Studying Teachers' Knowledge of Classrooms: Collaborative Research, Ethics, and the Negotiation of Narrative

D. JEAN CLANDININ
University of Calgary

F. MICHAEL CONNELLY
O.I.S.E.

We are engaged in a research project aimed at conceptualizing teachers' knowledge of classrooms. Our practical intention is to foster a spirit of confidence on the part of teachers in the personal ways they know their classrooms. We hope, thereby, to counteract in some small way those administrative, policy, and research traditions which deny a central voice for teachers in curriculum and instruction. Our intention is for the work to enhance teachers' sense of authority amidst a predominantly prescriptive administrative, policy and research environment.

We approach this matter from the point of view of knowledge. Our concern is not primarily with skills, attitudes, beliefs, content nor achievement, although these have their place. We want to understand the ways in which teachers know their classrooms and we want to give an account of their knowledge as embedded within the culture and traditions of schooling. We view the work as developing an intersubjective theory of teachers' knowledge. The sources of evidence for understanding knowledge, and the places knowledge may be said to reside, exist not only in the mind but in the narratives of personal experience, which are studied biographically and in the details and forms of classroom practice. With Dewey (1910, 1938), we see thinking not so much as an act of mind but as temporal, narrative expressions located in mind, in storied reconstructions of experience, and in practice.

Crucial to the ideas under development is the notion that theory and practice are reflections of one another. In what is perhaps too rough a distinction, the idea of theory and practice in the work is "dialectical" rather than "applied," as it is in administrative, policy and research versions which deny a central role to the

teacher. This view of theory and practice is expressed in our research method which adopts a collaborative stance between practitioner and researcher.

In this paper, we present an account of the ways we conduct research collaboratively with teachers in their classrooms. Our research method is made explicit through the analysis of a problematic working relationship between one researcher and one teacher participant. Through the analysis we were able to conceptualize our method in personal practical knowledge terms. Thus, the paper serves two interrelated purposes, to explicate our working method and to conceptualize the method in the substantive knowledge terms of the work.

We began working with one school, Bay Street* in the Fall of 1980. Since that time we have passed through the phases of negotiation of entry, participation and negotiation of exit. From the beginning we concerned ourselves with the concept of negotiation, with the ethics of participation, and with the concept of practitioner/academic collaborative research. These three notions guided the character of our daily working relationships. We formulated ethical principles and working procedures to ensure that the concerns of negotiation, ethics and collaborative research would be met. The process came to a first interim conclusion with the publication of a four volume report at the end of a three year funding period (Connelly & Clandinin, 1984). (Subsequent annual reports were made and are available upon request.) With the ebb and flow of intensive work followed by interpretive writing and the sharing of resulting documents that characterized our relations with the school, we assumed, with a renewed three year funding contract, that we would re-enter the school in January 1985 for another intensive collaborative period. The membership of the research team had changed over the time of the work as graduate students completed their degrees and moved on. New research assistants were hired to take on more in-depth work as Clandinin had accepted an appointment at a university some distance from the school research site. Clandinin had, however, worked in the school on the new study for two and a half months in the Spring of 1984 (Clandinin, 1985, 1986) and there was no hint that our continuation would be questioned. We wrote a letter to the school board's Director of Research in which we said "Phil (the school's principal) sees no problem with our continuing the study." Within two weeks it became evident we had made a wrong assumption.

This unexpected questioning of our presence in the school described above and an earlier problematic "ethical incident," provoked reflection on our part. We wondered why we had been so wrong in our assumption that our work would continue uninterrupted, particularly since our interpersonal relationships with school personnel were remarkably congenial. We were challenged to understand negotiation, ethics, and collaborative researcher roles as notions not held apart by theory and principle but unified by the personal knowledge of participants.

In this paper, we present our ideas narratively and dialectically. We show how our ideas grew through the research process and how the events noted added

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* To ensure the privacy of portrayants, pseudonyms are used throughout the paper.

depth to our understanding of what it means to work collaboratively with schools. We begin with an account of a set of seven working principles outlined in the original research proposal (Connelly & Clandinin, 1980).

Principles for Classroom Research

Negotiation of Entry and Exit. In sharp contrast with the more traditional view of how researchers should gain access to schools (Carter, 1979; Bush, 1978), Hunt describes a collaborative process in which researchers negotiate working relations with teachers. MacDonald (1977) discusses negotiation of entry issues under three headings: the context of the study, the study process and outcomes of the study. We extended this notion to include the negotiation of exit, a requirement reflecting the researcher's need to follow a phase of intensive school participation with a phase of conceptualization and writing. An abrupt departure from the school would violate collaborative relations. Therefore, according to this principle, entry to and exit from the system must be fully negotiated processes in which all parties participate and benefit. Establishing trust and co-worker relationships with teachers and other parties in this study was a delicate, time-consuming process governed by negotiations which extended throughout the study.

Reconstructing Meaning vs the Judgment of Practice. This principle asserts that the research intention is to reconstruct the meaning in acts of schooling from the point of view of the actor rather than to judge the act from an external point of view. Frequently in educational research, whether by implication or deliberately as in certain "critical theory" studies, school acts are judged against standards set by a theory, policy or program or against the values of a normative stance toward schooling. While we recognize that many classroom events encountered in the course of research run counter to our own theories and preferences for teaching and learning, we deliberately avoid acting upon these preferences and, instead, ask "What is the meaning of the event for the actor?" Some critics of our work have labelled this a "Hollywood" approach since we have no specific reforms in mind as we work in classrooms and since we accept as meaningful actions some might find distasteful. This does not imply that we do not hold our own theories and preferences nor that our practices are not expressions of our personal practical knowledge. We mean, rather, that we do not judge other practitioners' work nor do we attempt to implement particular curricular reforms.

Participant as Knower. One of the guiding principles of our research is the simple notion that the research subject is a person. Recent work in psychology has directed increasing attention to the need to operate in terms of a more adequate and realistic image of the human subject (Combs et al., 1974; Giorgi, 1970; Maslow, 1969; May, 1969), and this influence is also felt in educational contexts (Hunt, 1976; Hunt & de Charms, 1976; Sarason, 1971). Work done in the social sciences (e.g., Schutz & Luckman, 1973; Schutz, 1966; Garfinkel, 1967; Cicourel, 1964) has focussed quite directly on the interaction of researcher and subject in a

shared process of practical reasoning. This perspective emphasizes the fact that the participating practitioner has feelings, values, needs and purposes which condition his/her participation in the research, and which can enrich and validate the study which elicits them as much as it can sabotage the study which ignores or suppresses them. Sarason (1971) for example, speaks of the need to understand the persons being studied from the perspective of their own situation rather than judgmentally from afar. In his own work, this need led to "choosing to experience the school culture via the helping relationship" (p. 2). Sarason thus reminds us that every research stance constitutes the taking up of a particular perspective, from which some things, and not others, can be seen. The concern for "bias" and "objectivity" in studies which involve a high degree of personal involvement (e.g., participant observation and the helping relationship described by Sarason) is therefore misplaced. Rather, it must be remembered that because such studies make available a different range of data than do other procedures, they therefore call for particular types of controls and styles of interpretation which take into account the context in which the data are collected. This context is both existential and personally historical in the study of personal practical knowledge.

Participants as Collaborative Researchers. In order to construct a view of practical knowledge that is personal and from the point of view of the teacher, we operate from the principle that co-operating teachers and others within the school system must function as collaborative researchers in the study (Keen, 1975). This is not to suggest that the different roles and lives of the teachers and researchers will be exchanged. It does mean, however, that both parties will be meaningfully involved in the same problem and that we, as researchers, should work with teachers to help them cope with their classrooms and with board policies affecting school life and, wherever possible, facilitate the improvement of their teaching by offering informative comment when called upon to do so. Likewise, teachers must see our need to conceptualize and understand the problem of practical knowledge and be willing to read and evaluate our written comments.

Openness of Purpose. We disclosed our purposes to the Bay Street teachers from the beginning. There were no attempts to mask intentions nor to hide interpretations. There were no symbolic one-way observation mirrors, symbolic placebos nor deliberately misleading statements in the research. We have found that one of the first consequences of this openness is that preliminary discussions with participants center on their purposes as much as ours. We also find that this interest continues throughout the work. This "discovering" of the researchers' purposes ultimately shifts toward modifying and sharing research purposes.

Openness of Judgment and Interpretation. This criterion specifies that researchers will not be dispassionate, objective observers of the situation but will, as a consequence of participating in the situation, care for it. Values come into play and more desirable courses of action are suggested and discussed with participants

as appropriate. This criterion further implies that any work published as a result of the study be discussed with teachers and other appropriate participants. Because we are aware that other readers of this work often do not share the intention of our second principle (reconstruction of meaning rather than the judgement of practice), we caution participants that readers may judge the record of participants' action in ways other than those we present.

Multiple Interpretations of Text. Transcript texts and interpretations of other practical events are multi-faceted depending on the perspectives, intentions and preliminary conceptions of the interpreters. It is necessary, therefore, in any interpretive process to demonstrate, through presenting the appropriate assumptions and interpretive logic, the particular course of the interpretations made. Demonstrating the link between the interpretations and the phenomena is essential. Otherwise work of this order may degenerate into mere relativism, i.e., "anyone's interpretation is as good as anyone else's." Interpretations should be grounded in data made in the context of assumptions and preliminary conceptions and should be offered with an argumentative, deliberative logic. The criteria of *plausibility* and *persuasiveness* are important in judging the adequacy of an account.

Ethical Quality of the Co-Participant Relationship. The principles described above form the ethical stance of the research. Our purpose in this section is to highlight the quality of the collaborative researcher relationship. Because the study of personal practical knowledge requires intensive close working relations with practitioners, fundamental ethical issues come close to the surface throughout the research, from negotiation to entry to the preparation of results. Ethical issues become apparent as an expression of the method. In anthropology, Barnes (1963), for example, raises ethical issues surrounding negotiation of entry and the publication of results that are relevant to educational researchers.

Anyone reviewing journal submissions or conference papers on classrooms will notice that teachers have often been participants in studies using qualitative methods without having the research purposes fully explained. In such studies, where the teacher, her classroom or school is shown to fail in some respect, it is unlikely the researcher would have gained access in the first place had the research purposes been explained, nor is it likely the teacher had a voice in writing the research paper. While we are sympathetic with the reform intentions of these papers, they are, according to our principles, founded upon an unacceptable ethical relationship.

An Ethical Incident

These principles and procedures served the project reasonably well. We had however, perhaps for our own convenience, put a rather sticky ethical incident out of mind. The difficulties surrounding the second round of negotiations over entry to the school in 1984 reminded us of the incident and we turned our attention to it. The incident occurred in October 1981 when we introduced

another project assistant, Charles, to work with Ellen, another teacher at Bay Street School. Ellen had, in fact, asked if she could become involved with the study. She felt the classroom assistance given by Clandinin to another teacher, Stephanie and the importance Stephanie place on her ensuing reflections, were of a sort she would value. Ellen, in a reflective comment prompted by a reading of a first draft of this paper, wrote "I wanted to participate, hoping to be challenged and questioned about my practices — perhaps gain new insights; understandings which would effect my practice. I thought it would be an opportunity to engage in meaningful discourse, I wanted another adult in the classroom with whom I could share this experience." (Notes to file, May 14, 1985). In effect, then, the original 1980 negotiations encompassed negotiations for other participants.

Negotiation of Entry: We expected the procedure for introducing Charles to the school would follow the steps for Bay Street School entry in 1980: — an overture to Phil, the principal; a presentation to the school's decision-making body, the Cabinet; meetings with small groups of staff, and final arrangements with Ellen all conducted in the context of discussions on Charles's purposes, our project interest in having him participate, and repeated reference to, and discussion of, our principles for working in the schools. Instead the process was much simpler. From the beginning of our discussions with Phil over the entry of Charles into the school, we took for granted Charles's eventual participation. We presented his interests and ours as similar to that which had governed Clandinin's in her work with Stephanie (Clandinin, 1986), namely, that Charles, while working in the school to collect data for the project, would also obtain material useful for a doctoral dissertation. From the point of view of the project, his work was described as adding a second intensive classroom study parallel to Clandinin's with Stephanie. On the day of Charles's introduction at the Cabinet meeting, Clandinin called Phil to alert him to the impending introduction explaining that this would be a good way for him to get an overview of the school. Even though Phil was hazy on the plan, he readily agreed and saw Charles as another "volunteer." Three other cabinet members had come to support the ideas based on discussions with us.

Charles was introduced at the meeting as a student working on the project who would begin with Connelly, a co-participant with Nancy, the school librarian. No questions were asked and no discussion followed. Over the next few days Nancy took an active role in discussion eventually leading to our intention to have Charles begin with Ellen rather than in the library. On the morning of our formal meeting with Phil on the placement, Nancy arranged for Charles to meet Ellen in the library prior to the formal meeting.

At the meeting Phil asked Charles "to describe what it was that he wanted to get from the school" and "how he wanted to work in the school". Following Charles' response Phil gave his view:

> Phil pointed out he saw the teachers as part of a group connected to division meetings which are designed to encourage sharing among the teachers. He said he saw Charles as functioning

> as part of the team. [By "team" Phil was referring to the primary division teachers.] (F.N., October 21, 1981).

When it became clear to him that ground work had been laid for participation with Ellen, he then referred to Charles' work with Ellen and one other Grade 3 teacher he had in mind as a "network between two areas." In an effort to ensure continuity as he saw it, Phil referred to Clandinin's work with Stephanie as a "model that Charles should follow." Following the meeting, we took Charles to Ellen's classroom and left him to "stay in the room and pitch in and help Ellen" (F.N., October 21, 1981). Ellen and Charles mutually agreed upon this beginning.

Participation and Exit: From the point of view of the project, Charles' work assumed an independent and special character. Much of this, of course, was governed by Charles' research interests which tended to focus more on students and parental community than upon teachers and classrooms and also upon a special autobiographical interest of his in using himself, in part, as the subject of his studies. The most dramatic departure from established project routine was in the collection of data in that Charles did not prepare fieldnote records nor were there ongoing discussions of his work with project staff. Accordingly, our record of events for the period of participation and exit is based entirely upon the detailed reconstruction of the character and causes of the breakdown in Charles' and Ellen's collaborative research role, drafted in final form on February 13, 1982, and upon several other interpretive and evaluative remarks by each that found their way into our own fieldnotes for that period.

Events moved swiftly and on February 1, 1982, difficulty in their working relationship surfaced:

> Charles came to visit on Monday morning in our "storeroom office" (a project space in the school basement allotted to us by the principal) . . . The purpose of his visit was to let us know that he had a problem with Ellen. He described her as being upset. (F.N., Feb. 1, 1982).

The source of this problem was an interpretive account Charles had written on his work with Ellen which had been presented and distributed in a doctoral course on January 27, 1982 and given, the same day, to Ellen. She called Charles after reading it, told him she had concerns, and arranged with him a time to meet and discuss it. The document contained a number of specific biographical items that had been revealed in post-class luncheon discussions between Charles and Ellen and a number of evaluative comments by Charles on both Ellen's personal and professional actions. More generally, Charles said "she thought that his treatment of her was quite external and objective and didn't seem to be looking at things from her point of view" (F.N., February 13, 1982), a statement later made independently by Ellen. As Ellen read a draft of this paper, she wrote, "What upset me the most was that Charles had used my name and the names of my students in the distributed paper. What was not an important issue was that he

made evaluative comments, but he did so without discussion'' (F.N., May 14, 1985).

She further said she ''had assumed that this kind of thing was being looked after by the board and had been surprised when it wasn't'' (F.N., May 14, 1985), a concern that subsequently led her, in discussion with trusted colleagues within the school, to consider raising the matter with any or all of the school board, the Grievance Committee of the Teachers Federation and the university. Charles told us she was ''thinking about taking it to someone else to see that this sort of thing didn't happen to other teachers'' (F.N., February 13, 1982).

During a meeting with Ellen on February 1 the matter of the project's ethical principles, outlined at the beginning of this paper, came up and due, in part, to the character of the entry negotiations, it turned out Ellen had not seen them nor discussed them fully. These were given to her on February 4 and the discussion of them was, in general, the basis for reaffirming the project's stance and for assessing the situation that had developed between herself and Charles. Ellen, in reading the draft of this paper indicated she ''felt anger towards Charles'' as she read the section entitled Openness of Judgment and Interpretation. She felt that Charles did not exhibit care for the situation as a result of participating in it. She ''felt that element was missing'' (F.N., May 14, 1985). Procedurally, the project had erred in not ensuring the various principles were at work, the most contentious of which at that point was the right of the teacher participant to be a first reader of interpretive material.

A rapid sequence of events took place over the next few days. The most significant event was that on February 1, Ellen contacted Connelly to say she wanted to go ahead with the work but that she felt Charles was using her. On February 2, Charles drafted a statement to the university class including both a request for the return of the circulated interpretive account and an explanation of his reasons. On February l4, Charles had more discussions with Ellen in which he said she had claimed he was using her to solve his problems. On February 6, Charles again met with Ellen to reassess the situation. Throughout the week of February 8 Charles attended Ellen's classroom and avoided discussion of the incident.

The work proceeded through February, March and April on a reduced schedule of a half day per week. There was no change in the process of making fieldnote records. The project's interests were monitored by Clandinin who, because of her continuing presence in the school and a standing invitation from Ellen to work with her, was able to discuss progress with Ellen.

Charles' reduced schedule concerned Ellen, but she continued with the study. Meanwhile, Charles reported his school visits were no longer productive for his purposes and on May l2 he formally left the project. A new interpretive account was prepared by Charles, given to Ellen and discussed. She reportedly found no difficulties with it.

Charles' classroom visits tapered off and, in a September 15 fieldnote, Ellen observed Charles had not been attending class in the latter part of the previous

school year and that "there had been no good-bye's" between Charles and the class or her.

In a thesis proposal drafted by Charles in the spring and fall of 1982, student data, gathered during the previous year's visits, were used as a data base. Because our project agreement with the board did not include the collection of student data and because data collected after May 2 was not under the auspices of the project, it became necessary for Charles to obtain independent school board approval for the use of his proposed thesis data. This, combined with the thesis committee's requirement that the data be disclosed and discussed with students and their parents as well as with Ellen, led Charles to decide not to use Bay Street School data for his thesis. This decision closed out Charles' participation with Ellen and finalized his exit from the school.

Negotiation of Working Relations Among Persons

A Procedural and Ethical Interpretation: As we reflected on this incident in December 1984, Phil's reluctance automatically to grant us continuance in the school made sense. Clandinin was no longer on-site, having accepted an out-of-town appointment, and we planned on bringing two new people into the school as part of the project. Given the difficulty with Charles, we could see that Phil viewed negotiation as a matter of establishing a working relationship between people and not between school and project. Given that insight, we asked ourselves what it was about Charles' and Ellen's working relationship that contributed to the unhappy conclusion to their work.

Returning to our fieldnotes we noted the first explanation offered for the January 27 rupture in Ellen and Charles's working relationship was a procedural one (F.N., February 1, 1982). First and foremost, it was clear that circulating the account to a professor and group of students, all of whom were unknown to Ellen prior to her viewing it, breached a procedural agreement. Throughout discussion on the matter Charles maintained the position that had he discussed the interpretive account with Ellen first, the problem would not have developed.

But it is equally obvious that the causes were not merely procedural. Ellen specified she had "concerns" about the *content* of the account in her telephone call to Charles on January 27, 1982 and, in fact, at this time she did not know the document had been circulated to a class. Her later statements that the account did not express an "understanding of her perspectives" and that it was an "objective account" about her, points to deeper matters at work. Her "concern," then, went beyond the invasion of her privacy in the interpretive account which revealed biographical items and beyond the normal reaction one might expect to negative judgements on professional and personal actions also noted in the account. (See above notes on the incident). The "concern" rested with the relationship where she felt objectified by being studied and interpreted. Once again, in a comment on an early draft of this paper, Ellen wrote that her concerns were not with "being objectified, studied and interpreted but rather real, concrete practical

consequences for my life and the lives of the students. There was no care or respect given the sensitivity of such information'' (F.N., May 14, 1985).

Our discussion on February 1 turned from procedural to ethical matters and our notes show that the suggestion was made ''that we take this as a legitimate problem; as an ethical case. We felt we could do more for this kind of research in the long run if this issue was fully developed as an academic point'' (F.N., February 4, 1982). It was then that the project's ethical principles were discussed and at that point, it came to light that Ellen had not seen them. We then took a copy of the principles to the school and discussed them with her on February 4.

Following Ellen's agreement to continue with Charles and the project, it is clear that ''following procedure'' allowed the project to continue and allowed Charles to continue to obtain data. But while the procedure permitted his continuation, it was also clear that Ellen was unhappy with the work. In May, 1985 as she responded to the draft paper she wrote, ''the trust had been destroyed'' (F.N., May 14, 1985). She referred to herself as ''being used'' and to a feeling that Charles was not spending enough time in class. Her own purposes in the relationship were, therefore, inadequately served. From Charles' point of view, the procedure was working and the ethical principles were being applied. From a collaborative research point of view, the principles were not at work since a collaborative researcher role had not been established and the teacher/participant's purposes were not served, a point recognized by Charles in a later quizzical statement in which he wondered how she was benefiting from his presence.

Accordingly, had we written an account of the case at that time, we would have done so in terms of the ethical principles governing the project. We would have shown how the practical conditions corresponding to the principles were not at work. For example, for the principle on the ''openness of purpose,'' we would have shown that while Charles' purposes were originally discussed, such discussion did not persist. The continual discussion and evolution of purpose is one of the markers of the principle in practice. Moreover, and more important, we would have argued that Ellen's purposes were not at issue in the discussion making it impossible to imagine the evolution of shared purpose in the relationship. Our argument would have been factually buttressed by a comparison of this point with Stephanie and Clandinin's relationship where a significant portion of the fieldnotes and interpretive writing dealt with the matter of co-participant discussion of what was happening and why.

This brief rendition of one of the principles illustrates how our understanding of the causes of the rupture deepened from an understanding of it as a procedural mistake to one of ethical conduct in collaborative researcher work. As events unfolded, the case was not written at that time. Subsequent events led us to yet another level of understanding of what occurred in the rupture.

An Interpretation in Terms of the Negotiation of Practice. As indicated in the introduction to this paper, our renewed interest in the proper working relations between researchers and teachers was prompted by our need to re-negotiate our

continuing work in Bay Street School in the fall of 1984. Our deliberations led to a recollection of the Charles-Ellen relationship and a recasting of it in terms of subsequent ideas developed in the project. The necessity of renegotiating our work in the school reminded us that negotiation is an ongoing part of collaborative research that cannot be taken for granted. As we thought through the incident, we saw it as part of the continuing process of negotiation that went beyond the more static application of the set of guiding principles we had earlier imagined and which are described above.

Our first observation upon returning to the incident in the fall of 1984 was that, practically speaking, the difficulty lay in the quality of the working relationship rather than in the more formal application of principles. We could see that very little appeared to be going on in the way of working out of joint purposes and, at a time when Ellen felt not enough time was being spent in class, Charles felt he was getting little from the classroom situation. When our view shifted from seeing the difficulty as a procedural problem in the application of principles to seeing it as a problem within a working relationship, we redefined the difficulty in terms of the "negotiation of practice." Subsequent to the preparation of the project proposal in which the principles were listed, we developed the notion of "negotiation of practice" to refer to the daily give-and-take of a working classroom relationship. We wrote about it as follows:

> Because of the special dialectical relationship between researcher and practitioner, our negotiation of research methods within the school includes a process which we call "the negotiation of minded practices." For instance, Clandinin's negotiations with the Grade 1 teacher Stephanie developed in such a way that Clandinin became, variously, a teacher aide and co-teacher of the class. She was actively involved in working with individual students and in discussing programs for individuals and for the class as a whole. Both researcher and teacher had their own ways of doing things. Their practices would differ on, for example, the teaching of reading. Behind this, of course, were two different minds at work. In short, the minded practices of the researcher and teacher were different. Negotiation of these practices was inevitable and occupied both planning and reflective sessions when researcher and teacher evaluated lessons and planned future ones. In the process, the negotiation of minded practices for the classroom occurred (Clandinin & Connelly, 1983).

As a reader can tell from the above, we were aware of the negotiation of practice but we saw the concept as conveying a sense of practical necessity — two teachers in one classroom working out a mutually acceptable set of practices. Joint action implies joint meaning and this is part of the negotiation of practice. In our review of the incident, we saw that perhaps, in part, the problems in the working relationship could be seen as a failure between Charles and Ellen to negotiate mutually acceptable practices for their work together. Once again in reflection, Ellen wrote, "I don't think we ever really developed the spirit of what it meant to work together" (F.N., May 14, 1985). In part, but only in part, this can be seen as an adequate interpretation.

An Interpretation in Terms of Narratives of Experience There were hints in our field notes that there was more to the matter than the negotiation of practice.

There was Ellen's reference at several points to "sensitivity" and Phil's reference to Charles becoming "part of the process" and "part of the team" and to teachers and researcher working together as a "network." Merely agreeing upon the practices, for example would not, in itself, speak to the point of sensitivity nor to being part of a school process. The ongoing work relationship between Charles and Ellen was also an historical matter, i.e., a matter of what each person brought to the working relationship. In effect to agree upon practices entails each party bringing forward to those practices their own narratives of practice.

Therefore, looked at in terms of each participant's narrative, the process of collaborative working relations with schools carries more than an understanding of negotiation of entry, exit, minded practice and the negotiation of research papers and interpretations. In the process of working together collaboratively, it becomes a process of the negotiation of a new narrative unity for each. Narratives have continuity and may be said to exhibit a unity in the life of a person. We have borrowed the term "narrative unity" from the moral philosopher McIntyre (1981) and conceive of it as a continuum within a person's experience which renders life experiences meaningful through the unity they achieve for the person. What we mean by unity is the union in a particular person in a particular time and place of all that he or she has been and undergone in the past and in the past of the tradition which helped to shape him or her (Clandinin, 1985). Narrative unity is a term which names the continuities and unities which we see at work in individual's classroom practices.

The notion of narrative unity is not merely a description of a person's history but a meaning-giving account, an interpretation of one's history. We can see within the history of an individual a number of narrative unities. The notion of narrative unity allows us the possibility of imagining the living out of a narrative as well as the revision of ongoing narrative unities and the creation of new ones. In an earlier article (Connelly & Clandinin, 1985), we showed, through an interpretation of Stephanie's practices, the sense in which teachers are constantly constructing and reporting various of their own narrative unities in their classroom practices. We showed, for example, how Stephanie's practice of making gingerbread boys in December forms part of her narrative unity, reported and revised through its expression in the classroom with the researcher and with her students.

We now return to Charles and Ellen's relationship to explore in more depth what this revision and creation of narrative unities means for their collaboration.

When the relationship between Charles and Ellen is examined in terms of the negotiation of narrative unity, we arrive at new insights into understanding the relations between researcher and teacher doing classroom research. In the ongoing relationship between Charles and Ellen in the classroom, Charles did not become part of the teaching/learning process. He sought to participate in the classroom on an irregular basis and, when in the classroom, only participated at Ellen's specific direction. Charles remained an outsider to the classroom. In the classroom, his activities were mostly limited to Ellen's suggestion — reading with small

groups, acting as a disc jockey at class parties and so on. In his after-class discussion with Ellen, he told her how he had perceived her in the classroom by offering his observations and interpretations of her teaching. In personal practical knowledge terms we can see, in this reading of Charles' classroom activity, that his practices were a reporting of an ongoing narrative unity in his life. But Ellen was not part of this narrative. She, instead, sought to encourage sharing in the process, a negotiation of both of their narrative unities as they were embodied in classroom practices. In this interpretation we see that she sought, through her practices with Charles, to engage in a reporting and revision of an ongoing narrative unity of her experience. Through Charles' practices while working with her in her classroom, she allowed for a reconstruction of classroom practices in which both would join. Charles, however, remained an observer, commenting on himself as a researcher but not on himself as a participant in the classroom. Ellen found herself in a changed situation in her classroom. Her situation was now one in which she was observed and one in which she would be offered interpretations of her personal practical knowledge. For her, an interconnected but revised narrative unity was begun. She saw her practices differently as a result of Charles' presence in her classroom, as a result of their reflective discussions and as a result of the written interpretations he prepared. But it was her practices and her classroom, not their practices and their classroom.

In sum, we now see the episode as more than procedural, as more than the application of principle and as more than the negotiation of practice. In a deeper sense it is a negotiation of two people's narrative unities. The presence of others generates a new shared narrative for each as it does in friendship and does not in acquaintanceship. Each person constitutes part of the other's situation requiring a special re-collection from her narrative history and a special reconstruction to accommodate the other. The drama in the situation noted above is that one research partner anticipated a new narrative unity, began it, and felt betrayed by it while the other continued with an ongoing narrative unity revising it only to the point of encompassing a new set of school data according to his image of himself as a researcher.

This account brings us back to our three key terms, collaborative research, ethics of participation and the concept of negotiation. Where we had originally seen these terms as being functionally discrete, we now see them as bound together by the notion of the negotiation of narrative. It is possible, we believe, to define each in a working relationship and still effectively fail in the relationship. We have shown how successful negotiations and the application of principles do not guarantee a fruitful study. The reason, of course, is that collaborative research constitutes a relationship. In everyday life, the idea of friendship implies a sharing, an interpenetration of two or more persons' spheres of experience. Mere contact is acquaintanceship, not friendship. The same may be said for collaborative research which requires a close relationship akin to friendship. Relationships are joined, as McIntyre implies, by the narrative unities of our lives.

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