves as testimony of the potential for teachers' dilemmas to unfold and cover stories to be lived out on the out-of-classroom place.

It was Carol who broke the silence and interrupted the cover stories. Within the ethical boundaries of our collaborative work she could risk telling her secret story of the Grade 1 team meetings because she saw a sense of purpose in telling it for the benefit of other teachers. Carol did not tell her story for personal gain and, in this regard, her decision to reveal her story can be seen as congruent with her narrative. Like her father she is willing to "wave the flag for a cause"—the cause of research for education. Carol knew that research documenting the cover stories being lived out on the Riverview landscape would be of no benefit to teachers. In this way she interrupted the cover stories being lived out by the Grade 1 team. In telling her story Carol made it possible for her colleagues to tell their stories too. Carol's willingness to risk telling her story made it safe for all four teachers to talk openly, to me, about the team meetings.

Thinking about the way in which Carol interrupted the cover stories, being lived out in the 1994-95 school year, I realize my telling of my secret story of mandated team teaching (p. 4) also interrupted the cover stories that had held on the landscape for a period of twelve years. I note the ease of story telling when one

member of a team risks telling her secret story and names her experience. To tell a teaching story dating back twelve years is one thing, but to story one's experience of the current landscape can be seen as being far more risky. I am left wondering about what makes it safe for Tom, Liz, Carol, and Jane to tell their stories? Do they feel safe because they are engaged in a collaborative research project sanctioned by a university? Do they feel safe because of the level of trust established in relationship with me as a researcher? Is there safety in their anonymity? And what about each teacher's narrative? Is it more difficult for teachers who desire a harmony plot line to divulge their secret stories? And what of high stakes relationships within educational hierarchies? Are cover stories more likely to be maintained in such instances?

Each teacher's position on the landscape and his/her narrative knowing can be seen to have a bearing on whether or not it might be safe to reveal individual cover stories. And for teachers like Carol, who choose to interrupt a cover story, there is the sense of a moral push to her action. She sees her contribution to research as making a difference—this seems to guide her. Carol's actions, and my knowledge of her life story, cause me to think of Carr's (1986) words:

> What is at stake on the plane of "life" is my own coherence as a self, the unity and integrity of my personal identity.... The narrative coherence of a life story is a struggle nonetheless, and a responsibility which no one else can finally lift entirely from the shoulders of the one who lives that life. (p. 96)

As I think of the Riverview teachers' stories, concerning mandated relationships, I recognize the inherent dangers for teachers in expressing their knowledge on the out-of-classroom place—knowledge in conflict with the story of school voiced by their principal and sanctioned by the hierarchy of the school district. And yet their teacher knowledge needs to find expression and can be seen to find expression within our collaborative research relationship.

It is unlikely that Tom, Liz, Carol, and Jane would have shared their secret stories outside our research relationship. I believe our research relationship creates safe places for the telling of their teacher stories. Their teacher thinking, and their narrative teacher knowledge are shared in an environment nurturing relational trust. Over time, their roles in both the in-classroom place and the out-of-classroom place are more easily understood by them, and by me, as they learn to live on the whole landscape.

Relational trust, as it is understood by Liz, has the potential for allowing stories of collaboration to be lived out on both the in-classroom place as well as on the out-of-classroom place. But in the case of the Grade 1 team the level of relational trust is insufficient for a story of collaboration to be lived out as anything more than a cover story in the 1994-95 school year. Glen comes to an understanding of relational trust among teachers in conversation with Liz in her in-classroom place. He reveals a different knowing as he explains, "As you get to know people, you trust them on different levels [and] as a staff stays together that trust builds up"

(Conversation, June 20, 1995). But knowledge over time among colleagues does not necessarily translate to increased levels of trust. It is not that simple. There will always be a range of possible relationships "from all out conflict at one extreme to total undifferentiated union at the other" (Carr, 1986 p. 137). There can be no guarantee that had Tom, Liz, Carol, and Jane remained together for another year that trust would increase. However, in conversation with Liz, Glen taps a level of knowing that resonates with the knowing each teacher has shared with me in our discussions concerning the level of trust required for collaborative endeavour. In the safety of relationship with Liz, in her in-classroom place, Glen briefly articulates his personal practical knowledge concerning trust. However, I am left wondering if his sense of himself as a "system person" quiets his inner knowing in favour of supporting the system story of shared decision-making and collaboration.

Glen's words cause me to think of Tom and his new found sense of the power of the system story and his understanding of being a "team player" at the system level. Tom's words haunt me, "They want us to be faithful to the system. If the system says we're going to do something then you do it...and Glen's very much a system player because of his years of experience" (Conversation, July 7, 1995). Glen, as a seasoned administrator, knows the system story and I have observed his pride in being a "system person" (Field Notes, June 3, 1994). Tom, as a junior administrator, knows, "If you're going to go anywhere you've got to believe in the system and support them no matter what" (Conversation, July 7, 1995). At almost

every turn, there are dilemmas of knowing for Tom as he crosses back and forth between his in-classroom place and the out-of-classroom places on the landscape.

For Tom to live out cover stories in such a complex professional world can be seen as a necessary response to the ongoing dilemmas of the landscape. And in living out his cover stories, Tom gains a reputation among his colleagues for his tact and diplomacy. Much is expected of Tom by teacher colleagues on the landscape, by the school's administrative team and by system officials grooming teachers like Tom for future leadership positions.

To act with tact and diplomacy might signify the living out of a cover story. Similarly to live out a cover story, on the out-of-classroom place, might also involve elements of tact and diplomacy—possibly displayed by all parties in a particular situation. Such was the case in the team teaching stories of Jon, Mike, Terri, and Linda and also in the team planning stories of Tom, Liz, Carol, and Jane. Whether the stories are from the 1982-83 school year, or some twelve years later, multiple cover stories abound. My research penetrates only some of those cover stories. It would be naive to think otherwise. I am reminded of this by Tom when he explains:

> I think what I'm figuring out with this research is that there are many stories. The school is full of stories and what you're capturing is still only going to be part of it. It'll be part of what Liz, Carol, Jane, and I have done together this year. It'll be reduced to 250 sheets of paper and some ink and it still won't be the whole story.
>
> (Conversation, July 7, 1995)

I believe Tom's words have much to say to me as a researcher and much to say about the research process itself.

Relational Trust and the Research Process

In thinking about my narrative inquiry, the words of Barone and Eisner (1995) resonate with my sense of purpose:

> Artistically grounded research furthers understanding and that enables a reader to notice what had not been seen before, to understand what had not been understood, to secure a firmer grasp and deeper appreciation of complex situations contributes to the end to which educational research in general is committed. (p. 31)

My relationship to the inquiry at hand is that of a researcher drawn to narrative as a form of artistically based research that "aims for verisimilitude" (Bruner, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1988). But since narrative is both "phenomenon and method" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994a, p. 416), I find myself thinking about the way in which trusting relationships are vital to what is achieved in the research process. Relational trust acts as a catalyst for Liz and Tom's story of collaboration and, in similar fashion, the level of relational trust existing between my research participants and myself (Louden, 1991; Noddings, 1991), is critical to unpacking the contextual complexity of a changing landscape.

Tom speaks of our narrative inquiry in the following way, "I like this whole approach to research. This teacher research concept where...as it said in that quote 'problems aren't problems, they're just questions to be pondered' [Bissex and

Bullock, 198, p. 4]" (Conversation, July 7, 1995). And Liz writes a message to me as she returns sections of my written text with her response:

> I have always had a desire for community. As the youngest in a very active family I often had to fit into the flow. As I grew and developed ideas and opinions of my own I still wanted to be part of the crowd and thus found groups that would accept me. Drama groups, political groups, students' union, camp and school staffs. I guess I'm a people person! I really enjoy our talks together and hope we will continue. I have learned a great deal about teaching relationships, teaming and friendships. I am so pleased you chose us to be in your study!
>
> Love always,
> Liz
>
> (Letter, August 24, 1995)

And close to a year later our research conversations continue. Conversation is viewed as important by Carol when she acknowledges, "Talking to you actually helps me with my own growth because when I speak out loud, I'm actually giving this topic thought. I can see where I'd like to move more to the collaborative...and I can improve there..." (Conversation, June 12, 1995). While Carol sees the possibility to reshape her teacher story, Jane, from her position as a retired teacher, sees the value in teachers telling their stories. She notes, "It's the kind of thing that needs to happen in order for us to move on as an educational community.... There needs to be time for teacher talk—for talk about what goes on and how we handle it and how we're feeling about things and why we need collegiality" (Conversation, November 12, 1995). Such comments offered by the Grade 1 teachers echo Greene's (1994) words:

> What matters is a social world accepting of tension and conflict. What matters is an affirmation of energy and the passion of reflection in a renewed hope of common action, of face-to-face encounters among friends and strangers, striving for meaning, striving to understand. What matters is a quest for new ways of living together, of generating more and more incisive and inclusive dialogues. (p. 459)

I believe my research participants felt comfortable in our research endeavour. I know our relationships will continue even as this study draws to its conclusion. It therefore seems fitting to include storied accounts, from Tom, Liz, Carol, and Jane telling how they experienced the landscape as insiders in a research relationship operating at a level of trust.

Tom

> This new research work has brought you and me together again. It's nice when you're there simply to spend time with me—to look at what I'm doing—to be totally interested in what I have to say. Teachers don't get that experience very often.... In my career I've spent a lot of time working alone and wondering what I was doing. When you listen to what I have to say, it's wonderful.... It's nice to feel important or special.... Working together—talking a lot—we know each other better....
>
> But some of what happened on this landscape is not because you and I know each other—some of it is that we're both really interested in the same topics. If I'd met you for the first time [as you began your doctorate] it still would have been okay. I'm convinced of that, based on who we are. Because you are outside of things, I can talk to you and when this project is over I'll still call you. I trust you as a friend.
>
> When I talk things over in our research conversations, it helps me to figure them out. I do see the landscape differently. You've helped me to understand my issues as a teacher-administrator. You've helped me to have more confidence that I am doing okay. You've helped me view what my life is like in the school, to see what it's like to be part

of administration and to see again what it's like to be a teacher. One of the things I've learned with my present administration is that the administration does have a lot of say, a lot of power and a lot of influence.

Because of our work I've developed a better understanding of team teaching and I think that as a school leader I, hopefully, will be able to have a realistic view of what team teaching means. I've experienced good team teaching with Liz—the best it could be. I see it with other teachers too. I can see a classroom and say, "Ah yes, that's it". Team teaching isn't just a thing that you do—there's a range of how people work together and there are also teachers who are better off working by themselves. They're still good teachers, doing good work. Yet teaming, teaming, teaming—that's the big thing we're hearing.

You asked if the terminology of the landscape made me think differently about things. Because I'm a writer I think in metaphors...and I see things happening on the landscape that I don't think I knew before. Naming them makes a difference.... Why do we live cover stories? Why can't we be honest with each other? That's what I've had to learn to deal with as a vice principal. I walk around thinking to myself, how much can I be myself and how much do I have to live some sort of cover story on the out-of-classroom place? I feel a little dishonest but that's how I survive.

(Conversation, May 2, 1996)

Liz

I really enjoyed our research. A lot of the time you just think, oh it's just conversation, it's just professional information being passed on and we're enjoying ourselves. But all of a sudden you realize...all of this is very important.

When I look at my classroom as part of the Riverview landscape my view has certainly changed. I now see the in-classroom place as *ours* rather than *mine* and that was a big change for me.... Before team teaching with Tom, I would look at *my* kids and me as the teacher...and now the whole group is *ours*. I really enjoy working with Tom. Two teachers working together provide a nice mix for the

kids...and we have very equal roles.... I think that's healthy for the kids to see.

It's true that Tom and I are alike in some ways. It's like any kind of friendship...you have the same values and the same philosophy most of the time. There is something that binds you and so teaming grows. At first you spend all of your time just attempting to mesh your program and figuring out how to meet the needs of the children. That's a challenge you meet together. You're not trying to challenge one another. When you trust one another enough to say, "Hey, we're not good enough at this yet," then it's not a slap in either person's face, it's simply saying, "How can we do this better?". The challenge is not individual in nature but rather it becomes a team challenge to push practice forward.

You asked about the trust between you and me as researcher and participant. I think it developed really nicely.... As the months progressed I looked forward to your visits and I wanted to sit down and talk with you.... It's nice to be able to have the time to talk about issues and to be honest and to see where other people are coming from. It's not hard for me to tell difficult stories. When it comes right down to the truth and me having to say something that's an honest response then, no, it's not hard. Telling my story doesn't make me feel unsafe on the landscape. As a matter of fact, in this school year [1995-96], a lot of what we said last year is still being said by Tom, Carol and me. We're able to talk together now about events on the landscape. Carol and I have developed a friendship that has arisen from the ashes of last year. I think Carol trusts me...we're so much more communicative than we've ever been.

I've come to see that, as teachers, we comply on the very public side of things—we appease, put it that way, and we do what we want on the in-classroom place. We shape our own landscape. But on the out-of-classroom place, we say "yes" to what administration says. I know how to play the game so it's okay. I know where to push and how much. I'm accepted.... I don't want to be on the wrong side.

I realize how much our research has affected me and how interesting it is for me personally. It's helped develop my interest and my energies in a new way.

(Conversation, June 25, 1996)

Carol

I enjoyed being part of the study. At first I was curious about what you were doing with Tom and Liz.... I wondered what you were talking about. Sometimes I thought, what drudgery after a long day of teaching—there they are sitting down rehashing things—that can't be easy....but because of the study I got to know you and I found a safe place to talk. I've never had that, mainly because if you're alone in a situation you don't share anything with anybody. You keep it to yourself.... You bear more of an emotional load than anybody else by travelling alone.

I didn't find it difficult to share a sense of trust with you.... I started instantly liking you. When you were on the Riverview staff I didn't get to see what makes you tick. I only saw you at staff meetings and you didn't reveal much of yourself in those situations. But when you took the risk to say certain things to me, then I knew I could trust you. Some people would describe trust as sharing stories...we certainly did that.... I felt you were revealing some real solid, down to earth—homespun honesty and I really enjoyed that. For me, trusting someone is like trusting them with your life. You let that other person see who you are. You let them walk into your innermost space.

At the Grade 1 team meetings I found your presence refreshing because, for the first time, somebody listened to me (laughter)...somebody was paying attention.... I felt elevated. I felt important...I liked that. I smiled to myself lots of times when you were there at our meetings.... I knew my thoughts counted. I knew I was okay.

Working with you I've learned about stories, the in-classroom place, the out-of-classroom place—I've learned these terms from you.... If this study hadn't happened, my relationship with the Grade 1 team would still be uneasy. The team would be either worse or non-existent. I don't think it would be better because there was no place to air our thoughts and feelings.... The research gave us a forum.... Now there's nothing to hide. Why pretend? Who is it serving? I can look into Liz's face now in a more honest way. When I talk to her now I really feel I'm actually talking to her. I have good feelings towards Liz and Tom. We're all looking at each other for the first time. We negotiate well and compromise...we're happy. We don't need to prove anything to each other. I think Glen senses something

and wonders about the vibes among us.... There's camaraderie now. It's really comfortable.

Because of this study I've come to realize when you're out there by yourself, appearing like a loner, then nobody understands you.... With Tom and Liz I was a loner—I did my own thing...and I was vulnerable. I viewed Tom and Liz from the outside and saw what it was like to have a close team and, in some respects, I wanted that.... This year [1995-1996] my teaming has gone very well and I've enjoyed it a lot. It's nice to go into the staff room and have my team partner make a place for me. There's a secure feeling because now people look at me differently—not that I'm any different. I'm still Carol, the same person, but now all of a sudden I seem to be more like them. What is it that's changed my image? I feel more included...and people are more receptive.

You asked me if I see the landscape any differently now. I do.... When I read Tom's story it made me reflect and realize how my actions impacted somebody else. It's not just me that's vulnerable. I didn't realize that before.... That enlightened me...and I guess my whole attitude towards teaming has changed quite a bit....

You asked me if I feel research is useful. Of course (laughter)...but it depends who reads this work and if there's a follow up because there's a comment that Glen makes where he talks about students in university not being taught about teaming. Here's some valid research on teaming in the real world of teaching. If they're going to instruct students on how to move into a team, then our stories can alert them to things to look out for, or pitfalls.

(Conversation, May 9, 1996)

Jane

It's been interesting to look at the Riverview landscape—to see how the school has changed—to think about why it's changed and be invited to have some say about that—to be able to read about it and offer response.... Our collective knowledge of the school is important.... I remember reading your research proposal and coming across the term "cover story". We talked about this term and it was so illuminating. I said, "Yes! That's exactly right (laughter). This is the look of things and the way we let stories be told." I like the

terminology we're using. The landscape language is clear. It's good. It isn't cluttered up.

I've enjoyed being a participant because it's really interesting to get inside the heads of other teachers and find out how they feel about certain situations, like the team meetings. Not that I didn't guess that's the way they were feeling, but when they opened up and I read their stories and acknowledged them—I saw things. I fitted Tom, Liz and Carol into the backgrounds they've come from and I see how, as teachers, we constantly mirror back our experiences—childhood experiences and others, into our present-day selves and into our teaching.

I think any time teachers talk as much as we've talked, trust deepens and when I put out my thoughts, I felt I wouldn't be betrayed. Trust deepens when you talk and are not compromised, misunderstood or misrepresented. I'm an open person...my tendency is not to have a lot of secrets—and not to feel I need to protect anybody.... It opens conversations when people see me as just a straightforward, ordinary person—with faults, fears and worries of my own. The confidence I have in myself allows me to do this—the feeling that I'm not hiding anything particularly bad or unusual.

There's a different level of trust now between you and me and perhaps between Tom, Liz and Carol. New conversations arise through our work, through reading these chapters. But I wouldn't go back to Tom and say, "I never thought you thought this or you had this kind of home life". That would be like betraying a certain level of trust that we have. He didn't tell *me* about his life; he told *you*. I read it because he said I could. He didn't say I could then jump back and use it in some way. It doesn't necessarily make us closer or more trusting of each other, but it illuminates our positions as we relate to each other through you. Each of us has taken a risk...and I think Carol, in particular, is probably much happier because she's been a part of this. It's allowed a whole lot of things to be acknowledged and recognized as real. She's been validated as a person....and it validates me, as a teacher, to be able to say, "I was part of the Riverview landscape and I'm a part of this study and it's important work". It's the essence of a big part of my life.

(Conversation, May 11, 1996)

What do I say as researcher in response to my co-researchers? Their words speak to me and touch me deeply. In as much as they feel validated as teachers, their honest reflections validate my work in creating this research text. They see the landscape differently. They are changed through participating and so am I. It is not easy to articulate this change but I am aware of a new sense of knowing in stepping back onto the landscape as a classroom teacher.

I returned to teaching in January 1996. I accepted a Grade 1/2 position in a small open area school with a history of team teaching and a commitment to the concept of multi-age grouping of children. I continue to find team teaching compelling—a view also shared by my new team partner. Together we are prepared to meet the challenges confronting us as we work with young children and our colleagues.

My research work allows me to feel hopeful about my position on the landscape. There is a sense of personal calmness in knowing what I now know. I hope my narrative representation of my participants' lived experiences does justice to their knowing and that their knowing can be accepted as having epistemic merit within the academy (Barone, 1992; Casey, 1995). I offer my final reflections (Schön, 1991) in the form of a poem:

Stories and the Promise of Change

I step with care
onto a complex landscape
of shifting values...
understanding the power
of the sacred story
to hold within its vortex
not only a story of school
but a multiplicity of school stories
and teachers' stories too...
some silenced on the landscape
trapping teachers' knowledge
in a vacuum
of cover stories

penetrating cover stories
involves risk—
a circling back
against swirling narratives
allowing secret stories
to be told
within relationships of trust...
revealing
the story of school
the story of the school system
the story of Canadian society itself
even things global

in circling back
through the layers of the hierarchy
there is a miraculous resurfacing—
a hopeful upward spiral
with grass-roots thinkers
providing a new entry point
for teachers' knowledge...
knowledge situated
within a narrative context
attentive
to the professional knowledge landscape
and promising change

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