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The Novice GT Researcher

Barney G. Glaser, Ph.D., Hon. Ph.D.

Make no mistake, as I said in my article, "The Future of Grounded Theory" (*Qualitative Health Research*, Nov, 1999) is in the hands of the beginning PhD researcher. I said "Unformed researchers embrace grounded theory for dissertation or master's theses when, in their view, the more preconceived methods do not give relevant answers. Unformed researchers who can choose their own methods do so at the discretion of their advisers. The principal GT users today, mostly students who are doing MA and PhD theses or dissertations, are well into their academic careers and looking for methodologies that will result in data and theories relevant to what is going on in their research area of interest. This makes grounded theory very appealing on that one point alone — relevance."

GT is done best in the hands of the novice PhD and MA candidates because not only of their quest for relevancy, in the face of extant literature that does not fit, work or is not relevant, they are still open to "whatever", still enthusiastically learning, still unformed in other QDA methods, lack QDA method identity protection, and their skill development fledgling status is uniquely suited to skill development required in the GT process. Also they have big stakes in doing original research — hence high motivation — and have the modest amounts of time and money to finish in a timely way. Also the novice is more likely to see fresh new patterns in the face of experienced forcing of professional interest patterns. Thus the category build-up in memos seems very original as they fit and are relevant — sensitive and intelligent.

Also the novice is not shy of the preconscious processing of the input-depression-output procedurally produced by following grounded theory procedures. In spite of the confusion and depression, they tend to tolerate, understand and trust to the soon to come creativity and originality that comes with the memoing output. It may take time, but never as much as it feels it will and it always works. With novices it usually comes too fast and they have to be slowed a bit to be sure of grounding and ward off impressionism. This essential tolerance and trust to

emergence tends to be skeptical and doubtful among the formed in favor of forcing. (See: John Lofland, "Student's Case Studies of Social Movements: Experiences with an Undergraduate Seminar" **Teaching Sociology**, 1996 vol 24, page 389–394).

I know and work with many, many of these beginners, quite often as their external examiner for the dissertation. They are all over the world in many diverse departments, but usually business, nursing, education, social work and sociology. Make no mistake about it, the best GT is done in the hands of beginners.

GT was written for beginners as it emerged FROM beginners' research, myself included, when we did *Awareness of Dying*, a resounding success. GT was not thought up based on research maxims from positivism or symbolic interaction. IT WAS WRITTEN FROM METHODOLOGICAL NOTES I did during the research for *Awareness of Dying* and the methodological notes taken during several years of my analysis seminar at Univ of Calif, San Francisco. During each seminar, each week, a student was assigned the task of doing methodological notes on what was going on. Thus, GT is itself a grounded theory of methodology of what went on in my seminars as we all painstakingly did our GT of GT while doing GT, fitting names to patterns, being relevant to participants and making sure it all worked.

In generating a GT methodology using this method, it was clear that the question of not sufficient competence or the beginning skill of the novice was not an issue. Using GT methodology carefully brought its own skill development, and brought it faster and better without previous training in qualitative research. The novice need only have an ability to conceptualize, to organize, to tolerate confusion with some incident depression, to make abstract connections, to remain open, to be a bit visual, to thinking multivariately and most of all to trust to preconscious processing and to emergence. Many do have these abilities at the advanced degree level. For many novices these abilities come naturally.

Ingrid Hylander says regarding this natural bent: "I recognize the main strategies of grounded theory as something I unsophisticatedly, although not knowing it, had been doing for years." (**Turning Processes: the Change of Representations in Consultee-Centered Case Consultation**, Linkoping Press, 2000, page 67.) Phyllis Stern also talks of this natural bent:

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"Students often find it hard to believe, as they begin the research process, that they will develop a credible conceptual framework. And yet students manage to learn to perform the magic of creativity. Having transcended the creative process, the neophyte becomes sufficiently proficient to conduct subsequent studies independently and to teach other neophytes." ("Eroding GT", page 218 in **Critical Issues In Qualitative Methods**, Janice Morse, editor.)

Miles and Huberman (p. 309, **Qualitative Data Analysis**, Sage, 1994) talk of the essential requisites for qualitative analysis which fit the novice. "You don't need prolonged socialization or arcane technologies. The core requisites for qualitative analysis seem to be a little creativity, systematic doggedness, some good conceptual sensibilities, and cognitive flexibility — the capacity to rapidly undo your way of construing or transforming the data and to try another more promising tack." These requisites fit the novice GT researcher perfectly. They conclude, "We also don't think that good qualitative analysis necessarily calls for formal prerequisites." Miles and Huberman make these statements to help the novice offset the feeling of data overwhelm. They are right. GT, of course, helps allay this feeling with the knowledge that the GT methodology provides constant delimiting of data collection thus reducing data overwhelm immensely.

Please reread this section to reaffirm my contention that the future of GT is in the hands of the novice high level degree researcher who is still open. Soon after the dissertation the experienced researcher will likely (for many) erode GT along QDA lines as becoming formed increases. The blocking of good GT increases as becoming formed takes on QDA requirements.

The Experienced View

The experienced have many views of the novice GT researcher. All these views tend to block the novice researcher by taking GT out of his/her hands by talking of his/her inexperience. The formed will try to force this conclusion on the unformed, new novices to try to form them in their image. They will impose QDA procedures of data collection and analysis which will preconceive the novice's research, hence block good GT. They will give a misread of normal GT, as they say, in order to rescue the novice from confusion, not knowing, depression, fear of not doing it, or

data overwhelm, by saying these are ineptitudes that will be solved by forcing preconceived interests and frameworks. They do not advise the novice that their confusion and overwhelm is part of the GT process which are to be tolerated for a short while. Nor do they advice that these so called problems mean that they are doing GT correctly. and should keep asking "what do I have in this data, what is this a study of, etc".

Mentoring

This misread comes from method loyalty. The formed are unbendingly loyal to a QDA method, based on their experience and build up of identity as a certified QDA researcher. Method loyalty is impossible to give up and leads to competitive training of novices. So when seeing the novice GT researcher going through the confusing initial problems of doing GT, the QDA trained supervisor will see a need to rescue the novice "from not knowing" by suggesting and training in QDA preconceived frameworks, categories and questionnaires etc. This block on the novice and GT is great. The novice who happens to find a mentor who is experienced in GT and has GT method loyalty is fortunate. But most method loyalty is to a QDA method. Thus minus mentoring is advisable if the mentor will, in effect, advise or even force QDA requirements.

On the GT mentor, the right mentor, Rita Schreiber writes: "One of the struggles in teaching and learning grounded theory is that it is difficult to capture fully and in writing the 'how to' of the method without sacrificing its more intuitive aspects. Part of the difficulty is that getting a handle on the method involves process learning: you learn as you do. The 'doing' however, goes much more smoothly and is likely to have better results when the novice is able to work with an experienced mentor who can guide the way. In many programs mentors are in short supply." ("The GT Club," in **Using Grounded Theory in Nursing**, Springer, 2001, page 109) Rita is quite correct, and in "the short supply" bargain a mentor who professes GT experience many in fact bring in QDA training such as in interview guides, sampling, taping and preconceived analysis. Then GT blocking occurs. Mentored novices should always maintain their autonomy in mentored relationships, however confusing their initial foray may be. They should trust to emergence and the eureka syndrome. I have seen "eureka" happen so often.

Listen to this student email (Hans Thulesius, Jan 02) at the other end of the mentor continuum. "The other point that I would like to discuss is the "minus mentor" issue. How did you deal with it, if you had to. My supervisor is excellent and I have great respect for him, however he is a 100% positivist of quantitative background and thinks GT is "bullshit". He is changing slowly and appreciates what I'm doing, I trust knowledge will prevail against prejudice...." I have written at length on changing the formed in **The Grounded Theory Perspective**. This kind of mentor is hardly worth the time and mentoring. A novice's skill grows in doing GT, and ends in a theory in a dissertation. His/her skill in changing others is not the task at hand, nor the measure of the novice.

Mentoring is the way of the world and who's to say that maybe QDA fits a particular novice better. But many novices with the wrong mentor, who can do GT, are lost to it. Now let us look at three aspects of experienced QDA views of the novice: skill undermining, staying open and pattern finding.

Skill Undermining

The basic problem emanates from the simple fact that the experienced QDA researcher does not understand the learning curve and its properties of beginning to do GT. The experienced QDA teacher blocks the novice with a formed view of QDA training and with a given image to the novice of not skilled enough. The experienced misread the novices confusion and evolving self development as an ineptitude. Hence the beginning "not knowing" quandary, confusion, data overwhelm and often depression is rescued by training in forcing procedures varying from structured data collection to framework analysis as the anxious novice reaches out for help and solace and QDA researchers rush to help.

I have written extensively in **Doing Grounded Theory** on not reviewing the literature in the field before doing a GT. Remember students at the PhD level have been institutionally selected partly for reading ability. And they have read a lot which makes them very sensitive to the conceptual style in their general field. They also continue reading in their field, if not their substantive area. To read in their area of research preconceives them and also with GT, since one doesn't know where it will take them, they do not know what literature to read. Not reading the

literature and suspending knowledge about it for the time being is not hard, but is seen as being a difficult challenge for the novice by experienced QDA researchers. It is not seen as a skill developmental step.

Rita Schreiber flatly says (page 59) "Thus, in today's world a literature review is usually a necessary first step in beginning any research project, including a grounded theory." She attributes this erosion and novice blocking to funding agencies, but takes relief in it while faulting others.

Janice Morse is firmly opposed to not exploring the literature before commencing data collection. She says, "Such a naive perspective as working without consulting the literature may be possible for a senior investigator with a vast knowledge of social science theory with many concepts at his or her fingertips and with real theoretical wisdom. However, ignoring the literature is a strategy that is fraught with danger for a new investigator. Literature should not be ignored but rather bracketed and used for comparisons with emerging categories. Without a theoretical contest to draw on new investigators find themselves rapidly mired in data."

Actually it is just the opposite case in spite of Morse. Novices without a literature search in the substantive area to distract or force them are more open to the emergent and soon find their thought emerging from the constant comparisons in the data. They find this with exciting clarity. The senior investigator does not get mired in the data because of immense preconceptive almost automatic forcing. He wants to share this power with the novice and the consequence is default remodeling of a GT procedure. Remember the literature does not disappear and "which literature" will be there for constant comparisons during sorting and writing- up. It is a pacing and efficiency concern. Scholarship is of course required to show the contribution of the GT to the substantive area.

Kaise Backman, in her article, "Challenges of the GT approach to a novice researcher" (**Nursing and Health Sciences**, 1999), incorrectly mixes not reading the literature first with the novice being too emotional to suspend his/her knowledge. In fact it is easier for the novice to suspend knowledge as they are more open to new categories and ideas as data collection starts. Backman says: "This detachment (from the

literature) may however be quite difficult for a novice researcher because reading the literature usually helps to clear up one's thoughts and narrow down the topic of research." She counsels just the opposite of GT to discover the problem, not to preconceive it out of the literature.

Backman continues: "The novice researcher must identify and suspend what he/she already knows about the experience being studied and approach the data without preconceptions. This could be particularly difficult to a novice researcher, because he/she has little experience about the emotions involved in data collection and analysis in qualitative research."

To rescue the novice from the emotions of confusion Backman says, "it is always implicit in the way a problem is presented, the way the literature is reviewed. Concepts which strictly narrow down the research questions easily direct the study deductively. Clean cut and well defined concepts make it easier for a novice researcher to maintain the logic of the study. If the research questions are very flexible and the researcher begins data collection by interviewing without a guide, the choice of suitable themes may also be problematic."

In short, Backman counsels forcing concepts and problems, the opposite of GT orientation. Such clarity from the start in a research is at the expense of GT emergence. It simply blocks and default remodels GT for the novice. It forestall's and finalizes his/her GT skill development.

Rita Schreiber's misread of the experiential skill developmental process in learning GT is throughout her article on the "how to" of GT, pages 55–85. She says at one point "Selective coding serves as a guide for further data collection, focused on filling in gaps in the theory. It is at this point that novice researchers sometimes stall, as they succumb to the temptation to follow other interesting leads through the data. (75)" She has selective coding totally wrong (see **Theoretical Sensitivity**). But more importantly at the moment that the novice is about to look at comparative groups through interesting lead, she counsels against this creative processing which comes from input and constant comparisons. Again GT is eroded by the experienced view. Her QDA structured view reduces flexibility of theoretical sampling and openness to emergent.

Schreiber continues blocking the novice in the name of

warning of incapacity, which is misplaced. As you read this quote remember that theoretical connection between categories occurs in mature memos and sorting memo banks based on theoretical codes. Theoretical connections that increase the level abstraction do not occur early in the GT process. She says as a foreclosure: "Many novice, and sometimes experienced, grounded theorists encounter difficulty raising the level of theoretical abstraction from description to theory in the emerging theory.... Most novices do well creating categories and describing how the categories relate to each other, often in some sort of linear story line. Where difficulties arise is in being able to elevate the theoretical level of the findings so that what is produced explains the action, that is, how people work to resolve the basic social problem. Too often, researchers are content to create elaborate descriptions of the phenomenon of study and fail to take the next, vitally important step into abstract theory development." This is, of course, the effect of QDA training of the novice, resulting in descriptive capture as I explained at length in **The GT Perspecti***ve*. It is not from being a novice.

Some experienced researchers suggest skill enhancers for lacking skill rather than working on skill development as GT requires. Phyllis Stern warns against these enhancers (taping and computers) when she says in counseling the novice: "With the invasion of technology, investigators have not only come to rely on it (technology) but also consider avoiding its use as heresy. Janice Morse (this volume), for example, seems aghast that Glaser advises researchers that using a tape recorder allows one to collect and then to analyze meaningless data. While it is true that when one has an inexperienced research assistant, tape recording may be necessary, but anyone who has plowed through pages of irrelevant, transcribed data must agree with Glaser. Is Morse suggesting that generations of researchers who lived prior to electronic equipment created theoretical frameworks that were weakened because a word or two might be skipped. We can only speculate, but our collective heritage suggests that recording every word informants utter is not necessary in producing sound grounded theory."

Stern is quite right. Morse seems to want the full coverage of evidentiary QDA, which is not necessary and time taking in GT. Tape recorded data is not "meaningless", it is interchangeable and yields saturation of categories and their properties long

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before wading through it all. It is a waste. See my chapter on taping in **Doing GT.**

Regarding computers see my chapter above on computer use as eroding GT. Stern agrees when she says: "In truth, unless the beginning researcher understands that any computer program simply serves as a tool to the investigator, that it is the mind of the student that creates and refines the conceptual framework, she or he is in danger of discovering a thin analysis that fails to illuminate the problems and processes in the scene." Yes, indeed: thin, flat and forced, a true erosion of GT.

The Richards, creators of Nudist, imply, inadvertently, that computer skill enhancing has its drawbacks. "We have learned too that novice researchers, who may find their own rich and messy records to be alarming in their diversity, may be further alarmed by software that seems designed to celebre diversity. Novices too are often stalled by the anxiety about creating a perfect index system, not trusting the promise." (**Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials**, 1998, p. 237.) This travail for the novice is simply unnecessary derailing and distracting from the task at hand: generating GT for all the reasons I have been detailing in this book.

Guba and Lincoln (**Naturalist Inquiry**, pp. 193–5) seem to undermine the skill of the novice by offering the supernormal view of the human-as-instrument in qualitative or natural research. The human as the instrument of choice has these enigmatic qualities they say: "Responsiveness, adaptability, holistic emphasis, knowledge abased expansion, processural immediacy, opportunities for clarification and opportunity to explore atypical or idiosyncratic responses." The reader could study what these all mean, but it is not worth it. They are trite, yet demanding to the point that they are, they say, "meaningless if the human instrument is not also trustworthy." And if this is not enough quandary, Guba and Lincoln imply the novice is essentially untrustworthy when they say: "One would not expect individuals to function adequately as human instruments without an extensive background of training and experience." the novice who embraces this program is lost to GT forever. The desire to do GT is enough as GT provides its own motivation at each stage (see *Doing GT*) and skill development to do and generate

systematically that which comes as natural to us all as we theorize about our daily lives.

There are a plethora of writers acting as authorities giving advice to novices on doing GT. They engage in the adapt, adopt, coopt and corrupt pattern to some degree that I wrote about in **The GT Perspective**. They superficialize GT by mixing it with QDA requirements, hence diluting and eroding GT procedures by default remodeling. Once written these writings are taken as authoritative gospel, as accurate and adequate. The writers have no notion how the naive novice will take them and in what direction. But surely the block on GT is a consequence. The novice reader should not read too many of these "advices" and trust to the emergence experience of doing GT and the growing skill development. Reading too much "advices" will surely sour GT's purity.

Listen to this advice by Backman (page 5). "The purpose of the grounded theory approach is to create a theory which has connections with the data. The instructions for the analysis process emphasize that the connection with the data should be maintained throughout the whole process. This requirement may prevent the researcher from conceptualizing the data and from formulating abstract categories and discovering theory. If he/she is unable to do that, he/she may discover a theory which is naive, concrete and written by using the same terms as in the data. In that case the discovered theory may be simplistic and ill-constructed."

This discouraging statement to novices is just plain, opposite and wrong based on not knowing the constant comparative method. The researcher has to stay engaged with the data totally and let the abstract patterns emerge through the constant comparisons, as they surely do. Disengaging from the data leads to conjecture which is counter GT; it undermines grounded. Good grounded theory has never ended up naive, concrete and simplistic. This is just disparaging method talk of a corrupting nature.

Backman continues her negative advise: "For a novice researcher, applying the grounded theory approach is more or less a compromise between the demands of the approach and the resources which he/she has available." Wrong again, it is a very economical way to do a dissertation using field notes. GT moves

much faster than QDA and it just takes the researcher's time, which has its cost, but minimal compared to the reward for the GT product.

Backman closes her paper on the novice GT researcher with again a completely corrupting, negative, skill undermining statement: "The GT method can be a good tool for a novice, but it may also hinder the way to create inductive theory." Just the opposite: GT enhances the skill in achieving the goal of generating inductive theory. That is what GT was designed for: abstract, inductive theory generating.

Miles and Huberman (page 14) give nebulous warning advice to the "beginning researcher" in reading their book *Qualitative Data Analysis*. "The biggest enemy of your learning is the gnawing worry that you're not doing it right. Dissertation work tends to encourage that." "We have encountered many students launched on qualitative dissertation or research projects who feel overwhelmed and under trained." These warnings are neutralized by GT methodology. As I have repeated so many times, data overwhelm is solved by the many delimiting procedures of GT: it is QDA that worries about full coverage and accuracy.

"Doing it right" is minimized if GT methodology is followed. the data is never wrong, it just has to be figured out what it is, baseline, properline, interpreted on vague, and thus conceptualizations of it are never wrong, since they are carefully grounded. The GT product always appears as original, creative and conceptually general. The novice may start his GT research with little skill, but experience increases it quickly. He/she may compulsively collect too much data and wonder what to do with it. He/she may be scared and impatient at first to get beyond the data. But as the constant comparative process continues, abstractions emerge from the data. The GT skill increases and with it confidence.

The novice should be encouraged at this point by the experienced research involved, NOT blocked and derailed to a QDA approach and eventual description capture by QDA rescue advise. Kate Felix in a written communication to me on 5/5/2000, said "I really enjoyed our brief conversation and wanted to study your newest books before calling. However your words of encouragement were very much appreciated the last time we spoke." She wrote a lovely dissertation on "Developing Trust

Within Teams in Health Care Organizations", (*Nursing*, University of Colorado, 1997)

Antoinette McCullum wrote in the beginning of her dissertation, regarding my encouragement: "Much of the motivation behind this project can be attributed to Dr Barney Glaser and his inspirational workshop in Christcheuch, New Zealand in 1996. Barney's commitment and enthusiasm for the grounded theory method encouraged this student to proceed with a daunting task, minus methodological mentoring." She wrote a brilliant dissertation on pluralistic dialoguing. Encouragement motivates and helps the minus mentoree stay the course, as skill develops and produces its own motivated momentum.

Openness

What the novice has to offer GT is openness: being open to the emergent. They are not yet formed in a method or a substantive area to any extent. They are still fee to forsake the preconceived. It is not that the experienced formed cannot remain open. It is just that few seldom do. Confident knowing is its own downfall in GT: almost nonstoppable. The greater the light, the greater the darkness does not seem to apply. Rather the greater the light, the more the formed see clearly "in advance" or preconceive the theory.

Here is a good example of how the openness occurs in the Phd candidate. Brene Brown wrote on page 3 of her dissertation. "Initially I set out, on what I thought was a well-traveled path, to find empirical evidence of what I knew to be true. I soon realized that conducting research centering on what matters to research participants — grounded theory research — means there is no path and, certainly, there is no way of knowing what you will find. This research began as a narrow quest to verify if one small group of helping professionals utilized a practice I believed 'essential to good helping.' Through the use of grounded theory, I was forced to challenge my own interests, investments and pre-conceived ideas in order to understand the concerns, interests and ideas of the research participants. The process evolved from 'I think this is important — are you doing it?' to 'what do you think is important to helping and why?' This evolution transformed my narrow quest for verification into the development of a complex theory about a basic social-psychological process of professional helping."

Openness forces itself on the novice GT researcher. I see it happen over and over again. The experienced researcher is often too formed to get this message. They are realization immune unlike the novice whose receptiveness is just waiting for emergence.

Brene continues: "At the dissertation proposal stage, there are numerous challenges for the grounded theory researchers. These challenges include: (a) acknowledging that it is virtually impossible to understand grounded theory methodology prior to using it, (b) developing the courage to let the research participants define the research problem, and (c) letting go of your own interests and preconceived ideas to 'trust in emergence'."

These challenges emerge for many and are met and the novice's dissertations are quite good. Space limits me giving the multitude of examples of this openness that I have in my files. These challenges are certainly quite different than the negative challenges professed by Backman and others mentioned above which block good GT and block and undermine the skill development of those novice GT researchers who cannot withstand their advise and rescue.

A profile of the experience view is not beneficial to the novice GT researcher. The experienced with their formed view are constantly worried about the lack of skill in the novice, as we have seen, without realizing that this lack leaves them more open and more developable in GT skills. This worry translates in concern about novice confusion and a need to see the novice force the data according to the experienced's professional interest and framework. The formed, experienced have a stake in a status quo of their design and therefore a stake in not letting the novice stay open, which is subversive. They say that the novice's inexperience is a block and, as we have seen, it is just the opposite. The experienced's stake blocks the novice and forces him/her into applying an eroded GT.

The more experienced GT researchers become as careers advance, the more fixed and formed in professional interests and knowledge they are likely to become about substantive areas and their adopting, coopting and corrupting GT methodology to the study of the areas. They do not realize their forcing frameworks. Many become fixed on pet theoretical codes, such as Janice Morse

focuses on process as the distinguishing characteristic of GT, she sees it as a core variable. ("Situating GT" in **Using GT in Nursing**, 2001, page 1–4. First of all in **Theoretical Sensitivity** I detailed 18 theoretical coding families, only one of which is process. The theoretical code has to emerge as organizing feature of the GT. Actually some of the best GTs I have read are topologies and are cutting point analyses based on ranges. I have detailed even more theoretical codes in **Doing GT.** Morse is not unique. Many experienced GT researchers become proficient in using one theoretical code and it takes them over. They force the theoretical codes in subsequent researches and want their novice to force with them. It is hard to stay open under such influences, but many novices do. I remember clearly how Anselm Strauss wanted everyone to analyze the research on how the action was "paced" irrespective of emergence. Many researchers now want to see context in all theory irrespective of emergence. Theoretical codes become fades among the experienced. The novice has the best chance of breaking out of these trends.

Morse is also wrong about classifying a theoretical code (process) as a core variable. A core variable is a substantive category that accounts for most variation in resolving the main concern of participants. The theoretical code of the theory is how it integrates the core category with other categories in writing the theory. Morse also considers (page 2) GT as a theory of the middle-range. This is purely a QDA descriptive perception. GT can be written at any level of abstraction and all substantive theory has complete general, conceptual implications. This level is in the hands of the GT researcher. For example a GT on the credentializing of diploma nurses can easily be generalized to the credentializing of all work to insure quality, accountability, reliability etc.

To be sure the openness of the novice is subversive and threatening to the experienced if they do not preconceive as they do. Their inexperience is not seen as openness, it is seen as an ineptitude that should be trained, usually by QDA requirements. This is blocking, eroding and remodels GT in the eyes of the novice whose openness is compromised. Fortunately many are not compromised as they take on their experienced supervisors with the armor of their discovery of what is really going on. It is very hard to talk a novice into what he should see in the data when he/she knows what he did see emerge in the data. In sum, it is

hard to close the openness of the novice by the fears, projections and frameworks, framed as wisdom, of the experienced.

Pattern Finding

A focused view of the experienced is that the novice has a hard time finding patterns in the data and therefore cannot do GT without using preconceived categories. This worry, of course, brings us back to the experienced wanting the novice to use pet categories for professional interests. This view is surely a block to emergence.

This view is debilitating to novices and inaccurate. The ability to see patterns and to conceptualize them is innate and starts at a very young age, long before PhD candidacy. It is latent patterns that the novice has to learn to see emerge, and he/she having reached high degree status likely has the pattern viewing ability that can be used to see latent or underlying uniformities. To be sure some at the PhD level cannot see patterns, nor are good at conceptualizing and therefore should go into descriptive QDA to alleviate the confusion (see **The GT Perspective**). BUT many more novices can see patterns than do or are allowed to do. And, of course, GT enhances this ability toward generating conceptual theory.

Novices often, because of openness, see patterns quicker and of better fit and relevance than the experienced do because of their normal forcing of previous categories and models. One email on 4/5/2001 from Kennedy John, a new PhD said to me: "Secondly experts do not see patterns as novices do. Experts are so formed in their learned view that they see it everywhere and force it on whatever to sound learned. Novices who are high in intelligence and still open and if they use GT procedures see patterns easily. Thirdly, GT provides a procedure, careful constant comparison, that empirically establishes patterns and their and properties. Impressionistic patterns stated by formed experts, based on professional interests, who have lost openness are just particularistic. These patterns are expert mantled, and usually irrelevant, if patterns at all. The constant comparison method carefully grounds latent patterns as real to what is going on and is relevant to substantive action. They explicate the realities behind professionally forcing interests." This PhD is young, but very close in formulation. The open novice using GT methodology has the best chance to discover relevant categories as to what

continually resolves the main concern. The experienced expert will establish patterns along the lines of his received, formed view, which are often not relevant to what action really takes place.

It is light touch when Janice Morse writes (page 8, Situating GT) "One strength of grounded theory is its ability to recognize patterns (topologies) of behaviors." Of course, that is how it is designed to generate theory. It goes without saying. But discovering patterns is a complex constant comparative process followed by subsequent GT procedures to a finished product, which I have written about at length. Whether or not they are topologies, one of many theoretical codes, has to emerge. And to what degree a category (pattern) "permits a voice to remain", as Morse says, is a forced view of a pattern that may or may not emerge for the open novice. As I wrote in **The GT Perspective**, a pattern may come from the participants voice, it is a conceptualization of it, not the voice.

Miles and Huberman (p. 58) do not favor the trust for the novice to see patterns in the data through constant comparisons. They say "One method of creating codes — the one we prefer — is that of creating a provisional 'star list' of codes prior to fieldwork. That list comes from the conceptual framework, list of research questions, hypotheses, problem areas, and/or key variables that the researcher brings to the study." This is of course total preconceived forcing and shuts down the openness of the novice if used. Miles and Huberman do say the emergence of codes from the data has a lot going for it, but the prefabricated list rescues the novice from a GT process "so daunting to new researchers." I believe they see emergent pattern recognition as so daunting to novices, because their discussion of "generating pattern codes" in pages 69–72, is based on comparing descriptions to constantly check out the code. This is based on descriptive redundancy. This type and level is indeed hard.

M&H miss or omit the GT constant comparative method in their pattern generating. They do not understand that the GT comparisons are conceptual generating of categories and their properties, and the patterns get delimited by choosing a core category and going to selective coding, and by the interchangeability of indices. Thus M&H's QDA descriptive capture orientation is very "daunting" (blocking) to novices. To be sure their approach results in data overwhelm compared to the

delimiting of GT methodology. The openness of the novice to pattern generating is maximized by using GT methodology.

Katheryn May also does not understand that conceptual pattern recognition comes from the constant comparative method, during which the researcher conceptualizes the comparisons between the differences and similarities of emerging categories. She believes that patterns come from the experienced's experience, intuition, creative reasoning, magic and training. Perhaps in QDA, and they are forced by her listed sources. But these are not the GT conceptualized latent patterns coming from conceptualizing comparisons, that a novice may see just as easily as an expert, and maybe more easily since the novice is more open (less preconceived), less tracked by accumulated knowledge in the substantive area.

May says (pages 18–19): "Although the basic processes of creative intellectual work are the same in novice and expert, the expert will notice more, remember more, and exercise better judgment. I would argue that an attribute of expert practice in qualitative research is an exquisitely tuned capacity for pattern acquisition and recognition. Pattern recognition is the ability to know where to look, in this area, the expert analyst may be informed substantially by intuition and creative reasoning. Pattern recognition is the ability to know similarities and differences based on previous experience. Again these processes cannot be observed or understood directly; they can only be understood by the product. Experts cannot tell you how a pattern was seen.... Pattern recognition is instantaneous and can be substantiated in retrospect, but cannot be predicted. The expert relies as much on intuition and creative reasoning as on past experience. Another potentially important difference between how novice and expert analysts know involves the interaction between pattern recognition skill and knowledge of the substantive related to the phenomenon being studied."

May in lauding the expert over the novice has to be talking QDA or descriptive patterns recognition. These descriptions in her view are based on accomplished skill, seeing redundancy, a buildup of considerable experience in the substantive area which includes much literature knowledge and a methodological approach based on intuition, unanticipation, magic and mysterious impressions. This view has no procedural credibility as scientific. It is particularistic to an individual (expert) view. It

is a rhetorical way to force the data along professional interest lines from the start. Obviously this skill is absent in the novice for good reason. The novice has not yet been indoctrinated with this kind of rhetoric of description capture.

May blocks, not encourages the novice who is doing GT. I am talking of an entirely different approach to pattern recognition for the novice; that of the constant comparative method of conceptualizing categories ... it is a clear procedural, observable, predictable approach to conceptualizing latent patterns, which can be predictable as always there. It is scientific not mysterious. The novice can rely on it as productive. The less the novice knows, the more he/she can suspend what he/she knows, the more open he/she will be open to discovering these patterns, particularly the core category, because the less forced will be the generating. Knowledge does not go away, it always stands ready to be woven in at the right pacing — later in the sorting stage of the research. The issue for the novice is to be open to careful GT skill development, not to be held to an absolute expert QDA skill standard.

A quick example would be in May's view of pattern recognition would say that teacher and students give up over time their respective roles toward a getting together as just people. And this would be redundantly described ad infinitum. A novice grounded theorist would conceptualize the latent pattern of binary deconstruction, based on constantly conceptualizing comparisons. There is no magic in this, it is a careful form of index formation as I have said many times (see **Doing GT**, chapter 2 and **Theoretical Sensitivity**, chapter 4) The novice with more openness from less skilled and knowledge forcing has the edge in these discoveries. The novice with openness is truly in a favorable state to emergently conceptualize what is exactly going on undistorted with little wishful, professional interest forcing. He/she need only adhere to the rigor and tedium of the constant comparative method of generating categories and their properties. This is not the methodological, particularistic magic of May's expert. It is just using a method that generates fit, relevance and works.

I have come on a bit strong to offset the replete, constant description of "novice lacking" in the methodological literature written by the experienced. The novice is described in the literature as lacking skill in interviewing, coding, clear

organization of data, ability to focus on a line of thought, theoretical sampling, handling data overwhelm, analyzing, literature search, pattern recognition and on and on with the QDA preconceived requirements. But this skill undermining and lacking applies, if at all, to routine QDA research.

Here I am talking of GT research and what is seen as skill lacking is ok, because built into GT is the progressive skill development of the open novice. The novices's GT skill will develop relatively rapidly if he/she is not distracted and distorted with QDA rescue tactics that force the data and block trust in emergence and emergence.

Not one of these experienced methodological writers — as I pour through the literature — talk of the benefits of being a novice. NOVICES ARE NOT ENCOURAGED. They are discouraged by being characterized as lacking skill, hence their freshness to skill development is being undermined by the need for mentored training in QDA. This negative characterization is a misread characterization as I have said throughout this chapter. In addition to their openness and unforced pattern recognition ability, novices have a big stake in finishing a good GT in order to receive the PhD in a timely manner, to get on with a career. Experienced researchers seldom have this degree of pressure or stake in completion.

My general point or message in this chapter is read the novice's situation, problems and actions correctly. Do not rescue the initial confusions and data overwhelm with preconceived frameworks and outs. They block GT. Trust to emergence and skill development using GT methodology. Trust to delimiting procedures of GT. Encourage the novice's openness to emergence by encouraging him/her to stick to the tedium of conceptualizing constant comparisons and allowing GT skill development, and letting categories of latent patterns make sense of the confusion. Normal descriptive pattern recognition soon turns into conceptualizing latent patterns. It happens faster than novices and experienced alike realize. It happens often too fast as impressions try to take over to reduce the productive aspect of confusion. The latent patterns must constantly be verified over and over by conceptualizing comparisons and the ensuing property development of categories.

For example describing patterns of being careful in dentistry

to avoid AIDS soon turns into a theory of cautionary control with amazing general implications: (from another dissertation written by a formidable previous novice: Barry Gibson.) This is just one novice among a legion of them sending me and working with me on generating incredibly creative grounded theories. These are novices who were not blocked and discouraged by an erosion of GT along the lines of QDA requirements.

Listen to the pattern recognition of this novice as stated in her dissertation, See Brene Brown: "Acompanar: A GT of developing, maintaining and assessing relevance in professional helping", 2002) "What a wild ride this is. I was really depressed in early Dec. Nothing made sense — I was hating the process. I called Amy Calvin, a grounded theorist, and we talked for 1 1/2 hours. It was too helpful. About four or five weeks ago I started noticing patterns as I coded my field notes. Then I started to see one major category and the infrastructure that supported that category. Some infrastructure — properties but I think some — categories that support my core. These appear to have their own properties. The relationships between the concepts make so much sense. its like seeing the anatomy of something you think you've always understood. It has been amazing, I have definitely become more specific in terms of who I'm interviewing and how I'm coding. I'm totally amazed about how complex this is going to be. I thought it would be difficult to conceptualize, but it is really the only way I can think of it."

It is clear from this passage that the experienced should not rescue a student from confusion. Patterns will emerge and with amazing clarity, theoretical sampling, a multivariate theory and conceptual grab. My view on the novice researcher is shared by Miles and Huberman in their own way but the dimensions of concern are roughly the same. They say: "We found that making the step of analysis explicit makes them less formidable and uncertain, and more manageable. You don't need prolonged socialization or arcane technologies. The core requisites for qualitative analysis seem to be a little creativity, systematic doggedness, some good conceptual sensibilities and cognitive flexibility — the capacity to rapidly undo your way of construing or transforming the data and to try another, more promising tack. None of these qualities is contingent on a battery of advanced 'methods' courses."

Since my view on the novice is grounded, it cannot be new to

others. What is new is my formulation and its assertion in the face of experienced writers who would deny the novice his/her power.