

The Grounded Theory Review: An international journal

From the Editor

This issue of the Review explores several interesting perspectives on teaching and learning. First, we asked Dr. Glaser to revisit an address he gave a decade ago on the future of grounded theory. Just as a decade ago, he continues to suggest that the future of grounded theory rests with the novice grounded theorist attracted by the promise of finding out what's really going on, of getting out into the field as soon as possible. As he points out, grounded theory often attracts a more mature individual; experienced practitioners pursuing a professional credentializing requirement as opposed to a purely scholastic pursuit. Many come from professional fields such as social work, nursing, medicine, allied health vocations, education, management and business. They're practitioners seeking a better understanding of the social patterns that underpin the behaviours they encounter in their work – those high impact access and controllable variables (Glaser & Strauss, pp.245-249) that suggest better ways to mobilize often scarce resources to resolving issues or leveraging opportunities. There's tremendous satisfaction in the emergence of such patterns in a research study. Perhaps somewhat intimidated by the standard academic prerequisites in qualitative research such as a declared philosophical stance, literature review and theoretical framework to guide the research, grounded theory's straight forward, unencumbered and perhaps less pretentious and more intuitive approach provides a "sensitizing recognition" (Glaser, 1998, p.62) for the experienced practitioner. Easily overwhelmed by the social structural dictates of the academy, they understand and embrace a method that offers a 'full package' approach and promises an outcome with practical value.

As such, grounded theory offers a somewhat 'counter-culture' alternative for the experienced practitioner with an intuitive sense that the preconceived, normative and prescriptive extant theories simply do not capture the reality they experience. Such theories not only lack relevance but may even inhibit constructive intervention and change. Even the novice with limited practice

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experience can feel hampered and hindered by the dictates of traditional research methodologies and the social structural constraints of many post-graduate research programs. The “draw and grab” (Glaser, 1998, p.62) of classic grounded theory is highly motivating.

Odis Simmons (this issue), one of Dr. Glaser’s earliest students and now one of the most experienced teachers of classic grounded theory, shares with us a very personal perspective on the challenges facing the novice grounded theorist and how he works with students to overcome these challenges. He alludes to the counter-culture nature of grounded theory in its taken for granted theory generating stance as “inside out and upside down” in terms of traditional academic culture where, he suggests, theory development is considered a rare skill and most are content to make a modest contribution or modification to extant theories. Others engaged in supervising and mentoring novice researchers will find inspiration and sound advice in his paper.

Like Odis Simmons, Antoinette McCallin (this issue) is a Fellow of the Grounded Theory Institute and one of this journal’s most experienced peer reviewers. In this issue, she reviews a recent guide to doing grounded theory in the field of nursing (Artinian, Giske & Cone, 2009). The primary author, Barbara Artinian, is another experienced teacher of grounded theory methodology who openly embraces ‘Glaserian’ grounded theory while offering up her own “variation” (Glaser, 2009).

Common to all of these papers is a recognition that learning and doing grounded theory is a delayed action learning process (Glaser, 1978, p.6; 2001, p.1; 2003, p.78); that talking grounded theory without doing it fosters confusion through what are often unintended methods variations. Learning delays come from the cognitive confusion of grounded theory’s ‘staying open’ stance as opposed to the preconceived frameworks traditional in many other research approaches; from the need to tolerate confusion and regression (Glaser, 1998, pp.100-102) in service to the preconscious processing that facilitates ideational emergence of the theory in progress; and, from the resistance to unlearning taken-for-granted procedures standard to other research approaches. Staying open takes time but methodological realization grows with sustained engagement in using grounded theory methods. The importance of learning through doing cannot

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be under-estimated. As Glaser often comments in his troubleshooting seminars, grounded theory is asymptotic; its propositional nature allows for its modification with additional data and with further skill development on the part of the theorist. What one ‘misses’ in the first grounded theory study can be realized and ‘corrected’ in subsequent studies.

One goal of this journal has always been to encourage novice grounded theorists to submit their work for review and possible publication. To emphasize our goal and to encourage novices to submit working papers on their emerging theories, we are introducing a new feature – “Theories in Progress”. We are pleased to include here our first paper in this series. Alison Clancy (this issue) is a PhD Candidate at University College Dublin. Her emerging grounded theory offers an interesting perspective on the world of academia. Her theory of perpetual identity constructing proposes an interesting concept of ‘possibility portals’ where academics find crucial space and time needed for a becoming process in the construction of preferred professional identities. In much the same way, one might suggest that those desirous of becoming grounded theorists also need such possibility portals through reading, seminars and mentorships as opportunities to construct their preferred researcher identities.

- Judith A. Holton, Ph.D.

References

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Submissions

We welcome papers presenting substantive and formal classic grounded theories from a broad range of disciplines. All papers submitted are double blind peer reviewed and comments provided back to the authors. Papers accepted for publication will be good examples or practical applications of classic grounded theory methodology. Comments on papers published are also welcomed; these will be shared with the authors and may be published in subsequent issues of the Review. Manuscripts should be prepared as Word (.doc) files using single line spacing and New Century Schoolbook 11 pt typeface. Forward submissions as Word documents to Judith Holton at judith@groundedtheoryreview.com

Title Page: Include names of all authors, their affiliations and professional degrees. Include the address of the corresponding author, telephone number & email. A brief biographical statement of each author is welcome although optional.

Abstract: The title page is followed by an abstract of 100 to 150 words. Include maximum of five key words.

Introduction: Briefly overview the focus of the study. Comment on data sources, data collection and analysis.

Theory: Using sub-headings, clearly identify the theory's core category (variable) and related concepts, explaining each briefly. Under an additional subheading, articulate the main theoretical propositions (hypotheses) of your theory.

Discussion: Discuss the general implications of your theory for practice. Discuss its contribution to knowledge by addressing extant theory and literature. Discuss its limitations.

Notes to the Text: Notes to the text should be kept to a minimum and should appear at the end of the text.

References: References should appear as a separate section titled 'References' at the end of the paper following the text and any endnotes. References should conform to APA publication format.

Word Count: As a rule, papers should not exceed 8,000 words.

Graphics: Our preference is to minimize the use of graphics, figures and tables. If they are necessary, authors of papers accepted for publication will be asked to supply print ready artwork.

Peer Review Guidelines

The goal of peer review in this journal is to advance classic grounded theory scholarship by providing constructive comments to authors with a view to enhancing the quality of papers submitted. The role of the peer reviewer is to respect the autonomy of the author by coaching rather than criticising thereby encouraging and supporting the author's understanding of the methodology and subsequent skill development as a published grounded theorist.

Following peer review, papers are returned to the author with one of the following recommendations:

- Accept as it is
- Accept pending minor revisions
- Revise and resubmit

Basis for Revision:

- Needs a clearer focus
- Core category needs clarification
- Related concepts need clarification
- Theoretical propositions (hypotheses) need to be clearly articulated
- Contribution to knowledge (addressing the literature) needs further work
- Implications for practice need to be addressed
- Limitations of the study need to be addressed
- Data sources need to be addressed
- Brief statement on data collection & analysis needs to be consistent with classic GT methodology
- Composition needs work