

## **Building a Learning Community: The GT Troubleshooting Seminar<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

This paper explores the evolution of Barney Glaser's troubleshooting seminar approach to which I add my own experiences as both a participant and facilitator of several similar seminars. The paper begins by situating the seminar approach in Glaser's early teaching experiences from which his pedagogy would develop. After recounting my own introduction to GT seminars, I then explore their design, structure, and process. I conclude the paper by offering some advice to those who must learn GT on their own.

### **Introduction**

Barney Glaser has referred to learning grounded theory as "development driven" (Glaser, 1998, pp. 56–60); a "delayed action learning process" (1978, p. 6, 1998, p. 220, 2001, p. 1, 2003, p. 78) where the experiential is essential to truly understanding and effecting the methodology. Having worked for several years with graduate students at University of California San Francisco (UCSF), he recognized the limitations of *Discovery* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) as a methodological guide. Indeed, this was a primary motivation for his authoring of *Theoretical Sensitivity* (Glaser, 1978), in which he offers guidance in applying the "full package" of classic grounded theory methodology. The guidance offered was grounded in his years of teaching at UCSF, from which he concluded that learning together in a seminar format was the optimum way of teaching and learning grounded theory.

Glaser's early seminars at UCSF adopted what he called a "revolving collaboration" model with "committed full time participants" (Glaser, 1978, p. 33). The intention was to encourage openness to ideas, to "de-contain" (p.34) participants' preconceptions and often strongly defended perspectives, replacing defensiveness with "the right to be wrong" (p. 34), all in aid of advancing the conceptual analysis of the data as presented. Kathy Charmaz was one of Glaser's students at UCSF. She described Glaser's approach as unconventional at a time when the typical graduate seminar was focused on exploring and critiquing extant literature. She suggested, "...Barney's innovative method of engaging students in theory construction in class sessions turned the conventional sociology graduate seminar inside out and, simultaneously, encouraged students' analytic thinking" (Charmaz, 2011, p. 181). Over the years, Glaser continued to employ a seminar approach in his

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teaching and mentoring of grounded theory. While the intention and focus of his seminars remained consistent, the structure changed to what Gynnild (2011) describes as a “fly-in, fly-out” (p. 38) intensive three-day format that enabled students from all corners of the globe to attend. Glaser would later extend the reach of his work by effectively embracing both virtual technologies and a growing cadre of experienced classic grounded theorists whom he had mentored through earlier seminars as aids in overcoming the ‘minus mentoring’ challenge (Glaser, 1998), a term Glaser had used to describe those students who do not have access to local expertise in grounded theory, whether through supervisors or collegial networks.

### **Finding Community**

My own experience of Glaser’s troubleshooting seminars began in 2003. Like many new to GT, I had encountered confusion in working my way through the various GT perspectives offered in texts and journal papers. The more I read, the more confusing I found the advice being offered. My wish was to do GT as it was originally presented in *Discovery* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I had tried using strategies and advice offered in Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) text, but I found the advice took me through repetitive cycles of analysis that resulted in what seemed to me to be rather predictable descriptive outcomes. Where was the creativity that *Discovery* has promised? Where were the eureka insights (Glaser, 1978)?

An internet search in March 2003 led me to Sociology Press and the Grounded Theory Institute. Glaser’s several books pointed me in the right direction, but it was the notice of face-to-face seminars with Glaser that truly excited my learning. The April 2003 seminar in London was already fully subscribed but I was advised to keep watching the website for future seminars. What truly amazed me, however, was that Barney Glaser emailed me to ask about my research! Thus began a most memorable mentoring relationship; further solidified when I was able to attend a GT seminar in Malmo, Sweden, in September 2003. The seminar experience was exhilarating. To begin with, here was the man himself! The symbiosis between Glaser as author and Glaser as seminar leader was manifest in his tone, his theoretical sensitivity evidenced in his ability to conceptualize data from whatever source, and his passion for just doing it!

The composition of the seminar was, however, unexpected. As participants introduced themselves, the range of disciplines around the table was impressive if somewhat intimidating. I was a PhD student in management. What did I have in common with these students of medicine, nursing, occupational therapy, education, social work? Would I be able to understand their research? Would they understand mine? Was this seminar going to help me unravel my confusion? As the first day progressed, I found myself engrossed in the troubleshooting process regardless of the study focus. It was the data and its conceptualization that focused our attention. Following that first seminar, I progressed my PhD study by attending additional seminars in New York, London, Mill Valley, and Stockholm. With each seminar, not only did my own research progress but I continued to develop my understanding of the GT process through participating in the troubleshooting of over 50 other GT studies in progress. My initial hesitation regarding the disciplinary range of seminar participants had been replaced with enthusiasm for discovering concepts and theories in any data and for seeing how GT can be applied to all kinds of data.

Through the seminars, I also developed collaborative relationships with fellow grounded theorists from around the globe; a network of connections that continues to inform my research and understanding of GT. This fluctuating support network is a living example of my grounded theory of rehumanizing knowledge work (Holton, 2006, 2007). Indeed, seminar attendance certainly rehumanized the PhD trajectory for many of those who attended! In 2006, I began to offer my own seminars; many in collaboration with my GT colleagues. These seminars have been offered in Canada, the USA, the UK, Hong Kong, Sweden, and France. Through seminars, my editorship of *The Grounded Theory Review* (2004–2011) and email connections facilitated via the Grounded Theory Institute, I have also served as a mentor to many novice grounded theorists, all of whom have offered me additional experience as a teacher of the methodology.

### **Original Design of the Troubleshooting Seminar**

Glaser recognized early on the importance of appropriate methodological training. *Theoretical Sensitivity* (Glaser, 1978) was written based on his experiences in developing and leading seminars with graduate students at UCSF as a means of accelerating the learning process. He recognized that students could 'stagnate' if they focused exclusively on their own study; that there was much to be said for breaking up attention to their own data and flexing their conceptualization skills on data from the studies of other students, by hearing what others saw in the data and by working to 'one up' each other's conceptual level. In his seminars, students shared challenges that they were encountering and problem-solved together in a mutually supportive learning exchange. Gynnild (2011) relates Glaser's seminar approach to Carl Rogers' person-centred theory (Rogers, 1969) wherein significant learning is fostered in environments of minimal threat and maximal differentiated perceptions. She suggests, "... both Glaser and Rogers are concerned with opening up to, and theorizing from, experience ... [t]he strength in both approaches lies in the focus on presence and relational qualities in a learning situation, and the supervisor or facilitator's function as a role model [offering] genuineness ... non-possessive caring ... empathetic understanding" (Gynnild, 2011, pp. 46–47). The collaborative learning model helped to overcome the sense of isolation that many graduate students experience as they progress their work. Indeed, Glaser (1996) did intend the seminars as mutual support:

These seminars were a support group encouraging theoretical sampling in different directions, looking at different slices of data, and a constant source of 'running by' their latest ideas. These seminars did away with the 'put downs' of normal discourse with many colleagues, and the energy draining nature of colleagues who just listen and say little more than an 'OK' for quick closure, instead of fiery feedback which keeps the researcher active, thinking and generating. In short, it is important to have this positive discussion if available, but just as important not to talk to the wrong people and give away the energy for putting down in writing what was just said. (p. xiii)

### **Structure and Pedagogy**

Glaser (1998) explains that the seminar structure he used at UCSF extended over a semester or two, with four to eight students working on a grounded theory for journal publication. Students would meet weekly for three of the four weeks per month, with the fourth week open to provide a necessary break and allow the various works in progress to

'cook'. Meeting weekly on the other three weeks per month was necessary to sustain momentum. He explains that everyone worked on everyone's study in progress. As such, "each participant will end up doing some measure of 4 to 8 studies" (p. 218).

The work of the seminar was divided into four positions: a presenter, two note takers (one substantive-focused and one methodology-focused), with the remaining participants as analysts. "No teachers are needed as people help each other, but a mentor is always helpful ... no lectures of more than a few minutes, just lots of discussion" (p. 219). The first session was devoted to coding and memoing an "intuitive sampling" (p. 226) of field notes (10 to 15 pages) from across a participant's data. The sampling would not be taken from one interview transcript, or one long field note but would be "a sampling of many in order to get the patterns over many incidents" (p. 226). Glaser explained, "One goal of the first session is to firm up a choice for core category as best as possible to use as selective coding for session two" (p. 227). This second session would then be devoted to coding and memoing a second "intuitive sample" of field notes that appear to relate to the selected core category, the goal here being to "sufficiently confirm the core category by its relations to other categories and to write many memos on these categories, other properties, and their relationships" (p. 227). During the third session, the group worked on hand sorting all the memos that had been written by the researcher and other group members to "try to firm up an overall emergent integration of the memos into a beginning theory" (p. 227). The researcher then took this 'sort' home and continued to sort and prepare a working paper as a first draft. The fourth session was devoted to reworking and editing the full draft in anticipation of its submission for journal publication.

Of course, these sessions were spread over several months in tandem with the studies of the other participants. Overall, the process took months, thus facilitating GT's delayed action learning curve. Participation was limited to those who were engaged in a GT study and seeking to publish their work.

The general stance of the seminar is to leave citizen type issues outside the door and become objective analysts, no matter where it takes them. ... The right to be wrong is vital since wrong tracks lead to right ways. The objective is to de-contain oneself which being correct inhibits ... there is no need to defend. They can one-up each other conceptually, with no fear of implicitly putting each other down, since the job of all is to raise the conceptual level of the analysis. ... Fracturing [the data] should be done with no fear of hurting or violating the person who might cherish the story because of collecting it or for other personal reasons. (Glaser, 1978, p. 34)

No 'auditors' or 'observers' were allowed as Glaser felt they constrained the robust engagement of those with a firm stake in the seminar outcome (Glaser, 1978, p. 33). Also important was the rule of no late entries into the group. Glaser believed that unless they were there from the outset, "they would never be able to experientially catch up to the assumptive buildup to which the seminar tacitly refers as they analyse each others [sic] data" (p. 33).

From the mid-1990s, and for over twenty years, Glaser regularly offered GT troubleshooting seminars in both Europe and America. While his seminars at UCSF had run over the course of a full semester or two, for these later seminars, he devised a condensed three-day troubleshooting approach which continued the basic structure of collaborative

support in service to conceptual emergence but in a more intensive learning climate. Each seminar was fully subscribed with PhD students at various stages of the GT process, and generally from all corners of the globe. Participants would “worry whether or not they can truly accomplish a GT dissertation. They [we]re highly motivated to find answers to their GT questions” (Glaser & Holton, 2007, p. vii). Many came seeking to push past a specific stumbling block to advance their theorizing; others came full of confusion as to how to sort through the various approaches labelled GT in the literature. The range of issues and levels of expertise present at each seminar may have created some initial confusion for the first-time attendee – much as I experienced at my first seminar in 2003 – but the relaxed and open atmosphere soon stimulated engagement and accelerated learning for all: “...a few days of intense coding of several people’s data goes a long way in teaching coding to all seminar students” (Glaser, 2011, p. 46).

Designing a time-condensed seminar, however, posed a dilemma for Glaser in that learning the basics of GT usually takes about eighteen months of intensive work (Glaser, 1998), given the delayed action learning nature of the methodology. Here both the atmosphere of collaborative support and the temperament of the seminar leader are essential. Gynnild (2011) explored the importance of the atmosphere that Glaser intentionally promoted at the outset of each seminar as essential to facilitating openness to learning and to discovery. She describes it as “a holistic, experiential, exploratory, and yet grounded mentoring approach” (p. 32) and a “...safe psychological space” (p. 37) that facilitates “[a] process of building trust through a feeling of authentic communication” (p. 33), whereby “[i]mplicitly, properties of outspoken curiosity and active problem-solving are encouraged” (p. 34). She quotes from Glaser’s opening remarks at a GT seminar:

We’re going to do perspectives on perspectives. People will see data and I’ll expect you all to chime in with a potential concept, for the data. I want you to start getting abstract. So, leave the data and get on a conceptual level which is abstract of time, place, and people, and start talking about the general patterns of life. The one thing I can’t stand is tiny topics. (pp. 42–43)

Glaser would begin each seminar with an opening talk, emphasizing its pedagogy, grounded in the principles of:

*Cognitive stripping* as mindset disruption to dislodge preconceptions and enable emergence (i.e., realization). At seminars, participants “can take conceptual flyers (ideational chances) with no fear of being wrong as they try to fit concepts to data or generate theoretical memos” (Glaser, 1978, p. 34).

*Seed planting* for later emergent realization as participants offer perspectives on a perspective often dislodging the researcher’s assumptions about what is in the data and thereby raising the potential for originality in emergent grounded theories.

*Preconscious processing* whereby Glaser emphasized the importance of allowing ideas to ‘cook’ as conscious deliberations are too slow to make important conceptual leaps. Preconscious processing is much faster in processing the input from coding and analyzing of data, but it produces ‘conscious confusion’; hence, mindset disruption and potential regression. The grounded theorist must be able to tolerate this cognitive stripping to allow the creative intuition of realization to emerge – those eureka moments.

*Realization* occasionally occurs during the seminar itself but more likely is a delayed action phenomenon, a consequence of the participant's openness to discovery, aided by the seminar's cognitive stripping and seed planting. Realization cannot be pressured by external deadlines. The analyst must develop a pacing and cycling pattern that keeps the work moving but that alternates conscious periods of analysis and writing with periods of respite and relaxation to support preconscious processing. This cycling pattern begins during the seminar as participants feel free to alternate between active and vocal engagement in the troubleshooting of others' work with periods of reflective silence.

### **The Troubleshooting Process**

At each seminar, one individual – usually a returning attendee – offered to take notes for the session so that the remaining participants could fully engage in thinking and talking without the worry of capturing extensive notes. As each person presented their data or memos, the rest of the group would think, analyse, and suggest what concepts or patterns they were seeing and gradually they would begin to recognize methodologically what is going on as the analysis proceeded.

Day 1 of the three-day intensive seminar began with an opening 'lecture' intended to set the atmosphere, where participants were asked to set aside emotions and anxieties around their participation and to expect and indeed embrace confusion as a necessary step to discovering theory from data. The seminar proceeded with each participant briefly introducing themselves, stating their name, affiliation and one or two sentences about their study. Doing so broke the tension as everyone spoke and had an idea about who else was attending. Participants are usually awed by the geographic scope and disciplinary range represented around the table; this was a new experience as most are accustomed to disciplinary-specific seminars.

Following the round of introductions, a participant was invited to present their study, state where they were in the GT process and what they would like help with from the seminar. The order of presentations was important to give participants a sense of where they 'sat' in relation to others' studies and problems, offering both confirmation that others might be facing problems like theirs and reassurance that others had been able to successfully resolve similar issues and progress their studies. In listening to others presenting their challenges, everyone learned by actively engaging in the troubleshooting discussions and suggestions. Presentations and troubleshooting continued throughout the day. A leisurely lunch break offered another opportunity for networking among participants, thus further building a sense of collaborative support that often carried forward into an evening of informal dining and sharing of experiences.

Day 2 began with a short debrief of the first day, offering an opportunity for participants to raise any thoughts or questions that may have emerged overnight. The remainder of the day was devoted to troubleshooting. A celebratory dinner and presentation of certificates often capped the second day. The agenda for Day 3 was more relaxed and informal. For those who wished to explore what had emerged for them over the course of the two days and what to do next, there was an opportunity to sign up for one-on-one chats with Glaser. This also enabled some participants to be more open and candid about issues with their study than they may have felt comfortable doing in the full seminar. The day often included an informal Q&A session that would run in parallel with the one-on-

one sessions. Here, more experienced grounded theorists offered responses to questions from novices seeking to resolve concerns or misunderstandings that may not have been fully addressed in the first two days. The more relaxed and intimate approach on Day 3 also responded to a range of learning dispositions ensuring that those who were more reserved still have an opportunity to air their questions and concerns. Apart from this basic structure, the seminars remained largely emergent, offering help just where each individual participant was in the process and what they were having difficulty with. "This approach brings the workshop right to the edge of current problems of participants in the workshop which is their most meaningful next increment of learning. Its details are planned on the spot according to the ability level of participants as they emerge" (Glaser, 1998, p. 231).

While the format of the seminars had evolved, Glaser's basic rules of engagement hadn't. In *Theoretical Sensitivity*, Glaser (1978), had set out the following conditions for participation: no sharing of experiences – stick to the data; no logical elaboration – stick to the data; no need for apologies or preambles before offering ideas; interrupting is okay if it is in service to generating ideas; and humility not ego, cooperation not competition (p. 34). The seminar process placed no pressure on any participant to compete in demonstrating their expertise, but rather to be open to learning and to accepting suggestions and advice. This "deliberate detachment of personal, emotional, political as well as other presuppositions in the situation ... implies training in non-judgmental attitudes" (Gynnild, 2011, p. 43) – a skill that can challenge those who have been trained to know.

To balance the potential regression that first-time attendees might experience, Glaser would make skilful use of humour and playfulness to encourage participants to detach in service to their learning. Gynnild (2011) sees additional value in the role of humour: "Humour helps keep energy up, and it is a generous way of telling people to keep on track. Moreover, playfulness helps create psychological space for exploration and for breaking out within a group ... fosters risk-taking ... might take the edge off otherwise embarrassing situations" (p. 44). While the first-time attendee might leave feeling somewhat overwhelmed and even deflated, Glaser's anthem to trust in emergence would often provide the longed-for reward: "After my seminar I felt a bit down, everybody seemed to have found the core category after a real experience of epiphany ... Barney told me to go back to my data because he suggested I was forcing, and this is what I did. I went home and restarted the analysis from zero ... there it was – my wonderful core category." (Email from PhD Student, March 14, 2016)

Gynnild (2011) suggests that atmospherings fosters psychosocial properties of "authentic presence, explicitness, full acceptance, and playfulness" (p. 34) and emphasizes that it is "... a conscious teaching act aimed at escalating participants' learning curve as much as possible within the given time frame [and] ... where the structuring of seminars conditions [both] the emergent individual and collective learning processes" (p. 31). She conceptualizes the atmospherings process around five distinct framing principles:

*Across-ism* whereby the mix of research disciplines, substantive areas, and GT skill levels "takes the edge off unproductive competition between participants in favour of productive, collaborative sharing" (p. 38),

*Fly-in, fly-out* as a temporary physical relocation and decontextualization whereby “participants literally must let go of their everyday life routines and environment ... going global ... accelerates the process of opening up for new discoveries” (pp. 38–39),

*Sense orchestrating* through informality to reduce anxiety and “purposive ambiance” (p. 39) through careful selection of seminar locations (i.e., inspiring global settings) and facilities that excite and inspire through an “aura of distinction” (p. 39). No dreary university classrooms!

*Dressing down* as Glaser himself would invariably do in blue jeans and sweaters – no suits or tweedy jackets! Dressing down is a sociological leveller “signal[ing] a peer-to-peer approach” (p. 40) intended to further reduce performance anxiety.

*Group individualism* whereby seminars were designed to accommodate binary needs for both plenary and individual sessions, supporting the idea of “multiple experientiality” (p. 40) as participants were offered an intensive burst of learning by “conceptualizing across disciplines and stages of theory development” (p. 40).

The overall aim was to set the stage for collaborative support, both during the intensive engagement of the three-day seminar and potentially extending this support in follow-up interactions with seminar leaders as well as among participants themselves: “...a future set of intimate, collaborative colleagues in research ... with a depth of understanding of what the analyst is doing in generating grounded theory. ... Eventually such collaboration becomes an internal dialogue, and the participant is trained to go it alone” (Gynnild, 2011, pp. 34–35). The seminar process “...empowers its participants by building confidence in doing grounded theory ... experientially grounding the method ... networking ... planting seeds for further strategies and methods ... clarifying the method jargon ... ok-ing the tolerance for confusion and regression” (Glaser, 1998, p. 232).

The expectations were clear and the learning intense, as one first-time attendee confessed: “I’m listening so hard that I’m afraid others can hear it” (p. 42). The learning value was also clear. Seminar participation stimulated energy and a desire to share. Many participants returned a second, even third time for more troubleshooting participation as their dissertation research advanced. Having achieved the PhD, some returned to share their success and continue their learning through troubleshooting new issues all the while experiencing again the mutual support and stimulating learning exchanges. After attending several seminars, some would become ‘local experts’ at their home universities, mentoring other students or offering their own seminars (Glaser & Holton, 2007, p. viii). As one seasoned seminar attendee commented: “People bring different backgrounds and different experiences with theory and research. But for the two to three days [of the seminar] I always got a sense of renewal with my work” (personal communication, August 10, 2015).

### **Mentoring for Solo Learning**

Barney Glaser’s troubleshooting seminar approach had proven an effective way of fostering researcher autonomy. For many PhD students, periodic participation in GT troubleshooting seminars over the course of their research trajectory provided important methodological clarification, motivational inspiration, and sufficient mentoring support to sustain energy and move their work ahead.



However, despite the availability of both virtual and face to face GT seminars offered by experienced grounded theorists who were mentored by Barney Glaser<sup>2</sup>, many who wish to learn how to do GT have to do so without experienced guidance – i.e., they will be minus-mentored (Stern, 1994) "...in the sense that their professors do not know the method or ways of teaching it" (Gynnild & Martin, 2011, p. 1). Morse (1997) emphasizes the experiential importance of mentorship by likening the attempt to learn a methodology from reading methodological texts to learning to drive by reading a manual about driving. She asserts: "The fastest way, the most efficient way, and the most painless way is to find a mentor, even if distant" (p. 182). Gynnild and Martin (2011) assert that: "Mentoring not only concerns methodological support; it also socializes and informs new researchers into a community of scholars" (p. 4); that the "...psychosocial aspects of mentoring tend to be just as important as the strictly skill-dependent aspects" (p. 5).

While it is possible to develop the necessary skill in doing GT while minus-mentored, Glaser (1998) cautioned that the minus-mentored researcher "...should not expect conscious results too fast ... [should] always take respites from coding and memoing to let the patterns germinate in the preconscious, and then try days later to one-up oneself conceptually ... should try and trigger memos and codes by writing a lot. Once it is preconsciously processed, writing allows the conceptual material to pour out" (p. 217). Curbing anxiety and the pressure to know in advance is a necessary part of respecting the integral role in GT of preconscious cognitive processing, with its inherent confusion in service to emergent theorizing. Theoretical pacing is an integral aspect of GT's iterative nature. It is essential to the creative nurturing of ideas into conscious realization:

[B]uilt into each stage of the method are techniques which ensure some level of creativity ... memos allow creative theoretical forays with the data and concepts; sorting forces creative integration of the theory; reworking of initial drafts can be highly creative as the theoretical perspective becomes sharpened; and the inductive logic leans heavily on the analyst's creative boost, which comes from concepts and ideas emerging from the data ... creativity is not the gift of some privileged person, rather, it is a matter of developing one's personal recipe for pacing himself through the grounded theory process ... creativity can both be learned and turned on when desired. (Glaser, 1978, pp. 20–22)

Each grounded theorist must find his or her own pacing rhythm, fitting it into individual life patterns by cycling periods of intense engagement with data analysis, memoing, sorting and writing with respites for relaxation, other work, and professional commitments as well as time with family and friends. Doing so allows ideas to grow with the data and the theorist's increasing theoretical sensitivity. Glaser (2001) quotes one student's experience of pacing:

There were periods of intensity interspersed with respites designed to allow me to step back from the all-encompassing effects of being in the thick of the action. The interstices indicated are important. Their function is to enable the researcher to fragment the data, giving some distance in order to allow a more conceptual view to

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<sup>2</sup> See Grounded Theory Online <https://www.groundedtheoryonline.com>

prevail. These are breathing spaces that prevent the researcher from suffocating in the intoxicating atmosphere surround[ing] captivating data. (p. 119)

The cycling pattern becomes a personal pacing recipe that aligns naturally with the theorist's temperament, commitments and obligations and keeps the theorist energized and the ideas emerging through to the writing-up stage. However, the pacing pattern may differ from one research project to another. Over time, a grounded theorist may develop several different pacing patterns as they cycle through various GT studies adapting different patterns to meet varying conditions and commitments.

### **Conclusion**

In this paper, I have offered some background on the evolution of Barney Glaser's approach to teaching and learning GT via his famous troubleshooting seminars, elaborating on Glaser's pedagogy, seminar design and the troubleshooting process. I have drawn upon my own experience of the GT learning curve as well as my participation in and leadership of several GT troubleshooting seminars and of mentoring several PhD students to the successful completion of their degree requirements. I have as well drawn upon the experience and advice of others who have also travelled this path, including, of course, the man who pioneered this learning journey. While each GT learning journey is unique and has its own delayed action learning curve, it is hoped that the ideas set forth in this paper will offer some encouragement and support to those who journey the path of GT methodology.

### **About the Author**

Judith A. Holton is Associate Professor Emerita at Mount Allison University, Canada. Judith completed her PhD in Management Studies at the University of Northampton, UK. Her research interests include grounded theory research methodology, leadership and management of complex systems, and learning and innovation in knowledge work. She is a Fellow of the Grounded Theory Institute, former Editor of *The Grounded Theory Review*, and was a frequent collaborator and co-author with Barney Glaser. Judith has published in several academic journals including *Management Learning*, *Organizational Research Methods*, *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, and *The Grounded Theory Review*. She is co-author with Isabelle Walsh of *Classic Grounded Theory: Applications with Qualitative and Quantitative Data* (Sage, 2017) and with Isabelle Walsh and Gaetan Mourmant of *Conducting Classic Grounded Theory for Business and Management Students* (Sage, 2019). She is also a contributor to *The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory* (2007), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods* (2018) and *The Sage Handbook of Current Developments in Grounded Theory* (2019). Her paper, "What grounded theory is . . . A critically reflective conversation among scholars", co-authored with Isabelle Walsh, Lotte Bailyn, Walter Fernandez, Natalia Levina and Barney Glaser, won the Academy of Management Research Methods Division Best Paper Award in 2015.

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