

Grounded Theory Review: A Brief History and A Bright Future

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Abstract

The *Grounded Theory Review* is an open-access, peer-reviewed journal dedicated to the publication of works that advance classic grounded theory. The journal was created in 1999 by Dr. Barney Glaser, one of the co-developers of grounded theory. During the past the last 24 years, the *Grounded Theory Review* has published more than 100 articles in 22 volumes under the leadership of its four previous editors-in-chief, Drs. Barney Glaser, Judith Holton, Astrid Gynnild, and Alvita Nathaniel. In 2023, there have been several changes to the journal. Dr. Barry Chametzky became the fifth editor-in-chief, and the Institute for Research and Theory Methodologies became the new publisher of the journal.

Keywords: *Grounded Theory Review*, classic grounded theory, purpose, history, editors

The Institute for Research and Theory Methodologies (RTM) is honored to be the new publisher of the *Grounded Theory Review*. During the last 24 years, the *Grounded Theory Review* has published many grounded theories and methodological papers to support the growth of classic grounded theory worldwide. This tradition will continue under the guidance of RTM, and as the President of RTM, one of my goals this year is to bring the *Grounded Theory Review* to more people with increased awareness of classic grounded theory. One of

the ways I am promoting the *Grounded Theory Review* is by promoting two conferences this coming year. The first is the Classic Grounded Theory International Virtual Conference, which is specifically for those interested in learning more about classic grounded theory and participating in an academic forum about classic grounded theory. The second is the International Congress for Qualitative Research and Theory Methodologies, which will include sessions about various qualitative research methods and classic grounded theory. The *Grounded Theory Review* is an integral part of the future of classic grounded theory, and because of this, I thought it would be a good time to share a brief history of this journal and reiterate the purpose of the *Grounded Theory Review*.

Grounded theory was developed by sociologists Dr. Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in the early 1960s during their research on death and dying at the University of California, San Francisco. Following the acclaim of that research, they published their seminal work *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (1967), where they explained the basic principles of grounded theory. During the subsequent years, Glaser continued to write and publish more than 30 books and articles on grounded theory. He also started the Grounded Theory Institute (<https://groundedtheory.com/>), Sociology Press (www.sociologypress.com), where his books can be purchased, and the *Grounded Theory Review*.

The *Grounded Theory Review* was established by Dr. Barney Glaser in 1999 and published by Sociology Press. Dr. Glaser served as the first editor-in-chief. Drs. Andy Lowe, Evert Gummesson, and John Klinkert served as associate editors for the first three volumes, with Steve Hedenskoog joining the team for the second (2000) and third (2001) volumes. Glaser (2001) introduced the inaugural editions by writing,

The purpose of this journal is to publish reprints and original grounded theory papers for the study and assimilation by its readers. This journal will endeavor to capture the current state of generating grounded theory throughout the world and what it is being used for in health, education, business and other fields. In bringing these papers into print, I trust this journal will serve to generate a worldwide community of grounded theorists. It will be a forum for minus mentorees to have others review, share and discuss their “emerging generating”, hence to call upon each other for advice, counsel, and stimulation by e-mail and other telecommunications. (p. 1)

After a noted absence of volumes between 2001 and 2004, Dr. Judith Holton took the reins as editor-in-chief in 2004. She established an international panel of eight peer-review editors who were all experienced grounded theorists to review articles and contribute their own work to the journal. In a Publisher’s Note in Volume 4, Glaser (2004) noted

Sociology Press is pleased to publish *The Grounded Theory Review*. Our primary goal in publishing this journal is to provide a forum for classic grounded theory scholarship. To this end, we will focus our efforts on:

publishing good examples of the grounded theories being developed in a wide range of disciplines

publishing papers on classic grounded theory methodology

creating a worldwide network of grounded theory researchers and scholars

providing a forum for sharing perspectives and enabling novice grounded theorists to publish their work

promoting dialogue between authors and readers of the journal. (p. iv)

Dr. Holton served as the editor-in-chief for the next 8 years, overseeing the publication of 19 issues of the journal and doubling the number of peer reviewers to sixteen, two of whom also served as associate editors. Dr. Judith Holton co-authored many articles with Dr. Barney Glaser and independently.

In 2012, Dr. Astrid Gynnild became editor-in-chief of the *Grounded Theory Review*. Under her leadership, the *Grounded Theory Review* became an open-access journal. Dr. Gynnild (2012) wrote

I am delighted to introduce the first issue of the *Grounded Theory Review* as an open access journal. This means that from now on, all academic articles provided by the journal are freely accessible online, including the archives. As an interdisciplinary, peer reviewed methodological journal, the *Grounded Theory Review* serves a broad academic community across continents. We are committed to the worldwide dissemination and advancement of classic grounded theory methodology, and similar to an increasing number of academic journals, we support a free exchange of scholarly knowledge, independent of access to scholarly funding or library facilities. (p. 1)

Dr. Gynnild also oversaw the indexing efforts and helped the *Grounded Theory Review* receive acceptance into Google Scholar and the Directory of Open Access Journals. She served as editor-in-chief for 6 years, publishing 11 issues of the journal, including a special edition celebrating the 50th anniversary of *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*.

In 2018, Dr. Alvita Nathaniel became editor-in-chief of the *Grounded Theory Review*. In the first issue published under her oversight, she wrote,

I am humbled by the opportunity to work with the classic grounded theory community and to follow in the footsteps of the previous two editors, Judith Holton and Astrid

Gynnild. I am excited to work closely with Barney Glaser, the editorial board, and peer reviewers. One of the most exciting aspects of the Review is the engagement of a global community of classic grounded theorists. Internationally diverse researchers from many disciplines collectively engage in this important research method. (p. 1)

For four years, she worked closely with Dr. Barney Glaser until his death in January 2022. Following his death, she coordinated the June edition as a special tribute to his life and work. She continued as editor-in-chief until 2023.

In 2023, the *Grounded Theory Review* went through several changes. Dr. Barry Chامتزky became the fifth editor-in-chief. Following Dr. Barney Glaser's death in 2022, the Glaser family also decided to entrust the continued publication of the journal to the Institute for Research and Theory Methodologies (RTM). RTM is a non-profit organization that trains, mentors, supports, and connects students, faculty, and researchers worldwide in qualitative, multi-method, mixed-method, and grounded theory research across disciplines in order to develop methodological expertise. The journal is housed within the Glaser Center for Grounded Theory at RTM. The Glaser Center for Grounded Theory trains, mentors, supports, and connects students, faculty, and researchers worldwide who are learning and using grounded theory.

Historically, when there have been transitions in the journal leadership, the journal has reiterated the purpose of the *Grounded Theory Review*. Building on the original purpose stated by Dr. Barney Glaser, RTM is pleased to support the following purpose of the journal. The *Grounded Theory Review* is an interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed, open-access journal for advancing classic grounded theory and scholarship. We do this by

- publishing examples of grounded theories being developed in a wide range of disciplines and papers about the classic grounded theory methodology,
- building a worldwide community of grounded theory researchers and scholars,
- offering a forum for sharing perspectives, and
- providing opportunities for novice grounded theorists to publish their work.

As the *Grounded Theory Review* enters its 25th year, RTM is excited to support the work of the journal under the direction of its newest editor-in-chief, Dr. Barry Chametzky. We are pleased to bring you this latest edition on our new open-access journal platform and website at <https://groundedtheoryreview.org/>. Indeed, the future looks bright.

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