Research Collaboration: Relationships and Praxis

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RESEARCH COLLABORATION: RELATIONSHIPS AND PRAXIS
BOLD VISIONS IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
Volume 19

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Research Collaboration: Relationships and Praxis

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1. STUDYING RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS

This introductory chapter contextualizes the book by referring to increasing trends and pressures for researchers to collaborate, distinguishing different forms of collaboration and styles of research into research collaboration. More importantly, it begins the challenge of theorizing research collaboration. By featuring an emphasis on solidarity and emotional energy, as well as considering particular dialectical approaches to understanding collaboration, this collection of contributions set it apart from other major publications on collaboration. The structure of the sections and sequence of the chapters are then described in the book overview near the end of the chapter.

RESEARCH COLLABORATION: A COMMON YET UNDERTHEORIZED PRACTICE

Several years ago a magazine advertisement for an international company promoting IT solutions for sharing information between business partners caught my eye. Moving objects (i.e., cars and people) were blurred in the rather dull photograph of shades of grey and brown. This had the effect of leading my eye directly to the focused image of a stationary and solemn-looking business executive holding a placard with the red caption: “COLLABORATE OR DIE.” Just as the advertisement highlighted how important it was for business partners to collaborate for their survival in a global economy, research policy and practices have shifted from supporting lone researchers working in isolation to larger teams, often involving either international or interdisciplinary researchers or both, particularly in the sciences. Cooperative Research Centers (CRCs) have formed to manage interdisciplinary-research projects in Australia, and the Commonwealth government’s Australian Research Council (ARC) promotes international research collaborations in one of the research-grant programs under its control.

In the context of government rewards for increased productivity and encouragement of collaborative research projects there has been an increasing trend for researchers to collaborate in recent times (Ritchie & Rigano, 2007). While Morrison, Dobbie and McDonald (2003) noted that “collaboration is now the dominant form of research among all scientists” in New Zealand (p. 276), Phelan, Anderson and Bourke’s (2000) bibliometric analysis of Australian educational research reported that “most universities undertake a substantial amount of collaboration and, in general, the amount of collaboration has jumped substantially in recent years” (p. 635). This trend is not constrained to Australia and New Zealand. Even though multiple authorship is a crude indicator of collaborative-research activity, a cursory inspection of the table of contents of the
American Educational Research Journal over four decades, for example, shows that collaboration, as reflected in co-authorship, has indeed increased (i.e., the proportion of co-authored articles increased from about one half in 1965 to about three quarters in 2005).

The reasons researchers give to explain their participation in research collaborations are varied. Collaborative-research teams have the potential of addressing complex social problems by bringing together researchers with different expertise and perspectives; providing a supportive climate that encourages creativity and risk taking; and distributing work loads to enhance motivation and productivity (Ritchie & Rigano, 2007). For the novice researcher, collaborating with established researchers can build confidence through the in-built support structure that in turn might help overcome any psychological and logistical barriers that may be associated with initiating new projects (Paré & Larner, 2004).

Collaboration is so entrenched in research practices, Morrison et al. (2003) recognized “[t]he issue is no longer whether collaboration is common or even dominant but how the practice is operating, among whom and to what effect” (p. 284). It is surprising then that collaborative practices and relational dynamics in particular have been overlooked in most discussions on methodological issues (Wasser & Bresler, 1996) and theoretical accounts of collaborative research (Creamer, 2004). John-Steiner, Weber and Minnis (1998) noted that few studies provide penetrating analyses of collaborative-research practices, while John-Steiner (2000) also declared that less is known about collaborative-research relationships in the social sciences (e.g., education) than the natural sciences.

Self-interrogations of collaborative-research relationships are now emerging in the research literature. Moje (2000), for example, closely examined how her embodied relations with a co-teacher/co-researcher shaped and were shaped in this research relationship. Through conversations with her co-teaching colleague, and subsequent reflections, Moje came to understand that her attempts to be *some body* in the world of schools (i.e., showing others that she was a researcher who could perform competently in a classroom context), contributed to the production of negative power differentials (i.e., where the teacher positioned the researcher as the ascendant partner. Moje concluded that it was essential for researchers to continue to examine their research relations so that multiple ways to collaborate might be identified, “rather than create a standard representation which serves to normalize and regulate our practices” (p. 40).

By studying successful or productive collaborative-research teams in which collaborators report either concord or conflict in their relational dynamics, it might be possible to come to a better understanding of what it means to collaborate. What we learn from others’ experiences might help us understand our own research practices and relationships. The studies of research collaborations reported in this book collectively might provide an informative resource for reflection by individual researchers and teams—particularly for new collaborative ventures. Before I overview the structure of this book and the nature of the studies therein, I develop a tentative theoretical framework for studying research collaborations. In so doing, I describe different patterns of research collaborations and emphasize
important outcomes from successful interactions within research teams: solidarity and positive emotional energy.

THEORIZING RESEARCH COLLABORATION

Amey and Brown (2004) defined collaboration as “a mutual teaching-learning (give and take) process among the group members where all work on the same task and learn from the discussion with each other regarding the task. Collaboration is integrative, involving the collective cognition of the group” (p. 10). Yet, as they detailed the various development stages or dimensions of their modernist model for interdisciplinary-collaborative research, Amey and Brown neglected to consider the impact of emotions and interpersonal relationships in research collaborations. This ultimately renders their model impotent when it comes to account for both cognitive and emotional experiences that arise from many successful research collaborations, as the following personal reflections of Barker’s (2004) collaboration with teachers from a feminist stance illustrate:

I see the (collaborative) relationships very much like the relationships that I have with my close long-term female friends. We know about one another, we have a sense of trust, there is a comfortableness to talk about our successes and failures—to share the smallest details of our lives and also to celebrate the big moments. We can sit over a cup of coffee and talk about the things in our experience that are serious to us—that have meaning for us. At times some of these topics may not be important, but they give us insight to each other and builds a context for knowing one another. Sometimes we come to a friendship with a goal in mind and sometimes we are there for the companionship. Sometimes we are the experts, other times we are the novice learners. In all cases we travel the journey of the relationship together, trying to understand our own experiences and each other as we go. (p. 93)

Acknowledging the limited number of studies upon which to draw for developing an understanding of collaborative-research relationships, Austin (2001) concluded that not only are specific collaborative relationships likely to vary in the way that interpersonal dynamics play out, but also that these relationships evolve over time. Similarly, John-Steiner (2000) recognized that collaborative relationships could evolve through a research project, that there are different types of collaborative relations, and that many collaborations contribute to both cognitive and emotional needs of research partners. In her studies of artistic and scientific collaborations, John-Steiner found that “partnerships are not static” (p. 142). This was particularly noticeable in collaborations across generations or in mentoring relationships. In these relationships, the novices typically were the primary beneficiaries at the start. “But as the relationship develops, it becomes more symmetrical; the older members are renewed and stimulated by their interaction with the former apprentices who have become their colleagues” (p. 156). Furthermore, her studies of long-term partnerships revealed that collaborators “change and develop unevenly” (p. 145).
Accepting that “there is no longer a single pattern of collaborations,” John-Steiner (2000, p. 143) proposed a loosely structured model that identified four types or patterns for collaboration where it is possible for a particular collaboration to start with one pattern but over time change into another pattern. The four patterns are distributed, complementarity, family, and integrative collaboration. Distributed collaboration is a widespread and the most casual pattern. Similar interests link members in a distributed collaboration where conversations at times may lead to personal insights or even arguments. Distributed collaborations can form and dissolve quickly in such contexts as conferences, working groups or committees, and online discussion forums. Complementarity collaboration is the most practiced form of collaboration that is based on complementarity of expertise, disciplinary knowledge, roles, and temperament. It is characterized by a division of labor that frequently realizes in mutual appropriation or the stretching of human possibilities of partners at both cognitive and emotional levels after sustained engagement. Family collaborations involve flexible or evolving roles that are frequently intense engagements that cannot be sustained indefinitely. Usually in dyads, partners can help each other shift roles and, like family members, can “take over for each other while still using their complementarity” (p. 201). Finally, integrative collaboration requires prolonged periods of committed activity by partners. According to John-Steiner (2000):

Integrative collaborations thrive on dialogue, risk taking, and a shared vision. In some cases, the participants construct a common set of beliefs, or ideology, which sustains them in periods of opposition or insecurity. Integrative partnerships are motivated by the desire to transform existing knowledge, through styles, or artistic approaches into new visions. (p. 203)

Partners in an integrative collaboration can experience a profound sense of bonding or solidarity during the creation of a new vision through successful interactions. Solidarity is a feeling of membership or belonging to a group of interlocutors, where “our sense of solidarity is strongest when those with whom solidarity is expressed are thought of as “one of us”’ as opposed to “one of them” (Rorty, 1989, p. 191).

Solidarity is not restricted to integrative collaborations, however; it can emerge through both complementarity and family collaborations. In family collaborations, for example, “the ties of solidarity and shared vision are accompanied by the participants longing for the security of a caring community. In many partnerships, participants experience emotional connectedness and a revival of purpose in shared work” (John-Steiner, 2000, p. 124).

Collins’s (2004) sociological theory of interaction ritual chains linked successful interaction rituals to outcomes like solidarity and emotional energy. He argued that interaction rituals have four ingredients that feed back upon each other. These are: group assembly (bodily presence), barrier to outsiders, mutual focus of attention and shared mood or emotional experience, and the latter two variables reinforce each other. More specifically, “as the persons become more tightly focused on their common activity, more aware of what each other is doing and feeling, and more aware of each other’s awareness, they experience their shared emotion more
STUDYING RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS

intensely, as it comes to dominate their awareness” (p. 48). While Collins tested his theory out by interrogating rituals involving tobacco use and sexual interactions, I now apply his theory to research collaboration.

Generally, successful interactions between participants lead to the production of positive emotional energy or “a feeling of confidence, elation, strength, enthusiasm, and initiative in taking action” (Collins, 2004, p. 49) in individuals and collective effervescence from the group. According to Collins (2004), “this feeling of emotional energy has a powerful motivating effect upon the individual; whoever has experienced this kind of moment wants to repeat it” (p. 39). Saltiel (1998) also recognized how collaborators “could fuel one another, creating an energized dynamic, electric in its feel” (p. 8). He argued that “the synergistic quality inherent in the (collaborative) relationship creates a relationship that is deeply valued as part of the endeavor” (p. 10).

The extent to which solidarity and emotional mood lasts depends on the transformation of short-term emotions into long-term emotions, usually through storage in the form of symbols like significant collaborative publications or grant applications (Collins, 2004), for example. Rereading such a document, noting a citation to the document in another publication, or reviewing a related study might invoke emotional memories or meanings that influence interactions and personal identities in future collaborations (Collins, 2004). Furthermore, the effects of interactions in contexts like research collaborations, for example, are cumulative in that individuals who have taken part in successful collaborative relationships “develop a taste for more … solidarity of the same sort, and are motivated to repeat” (p. 149) the experience.

At the individual level, interactions are stratified in terms of member involvement, and the outcomes of emotional energy and solidarity (Collins, 2004). This means the outcomes from interactions are likely to be different for individuals within large groups or research teams. Those persons who are on the fringes of the team, for example, are likely to experience less intense emotions (and less commitment to the group—or solidarity—and its symbols) than the socio-metric stars who are at the center of conversations (Collins, 2004).

The possible stratification of solidarity in research collaborations can be explained briefly with reference to a recent collaborative research project in which I participated (i.e., Ritchie, Tobin, Roth, & Carambo, 2007). The research team was investigating the leadership dynamics within a school academy in North Eastern USA. Apart from myself, other team members included Kenneth Tobin and Wolff-Michael Roth (researchers with vast experience and collective resources from their ongoing socio-cultural studies within the school), and Cristobal Carambo (a teacher leader within the school). While Ken, Michael and myself have collaborated previously on one book project, Ken and Michael have had numerous successes working together on book projects; Ken and Cristobal have collaborated in classroom research with other researchers and teachers, including Michael; and I have co-authored several articles with Ken. This was the first occasion that all four of us came together on this project. Accordingly, it makes sense that due in part to our previous histories of collaboration there could be stratified solidarity of the
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dyads, for example, within the team, especially given the variations in interaction patterns between team members. I worked with Cristobal and other teachers in the school mostly by myself—creating a new working relationship that had a short life span (cf. distributed collaboration)—but sometimes with Ken, and less frequently with Michael. Yet Ken and I met daily to discuss the project, and Michael participated in these discussions during his short visit to the site. On other occasions, Ken engaged in conversations with Michael when it was not possible for me to be present. We have not discussed the dynamics of our research collaboration collectively so I’m not in a position now to explore stratification of solidarity in this research team thoroughly from our different perspectives. Nevertheless, the issue of stratification of solidarity within collaborative research teams is explored further in the next chapter and a few other research teams contributing to this book also take it up.

Just as I applied Collins’s (2004) sociological theory to relational dynamics in research collaborations, I now consider Roth, Hwang, Goulart, and Lee’s (2005) dialectical theory of collaboration—produced from their studies of children participating in classroom design activities. At the heart of their theory is the notion that during face-to-face interactions in collaborative acts, human subjects (e.g., individual researchers) take up different parts of the collective labor such that the bodies in action produce a new terrain of action possibilities (or room to maneuver) within the collective where the collective action is more than the sum of what the bodies (i.e., researchers) can do individually. This became apparent to me during the leadership study I described previously (i.e., Ritchie et al., 2007). While I was familiar with the literature on teacher leadership and science education, I was initially unfamiliar with the sociological literature on interaction ritual chains (i.e., Collins, 2004), and the contexts of urban schools and the life worlds of African American students in particular—fields in which Ken, Michael and Cristobal have had much experience. Working collaboratively with my colleagues, we were able to produce a scholarly article on leadership that would not have been possible had any one of us attempted to write the article individually.

“Working collaboratively” did not involve the four of us doing everything together, however. As described previously, we rarely met together as a team throughout the entire project and we had differential interaction patterns with other team members. Within the team we shared data with each other, sometimes synchronously but more often asynchronously, and contributed to discussions about what was happening in the school and how we were making sense of our joint and separate observations in light of other data that were accumulating rapidly. In the context of these dynamic interactions, I initially began forming tentative assertions that were presented to and critiqued by other members. These were modified then and again during the first iterations, and following subsequent critiques and overwriting by Ken and Michael of the draft paper. Overwriting involved the practice where any coauthor exercised agency for modifying existing text or adding new text to the document. Our bodies in action in the classroom, face-to-face interactions, and writing created new possibilities for others to contribute more—to build on what we were creating together. Through several iterations, the final compilation of ideas and text was ready for submission to a
The manuscript changed yet again in response to the editor’s requests. So even though I took responsibility for tracking the progress of the paper and ensuring that deadlines were met, the accepted paper was a collective product of our individual and collective actions. The same paper could not have been published had any one of us contributed differently during the project. A feeling of personal and collective satisfaction was realized after the paper was accepted—a feeling, that once experienced, is desired to be experienced yet again.

There is much more to Roth et al.’s (2005) dialectical theory of collaboration than the previous account of how the sum of individuals’ ideas or contributions to collective motives for an artifact are realized through division of labor. In cultural fields like school classrooms and even research team meetings, participants both reproduce and produce cultural practices—where the reproduction and production of cultural practices stand in dialectical relation to each other, that is, each mutually presupposes the other (represented thus: production|reproduction). In relation to collaborative practice, Roth et al. argued that “[t]he production|reproduction of intersubjectivity is central” (p. 152). This means, that as individuals interact within teams, they each make available their subjective understanding and intention to others through speech, gestures and use of materials. A plane of intersubjectivities then becomes available for the collective through the production|reproduction of resources—providing access to new resources and opening possibilities for subsequent actions. The semiotic value of these actions is grounded in intersubjectivity, Roth et al. asserted. They continued, “[i]n their materiality, embodied actions realize their semiotic value in the concrete form. This both constrains and enables communication and thereby collaboration itself” (p. 171). While this ideally takes place in the interactions at a face-to-face level, it might also be possible to collaborate successfully (but perhaps less satisfactorily) through asynchronous writing without a bodily co-presence, especially if that builds on successful bodily co-present interactions as described previously with the writing practices in Ritchie et al. (2007).

In summary, within collaborative research teams, researchers’ intersubjectivities are made available to the collective for possible subsequent actions as practices are produced and reproduced. During successful face-to-face interactions within teams, researchers experience positive emotional energy and build solidarity that could be stratified according to the interactive patterns within the research team.

LOOKING AHEAD

Across the studies reported in this book, we might expect to find variation in patterns of collaboration throughout a team’s history and between teams, the possibility of reports of both intellectual and emotional experiences, and that stories of successful collaborations might be associated with feelings of solidarity and positive emotional energy. Conversely, we might expect reports of group fractures or splits from unsuccessful research teams where members experience negative emotional energy and a lack of desire to engage in collaboration in subsequent research projects (Collins, 2004).
The chapters are organized in four (unmarked) sections. The first section sets the scene for the case studies reported in the second and third sections by developing a tentative theoretical framework and raising issues for further consideration. The final section contains one chapter that summarizes the main findings, identifies discrepancies and unresolved issues, as well as discusses the implications of this work for researchers, both in practice and for further research.

Section 1: Setting the Scene for Studying Research Collaboration

There are three chapters in this section. While I put forward a tentative theoretical framework in this chapter, I follow this up in Chapter 2 with my collaborator, Donna Rigano, where we discuss the results from an international interview study we conducted with 24 education researchers about their collaborative research experiences. In fact, it was this study where we first theorized the stratification of solidarity in research teams (Ritchie & Rigano, 2007). Accordingly, that study stimulated my interest in editing a book that could widen the scope of research into research collaboration even further. To that end, I carefully invited researchers who were not interviewed in the study to contribute to this edited volume. This means that this collection samples a wider range of active (educational) researchers. To add further to this diversity, the book includes contributions from one large international interdisciplinary team (Chapter 11) as well as another chapter outside of education (Chapter 15). While Chapter 2 deals mostly with what other researchers told Donna and me about their collaborative research experiences at interview, we also attempt to apply what we learned most from these accounts to our own collaborative relationship and practices. In particular, we discuss how we have tried to write together both synchronously and asynchronously.

Chapter 3 by Wolff-Michael Roth grounds the construct of solidarity in terms of first philosophy. According to Michael, first philosophy attempts to work out under what conditions cultural phenomena like language and ethics may have emerged and later led to the cultural possibilities of today. Michael argues that researchers who practice solidarity act ethically and enhance their productive capacities. He illustrates this assertion with reference to a detailed microranalysis of the concrete actions of members within his own interdisciplinary research team.

Section 2: Case Studies of Research Teams within a Research Program

While on sabbatical at the Urban Science Education Research Center at the University of Pennsylvania in the autumn of 2003, I engaged in several weekly-research meetings that Ken Tobin held with his squad of graduate students. Experienced researchers who were conducting related studies from other nearby universities also attended many of these meetings. Occasionally, other scholars like Michael Roth participated when they were visiting. Each meeting would hear progress reports on the separate research projects and preparations for papers to be presented at conferences or submitted for publication. Ken usually chaired these sessions and he invited others to react to the reports and offer suggestions. As well as engaging in these relatively informal interactive sessions, there would be one
more formal presentation scheduled for the squad each day. These presentations were related to either a methodological, theoretical or empirical issue of relevance to the squad. While there was much diversity in the focus of each of the research projects, they shared the same context of urban science education and the squad collectively continued to work at refining the theoretical lenses through which to view/interpret their individual observations.

Ken moved to the City University of New York (CUNY) in 2004. He maintained contact with his recently graduated students from Philadelphia as well as set up research projects with his new squad members in New York. The case studies that appear in this related set of chapters focus on the collaborative-research practices and relationships of both former and current squad members. As each squad member conducted research he or she formed research collaborations with other squad members, teachers or even students. In a sense, this section contains the case studies of four research teams that worked within the larger team or squad—a sample of the teams that constituted the squads.

In Chapter 4, Ken Tobin overviews the section by describing the relational dynamics of his research squads, and how the structure of his squads evolved over time. In particular, he identifies the salience of emotions in creating forms of effervescence that sustain collective goals and associated collegial practices that produce and maintain solidarity. Just as importantly, he probes the contradictions that tend to fragment and divide collaborative research teams.

Christopher Emdin and Ed Lehner are two of Tobin’s New York squad members. They explore the dynamics of their collaborative relationship as teacher-researchers at different school sites in Chapter 5. Research-team meetings and interactions between both researchers and their students are spotlighted. Linda Flohr and Sonya Martin were two of Tobin’s Philadelphia squad members. In Chapter 6 they explore the longitudinal evolution of their collaboration in relation to other team members with reference to distance/separation, ethics and academic writing through metagologue and auto/ethnography. Ethics in collaborative research is the major theme of Stacy Olitsky and John Weathers’s chapter (Chapter 7) that deals with the inclusion of students as co-researchers. They argue that researchers should use cogenervative dialogues with student researchers to make explicit issues of power, knowledge and exclusivity. Like Stacy and John, Rowhea Elmesky focuses on students as co-researchers from the Philadelphia squad in Chapter 8. Through microanalysis of videotapes Rowhea examines how solidarity between adults and youth is built during collaborative research, and how these bonds are maintained and shift overtime.

Section 3: Broadening Horizons for Research Collaboration

Five of the seven chapters in this section can be linked to the activities of Tobin’s squads that featured in the previous section. Catherine Milne (Chapter 9) and Kate Scantlebury (Chapter 10), both experienced researchers, have maintained regular contact with the Philadelphia and New York squads. Cath provides an emic account of her participation in an interdisciplinary research team where issues of
power, status and emotional entrainment were the focus of her conversational and gesture analyses. In Chapter 10, Kate foregrounds feminist research issues within collaborative research teams in which she has participated through autobiography.

Wolff-Michael Roth from Canada visited the squads periodically, but with other members of his international and interdisciplinary research team (i.e., Diego Ardenghi from Brazil, Leanna Boyer from Canada, Peilan Chen from Taiwan, Gholamreza Emad from Iran, Pei-Ling Hsu from Taiwan, Bruno Jaime from Brazil, Mijung Kim from Korea, Lilian Pozzer Ardenghi from Brazil, Giuliano Reis from Brazil, Ian Stith from USA and Michiel Van Eijck from The Netherlands) reports on the fluid transitions of being and becoming a member of this collaborative group in Chapter 11.

Collette Murphy and Jim Beggs from Northern Ireland visited the New York squad as well as Kate Scantlebury in Delaware in 2006. Their chapter with Karen Carlisle and Tony Gallagher (Chapter 12), also from Northern Ireland, reports on their collaborative research into coteaching with pre-service teachers. They focus on the cultural differences between their institutions, and expanding the agency of student teachers, classroom teachers and child participants in their research.

Angela Calabrese Barton and Ken Tobin frequently communicated about their ongoing but separate research programs in New York. Chapter 13 by Angie, who now works at Michigan State, Melina Furman, Ben Muir, John Barnes and Stephan Monaco uses the margin|center dialectic to explain how the margins can become adaptable spaces for solidarity building in research teams.

These five chapters emphasize different features of the collaborative-research teams described. While particular researchers from these teams share interests across teams, they also participate in quite separate research programs. In a sense, this demonstrates how the horizons of their research collaborations extend beyond what they have in common.

The next two chapters extend these horizons even further. Bill Atweh and Derek Bland from Australia take up the issue of students-as-researchers in a longitudinal program of research into improving university access for students of low socioeconomic backgrounds in Chapter 14. In Chapter 15, Lorrae van Kerkhoff, Sasha Courville, Gabriel Banmer, Steve Cork, David Dumaresq and Christine Ellis, also from Australia, draw on their collaborative-research experience and observations of other research teams, particularly in the sciences, to develop elements of trust necessary for collaboration in research teams.

Section 4: Researching Together with New Insights

The final section includes only one concluding chapter. In Chapter 16 I tease out the major issues from the case studies that could inform successful praxis for research collaboration. New directions for conducting research into research collaboration are identified, and refinements to the theoretical framework proposed in Chapter 1 are suggested.
STUDYING RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS

INVITATION

The contributing authors of this book use a range of research procedures and methods to examine relationships and praxis in collaborating research teams. Interviews, auto/ethnography, metalogues, reflexive writing, self-study, and microanalysis of video clips help the researchers gain a deeper understanding of their research collaborations. As you read these chapters I invite you to consider ethical praxis that will lead to productive outcomes, positive emotional energy and solidarity in your current and future research collaborations.

REFERENCES


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Illustrating how the construct of solidarity became an essential feature of the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 1, in this chapter we focus on a cross-case analysis of the relationships and practices of two contrasting collaborative research teams of education researchers. From this study we hypothesize that solidarity is a stratified construct. Furthermore, we discuss our own evolving collaboration in terms of solidarity and describe our attempt to appropriate particular writing practices articulated by one of the research teams.

STUDYING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

In this inquiry of collaborative-research relationships we employed a multiple case study design from the interpretive paradigm (Bassey, 1999). Twenty-four researchers participated in the study, 13 Australians and 11 North-American-based researchers (i.e., Canada and USA), none of whom had collaborated with either of us. Even though each researcher had established an international research-publication record in education, all ranks were represented (i.e., assistant professor / lecturer and senior lecturer, associate professor, professor). There were 14 men and 10 women in the sample.

Because it was not possible to observe different research teams at work concurrently (i.e., co-participating in and with the researchers), a single researcher-nominated article (i.e., the artifact or product of their research) became the initial focus of our conversations with each researcher. The researcher-nominated articles had been published or submitted for publication in an education-research journal or edited book. Interestingly, Miller’s (1992) account of what transpired as she opened up her recently completed book provided support for a text reawakening memories of collaborative-research practices: “… I let the pages fall open for yet another reading. I begin, often in the middle of a paragraph, and am immediately drawn into my remembrances of a particular episode in our group’s deliberations as well as my writing of those moments, my inscription of our time together” (pp. 166-167).

Except in one case, each researcher was interviewed actively face-to-face (see Ritchie & Rigano, 2007a). Active interviewing is an interpretive practice between interviewer and respondent who use interpretive resources to co-construct meaning. An active interviewer “intentionally provokes responses by indicating—even suggesting—narrative positions, resources, orientations and precedents” (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997, p. 123). These interviews (each taking...