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From the Editor

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The Grounded Theory Review

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From the Editor

Those of us who mentor or supervise novice grounded theorists are often asked questions about addressing the literature in a GT study. Glaser has written extensively on the importance of remaining open and avoiding preconception through extensive engagement with extant and frequently ungrounded ("conjectured") theories. In this double issue of the Review, we offer a range of perspectives on this subject from members of our Peer Review Board. We begin the discussion with a reprint of Antoinette McCallin's (2003) paper, "Grappling with the Literature in a Grounded Theory Study", **Contemporary Nurse, 15(1-2), 61-69**, reprinted here with the permission of the publishers. Five of our Peer Review Editors have offered a response to McCallin's paper.

Tom Andrews attributes the "grappling" dilemma to methodological confusion resultant of the frequent remodelling of the classic methodology by qualitative researchers and suggests that adherence to the dictates of the classic methodology will enable most researchers to overcome the challenges to appropriately and effectively addressing the literature. Alvita Nathaniel draws inspiration from Plato's allegory of the cave in acknowledging the importance of theoretical sensitivity, the impossibility of any competent researcher attempting to undertake a study *tabula rasa* and yet also recognizing the potential for contaminating a grounded theory study with preconceived and ungrounded assumptions as may be garnered from a less than critical engagement with extant literature.

Hans Thulesius suggests that the grappling dilemma as addressed by McCallin is less an issue than she implies and easily resolved by following Glaser's advice to continually enhance one's theoretical sensitivity by reading widely (cross disciplines) and to avoid preconception by leaving the tunnelling down into the 'relevant' literature until after the theory has emerged. Helene Ekstrom offers a pragmatic perspective on McCallin's paper and, in so doing,

mirrors the concerns of many novice grounded theorists seeking practical advice on sourcing the relevant literature, particularly in disciplines where there is a paucity of good published grounded theories. She also acknowledges the challenges for novice researchers in moving beyond their discipline boundaries in sourcing appropriate literature to be constantly compared into an emerging theory.

In her response, Vivian Martin suggests that the issue of addressing the literature has become a bit of a red herring that can divert attention from the methodology's "subversive potential ...to push pass disciplinary boundaries by broadening the 'relevant' literature". She offers a useful four phase-model for understanding the process of addressing the literature appropriately throughout one's engagement in a GT study.

Antoinette McCallin's paper, "Methodological Issues: Have we forgotten the place of thinking here?" concludes this exchange of views by responding to the various perspectives offered. In so doing, she raises the interesting question of thinking - both in terms of style and competence - in undertaking a grounded theory study. She suggests that the "true" grounded theorist's approach to thinking is creative, inquisitive, critical, analytical and comfortable with complexity - a style that is not necessarily inherent in all researchers and one that can be challenging to the novice. Glaser, of course, has noted the ability to think conceptually as fundamental to doing grounded theory and attributes the inability to do so for producing descriptive rather than conceptual theory.

This issue of the Review also offers an example of the enduring nature of a good grounded theory. Eleanor Krassen Covan's (1998) paper, "Caresharing: Hiding frailty in a Florida retirement community" (previously published in **Health Care for Women International**, 19:423-439, and reprinted here with permission of the publisher, Taylor & Francis) offers us such an example. Building on her original theory, her new paper, "Revisiting Caresharing in the Context of Changes in a Florida Retirement Community", offers us an important modification to her original theory, achieved through the constant comparison of indicators in

additional data collected over the past decade. This second paper shows us how a good grounded theory lives on and continues to fit, work and remain relevant through its continual modification based on new data.

As in previous issues, we continue our commitment to encouraging novice grounded theorists to publish their work. In this issue, we are pleased to include a paper based on the doctoral thesis of Hans Moran. His grounded theory explains the decision-making process underlying the service response of De La Salle schools to youth at risk. Moran describes his theory of helping behaviour as enhancing extant theory, particularly the attribution model, by explaining the role of personal altruistic convictions as well as rational pragmatic deliberations in shaping a helping service response.

“Bookending” this issue of the Review are two papers that focus attention on the origins of classic grounded theory. In his paper, “The Roots of Grounded Theory”, Dr. Glaser shares with us his thoughts on the four dimensions of sociology and how grounded theory emerged from his training along these dimensions. It’s a fascinating account of the emergence of the methodology from his own experience as a doctoral student at Columbia University and serves as a testament to his perceptive intellect and his conceptual brilliance. It is an important reminder of his contribution to the science of sociology and particularly timely with next year marking the 40th anniversary of the publication of **The Discovery of Grounded Theory** (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Likewise, Vivian Martin’s paper, “The Postmodern Turn: Shall classic grounded theory take that detour?” offers a timely critique of two recent publications (Charmaz, 2006; Clarke, 2005) each purporting to offer methodological advancements on grounded theory methodology. One should expect several papers and publications offering varying perspectives on the methodology as we approach its forty-year landmark on the research landscape. The old misunderstandings and remodellings will no doubt prevail in much of this rhetoric. It is hoped that The Grounded Theory Review can continue to offer a perspective that

honours the original contribution of Barney Glaser – one that has stood the test of time and the embrace of the many who have endeavoured to emulate its achievements whether or not they have fully appreciated and employed the scholarship from which the methodology emerged.

- Judith Holton

Submissions

All papers submitted are peer reviewed and comments provided back to the authors. Papers accepted for publication will be good examples or practical applications of grounded theory and classic grounded theory methodology.

Comments on papers published are also welcomed, will be shared with the authors and may be published in subsequent issues of the Review. See our website www.groundedtheoryreview.com for full submission guidelines.

Forward submissions as Word documents to Judith Holton at judith@groundedtheoryreview.com