A Collaborative Perspective on Teaching and Learning:
Creating Generative Learning Communities[i]

Harlene Anderson, Ph.D.
Houston Galveston Institute
Taos Institute

Changing landscapes of therapy practice call for new therapist education practices[ii]. Our traditional perspectives on therapy and our educational perspectives on the creation of knowledge and the preparation of professionals for practice are challenged to meet the unavoidable complexities inherent in these changes and our therapy clients' lives. People around the world demand to have a voice in decisions that affect their lives. They want to participate, to contribute and to share ownership. They no longer want to be treated as numbers and categories that ignore their humanness and their unique contexts, cultures and circumstances.

In addressing these changes therapists and educators of therapists are pressed to reassess our knowledge and language traditions: how we understand the world we now live in. This includes our guiding psychological theories and educational philosophies and our roles as therapists and educators and supervisors of therapists.

My philosophy of the education of therapists and supervision is coherent with my philosophy of therapy: both are based in a set of abstract assumptions from postmodern philosophy and social construction, dialogue and narrative theories. Postmodern assumptions provide an alternative language that serves as an orienting perspective to therapy and consequently to education and supervision practices: practices that are germane to the learner and in which the learner is actively and intimately engaged in their learning and have a voice in determining and evaluating the what and how of it. In earlier writings I refer to it as

collaborative learning and *collaborative learning communities* (Anderson, 1993, 1998, 2000; Anderson & Swim, 1993, 1994).

I will first discuss the assumptions on which the notion of collaborative learning is based and then illustrate with a description a supervision course.

Collaborative learning entails a partnership in which the wisdom, knowledge and customs of the members of a local learning community, for example, education classrooms and supervision groups are acknowledged, accessed and utilized. This requires creating an environment for transformative dialogue in which newness occurs. In turn, creation of the environment requires the following educator values and attitudes: a) the transformative native of dialogue and collaboration, b) trust and confidence in each member's expertise and judgment about, and what is critical to, their daily and future lives; c) the knowledge and experiences that the students brings as equal to theirs and d) self-reflection and remaining open to their perspectives being examined and challenged. Foremost this requires that the one designated as "teacher" expresses these values and attitudes and invites others to consider them by living them.

Collaboration as a Fertile Means to Creative Ends

Collaborative partners in their dynamic exchanges generate knowledge[iii] and other newness far more creative and abundant and specific to the local context and needs than any member of the partnership could accomplish alone. The notion of collaborative learning is not new. Well documented in fields of art and science (John-Steiner, 2000), for more than three decades a growing body of literature suggests in one way or another the importance of collaboration in education, variously referred to as collaborative, collective, cooperative, action, peer, partner, group and team learning (Anderson, 1998, 2000; Anderson & Swim, 1993, 1994; Astin, 1985; Bonwell & Eison, 1991; Bosworth & Hamilton, 1994; Bruffee, 1983; Freire, 1970;

McNamee, 2007; Shotter, Golub, 1988; Goodsell, Maher, Tinto, Smith & MacGregor, 1992; Johnson & Holubec, 1990; Kuh, 1990; Mezirow, 1978; Mezirow & Associates, 2000; Peters & Armstrong, 1998; Sir Ken Robinson, Slavin, 1990; Weiner, 1986).

Collaborative learning is a relational and non-hierarchical approach to education in which each member of the learning community, including educator and student, contributes to the production of new learning and knowledge, its integration and application and shares responsibility in these. It is based on the supposition that knowledge is a communal construction, created in social exchange rather than instructive interaction. It is also based on the supposition that the collective learning experience is transformative: what is being learned is transformed in the learning process, the learning or knowledge-making process itself is transformed in its making and likewise and the persons involved in the learning process are transformed. Transformative or transforming refers to the generative process in which people engage with each other and with themselves in the sharing and inquiring into their experiences and critically considering and reflecting on familiar and new reference frames and assumptions. Transformative learning is not informational learning in the manner that many of us are accustomed to. Instead, as Harvard University educator and psychologist Robert Kegan suggests, ". . . genuinely transformational learning is always to some extent an epistemological change rather than merely a change in behavioral repertoire or an increase in the quantity or fund of knowledge" (2000, p. 48). Similar to Kegan's notion of epistemological change, educator Jack Mezirow (2000) suggests that it is a change in habits of mind that lead to a change of reference or perspective. The implications of transformational learning extend beyond the educational space, and provide an opportunity to think differently about ourselves and others and to live differently in our world.

In this article I will focus on collaborative-transformational learning in which students and teachers and students and students become conversational partners who engage in creating knowledge. I will present the postmodern philosophical underpinnings of collaborative learning and will illustrate with a description of a course for supervisors how the one designated as the teacher can be consistent with and perform this philosophy in their way of thinking and being.

The Development of the Collaborative Learning Approach

My interest in collaboration in education came through my years of focus on collaboration in my practices as a psychotherapist, consultant and trainer in various clinical, university and post-graduate training contexts (Anderson, 1997; Anderson & Gehart, 2007; Anderson & Goolishian, 1988). My philosophy of education is based in an abstract body of assumptions associated with postmodern philosophy that that provides an understanding of people as unique, active, engaged participants in the construction of knowledge that has local relevance and fluidity. These assumptions inform my philosophy of psychotherapy and my philosophy of education and inherent in them is the notion that knowledge and knowledge systems are not fixed but always evolving. In other words, it is important for collaborative practitioners to not only re-examine our knowledge traditions but to continuously examine our own beliefs. This requires being what learning systems theorist Donald Schön (1983, 1987) describes as a reflective practitioner. Schön refers to the practitioner's reflecting-in-action: reflecting, pausing and inquiring into to understand one's theoretical underpinnings and to describe one's practice as one does it. In doing so, theory and practice are reciprocally influenced as the practitioner makes new sense of these and thus the practitioner becomes more thoughtful and accountable regarding their work. Based on his research about how professionals learn, Schön suggests that incorporating reflective practice in education leads to learning that is more profound. To

paraphrase Schön, self-discovered, self-appropriated learning or learning that belongs to the learner is the only learning that significantly influences behavior. I would add, the way that one lives in both one's professional and personal worlds.

The Traditions of Knowledge Re-examined

We are born, socialized and educated in a world based on the classical view of the autonomous, bounded and rational self: the individual who thinks and constructs knowledge. Knowledge (e.g., truths, beliefs, expertise) in this view is an individual accomplishment; it can be transmitted from one person to another and from one generation of discourse to the next and it can be verified through observation. In this classical world view, we inherit often obscured, assumed knowledge that is centralized, fixed, discoverable and re-discoverable, and we automatically carry out our professional and sometimes our personal lives in distant, dualistic, hierarchical relationships and static structures. Furthermore, we are guided for the most part by theories (e.g. educational, psychological) that we have become heirs to; theories that often seductively lead us to understand human beings (e.g., students, clients) and their lives and behaviors as standardized categories, types and kinds (e.g., students as academic, vocational, motivated, unmotivated).

For more than three decades an increasing assembly of scholars and practitioners in the social and human sciences have contributed alternative perspectives to this classical view of the autonomous knowledge constructing individual (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Gergen, 1982; 1999, 2009 a,b; Hacking, 1999; McNamee, 2007, ; Sampson, 1993; Shotter, 1984, 2008; Smith, Harre & Van Langenhove, 1995). Writing under banners such as social construction, hermeneutic, dialogue, language and narrative theories, all are influenced and inspired to some extent by foregoing critical thinkers such as Mikhail Bahktin (1981, 1984), Gregory Bateson (1972),

Jacques Derrida (1978), Hans-George Gadamer (1975), Harold Garfinkle (1967, 2002), Jean-Francios Lyotard (1984), Merleau-Ponty, Michael Foucault (1972); Ludwig Wittgenstein and Lev Vygotsky (1986). Some of these critical thinkers served as imaginary conversational partners for the assembly of scholars and practitioners, helping each to reflect, see and understand differently and thus to further develop their unique contributions that increasingly challenged mainstream psychology, education and related fields of study. You might say that these scholars and practitioners worked in collaboration with the written words of their predecessors, yielding irreverent contributions and creating a rhizome effect at the

> "edge of a move from the classical world view to a world view of understanding human systems (singular and plural) and their lives and behaviors, as unique, active, engaged participants in the construction of knowledge that has local relevance and fluidity. (Anderson, 2010)

Similar themes run through each author's work that collectively creates the threads of what I suggest as a postmodern philosophy tapestry. Postmodern refers to a set of abstract assumptions, a collage of contemporary hermeneutics philosophy and social construction, narrative and dialogue theories that challenge and provide a contemporary alternative to our inherited and often taken-for-granted and invisible classical traditions of knowledge and language that were from a different age and for a different culture. The central challenge is to reexamine these traditions in which a) knowledge is fundamental and definitive, b) knowledge systems have a centralized top-down structure, c) knowledge is the product of an individual mind, d) knowledge is fixed, discoverable and re-discoverable, d) language is descriptive and representational and f) meaning is stable.

Interconnected Guiding Assumptions: Threads of a Postmodern Tapestry[iv]

1. *Meta-narratives and knowledge are not fundamental and definitive.* We are born, live and educated within grand knowledge narratives and traditions that we mostly accept without question. We unwittingly buy into and reproduce such institutionalized knowledge that can lead to forms of practice that risk being out of sync with our contemporary societies and possibly alien to them as well. Lyotard (1984) for instance called attention to the seductive nature of the grand narratives – established dominant discourses, universal truths and rules — as privileging, legitimizing and oppressing. Correspondingly, Foucault (1972) called attention to the not-so-invisible and often invisible power discrepancies that inherit our language, our words, our relationships and our societies. Words, for instance, he suggests, have "hidden mechanisms of coercion and predefinition of relationships of power".

This does not suggest that we abandon our inherited knowledge or discourses (i.e., educational theories, a priori criteria), or that these can be discarded for that matter: any and all knowledge can be useful. Nor does it suggest that postmodernism is a meta-knowledge narrative: it is not. The invitation is simply to question, to be skeptical of and to critically analyze any discourse's claim to truth, including the postmodern discourse itself.

2. *The generalization of dominant discourses, meta-narratives and universal truths is seductive and risky.* Inherent in Lyotard and Foucault's warnings about the potential seduction and oppression of grand narratives is a warning about the risks of deliberately and unintentionally assuming the validity of likeness among and across peoples, cultures, situations or problems. "Skepticism" is suggested regarding the probability that dominant discourses, meta-narratives and universal truths can be generalized and applied across peoples, cultures, situations, or problems.

Thinking in terms of ahead-of-time knowledge (e.g., theoretical scripts, predetermined rules) can lead us to look for similarities and thus we may create categories, types and classes (e.g., people, problems, solutions) that may inhibit our ability to learn about the uniqueness and novelty of each person or group of people. Instead, the invitation is to learn about the distinctiveness of others and their lives directly from them and see the familiar or what we take for granted in an unfamiliar or fresh way. Thus we are challenged to relinquish the custom of viewing, wittingly or unwittingly, the people and the events of their lives encountered in our professional practices as familiar and instead to develop a habit of viewing them as exceptional. Familiarity tempts us to find what we think we know and assumingly fill in the gaps and then proceed based on these. This knowing can put us at risk of depersonalizing the student for instance and can prevent us from learning about each student's specialness, limiting our and their possibilities.

3. *Knowledge and language are considered interactive and generative social processes.* A common assumption of postmodernism is the centrality of knowledge and language (verbal and nonverbal) as contextualized social, cultural, historical and communal processes in which knowledge and language are relational and generative and therefore inherently transforming. That is, we participate in constructing the world we live in. Though this perspective is evident in the writings of critical thinkers such as those mentioned above, it is not as new a perspective as it may appear. As far back as the seventeen hundreds Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico (1775) denounced the Cartesian method that truth can be verified through observation. He alternatively suggested that the observer participates in the construction of what he observes, attributes their descriptions to it and wears multiple interpretive lenses regarding the same. More contemporarily, constructivists such as Heinz von Foerster (1982) called attention to the notion

of observing systems saying “believing is seeing.” Maturana (1978) suggested that “Everything said is said by an observer to another observer.”

Put differently, embedded as it is in culture, history and language, knowledge is a product of social discourse. The creation of knowledge (e.g., theories, ideas, truths, beliefs, realities or how to) is an interactive interpretive process that occurs within the discourses of knowledge communities in which all parties contribute to its development, sustainability and transformation. Its creation is a dialogic activity in which there is not a dichotomy between “knower” and “not-knower”. Knowledge is not the product of an individual or a collective mind; it is not fundamental or definitive, nor is it fixed or discovered. As Maturana and Varela (1986) suggested there is no such thing as instructive interaction in which pre-existing knowledge (including meanings, understandings, etcetera) can be taken from the head of one person (be it a teacher in person or the voice of an author on the pages of a book) and placed into the head of another (e.g., a student in a classroom or a reader). Knowledge acquisition by one person is not/cannot be determined by another person; the teacher cannot determine what the student will learn. Knowledge creation is relational, and it is fluid and changeable in its making. Yet personalized: When we share our knowledge with one another, we cannot know what each brings, we cannot pre-determine how each will interact with the shared knowledge nor can we predict what each will create with it. The learning outcome will be something different than either started with, something more than either could have created alone, something socially constructed.

Language in its broadest sense is any means by which we try to communicate, articulate or express with ourselves and with others, verbally or otherwise. It is the medium through which we create knowledge, the tool that we use to construct the realities of our everyday lives. Language,

like knowledge, is viewed as active and creative rather than as static and representational. Words, for instance, are not meaning-mirrors; they gain meaning as we use them and in the way that we use them. This includes a number of things such as the context in which we use them, our purpose in using them and how we use them such as our tone, our glances and our gestures.

Language and words are relational. Mikhail Bakhtin (1984) called attention to a new way of understanding language and words and their relationship. In his words, the use of language is "always individual and contextualized in nature." Although a word is an "Expression of some evaluative position of an individual person that person cannot determine how that word will affect another person, what it expresses for that person." Bakhtin suggested that "No utterance in general can be attributed to the speaker exclusively; it is the *product of the interaction of the interlocutors* and broadly speaking, the product of the whole complex *social situation* in which it has occurred" (p. 30). He further suggested that we do not own our words:

The word in language is half someone else's. The word becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intention. . . the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language . . . but it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts (1984, p. 293-4).

Wittgenstein likewise called attention to a different way of understanding language and words, saying "A picture held us captive and we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably." and "Let the use of words teach you their meaning."

Together, these perspectives of knowledge and language as interactive social processes that are inherently transforming suggest that students are active agents in their own learning. And if this is so, it calls upon educators to help enhance this agency to its fullest.

4. *Privilege local knowledge.* Local knowledge--the wisdom, expertise, truths, values, customs, narratives, etc.—that is created within a community of persons (e.g., family, classroom, board room, factory team) who have first-hand experience (e.g., unique meanings and understandings from personal experience) of themselves and their situation is important. Knowledge formulated within a community will be more relevant, pragmatic and sustainable for its members. Local knowledge, of course, always develops against the background of dominant discourses, meta-narratives and universal truths (as mentioned above) and is influenced by these conditions. This influence cannot be, nor is it suggested that it should be, avoided.

5. *Knowledge and language are inherently transforming.* Knowledge and language are relational and generative and therefore intrinsically transforming. Transformation--whether in the form of a shift, modification, difference, movement, clarity, etc.—is inherent in the fluid and creative aspects of knowledge and language. That is, when engaged in the use of language and in the creation of knowledge one is involved in a living dialogic activity (i.e., dialogue with oneself or another) and cannot remain unchanged. Just as knowledge is produced in dialogue or conversation so is what is typically called change. Change is not a from-to phenomenon produced from the outside or occurring within a person; it is not an intervening-into but an ongoing process within the dialogic space.

6. *Self is a relational dialogical concept.* Central in the writings of the above is a challenge and alternative to the traditional notion of the self as a bounded or contained autonomous individual--the essential "me". Rather we are dialogic beings who speak, think and act not as one voice but as the multiplicity of voices that inhabit us. We, our self identities and those we attribute to others, are constructed in dialogue, in conversation. What a dialogic

construction of self or human nature permits according to psychologist Sampson (2008) is not the essence of a person

> . . .but rather will unfold an emerging, shifting and open horizon of human possibilities, which cannot be readily known in advance or outside the dialogue but emerges as a property of the ongoing dialogue itself. (p.24)

Foremost in this contemporary challenge to the traditional notion of the self

My attempt is to generate an account of human action that can replace the presumption of bounded selves with a vision of relationship. I do not mean relationships between otherwise separate selves, but rather, a process of coordination that precedes the very concept of the self. . .that all intelligible action is born, sustained, and/or extinguished within the ongoing process of relationship. (Gergen, 2009, pp.

In a similar view on learning, Vygotsky (1986) called attention to the linguistic, social and historical context of creative thinking and cognition and the interdependent nature of their processes as social and individual. He challenged established theories of learning and development, proposing such activities as social, dialectical processes occurring not within the minds of an individual nor transmitted from the teacher to the learner but within social relationships in which the learner plays an active role in the how and what of learning and in which the teacher is likewise a learner. Neither Gergen and nor others mentioned above (such as Bahktin, 1981, 1986;   ? 61? Hermans, 1995; Mead, 1934; Resnick, 1991; Sampson, 1993; Vygotsky, 1962 ; Wittgenstein, 1958) suggest that the traditional notion of self is false. Instead, the suggestion is that there is an alternative perspective or construction that is more useful, permitting more freedom and flexibility in our thinking and acting.

Implications for Educating Therapists

The above assumptions combine to inform a philosophy of education or what I refer to as the educator's philosophical stance: *a way of being*. A way of being refers to a way of orienting with—how we conceptualize, how we position ourselves with and what we do in our meetings with the people we meet in our educational practices. This includes a way of thinking with, being in relationship with, talking with, acting with and responding with. The important word here is *with*—a shared engagement. *With* puts us and the other in partnership: the other becomes our conversational partner with whom we connect, collaborative and construct. Education is one kind of conversational partnership activity.

Central to this philosophical stance is the notion of collaborative relationship and generative conversation that involve dynamic two-way exchanges, sharing, criss-crossing and weaving of ideas, thoughts, opinions and feelings through which newness emerges. St. George and Dan Wulff (2011) at the University of Calgary suggest that collaborating entails

a way of interacting with others such that everyone contributes in his/her preferred way(s) and a new understanding, idea, or process is developed that would be unlikely by any individual actor. This dialogue is *threaded*, meaning that comments/actions are connected to the other comments/actions. The beauty of collaborating is that there are no set roles; there is a flexibility and fluidity that allows for leading and following to be in motion. In collaborating all participants appreciate the variety of ideas and strive to be inclusive. That is, for collaboration to occur there must be room for each person and their voice must be unconditionally present. What each contributes must be equally appreciated and valued. Having a full sense of being valued leads to a sense of belonging (e.g., to the educational community). A sense of belonging to the community leads to a sense of participation which in turn leads to a sense of ownership thus a sense of shared responsibility. All combine to promote sustainable learning.

Dialogue or dialogic conversation refers to a dynamic form of talk in which participants engage with each other (out loud) and with themselves (silently)—in words or gestures--in a mutual or shared inquiry—jointly examining, questioning, wondering, reflecting and so forth about the issues at hand (e.g., a discourse, subject content, opinions). What is put forth in dialogue is interacted with and interpreted, entailing two-way exchanges and crisscrossing of ideas, thoughts, opinions and feelings. Participants are engaged in a shared inquiry in which they try to understand each other, try to learn the uniqueness of their language, their meanings whether expressed in words or without words. In other words, participants do not assume they know what the other intends, they do not try to fill in meaning gaps. Through these dialogic exchanges, through the shared inquiry, participants engage in a process of trying to understand each other, which in turn new meanings, viewpoints and perspectives (e.g. learning) is created.

In education, the goal of collaboration and conversation is the generation of new learning[v]—e.g., new knowledge, expertise, skills--that has relevancy and usefulness beyond the classroom. The process of achieving this goal has several features. Foremost, the one designated as the teacher must trust the collaborative-dialogic process and must trust the students. They must act and talk consistent with the philosophy of collaborative learning. In other words, they must live it, being genuinely and naturally collaborative. This includes respecting, inviting and valuing each voice from the time they first meet and through the duration of the learning program (e.g., course, workshop). This requires being, flexible, responsive and creatively doing what the occasion calls for at any moment. What begins to be created are relationships and learning that are different[vi] from the familiar hierarchical and dualistic teacher-student relationships and learning processes that students have come to know.

Student and teacher and student and student develop connections in which what is learned—e.g., knowledge, expertise, skills—is jointly selected and created in contrast to a so-called knower (e.g., a teacher) bestowing knowledge that is pre-determined (e.g., by a teacher, learning institute or larger learning context) upon the one (e.g., student) who does not know.

The collaborative educator wants to create and facilitate learning relationships and processes where participants can identify, access, elaborate and produce their own unique competencies, cultivating seeds of newness in their personal and professional lives outside the learning context. They want to talk and act to invite and encourage participants to take responsibility for, and to be the architects of, their learning.

To illustrate some of the features necessary to create and sustain a collaborative learning community and collaborative learning, I will describe and highlight selected aspects of a course for supervisors, including how I orient myself to the task and the participants and a general kind of structure that serves as template that is modified for each course, and as each course evolves, according to the participants and their responses. This is to say that although collaborative learning is often mistaken as unstructured learning, it is simply a particular kind of structure that shifts in response to the learners and the context.

Inviting, Facilitating and Sustaining Collaboration by Doing: A Course for Psychotherapy Supervisors

I conduct a course that is required by state licensing boards and professional associations for therapists, counselors or social workers who want to be credentialed as a supervisor. As with any education program, the course takes place within a nest of stakeholders and their expectations. The course is designed to meet each stakeholder's content requirements. It is a 40 hour course comprised of a combination of opportunities and contexts for learning including in-

class study, independent study assignments and on-line exchanges. Course participants meet for two, two-day sessions scheduled four to six weeks apart; the out-of-class study assignments and on-line exchanges are accomplished between the two sessions.[vii] The combination of study structures provides multiple opportunities for generative learning.

In the in-classroom time I provide brief didactic lectures, conduct demonstration supervision consultations with participants and with supervisor-supervisee duos who volunteer to come to the course as guests. During the consultations participants are assigned reflecting roles so that they are not merely observers (Andersen, 1995). Participants may also schedule to invite their supervisees to participate in a consultation session with them.[viii] I facilitate discussions around the course topics and topics and questions that the participants provide.
Woven throughout all of the above are opportunities for participants to meet in small conversational clusters to inquire into our various topics, generated questions and assigned readings; they also participate in whole group discussions.

The out-of-classroom assignments include: 1) Following each in-class session day participants submit, to me and to each other, a reflection[ix] on the day. They note their experience and what struck or surprised them. They also include new questions and topics of interest that they want to address as well as any other suggestions for the next meeting. 2) Between the two, two-day sessions they a) submit brief reflecting essays on selected required readings and b) write a philosophy of supervision essay. 3) Also between the two sessions participants are required to observe two supervision sessions and submit a paper in which they reflect on the observations, compare and contrast the two observations and note what they learned and if and how it has influenced their supervision philosophy or performance.

Getting Started: Setting the Tone for Collaborative Learning

Meetings and Greetings. As Wittgenstein supposedly said, relationships and conversations go hand-in-hand. The way that we start talking with people begins to inform the kind and quality of relationship that we can have with them and the way that we start relating with people begins to inform the kind and quality of conversations that we can have with them. I am interested in inviting possibility relationships and conversations and strong believe that how I meet and greet the participants in the course sets the tone for the creation of a collaborative learning community and collaborative learning.

After registering for the course, participants receive a letter welcoming them to it along with copies of suggested pre-course readings. On the first day I greet and introduce myself to each person as they arrive and provide name tags and course folders. I offer them refreshments[x] and ask them to begin to introduce themselves to each other while waiting for the full membership to arrive. I also try to help the participants make connections based on what I may know about some of them before they arrive. The chairs are arranged in a circle though depending on the number of participants the seating might be configured otherwise (e.g., concentric circles, chevron). The important thing is that participants can see each other and are not lined up where they see the backs of heads and the face of the course leader in the front of the room. This arrangement is preferred for at least two reasons: 1) the opportunity for conversation is enhanced when people face each other and 2) it is a less hierarchical arrangement because I place myself in the circle.

Once all have arrived, I welcome the group and briefly introduce myself and say a few words about the Houston Galveston Institute (the institutional host) and the practicalities of the building. I then tell them that since we will be together for four days and that the format will be very interactive, I have found that it helps to take time for each person to introduce themselves.

During the introductions I express my curiosity and interest in each person. I comment on or ask a question about something that each person has said.

Creating the Agenda. The course syllabi includes the topics required by the external credentialing institutions and topics I deem important. I want participants, however, to have a voice regarding the course content and the learning structure.

A primary vehicle for content is dialogue, sometimes occurring in relation to a reading, videotape, experiential exercise, consultation, or shared information by facilitator or participants. Content is seldom entirely covered in a discrete time frame or as a discrete entity. Instead, various aspects of course content weaves throughout each session in various ways. The content agenda (that proposed in the course syllabus now expanded with their added agenda items) is always so full that participants have working lunches. As one participant put it, "Agenda building is a great tool…to state what is important, puzzling, exciting…so that everyone's needs are stated, even though there may be too many items to address!"

After the group introductions, I introduce myself more fully. I also briefly introduce my philosophy regarding the course and its organization. I tell them that I have a lot of experiences and biases about supervision to share with them but I do not assume that we are all here for the same reasons. I tell them that I need their help in selecting out what to emphasize. I ask them to think for a moment why they are in the course: what is their expectation of the course, of me; what would they like to leave with at the end of the fourth day; and what are some of the most important things that you think it would be helpful for us to know about you and your everyday work? I then ask them to form small conversational clusters[xi] of three to five persons and to share their expectations and so forth. They then organized themselves and are free to choose the space available in or outside the building where they prefer to meet. I give each cluster a large tablet

and markers to share what their conversation generated, a small pragmatic action that enhances engagement and conveys my serious interest in their voices.

I trust that each cluster will find their unique way to organize themselves and respond to my request. I do not expect certain kinds of answers or even answers: the questions serve as starters for conversations. Clusters might respond to all questions, address only one, or talk about something different. I reconvene the larger membership and each cluster shares the highlights—what they would like for us to know--of their conversations. I simply ask them to tell us I do not designate how they should do so. As each cluster shares, I ask questions to make sure that I understand what they are telling us and to learn their meanings. I then post the tablet sheets on the wall. Through this process, and at the beginning of each meeting thereafter, participants help create the course content and agenda.

Following the agenda collecting on day one, I give an introduction to postmodern philosophy and relate it to collaborative learning. During the presentation I keep their beginning agendas, interests and questions in mind and weave in responses to their interests and questions when suitable. In other words, I do not, for instance, answer question after question. I think that questions are posed as a way of inviting discussion. After the introduction, I invite participants to form conversational clusters to discuss what I have talked about and to raise new questions. We then reconvene in the large group for a general discussion.

We all know the importance of relationship building though we often short-cut it, failing to give it deserved attention. The quality of the relationship begins before student and teacher meet. It is influenced by each party's preconceived ideas and expectations of the other. These are attributed reputations that might be influenced by personal experience, hearsay, or stereotypical categories and groups of people such as undergraduate psychology students,

graduate philosophy students, math professors and so forth. From the collaborative perspective, educators want students to meet and experience them in the present moment. Though educators cannot unilaterally influence how students will experience and describe them but they can take care in what they do and say that will set the stage for collaborating.

The way in which an educator greets and meets the learners is critical to setting the tone for a collaborative and dialogical process. In emphasizing the importance of relationship and its association with generative dialogue, I find it helpful to talk about hospitality. I use a host–guest metaphor: it is as if the teacher or supervisor is the host who meets and greets the student or client as a guest while simultaneously being their guest. I ask the participants to think about how they like to be received as a guest. What does a host do that makes them feel welcomed or not, at ease or not, special or not and importantly, that they would be invited back? I ask them to describe the quality of the meeting and greeting, what was it like? Likewise, I ask them to think of a time that they had a guest in their home, office, etc that was the kind of guest who they would invite back. What were the characteristics of the guest? These are not rhetorical questions. I do not expect particular answers. Rather, I want the participants to think about the sense of their experience in the relationship and conversation--what it communicated to them, how it invited them or did not. I suggest that this is the kind of host and guest they want to be. Additionally, I emphasize the importance of keeping in mind that even though each of us has our unique “style”, we must be able to spontaneously adapt to each new and continuing relationship and conversation and its distinctive circumstances. Each conversational partnership is distinctive; it forms and evolves, mutually and periodically readapting and redefining itself over time.

Heterogeneity in Learning Groups

Typically, homogeneity in the membership of the learning group, largely based on a developmental theory of learning, is valued over heterogeneity. In collaborative learning, diversity among participants enhances the quality and quantity of learning that is produced. Each person brings a difference in terms of age/life stage, personal/professional experience, degree/discipline, learning style/agenda and theoretical and practice experience. Variety in voices provides a richness of perspectives and realities. The supervision course might include experienced and rookie supervisors practicing in various clinical settings with sundry degrees who come for distinct reasons. Often participants who have previously completed the course attend again because they value the learning and collegial experience.

Relationships and Conversations are Inseparable: They Reciprocally Influence Each Other

To invite and maximize collaborative learning I must maintain coherence with my philosophy in my acting and speaking. In other words, I must live it, being genuinely and naturally collaborative. This includes respecting, inviting and valuing each voice, being flexible and responsive and creatively doing what the occasion calls for on the spot. Foremost, this includes trusting the other and our process. I want to create and facilitate learning relationships and processes in which participants can identify, access, elaborate and produce their own unique competencies, cultivating seeds of newness in what they learn and its translation to their professional and personal lives. I want to talk and act to invite and encourage participants to take responsibility for and to be the architects of their learning. I also want each participant to experience our task and relationship differently from the familiar hierarchical and dualistic teacher-student relationships and learning processes they may have experienced.

Relational Expertise

Being collaborative does not mean that I deny or ignore my wealth of so-called knowledge whether in the form of ideas, opinions or experiences, but that I too must be a learner; I must believe that I can learn as much as the participants. I do not discount my knowledge nor do I think that I can leave it behind when I enter the classroom or web course. The difference is the intention with which that knowledge is used: my intent is to help the other person learn.

Importantly, collaborative teaching and learning challenge both participants and me to reconstruct how we think about teaching and learning.

Selecting and Addressing Content and Agenda

Collaborative learning occurs within a broad context of expectations such as credentialing and licensing bodies, professional associations and university departments: most are fashioned after the discourse of top-down knowledge. I keep in mind that multiple investors hold distinct assumptions about the learning purpose and how learning will be accomplished. I also realize that my role bestows power and authority on me as a teacher and supervisor, automatically placing me in hierarchical position. I hold the personal freedom, however, to choose how to exercise that power and authority. What I am most interested in is how I can position myself within these contexts and assumptions to best offer what I have to offer and for the learner to summon control over his or her own learning.

Reflecting Process

As mentioned above, an important part of learning is the opportunity for reflecting--reflecting with oneself and others, putting silent thoughts into spoken or written words. It encourages learners to be active and purposeful in their learning and in determining its direction, and it encourages reflection as part of everyday practice among supervisor and supervisee and among therapist and client. The reflection process consistently builds in continuous self, other, course and teacher evaluation as well. Importantly, the reflection process helps me continually learn the participants' changing needs and it provides an opportunity for me to improve my teaching and adjust my style to best serve their individual and combined needs—to accommodate to what each group, occasion, circumstance and relationship calls for at any one time.

It is equally important for me to reflect as well. I offer my reflections on our previous work at the beginning of each session. As well I periodically reflect during the session itself.

Learner's Feedback about Collaborative Learning

Participants overwhelmingly report in their reflections that the learning process is more important than the content. Participants consistently report amazement at the richness and meaningfulness of the process. They comment on the generativity of the conversations, the emergence of new learning and the surprising changes in their thoughts and practices. They express gratefulness for the opportunity to be thoughtful active learners, although at first the experience is unfamiliar and challenging. They appreciate and develop the richness of possibilities as they move from a need for certainty and closure to a sense of comfortableness with uncertainty and the yet-to-come. In one participant's words, "it [collaborative learning experience] gave me a new sense of self-confidence." As another learner put it, "The atmosphere beckoned to me, 'Take a chance'."

Participants report that the new learning is useful in their everyday work. They begin to appreciate what their supervisees bring to the table—listening and hearing their stories differently. As one participant said, "respect for the supervisor-supervisee relationship as well as for each of their positions—that no one position is of greater importance than another." Another one said she valued learning to talk about supervisees and clients with "critical thinking and compassion" rather than with a pejorative and judgmental attitude. Another describe a shift in her perspective of her therapy clients,

"I am constantly amazed at how my supervisees change, as they are willing to learn more about their client's lives, their struggles, their histories. Their negativity usually reduces in proportion to their openness. I amaze myself when I am willing to be more open-minded as well."

Another told of her supervisees' experience of collaboration,

"My supervisees have reported that my non-hierarchical and collaborative model of supervision is refreshing compared to previous supervision in which the supervisee feels intimidated and judged."

Also noteworthy is that participants express pride of ownership in the course and accountability for their learning. They also describe a new sense of responsibility to each other, congruent with McNamee and Gergen's (1999) notion of relational responsibility. That is, as one positions oneself differently with another—as I position myself differently with the learners—we boldly experience that no one holds sole responsibility. When responsibility is shared—as participants connect, collaborate and construct with each other—the learning relationship and process are more mutually gratifying and rewarding. These experiences with supervision as collaborative learning reported by supervision course participants and their supervisees are

consistent with other accounts of supervision from a postmodern perspective (Caldwell, Becvar, Bertolino & Diamond, 1997; Ungar, 2006; London & Punsky, 2000).

Collaborative learning cannot be taught but educators can create environments in which students learn to learn collaboratively. The essential relationships and processes spontaneously emerge out of the experience itself, learning by doing rather than through be lecturing and so forth. Students move from a tradition of individualized competitive learning to a new experience of shared inquiry and construction. In so doing, students become more active agents in their learning, they enhance each other's learning and they share with each other the responsibility for their own and each other's learning. Students report satisfaction and amazement at not only what and how the learning has applicability in other areas of their lives. In other word, learning is a transforming experience from fertile means to creative ends.

References

Anderson, H. (1998).Collaborative learning communities. In. S. McNamee & K. J.Gergen (Eds.).*Relational responsibility*.Sage Publications: Newbury Park, CA.

Anderson, H. (2000). Supervision as a collaborative learning community. *American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Supervision Bulletin.* Fall 2000, 7-10.

Anderson, H. (2009). Collaborative practice: Relationships and conversations that make a difference. In J. Bray & M. Stanton (Eds.). *The Wiley Handbook of Family Psychology*. (pp. 300-313). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Anderson, H. (1993) Learning as collaborative conversation with commentary by Laura Fruggeri. *Human System: The Journal of Therapy, Consultation and Training. Vol.* 4, Issue 3-4.

Anderson, H. & Goolishian, H. (1991). Supervision as collaborative conversation: Questions and reflections. In H. Brandau (Ed.). *Von der supervision zurystemischen vision*. Salzburg: Otto Muller Verlag.

Anderson, H., & Rambo, A. (1988). An experiment in systemic family therapy training: A trainer and trainee perspective. *Journal of Strategic & Systemic Therapies*, 7(1), 54-70.

Anderson, H. & Swim, S. (1993) Learning as collaborative conversation: Combining the student's and the teacher's expertise. *Human systems: The journal of systemic consultation and management*. 4:145-160.

Anderson, H., & Swim, S. (1995). Supervision as collaborative conversation: Connecting the voices of supervisor and supervisee. *Journal of Systemic Therapies*, 14(2), 1-13.

Anderson, H. D. (1985, July). The new epistemology in family therapy: Implications for training family therapists. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 46.

Andersen, T. (1995). Reflecting processes; acts of informing and forming: You can borrow my eyes but you can’t take them away from me. In S. Friedman (Ed.).*The reflecting team in action: Collaborative practice in family therapy.* New York: Guilford. pp. 11-37.

Astin, A. W. (1985). *Achieving educational excellence*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Bateson, G. (1972). *Steps to an ecology of the mind: A revolutionary approach to man's understanding of himself*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books.

Belenky, M., Clinchy, B., Goldberger, N., & Tarule, J. (1986). *Women's ways of knowing: The development of self, voice, and mind*. New York, NY US: Basic Books.

Bonwell, C.C., & Eison, J.A. (1991).*Active learning: Creating excitement in the classroom.*ASHE-ERIC Higher education report no. 1. Washington, DC: The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development.

Bosworth, K. (1994). Developing collaborative skills in college students. *New Directions for Teaching & Learning*, (59), 25.

Bruffee, K. (1993). *Higher education, interdependence and the authority of knowledge.*

Caldwell, K., Becvar, D. S., Bertolino, R., & Diamond, D. (1997). A Postmodern Analysis of a Course on Clinical Supervision. *Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal*, 19(2), 269.

Derrida, J. (1978). *Writing and difference.*(A. Bass, Trans.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Goodsell, A., Maher, M., Tinto, V, and Associates (Eds.) (1992). *Collaborative learning: A sourcebook for higher education.* University Park: National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, Pennsylvania State University.

Foucault, M. (1972). *The archeology of knowledge*. (A. M. Sheriden Smith, Trans.) New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* New York: Continuum.

Gadamer, H.-G. (1975). *Truth and method* (G. Burden & J. Cumming, Trans). New York, NY: Seabury Press.

Garfinkle, H. (1967). *Studies in ethnomethodology.* New York, NY: Prentice-Hall.

Golub, J. (1988). *Focus on Collaborative Learning*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English,1988.

Hermans, H. M. (1995). The limitations of logic in defining the self. *Theory & Psychology*, 5(3), 375-382. doi:10.1177/0959354395053005

John-Steiner, V. (2000). *Creative collaboration*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T. & Holubec, E. J. (1994). *The nuts and bolts of collaborative Learning*. Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company.

Kegan, R. (2000). What "form" transforms?: A constructive-developmental approach to transformative learning. In J. Meizrow (Ed.).*Transformational Learning*.Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA.

Kuh, G. D. (1990). Study group on the conditions of excellence in higher education, 1984).

Lyotard, J.-F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Mead, G.H. (1934). *Mind, self and society.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of perception* (trans. C. Smith) London, England: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Mezirow, J. & Associates (2000). *Learning as transformation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Peters, J. 7 Armstrong, J. (1998).*Collaborative learning: People laboring together to construct knowledge*. In Saltiel, I. M., Sgroi, A. & Brockett, R. G. (Eds.). *The power and potential of collaborative learning partnerships*. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no. 70. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Resnick, L. B. (1991). Shared cognition: Thinking as social practice. In L. B. Resnick, J.M. Levine and S.D. Teasley (Eds.), *Perspectives on socially shared cognition*. Washington, DC: American Psychology Association (pp. 1-20).

Schön, D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in America.* New York, NY: Basic Books.

Slavin, R. E. (1990). *Cooperative learning: Theory, research and practice*. Needham Heights: Allyn and Bacon.

Smith, B. L. & MacGregor, J. T. (1992) What is collaborative learning?” In A. Goodsell, M. Mahe& V. Tinto (Eds.) *Collaborative learning: A sourcebook for higher education*. Pennsylvania: The National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning and Assessment at Pennsylvania State University.

St. George, S. &Wulff, D. (2011). Frequently asked questions: What is collaboration? *International journal of collaborative practices*, *2*. www.collaborative-practices.com/

Ungar, M. (2006). Practicing as a postmodern supervisor. Journal of Marital and Family Therapy. Vol. 32, Issue: 1, Pages: 59-71

Von Foerster, H. (1982). *Observing systems*. Seaside, CA: Intersystems Publications.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1962). *Thought and language* (E, Hanfmann& G. Vakar, Trans.). Cambridge: MIT Press. (Original work published in 1934).

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978).*Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Wiener, H. S. (1986) Collaborative Learning in the Classroom: A Guide to Evaluation. *College English 48*(1), 52-61.

Wittgenstein, L. (1961). *Tractatuslogico*-philosophicus (D. Pears & B. McGulness, Trans.).London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. (Original work published in 1922).

References

Anderson, London & Punsky, 2000)
Bateson, G
Bahktin, 1981, 1984Edwards, 2005; Gadamer, 1975; Habermas, ; Shotter, 1984, 2005, 2006;

Anderson; Shotter, Golub, 1988; Kuh, 1990; 1998; Sir Ken Robinson, , 1986).

Anderson, H. (2010)

Anderson, H. (2000) Supervision as a collaborative learning community. *American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Supervision Bulletin.* Fall 2000 7-10.

Anderson, H. (1998) Collaborative learning communities. In. S. McNamee & J.K. Gergen (Eds.). *Relational Responsibility*. Sage Publications: Newbury Park, CA.

Anderson, H. (1984) The new epistemology in family therapy: Implications for training family therapists. Doctoral Dissertation. University Microfilms.

Anderson, H. & Goolishian, H. (1991) Supervision as collaborative conversation: Questions and reflections. In H. Brandau (Ed.). *Von der Supervision zur Systemischen Vision*. Salzburg: Otto Muller Verlag.

Andersen, T. (1995). Reflecting processes; acts of informing and forming: You can borrow my eyes but you can't take them away from me. In S. Friedman (Ed.). *The reflecting team in action: Collaborative practice in family therapy.* New York: Guilford. pp. 11-37.

Anderson, H. & Rambo, A. (1988) An experiment in systemic family therapy training: A trainer and trainee perspective. *Journal of Strategic and Systemic Therapies* 7:54-70.
student's and the teacher's expertise. *Human Systems: The Journal of Systemic Consultation and Management*. 4:145-160.

Anderson, H. & Swim, S. (1994) Supervision as collaborative conversation: Combing the supervisor and the supervisee voices. *Journal of Systemic* Therapies. 14(2):1-13.

Anderson, H. & Swim, S. (1993) Learning as collaborative conversation: Combining the student's and the teacher's expertise. *Human Systems: The Journal of Systemic Consultation and Management*. 4:145-160.

(Gergen, K. J. (1982); 1999, 2009 a,b;

McNamee. S. (2007)
Sampson, (1993)
Shotter, J. (1984)
Shotter, J. (2008)
Smith, Harre, R. & Van Langenhove, (1995)

Astin, A. W. (1985). *Achieving educational excellence*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Belenky, M. f., Clinchy, B. M., Goldberger, N. R. & Tareul, J. R. (1986). *Women's ways of knowing*. New York: Basic Books.

Bateson, G. (1972). *Steps to an ecology of the mind*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Belenky, M. F., Clinchy, B. M., Goldberger, N. R. & Tarule, J. R. (1986). *Women's ways of knowing*. New York: Basic Books.

Bonwell, C.C., & Eison, J.A. (1991). *Active learning: Creating excitement in the classroom.* ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 1. Washington, DC: The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development.

Bosworth, Kris (1994). Developing Collaborative Skills in College Students. Collaborative Learning: Underlying Processes and Effective Techniques. In K. Bosworth & S. J. Hamilton (Eds.), *New directions for teaching and learning.* no. 59. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994, pp. 25-31.

Bruffee, K. (1993). *Higher education, interdependence and the authority of knowledge.*

Goodsell, A., Maher, M., Tinto, V, and Associates (Eds.) (1992). *Collaborative learning: A sourcebook for higher education.* University Park: National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, Pennsylvania State University.

Caldwell, Becvar, Bertolino & Diamond, (1997).

Derrida, J. (1978). *Writing and difference.* (A. Bass, Trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Freire, P. (1970)

Gadamer, H--G

Garfinkle, H. (1967) Golub, 1988

Hacking, I. (1999). *The social construction of what?*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Hermans, H. J. M.. (1992). The limitations of lobic in defining the self. *Theory and psychology.* 5: 375-382.

John-Steiner, V. (2000) *Creative Collaboration*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T. & Holubec, E. J. (1994). *The Nuts and Bolts of Collaborative Learning*. Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company.

Keagan, R.

Kuh, (1990). Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in Higher Education, 1984).

Lyotard, J.-F. (1984) .*The post-modern condition: A report on knowledge*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1992). *Phenomomenology of perception* (trans. C. Smith) London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Foucault, M. (1972). *The archeology of knowledge*. Sheridan, London: Tavistock.

Mezirow, J. & Associates (2000). *Learning as transformation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Peters, J. 7 Armstrong, J. (1998). *Collaborative learning: People laboring together to construct knowledge*. In Saltiel, I. M., Sgroi, A. & Brockett, R. G. (Eds.). *The power and potential of collaborative learning partnerships*. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, no 70. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Resnick, L.B. (1991). Shared cognition: Thinking as social practice. In L. B. Resnick, In J. M. Levine and S. D. Teasley (Eds), *Perspectives on Socially Shared Cognition.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Schön, D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.

Slavin, R. E. (1990). *Cooperative learning: Theory, research and practice*. Needham Heights: Allyn and Bacon.

Smith, B. L. & MacGregor, J. T. (1992) What is collaborative learning?" In A. Goodsell, M. Mahe & V. Tinto (Eds.) *Collaborative learning: A sourcebook for higher education*. Pennsylvania: The National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning and Assessment at Pennsylvania State University.

Von Foerster, H, (1982). *Observing Systems*. Seaside: Intersystems Publications.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1962). *Thought and language* (E, Hanfmann & G. Vakar, Ed. And Trans.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (Original work published in 1934).

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Wiener, H. S. (1986) Collaborative Learning in the Classroom: A Guide to Evaluation. *College English 48*(1), 52-61.

Wittgenstein, L. (1961). *Tractatus logico*-philosophicus (D. Pears & B. McGulness, Trans.). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. (Original work published in 1922).

Bosworth, K. (1994). "Developing Collaborative Skills in College Students." Collaborative Learning: Underlying Processes and Effective Techniques. In K. Bosworth and S. J. Hamilton (Eds.) *New Directions for teaching and* learning, no. 59. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, pp. 25-31 .

Bosworth, K. & Hamilton, J. S. (1994). Collaborative learning: Underlying processes and effective techniques. In *New Directions for Collaborative* Learning, no. 59. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

---

[i] This article is a revision of a previous article on postmodern educational philosophy.

[ii] I use education as an umbrella term that includes all learning activities such as classroom learning, clinical training and supervising.

[iii] I use knowledge as a broad term that can include expertise, truth, perspective, etc.

[iv] For a more extensive discussion of the postmodern tapestry see Anderson, 1997 and Anderson, 2007.

[v] Granted, all educators would say their goal is new learning. What I am attempting to emphasize is the difference between thinking that a student learns

what is said or read as it is, but rather that in their interaction with the said and read they create new learning that is unique to each.

[vi] It is important however that the difference not be so great as to jar the students and invite what can be viewed as "resisting behaviors."

[vii] The 40 hour requirement is set by the licensing boards. Previously, I conducted the course one day a month for six months. I found that this time-frame gave participants a more in depth learning experience as well as ample time to practice and experience supervising over time between course meetings. Importantly, it provided ample opportunity for self-reflection and exchange with other participants which is critical to collaborative learning. Because a licensing board changed its requirements for the course (now the course must be completed in 90 days), I modified the time-frame while still trying to maintain the essence of the original course and learning experience.

[viii] Though this option is most often met with apprehension, usually by the second two-day session more than one participant has asked to invite their supervisee to join them for a consultation.

[ix] Reflecting practice is similar to Donald Schön's (1983) concept of "reflective practitioner" (thinking in and on action) in the development of professional knowledge which has been adopted in some professional education programs. Reflecting in collaborative practice whether education, psychotherapy or organization development, places importance on purposely taking the time to pause and think about an experience (e.g., a discussion, a book chapter, an observation) and to then share one's silent inner conversation/talk about the experience out loud or in writing with the others involved in the activity.

[x] Though I think refreshments are a requirement, I understand that others may not. Refreshments can help set the tone for a welcoming, warm and informal mood.

[xi] I purposely use the word "cluster" rather than "group" to help students begin to conceptualize differently what they are doing. The term group or group work comes with a history that does not necessarily emphasize collaborating. I also want to try to prevent the old "hear we go again, group work."

Anderson, H. (1993). (1993). LEARNING AS COLLABORATIVE CONVERSATION with Commentary by Laura Fruggeri. *Human System:* ***The Journal of Therapy, Consultation and Training.vol.*** 4, Issue 3-4