This is nothing particularly new – concrete artifacts have been used as central focus points in

conversations for ages. However, the *precise words of the discussion* are often not the *physically*

present artifact under discussion.

being able to come back and look at what I said the moment is
actually an opportunity to kind of solidify some ideas...

(looking at transcript) Where am I struggling
with finding words to explain myself?

Okay. So I'm marking that a little bit on line 22.

Another thing I sort of heard you talk about
and I'm looking up in the transcript...

You know because the transcript is up there you can actually point to my words instead of your
memory of what the words were or the connection that came into your mind.

Even breaking eye contact with the other people in the
room and looking briefly at the screen can be an interaction
with the central artifact that helps a participant engage more
with the in-person interaction. It's like a quick navigational
check-in on a conversational GPS: am I following this
discussion correctly? Where are we? What have we just said?

When I did the interview
with J for observation 2,
an audience member also
edited the transcript with
their own notes as we
were talking.

This was demonstrated clearly during Observation 1, an interview between two grad students.

Realtime transcription services like CART (Communication Access Realtime Transcription) allow participants to view, analyze, and edit data *during and immediately after* an interview, leading to *coding* (a form of analysis) that is both *grounded* in a concrete artifact and *indigenous*to the data collection process. **Grounded indigenous coding** is a rich mode of collaborative reflection.
(from http://radicallytransparentresearch.org/manifesto, written by Mel Chua in April 2013)

Sometimes watching the text
made me think more.

...reading the transcript as a way
to follow my own story

Having one's thoughts externalized as a concrete
artifact that's shareable by others can help participants
reflect.

[the transcript is] a benefit...
a memory device.

Since interviewers often struggle with low response rates on
the member-check portions of studies, moving the member-
check into the interview itself lowers the effort needed to
actually have a co-constructed analysis.

You have me now. Use me now.

I should find better ways to explain the process to my subjects at the start, though. (So I created http://radicallytransparentresearch/manifesto as a first draft.)

At the beginning I think it is useful to understand just a
bit of why the interview is being done this way - perhaps
as a unique way of doing research.

REFLECTION

When writing up the final data story, I had two recurring thoughts: (1) All these ideas web together, and a linear pure-text presentation doesn't seem to do them justice, and (2) Geez, I'm leaving out a lot... but I must, because otherwise this will encompass the whole world, so I might as well slice up the boundaries somewhere, and they might as well be 4-6 pages long.

I ended up deciding that I wanted to expound on one question and a 3-point answer. The question was "what happens in an interview when you use realtime transcription?" and the answers were (1) the transcriber is a professional human service that soon fades into the background, (2) the transcript becomes a central artifact that interviewer and interviewee interact around, and (3) the realtime element enables grounded indigenous coding (which I discussed in more detail in my midterm, and continue to explore in separate works).

For a while, I struggled with different text layouts of those four points. I decided early on that I would put each point on one page (thus ending up with a 4-page document), but even focusing on one page didn't seem to work – when you write in text, you need to put one thought or quote after another, so each thought can only be "next to" two others – the one before it and the one after it. But the data was far, far more interlinked in my mind – and visual, and spatial, and physical. In some cases, I've actually printed out transcripts, cut out phrases, and shuffled them around on the kitchen table or the floor to make sense of their relationships. And some of the data that I had in my mind – but hadn't captured very well in text – *was* visual and spatial; the physical layouts of the rooms I did the observations/interviews in, transcripts and artifacts flowing from one interview to another... these would work far better in pictures.

So I started drawing pictures. And eventually, I ended up doing the whole thing as a sort of comic book. I was still constrained to 8.5"x11" sheets of flat white paper and a pen and some markers (because that's all I had on hand), but it was liberating to be able to play with my data that way, and handwriting the text forced me to be *very* concise and attentive to exactly what I wanted to write down. For a while.

By the end of the second page, I was starting to think that this experimental format was fantastic, but had some obvious drawbacks. First, it would be very hard to edit. I could tell already that what I was making had a "rough draft" quality to it and that I could do far more storyboarding, sketches, etc. to polish the presentation – but that meant redrawing everything, and my average rate of comic-book production is well over an hour per page – perhaps even twice that – because of how many decisions need to be made before setting pen to paper.

Second, it wasn't text-searchable, which would make it hard to draw on for insights and snippets of text in the future. And third, it was a *giant* timesuck. Hand-writing quotes made me more attentive to that data, yes – but at this point, I wanted to get it *done*. So I began typing a hybrid document for the last 2 pages, leaving blank spaces for the drawings I wanted to do. It wasn't the same; I felt myself getting less deeply into the ideas I was typing than if I'd handwritten them, probably because I was spending less time on each idea (I type much faster than I write, and I could also copy-paste now). But on the other time, I was spending less time on each idea, so the comic got done *far* faster – the last 2 pages took perhaps a total of one hour, combined, to produce. This seems like a reasonable tradeoff for making drafts of "comic book" outputs in the future, but I'd want to draw final editions by hand or find a more attractive way to format them (or hire someone).

At this point in my studies, I'm rolling the idea of "grounded indigenous coding" into my dissertation proposal – which is *not* centered on grounded indigenous coding or realtime transcription, but simply uses it. It is, instead, focused on how faculty make sense of their own roles during the course of curricular revisions that incorporate design into a 4-year engineering or technology curriculum, and how sharing faculty stories across institutions shapes that sensemaking. I've learned my lesson about building a study that is "too meta." It doesn't make sense to do a research project about research techniques which requires you to make up another research project in order to do it – that's putting the cart before the horse. Instead, do a research project and *use* the technique, and then go back and study what happened and how that technique influenced it.

Ah, long-range planning and patience development. I suppose I still need to work on that.