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Department of Educational Studies

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date April 3, 1995
Abstract

In this thesis I explore the relationships in a collaborative research team and how the team approach influenced research tasks and results. To do this analysis I draw from my experience as a team member in an ethnographic evaluation of two exemplary adult education programs. The research team’s meeting tapes were used as the major source of data. Through an analysis of the audio taped conversations and discussions I reconstructed the collaborative relationships that were established in the research team. As a result of this analysis, I argue that collaboration is not a given; research teams become more collaborative during the shared work. Collaboration is a vision, an ideal that guides the team in building relationships and working together. This ideal is influenced by contextual factors - purpose, settings, skills, time, and confidentiality. To describe the concept of collaboration in a concrete manner, I present a characterization of roles and responsibilities in the team and how those changed at different stages in the research. I conclude that doing team research is different from more traditional approaches to research. Basically, reflexivity - a constant and rigorous scrutiny of methodology, researcher, and context - changes when traditionally private spaces, such as fieldnotes, become public. Collaborative team building can be supported by 1) creating a space for each fieldworker to reflect privately; 2) regarding research team meetings as collective reflections where the team makes sense of the data; 3) making provisions to acknowledge team meetings as data by taping and transcribing the meetings, and connecting the
transcripts to other sources of data; 4) creating structures that build on people's strength and trust in each other, and giving continuous feedback to researchers; and 5) evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of including liaison researchers, and making provisions for that inclusion (or exclusion). My main conclusion is that deciding to do collaborative team research is not simply doing research by existing methods with more people. It is a different methodology. Therefore, if one embarks on a team research project, one needs to acknowledge the peculiarities of the approach and take advantage of the benefits of a group working together, otherwise it is not collaborative, and it is not team research.
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Every student who has gone through the hard process of writing a thesis knows that this would be an impossible task if it was not supported by her family. I have been lucky in that respect. My husband - partner, friend - and my son have been a constant source of support and encouragement. I love them for that.

My family, back in Argentina, has been waiting long to see "la tesis." Although I doubt that they will ever read it, I know that they are proud and happy for me. Their good wishes always comforted me.

My fellow team members have been extremely understanding. They never complained about my Argentinean manners - interrupting, shouting, challenging - and have responded patiently to all my requests. This thesis could not have been written if it had not been for their thoughts, words, and experiences, and I want to thank them for that.

Gracias!
I dedicate this thesis to Pat,
My academic buddy,
My Canadian friend.
CHAPTER ONE: SITUATING THE STUDY

Between 1992 and 1994, I participated in the National Literacy Demonstration Project research, an evaluation of two adult literacy programs in the Vancouver area. This was not my first experience on a research team. I had participated in research teams before, in my home country, Argentina. But this was my first experience with a research team in Canada. Being part of this team was a particularly important experience for me. I had been part of talks and conferences where I could not find evidence of interest in team work or research teams. And I had thought that team work was not going to be an option for my academic career in North America.

When I was asked to be part of this research team I was happy I had found a group of people with whom I could work in the way I feel I work best. During the two years we worked together I had the opportunity to reflect on and question my own biases, beliefs, and ideology about team work. I learned new ways of relating to other people in working relations. And I appreciated the importance that being part of a team has for me. Being part of a team feels natural to me, I feel comfortable working with others, interacting and discussing ideas.

As a consequence of my experience on this team, I began to think of collaboration in research teams as an ongoing journey. I became interested in collaboration and teams as issues in themselves, whereas in the past I had taken working in teams for granted. I reflected on the advantages and disadvantages that working on a team offers. I wondered about the place for individuality and privacy in these teams and about the role that
a leader can play in facilitating the collaborative process.

Collaboration and team work are topics that are gaining more and more attention. The National Literacy Demonstration Project was funded partly because of an interest in issues of collaboration. In classrooms, teachers realize that when learners work together the educational experience becomes an opportunity for different kinds of learning. The educational literature has reflected that interest with a varied and extensive discussion. In research, researchers have been including teachers and students in their projects, and researchers themselves have been working in teams. This last aspect is only recently beginning to appear in the educational literature.

Collaboration is a complex term used to refer to different concepts. Research is said to be collaborative when it includes "the researched." The term is also used to refer to research done by two or more researchers from different disciplines or interdisciplinary studies. The same adjective, collaborative, is used when research is done by a team. In general terms, collaboration alludes to the research process, it points out that the investigation is done by two or more people working together. Who the people are, what kind of background or roles they have, and the relationships that they create between them are not made explicit in the term "collaborative."

Other questions related to collaborative teams emerge: How does a group of people become a collaborative team? What does it

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1 This term is used here to refer to the participants in or subjects of the research.
mean to be collaborative - how is "working together" defined? How does it affect the research process? Are collaboration and role distribution opposite terms? What happens with the differentiation of responsibilities? What is the impact of institutionalized rules, and those rules once they have been internalized by the researchers, on the collaborative process? These are some of the questions that the literature on collaborative research is beginning to address. In this thesis I will focus on some of them.

Focus of the thesis

This thesis focuses on collaborative practices within one research team. Its goal is to explore the implications of teamwork in a research project. In particular, this study examines the following things: the interactions between research team members, team members' struggles to become a collaborative team, and their attention to, and concerns with the demands of producing rigorous knowledge. I look at collaborative relationships and how they are constructed. I focus on understanding collaboration in a real, concrete situation, the obstacles that collaborating presents, the impacts on the research tasks, and the strategies that one particular team chose to overcome those problems. I am also interested in enriching the practice of collaborative research. Therefore this study presents conclusions that may help researchers involved in collaborative projects to plan for and prevent some problems.

A methodological commitment shapes this thesis. I believe that it is possible that certain kinds of research are improved if done by a collaborative team. This is based on my cultural
background, my own experience, and my ideology. I believe in the potential of small groups and I think that we can learn by interacting with others. In the next chapters I will explore how talking and reflecting with other people can fortify, enhance, and enrich the research process.

In this thesis I am focusing on research teams, particularly teams that are formed by academics - professors and students. Within these teams I have chosen to look at those teams that set out to work collaboratively. By this I mean groups of people that work together in such a way that the product of the group work is different from what would have resulted if each of the members had worked individually. Team members understand the power differentials that influence their work and are willing to share control in an appropriate form.

I purposefully define collaborative research teams in terms of their intent (see Tom, 1995b) rather than their structures because in practice, research teams begin their work with a notion of how they want to function and, as they confront everyday work, they adjust their structures to deal with new situations and problems. This is crucial in qualitative approaches where the research design emerges after much data collection has been done and where each research decision depends on the data collected. The structures that were suitable in the beginning of the research must change as both the research and the team evolve.

In addition, what may be a collaborative structure for one group of people may not be collaborative for another. A group of professors in the same discipline might be distributing the roles
and responsibilities equally in a team. The same kind of arrangement might be understood as non-collaborative if the team members are students and professors. Asking that students share the same kind of responsibility as a professor in a research project might not be an "appropriate" sharing of power. There are no moulds to fit and no recipes to follow. Each research team is different from others. Even more, each group changes through the research process. In sum, I am focusing this study on research teams within the academic world, and specifically those in which team members are aware of power issues in carrying out the work and are committed to sharing that power appropriately.

The ethnographic evaluation

The National Literacy Demonstration Project was an ethnographic evaluation - done over a period of three years, 1991 to 1994 - of two adult literacy programs in the Vancouver area. The programs being evaluated are considered models in literacy work because they offer an alternative approach to the traditional school-modeled adult literacy practices. The project had a double goal: to study the way the two programs were fulfilling their objectives, and to demonstrate how collaborative ethnography could be useful in providing that kind of information. This thesis is an analysis of the process that the National Literacy Demonstration Project research team went through in becoming a collaborative team.

The project was initiated by the program directors, who with a proposal written by Dr. Allison Tom (Allison) and Dr. Hanna Arlene Fingeret (Hanna), obtained funding from the National
Literacy Secretariat. The underlying goal was that this evaluation would give information about how the two programs were achieving their goals, and about how evaluations of educational programs should be done.

This project was conceived by the two principal investigators, Allison and Hanna, as collaborative research. Although the term was not theoretically defined or discussed at the beginning of the study, the fact that the program directors initiated the investigation and that the research plan included the participation of the subjects - teachers, learners, and staff - made it in that sense collaborative. As the study progressed, the definition of collaboration developed into a more defined one: a commitment to the deliberate and appropriate sharing of power (Tom et al., 1994). The two co-investigators were responsible for the planning and the overall running of the study. The research team included two teachers from the literacy programs: Mark McCue and Deborah Lee, and six graduate students: Cathie Cunningham-Dunlop (who was later replaced by Tom Nesbit), Jane Dawson, Patricia Dyer, Lynette Harper, Anne Morley, and myself. The research team was responsible for the fieldwork. Team members went to the sites, observed classes and informal interactions, and wrote extensive fieldnotes. The teachers and students from the programs participated in the research through consulting groups that met periodically to give feedback and suggestions to the research team.

Research team meetings were held regularly to share problems and to plan the fieldwork activities. These meetings were recorded on audio tape. The research team meeting tapes
constitute the core data for this thesis. Through an examination of the conversations, discussions, and interactions recorded in the tapes I have attempted to reconstruct and understand the process of collaboration.²

Contributions of this thesis

This thesis makes two major contributions: it analyses matters not yet dealt with within the literature, and it explores concerns about the practice of collaborative team research. Although the practice of collaborative research in education has increased in the past few years, the literature about team research as a particular method of investigation does not reflect that growth.

Collaborative teamwork is a topic of current interest for researchers in at least two respects. First, there is an interest in the practice of team research. Researchers want to know how other teams carry out research tasks that traditionally have been done individually. One example of that interest can be found in electronic mail lists. Recently one electronic mail list, Qualitative Research for the Human Sciences (QUALRS-L), brought up issues and questions about doing collaborative research, and the topic focused particularly on research teams. Participants were eager to hear from other researchers who were doing the same kind of work. The questions ranged from technicalities to ethical issues. "We are interested in

² The results of the research are published in two separate reports. If the readers are interested in learning more about either the literacy evaluation (Fingeret et al., 1994) or the analysis of the methodology (Tom et al., 1994), they are invited to refer to the two publications.
corresponding with other qualitative teams to share experiences and gain insight" said the first message (QUALRS-L, March 22, 1994).

Researchers are also interested in understanding the theoretical and methodological implications of doing team research. The literature tells us about the importance of acknowledging researchers' biases because of their influence on the investigation (Eisner, 1986; Heshusius, 1994; Lather, 1986, 1991). But how that changes - or does not change - in team research is still not explored.

This thesis looks into the process of making research collaborative, it analyses the tensions that this kind of research entails and the mechanisms that operate within a collaborative team. It describes the ways in which the research process is affected by teamwork. It offers a description of how one particular collaborative team dealt with and reflected on the problems we encountered. Because I believe that research results should benefit practice, I also present conclusions that will be useful for researchers planning to do or doing collaborative research.

This thesis will be useful for researchers, particularly ethnographers and collaborative researchers, and adult educators. Researchers working in teams will find this thesis useful because it analyses benefits and drawbacks of team research, and it specifically points at aspects of research methodology that have to be adjusted or changed when the project is carried out by a team. The Literacy Demonstration Project team, as the other research teams expressed in the QUALRS-L list, could have made
good use of literature related to the topic. We sometimes wished that others had recorded their experiences so that we could have learned from their work.

This information will be valuable for adult educators because it opens new teaching roles for them in research. If there are skills that need to be developed so that people can become effective team members, then it is possible that people could be taught to participate in research teams. Team research also appears as an alternative approach to research in the field of adult education. It is a choice that gives the opportunity for adult learners and teachers to work together in research projects.

The structure of the thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters. The rest of Chapter One describes the National Literacy Project in more detail. The second chapter locates this thesis within the literature. Chapter Three delineates the methodology used for this research and the challenges that I confronted. Chapters Four and Five present a description and analysis of the data. Chapter Four follows the process that the research team went through in becoming a collaborative team. It looks into different aspects of the research team meetings that changed through the process, and explores the events that triggered - or marked - changes in collaborative relations within the research team. The main argument in this chapter is that teams become collaborative, they are not automatically created as such. Chapter Five analyses the impact that our collaborative practice had on the study. In this chapter I explore the effect of public
fieldnotes on the researchers' reflexivity and argue that research team meetings are collective fieldnotes. The last chapter presents conclusions and recommendations for the practice of team research.

The National Literacy Demonstration Project

The National Literacy Demonstration Project was initiated as a nation wide demonstration of how an evaluation should be done. To help monitor the research process the National Literacy Secretariat requested that an advisory committee be created composed of scholars and practitioners expert in the areas of literacy and the methodology the project embraced.

During the first part of the study (October 1991 - March 1992), preliminary fieldwork and most of the original planning were done. Of the two principal investigators, Hanna lives in North Carolina, USA, so she had a distant role in terms of the fieldwork and the team work. Allison assumed the role of project director. To help her in this stage, one graduate student, Lynette Harper (Lyn) was hired to help with the fieldwork and the administrative aspects of the project. The directors of the programs being evaluated suggested the possibility of including teachers from the two programs in the research team. The co-investigators welcomed the opportunity to expand the collaborative dimension of the research in that way. Deborah Lee and Mark McCue became part of the emerging research team as liaison fieldworkers. They were both suggested as teachers who had the most experience and permanent positions in the programs.

In April 1992 the data collection phase began. The research team was formed to perform that task. The team was composed of
Allison, Hanna, Lyn, Mark and Deborah, and five graduate students from the Department of Administrative, Adult and Higher Education of the University of British Columbia. All of the graduate students had been part of a seminar that Allison teaches on ethnography. During her teaching Allison got to know the students and was able to evaluate them according to their skills in doing ethnography, ability to work with other people, and her trust in them. Four of the five additional graduate students - Jane Dawson, Patricia Dyer (Pat), Anne Morley,¹ and myself were hired as fieldworkers. Catherine Cunningham-Dunlop (Cathie) worked as the administrative assistant to the project until December of 1992, when her contract ended and she was not able to accept a renewal for another term due to the demands of her own research. She was then replaced by Tom Nesbit.

For the first part of the data collection phase, each fieldworker attended only one site. Going to one program only, we argued in the meetings, would allow every fieldworker to focus on one program instead of two. One of the programs was smaller than the other one (approximately 70 students compared to 620 learners at the time of the study), with only one class at a time. Therefore, only one graduate student - Jane - and one liaison researcher - Deborah - were doing fieldwork in the smaller program. The rest of us attended the other program, where classes and instructional interactions are constantly occurring. Later, it came to a point where the team felt it was

¹Originally another student had been hired, but when he left the team in June 1992, Allison hired Anne, who worked from September 1992 until the end of the project.
necessary for more fieldworkers to work in the smaller program. Lyn and I took turns doing fieldwork there.

Between March and December 1992 the team members collected data for the project. Each fieldworker went to the field approximately twice a week and observed classes, informal interactions, and staff meetings. We talked with and interviewed learners, teachers, staff, and family members. Each time we went to the field we wrote fieldnotes - descriptions, reflections and emerging analysis - of our experiences in the field. Once a week we copied our fieldnotes onto a common disk which was then copied and delivered to Allison and transmitted via modem to Hanna. Once every other week we met to discuss the progress of the fieldwork. These meetings were recorded on audio tape and a copy was sent to Hanna.

An electronic network connected the UBC members of the team (Allison and the graduate students). This form of communication was constantly used to share information among the UBC research team members. Allison usually made sure that Mark, Deborah, and Hanna got the information as well. We used this form of communication, among other things, to arrange for rides to the sites, to update the list of people we had contacted in the field, to share first impressions about the fieldwork, and to do preliminary analysis.

In an attempt to include learners and teachers from the programs in the research, consulting groups were created. These groups "were intended to support the research and to provide the

---

*During July and August the programs do not function in their usual form so we did not collect any data.*
research team with information about important issues. They were intended to be groups of individuals ready to help shape the research questions and to provide feedback about the way the research project was received at the sites" (Tom et al., 1994, p. 11).

Fieldworkers' participation in the project changed over time to accommodate different situations in their lives and work. For example, Cathie had to leave the project to do her own research. I had to stop doing fieldwork when my pregnancy was threatened. Later, I took a parental leave (about two months) and slowly began to work more and more. In the later part of the analysis stage, Jane and Lyn had to dedicate more time to their own research projects. They were still involved with the team in a consulting role. They came to the meetings and read what the other members were writing. Then they produced a feedback memo reflecting on the meeting and the other pieces of writing. Anne also had to monitor the time she dedicated to the project since she finished her thesis while she was still involved in the team.

The role of the fieldworkers also shifted because of developments within the study. During the analysis stage, they became more involved in the analysis and writing than originally planned. The complexity and size of the project demanded that the data analysis and writing phase be prolonged. It took eleven months, more than twice the time that had been anticipated, to analyze the data and to produce the two reports that document the research. Part of that process is analyzed in the following chapters.
In this chapter I present the place of this thesis in the literature. I frame the topic of team research in broader discussions about subjectivity, reflexivity, and an awareness that the solo lens in ethnography has been changed to a shared lens. As researchers agree that objectivity is an illusory ideal, they are striving to find new criteria to determine the trustworthiness of data and the role of subjectivity in research. Reflexivity plays a crucial role in this discussion as one basic element that distinguishes common sense from science. Although researchers have acknowledged their own individual subjectivity through reflexive practice, they are only recently beginning to reflect on the meaning of a shared subjectivity. The literature analyses collaborative research experiences where researchers work with participants, but so far little has been written about team research.

In the following pages I situate the topic of team research within the literature. First, I analyze the meaning of subjectivity in post-positivistic thought. Next, I look into the meaning and role of reflexivity in that context. Then, I examine how researchers, through reflective thought, have positioned themselves and their work. I explore the reflections of researchers working with other researchers and their shared subjectivity. I turn then to the literature on collaborative research for a broader understanding of the aspects that affect the practice of team research. Within that literature, I present a framework for the study of team research. Finally, I look into
the place of this topic within the adult education field.

Objectivity and subjectivity

The basic ontological assumption of the positivistic paradigm is that we can know reality as it is; this position is known as realism (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The epistemological argument that follows that premise is that "the investigator and the investigated 'object' are assumed to be independent entities, and the investigator to be capable of studying the object without influencing it or being influenced by it" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.110). In this view, scientific knowledge can and should discover and explain universal laws in an objective and neutral manner.

From the positivistic stand, a major problem in research is the researcher's possible influence on and biases about the methods and results of an investigation. To achieve the necessary distance from the object - objectivity - researchers need to prevent their own subjectivity from influencing the research process. By following the scientific method, the researcher guarantees that objectivity has been achieved. Following scientific methods ensures that the resulting knowledge is unbiased and true.

Post-positivistic thought has questioned the postulates of positivism. The basic ontological premise is challenged, and it

5Although I acknowledge that the term "post-positivistic" is used by some authors (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) to refer to neo-positivistic thought, I am using the term post-positivistic here in the sense that Patti Lather (1986, 1991) uses it, to denote the different ontological and epistemological postures that emerged as a critique of positivism. Hence, they are different from positivism.
is argued that reality cannot be known as it is (when it is assumed that it does exist). In this view, research produces knowledge that is a result of an interaction between researchers and the object of study. Research is thus inevitably influenced by researchers' experience, ideology, personal skills, and personality. In post-positivistic thought, objectivity is an illusory goal. Values are embedded in every activity we do. From this perspective, positivistic scientific knowledge is also biased; it reflects a particular worldview.

Authors who acknowledge the influence of the researcher in social inquiry have looked at the meaning of subjectivity in research. Although they accept that researchers bring their biases into their research tasks, they differ in how they propose to "handle" that relationship. Some authors look for different ways of controlling the researcher's biases. For example, McMillan & Schumacher (1989) refer to researchers' biases as "contamination." In this context, researchers' influence is accepted, although it still appears as unfortunate.

Patti Lather understands that research is value laden. She is concerned with the danger of a "rampant subjectivity where one finds only what one is predisposed to look for" (1991, p. 52). Therefore she offers a re-conceptualization of validity appropriate for what she calls openly ideological research, "to guard against researcher biases distorting the logic of evidence" (p. 67). Basically, she proposes that researchers monitor their own subjectivity and the ways it influences research.

Other researchers (Eisner, 1992, Heshusius, 1994) look at subjectivity as necessary in research. They believe that
generating new guidelines to control, or monitor, the influence of the researcher on the data is again arguing that knowledge can be objective. Lous Heshusius (1994) maintains that "procedural subjectivity" (controlling one's subjectivity), is identical to "procedural objectivity" because both refer to an ontological distance between the self and the "other" and both terms see the self as being a potential methodological concern.

Don't we reach out (whether we are aware or not) to what we want to know with all of ourselves, because we can't do anything else? If there is no ontological or procedural objectivity to guide the research process, then, ... neither is there ontological or procedural subjectivity to guide the research process (p. 16).

Heshusius admits that it is crucial to become aware of personal reactions and related values. But he "points to the need to observe them completely and without evaluation, for it is in the attentive, nonevaluative movement of consciousness that they can be let go of" (p. 18, emphasis in the original).

In other words, whether it is with an intent to control it or to understand its role, many researchers now do not deny their influence. Objectivity does not appear as the universally desired value in research it used to. But since "no longer does following the correct method guarantee 'true' results" (Lather, 1986, p. 65), researchers have been left with the problem of establishing the trustworthiness of their data in new, and still systematic ways.

**The role of reflexivity**

As early as in 1986, Patti Lather was talking about the "epistemological and methodological ferment in the social sciences" (p. 66) as a step preceding the emergence of a new
paradigm. She called then for suitable criteria for data trustworthiness. Almost ten years after that article was published, researchers are still struggling to agree on common criteria to evaluate qualitative research. If the standards that the positivistic paradigm had set up are not useful, it has to be admitted that there are no other criteria that have been accepted as widely as the positivistic ones were.

Despite many areas of disagreement, one common point of agreement has emerged: the importance of reflexivity. Although it is not usually discussed extensively (except for Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983, and Marcus, 1994, see below), reflexivity - the ability to reflect and critique - is included whenever there is discussion about criteria to evaluate research. Whether it is called that or other names (to become aware of values and emotions, observe the conduct of self) researchers agree that it is necessary to continually scrutinize research procedures and reflect on them.

Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson (1983) dedicate a whole section in the first chapter of their book "Ethnography: principles in practice" to the concept of reflexivity. They first draw on the basic meaning of the term reflexivity - an action by the subject upon itself - and argue that we, as researchers, are part of the social world that we are studying. Therefore, by studying our world we are studying ourselves. In ethnography this concept is particularly important because ethnographers are the fundamental research tool. Ethnographers need to know themselves to be able to "know others."

Science, argue Hammersley & Atkinson, is not very different
from common sense and scientific and everyday activities are similar. What differentiates these kinds of knowledge and activities is their intentions. Social inquiry has the distinctive function of developing and testing theory. And, according to Hammersley and Atkinson, it is through reflection that researchers achieve this goal. Reflecting on the relationship between events and ideas, researchers build an understanding of reality.

In their conclusion, Hammersley and Atkinson focus again on the concept of reflexivity. There they argue:

Reflexivity is, in our view, the key to the development of both theory and methodology in social science generally and in ethnographic work in particular.... In science, there is an obligation placed upon practitioners to scrutinize systematically the methodology by which findings, their own and those of others, were produced, and in particular, to consider how the activities of the researcher may have shaped those findings (p. 236).

Researchers' fundamental role in knowledge building makes it imperative that they analyze and reflect on their practice.

George Marcus (1994) has analyzed how reflexivity has been used. He has differentiated four kinds of reflexivity that broaden the scope of the term within ethnographic thought. The "baseline form of reflexivity" is individual and personal examination. This kind of self critique, Marcus claims, is most commonly equated with the term reflexivity. Emphasizing this understanding of reflexivity has the risk of turning research into a self examination process. Understood more profoundly, however, it could be used as a means of understanding the object of study, by using the researcher's reactions, intuitions, and feelings as data.
The second kind of reflexivity is mostly a research tool, a rigorous examination of research methodology. It is tied to "the commitment to sustain objectivity" (p. 569) and has a very limited function in Marcus' eyes. It is this meaning of the concept that some authors emphasize in their work. In Patti Lather's (1986) analysis, for example, reflexivity comes under explicit attention as part of construct validity, which the author defines as a "systematized reflexivity" about how the a priori theory has changed throughout the research process.

Marcus finds the third type of reflexivity the most interesting. It "emphasizes the intertextual or diverse field of representation that any contemporary project of ethnography enters and crosses in order to establish its own subject and define its own voice" (p. 570). This understanding of reflexivity refers to the analysis of the historical location of ethnography as a research approach, its role and function, and to an examination of who the subjects are and who the researcher is as a means of political location of the methodology.

The fourth understanding of reflexivity denotes the position of the researcher within the context. Questions of ethics and the "other" are usually referred to in the context of this kind of reflexivity. This is the kind of reflexivity, according to Marcus, that feminist thought has brought to the foreground, by positioning researchers and the knowledge they produce in context.

In sum, reflexivity can be defined as a basic element in qualitative research and social sciences. It denotes the inevitably close relationship between the researcher and the
object, or subject, of study. It also refers to the researcher’s attitude of constant and rigorous scrutiny of the methodology, the methods, the researcher, and the context. And it is this characteristic that marks the difference between common sense and scientific inquiry.

**Researchers position themselves**

It is difficult to identify the kind of reflexivity that researchers refer to in their articles. It is probably true that the four meanings of reflexivity, as described by Marcus (1994), do not appear in "pure" form. In other words, when researchers reflect on their practice they engage in self examination, including aspects of more than one kind of reflexivity. For example, Sam Fujisaka and John Grayzel (1978), in their study of prison culture, found that they were drawn to different inmates and they attracted different kinds of inmates. Consequently they came to distinctive characterizations of inmates' lives and prison culture. They explained these differences by relating them to their own differences as persons and professionals. This understanding led them to conclude that "each of our personal backgrounds, biases, and attitudes became important field variables" (p. 172). As a result of this experience they called for researchers to "strive for objective awareness of personal bias, and then to work so that such biases are not only minimized, but to a degree taken advantage of as well" (p. 179).

This is a clear example of how, while involved in reflexive research, researchers have positioned themselves. They have examined how their own ethnicity, gender, social class, even professional background, have influenced, if not determined,
their work. In that sense, this kind of analysis relates to the first and second meaning of reflexivity described above, self examination and methodological scrutiny.

As part of the reflexive exercise, researchers have also questioned their roles in society. This line of inquiry refers to the third and fourth kinds of reflexivity, a political examination and positioning of ethnography and ethnographers. The traditional role of the ethnographer going to remote cultures to study groups of indigenous peoples has been rejected as part of the "recognition that the 'comparative method' and the anthropology of primitivism is inherently flawed by both its Eurocentric bias and its methodological inadequacies" (Vidich & Lyman, 1994, p. 38). If researchers are not neutral and objective observers, but subjective participants, then what is their role? From Gramsci's organic intellectual to today's reflections, ethnographers and other social researchers have questioned the usefulness of their research and their own role in the lives of the people they are studying.

In 1982, Courtney Cazden delivered an address at the Annual business meeting of the Council on Anthropology and Education in Washington, D.C., in which she called for more involvement on the part of ethnographers in designing, and being part of, educational change. She concluded: "at this point, isn't it true that we - the community of linguists and ethnographers - have explained educational failure without showing how it can be reversed?" (Cazden, 1983, p. 36).

Without the assumption that research has to be value free, there is no theoretical impediment for research to be
ideologically driven. In fact, as has been noted before, research has always been driven by political ideas, only these have not been acknowledged. Patti Lather (1986, 1991) called for what she originally called openly ideological research and later research for praxis, "research that is explicitly committed to critiquing the status quo and building a more just society" (1991, p. 51). From her perspective, researchers have a role to play in empowering the powerless and disadvantaged in society.

Tom (1995c) agrees with Lather about the role of researchers in social change. She argues, though, that the relationship that researchers and researched engage in is not necessarily one of immediate personal change. When "subjects" agree to be part of an investigation they are not deliberately entering a relationship of possible individual and/or collective change. Therefore, Tom also looks at other areas where research can affect the social structure, not necessarily immediate individual social change.

In today's literature it is very common to find the author's acknowledgement of their position. Whether it is their cultural background or their ideology, their gender or professional skills, authors bring to the foreground the aspects of their lives that they believe to be influencing their work. They also raise questions about their role as researchers in society. And this is both a consequence and a part of the reflexive exercise.

Researchers work with other researchers

It is interesting that in the process of acknowledging who they are, and analyzing the ways in which their ideology, background, and skills influence the research practice,
researchers have not looked into their own relationships with research partners. Here I am talking about academic research teams and research partnerships. These groups, although frequently referred to, are very rarely analyzed and described. Although collective research "adds new levels of complexity to the process of exploring subjectivity" (Crow, Levine, & Nager, 1992, p. 739), it is not represented in that way. Results of team research are presented as if the fact that it was produced in a group does not bear any influence on the process or product of the studies. Most commonly, the team director's subjectivity is acknowledged but there is no reference to the other researchers' influences. There are only a few analyses that acknowledge the differences that carrying out research collectively, as opposed as individually, make in research results and processes (Crow, Levine & Nager, 1992; Liggett, Glesne, Johnston, Hasazi, & Schattman, 1994; Olesen, Droes, Hatton, Chico, & Schatzman, 1994; Porter, 1994; Tom et al., 1994).

Gary Crow, Linda Levine, and Nancy Nager (1992) report on the interdisciplinary study they conducted to learn more about career-change graduate students. They tried to build collaborative relationships within their team of three professionals from different disciplines, and between this team and students and advisors. They achieved a greater level of collaboration within the interdisciplinary team, what they call "internal collaboration," than with the other two groups, "external collaboration." They explain this in part as a problem related to the difficulty of simultaneously establishing
"internal interdisciplinary collaboration and two additional kinds of external collaboration" (p. 753). The authors also relate these difficulties to the status differential between students and the team members (all professors in the same university).

Annette Liggett, Corrine Glesne, A. Johnston, Susan Brody Hasazi, and Richard Schattman (1994) also describe their team research experience in the study of the implementation of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 in the USA. In their honest account of their work as a team, they share their struggles to "keep individual egos in check," and to work together. In pointing at the difficulties and challenges of doing team research, they conclude that team research requires a specific kind of support. In their words:

In another study, we would seek more funding to compensate for the teaming effort. Yes, we would find it rewarding to do [it] again if the study called for a need to incorporate different discipline backgrounds, if a similar careful team selection process was used, and if there were adequate support for genuinely collaborative, team effort. Otherwise probably not (p. 87, emphasis in the original).

Marilyn Porter (1994) has described the challenges of carrying out what she calls "second-hand ethnography" - an analysis of fieldnotes and interviews done by hired fieldworkers. She undertook a major project in Newfoundland to gather data about women and work in the province. She hired three research assistants to do the fieldwork. As the study progressed she "became acutely aware of the problems and limitations of using other people to 'do' one's own ethnography because of their diverse and less than comparable academic backgrounds" (p. 76). This is a common practice in North American universities; what is
surprising is that these kinds of reflections are not more abundant.

I could not find any study that intentionally set out to analyze the relationships within a research team. The previously described articles are reflections that researchers do after their study has ended. They are reconstructions and attempts to retrace methodological decisions that shaped team activities. The literature is more extensive in analyzing other kinds of partnerships, particularly those with "the researched," practitioners (especially teachers) and community members. Because the literature on team research is so scarce, I have used the literature on collaborative research, regardless of the actors in the relationships, as a framework for my analysis. In the next section I turn to this literature.

Collaborative research

In this section I examine the literature on collaborative research. In particular, I describe the reasoning behind including participants in research. I then use Allison Tom's framework of collaborative research to analyze issues in team research.

Collaborative research is a broad term that refers to the actors in shared research. "Collaboration" points at the relationships between researchers and other groups who undertake an investigation together. The literature reveals that the actors who engage in collaborative relationships can be as varied as the field. Researchers collaborate with community members (see Gibson, 1985; Schensul & Schensul, 1992), with practitioners (see Cole & Knowles, 1993; Florio-Ruane, 1990; Hollingsworth,

As can be deduced from the previous enumeration of authors, the relationship between researchers and practitioners has been the most recorded and reflected on in collaborative research literature and practice. Through the analysis of particular experiences, this literature explores the purposes for doing collaborative research, its methodological foundations, the contexts within which this particular kind of inquiry is practised, and its advantages and challenges.

The rationale for doing research with the people that the research is about can be traced again to the practice of reflexive research. As authors question their role as researchers in society, they also look at the role that the researched play in research. They have at least three important reasons for analyzing this aspect of research. First, there is an ontological reason: the subjects' understanding of the object of study is as valid as - although different from - the researcher's understanding. Second there is an ethical question, if research is about a group of people, shouldn't they have a say in it? Third, there is a practical reason. Some traditionally researched groups have demanded a more active role in research that is about them.
If there are no universal truths, then the esoteric and exclusive role of the researcher may be questioned. If making sense is understanding reality as a transaction between objective conditions and personal frames (Eisner, 1992), then it is possible that different people will understand a problem or situation in different ways. That does not mean that one perspective is right and the other is wrong. There are multiple ways of understanding reality, which essentially means that there are different realities. Researchers can understand an educational problem in a certain way but teachers, for example, can understand it differently. If academic knowledge should represent not only one understanding of reality but its multiplicities, then researchers need to look at the others’ perceptions and understandings of their reality.

One of the benefits that this type of research brings to the resulting knowledge and process is a more rich and integrated study with data validated by the researched (Gibson, 1985; Johnston, 1990; Kyle & McCutcheon, 1984; Troyna & Foster, 1988). By involving "the researched" in design, data collection, and analysis, research also becomes more responsive to local needs and interests.

The second reason to question the role of the researched in research is linked to the previous one. Traditionally research has been done on a group of people in the sense that their participation in designing the investigation, collecting data, and/or analyzing the results has been minimal or non existent. If research is about them, then they should be more involved. For many this is a moral statement. For example, those
interested in "empowering" participants argue that the researched have the right to be involved in a substantive way in research so that they will benefit directly from the process rather than being treated as mere objects of the study (Lather, 1991; Schensul & Schensul, 1992). In Gitlin’s (1990) words,

If research is going to help develop practitioners’ voices, as opposed to silencing them, researchers must engage in dialogue with practitioners at both the level of question-posing and the interpretation of findings.... The researcher and the subject attempt to come to a mutual understanding based on their own strongly articulated positions (p. 446).

A third important factor in including the people who are being studied is that practitioners and community members have become aware of their passive role in research. They are increasingly voicing their reluctance to participate in this way. Fujisaka and Grayzel (1978), for example, report that their subjects refused to be treated as anonymous and impersonal subjects of research and either responded in a standard way to the researcher’s questions, or simply refused to answer them at all until genuine rapport and agreement was established.

In response to these questions different approaches have emerged: action research, participatory research (see Brown & Tandon, 1983) critical ethnography, research as praxis (see Lather, 1991), educative research (see Gitlin, 1990), and so on. Although these approaches are different from one another (for a description and comparison of these approaches see Brown & Tandon, 1983; Reason, 1994) they all share the idea of researchers and subjects working together. "Collaboration" is a term that many authors have chosen to refer to that aspect of research. In that sense collaborative research can be seen as an
umbrella term for these research approaches. The degree to which the different groups share the work differs in each research approach, but the fact that there is work that is shared makes it, in these usages, collaborative. The purposes for doing collaborative research are diverse.

**A framework for team research**

Most of the literature on collaborative research is based on analyses and accounts of experiences in the field. Authors undertake a research project with a collaborative approach and once the study is finished they reconstruct the collaborative process and reflect on it. They emphasize the issues that appeared as most problematic or rewarding and conclude the articles with words of caution and suggestions. Tom (1995a) builds on this literature and on her experience in the Literacy Demonstration Project (the same project that I study for this thesis), and presents a frame for analyzing decisions about who is included in collaborative relationships and in what kinds of research tasks they are involved. I found this a useful frame to think about the issues that the collaborative research literature shares with the topic of team research. In this section, then, I analyze Tom's framework and look at its applicability to team research.

Tom (1995a) suggests that there are five aspects of the context in which collaborative research takes place that affect the decisions that researchers make about who will collaborate and how collaboration will occur. These aspects are: purpose, settings, skill, time, and confidentiality.
Purpose

Different research purposes call for different collaborative relationships. Examples of these differences are the close and trusting relationship that has to be secured between researcher and participant in a life history, and an evaluation study for which it is essential to "demonstrate that [the researchers'] loyalty to the organizations' goals or administrators has not blinded them to what needs to be seen in the organizations" (Tom, 1995a, p. 6).

In research teams that include participants, the purpose of the study directly influences who will be part of the team and what kinds of activities each person will undertake. By affecting the relationships with the object of study, the purpose of the investigation also affects the relationships inside the research team. Purposes that call for a more distant relationship with participants will affect the relationship between team members.

When teams do not include participants, the purpose of the study affects relationships between team members in a different way. Choices about strategies are restricted. If the study calls for a set product, then team members are restricted in their tasks to those that build into that goal. If the funding agency only requires a report of activities, team members are more free to undertake different jobs and responsibilities.

Setting

Settings also influence decisions in collaborative research. Tom points at three institutions as part of the setting: the funders', the participants', and the researchers'. She
discriminates two aspects in this influence. First, the roles and responsibilities that participants and researchers have in their own institutions affect the kinds of relationships that they can build with each other. The institution might release a certain amount of hours for research time, or they might require a specific kind of product or performance.

Second, while working together, participants and researchers are also bound by the relationships that they still have outside of the investigation. Teachers collaborating with learners might find it hard to let go of their role as teachers, and vice-versa. On this topic, Tom reports on the difficulties that the research team encountered while trying to work with consulting groups that included both learners and teachers (see also Crow et al., 1992, and Clift et al., 1992).

In team research, we can assess the influence of at least two institutions (funders' and researchers') if the team is composed only of academics, and a third one (participants') if any liaison researchers are included. I suggest that even when all team members are affiliated with the same institution, it affects decisions in the team in at least two ways. First, the researchers' institution - usually a university - shapes decisions because it places requirements on the kind of research that it houses. If the university plays an administrative role in the project, the ways in which it affects the study are enlarged. Second, university team members still continue their institutional roles. Professors still have to teach classes, participate in committee meetings, and advise their students. Students involved as research assistants have to take courses, do
their research, or write their theses. In some universities students have a limited amount of hours that they can dedicate to a job if they want to be considered full time students. In sum, the fact that all team members belong to the same institution does not diminish the influence that the institution has on the decisions about who should collaborate and how.

When research teams are composed of both professors and students, their out-of-the-team role permeates their relationships in ways that may affect the research process. As learners and teachers could not interact in a different way in the Literacy Demonstration Project’s consulting groups, team members can find it hard to relate to each other in a relationship different from that which they hold outside of the team. Although I am not advocating that professors and students should have the same kind of responsibilities in a research team (see Tom, 1995c), I am arguing that the relationships that they want to establish in the team are different from those that they held outside of it, although still shaped by them. Maintaining those two different relationships may be hard to accomplish.

Needs, rewards, and motivations also differ in different institutions. Tom and Sork (1994) also point at this discrepancy as a point of potential problems in adult education collaborative research. They suggest that to avoid it becoming a problem "collaborators should work together to make sure that the outcomes of their work will be viewed positively by those to whom they are accountable" (p. 52).

Differences in needs and rewards play a key role in team research. Even when all researchers in the team need to be
recognized in the same way, the institution influences decisions through its determination of who should be rewarded and how. As Tom points out,

Sharing credit with members of the community - practitioners, advocates, clients or students - as authors, grant recipients or authorities on the research generally diminishes (and almost never increases) the academic researcher's status and credit in the university system (1995a, p. 8).

A professor who is working towards getting tenure would find it very hard to share credit with other team members, because that would mean less recognition of her work in terms of tenure competition.

The funders' institution affects decisions because it shapes the basic hierarchy and responsibility distribution within the team. Porter (1994) describes in detail how SSHRC (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council) guidelines for funding influenced her decisions about what kinds of people to hire for her team. She had thought of hiring advanced doctoral students, with experience with feminism, sociology, Marxism, and ethnography (a background like Porter's). The "low pay rates allowed for research assistants," among other things, however, pushed her to make different choices. She directly addresses how those decisions resulted in a hierarchical team:

The grant was in my name. I was ultimately responsible for the project and the money; I had considerable power and authority over other members of the research 'team.' No matter how we disguised it, or how far we tried to achieve more equal relations and more democratic procedures, the inescapable fact was that I had more power than my 'assistant' and, ultimately, it was my reputation that was at stake (p. 73).

There is yet another aspect of the setting that Tom (1995a) suggests is an influence in decisions about relationships in
collaborative research. "Researchers have the potential power to affect participants' livelihoods, careers or self esteem and this power between researchers and participants influences research" (p. 7). I would suggest that participants also have the power to affect the researcher. Participants can harm a study or the reputation of a professor by boycotting an investigation, or leaking information to administrators and funders.

When people get involved in teams, they get involved in relationships with other people. By doing this, people become more vulnerable to each other. Power issues between research team members are a complex topic. As researchers can harm participants in a study, researchers can harm each other in a research team. Professors can place a very high demand of time and skills on students, and can in that way affect students' career. Students can affect professors' reputation by initiating rumours, or doing poor work, for example. Professors can affect other professors' careers as well. Other issues bring more complexity to the power relations in an academic research team. When a professor hires students, she becomes their employer and boss. To add more complexity to this issue, often the research director is also the students' advisor. Researchers then are connected to each other through many - sometimes conflicting - relationships. The multiplicity of roles and relationships between the researchers can become a source of problematic situations.

Skills

Skills is the third aspect of the context that Tom presents as an influence in determining collaborative relationships. It
is important, she explains, to make decisions about training people in the skills "that they need to carry their roles effectively" (p. 9). Tom presents the concept of skills as "project-relevant skills." Although not explicitly referred to by the author, this is an important point in collaborative research, because the potential for discriminating different kinds of knowledge for being either too theoretical (the researchers') or too practical (the practitioners') is great. Involving participants in research assumes that practical and theoretical knowledge are valuable. Both kinds of knowledge are considered important and necessary in research, although admittedly different (see also Kyle & McCutcheon, 1984; Schensul & Schensul, 1992; Tom and Sork, 1994, Troyna & Foster, 1988).

Skill is an important factor in team research. I already mentioned how Porter (1994) describes the importance that she placed in the skills she wanted the research assistants to have. Liggett et al. (1994) also describe the relevance of skills in selecting the team members. They stress that one of the skills that they found essential was inter-relational skills, "persons who could work together without intrusive egos blocking interaction, [and] who would enjoy spending time with each other" (p. 78). They admit that they placed as much emphasis on personality as they did on knowledge and experience. Although literature on team research does not refer to training sessions for team members, there are allusions to retreats or time spent together in which team members became acquainted with each other and a sense of team emerges.
Time

Time is one of the most frequently mentioned drawbacks in collaborative research. Most authors reflect on the fact that collaborative research takes more time than non-collaborative research. Because this kind of research involves different people working together, the already needed flexibility in qualitative research design is exacerbated. It is not always possible to plan and predict the development of events. This presents a high risk for overload on certain roles, particularly the director's. Tom argues that "the challenge for dealing with the time pressures in collaborative work is to find creative ways to build and retain a sense of connection between the members of the collaborative research project in ways that maximize time use" (p. 12).

Time is also scarce in team research. Researchers need to negotiate meanings and procedures. Authors (Crow et al., 1992, Liggett et al., 1994, Porter, 1994) describe the process of making meaning together, disagreeing and compromising that they have had to go through. When some of the team members have more responsibility over the project than others, time demands may result in overload roles. Tom et. al (1994) report on how team members' roles were overloaded, particularly that of the research director. Researchers need to engage in team research acknowledging the effects that this approach will have in the study, time being one of them.

Confidentiality

The last aspect that Tom refers to is confidentiality. Collaborative research challenges the traditional notions of
confidentiality because these are based on the assumption that researchers are separate from participants. An additional question arises when some participants want to be named. Tom argues that it is necessary to explicitly discuss these issues between the collaborators to make decisions together.

In team research, when participants share information with one researcher, they are sharing it with the whole team. And keeping confidentiality, even with the use of pseudonyms, becomes a challenge. This challenge is sharpened when the team includes participants. With the exception of some (Tom et al., 1994, Tom, 1995a), most authors do not mention the problems that arise around confidentiality in team research. I agree with Tom (1995a) that acknowledging the challenge and working inside and outside the team on issues of confidentiality is essential to team research.

**Adult education and team research**

To refer to the relations between adult education and team research I am going to look at the two meanings that the word research has in the discourse of adult education (Blunt, 1994). Research can be conceived of as a process, "a careful and systematic means of study or inquiry conducted with the intention to discover new knowledge and understandings" (p. 167), or as a product, the outcomes of such a process that are considered part of the academic field of adult education. The topic of team research is connected, through both meanings of research, to the adult education field.

As a process, team research refers to one particular way of doing research that is growing fast in adult education research
projects. This is a consequence of at least two processes.
First, researchers are studying complex phenomena that require
more than one researcher to gather data (Burgess et al., 1994;
Porter, 1994, Tom et al., 1994). Second, working in groups has
been appreciated as a beneficial factor in other educational
enterprises.  

In the broad educational field, group work is an issue that
is gaining more and more attention from educators. The
literature explores how students work together, in whatever level
of education we refer to, and the impact of that process on the
learning experience (Cowie & Rudduck, 1990, Doise, 1990, Ruggles-
Gere, 1987). From primary school to university education, and
non formal institutions, teachers are using small group
techniques to facilitate learning experiences. Cooperative
groups appear to facilitate the achievement of individual,
social, and political goals. When learners work in cooperative
small groups their motivation is increased, responsibility and
initiative are developed, understanding is enriched and
interpersonal skills are facilitated (Cowie & Rudduck, 1990).

But even when researchers work jointly, the literature has
not reflected that practice. Except for a few recent accounts
(Liggett, Glesne, Johnston, Hasazi, Schattman, 1994; Crow,
Levine, & Nager, 1992) researchers who work or have worked
jointly have not documented, or at least published, accounts of
the processes and problems they went through while trying to work

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*I consider that research is in itself an educational undertaking where an investigator, or a group, sets out to learn more about a specific process, situation, or problem.*
in a team. The adult education literature has almost no reference to the process of constituting a team, or the influence that this kind of work has on the research or on the researchers.

As a product - the knowledge resulting from research - studying team research opens potential roles for adult educators. In other words, the insights that we gain from studying research teams reveal that adult educators may be needed in the training of research team members. Although researchers have been working together, there are no models for doing research in teams. Researchers are only beginning to understand the skills that are needed in doing this kind of research.

The literature tells us that researchers have found some skills to be important in working as a team. Liggett et al. (1994) refer to the importance of negotiating meanings among team members, others emphasize establishing trusting relationships and communications (Johnston, 1990), yet others look at shifting roles (Hollingworth, 1992; Olesen, 1994). Researchers reflect on their mistakes, and share their conclusions in the hope that other researchers will learn from their reflection. I believe that it is time to find a more systematic way of using researchers' reflections. If we can agree on the skills that are necessary to be effective members of teams, then we can look at ways of teaching these skills. Tom and Sork (1994) claim that collaborative research - which includes team research -

Is not an easy approach to research and it requires a set of skills that are rarely part of traditional research methods courses taught in universities.... Academic researchers must learn the skills that allow them to be effective, non-offensive participants in the practitioners' worlds (pp. 48,50).
Tom and Sork envision this training component as a parallel process in collaborative research, one that supports collaborators throughout the course of the research.

Adrian Blunt (1994) has recently published an article in which he explores the future of research in the field of adult education. He foresees more collaborative and interdisciplinary work, and more socially and pedagogically relevant knowledge. I argue that these characteristics are present in team research. If we are to use this approach, we need to acknowledge its peculiarities to take advantage of its potential as a difficult but innovative and worthwhile approach.

In this chapter I have framed the topic of team research within the literature. Although the literature explores the issues around collaborative partnerships between researchers and practitioners, it is only recently beginning to address the relationships among researchers. In the next chapter, I describe the methodology of my research and explain the challenges that I confronted in analyzing the data.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

To analyze the collaborative processes within a research team I have looked at the National Literacy Demonstration Project research team. In this chapter I describe how I did this study. I begin by describing the team members. Next, I describe the data I used and how I analyzed it. Following, I present an analysis of the challenges that I encountered while doing this research and how I dealt with them. Particularly I look into the problems of doing research about a team in which my academic advisor and I were both involved.

Team members

The research team was composed of ten persons: six graduate students, two liaison fieldworkers, and two co-investigators. The liaison fieldworkers were two teachers from the programs that were being studied. Mark had been working as a teacher for the program since 1984. Before this he had worked as an elementary teacher for five years in the B.C. public education system. At the time of the investigation, Mark was feeling frustrated with the program, and had been talking about leaving it. Mark’s inclusion in the team was considered an opportunity for him to have a change and take some time to think about the program. He was a great help in creating an atmosphere of acceptance at the literacy centre so researchers could carry out their tasks as easily and effectively as possible. The fact that teachers and learners liked Mark, and that they knew he was part of the research team facilitated their acceptance of our presence in the site. In the team meetings, Mark was a refreshing participant.
He liked to joke and at the same time he brought to the team an insider’s critical perspective of the program.

Deborah Lee immigrated to Canada from Hong Kong in 1985, and was hired by the City of Vancouver in 1988. She had joined the language program as a learner when it first started, in 1990. Because of Deborah’s hands-on experience with the program, and her former profession as a teacher (in Hong Kong), she was seconded from her position with the City of Vancouver to a job with the School Board as a teacher in the language program where she now works. Although in the beginning she was not sure about being part of the research team, she quickly came to enjoy this new aspect of her work. She arranged for team members to meet with learners and teachers, and dedicated a lot of attention to making sure we found people to talk to in the programs. In the team meetings Deborah was usually quiet; she enjoyed listening to the discussions. She talked whenever she was asked a specific question about the program, her own philosophy, or when she disagreed with what was being said. Deborah is a firm believer in the philosophy of her program and, therefore, brought the programs’ perspective to the meetings.

The graduate students were enrolled in the master’s and doctoral programs in the Department of Administrative, Adult, and Higher Education in the University of British Columbia. Five of the six graduate students were hired as fieldworkers. The other graduate student, Cathie Cunningham-Dunlop, was hired as the administrative assistant. Cathie was working on her doctoral research studying how organizational ideologies and individual intentions are translated into planning strategies for adult
education programs. She was not always present at the team meetings, but she was a constant presence for everyone in the team. She always made sure that the administrative work was as little of a burden as possible. More than once she overworked so that the rest of the team members found it easier to deal with the technological problems. In January 1993 she left the team to dedicate her attention fully to her research and growing family. She was replaced by Tom Nesbit.

Tom, originally from Northern England, has dedicated most of his adult life to workers' education. He had been involved in collaborative projects before. He moved to Canada with his wife to do his doctoral work. After taking the ethnography course with Allison, she invited him to apply for the position. Tom was already working on his doctoral dissertation on adult teaching and learning mathematics, as well as being a student representative. Tom found this an interesting opportunity to be involved in a collaborative project in what he understood was a supportive role. He found himself wanting to participate more in the team meetings and analysis than he had time for.

Jane Dawson, one of the fieldworkers, was at the stage of beginning her doctoral research about educational processes in the workplace. Jane had been originally reluctant to accept the position in the team because she was afraid it would take too much time from her own research. She came to the team with an interest in workers' education, which she hoped she would learn about by being involved in the literacy program that trained municipal workers. I think of Jane as a reflective, rational, and organized participant in the team. Her reflections usually
triggered interesting discussions. She writes beautifully and her quotes have been of great insight in the reports and in this thesis as well.

Pat Dyer's background is in occupational therapy. She found herself frustrated with the hierarchical medical model and decided to change her career. She had long been interested in feminist issues, and at the time of the investigation she was student representative in the Department of Adult Education in the University of British Columbia, at the same time that she was taking her last two courses for the master's program. Pat and I had been taking courses and studying together since we met in 1991, and were very close. Pat was also involved with a church community agency that worked in the Downtown East Side with the mentally ill and, as the project developed, she engaged in issues of literacy and language learning, which she pursued later by working as a full time English as a second language (ESL) teacher. Pat knew about the project and had hoped to become a member of the team long before it was formed. She brought to the project her endless energy and commitment to the learners and teachers in the programs.

Lyn Harper became involved with the project six months before the team was formed. While working for the project she was also working on her master's thesis which explored the experiences of a Lebanese immigrant to Canada. Lyn's background as an anthropologist emerged in her lively comments during the team meetings. Lyn has the ability to reflect and bring up concerns about research tasks and problems in a positive and constructive way. Her extensive and rich fieldnotes have been a
great source of ideas when re-thinking the National Literacy Evaluation Project.

Anne Morley, a British immigrant to Canada, came into the team in September 1992. She was writing her master's thesis on mature women students' experiences in a career preparation program. Although Anne kept reminding the team members that she "came late," none of the others felt any difference. Anne accommodated quickly to the dynamics of the team. She brought an understanding and compassionate look at participants, particularly volunteers, in the programs. Anne talks and writes as if she was writing poems. Every time I found a quote from her I felt compelled to copy it and include it in this thesis.

I immigrated to Canada from Argentina four and a half years ago. I have a background in teaching and, when Allison invited me to participate in this project, I was at the point of choosing the topic for my master's thesis. I chose to take the opportunity of working in a team, which I enjoy dearly. I was always more concerned about the research process than I was about the research content, if they could be separated in such a way.

Allison, one of the principal investigators and the research director, came to Canada from the United States eleven years ago. She has an anthropological background, with a special interest in ethnography and feminist issues. This was the first collaborative project, or team, that Allison participated in, not to mention directed. Allison struggled through the project to achieve a level of consistency between her philosophy and multiple role responsibilities. As a research director she was supportive and understanding, yet demanding.
Hanna was a geographically distant member of the team, and we all felt that. With her background in sociology and well known for her work in literacy research we all hoped that we could spend more time together and learn more from her. When she came to Vancouver she was busy, and the scheduled time for team meetings was always too short. But she came to know all of us very well by reading our fieldnotes, and listening to the team meeting tapes. In more than one way we thought of her as "the expert" and the team member who had the "bigger picture" of what was going on in the programs.

The data

For most of the project's data collection stage (April to December 1992) the research team met for three hours every other week. During the data analysis and writing stage (January 1993 to February 1994) the meetings were held weekly, biweekly, or monthly depending on the need of the team. Although these meetings were taped with the intention of including Hanna and helping her feel part of the team, a copy of the tapes was kept in Vancouver. These tapes have not been systematically used for data analysis in the Literacy project.

I have used the research team meeting tapes as my main source of data. The team held a total of twenty three meetings. I have analyzed the tapes of twenty research team meetings.7 The tapes for two meetings are missing, so I relied on the notes that I took (as a team member) and the agenda to know what were

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7The recording quality of the tapes for one of the meetings was very bad, so although I have heard them, I have not been able to analyze the data in depth.
the topics discussed in them. In addition, I used two more tapes from a presentation that the team gave in the Adult Education program in the University of British Columbia. Overall I have worked with fifty six (56) hours of taped conversations. I also used e-mail messages, fieldnotes, final reports, and memos that were distributed to each team member during the project as support documents.

The data I used was not collected with the intention of documenting a process. The intention behind taping the meetings was to keep one of the team members, Hanna, as close as possible to the team. Accordingly, tapes are a record of the meetings, with no intentional focus or guiding on my part. I have used the tapes as a researcher would use documents, assuming that they are records of a process. In the same way that historians cannot ask questions of the people who wrote historic documents, I felt I could not ask the team members to comment about the process as they would have done during the process. I could ask the team members to reflect on the process after the fact, and I would get valuable information about how they view the process in retrospect. Their thinking today will most probably not be the same as it was during the project.

Thus, the data I worked with was already collected and I did not have any control over what was in it and what was not. I could have chosen to interview each team member and analyze their current reflection on the collaborative process. That would have been a different approach - and a different study. I chose to analyze the team meetings to understand the collaborative processes that the team went through. I took for granted that
the fact that I could not shape the data entailed some limitations to the kind of analysis I could do. I chose to work with the data that was already there.

Analysis

The following section presents a detailed account of how I dealt with the analysis of the data and the particular challenges that the work presented. McMillan and Schumacher (1989) argue that one of the things qualitative researchers can do to enhance the credibility of their data is to make the data collection and analysis strategies they use explicit. I found it essential to share the paths that I walked to write this thesis.

Taped data

The form of my data, tapes, presented a challenge to me. The first issue I had to tackle was to decide whether or not I needed to transcribe all, or at least the most relevant parts of the tapes. I struggled with the idea of spending time and money transcribing the tapes. I had never worked with oral data before and could not find useful references to guide my analysis.

As I explored the literature on ethnographic and qualitative analysis I found that there were no reasons why the data had to be written down and not assume other forms. Although ethnographers produce most of their data by writing, I could not find any argument that would contradict having the data in another form. Fieldnotes, journals, and diaries are an

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8Deciding what was relevant for my thesis was a very difficult thing to do in the beginning of the data analysis. As in most of qualitative analysis, the themes for this thesis emerged throughout the analysis process. How could I decide what to transcribe and what not to transcribe beforehand?
interpretation that the researcher makes of her experiences and observations, they are representations of reality (Ottenberg, 1990). The form of representation the researcher chooses affects the image of the event that is presented, and each form of representation affects that image differently. Written transcripts, though, are no closer to reality than taped conversations. One form is not more reliable than the other. Geertz stresses the relation between the ethnographer and the written data but he points out the need for reflection on what that data is, a representation:

What does the ethnographer do? - he [sic.] writes. Or, again, more exactly, 'inscribes.' Most ethnography is in fact to be found in books and articles, rather than in films, records, museum displays, or whatever. Self-consciousness about modes of representation (not to speak of experiments with them) has been lacking in anthropology. (1973, p. 19)

Robert Sanjek synthesized the advantages that some ethnographers found in using tape recorded texts instead of recording by hand: accounts are richer in details and contextual information, and they constitute "instant texts" compared to the hard work of hand recording for hours. Sanjek also points out the problems of transcribing; one hour of talk can take six to eight hours of transcribing and "untranscribed tapes sit in many offices and studies" (p. 114). He ends the discussion on a resigned note: "Technology marches on and taped texts are here to stay" (1990, p. 115). Whether or not these texts are to be transcribed is not part of his discussion, it is taken for granted.

My data were conversations, laughs, discussions - sounds! Why would I need, or even want, to translate them to another
form? Hammersley and Atkinson suggest that transcription is not essential, "one can simply treat the tape as a document, indexing, summarizing, and/or copying sections of it" (1983, p. 161). Although I only found one brief concrete description of the use of taped information with no transcription, I found no theoretical reasons for the need to transcribe.

There were practical consequences of this choice. I had done text analysis before but I had never done it with taped conversations. I had to create a system that would be reliable and practical. I began by listening to all the tapes. While doing so I kept three different records: a log of topics, a list of themes, and a quasi journal. The first record was a log of the issues that were being discussed in the meeting. For this purpose I used the counter on the tape recorder. For example, on the page I recorded that from 0109 until 0342 there was a discussion about authorship. This counter log was very useful when needing to quote team members, or when I went back to listen to a specific section of the tape. It served as an index.

The second record I kept was of themes, a list of ideas and issues that I saw emerging from the data, for example confidentiality, inclusivity, and authority. These were problems that were discussed in the research team meetings, or related points that I thought would be interesting to explore in the analysis. As I listened to the tapes the themes began to take form and I could see how they emerged again and again in ensuing

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9 Robert Sanjek describes how Paul Bohannan, the project director for a research team taped his conversations with his fieldworkers and later took notes on the tapes (1990, p. 332).
meetings.

The third record I kept was for personal reflections. This list included issues such as my memories of the meetings; the feelings that I had while listening to my son, a two month old baby in the tapes, and suddenly hear him, an eighteen month old boy now, calling me; or even practical difficulties of dealing with the taped data.

Once I had listened to all the tapes I put together the information I had about each theme and wrote a one or two page description for each theme. At that point the themes began to converge and gain complexity. I ended up with eight inclusive themes which in turn became part of the chapters in this thesis.

I went back to the tapes over and over again. This time I went to specific segments of the tapes and made sure I listened to the context of the conversation as well as the content. I looked not only for conversations that would confirm my arguments, but also those which seemed to contradict them. The procedures I used to analyze the taped data were similar in many ways to the traditional qualitative procedures of analyzing written data as described by Hammersley & Atkinson (1983). Once I had a complete draft of the thesis I distributed copies to all team members. I got back the copies filled with scribbles and suggestions which I incorporated to the subsequent drafts.

Researcher and subject

I have done an analysis of a project in which I worked. In a way I was studying myself; I was researcher and subject. This carried benefits and drawbacks. On the positive side I had an insider's perspective. I had been part of the project and knew
what it felt like to be part of the team. I have very strong memories of the meetings which helped to contextualize some discussions. I have included some descriptions based on my memories of the events when there was no representation of the events in the research team meeting tapes.

On the other hand I had to convince myself that I was more than a subject in this research. At one point I was confused about where my analysis was coming from and felt very insecure. I felt I had to consult with every team member to make sure that they felt the same way I did about what I was writing. Once I realized that I was playing two roles and articulated the differences between them, I could handle the tension more easily.

Although I am aware of the fallacy of dividing myself into two different roles - researcher and subject - I found it necessary. It was very useful to think of myself as playing two different roles. The tension did not cease but I became aware of it. I found it useful to ask myself on what data I based my analysis. Was there anything in the tapes to substantiate my claims? Or was I talking from what I remembered I was feeling at the time? Ultimately the way in which a researcher arrives at a conclusion and validates her analyses differs very much from the way a research participant reflects on the investigation. As a subject I did not have a responsibility to be consistent with the data, or with the other team members. I could base my statements on how I felt. As a researcher, however, I had to work much harder with issues of validation and reliability.

Multiple roles

I was not the only person involved in this study holding
more than one role. This research is an analysis of a project for which my academic advisor, Allison Tom, was the director. Allison and I had anticipated that some complications could arise as a result of her double role in this study. As the project director she was also one of my research subjects. As my academic advisor she was responsible for supervising my research. How would those two roles interplay? Would the research advisor be able to stop the research subject from directing the thesis in a specific direction? How would she be able to distinguish which voice was talking? On the other hand, how would I be able to write about the project director's role without worrying about my research supervisor's reaction?

One of the things we did to prepare for future complications was to make sure that I would be able to find someone else to talk to in the event of a conflicting situation. This person would have to be someone that both Allison and I felt comfortable talking to. For me it was important to find someone who would be able to understand me should I find I could not talk to Allison. For Allison, finding someone she trusted was essential because this research was about her and if I had to share any information I would be exposing her. So this became a critical criterion when we chose the professors for my thesis committee. And it proved to be worthwhile.

Allison and I were able to work together up to the point at which I began to actually write the data analysis chapters, particularly Chapter Three which deals with issues of leadership. In one meeting we became aware that there were "too many people sitting around the table:' the research supervisor and the
researcher; the project director and the fieldworker; the boss and the employee; and the teacher and the student. Our conversation was a mixture of reflections and advice from the advisor to the advisee, new information from an interview of a research subject, and feedback from a researcher to a research participant. We realized this was not working. I was not having the necessary space and freedom to write and Allison was not having her rightful space to react.

Researchers do not commonly share their analysis with research participants until they have an articulate idea to present. Ideas evolve as the writing develops, and researchers can and must view things from different perspectives in these early stages. My first drafts for Chapter Three, for example, were very critical, and lacked contextual considerations. Allison pointed to the context by adding more information than what I had on the tapes, and by explaining why she had done what she had as a research director. Allison was not able to respond to my analysis solely as a subject because she was worried, as a research advisor, about leading my research or not giving me enough space to reflect. She could not be sure what voice was responding, and she was in constant tension. I, on the other hand, always struggled with the desire to make Allison happy with my analyses. In our conversations, we were both pushed to behave in an unnatural manner.

I do not think that we had anticipated, when I decided to write this thesis, that we would not be able to work together. At this point however, we both felt that we needed a different approach. Allison talked to one of the professors in my research
committee, Dr. Richard Sullivan, and we agreed that he would supervise the writing of the chapters until he and I felt that they were ready for Allison to read. Allison would still supervise the aspects of the thesis related to methodology and literature reviews.

This change was useful for me in terms of letting me develop the analysis with less pressure from "the field." Richard was extremely helpful and understanding, and pointed at different areas of analysis. His expertise came from a different direction than Allison’s, however, and he is not familiar with the kind of qualitative analysis we were attempting. Therefore I had to figure out what kinds of things I should share with Allison since they were methodological issues, and what kinds of things I should not share because they were part of the content.

This change was difficult for both of us because Allison and I had been working together for two years and had created a trusting working relationship. For her it was hard because she felt she was abandoning me. And although we talked on the phone, Allison was not monitoring my work as closely as we were used to.

Once I had a complete draft of one of the content chapters I shared it with Allison. As a researcher, I was anxious to hear her responses, both as an advisor and as a subject. Allison read the draft and responded to it, explicitly differentiating her two voices: purple scribbles were her comments as my advisor, blue were the subject’s responses. With the next chapter I still worked with Richard until I felt the chapter did not contain any material that would make the relationship with Allison difficult. Then I shared it with Allison and we both felt it was time to
work together again.

Confidentiality

Another challenge that I had to face was one related to the issues described above. Promising confidentiality to the research team members was very difficult. I knew I could not promise the team members that I would disguise their words. There were not many of us, and we know each other very well. In addition, Allison is also the advisor of most of the rest of the students in the research team. This might have created difficult situations if a team member wanted to say something about the leadership and worried about how that comment would affect her relationship with Allison. Allison had been reading our fieldnotes for almost two years and it would be difficult for her to not know who had said which words. She is familiar with the ways we talk and the kinds of things we tend to think and talk about. There was no way that I could prevent the quotes from being transparent to her without distorting them.

I decided that, as in other issues of this research, I had to accept the way things were. I could not promise something I could not deliver. The consent form that the team members signed did not promise secrecy from Allison or from any other team member.

During the time I wrote this thesis I became aware that I was getting the chance to understand situations that my fellow researchers did not. As I analyzed the data and talked with Allison about some of the issues that I saw in the collaborative process, I came to understand them differently. I had the chance to be part of some of the reflections that Allison had after the
research process was over. With those reflections I had new ways of understanding some of the team processes. I see this as a privilege.

I always wondered what would have happened with the research team tapes if I had not analyzed them. I think they would not have been analyzed. I feel strongly it would have been a misfortune. I hope then that my fellow researchers think of this thesis as a present to them. The next chapters explore our experiences and the collaborative relationships that we built. I am giving my fellow researchers the gift of analysis, some explanations, and some (more!) questions.
CHAPTER FOUR:
THE PROCESS OF BECOMING A COLLABORATIVE TEAM

The National Literacy Demonstration Project was designed by the principal investigators to be a collaborative investigation. "Collaboration" was seen to happen at different levels: between the two co-investigators, within the research team, and between the programs and the research project. The fieldworkers came to a project that had already been designed and planned by others. That design determined the research team’s involvement in the process. Within that frame, we worked towards a vision of collaboration. We struggled to get as close as we could to that vision.

This chapter describes the process that the National Literacy Demonstration Project team went through to become a collaborative team. The chapter presents the development of the team’s relationships and the contextual factors that intervened in that development. The basic argument that I make in this chapter is that collaboration within a research team is constructed through the research process. A research team does not start out as a collaborative team, it becomes collaborative.

Writing this chapter gave me the opportunity to question the assumptions that I brought to the project as a fieldworker, and to this thesis as a researcher. In particular I had to review my

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10Unless the members had worked as such before. Even if they did, the new project will take them to different levels of collaboration.
beliefs and biases about the differences between teachers and students. Although it is hard for me to admit, I came into the project expecting teachers, university professors in this case, to have all the answers. I learned that although the research team was composed of both professors and students\textsuperscript{11} we were all learning to create a different way of working together. Creating collaborative relationships was a new experience for most of the research team members, even for those of us who had experience with collaborative research. This project presented its own challenges. We created collaborative relationships and had to continually recreate them as the old ones gave way to new forms.

Trying to describe such a complex process and still capture its dynamics is not an easy task. I chose to cut the process in three, according to important events in the project. I describe three different moments in the relationships within the research team. The chapter begins with a description of team members' motivations for participation in the project. Then I describe the team as it began, the factors influencing the constitution of the team (setting, time, skill), and a description of the roles and responsibilities. This analysis shows the structures as they were in the research project when the team was created. Next, I analyze the "crisis at Isadora's," a problematic situation that arose as a manifestation of what had become unsuitable structures of work. Following, I explore the new structures that were created to try to accommodate the new relationships, and their

\textsuperscript{11}The liaison fieldworkers are discussed in this paragraph as students because of their previous experience with research, particularly ethnography, and also because of their relationship with Allison.
manifestation through the issue of ownership in the team. I then summarize the chapter and present conclusions for the practice of collaborative team research.

Motivations and definitions of collaboration

The research team was formed in April 1992. The graduate students who were hired knew each other but had never worked as a group before. Hanna, Allison, and Lyn, who had been working for the project since November 1991, knew Mark and Deborah. Although there were some for whom the collaborative aspect of the research was not the reason they joined the team, we all shared an enthusiasm for the work. Some of us shared an interest in the collaborative nature of the project. Some research team members were interested in the personal benefits of collaborative work, others had worked in teams before and needed to work that way. For others this was a new way of working that they wanted to explore.

In one of the first research team meetings, we took time to articulate our expectations. The tapes reveal that Allison and Mark wanted to explore collaborative relationships because they had read about them or because they felt that was a skill they wanted to improve. For Pat it was important to be supported and guided by Allison and the rest of the team. She felt this would be useful in getting her through the master’s program. I shared the expectation that the collaborative work would help me with my academic work. For Lyn and me the collaborative aspect was something we felt we needed: we had worked in research teams before, we knew that we liked it and what we could get out of it - guidance and companionship.
We expected a lot from the collaborative aspect of this project. We expected it to help us get started on our own theses, to help us get organized, to discipline and guide us and yet still let us be creative with the required assistance, to teach us how to be collaborative, and finally to improve our skills. What these high expectations concealed was that, even though we all talked about collaboration we were referring to different concepts. We never defined the term. We did not identify how we would do things together, or what it meant concretely to be part of the team.

The shared use of the word collaboration hid the fact that for some of us collaboration meant that we expected we would have equal participation in decision making processes. It also hid confusion about differentiation of roles and responsibilities. Each of us had different experiences in research before, some of us had worked in teams before, others had not. Those experiences and our philosophies framed the way we thought of collaborating in this team.

In the beginning there were jokes in the meetings about what was collaborative and what was not. The jokes were hiding a sense that collaboration meant doing everything together, and that there was no differentiation of roles and responsibilities. The next quote illustrates the contradictions we felt between the need to have different responsibilities and the way we defined collaboration in action, which seemed to be defined as doing everything together.

AT: I have a gut instinct and whoever wants to say can, that it is not collaborative but I feel that if you're going to do an interview that I ought to know ahead of time so that
I'm keeping track of who's being interviewed and by whom and for what purpose so that we're not getting into a problem of spending a lot of time on one kind of person or one kind of interview, or interviewing somebody prematurely when it needs to wait or whatever. It's a resource allocation thing both in terms of people's patience with us and in terms of our time.

Allison felt that she had to explain the reasons why she would have to supervise and know what the fieldworkers were doing, and to justify her "gut instincts." Allison's "gut instincts" were much more than that. She was talking from her experience in research, from her knowledge of ethnography, and from her position as the team director. Because we never shared more than our expectations, with no definitions, it was difficult to define the boundaries of our roles, and who was responsible for what. When talking about collaboration, we were using the same language but often referring to different concepts. We were also referring to ideals without contrasting them with real and concrete situations and expressing how those ideals would translate into roles and responsibilities in this research team.

The team as it began

Factors influencing the constitution of the team

We never defined what each of us meant by collaboration, or what the research project defined as collaboration. There were no job descriptions and no explicit distribution of responsibilities. We did not clarify the structures within which we would be working together and how the context would influence our relations. As the methodological report describes, "we struggled with a central tension between the need to adhere to certain norms of research - of what 'research really is' and of ethical behaviour in research - and the need to create our
research process as we went along" (Tom et al., 1994, p. 3). Within the research team, that meant that there were certain principles that we wanted to live up to, particularly "the deliberate and appropriate sharing of power,"\textsuperscript{12} but we had to create the relationships as we went along. There were no preset definitions or role distributions. As the fieldwork began, the areas of responsibility and decision making developed and became clearer, although they were not explicitly defined or discussed. It became clearer that there were differences within the research team in terms of obligation to the research project, and in terms of responsibility as well. These differences can be linked to the contextual factors delineated in chapter two. In this chapter I particularly explore how setting, time, and skills influenced the configuration of the team. Chapter five examines the effect of purpose and confidentiality.

**Settings**

In terms of the obligation to the research project, "Hanna and Allison were each responsible to their (very different) organizations for fulfilling a contract. The graduate student and liaison researchers were contracted to provide their services but did not enter into the same kind of agreement to produce a product that held Hanna and Allison" (Tom et al., 1994, pp. 45). This translated into different commitments in terms of time dedication and consequent responsibilities.

Collaboration does not happen in a vacuum, the relationships are established in a certain context. Three institutions

\textsuperscript{12}This notion of collaboration was articulated by Allison during the project.
influenced the decisions about who (and how) would participate in the research team: funders', participants', and researchers' institutions. The funding agency, the National Literacy Secretariat, placed some requirements on the way the funds would be managed and on who would be in charge of the project. It required that a community association be in charge of administering the funds, and that Hanna and Allison be responsible for running the project. Their philosophy influenced the choice of actors in the team. The principal investigators also had to consult with this agency about decisions about budget and major changes to the original research plan.

The participants' institutions, the literacy programs that were evaluated, played a key role in proposing the liaison role and suggesting teachers for that role. The program directors also had a veto power over who would be hired to work on the research team. Thus, once selected by Allison, all the graduate students were interviewed by the program directors. In addition, Mark and Deborah continued working for their programs. These out-of-the-team roles interplayed with the inside-the team-roles. We related to each other as co-team members, and as teacher to researcher (I explore these relationships further in the next chapter).

The researchers' institution, the University of British Columbia, also influenced the team. The roles that each of the team members had in relation to the university, particularly the graduate students and the research director, influenced the way we related to each other. All the team meetings were held at the university, the project's office was on campus, and by the end of
the investigation the university was administering the research funds. Also, except for the liaison fieldworkers and Hanna, the other team members were associated with the university. Allison was teaching her courses, participating in departmental meetings, and advising students. The graduate students were taking courses and /or were involved in their own investigations. Most of the graduate students had a limited number of hours that they could dedicate to work in the study. Out-of-the-team roles intertwined with the team roles. For example, Allison was the academic advisor for five of the six graduate students and she was also the director of the team (I analyze this aspect later in this chapter).

The way that these three institutions affected decisions in the team is an example of how settings influence decisions in collaborative research. The fact that we had not explicitly explored these influences during the project made it more difficult to understand the differences within the team.

Time

In terms of time, no written agreements limited the amount of time that Hanna and Allison had to dedicate to the project; they would work as much as was needed to get the research done. In contrast, the fieldworkers had an explicit amount of time to dedicate to the project. The liaison fieldworkers were seconded from their full-time employment contracts into half-time positions with the research project. This meant that they had up to 15 hours a week to dedicate to the research project. The graduate students also were hired for limited amounts of time, 12 hours of work a week (Cathie was hired for six to twelve hours of
work a week). And although all the team members ended up working more hours, that limit explicitly guided our ideas about time. The differences in contracts inevitably resulted in differences in responsibilities.

**Skills**

Other elements also contributed to the differentiations within the research team: experience and knowledge. In this sense, these differentiations relate to the influence that skills have on research teams. Allison and Hanna have a broad experience in research. Overall, the other team members' experience and knowledge about research varied from member to member, but it was less than that of Hanna and Allison. Although some of the graduate students had research experience, the fieldworkers were mostly novices in ethnographic research.

When it came to the programs, the situation regarding experience and knowledge was different. The liaison fieldworkers knew the programs in a way that none of the other team members knew them; they had been working as teachers in the literacy programs for a long time. They knew the history and philosophy of the programs. They were also one important connection between the programs and the research project. Teachers, students, and even program directors asked them about the progress of the investigation. They described and presented the study to the people in the programs. Research team members asked them about the programs. They also described and represented their programs to the research team. In either position they were insiders, both in the program and in the research.

Paradoxically, the liaison researchers were also outsiders
in either position. By becoming part of the research team, they stepped away from their programs and made themselves somewhat outsiders, they affiliated themselves with us, the outsiders. And in the research team they were outsiders because they were not part of the university culture.

I suggest that it is fallacious to expect every team member to participate in the same way in the research team when their situation - and the project's - limits the time and kinds of input they can bring. A collaborative research team is not defined by every team member doing the same things as every other team member. Other considerations interplay in the relationships. The influence that settings, skills, and time have on collaborative teams result in differences in contracts, knowledge, and experience and therefore they cannot be overlooked when describing a research team. In the next section I examine how these differences resulted in different roles and responsibilities within the research team.

Roles and responsibilities within the team

Although the research team set out to work without explicitly acknowledging differences between the members, there were very definite differences in terms of roles and responsibilities. Hanna and Allison were the co-investigators. They had a more binding relation with the project and ultimately were responsible for the investigation. They had been part of it since it took shape, and were now responsible for the overall running of the project: managing the budget, dealing with the funding agencies, establishing and maintaining relationships with the program directors, planning, and making sure that the project
was progressing according to the goals. Part of their responsibility was to hire and direct the research team.

The research team was designed to be responsible for doing the fieldwork (doing observations, writing fieldnotes, doing interviews, and case studies). It was anticipated that the fieldworkers would be part of the initial analysis and validation of the data, but the research team’s main responsibility was fieldwork.13

The next quote comes from a meeting in which Allison explained to the research team the program for the advisory committee meeting that would take place the following week. Hanna and Allison, with Cathie’s administrative help, had organized the advisory committee meeting which included visits to the literacy programs; conversations with learners, teachers, and staff; and a session in which they shared the progress of the study with the committee members. This quote gives an example of the role the team members played in this meeting, in contrast to Hanna and Allison’s responsibility.

**AT:** All we need on those days is for you to show up for dinner at 6:30 and on Wednesday I need one person to pick up two advisory committee members and Hanna and drive them to Invergarry. So that’s all I need from you in terms of participation in the advisory committee meeting.

The graduate students’ role in this meeting was circumscribed to

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13 Among the fieldworkers, the liaison fieldworkers had a different kind of responsibility both to the research project and to their programs. They were researching their own practice and they had a vested interest in the research in a way that the graduate students did not. Also, two graduate students, Pat and I, had planned to write our master’s theses on topics that we would select from the research project. This proved to be a very difficult task that we could not accomplish during the time we were part of the team.
a dinner gathering. We were expected to be sources of information about the project for the advisory committee.

One of the consequences of not having defined collaboration and not having defined the different roles in the research project was that there were different expectations about responsibilities. It was not clear in what areas the research team shared decision making processes with other groups such as the advisory committee or the program directors. It was not clear in which areas the research team had opportunities to change decisions. Specific interactions in the research team meeting tapes show that the team members thought the research team was the one making decisions about the research project, or at least they did not understand that they were not. This situation created moments of awkwardness and contradictory attitudes and behaviours.

AT: We've agreed that anybody that works with a literacy instructor is a literacy student. To the extent that they speak English. We can't open up into School Bridge instructors. We are already over our heads.

MN: Well, we can consider other people. If this person wasn't a literacy student and he had a vision from the outside of literacy while being in Invergarry, we are not treating him as a student but his view of the literacy project is important. Isn't it? Or is this project only about interviewing people within the Literacy Program?

Lex: No! We can talk to people outside, look at people in settings outside about what they think, talk to people in the school board about what they think. Sorry Allison.

AT: Wait a minute. Why are you apologizing to me? I liked your answer. I thought it was good. Should we write "COLLABORATION" on the wall?

PD: I am trying to keep minutes and I am not doing a good job.

AT: This is a discussion about how far out we go.

PD: Ok, but anyone who is ...

AT: Who is working with a literacy instructor and to the extent that they work with the literacy instructor we are looking at them. The look of alarm on my face when you [Marina] began to speak was we can't ask what everybody
in School Bridge thinks about Literacy. We can't get the whole world looking in at Literacy, we have to put the most of our time and attention in Literacy and then we move out.

In this quote we can see how Hanna and Allison notified the team of a decision they had made. They had talked and decided on what definition of literacy the team was going to use. Two team members bring their opinions, in what could be seen as an intent to participate in shaping what the research would include, outside perspectives. When one member apologizes for crossing the boundaries of responsibilities, Allison says there are no reasons to apologize, as if there were no boundaries, and as if this was a discussion to make a decision, but then she summarizes the conversation going back to her decision.

Two issues arise in the previous quote, decision making power and knowledge differences. Hanna and Allison were in a position to define what the project would study. In retrospect Allison explained that the decision was made based on the discussions that the research team had during the previous meetings. That aspect of the decision was not transmitted to the team, the decision was presented as if it had been made by the co-investigators alone. They chose to take into account the discussion that the team had but they did not have to do that. They were the ones deciding, and the team members did not oppose that situation.

Another way the decision had to be made was with an understanding of what constitutes an adequate focus for the study we were doing. Not including outside perspectives was a methodological decision. The time that doing that would have
involved is not something the research team members were taking into account. Hanna and Allison had to do that kind of analysis, because of their experience in ethnographic projects, and because they were responsible for the overall design of this research project.

Although the research structures with which the project began were not explicitly defined, we can deduce those from looking at the relationships and roles that the people actually acted on in the beginning of the investigation. It was expected that each fieldworker would go to the sites, write their fieldnotes and logs, and copy them onto the common disk. In the research team meetings we discussed issues related to fieldwork and did the weekly planning. Allison and Hanna read the fieldnotes and planned for the long run. They dealt with the program directors, funding agencies, and advisory committee. This way of working was useful in the first part of the project but some problems began to emerge as we moved into the analysis stage.

The "crisis at Isadora’s"

As the research progressed and we began to do preliminary analysis of the data, the role of the research team members began to shift. The research team meetings changed too. The emphasis was no longer on planning data collection but on beginning to analyze the data. We were trying to make sense of the data and beginning to generate themes and explanations. This new role for the research team members created underlying tensions. We were working on data that the fieldworkers had gathered. Research team members were gaining more knowledge about the topic we were
researching. We were proposing themes to be presented in the advisory committee meetings and we were writing outlines for the reports. This was contradicted by our exclusion from the meeting with the advisory committee, we were not thought of as authors of the reports, and we did not have the general perspective that Hanna and Allison were getting by reading all of the fieldnotes. We did not have what we called "the big picture."

Isadora's

These tensions surfaced after the meeting that Allison and Hanna had with the advisory committee members. The fieldworkers participated in a dinner at a local restaurant (Isadora's).\textsuperscript{14} There we met the committee members for the first time. We were supposed to share with them our experiences with the research project.\textsuperscript{15} At the end of the gathering, after the advisory committee had left, some fieldworkers stayed longer and began to talk in a gossipy style about the different people we had met and the conversations we had with them. At a certain point, the tone shifted; our conversation became a complaint. We had two main objections, one related to the advisory committee meeting (why were we not included in the meetings?), and the other regarding

\textsuperscript{14}This description is based on my memories of the events because there is no representation of the events in the research team meeting tapes. The conversation on the tape refers to the events and to the e-mail message mentioned in this description, but I have also added description from my own memory to fill out the situation here.

\textsuperscript{15}Although that was Hanna and Allison's goal, some fieldworkers found that the advisory committee members were reluctant to talk about work. They were tired after a whole day of work, some were suffering from jet lag, and they were more interested in socializing. This increased the feeling of frustration for the fieldworkers because this was their chance to share our work.
the analysis of the data (why did we not know what the other fieldworkers were writing about? Why were we not getting feedback from Hanna and Allison?). Our concern, frustration, and anger grew as we talked. It was increased by the fact that the following evening we would be giving a joint presentation about the project in the adult education department at the University of British Columbia, emphasizing the collaborative aspect of the research. We decided that we would raise these issues in the team meeting scheduled for the following day.

Jane sent an e-mail message to the literacy network early the following day, describing her impressions of what had happened in the impromptu discussion. That afternoon we spent most of the research team meeting talking about the graduate students’ feelings and trying to figure out what the discomfort was all about. In the beginning the tone of the conversation was of complaint to Hanna and Allison. The graduate students expressed their frustrations and expected answers and solutions from the two principal investigators. Two main sources of discomfort were identified: not having the "whole picture," and not having participated in the meeting with the advisory committee. All of these feelings were mixed with a feeling of anxiety and loneliness for the graduate students.

MN: I still feel that I know what I’ve written about, and I might have some sense of what other people have written about, some things that we’ve talked about. But other things like the whole, like building up something, I don’t feel I have that sense. I feel in a way I’m writing a lot, I’m not sure what’s being done about it, and how that part of my personal perspective is making sense of the whole.

LH: And I’m missing tonight. And I’m missing next week. So I do feel a little lost. Part of it I think is that we’re at a point in our notes where I’m feeling like I’m
working sort of independently on my own and not knowing how it relates to other people, sort of the bigger picture. And I don’t know what happened to the Advisory Committee, so I don’t have any of all that reassurance yet.

Mark and Deborah, the liaison fieldworkers, were part of the advisory committee. Mark did not share our feelings of anxiety but he and Deborah did feel frustrated that the rest of the team members were not part of the meetings with the advisory committee.

MM: And I agree with Marina, I think that it would have been nice for all of us to have been at those meetings. I know the numbers would have been unmanageable, but I think that it would have been nice, and important I think, for people to be a part of that too, I agree.

DL: That’s what I was asking Jane. I thought they were included.

Allison agreed that it would have been good to have all of the team members in the meeting but she explained that they could not make that decision.

AT: [It would have been an] interesting thing to have attended and that, but there’s also no doubt that it wouldn’t have worked, in the sense of us not having any control over it. We weren’t in a place to do that.

Hanna and Allison related our feeling of anxiety to a particular stage in the analysis. This is how we were supposed to feel at this stage of a research study, they too were feeling anxious. Instead of defending themselves against what could have been felt as an attack on their style of leadership, they validated our feelings by relating them to a certain point in the research process, and by sharing their own challenges with leading the collaborative process.

HF: There’s also that it’s very hard actually being part of a qualitative project where you have a lot of people generating data because what makes data useful is that the researcher feels like you’re acting autonomously. I mean
what makes it useful is that you can get excited and you can connect to the things you feel passionately about, and you can see something and follow it through, and feel some sense of the ability to do that at the same time as feeling connected to a larger project, and it’s a real tension, that at the data collection stage it’s very hard. I don’t really want a whole lot of people sharing each other’s data and group thing because the value of Marina’s perspective being so different from Lyn’s perspective, I want to capitalize on in a project. I want Marina to really be immersed in Marina’s perspective and be out there following the things that really matter to Marina, and not to be carrying around Lyn’s questions, which I want Lyn to be out there following. So it’s a real tension. How do you have a coherent project at the same time as people really needing to feel the autonomy of running after their own questions, and how do you feel like you’re part of a group when what’s really important is that you’re asking your questions.16

After this explanation the conversation shifted, the fieldworkers further understood the rationale for not sharing notes. It was necessary for each fieldworker to keep her own perspective so that the research project would benefit from the multiplicity of ideas and viewpoints. But then a new concern surfaced. The graduate students began to ask for more feedback. Allison listened and responded.

AT: Maybe we should stop and say that the notes, the work is excellent and we are reading it and if there was a problem, you would hear. You know, it’s not like we’re going, "Oh

16In a later conversation, Allison shared with me her different reasons for not having a structure that required fieldnotes to be shared:
I thought the only safe way to write fieldnotes is for them to be separate and private. Therefore I kept them separate and private... I have a relationship of trust between me and Marina, between me and Jane. I can maintain that, I can sustain it, I can promise that that trust will be honoured but if we go to the team then the trust has to go not between me and them but higher... For me it was an instinctive creating safety kind of a thing.
I develop the issue of shared fieldnotes further in Chapter Five.
well, you know, no one's ever going to read it."  

After that, in an effort to share as much information as was possible about the meeting with the advisory committee, Hanna and Allison described the meeting in detail and they distributed the agenda and Allison's notes. This series of events (advisory committee meeting, the dinner at Isadora's, and the team meeting) was one of the most critical situations for the team. Later we would refer to it as "Isadora's."

**Understanding the crisis**

The strains at "Isadora's" were the result of tensions that had been building and combined with other issues in the team. Being part of the advisory committee meeting, receiving feedback, or having the whole picture were not critical, although they were important issues in themselves. In this section I explore the different currents that crossed each other in the team to create the crisis.

From the perspective of leadership, there were mixed messages sent to the fieldworkers. On one hand we were told that we could make decisions, but then sometimes the decisions were made at another level. We were told to write outlines, and propose themes, but we were not part of their presentation. The fact that the fieldworkers felt they were not formally included in other aspects of the project, such as the analysis, created tensions as well. Ultimately what these mixed messages concealed

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17 Today, in a new collaborative team that Allison is directing, she writes a memo to every fieldworker about their fieldwork at least every month. This reflects Allison's awareness that fieldworkers did have a point and that she acknowledges that more feedback is necessary.
was that there were things happening in the research project that were not brought to the research team meetings. Allison acknowledged that situation in a later meeting:

AT: I had to realize that a lot of the struggles that I have gone through, that felt so present to me were not present to you guys. Some of that was... all the things that happened around the advisory committee, and why you were not invited to the advisory committee meeting. Things that I just never realized needed to be articulated. None of that has come into these meetings.

Another area of conflict was a lack of consistency between the fieldworkers' role in the research project and the philosophy that dominated the research team members' training in ethnography. In the same way that the team did not share definitions of collaboration in the early meetings, Hanna and Allison also did not share definitions of ethnography and collaboration. Hanna has a sociological perspective on ethnography. The sociological understanding of ethnography does not conflict with using other people's data. Interviews and observations can be analyzed without the data collector having a dominant role. Allison, on the other hand has an anthropological viewpoint.

From the anthropological perspective, ethnographers are the research instruments. Researchers collect the data, write fieldnotes, analyze the information, and do interpretations. Moreover, the different stages - data collection, recording, and analysis - are very difficult to separate. It would be very hard to separate the processes to keep the data collector away from the analysis process. In Geertz's (1973) words

But as the standard answer to our question has been, "He [sic.] observes, he records, he analyzes"- kind of veni, vidi, vici conception of the matter- it may have more deep-
going consequences than are apparent, not the least of which is that distinguishing these three phases of knowledge-seeking may not, as a matter of fact, normally be possible; and indeed, as autonomous "operations" they may not in fact exist. (Geertz, 1973, p. 20)

All the research team members had been trained by Allison. Mark and Deborah were trained through a series of interactions and discussions about readings. The graduate students had been trained in a graduate seminar on ethnographic methods with a strong emphasis on the anthropological perspective. In a later conversation with me, Allison reflected on the structures that she and Hanna had planned, specifically the research team's role in the project. Allison explained that she "didn't know" how a collaborative research project should be run, and that she had relied on the structures that Hanna had originally proposed without reflecting on how they integrated with her own philosophy.

In retrospect, Allison says she can see the contradictions and how she was unintentionally undermining the original structures. She was guiding the team in a way that was not consistent with the designed structures of participation for the team members. Although it was anticipated that the fieldworkers would be included in the analysis for validation checks, it became clearer that the analysis was an ongoing process that the research team members were already doing, and was not a separate stage.

Another ingredient that helped trigger the crisis was the personality and philosophy of the graduate students. None of us would "just nod" when we had questions in our minds, all of us would stand up and say what we thought and how we felt about
things. When it became clear to us as a group that there were things that did not make sense to us, or made us feel uncomfortable, we brought them up in the meeting. It must also be noted that we were able to do so because we were given the space to complain.

"Isadora's" revealed another underlying tension. We were trying to work collaboratively as professors and students, bosses and employees, with different responsibilities, different time commitments. We had never talked about how those distinctions would affect the joint work. Some authors see collaboration between faculty and students as a very difficult task to achieve (Crow et al., 1992; Liggett et al., 1994). It was a challenge to all of us to find a way to work together, acknowledging and respecting those differences.

This event, "Isadora's," became a reference point for the team. It was the first time that the graduate students were able to articulate their frustration with their role of fieldworkers. We wanted to know more and participate more. From then on there was a different sense of what and why we were doing what we were doing in this specific way. It also revealed that the graduate students, as a group, could get together and talk about our feelings, and let Hanna and Allison know how we felt.

It also showed that Hanna and Allison did not have all the answers and were learning with us. They demonstrated that they were ready to listen, elaborate, respond, and change their decisions, even when this challenged the boundaries of responsibilities originally created in the research plan. The next advisory committee meeting included all of the team members.
In terms of the theoretical framework, the previous analysis raises an interesting methodological issue. The contextual factors influence the constitution and structures of a research team. But teams change and contextual factors can be challenged. In our team, as the fieldworkers gained more skills and knowledge they could challenge the structures that had been set up in response to their original skills. In other words, the team had to be adjusted to accommodate its development. Structures that were appropriate in the beginning of the project became unsuitable once the team had grown in cohesion and skills. This change calls for a continuous monitoring of changing relationships in research teams.

**New structures**

After "Isadora’s" the inclusion of the research team members in the analysis was clear and formal. The team members were assured that those who had the time would be included in the analysis stage. New strategies were implemented to facilitate the collective process of analysis.\(^{18}\) We tried to work together in several team meetings putting together the codes that each of us had come up with while analyzing our own fieldnotes. This proved to be a good starting exercise. But we had to go further in the analysis. After trying different approaches, "it seemed to Allison that the problem at this point was that we were working well with the intuitive level of analysis that is essential to ethnography but it was difficult, if not impossible,

to work as a group at the second level of analysis required: checking intuition against the data collected and refining the initial constructs in light of patterns in the data" (Tom et al., 1994, p. 126).

The research team divided into two sub-teams. Each sub-team was responsible for one of the reports. Hanna, Anne, and Pat worked on the evaluation report. Allison and I worked together on the methodology report. Jane and Lyn were not able to commit time to this new stage of the research; they were working on their own investigations. Both of them still participated in the meetings giving feedback on the reports’ drafts. The liaison fieldworkers were not included in this stage for the sake of confidentiality of the data.¹⁹

The more included we were in the analysis and writing process, the more we felt that we "owned" the research too. Again there was a tension between being part of the analysis, helping to write the reports, and not being authors of the reports, not owning the study. Eventually in one team meeting Allison shared with us a new change in the structure of the project.

AT: We [she and Hanna] talked about how what was really necessary at this point was to carefully think of the process of analysis and writing, and challenging the assumptions that we’d gone into the project with. Because when we went into the project our assumption was that already at this point we wouldn’t have any help, that we would have spent all of our budget and it would be only me and Hanna working. And that the analysis and the writing would be something that we would be doing by ourselves. Boy are we glad we were wrong! And as we went along we realized

¹⁹Later Mark suggested that it would have been a good idea for each of them to work on the other program’s data. We regretted not having thought of that option before.
that what makes the most sense in involving people in analysis is actually to acknowledge that as shared authorship. And to work on a totally, not totally, but a very much changed plan in terms of how the work goes. And I indicated that in an e-mail message that what it seems right to do at this point both in terms of getting the work done and in terms of acknowledging who's done it, is for us to move to joint authorship, all of us, and probably including Deborah and Mark, of the reports. I trust nobody has any trouble with that. I suspect that if anybody was having trouble... it was before and not now.

This quote from the research team meeting we had on March 31, 1993 explains the decision from different angles. Allison relates the move to shared authorship to practical matters, such as budget and time. She also alludes to ethical and research reasons for making this decision. Allison acknowledges that the issue of ownership had caused some discomfort. This issue had not been discussed in the meetings before, although there had been some general references in the forms of questions about who would own the data, or whose names would be on the final reports. She is also sharing with us that she and Hanna had challenged their original assumptions.

This re-accommodation of roles and responsibilities brought a new dynamic to the meetings. The tapes are rich in discussions with reflections about the project, particularly the collaborative processes. These discussions had a different sense than the ones before, in which we asked Hanna and Allison for answers. In these new discussions we were reflecting collectively.

One example of the new way we interacted with each other can be found in the conversation that took place after some of the graduate students wrote an article for an adult education conference. When the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult
Education (CASAE) placed a call for papers, some of the graduate students in the team suggested that it might be a good idea to present a paper about the National Literacy Demonstration Project. Everybody in the team was invited to participate. Although originally more people were interested, at the time of writing the paper only Jane, Lyn, Pat, and I could find the time to work on it. We wrote the paper20 and the night before the deadline for submitting the article we left a copy for Allison to read.

Allison had concerns about the way the paper portrayed her. During the April 15th meeting, which only included the UBC members of the team, we talked about the article. The following is a quote from the meeting that reflects the level of questioning that we achieved with this new set of relationships.

AT: Looking over the draft, my concerns are a learning experience for me in terms of what it feels like to be the other.... When I look at the picture of how I feel I look in [the article], it feels like I look like a very limited role and not a person. And that hurt, to come across as the administrator.

JD: It was a conscious decision on our part to not specify the kinds of programs and not talk too much about the other roles that weren't ours. And there are reasons why that looks like a good decision.... And in terms of your response too you can see how that creates a perspective, ... your position was kind of depersonalized, as were the programs.... It is a question for me, how do they respond to becoming a "they"?

AT: The shock of becoming the other.

LH: One of the things I find myself thinking a lot about is my experience in CASAE last year.... For me that framed my approach for writing this [article]. Some people just went out there and bared their souls. So I

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found myself writing with that sort of [frame].... But of course, the process is very difficult because writing is different [from presenting]. And it has a different impact. And I’ve been finding that hard. I really want this to be a verbal interactive thing. It’s an exploration. So having your response was like wow, Allison is looking at this in a different way. Because that’s what it is! It is writing, and it has a different kind of an ‘existence.’ It is still written and it gives things a sort of immortality.

This quote gives an example of the new kind of relationships in the team. Instead of expecting Allison to give guidelines for reflection, team members reflect together. Allison participates as an equal, as one more team member.

Research team meetings became less frequent and Allison and Hanna took over the writing of the reports. They shared their drafts with the research team. Both acknowledged the awkward feeling they had about sharing these early pieces of writing with other people, something they had never done before. Once the reports were written we had to make sure that the people quoted in them felt comfortable about how they were portrayed. Pat felt that each and every participant had to have the opportunity to read, and potentially change, the way s/he appeared in the report. This required a great deal of work and time, and none of the research team members had that time. There were also deadlines to meet with printing, copying and releasing the reports. Pat used the e-mail network to check with other team members about the promises we had made to the participants. Once she felt that we had assured everyone verbally that they would get this chance, she went ahead and made sure that every quote

\[21\text{Again this account is reconstructed from e-mail messages and my memories of the events.}\]
was copied, put into sealed envelopes, and each quoted participant had a chance to check "their piece." This process took over 100 hours of fieldwork. The methodology report acknowledges Pat's persistence.

This last episode reflects the shift in responsibility in the team. One team member insisted on having each participant read her/his own quotes. Hanna and Allison were reluctant because of the pressures of time, money, and exhaustion. Pat felt she was as responsible for the research as anybody else and she knew what she had to do. Her decision did not depend on being paid and she also had her own very busy life. This episode indicates how the research team members ended up feeling a greater sense of ownership than they began with.

Conclusions

The process described above is one of reflection, trust, and change. We reflected on the process, we trusted that every person was doing her/his best, and we changed to accommodate new ways of relating to each other and to the research project. In terms of research process, the biggest challenge we faced was understanding the individual feelings and translating them into research reflections and conclusions that would be useful for other people to refer to when involved in similar projects. Ultimately this was a research team, our goal was to produce rigorous knowledge and not simply to make each other happy.

In terms of the process the hardest challenge was to question our own assumptions as individuals, team members, and researchers. We pushed the boundaries of our own ideas, and we expanded our understandings. We came to the project with
conceptions about what a team is and what collaboration is. We worked together and found that our definitions were not the same and that our definitions changed. We also challenged the influence of the contextual factors that shaped the team. We negotiated new relationships and renegotiated them again and again. Hanna defined the process of collaboration in one meeting:

HF: I've been thinking of collaboration as a process. Well there's some sense in which it's a process, but it changes all the time. For me it really is about having a vision of what it means to respect other people's knowledge and to respect a kind of fundamental sense of the dignity of everybody who's involved in trying to work together and that it involves a process of negotiation and renegotiation and renegotiation that really has to do with where each of us are as individuals and where the systems are that we're trying to work within. And so it's another one of those things that you're always working towards but it's not something that I think some day I'm going to say, "Okay, now this is like the perfect collaboration process," it's like growing.

In this chapter I described the process that the Literacy Demonstration Project team went through to become collaborative. We began working together as a group of people who liked each other but without a clear definition of what we expected from the shared work. I presented the contextual factors that influenced the constitution of the research team, and how those translated into different roles and responsibilities.

Although it is possible that we could not have articulated our biases and expectations clearly in the beginning of the team's work, I believe that it would have been helpful to have had a conversation about how the context and our experiences shaped the kind of work we could do together. Research teams could benefit from having discussions throughout the research
process in which they revisit their definition of collaboration and its limitations. On these occasions, relationships could be explored, re-negotiated and adjusted to meet current realities.

I explored the crisis that arose in the team in the beginning of the analysis stage. For our team to survive and learn from that crisis, we were guided by our explicit commitment to an awareness of power and its appropriate sharing. This would not have been enough without flexibility and the will to change. Finally I delineated the new relationships in the team and gave one example of how the roles changed. The goal of this chapter was not to show a typical or a finished process, but to present an example of how collaboration is built throughout the research process.

Research teams are composed of people with different skills, different backgrounds, different social and institutional status, and sometimes different contractual obligations. These differences affect the opportunities team members have to participate. In our case, the institutional frame, time limitations, and skills, were factors that framed the fieldworkers involvement in the team. How these differences affect collaboration is still an open question. Can people with very different skills participate equally in a team? Can students and faculty members collaborate? Acknowledging these differences, though, appears to be essential in collaborative projects. These differences could be translated into different responsibilities according to people's skills, knowledge, and experience. Ultimately, people come together in a team to benefit from everybody's skills.
Thus, collaboration is not a given; research teams become collaborative. They become more or less collaborative, the move to create collaborative relationships is an open one.

We can always work towards a more collaborative relationship. As Hanna explained, collaboration is a vision that always leads us, but one that we can never be sure we have achieved. The significance of our struggle lies in the process as much at it lies in the product. While involved in building collaborative relationships, researchers' work is affected by it being carried out by a team. Chapter Five explores the ways in which ethnographic research changes when it is done by a research team.
Chapter Four described the transformation of collaborative relationships within the team. Drawing on the theoretical chapter I also looked at how settings, time, and skills influenced the constitution of the team. In this chapter I will argue that both data and researchers are affected by the collaborative process. Embarking on a collaborative process implies that the private space that researchers need to do the research is modified. Fieldnotes become more public - Pandora’s box is opened - and this affects the researchers’ reflexivity. Reflexivity, though, does not disappear. I argue that some of the reflexivity still happens in fieldnotes or in other more private spaces, and some occurs in the research team meetings. I then explore the threats to research team meetings as reflexive spaces. Specifically, I look at the inclusion of liaison fieldworkers and vulnerability as two possible problems in team research. Including liaison researchers may threaten the sense of privacy and may transform the research team meetings into fieldwork. I explore the consequences of this threat in terms of the issue of confidentiality. Research team meetings have to be protected to make sure that the team has the freedom to reflect. I expand this argument through an analysis of possible ways of protecting research team meetings. My conclusion in this chapter is that all of these issues affect this kind of research. Once one is aware of them, one can plan, understand, and support the
The analysis that follows is based on the assumption that reflexivity is, as described in Chapter Two, "the key to the development of both theory and methodology in social sciences" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 236). Particularly in ethnography, the researcher is the research instrument. Observations, interviews, and the experiences and ideas triggered by fieldwork constitute the data. Therefore it is necessary for the researcher to rigorously examine the generation of ideas and strictly monitor her effects on the data. By reflecting on the researcher's role, ethnographers produce interpretations. Reflecting on the ethnographer's role and on the data have traditionally been private processes. In this chapter I explore the ways a collective process of reflexivity converges with the traditional individual reflexivity, and how both are affected.

Pandora's box

Even when ethnography is carried out by a team, researchers are still the basic research instrument. Individuals go to the field, talk to people, participate, and observe. Regardless of their trust in the other team members and their use of the team meetings, researchers have to establish their own relationships in the field and try to make sense of their experiences. Traditionally, these processes take place in private spaces - usually fieldnotes, journals, and diaries. In the process of writing their notes, ethnographers interpret and reflect on their fieldwork. Although it is impossible to generalize, fieldnotes often draw on personal experiences and feelings that only later, in the analysis stage, can be connected to the data from the
sites (Jackson, 1990).

It is not very often that ethnographers share, or even let other ethnographers read, their notes. George Bond explains:

Fieldnotes are an anthropologist’s most sacred possession. They are personal property, a part of a world of private memories and experiences, failures and successes, insecurities and indecision. They are usually carefully tucked away in a safe place. To allow a colleague to examine them would be to open a Pandora’s box (Bond, 1990, p. 273).

In our team, fieldworkers were hired to do the fieldwork; they were not expected to be part of the analysis. So fieldworkers not only shared their fieldnotes with Hanna and Allison, but ‘released’ them to them. Furthermore, once they were written they belonged to the project and to the fieldworker. It did not make sense then to include very personal reflections because they would not mean the same thing to other readers, it also was something that people chose not to do in terms of protecting their privacy. As the roles shifted in the analysis stage and the graduate students got involved in analyzing and writing, team members read and coded each other’s fieldnotes. In one presentation that the team gave about the collaborative aspect of the project, Jane reflected on the effect that having shared our fieldnotes had on the level of reflexivity in her notes.

22 Allison also wrote fieldnotes but hers were shared only with Hanna. Although the original plan did not anticipate that fieldworkers would be sharing fieldnotes among themselves, this happened in an informal way. Specifically the graduate students shared their fieldnotes with the liaison fieldworkers with different intentions. Deborah read Jane’s fieldnotes and Jane read Deborah’s in an effort to help Deborah learn field technique. Mark also used Pat’s fieldnotes as a way to reflect on his own behaviour in some meetings.
JD: I think there really is a difference in not just how much you’re willing to let people read but how much you’re even gonna think the things that people might read. I am conscious that what I choose to say because I know that other people are going to read it, is different. There is more of a sense of presentation involved.

We realized, by the end of the analysis stage, that having written our fieldnotes with the awareness that they would be shared influenced what and how we wrote them. By that time there was not much we could do about the omissions that may have occurred in the fieldnotes except reflect on that. We included that reflection in the final report:

Even though the members of the research team produced fieldnotes which were meant to be shared, we were not deliberate in acknowledging the difference between the norm of ‘private’ fieldnotes which underlay our training and the reality of ‘public’ fieldnotes which underlay the experience of the project (Tom et al., 1994, p. 99).

One way this problem could have been lessened is by creating a way researchers could have kept private notes. Each team member could have kept a separate set of fieldnotes, or a personal diary where they would have a private space to reflect. It would then be the researcher’s responsibility to analyze these private notes and articulate their meaning for the team in the analysis stage.

If researchers admit that they do not write and think in the same way when their fieldnotes are to be shared, it does not necessarily follow that team research loses reflexivity. Even when researchers write more public fieldnotes, they still include their thoughts and reflections on their fieldnotes. In terms of the group’s reflexivity, this kind of thinking also happens in the research team meetings.
Research team meetings

Research team meetings in the Literacy Demonstration Project were originally thought of as an administrative and planning tool: a place to support fieldworkers and make sure everything was going on as expected. In the later stages of the research project, the meetings changed and became a place where we collected data, analyzed it, and reflected on the research process. In essence the team meetings were the times when the team materialized, physically, concretely. It was in the meetings that the team came together as a group.

As our meetings began, we sat around the table and chatted while members arrived. We talked about our studies, work, and families. Most of the time we had food to share. Team members took turns, without any formal planning (with the exception of two or three times that we planned to have lunch) to bring something to eat. Allison prepared an agenda for almost every meeting based on the topics that had emerged in the fieldnotes, or on issues that she and Hanna thought were necessary to discuss.

Usually we began with a round of descriptions of the activities we had done in the previous two weeks. This was an opportunity to raise questions and problems. Then we addressed the points on the agenda. Every team member had the chance to

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23 The allusion to data collection refers to the times when we "interviewed" Mark and Deborah during team meetings. I describe this process further in the second part of this chapter.

24 The tapes include this first chat because Hanna asked that we turn the tape recorder on. She felt this was a way of being closer to us by listening to comments about our week, our personal lives, and also about the fieldwork.
talk. Some participated more than others, depending on the topic and on our particular personalities. We had fun and we took care of each other by bringing a cup of hot tea or coffee to another team member, or carrying a baby around. The meetings usually ended with another round in which we shared our plans for the following two weeks.

There were many reasons why it was important for the content of the research team meetings not to go beyond the team members. The most important of these was that we were discussing issues that had been told to us in confidence. We promised participants that we would not tell what we talked about with people outside the research team, or to the liaison researchers. Second, there was a sense that a lot of our conversations were first attempts to understand what was going on in the sites. Our discussions were not clearly articulated and carefully validated presentations of information. The meetings instead were rich in hunches and impressions that were later checked with the data for validation. The third reason for the confidentiality of the meetings was to be able to talk freely about our feelings, frustrations and successes in the research.

I call the meetings the team's "collective private" space, the time that the research team had for reflection. This purpose of the research team meetings is parallel with that of notes for an individual ethnographer. Research team meetings can be understood as "collective fieldnotes" in which reflections, fears, analysis, data, and personal notes are interwoven in a particular pattern that most often can only be understood by those creating it.
Jean Jackson (1990) interviewed anthropologists to find out what they wrote in their fieldnotes and how they felt about them. She concluded that

If 'the field' is anthropology's version of both the promised land and an ordeal by fire, then fieldnotes symbolize what journeying to and returning from the field mean to us: the attachment, the identification, the uncertainty, the mystique, and, perhaps, above all, the ambivalence (1990, p. 33).

Jackson's conclusion does not limit the definition of fieldnotes to a certain form (written material), or content. I contend that much of what is ordinarily written in individual fieldnotes was spoken in our research team meetings. What is a monologue in journals becomes conversations in the meetings. That journey that Jackson refers to can be followed in the research team meetings. Presenting whole conversations as evidence of this claim would be expanding excessively the length of this thesis, but the quotes that I have presented in the previous chapter, and the ones that I present in this chapter, give an idea of how ideas evolved and got constructed during the meetings.

It is important to note that this argument does not suggest that research team meetings can substitute for individual fieldnotes. In our project, individual fieldnotes still yielded data and individual reflections. In their notes fieldworkers tried to make sense of their individual experiences in the field. They may or may not have included more personal reflection if the fieldnotes had not been shared. The project lost some of that

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There is an important difference though. Unless research team meetings are taped, there is no record of the conversation. And even if they are taped, if these tapes are not transcribed, they are very difficult to include in a traditional ethnographic analysis (see Chapter Two, methodology).
private reflexivity by having the fieldnotes shared.

The project also gained another kind of reflexivity - the team's reflexivity. The group produced their own collective understanding of the group's experiences; a collective reflexivity. In that sense research team meetings can be understood as collective fieldnotes, because they include observations and descriptions of the research process. Thus, the team is the research instrument that interprets the data.

Threats to reflexivity in research team meetings

I have argued that research team meetings are the team's fieldnotes, and that these are the spaces where the group reflects on the data and the process. Some conditions can threaten the collective space. In this section I explore some threats that arose in this project.

Including liaison researchers

We worked hard and consciously to keep the team meetings private research places. Research team meetings became a place where team members would share problems about the fieldwork, analyze data, and talk about their concerns. They were planned as a space to talk about the field, not as a field in themselves. Because our team included liaison researchers, however, we had to work out issues of confidentiality and in some ways behave as if the field was there because it was.

In the analysis that follows, it becomes clear how the purpose of the study influences the nature of the collaborative relationships between team members. As described in Chapter Two, different research purposes call for different relationships. The National Literacy Demonstration Project was an evaluation.
Therefore, it was necessary to establish relationships that would not compromise the team’s commitment to the study. The fact that there was information that had to be kept confidential was one consequence of the purpose of the study.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality "means that no one has access to individual data or the names of the participants except the researcher(s), and that the subjects know before they participate who will see the data. Confidentiality is assured by making certain that the data cannot be linked to individual subjects by name" (McMillan & Schumacher, 1989, pp. 189-99). Maintaining this confidentiality was a particular challenge for the team members because we included liaison fieldworkers in the team. It was difficult to keep identities from Mark and Deborah. Different cultural backgrounds, family situations, and opinions made it almost impossible to promise participants complete anonymity. Mark and Deborah knew the learners and their stories and could easily relate stories to particular learners or staff in their programs.

One of the first issues that we discussed as a team was how

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26Also, the fieldworkers were not expected to be part of the analysis. The promise of confidentiality was complex then because the fieldworkers were collecting data that they were not going to analyze. Fieldworkers were making promises about behaviour that was not their own. We could only promise that the information would not be shared with anybody outside the research team, and that it would not be published without the consent of the participant.

27An example of how participants were aware of their exposure is the comment that the secretary of one of the programs made to us. She was the only full time secretary in the program. Simply referring to "a person in the administrative role," would point the finger at her.
to protect participants' identities from the liaison fieldworkers. Our choices were either to keep the liaison researchers in the team meetings or, for the sake of confidentiality, to have some or most meetings without them. We raised that issue in the following discussion. We tried to understand the problem and to find a solution that would feel fair to everybody.

PD: Actually I was really feeling how important it was to be a team and if we can do it without wrecking confidentiality I would rather go the team way than not doing it that way.

LH: We could talk in a generalized level without using names.

AT: We can hold discussions in a general enough level so that we don't have to exclude Mark and Deborah. My concern is that we don't come up with a system that cuts Mark and Deborah out without it being a topic that we are discussing.

MM: I was thinking that if they [the participants] know that we are part of this they may feel "Well they are going to find out because they are part of this team so no matter what Lyn says to me I'm not really gonna tell her what I want to tell her because I know Mark's part of this."

AT: I can't think of a solution to that aside from actually kicking you off the team and I am not going to do that. I mean I think we just have to be as clear as we can when we talk to people that if they tell us [something] it will only go that far and be excruciatingly careful in these meetings to maintain that confidentiality that we promised and to even catch ourselves or even catch each other when it starts to get too close to that point and keep an eye on it. Let's say that Sam tells me something. I may bring what Sam says to the meeting but I won't say Sam said it. It's something that needs to keep coming up. And as it becomes more clear that Mark and Deborah are part of the research effort we have to make clear to people that "if you don't tell Mark and Deborah this we are not going to tell them either."

We chose to include Mark and Deborah in every meeting except in some of the analysis meetings (see below).²⁸ Essentially, we

²⁸It is my feeling that Mark and Deborah seemed to care less about having to leave the room or not participating in one or several meetings than the rest of us cared about having to exclude them. They were as worried as the rest of the team members about
chose to adhere to the principle of inclusion over the concern for inspiring total trust from participants. We never thought that the inclusion of the liaison fieldworkers would not affect the project. We knew that it was a trade-off. Even if we had excluded the liaison researchers from the meetings, participants would not necessarily have known that, and it might not have made any difference for them. We just took it as a fact that it would have an impact on the research and tried to reflect on how it did affect the process and product of the research. But the fact that we could not conceal the identities of the learners may have affected the ideas we brought to the meetings in a way that we were not aware of.

Another confidentiality issue that surfaced in the research team meetings related to the inclusion of the liaison researchers was that we also had to deal with the issue of liaison researchers as potential conduits to the programs. Liaison researchers had a double responsibility: to their own programs and to the research project. It made their task difficult. One of their challenges was to be able to participate in the research team meetings and keep the information, questions, and problems making sure the participants talked to the graduate students without fear of being recognized. On one occasion we excluded Deborah from a team meeting, and it was only for a short period. This was needed because Allison wanted to share some information with the research team that involved one learner in the program in which Deborah works. Even though it had been agreed that this could happen, we all felt awkward. We offered Deborah muffins and coffee and made sure she had a place to go. When Deborah returned to the room Allison "apologized" and explained, again, the reason why she had to be excused. On another occasion Mark offered to leave the room so we could share the name of the person we were talking about. The rest of the team thought that was not necessary. The conversation continued without the use of names.
we were facing to themselves. This issue was raised in one team meeting.

AT: We don’t want to turn into the way that people tell him [Mark] things. Because we don’t want to become conduits. Because then people think ‘You are a conduit for this. I see this channel working! How do I know when you close the door?’ I think that just having Mark and Deborah on the research team is acting in a way that raises questions about that. So we need to make sure that everything here, in this research team meeting is kept confidential. I think this is going to be hard for Deborah and Mark when Lee and Gary [program directors] want to know how it’s going.

Once this issue was discussed in a research team meeting, Mark and Deborah watched their comments to the program directors. It did not make their work easier.

The presence of the field

On some occasions, the research team meetings unconsciously shifted and became a time of data collection. This happened when the liaison fieldworkers explained aspects of the programs, or when they elaborated on their own philosophies as teachers. In these situations some of the other team members made sure that the tape was running or began to take notes. Most of the times there were a few questions asked as in an interview. These were precious times. Nobody wanted to miss the opportunity to record the thoughts of a teacher who was elaborating and reflecting on program approaches and teaching philosophies.

On the other hand, these were times in which the focus of the meeting got blurred. In one team meeting Hanna was aware of this process and called the team members’ attention to it. She said "I’m feeling a little uncomfortable. I’m feeling that this has turned into a group interview of Mark." The feeling that Hanna had of being uncomfortable in that situation was similar to
a feeling that Jane expressed almost at the end of the project. She said that she had felt all along that the research team meetings were another fieldwork time for her. Deborah represented the program to her and because of that she could never feel that the research team meetings were a place in which she could relax and express her ideas freely.

JD: My sense of being in the research meetings, because of the presence of the liaison people there, was like I was in the field again. I don’t know that it felt unsafe as in feeling dangerous but it felt like there was a certain kind of way that I watched my consciousness. And that there were things that I didn’t think, there were things that I didn’t critique, there were things that I didn’t pay attention to because I was sort of being in the field being in the research meetings. The field was always there and the person who represented the field was Deborah.

During the data analysis stage the research team held meetings without the liaison fieldworkers. The main reason for doing this was to keep information confidential. Another purpose for having these meetings was that we could reflect on some of the impacts that the inclusion of the liaison researchers had on the research team. Although discussions on this topic were also done with the liaison researchers, it was clear that the issues discussed were different. What follows is a quote from one of the team meetings that we held without the liaison fieldworkers. This quote illustrates the care that we took in understanding the relationships and the final goal that we were pursuing in this discussion. These were not gossip conversations, the purpose was to reflect on our experience so that we could come up with recommendations to be included in the reports. We saw this as a necessary step to produce certain kinds of understandings that we would not have had if the liaison researchers had been present.
HF: It needs to be understood, it needs just to be said that the conversation is totally confidential. It was important to us to schedule a time to be able to talk about the programs without Mark and Deborah here to be able to begin to put stuff out there without needing to worry about compromising confidentiality that has been promised to informants.

AT: Or hurting feelings or any of that. I mean you can be bashed or mad or disliking people or whatever and then we'll work to figure out what it means in terms of the research.

HF: And also, I just want to reinforce the way Allison just put it, that this stuff gets turned into questions. It gets turned into what we want to interrogate the data for.

Including participants as researchers has been one way in which researchers have tried to answer moral questions about the role that "the researched" play in producing knowledge about themselves. It is clear that their presence brings benefits to the investigation; incorporating an insiders' perspective and facilitating relationships with the sites are only some of the benefits. But their inclusion also raises methodological, ethical, and theoretical questions. In terms of confidentiality, there is a concern that participants will feel that their anonymity cannot be maintained, and there is an extra burden for the liaison to not become a conduit between the research team and the program. In terms of their actual presence in the team meetings I have described how some team members felt that the liaison researchers represented the field and that their presence inhibited the team members' ability to reflect in a relaxed atmosphere. At the least, their presence shaped the atmosphere in which reflection took place.

Deciding whether or not to include liaison researchers is a decision that has to be taken carefully, weighing advantages and disadvantages. If a team is to include people from the sites,
then some measures to protect the capability of the team to reflect have to be taken. Holding some meetings without the liaison fieldworkers may be an option, although this might raise issues about inclusivity within the team. The main issue here is to be aware of the threats that including liaison researchers in every activity presents to the research process.

**Vulnerability, comparison, and trust**

When people work together in research teams they make themselves vulnerable to other team members. Sharing fieldnotes, "half-baked ideas," frustrations, and questions puts people in a vulnerable position. At the same time, working with others allows for people to compare themselves. Different abilities can be interpreted in a judgemental, evaluative way. These situations can inhibit the capacity for reflection in a team.

One way in which we made ourselves vulnerable was by comparing ourselves to each other. In research carried out by a team there is a shared topic, approach, and same or similar sites, and participants. In our case we were all working at two similar sites, all the fieldworkers were working twelve hours a week, talking to people in the same or similar sites, and writing fieldnotes. It was easy to compare personal styles, approaches, and even the length of our fieldnotes. Anne thought her writing was "less theoretical" than Pat's. Jane felt she was a "failure" because the consulting groups did not work in the site where she was working as well as they did at the other site. Lyn and Marina did not get the same reaction from teachers and learners as did
Pat and Anne who were usually asked for help.\textsuperscript{29}

Instead of accepting that these were just different styles, personalities, and contexts, we questioned ourselves and translated those differences into a scale in which one style or personality type was better than the other. We ranked ourselves in that scale. Although we talked about how wrong that was and how that undermined our self esteem, we could not help doing it.

It was clear for most of the team members that comparing ourselves to others is a cultural behaviour that we have learned. It is in the basis of the idea of competition, it is not good enough to be doing good work, it has to be better than other people's work. Anne and Hanna articulated this in one meeting.

AM: I think it's this nasty North American, well Northern European thing, you know, if somebody's good, then I'm bad.

HF: If someone's good and doing something different from you then that means that you can't be good, too.

The academic world is not an exception. On the contrary, it might be one of the best examples of how competition works. Students are always marked compared to others, they are ranked, for scholarships and for jobs, and within classes. The Literacy Demonstration Project was linked in more than one way to the University of British Columbia. The institution provided administrative support for the project, and most of the researchers were part of it. We met at the university and used

\textsuperscript{29}Not only did we compare ourselves to each other as individuals, we also did so as sub-groups. During the analysis stage when the team divided into two sub-teams there were comments about one group being "better" than the other because of how they were working. Basically there was a different way of proceeding in writing the reports. For a more detailed description see Tom et al., 1994, pp. 133-135.
its facilities. This was another way in which the institutional setting influenced the relationships between team members. We were all affected by the university's rules and values.

It was mostly the graduate students who were comparing themselves to the others. The liaison fieldworkers had a different approach. Although they still perceived the differences between their work and the graduate students, particularly in terms of research skills, they acknowledged that being different did not mean being a better researcher or professional. They made an analogy between what the graduate students were feeling and how the learners in the literacy programs felt.

DL: I think it's hard to compare, because you are you and I am I. So it's hard to see what you wrote, I think it's completely different to what I wrote, because we are in a different position. That's how we see the learners in our class [react].

MM: At some point you have to have faith in yourself, you have to trust yourself. You just have to. You know that at the end there will be something, but I can't tell you what it's going to be. You're going to have to help me tell you what that's going to be, and I can't tell you without you, and we're not going to know until we get there. I mean, you were chosen for some reason.

Another way research team members are exposed is when they share drafts of writing. In an academic world where there is not much place for constructive criticism, sharing of these drafts is a courageous act that makes people feel very exposed. This kind of vulnerability, though, is unavoidable in a collaborative research team because team members are producing ideas together. The fundamental issue here is to acknowledge these feelings.

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30For the differences in the graduate students and the liaison fieldworkers' writing see Tom et al., 1994, pp. 106-110.
In our project, research team members were exposed in additional ways by sharing fieldnotes with the co-investigators. Fieldnotes are highly personal, they include descriptions and feelings that are not usually shared. In our case the vulnerability was heightened by the fact that we did not know Hanna very well, she did not live in Vancouver, and we saw her very seldom. Hanna talked about this.

HF: And by sending your fieldnotes to me, you do make yourselves vulnerable to me, both through your notes and through the reflections that you write at the end of your notes, where you really open yourself up about what you see, and the kinds of questions that you ask. And this is a process that does depend on trust, and to have as little experience with me as you have, and have to put yourselves in that kind of vulnerable position in relation to me, I think is a difficult thing.

Not only did Hanna read the fieldnotes, but she received a copy of the research team meeting tapes every week. She was being a silent member, almost an observer, of the team. In more than one occasion we felt that she knew what we were doing, saying and thinking, and we knew nothing of what she was doing, saying, or thinking.\(^{31}\) In our relationship with Hanna the research team members were very vulnerable.

**Protecting research team meetings**

The literature refers to the difficulties of team research, but there is general agreement that as a whole, and considering certain necessary conditions, this approach has major benefits for research. They emphasize how the inclusion of multiple points of view can strengthen research. Crow, Levine, and Nager

\(^{31}\)On one occasion we raised this issue. With an intent to overcome these feelings of vulnerability, Hanna responded with a description of how she works.
(1992) consider the problems they encountered while doing an interdisciplinary study. They conclude that, regardless of the difficulties, teaming in qualitative research enhanced the quality of their work. Liggett, Glesne, Johnston, Brody-Hasazi, and Schattman (1994) agree. They conclude that,

> From formulation of the interview protocol to data analysis, from questions of access to writing the present paper, every stage of our research was different and, we think, better than what any one person could have done alone (p.87).

It appears as if the authors are referring to the degree of reflexivity that is gained in doing team research. Lather (1986) also refers to this aspect of team research when she writes that "this [research] was a team effort so one can assume a degree of reflexivity" (p. 75).

I have presented the threats that collaborative research brings to a team's capacity to reflect. Some threats arise because there are changes from the traditional "solo" model of research. Others are part of the team structure of collaborative work. In this section I analyze the factors that facilitate reflection in a research team meeting: trust and feedback. Working in a collaborative team does not prevent people from feeling vulnerable. Team members feel exposed, but what is characteristic of a truly collaborative process is that they can still engage in the group activities because they trust the other team members. Trusting each other helps members deal with the feelings of vulnerability. Although explicit references to issues of trust in the research team meeting tapes are not common, the feeling of trust among the team members emerged in every team meeting as a way of allowing for certain topics to be
discussed, or certain words to be used.

From the time the research team was formed, trust played a main role in the interactions. Allison chose the graduate students from her ethnography class, based mainly on two criteria: their skills in ethnography and how much she could trust them. Although it was not articulated at the time, in retrospect, I think that "trust" included at least three different notions. First, there was the feeling that we could rely on each other for emotional and intellectual support. Second, there was a shared understanding of research, that came mainly from having been (partly) trained by Allison. Third, there was a common commitment to working together and what that work meant.

As the team began working and setting up the routines, Allison brought up the issue of trust when talking about the log of hours. "I trust you in how you spend your time; the intention [of keeping a log] is not to be sure you work 12 hours but to have an idea of how long it takes to do each activity."

This attitude stressed the importance of trust among research team members. We were all working together and there was no need for one of us to check or make sure that the others were doing their jobs. When a group of people works collaboratively there needs to be a sense that everyone is doing what they should be doing, what they feel is the best for the project. Mark commented,

I think that along with respect, comes trust. You have to trust that the people that you’re working with are doing the right thing. You don’t have to think that you’ve got something to protect in this group, and that somebody else might steal a little of that or all of it or whatever. You
have to trust that what they’re going to do is going to to be to the best of their ability to meet our common vision.

I believe that trust is the basic net supporting the collaborative process. Team members need to trust that questioning is not a challenge but a constructive exercise, that they do not have to worry about the words they are using, that the other members will not take advantage of vulnerable situations. Even when the trusting relationship exists, there are other conditions that can affect the way researchers feel about their work, and consequently their ability to reflect in the group.

Our team was composed of graduate students, teachers from the sites, one university professor, and one expert in literacy. The differences in roles, knowledge, and experience, and the fact that the fieldworkers were not reading each others' notes systematically promoted feelings of insecurity, specifically among the graduate students. They felt that a way of overcoming that feeling was to get feedback from the co-investigators. The next quote illustrates the insecurity of the graduate students and their request for feedback.

MN: How do I know if I’m doing the correct thing, I don’t know. I need that sense of someone saying you’re on track or something like that.
JD: If [the work is] good, what’s so good about it?
AT: Each of your notes, each set of notes is different but not one better than the other. People are looking at very different things, and doing very different things, but it doesn’t mean that somebody’s got it and somebody else hasn’t.
LH: I’ll speak for myself. I won’t say "we." I need strokes. And actually being told there are no problems isn’t the same as being told something constructive. I mean I would reduce it to a very simple level. Because I think we’ve gone through this stuff, I’m competent, I can do all this stuff, but I still like strokes. It’s like
writing a dialogue journal, it's fine to write a journal, but you need feedback.

AM: And although we're all competent professionals, we still like strokes, too. When you're grown up you don't get it.

Following the experience of this team I argue that it is important for research team members to receive feedback on their work on a continual basis. This could help team members deal with their different styles as such: different, not better or worse.

**Conclusions**

Collaborative teams go through a process of building their working relationships that affects the research and the researchers. Overlooking these processes can hinder the research process and its consequent product. Collaborative relationships are built during the study and they require time, attention, and energy so they are built in a way that is useful to the project.

In this chapter I have suggested that the collaborative team building can be supported by 1) creating a space for each fieldworker to reflect privately, such as a personal journal or a separate set of fieldnotes in which she can express more intimate feelings and reflections; 2) regarding research team meetings as collective reflections where the team makes sense of the data; 3) making provisions to acknowledge team meetings as data by taping and transcribing the meetings, and connecting the transcripts to the other sources of data; 4) creating structures that build on people's strength and trust in each other, and giving continuous feedback to researchers; and 5) evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of including liaison researchers, and making provisions for that inclusion (or exclusion).
When research is done by a collaborative team, it is important to acknowledge the particular processes and experiences that are involved. Basically, meetings appear as the most distinctive characteristic of team research. Regarding the meetings as the time where the group materializes; where collective reflection occurs, is a necessary step towards understanding the essence of collaborative team research. In the next chapter I elaborate on the importance of acknowledging team research as a specific and differentiated research approach.
CHAPTER SIX:  
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this thesis I have argued that collaboration is built through common work, and that embarking on a collaborative process has consequences for the research project. In this chapter I will discuss the conclusions that at this point deserve a more detailed scrutiny, present some recommendations for collaborative research practice, and open some questions for future research.

In the previous chapters I have explored the meaning and impacts of team research. I tried to understand how team research differs from other approaches. I concluded that taking a team approach to doing research implies that the research tasks and processes will be different than if a more traditional approach is taken. Two main factors characterise these differences: collaborative relationships are built during the research, and the team approach affects the project’s results. In the following sections, I look at each of these statements in more detail.

Collaboration is a vision

When researchers embark on a collaborative project, they have ideas about how they want their relationships to look. These ideas are based on assumptions about the value of group work, about respect for each other and each other’s work, and about sharing control. In turn, these notions influence the relationships that researchers build during the research. But these ideals will also change, influenced by contextual factors
and by the notions that other team members bring into the collaborative relationships. Collaborative relationships are the result of continuous negotiations and renegotiations between individual ideas, possibilities and contextual influences. Therefore, it can be said that collaboration is both a vision and the process of trying to achieve that vision. And because we can never be sure that we have achieved the vision, we keep on working towards it.

Collaborative relationships are constructed through the research. Each research team needs to work out their own collaborative structure to find the one that best suits the shared vision of collaboration, members' skills and possibilities, and the contextual constraints. Once one understands that collaborative relationships are constructed in a context, one can acknowledge that context, and be prepared for its influence.

Tom (1995a) points at five elements of the context that influence collaborative relationships. This thesis shows that in team research three elements are most important - settings, skills, and confidentiality. Settings influence relationships through institutional values and the responsibilities imposed on the members and on the team. Contract situations also limit the ways team members can participate. The amount of time that each member is required by contract to put into the work, and the ultimate responsibility for the final product, are some of the restrictions that a contract can impose on collaborative relations in a team.

Skill is another aspect of the context that affects the way
relationships will be constructed. Each member brings her own philosophy, definitions, biases, expectations, and previous experiences to the team. This background frames members' opportunities and preparedness for participation. In terms of project-specific knowledge and experience, most of the time, a professor can bring a richer background of experience in research than a student, for example. Likewise, a community member who has been involved in several similar projects can bring the voice of experience to a group of graduate students.

The notion of confidentiality that team members are familiar with, and the guidelines that institutions require, influence the relationships that university members built with liaison researchers. Because traditional understandings of confidentiality are difficult to sustain, team members confront the challenge of finding appropriate ways of dealing with ethical guidelines from the academic institution and with participants preferences and needs.

In team research, the purpose of the research and the time frame affect collaborative relationships. But the other three aspects of the context described by Tom (1995a), play a more significant and direct role in influencing how team members will relate to each other.

Working towards the vision

It has to be noted that what can be appropriate at one point in the research may prove to be inappropriate at another point. In the National Literacy Demonstration Project team, we began the research with one set of roles which proved to be unsuitable when we moved to the analysis stage. Researchers must plan to
accommodate changing roles and responsibilities within the team. Flexibility has to be planned into the structures. This flexibility is not a new requirement for ethnographic projects. As Hammersley and Atkinson note, in ethnographic designs "the strategy and even direction of the research can be changed relatively easily, in line with changing assessments of what is required by the process of theory construction" (1983, p. 24). Assessing the team's relations could be understood as another aspect of the general assessment. Flexibility to change both the research plan and the way team members work together to achieve the research plan are fundamental to collaborative ethnographic work.

Some researchers (Liggett et al., 1994) have not found it necessary to discuss "collaboration" to be able to collaborate with each other. I argue, though, that it is useful to arrange to have this conversation systematically through a continuous, or at least periodic, reflection on the team's collaborative relationships, and how the designed structures fit the current situation. By making expectations explicit, team members can negotiate and design new, more appropriate, organizations and distribution of responsibilities.

Certain points in the development of the research are particularly relevant times to address the structures of collaborative relationships. At the beginning of the project it seems to be necessary to acknowledge the constraints and freedoms that the team as a whole has, and to name the roles and responsibilities for each team member. Another crucial time in research, is when most of the data collection is done and
researchers move into an intensive analysis phase. At this time, team members should have a better idea of their object of study, and of their commitment to the research. Also, it may happen that by this point team members’ out-of-the-team duties have changed and team members consequently want to change their roles in the project. Writing up the results seems to be another suitable time to revisit the previous structures of the team. It may also prove to be useful at this point, particularly if it has not been done before, to address differences in needs and rewards among team members. Academic researchers may need to publish the results in journals while practitioners may need another kind of practical resource.

The previous suggestion of crucial points in the development of research projects does not eliminate other times of discussion. Teams go through different phases, and particular events call for an honest dialogue about how the team structures are accommodating collaborative relationships, the project’s demands, and individual needs.

As much as collaborative teams can accommodate different perspectives, team members have to agree on some basic ideas. Otherwise, competing agendas may become a major obstacle in collaborative relationships. Members who have more authority than others need to realize that working on a collaborative team may mean that they may have to let go of some of their authority at some point. There will almost certainly be an increasing need to share responsibilities and authority with the rest of the group. The person with greater authority does not make this decision alone; as the team matures and changes, the whole team
It needs to be said, too, that contextual factors limit how collaborative a team can become. Professors and students can work together, but the collaborative relationship they can build is restricted by the power differential between them and by other institutional factors. Research contracts limit the amount and type of participation that each member can have in the project. Status differences, informal traditions, and explicit policies of higher education institutions present an important obstacle that cannot be denied. In one team meeting, for example, Allison referred to this obstacle when talking about shared authorship. She explained how she struggled with that issue.

"AT: And actually when you look at sharing authorship on the reports, I think there is a distortion in my own thinking which is the fear about getting tenure. And the fact that, oh! this is horrible, this report isn't going to count all that much on my tenure decision anyway. Because it's not refereed and so it comes in as a little category that is very low status. But then, to cut its status again by somebody saying, "Well she just did this with a bunch of students," it's like "When am I ever going to get any of the things that they count"! This is an issue about the structure within which we do the kind of work.

Allison was describing how the values of institutions affect collaborative work.

Despite the limits that context puts on collaborative relationships, it is important to remember that there is always some space to change. Collaboration is about pushing those restrictions to make as much space as possible for the collaborative relationships to develop and succeed. When I say "pushing the limits," I am not only referring to concrete constraints that teams and people encounter. There are limits in the way people perceive the space available for change. In the
National Literacy Demonstration Project we had to push the boundaries of both the contexts and our own conceptions. Hanna and Allison had to make a choice between producing a report with their names, or to include the team members' names. I, for example, had to change the way I perceived faculty's involvement in a research team and understand that they were learning with us.

**Doing research in a team affects the project's results**

Doing team research affects the research. Traditionally private spaces, such as fieldnotes, are shared and consequently the reflexivity in fieldnotes changes. Research team meetings, though, are high in a collective kind of reflexivity. This reflexivity happens in the interactions among team members where ideas build on one another. Therefore it is crucial to regard research team meetings as fundamental elements of team research. Research team meetings - the place where the team works together - should be acknowledged and protected.

Different strategies can be implemented to acknowledge the team's space: a) allocating enough resources to the meetings, b) protecting the confidentiality of conversations, c) providing continuous feedback, and d) using research team meetings as data by taping and transcribing the tapes.

**Allocating enough resources for the meetings**

In research, time and money are scarce and early planning and budgeting are important times to protect resources for meetings. In the data collection phase of the National Literacy Demonstration Project, team meetings were perceived as an administrative event. From that perspective, the design did not
anticipate the need for the team to meet more often than once or twice a month. Once it became evident that the research team meetings were the times when all of the research processes occurred in a condensed form - data collection, data analysis, reflection, and synthesis - it was clear that the team meetings were one of the project’s priorities.

It also became clear by then that the team needed to meet, not only for administrative purposes but for team building purposes as well. If collaborative relationships are built through the research, then there have to be opportunities to build it. Research team meetings offer one central opportunity for team building.

**Protecting confidentiality**

Research team meetings should be times where researchers can feel free to comment on any event in the field, and to elaborate ideas without concerns about how people in the field will understand these thoughts. This climate has to be protected as a trusting and supportive environment. Conversation, discussions, and opinions should be kept within the research team members and not filter to participants or the site in any way.

Maintaining this kind of environment can be a problem when the team includes participants from the field. The presence of liaison fieldworkers in the National Literacy Demonstration Project made some of the other fieldworkers feel that there was no clear differentiation between being in the field and being in the research team meetings. This in turn affected the freedom to reflect in the meetings. The benefits and drawbacks of including participants must be carefully weighed.
Providing continuous feedback

When people work together they tend to compare their work. This may give rise to feelings of insecurity. This is particularly important when the team is formed by students and faculty. The professor holds a responsibility for the students' learning and it is understood that she is more knowledgeable and experienced than the students. Most of the time it is the faculty member who provides the standard of what is good work. In these cases systematic and continuous feedback from the faculty member may be a way of reassuring student researchers of the quality of their work. It also provides opportunities for ongoing discussions of research methodology and the continual improvement of all team members' research skills.

Use of the research team meetings

I have argued that research team meetings are the collective fieldnotes of the team. Using research team meetings means that these spaces are acknowledged as team building times. But, as in any other fieldnotes, the content of the meetings is part of the data and analysis that the project uses. These fieldnotes, though, are in the form of conversations. Therefore, it is necessary to find appropriate ways of recording them to make sure that they are used. Taking minutes might be an option. Our experience was that this was difficult. Unless the minute taker is experienced in that task, a lot of discussions can be lost. It is also difficult to make decisions during the meeting about what is important and what is not. In addition, it is difficult to participate and take minutes, so the minute taker's participation in the meeting is diminished. Taping the meetings
appears to be, at this point, the most efficient way of recording
the discussions.

The literature on collaborative research argues for more
collaboration between academic researchers and practitioners or
community members mostly from a moral perspective. These authors
(Gitlin, 1990, Lather, 1986, 1991) argue that research should
include those it is about. But the nature of the thinking itself
changes in collaborative work, and therefore collaboration also
has to be analyzed in terms of its contribution to meaningful and
rigorous research. Not acknowledging the challenges that
collaboration presents does not make them disappear. By
addressing and naming the problems, researchers can strengthen
this research approach. In this thesis I have addressed some of
the complications that the National Literacy Demonstration
Project research team had to deal with. In the next paragraph I
present other problems that call for more research.

Contributions to future research

In this section I look at some topics that still need to be
explored in the area of collaborative team research. First, I
present the methodological problem of dealing with taped data.
Second, I open questions about the differences between team
claims and individual claims to knowledge. Finally I describe
potential future research in the educational processes that
collaborative research teams involve.

The form of the data

I have argued that research team meetings have to be used in
order gain most benefit from the team approach. I have also
suggested that taping the meetings seems to be the most
appropriate way of capturing these interactions. So far, I have not recommended any particular way of dealing with the taped data. I do not think this is a question that has been fully addressed in terms of advantages and disadvantages. I did not use transcriptions to analyze the data for this thesis, and to support that decision I have argued that there is no reason to believe that either transcripts or tapes are "more real" than the other. They are both forms of representing the data.

Using taped data opened new challenges and questions about how to analyze data. By keeping the data in its "original" form, I gained the richness of the conversations, tones, intonations, accents, and even tensions that occurred during the meetings. For example, when a conversation stopped for a few minutes, I could interpret that silence according to the tones and topics that were being discussed. I could not have done that with transcriptions because in transcripts, silences are not usually effectively represented. I "felt the meeting" when listening to the tapes and heard its sounds, noises and rhythms.

I also faced some real challenges. Handling taped data is very complicated. In practical terms, retrieving a paragraph from a transcription can be much easier than finding a specific portion of a tape, especially if the technology one uses is primitive. I spent endless hours going through the tapes trying to find particular discussions, sentences, or interactions.

In addition, because I have been trained in the tradition of written ethnography I was insecure about analyzing taped data. Ethnography is traditionally a methodology that uses writing and written notes as its main source of data. I found myself
transcribing parts of interactions to make sure I was doing an accurate analysis.

The question of how to analyze taped data is part of a larger discussion about what is considered to be data. I have briefly explored this discussion in Chapter Two. At this point it is relevant to present some questions and suggestions for future research. I believe the basic questions underlying this examination are "what is data? Is it the tapes? Is it the transcripts? Would we have 'more accurate' data had I video taped the meetings?" The challenge of interpreting that data still remains. Ultimately, the data is our interpretation of events, words, and interactions. But how to interpret data that is in different forms is still an open question. How do we capture and interpret tones? What do we lose when we transcribe tapes? What do we gain? These are all interesting questions that point to areas not yet explored.

**Team research claims**

How are team research claims to knowledge different from individual research conclusions? What do teams bring to interpretations and analyses? One critical response to these questions lies in the inclusion of multiple perspectives. In a research team where all the team members are looking at the same problem, understanding is enriched by the multiple points of view. But there are still questions about how those perspectives converge into whole research conclusions, and how those claims are different from an enumeration of the claims of each individual team member. With the emergence of postmodern thought and its emphasis on multiple realities and perspectives, team
research may become a integral part of the paradigm, a fundamental research approach.

**Educational aspects in collaborative team research**

This thesis also reveals another area for future research - the educational processes within collaborative research. I believe that we need to regard collaborative research as a form of educational practice. Relationships between people are consequences of shared processes where learning opportunities exist. The more use we make of these opportunities, the better chance the collaborative process has to succeed. The constitution of a working group, the involvement of graduate students, and the inclusion of the researched in a research team are all potential educational processes that have to be planned carefully and given thoughtful attention.

How do collaborative relationships get built? What are the skills that people need to be part of a team? Can we teach people to be effective team members? What do researchers trained to do research on their own need to learn to work together collaboratively? By looking at collaborative relationships among team members, it may be possible to identify skills and abilities necessary in team research. Researchers could then be trained in these tasks to become more effective team members.

These questions point at another educational aspect of collaborative research: how do we teach research? The project described in this thesis could be studied as a model of training graduate students in research. What are the skills that fieldworkers learn in this environment? Is this an appropriate way of learning them? What are the advantages of learning to do
research in a real research team in contrast to taking courses on research methodology? And yet, what is the effect of including graduate students in research teams?

Being fieldworkers in the National Literacy Demonstration Project affected the graduate students' performance as students. The most apparent consequence was that it delayed, for most of us, our degree completion. But we also had an invaluable experience; we learned research skills in a concrete and authentic research project. Allison also struggled as she tried to support those processes from two different roles: advisor and employer. The project was also affected by having graduate students on the team. Graduate students could work limited hours for the project, and the fieldworkers had to split their energy between their academic tasks and the research. So what are the consequences of including graduate students in research teams? What do students gain? What do they lose? What are the repercussions on their out-of-the-team roles?

Research is also a powerful tool. It can help "research subjects" understand how something works, what forces influence and direct their context and their own behaviour, and find ways to change their situation. But including the researched in teams means that they will have to be trained in research skills. How do we do that while at the same time acknowledging that their way of knowing is different from, but as valid as the academic way of knowing? From my perspective, the involvement of the researched in research that is about them is a crucial issue in any investigation. But what form does that involvement assume? What are the consequences of involving the researched? Can we include
them as team members without acknowledging the differences? How
do we ensure that they participate fully in the different
research tasks? What are the learning tasks involved in working
across university / community - participant cultures? These are
all exciting questions that I intend to explore in the future.

Deciding to do collaborative team research is not simply
doing research by existing methods with more people. It is a
different methodology. Research done by a team is different from
"solo" research. In this thesis I have attempted to explore some
of these characteristics. People need time and opportunities to
create working relationships. Teams need time to emerge and work
as teams. It is clear then, that if one embarks on a team
research project, one needs to acknowledge the peculiarities of
the methodology and take advantage of the distinctive
contributions of a group working together, otherwise it is not
collaborative, and it is not team research.
Bibliographical References


