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Guest Editorial, Themed Section

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As I have supervised or read numerous theses and dissertations and completed countless reviews of manuscripts that purport to do grounded theory, I have been struck by the confusion about what exactly grounded theory entails. In this themed section focusing on constructivist (constructionist) grounded theory, we strive to describe constructivist grounded theory, provide an exemplar of this research, and point out the differences between constructivist grounded theory and classic grounded theory.

When grounded theory first emerged as a research methodology (Glaser, 1965; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) it literally rocked the research world and was quickly adopted by disciplines other than sociology from which it derived. For the first decade or two grounded theory continued without much 'disturbance.' However, later graduate students took up the public 'challenge' to "take the method in any direction they wished" (Glaser, 1978, p.158). First on the scene was the qualitative method by Strauss and Corbin, first known as qualitative data analysis but now called Straussian grounded theory. Later, the methods of feminist grounded theory (Wuest) and constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz) arrived on the research horizon. The developers of these variants took the challenge to make changes "more liking to their research bent" but neglected one major principle of research and theoretical clarity – they thought they were re-engineering (and sometimes bettering) grounded theory when, in actual fact, they were merely developing different methods. One of the most used methods in qualitative research is phenomenology. There are at least 19 different variants of phenomenology, all of which co-exist seemingly without duress. It is time that the 'designers' of grounded theory did likewise: understand the significant differences in philosophy, methodology, and research product of classic grounded theory, Straussian grounded theory, constructivist, and feminist grounded theory and quit the private and public bickering – bury the territorial hatchet.

This themed section is organized to help readers truly see the differences between classic grounded theory and constructivist grounded theory. The first article by Barney G. Glaser argues that constructivist data are only a small part of the data grounded theory uses. The article was originally published in *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung* 2002. Dr. Tom Andrews provides an introduction to constructionism/constructivism, the philosophical position underlying and driving the constructivist grounded theory method. Then, the constructivist research, *Constructing New Theory for Identifying Students with Emotional Disturbance: A Constructivist Approach to Grounded Theory* by Dr. Dori Barnett serves as a constructivist grounded theory research exemplar. This is followed by a commentary by Tom Andrews and me; the commentary utilizes the research exemplar to delineate key philosophical and methodological differences between constructivist grounded theory and classic grounded theory. Following this, the manuscript by Dr. Jenna Breckenridge, Derek Jones, Ian Elliott, and Margaret Nicol makes additional distinctions between constructivist grounded theory and classic grounded theory research processes, acknowledging the incompatibilities between the two methodologies; these insights were identified by Dr. Breckenridge as she was undertaking her PhD thesis research.