



A Review of the First Edition of the Book by Author Dr Helen Scott:
 Using Grounded Theory. How to Develop Theory for Managed Change

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Abstract

Using Grounded Theory is a valuable, fun, colourful, easy-to-follow and engaging learning tool. The target audience for this book is anyone interested in learning about Grounded Theory. Those include a novice student at any level who is engaging in research and considering using Grounded Theory methodology, supervisors who are mentoring students considering or engaging with Grounded Theory and any other academic researcher who has an interest and desire to engage conceptually with theory development. Scott describes her book as ‘a conceptual tool, which can be used by anyone who wishes to generate *theory*, irrespective of their philosophical perspective’. It is a practical book that assists with learning how to generate a theory about people and how they behave in a given setting.

Keywords: grounded theory, classic grounded theory, constructivist grounded theory

Using Grounded Theory is a book that has been brewing in style and thriving in silence since 2003, when Dr Helen Scott started her relationship with Grounded Theory. The bond developed with Grounded Theory as she was mesmerised by the methodology during her PhD, and her training with one of the founders, Dr Barney Glaser. She travelled to numerous grounded theory seminars across Europe, the UK and the USA to soak in as much as she could about Grounded Theory. During this time, she continued the supportive, encouraging mentor relationship with Glaser, who continued to support her next exhilarating venture, 6 years later, with her mentoring and troubleshooting, education mentoring consultancy services, Grounded Theory Online. The book details her skill, knowledge and insights drawn from her mentoring experience working with novice grounded theory students and expert grounded theorists worldwide. The following review will offer an overview of the construction of the book, with a summary of the chapter and ways in which the reader will benefit from the book.

The book's intention is clear. It is a tool to support the development of theory, together with building the process and skills needed, while learning how to cultivate a different type of thinking. It is beautifully designed, with colourful pages and a good manageable size, which makes it appealing to use. It is presented in a manual reference-like resource, with instructions on how to use it and the practicalities of its use. The tone is professional, friendly, easy to follow, yet very academically written with clear intent. While the colours and tone soften the presentation of the book, it also supports the transition of the reader into the sturdy and credible information presented.

The contents of the book include an introductory section which outlines: Acknowledgements, Foreword and Preface. The body of the book is divided into nine sections, all of which are focused on the content and the heart of what the book offers. Each section ends

with a *Your Turn* pedagogical application to reinforce what was read and help the reader consider how it applies to the stage in their research. The book concludes with an Epilogue where the author offers a practical perspective, wrapping up the book's intent nicely in a warm message of encouragement, support and further contact details for feedback and networking. The book brings together a community of grounded theorists as they share their experiences with the author, and she, too, shares hers and theirs with the reader.

The preface has a section on *Using this book*, which offers various options on navigating through the book to suit the reader's journey, and *Important Background*, which offers exactly that, important background on grounded theory. The *Using this book* section offers navigation suggestions, including benefits of moving through the book to sections which are relevant to the stage of learning, concentrating on areas of interest, and investigating further in a self-paced learning style with guidance and advice by the author included in chapters as pedagogical scaffolds. The section on *Important background* offers an overview of Grounded Theory, the founders, variations of grounded theory and valuable resources for the reader to dive into when they are ready to learn more about its history and origins. In the practical sections, which are from 3 to 6, Scott includes a parallel view to how Charmaz would approach that stage within the methodology.

In sections 1, *What is grounded Theory?* and 2 *What does a grounded theory look like?* Scott illustrates at an introductory level what grounded theory is about and what it looks like. She presents colourful examples of imagery to complement holistic explanations of concepts and what is involved in grounded theory. She shares tips about considerations to be made regarding the research area, general universally standard university requirements to conduct research for PhDs, and how a grounded theory might fit into a proposal, and a self-evaluation of

characteristics of a successful grounded theory researcher, well before a study is conducted. Section 2 is visually engaging with QR codes and tiny URLs, inviting the reader to engage with various examples of media stories where the process of conceptualising is introduced. The articles offer an overview of social behaviours and considerations for what the main concern might be, whilst challenging the reader to begin to think like a grounded theorist. The section continues with insights into the power of grounded theory, its variations, differences in using one type of grounded theory over another and why. There are also statements from Scott's mentees sharing their experiences with using their nominated grounded theory approach and her advice on how issues were resolved.

In sections 3, *Collecting grounded theory data*, 4 *Data analysis: Part I*, 5 *Data analysis II*, 6. *Conceptual Integration*, Scott guides the reader through the phases involved in conducting grounded theory. These sections represent the heart and soul of the practical application and the premise of the book, with a focus on grounded theory. Once again, every section begins with colourful illustrations guiding the reader through examples of existing theories and how these were constructed, with activities demonstrated, applied, and reflected, then ending with an activity encouraging the reader to reflect, learn and prepare for the next step. These four sections cover looking at all forms of data and examples from mentee experiences with data challenges and approaches taken to rectify issues or make decisions depending on various scenarios during the methodology. All of these are also presented with complementary illustrations to assist with a broader conceptual understanding. Discussion on ethics and conduct in research is included and integrated within the detailed step-by-step guide on how and when to conduct each grounded theory methodology step. From the collection of data phase, how to begin to analyse the data, what is involved precisely and where to seek further information if needed, Scott has ensured

that most of what the reader needs to conduct a study using Grounded Theory is covered, with supplementary resources provided. All these sections offer Charmaz's approach as a point of comparison.

Sections 7, *The final stages*, 8 *Integrating grounded theory within a research degree*, and 9 *A very practical perspective*, bring the reader to the final stages of what is involved with completing and integrating the grounded theory. The final stages include advice and support relating to sampling the literature and situating the theory amongst other theories. In addition, comparing the literature with the theory developed and writing up the final draft with tips on illustrating the theory and ways to present how it contributes to knowledge. The final section on *A very practical perspective* offers a clever, light-hearted analogy of what is involved in developing a grounded theory. Scott uses an image of a Porsche in all its beauty of construction and glory to show that each part of the vehicle is built the same way a theory is built. She states that both represent the creation of synergy.

The author's acknowledgements of contributions to her experiences in learning grounded theory from Glaser and Strauss (1967), and Glaser's written works on Classic Grounded Theory (Glaser, 1965, 1978, 1992, 1998, 2002, 2005, 2014) also suggests to the reader that there is so much more to learn and read. Scott, in her book, offers insights into what is needed to be known to conduct grounded theory research, the tools involved, resources required and knowledge which is obtainable through the experiences shared by the author. The author integrates her expertise, knowledge, and training into a warm, welcoming community of learning through sharing experiences with others and reflections to help future grounded theory users. I highly recommend this book as a practical resource at any stage of the process involved in conducting a grounded theory methodology in research.

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