



**Memoing for Conceptual Emergence:
A Key Process in Developing Grounded Theory**

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Abstract

When doing grounded theory, writing starts in the moment you begin the study. Daily writing is integrated into the method itself, and the key concepts are memos and memo writing, and, in grounded theory terminology, memoing. Memos form the textual fundament for theory building and are sorted and refined as the project moves along. In this article, I will explore how memoing in classic grounded theory provides space for reflexivity that is crucial to a researcher's personal growth. The discussion is based on the original literature written by Barney G. Glaser and on memos and field notes from participant observation in Glaser's troubleshooting seminars over the first two decades of the 21st century.

Keywords: Memo, theoretical ideas, classic grounded theory, research flexibility, grounded theory, reflection, theory development, reflexivity, constant comparison, theory building, preconception.

In recent years, several researchers have discussed memoing in grounded theory development at length (see, for instance, Chametzky, 2023; Holton & Walsh, 2017; Simmons, 2022). In many papers, however, memoing as a methodological concept is referenced only in passing in the method's section, without going into any depth on the phenomenon. The main aim with this article is thus to broaden the understanding of memos as flexible, but fundamental building blocks in grounded theorizing. In a time when hand-written notes tend to be considered superfluous, classic grounded theory still offers innovative perspectives on the value of reflective idea development in research.

Memos constitute a key feature when making a grounded theory manifest (Glaser 1978, 2014), even if the memoing process might not be very amplified in the finished study. When reading a GT study, it is therefore wise to look for the paragraph(s) on how the memoing has been carried out. In this way, you will nevertheless get close to the "little logic" of the study. Since memos and memoing are, by nature, private texts to begin with; a form of self-dialoguing going on backstage while collecting and analyzing data, it makes sense that the process itself is not much focused in the written-up texts. The outcome of memos is simply a well-integrated part of the theory building. Memos comprise a safe place in which the individual researcher, or potentially collaborating teams, can put their most focused and questioned ideas and thoughts while working in parallel with the other sub-processes of developing theory. In their most basic form, memos are a researcher's brief notes to oneself pondering emerging ideas when collecting and analyzing data during a GT study.

Memos are vital tools to strengthen the individual researcher's skills in going from descriptive to abstract levels of theory development. Learning to memo may constitute a backbone in a researcher's academic growth over a career. Based on these preliminary

reflections, it appears a bit strange to experience that the competitive advantage of doing memos is often de-attributed to its origins – in favor of other strands that also claim grounded theory to be their theoretical code. This tendency makes it extra pertinent to first seek to understand what memoing is – to be able to make it understandable to others. In the following discussion of these issues, I will regularly return to key aspects of memoing as points of attachment.

Background

In this article, I will first sensitize the reader to memoing as a mind-opening reflection process within grounded theory methodology. Next, I will provide a brief overview of memo writing in the original literature on grounded theory, its historical background, and method-specific terminology. I will then situate the memo approach to conceptual writing in a wider research context and argue that memoing concerns more than identifying patterns of behavior in a grounded theory study in progress; memos are closely related to widely used tools in qualitative research, for instance research diaries, albeit in GT, memos are further developed to serve a special academic purpose, namely building theories from ground up.

The overview in this article is grounded in readings of the original literature on the method, especially selected books by Glaser (1978, 2012, 2014), as his theorizing lay the foundation for later application across the different versions of the method. The readings of Glaser's original theorizing were supplied by digital searches, hunting for texts that could further amplify memoing issues. The article is also based on field notes and participatory observations in more than a dozen troubleshooting seminars with Glaser from 2004 to 2017 (Gynnild, 2012).

Memoing Should Be a Top Priority

I still remember the first time I participated in one of Glaser’s troubleshooting seminars in the early 2000s, in London. During the first roundtable session, when participants were encouraged to ask questions, Glaser (2004) would suddenly interrupt with what he called a teachable moment, and modulate with a teasing grin, “Did you do a memo on it?”, “What? Then do it now!” “Memoing should be your top priority, every day. No matter what you are doing, be ready!” “As soon as you get ideas about your project, do a memo!” “Ideas must be picked up immediately – if not, they are gone.” “Remember – you are constantly building your memo bank, work towards memo maturity, later you are going to sort these memos into an integrated theory!” (author field notes).

Glaser (2004) repeatedly pointed out that the memoing should start in parallel with collecting the first data, and continue throughout the stages of coding, theoretical sampling, sorting, and reading of literature until the paper was ready for write-up. His comments were served humorously and with much encouragement and inspirational comments. To some participants, however, it sometimes was a bit shocking that he so directly addressed their writing habits. His straightforwardness often brought about intensive discussions during breaks and frequently prompted unexpected eureka moments among the students.

Most people were not prepared to start writing right away, not even when doing grounded theory work. For beginners, memoing is most often a surprisingly new approach that awaits to be systematically implemented in one’s daily work regimen. In his seminars, Glaser repeatedly emphasized that with the memo procedures, one does not have to be a writer to begin with. Memoing simply concerns getting the ideas into writing and keeping up the good work

throughout the study, independent of what else goes on in everyday life. The aim was simply to get the participants going and to avoid writing blocks.

The memo procedures in grounded theory methodology split up the writing into fragments. This built-in flexibility takes momentary care of new ideas and prompts the researcher to stay open to new ways to make sense of the data during the whole theory building process (Glaser, 1978, 2002, 2011, 2012, 2014). Memoing supports the development of codes for the best fit as well as systematic ways of coming up with good definitions for new concepts. The process also helps researchers to continuously reconsider personal presuppositions, tacit knowledge, and established facts on the subject they work on. In the end, the constant comparison and sorting procedures will ensure that the main patterns of behavior under study will earn their place in the theory. Memos might be written and collected in numerous ways, but the basic idea is that by treating them as physical bits and pieces, the noted ideas are easy to sort further out in the theory building process.

Put Into Text the Ideas, Reflections, and Questions

When I was taught to do memos at the first troubleshooting seminar I attended, in London, I got confused. It was like being in a place where the showering of advanced research terminology made me feel like a total stranger. But for some reason, just like other participating beginners, I started to listen intensively and abruptly found myself taking new kinds of notes. At first, the notes dealt with descriptions of what happened at the seminar, and my own confusion and reactions to what was going on. I later realized that I was simply a novice grounded theorist on my way from a descriptive to a conceptual level of thinking, and the many options to write short texts on the spot helped me in that process.

It did take a while before I realized that when doing grounded theory, writing memos was not so much about *describing* what was going on, as it was a way to highlight and put into text the ideas, reflections, questions, and other issues that I was constantly pondering in my own research project. I also got to understand that memos are not field notes; the function of these two text genres is fundamentally different, and they should not be mixed neither physically nor psychologically. You take field notes when you are out in the field, or substantive area, collecting data. Then you do memos on the field notes, and you often do memos on memos as well, when the ideas start flowing. But you keep them separate.

Writing on the Go, a Moving-on Solution

The new habit of memoing challenged me to constantly relate to my own thoughts and reflections concerning the substantive theory I was working on. I started to experiment with writing-on-the-go, taking notes on whatever I had at hand, whether the cell phone, a notebook, a piece of paper, or even a napkin – instead of waiting until later. At one point, I wrote memos in ten-minute sessions to get it incorporated as a daily routine. This feeling of being very productive and quite confused at the same time was exciting and scary. Where would all these snippets of ideas and thoughts lead me in the end? And yet the ideas would continue to surface. It was nice to know, whatever ideas came to mind, there was space for them in the memo bank.

Freestyle Memoing

Glaser's concept of freestyle memoing (Glaser, 2014) made clear that memos in grounded theory can take on any form. There is no right or wrong, as the memos are simply ideas and reflections that the researcher jots down for his or her personal use on the way. They are not to be shown to anybody else before write-up, and so one is free to develop any individualized style that might serve both the research project and one's own personality well. No worries about

grammar, punctuation, or other stylistic aspects; Glaser (2014) insisted that getting ideas are paramount to write-up with good English – “don’t talk, memo!” (108).

Behind the experimentation with memo freedom lay the anecdotally proven presumption that when there is no sharing of a written piece of text; no evaluation or expectations of certain writing standards, the researcher will be more relaxed. In a relaxed state, ideas tend to flow more easily, and so freestyle memoing is a fruitful way of taking good care of oneself while simultaneously processing the bits and pieces that comprise the building bricks of the theory under development. Anecdotal evidence further suggests that the best ideas tend to emerge when researchers do anything but doing research, such as going for a walk, having a shower, or watching TV while lying on the couch. Memoing is there to help novice GT-ers smoothly overcome writing blocks.

No matter whether people complain about lack of time or issues of self-doubt, memoing stands out as a moving-on solution against which one cannot possibly argue. Memoing in grounded theory is eventually a smart pedagogical tool, a daily mini action for researchers to ensure that they stay on top of their own research process. Ideas are fetched on the fly and constant comparison helps systematize the ideas into sustainable theorizing. The memos are the bedrock of grounded theory. Without memos, there would be no theory to write-up in the end.

The value of keeping field notes and memos as separately treated entities was illustrated by a study of remote female fixation, a grounded theory on the illegal sharing of nude images of young women online (Otteren & Gynnild, 2021). In this study, to comply with the European privacy regulations GDPR, it was not allowed to carry out either interviews nor collect any personal data or identifying information on the users of the illegal forum under scrutiny. Data could only be collected through field notes that were kept separate to satisfy ethical rules and

data protection requirements. The same requirements precluded any research design involving rich description. Thus, keeping focused on memoing in parallel with taking field notes was decisive to be able to move on with the study, and the field notes were kept strictly separate from the memos.

Yet another issue that became evident when sorting the memos, was that of researcher preconceptions. The memos were helpful to handle personal prejudice and speculations with sufficient theoretical distance during the data collection process. Later, the sorting ensured that the researchers' initial preconceptions were identified and were taken into consideration through constant comparison.

Critical Juncture

In the moment a researcher enters the conceptual realm of classic grounded theory, he or she is introduced to a bundle of interrelated concepts. Memoing serves as a critical juncture between the descriptive and abstract levels of thought. The basic memo terminology is mostly quite self-explanatory in its outline of the steps and purposes of the activity. Some concepts that might be helpful to understand memoing, in a nutshell, are exemplified through terms such as moment capturing, sequencing ideas, constant idea refining, comparative reasoning, memo maturity, memo sorting, theoretical completeness, and write-up of sorted memos, just to mention a few.

Most of grounded theory's terminology on memoing was developed by the method's co-founder Barney G. Glaser over more than five decades. The rich well of new concepts on memoing stems from a perpetual flow of PhD student feedback, which Glaser systematically collected and analyzed. His sources of data included questions posed by novice theorists at his international trouble-shooting seminars as well as in email conversations. In addition, he

constantly handwrote memos on memos analyzing GT PhD theses. In this way, the co-founder's own theoretical understanding of the memo process expanded over the years. This process, in turn, created a need to refine the theorizing on memos as a basic procedure in GT. Glaser was constantly advancing his own learning curve as a grounded theorist, as he might have conceptualized it. That does not mean that he modified the process much, but the explanations expanded and were made more easily accessible to new users.

Even if the literature on grounded theory methodology has recently received increasing attention, people new to the method still tend to be a bit confused as to what memos and memoing entail. Such reactions could in themselves have been interesting to investigate further. But in this article, I have chosen to discuss the applicability of the grounded theory memoing process based on the rich, original literature that is readily available. In this section, I will therefore provide a somewhat broader overview of memoing and its implications for developing a grounded theory. I will begin the exploration by checking in on the meanings of memos in everyday communication. I do so, well aware that to English natives the term memo is part of kindergarten glossary, whereas to many non-English natives the same term is a new acquaintance. Already at this point, it is demonstrated that GT beginners' first encounter with this methodological key concept may take place along a preconception continuum.

Memo is short for the Latin *memorandum est*, "that must be remembered," which seems to be in perfect alignment with the grounded theory perception of the term. In everyday life, memos manifest in many formats, as lists, notes, briefs, records, and other short pieces of handwritten or digitized information. In law, memos typically refer to the records of terms for agreements, and in business management, for instance, recipes are provided on how to write business memos line by line.

The term memo is widely used within professional communication. In the Oxford English Dictionary (Stevenson, 2010), *a* memo is defined as “a written message used for communication within an organization», while *to* memo means “to send a written message to someone within a company or organization.” In sum, it appears that in their general everyday use, memos are typically associated with professional ways of structuring important information; memos are apparently supposed to be short, structured, routinized, and formalized information to be broadly shared in professional contexts.

The Beginning of Memoing

But what exactly is a memo in grounded theory methodology? How is it academically defined and applied? Let us, for a moment, go more than half a century back in the history of sociology, back to the moments when Glaser and Strauss were working on their seminal work, *Awareness of Dying* (1965), at the University of California in San Francisco. In the process of conceptualizing their empirical data, the two co-researchers would typically “become overloaded with conceptual ideas and possibilities of conceptual focus” (Glaser, 2014, p.4).

Glaser later explained how this overload of ideas made him start taking notes on index cards. His initial aim was to further categorize and sort the ideas that they had been discussing orally, but he soon found that such indexing was too structured at the early stages of the analytical process. Instead, he noted, “I started jotting memos to myself that varied from a jot or scratch to four pages” (ibid.). This was the very beginning of memoing as an actionable premise for grounded theory development. The memo discovery resembles what in contemporary business research might be referred to as a disruptive innovation; new knowledge or insights that change established ways of carrying out processes or providing new products.

Glaser (2014) explained memoing as a conscious act that he systematically engaged in to develop the awareness-of-dying theory. In his first single authored, seminal work, Glaser (1978) defined memos as “*the theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding*” (p. 83). He stated that theoretical memos were “the bedrock, the core stage of grounded theory generation” (ibid.). He also called them the first draft of the theory (ibid, p. 80) and claimed that doing memos “lead naturally to abstraction or ideation” (ibid, p. 83). In this book, Glaser devoted a ten-page chapter to the topic of “theoretical memoing” (ibid.) The process was emphasized to be paramount to the steps of theoretical sorting and theoretical writing of the memos, which were discussed at length in the subsequent chapters.

Glaser (1978) listed four basic goals of memoing; to develop *theoretical ideas*, that is, *codes*, with what he called *complete freedom* into a *memo fund* which should be easily *sortable*. The now further developed and conceptualized sub-theory of theoretical memoing was, for the first time, explained at length on the pages that followed. Included were details on how and why memoing might best be carried out. Initially, Glaser stressed that the constant comparison of ideas when coding the data was of high priority. Personally, I experienced that I literally had to start *doing* memos before I fully realized that by memo fund was meant a *physical memo bank*. The memo bank concept made it easier to visualize the collection of memos as a concrete physical box or folder in which the memo snippets were gathered. The rule on sortability was another reminder that, in grounded theory, memos are physically existing entities.

Further Refining

In his later books, (see for instance Glaser 2014), Glaser frequently referred to *Theoretical Sensitivity* (1978) as the best source to understand the memoing process. The memo guidelines and reflections in *Theoretical Sensitivity* have since been considered the gold standard

of memoing. In a short article there is too little space to provide the full lines of arguments and explanations that were put forward; instead, readers are recommended to experience the conceptual richness in Glaser's original literature on grounded theory.

In 2014, Glaser suggested the memo rules provided in *Theoretical Sensitivity* (1978) 36 years earlier, might have appeared a bit too formal to some users. These reflections were based on his subsequent analyses of responses he got from novices, often minus-mentored PhD students. Some students reported they had strived to follow the guidelines on how to memo and what the memoing was for. Instead of getting inspired and feeling on top of their project, they had experienced the rules to be confusing and even burdening. Glaser thus identified issues of potential strictures and forcing that, to some researchers, could be counterproductive to getting into a good workflow.

The feedback led him to further refine and explicate the sub-theory's basic principles. He found that there was a need to make memoing more accessible to readers by providing more examples. At the same time, the feedback abducted that GT novices were typically quite unfamiliar with putting their ideas and reflections into paper while in the middle of doing research. They appeared to be trapped in a double bind; they wanted clear guidelines while simultaneously being afraid of not "doing it right" if they were going to adhere to some rules. And they were perplexed by the "total freedom" imperative.

A clearly perceived dilemma was that in grounded theory, researchers are nurtured to develop their personal way of making the memo process work. Glaser identified theoretical sensitivity to be a crucial challenge for researchers while switching between the stages of open, selective, and theoretical coding. And memoing was frequently explained as the researcher's best companion, not to get overwhelmed, but to "get out of the data" (Glaser, 2011, p. 2.). Within

contemporary terminology, memoing has been conceptualized as a crucial activity that frees up space from the human hardware (Glaser, 2014); it acts as a digital hard drive that stores valuable information so it does not get lost during the period of cognitive progress and potential breakthroughs. The updated and refined sub-theory of freestyle memoing was launched by Glaser in 2014. The theorizing was rigorously supplied with memoing examples provided by former PhD students, and the theoretical outlay of the memoing process now filled a whole book.

Modifying Memos

It is indeed interesting that Glaser, more than fifty years after his first experiments with memos in grounded theory, was still focusing on further improving the memoing approach. The example demonstrates that he followed up on the previously stated principles for assessing the value of any new grounded theory; it should fit, work, and be relevant, especially to the people in the substantive area. The reflexivity issues highlighted in the memoing book made manifest that researchers should “not be afraid of modifying memos as growth and realizations occur” (Glaser, 2014, p. 90).

Creativity is yet another aspect of memoing, which helps explain the ongoing work of comparing and refining codes and concepts for the best possible fit. The creative issues of memoing are closely related to the researcher’s ability to reflect on what is going on in the data and come up with solutions to the problems he or she grapples with (Holton, 2011). Holton further pointed out that creativity is particularly helpful when it comes to choosing a variety of sources and types of data. Even if the most widespread data collection method in grounded theory is qualitative interviews, the “all is data” dictum amplifies that any relevant data could be collected and be a source of memoing. Specifically, researcher creativity is helpful when

choosing a variety of sources and types of data, for instance, texts, documents, artifacts, and secondary data.

When pondering on how the different slices of data hang together, grounded theorists are often advised to take a step back and reflect from a distance. That is, to take the time it takes to find out what “emerges” from the data and get it into memos. To better understand the background for Glaser’s constantly ongoing refinements of classic GT, exemplified by the process of memoing, I will follow this advice. Instead of analyzing more empirical data, I will now discuss in what ways memo writing, as put forth in the original GT literature, fulfills needs for researcher reflexivity. Implicitly, I will also reflect on the perceived double bind dilemma mentioned above; while some students perceived the memo procedures suggested in *Discovery* too strict and too formal, other students perceived the freestyle memoing suggested in the *Memoing* book too loose and open. How can such reactions best be understood?

The memoing procedures in grounded theory challenge researchers to focus intensively on what is in the data, and where the data leads next. Through focused reflection, the memoing process helps to tease out and incorporate all kinds of data that emerge to be of relevance to the study; vague data, interpreted data, properline data, and baseline data. The freestyle note taking gives the researcher the opportunity to conduct long conversations with oneself: “What is in the data, and what is this a study of?” as well as questions such as “Why am I so curious about these issues?” “What do they remind me of?” “What more do I need to solve this puzzle?”

At the beginning of a study, the potential list of questions does not seem to have any clear-cut end. What is relevant and important to memo depends, at any point in the process, on the data material as well as the researcher’s reflexive, creative and conceptual skill levels, until what Glaser termed memo completeness is reached. Thus, memoing is a way both to include, and

to minimize, one's own presuppositions and prejudices about the data. The relevance of the reflections is constantly tested through the constant comparative method. The main paths in the data will soon start to "pattern out," as Glaser would say, referring to the transitions from open to selective and theoretical coding. In GT studies, issues along the continuum from reflection to reflexivity are, additionally, further addressed in the "Limitations of the study" section. Glaser often advised, however, to write about ideas, not people, to remind researchers to keep focused on theory development through conceptualization and abstract thinking (Glaser, 2014).

Reflection and Reflexivity

To better understand the ongoing refinements for which Glaser was a spokesman through his constantly expansive theorizing, I will now turn to the issue of reflective practice, which has been much discussed in academic circles in general, and especially within qualitative research. By scholars adhering to other strands of grounded theory methods (Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz & Bryant, 2019; Mruck & Mey, 2019), however, reflection and reflexivity issues have frequently been posed as "shortcomings" of classic grounded theory. The literally infinite options for researcher reflexivity embedded in the memo process are often overlooked, or not quite acknowledged, by people who are not familiar with the original literature by Glaser.

Finlay and Gough (2003) are among many authors, across disciplines, who have pointed out that in general, the terms reflection, critical reflection, and reflexivity have caused much confusion among scholars. Rather than discussing their interchangeability, the authors suggest that the terms are found along a continuum. While reflection is defined as "thinking about" something after an event, reflexivity is a more dynamic process that involves constant self-awareness, and critical reflection is found somewhere in the middle.

Finlay (2008) further states that reflection and reflexivity are the “process of learning through and from experience towards gaining new insights of self and/or practice” (p. 1). She argues that reflective practice is complex and situated to the extent that it doesn’t work if it is applied in simplistic or mechanical ways, that it becomes more of a ritual. She points out that reflective practice is a professional imperative and sees it as the bedrock of professional identity. Finlay’s postulate appears to be in perfect alignment with the memoing process of the grounded theory method.

Mruck and Mey (2019) suggested that for grounded theory to demonstrate a reflexive process, two activities should have a central role. The first concerns reflective writing in the first person, which, as pointed out by the authors, would help to express the author’s own involvement and to develop understanding of what he or she is studying. They further claimed that reflexive methods would include writing research diaries and self-reflexive memos, as well as time-out techniques that could also serve as self-care strategies. The second concerns communicative exchange, which the authors argue should take place with colleagues, in research teams, and with external supervisors.

Mruck and Mey (2019) differentiated between research diary and “memo-writing,” but without clarifying what makes the *content* of memo-writing potentially different from that of a research diary. With reference to constructivist GT researchers, they have rhetorically left the impression that reflections and reflexivity in GT memo-writing is dependent upon a constructivist approach, implicitly that “lack of reflexivity” excludes the original literature from the good party (Charmaz, 2014). Mruck and Mey (2019) also highlighted that a research diary “should be an intimate refuge” that is not for anyone else to see without permission, and that

Sometimes it will only be possible to retrospectively understand the importance of astonishing episodes, communicative flops, disorientation, and breakthroughs for theory development. Especially in the beginning, entries could be fragmentary and unsystematic, with the intention of coming back to them later on to elaborate and explicate characteristics of the field under research. (para. 46, online source)

The rhetorical power of the above arguments lies in the pretending-as-if grounded theorists normally do not engage in reflective writing or communicative exchange with research colleagues and supervisors. While in fact, the first argument is in support of the process of freelance memoing. The second argument is a reminder that more data collection and orientation in the field of classic grounded theory is often to be recommended. The many online networks and interdisciplinary grounded theory events indicate that research discussions, methodological exchange, and supervision are of great importance when building grounded theories. Dr. Glaser's many books on classic grounded theory during the last two decades are all grounded in data from researchers practicing the method.

Problem-solving Through Reflection

Originally, memoing was by itself a response to the researchers' need for creative problem-solving through reflection. Freestyle memoing provides a physical flexibility for later sorting that an ordinary research diary would not normally offer. In that perspective, building a memo bank could simply be seen as a specific property of research diaries, developed for the specific purpose of developing a full theory.

The suggestions by Mruck and Mey (2019) are helpful contributions to better understand the reflexive aspects of doing grounded theory. Their reflections provide valuable data on

perceptions of memoing distant from the original literature. Cathy Charmaz also acknowledged the reflective practice integrated in grounded theory when she pointed out, in an interview, that

...the basic guidelines, the type of coding, the type of memo-writing, and trying to make your memos more analytic, more theoretical, and then checking through theoretical sampling still hold. Those are very useful techniques, and they can be used from a variety of theoretical frames, or types of data. (Charmaz & Keller, 2019, p. 9)

Charmaz and Keller is clearly talking about reflective practice here, the process of building theory from collecting data on practice and reflecting on these data.

Freestyle Works With Any Style

Originally, Glaser's (2014) concept of freestyle memoing was meant to amplify that the process could be applied in a variety of ways, depending on individual needs and ways of working. While one theorist might prefer a digital index card system, another researcher might fancy a notebook or a mobile app for note-taking. Some like to jot down keywords, others prefer to write full paragraphs. The point is that the individual researcher should find ways to memo that would work well for him or her; the memoing process provides opportunities to further develop their own independency and what Holton conceptualized as autonomous creativity (Holton, 2011).

Depending on the individual researcher's specific needs, research project, and learning curve, the ways of doing memos may well change over time. For instance, during a study, many researchers come to a point where complex ideas show up, not as text, but as maps and tables in their memos. These are visualizations of abstract models that await to be written up in text later – when the conceptual codes have emerged.

Glaser repeatedly pointed out, in seminars as well as in writing, that a grounded theory is good only as far as it goes. Implicitly, the fit, relevance, and catch of a grounded theory, at any stage, depends on the theorizing readiness of the researcher who produced the theory. The concept of theorizing readiness came to mind while I was reflecting on the suggested continuum from reflection via critical reflection to reflexivity (Finlay & Gough, 2003). When ending this article on memoing, then, it strikes me that readers of grounded theories, as well as theory builders and academic colleagues critiquing the method, are all found somewhere along the above continuum. That also holds true when it comes to interest and insights into the value of conceptual emergence through memoing.

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