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New Way of Using Literature in GT

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## **NEW WAY OF USING LITERATURE IN GT?**

*Hans Thulesius, GP, Ph.D.*

After having read Antoinette McCallin's paper on literature use in GT I find myself asking the following question. Is McCallin's way of applying the literature - letting the research area emerge in a literature search - an important modification on how to use the literature in classic GT according to Glaser? McCallin shows how her way to a one core variable grounded theory went over a literature review in the beginning of her research. But this literature review was actually a general literature search for a problem area to explore since McCallin tells us that she did not have a finite area of research before screening the literature. Eventually, through a literature search she decided that she wanted to study interprofessional practice in health care. After having found this problem area McCallin did what is not recommended in classic GT - she began studying the scientific literature on interprofessional practice. However, the area was almost unexplored.

In my opinion McCallin did not start her GT until she found the specific research area she wanted to explore. But this area was not found through a specific scientific literature search but by generally exploring what was going on in the health care scene in her part of the world. Then she could have been preconceived by too early reading the scientific literature, but the area was scientifically a virgin land to her luck.

Fortunately, the literature revealed that there was little published research on the concept of interprofessional practice (Bishop & Scudder, 1985; Casto & Julia, 1994; Gabe, Kelleher & Williams, 1994; Leathard, 1994; Ovretveit, 1993; Petersen, 1994; Soothill, Mackay, & Webb, 1995). Most readings proved to be anecdotal accounts of interprofessional teamwork. (McCallin, 2003, p.66)

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McCallin then generated a useful grounded theory explaining how health care professionals through pluralistic dialogue overcome difficulties in working together.

So the answer to the above question is no. McCallin just did what Glaser suggests, reading a lot, but not in the area of study. Her general literature search increased her theoretical sensitivity in discovering a relevant research area. As she tells us: "Perhaps long-term study within the discipline of nursing had de-sensitised me to the wider issues common to all health professionals working in the health reform environment?" (McCallin, 2003, p.65)

So the recommended use of literature in Grounded Theory research according to Glaser fits with how McCallin used it in her Pluralistic Dialogue study. What may be somewhat new is that McCallin actually found her problem area in the general literature.

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