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## Review

# Developing a grounded theory approach: a comparison of Glaser and Strauss

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## Abstract

Novice qualitative researchers are often unsure regarding the analysis of their data and, where grounded theory is chosen, they may be uncertain regarding the differences that now exist between the approaches of Glaser and Strauss, who together first described the method. These two approaches are compared in relation to roots and divergences, role of induction, deduction and verification, ways in which data are coded and the format of generated theory. Personal experience of developing as a ground theorist is used to illustrate some of the key differences. A conclusion is drawn that, rather than debate relative merits of the two approaches, suggests that novice researchers need to select the method that best suits their cognitive style and develop analytic skills through doing research.

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**Keywords:** Research methodology; Grounded theory; Analytic approaches

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## 1. Background

This paper developed from the experience of learning to use grounded theory to carry out a study, still in progress, about post-registration professional development of nurses. Novice qualitative researchers are often

unsure of how to analyse their data, particularly in relation to grounded theory and differences that have developed between the approaches of Glaser and Strauss, who first jointly described the method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Unlike quantitative research, where time is spent reviewing the literature and planning details of all stages of the research process, there is a need to start gathering data in order to formulate ongoing plans and, perhaps, to discover the nature of

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the research questions. Yet even here, instructions provided by Glaser and Strauss differ in their more recent, separate texts (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998, 1999; Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 1994, 1998).

Awareness of the methodological mistakes in many published grounded theory studies (Becker, 1993; Skodal-Wilson and Ambler-Hutchinson, 1996) adds to the level of anxiety. Morse (1991) recommends that only experienced researchers mix methods, but does that apply to the two different approaches espoused, respectively, by Glaser and Strauss? A tension exists between a need to understand grounded theory by reading about it and a recognition that the novice researcher must find out “about the process of researching through learning in the process of carrying out the research” (Freshwater, 2000, p. 29).

This paper is intended to help other novice researchers faced with this dilemma, by unravelling and exploring the two approaches, comparing them in relation to the role of induction, deduction and verification, ways in which data are coded and the format of generated theory. The paper will begin by examining grounded theory’s roots and divergences before comparing the approaches of its two originators in some depth. In conclusion, although no attempt is made to describe the detail of the study, some excerpts of data are used to illustrate experiences of coding using first a Straussian, then a Glaserian approach to analysis.

### 1.1. *Grounded theory: roots and divergences*

Grounded theory’s roots lie in symbolic interactionism, which itself stems from pragmatist ideas of James, Dewey, Cooley and Mead (Hammersley, 1989), most notably the concept of the looking glass self (Cooley, 1922). Individuals are self aware, able to see themselves from the perspective of others and therefore adapt their behaviour according to the situation (Mead, 1934). Social interactions create meaning and shaping of society via shared meaning predominate over the effect of society on individuals. The term ‘symbolic interactionism’ was invented by Blumer (1937) and his development of the interactionist approach together with naturalistic inquiry is a key influence on grounded theory. Blumer (1956) stressed the role of concepts that are sensitising rather than definitive, that gain their utility and significance from patterned relationships rather than quantifiable correlations. Moreover, Hammersley’s (1989) detailed analysis shows that Blumer’s concept of inquiry involved comparison of cases to develop the features of each case, the production of emergent meaning and ongoing refinement of the characteristics of the relationship. Parallels with grounded theory where concepts are related and developed around a core via a process of ongoing comparisons are clear.

Since its initial development grounded theory has diversified. Adaptations may be acknowledged by the author, e.g. Schatzman’s (1991) dimensional analysis, Chenitz and Swanson’s (1986) surfacing the nursing process and the Keddy et al. (1996) extension of macro-analysis beyond that of symbolic interactionist interpretation to address feminist socio-political concerns. However, the most important variation is between Glaser and Strauss, the founders of grounded theory.

Stern (1994) claimed that the differences between the two researchers had always been apparent, but it was not until Strauss published detailed guidance to the grounded theory process (Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1990) that the divergence was more widely recognised. Glaser (1978, 1992) is generally seen to have remained faithful to classic grounded theory with Strauss and Corbin (1990) producing a reformulation of the classic mode (Annells, 1996) with Glaser (1992) claiming that the Straussian approach is no longer grounded theory, but ‘full conceptual description’.

Glaser (1978) had extended grounded theory beyond the original text (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) to explain in more detail concepts such as theoretical sampling, theoretical coding and use of theoretical memos, but it was Strauss and Corbin (1990) who focused on developing the analytic techniques and providing guidance to novice researchers. This emphasis has been the focus of some criticism with Keddy et al. (1996) believing it produced a rigidity never intended for grounded theory, while Robrecht (1995) held that emergence is problematic. However, it is methodological rather than ontological and epistemological aspects that have been cited as the main source of divergence. Indeed, Hammersley (1989) sees an ontological paradox inherent in Blumer’s symbolic interactionism that is relevant to all grounded theory: if meaning is conferred on the social world by interaction of actors, can there be a reality of basic social processes to be investigated? Hammersley (1989, p. 135) claims that the paradox is easily resolved:

once we accept that there can be multiple non contradictory descriptive and explanatory claims about any phenomenon.

He links this to Mead’s (1934) concept of sociality which means that a phenomenon can be several things at once. Thus, grounded theory’s aim is to explore basic social processes *and* to understand the multiplicity of interactions that produces variation in that process.

A shared ontology can thus be assumed, but there may be slight epistemological differences. Fundamental to grounded theory is the belief that knowledge may be increased by generating new theories rather than analysing data within existing ones. However, there are

philosophical differences between Glaser and Strauss in the process of theory generation with different emphasis on induction, deduction and verification and also in the form that theory should take.

### *1.2. Induction, deduction and verification*

There is a tension at the heart of the qualitative research between presentation of data and its interpretation. While the role of interpretation varies with different approaches some interpretation will always be present, even if confined to the selection of events and details relevant and the way a narrative account is presented (Poirer and Ayres, 1997).

No one would claim to enter the field completely free from the influence of past experience and reading. Even if this were possible, ignorance is not synonymous with generating insider understanding (Morse, 1994). Attending to the data cannot ignore prior understandings and it could be claimed that the phenomenologist's concept of bracketing or holding preconceptions, values and beliefs in abeyance is fundamentally flawed. Analysis will always be filtered through one's tradition and cultural position (Ashworth, 1997). Furthermore, symbolic interactionism and thus grounded theory sees researchers as social beings whose experiences, ideas and assumptions can contribute to their understanding of social processes observed (Baker et al., 1992). There are two issues involved here: the extent to which pre-understanding is enhanced by early reference to the literature and ongoing use of self during analysis, i.e. the role of induction, and emergence vs. deduction and speculation.

Cutcliffe (2000) suggested that decisions about the literature depend on two factors. The first decision related to whether the researcher has little knowledge about the phenomena and process of interest and remains unsure about the most suitable approach, or is already aware that there is a lack of knowledge and has decided on a grounded theory methodology. Either possibility could exist if the research topic lies outside one's practice or academic interest, but this is uncommon in nursing; indeed, familiarity is generally a problem (Field, 1991; Lipson, 1991) and on this issue it may be best if further reading is avoided at first. Cutcliffe's (2000) second argument is that prior reading may be required if the researcher wishes to clarify concepts and build an emergent theory on these. The argument goes against one of the most basic tenets of grounded theory, as does the rationale of distinguishing between factor isolating and factor relating theory (Dickoff and James, 1968) on which it is based. Grounded theory both discovers and relates concepts and a theory cannot be simultaneously emergent and built on concepts selected from the literature. The approach has been attempted by Jezewski (1995) who

carried out a literature-based concept analysis of culture brokering before attempting to further develop the concept via grounded theory. Glaser (1978) does explain that, in an 'emergent fit' mode, it is possible to elaborate existing grounded theory by theoretically sampling further divergent groups. However, this approach is very different from that outlined by Jezewski (1995), whose readers are left uncertain which of the four concepts she describes are intended to be the core of her theory.

Glaser and Strauss both acknowledge that the researcher will not enter the field free from ideas, but differ considerably in the role they see for the literature. Discovery is at the heart of both researchers' ideas; one enters the field open to realising new meaning and, via cycles of data gathering and analysis, progressively focuses on a core problem around which other factors will be integrated. For Glaser (1978) prior understandings should be based on the general problem area and reading very wide to alert or sensitise one to a wide range of possibilities; learning not to know is crucial to maintaining sensitivity to data. More focused reading only occurs when emergent theory is sufficiently developed to allow the literature to be used as additional data (Hickey, 1997). Indeed, Glaser (1998) discusses near misses in discovering new theory, this is a process whereby as the theory begins to emerge, literature of close relevance is recognised or read and its powerful impact bends the emerging theory from its true path. For Strauss (1987) both use of self and the literature are early influences and, while diffuse understandings provide sensitivity, both specific understandings from past experience and literature may be used to stimulate theoretical sensitivity and generate hypotheses. Furthermore, he recommends (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) that a research question should take the form of identifying the phenomenon to be studied and what is known about the subject. This could be seen as the start of the audit trail (Koch, 1994), but the further recommendation that the researcher specifies what they want to know about the phenomenon could result in the researcher's interests and preconceptions shaping the research at the expense of problems of concern to informants.

Becker (1993) stresses that while the researcher may enter the field hypothesising they need to remain sensitive to the interpretations and meanings given to the situation by those whose social world is being studied. The constant comparative method centred on data was meant to ensure this with both Glaser and Strauss professing to remain committed to the method but differing in the way in which it is used. Although the constant comparative approach predates grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), Glaser and Strauss' contribution was to emphasise the ongoing reflection and analysis formalised in coding procedures,

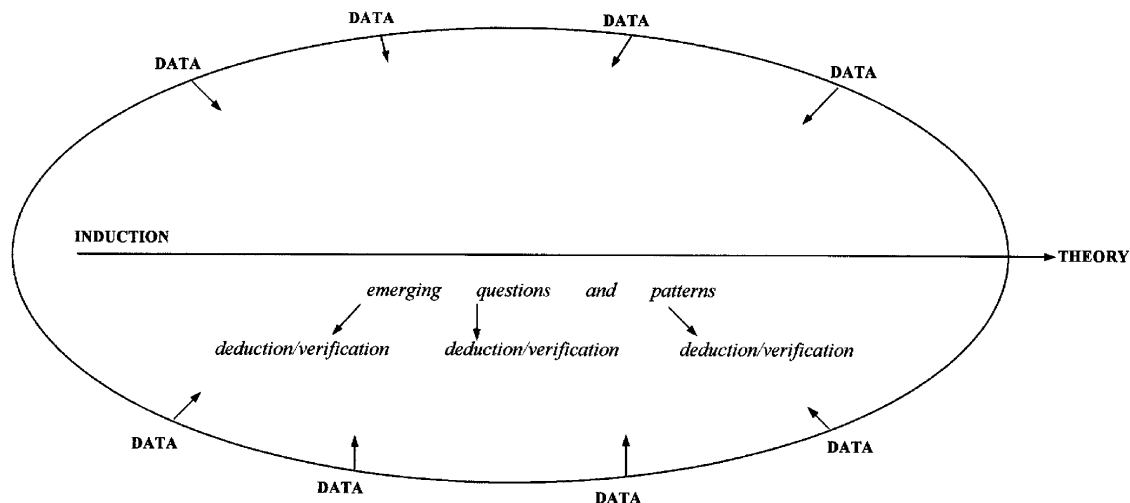


Fig. 1. Glaser (1978, 1992) place of induction, deduction and verification in grounded theory analysis.

generation of categories and writing of theoretical memos. However, ideas generated during reflection and analysis are subject to further comparisons, and this originally required that:

generation of theory through comparative analysis both subsumes and assumes verification and accurate description, but *only* to the extent that the latter are in the services of generation. Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 28)

Glaser (1978, 1992) has remained true to this commitment. Induction is viewed as the key process, with the researcher moving from the data to empirical generalisation and on to theory (Bulmer, 1979). This is illustrated in Fig. 1. As the data are analysed and coded, ideas and potential insights will begin to develop which are recorded in theoretical memos; it is the data that develops theoretical sensitivity. The imagination and creativity are used in memo writing and are essential if a theory which enhances knowledge and understanding is to be achieved; however, the data are allowed to speak for themselves and encompass all other considerations. In this view, all data are important. Selection to fit preconceived or prematurely developed ideas is to be avoided, however creative these may appear. The researcher must be able to tolerate confusion, hard work and the tedium of the constant comparative method and wait for concepts to emerge (Glaser, 1999); deduction and verification are the servants of emergence. Ideas generated must be verified by all data and categories are constantly refitted (Glaser, 1978) to ongoing comparisons of incidents in old and new data, with the researcher who easily and persistently finds verification of ideas alert to the danger of forcing data (Glaser, 1992).

Emergence retains a place in Straussian grounded theory, which also indicates that ideas or hypotheses generated will be dropped if their importance fails to materialise in the data. However, despite stressing the need to remain puzzled and warnings to escape from that which blocks new perspective, deduction and verification dominate analysis in the approach described by (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The relationship portrayed in their text is shown in Fig. 2. Indeed, Strauss and Corbin (1994) claim that in the original development of grounded theory inductive aspects were overplayed.

Glaser (1992) criticises this deductive emphasis, which requires the asking of numerous questions and speculation about what might be rather than what exists in the data. Strauss and Corbin (1990) provide several examples of this deductive reasoning. In a broad introduction to developing categories they describe observation of a lady in red when visiting a restaurant. They provide details of possible open coding to capture her actions and interactions as the scene unfolds, which appear reasonable, even if the category food orchestrator to describe her role could be seen as more catchy than meaningful. However, these techniques are promoted as being at the heart of creating theoretical sensitivity when, in fact, they can take the researcher further away from the data and increasingly reflect prior knowledge (Robrecht, 1995).

To illustrate the skill of asking questions, Strauss and Corbin (1990) take an example of interview data with one woman with arthritis and suggest using experience and the literature to extend analysis and guide the examination of subsequent data. Here, the novice researcher would be in danger of confirming existing knowledge rather than discovering new. Imagination rather than interpretation takes over in the technique of

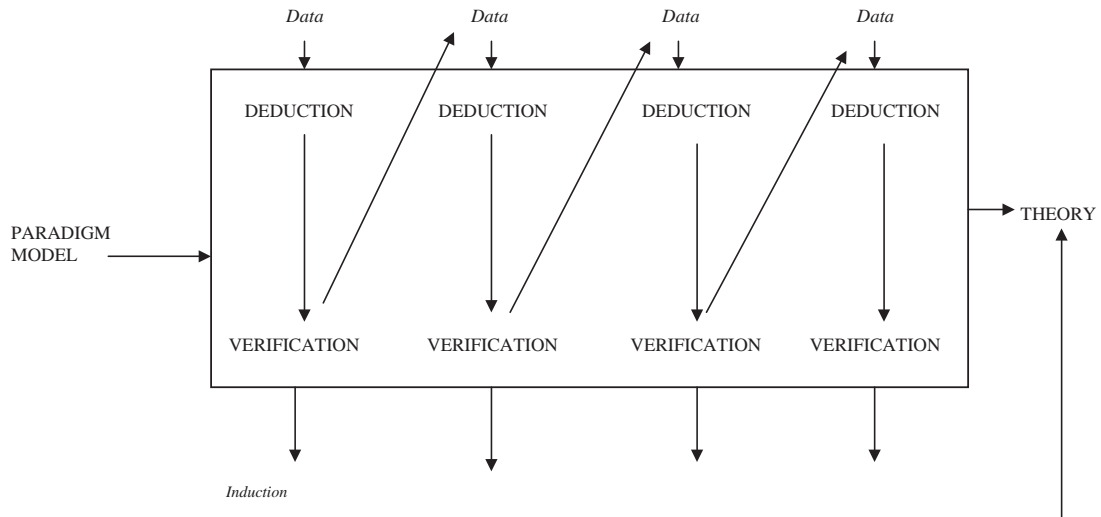


Fig. 2. Strauss (1987), Strauss and Corbin (1990) place of induction, deduction and verification in grounded theory analysis.

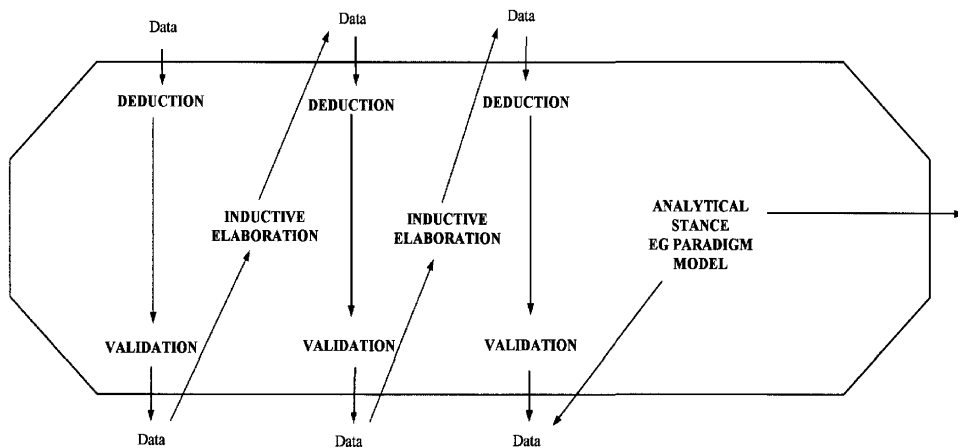


Fig. 3. Strauss and Corbin (1998) induction, deduction and validation in grounded theory analysis.

generating multiple meanings of a single word; the technique of 'far-out' comparisons such as the sports of weight lifting and trout fishing are even more problematic. Theoretically sampling new situations and diverse groups are potentially more beneficial, and challenging comparisons can then be data-driven rather than imagined. Forced questioning may be at the expense of data with novice researchers becoming so captivated by their ideas that there is subsequent sampling and selection of data to fit this creation. Ideas deduced must be verified against data however this is straying from the original approach of constant comparison which only emphasised minimising and maximising within comparisons, and forcing will clearly result if verification involves looking for data rather than at it (Robrecht, 1995).

Induction via ongoing data comparisons is more clearly present in the second edition of Strauss and Corbin's (1998) book. The authors continue to maintain that the role of induction should not be over-stressed. However, rather than emphasising deduction followed by verification, they talk of deduction followed by validation and elaboration from further data comparisons, which *ensure* emergence. The researcher shapes the data by their interpretations, which moves analysis beyond description; but they are also shaped by the data and validation prevents distortion, as shown in Fig. 3.

Thus, a range of positions may be taken to balance deduction and validation, drawing on one's own expertise with induction and generating ideas from the data. The researcher should describe and justify the

Table 1  
Data analysis: Glaser and Strauss compared

	Strauss and Corbin	Glaser
Initial coding	<i>Open coding</i> Use of analytic technique	<i>Substantive coding</i> Data dependent
Intermediate phase	<i>Axial coding</i> Reduction and clustering of categories (paradigm model)	Continuous with previous phase Comparisons, with focus on data, become more abstract, categories refitted, emerging frameworks
Final development	<i>Selective coding</i> Detailed development of categories, selection of core, integration of categories	<i>Theoretical</i> Refitting and refinement of categories which integrate around emerging core
Theory	Detailed and dense process fully described	Parsimony, scope and modifiability

position they have taken and its effects on theory generation and remain alert to the fact that, even when using the classic Glaserian approach, experiences are likely to have an effect for nurses investigating the familiar. Indeed, Glaser (1978) states that everything is data but sees personal knowledge and experience, past and present, as additional rather than central material.

### 1.3. Coding procedures and theory construction vs. theory discovery

Glaser and Strauss (1967) originally described two levels of coding, first into as many categories as possible and then integration of categories. Neither in the original publication nor in later separate contributions from the two researchers are coding stages meant to be distinct and linear in their use. However, for Strauss and Corbin (1990), two levels become three. Strauss and Corbin (1990) describe the first level procedures as open coding whilst Glaser (1978) refers to substantive coding (Table 1). The procedural descriptions are similar, leading some, like Kendall (1999) to suggest they differ only in the emphasis on emergence. However, as has been discussed, this difference is of profound importance for ensuring the theory's relevance as well as elegance. The intense questioning advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1990) extends far beyond the data to generate hundreds of codes and it is possible that it is this proliferation of codes that necessitates considerable reduction and thus the extra level of axial coding.

In their original text emergence remains the key throughout theory development:

it must be emphasised that integration of the theory is best when it emerges, like the concepts. The theory should never just be put together. Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 41)

The use of the paradigm model shown in Fig. 2 demonstrates with axial coding how Strauss and Corbin (1990) have moved away from this initial position. The theory is constructed under the control of a specified framework that now dictates coding to produce a linear model of causes, intervening conditions and consequences that explain the phenomenon, context, actions and interactions. These aspects of the theory may well be relevant but the accompanying threat that unless the model is used the theory will lack clarity and precision, increasingly forces the researcher towards this positivistic linearity.

Kendall (1999) also suggests that Strauss and Corbin's (1990) last coding procedure of selective coding is similar to Glaser's (1978) theoretical coding, but paradoxically also says that they are used differently to generate different types of theory. It is the differences inherent in the terms 'selective' and 'theoretical' coding that are of key importance (Table 1). The construction seen in axial coding continues in selective coding, with coding focusing on one category at a time until the researcher feels ready to *choose* the core and thus focus analysis on integration. Despite an initial emphasis on interpretation, the theory becomes created rather than creative Rules rather than interpretation take hold and the detailed structured explanation may be at the expense of heightened sensitivity and insight.

Glaser (1978) also starts with multiple coding but this is always data relevant, with memos where ideas are explored being separated from coding of what is clearly present; later these memos can become part of the comparison work. Comparison and emergence are stressed again and again, with fit and refit being terms used in relation to category development. Like substantive coding, theoretical codes emerge. Eighteen potentially overlapping and flexible frameworks are given, noting that researchers will find additional ones



that allow the grounded theorist to be both sensitive to and render explicit the subtleties of relationships within the data (Glaser, 1978). The endless possibilities allow the theory to be discovered rather than constructed around a predetermined framework. Rather than demanding details, parsimony, scope and modifiability are stressed (Table 1); theoretical saturation can be achieved without complex details, indeed these can strangle workability. Thus, Glaser (1978) carries forward the original claim that:

Our strategies do not insist that the analyst engage in a degree of explicitness and overdrawn explanation in an effort to coerce the theory's acceptance by drugging the reader's imagination and beating him into intellectual submission. Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 8)

Strauss and Corbin (1998) again modify their position in relation to coding and theory construction. The authors claim a rigidly staged process was never intended and in this latest version, the stages and levels of analysis do appear less contrived. Numerous labels may result from initial coding but the researcher is urged not to let these accumulate. Furthermore, it is suggested that during data analysis the researcher will *realise* certain groupings are possible and that patterns will be discovered. As in Glaser's approach, the sorting of memos keeps the researcher in contact with the data while descriptive concepts are gradually replaced by abstract categories as the analysis progresses. The paradigm model is present but it does not dominate, nor does it dictate the form of the final theory. Rather, the authors state that it is a perspective or analytic stance that may subtly suggest linkages and help achieve plausibility and completeness while maintaining the complexity and dynamic flow of the theory. Because evolving rather than staged analysis is a strong message, it is more apparent that while the core category may be selected, this is only where two perspectives appear equally plausible. Both will have emerged as possible ways to summarise the research in a few words and will have the power to pull together and integrate all categories.

It is difficult to say the extent to which this moves towards classic grounded theory and, in contrast to the balance between induction and deduction, it appears wiser to see this as being two different approaches to theory development. Thus, the researcher should mix the two approaches with caution, aware that they may violate philosophical underpinnings of both; boundaries between the two should be maintained rather than a synthesis attempted.

#### 1.4. Illustrating grounded theory analysis

Being aware that Strauss and Glaser proposed different approaches to grounded theory is not the same

as fully grasping the differences, particularly at the start of a study. In the study used here as an illustration, the area of interest was initially very broad, being concerned with the professional development of nurses through learning in practice. The potentially vast number of competing possibilities in the literature, led to a decision to conduct interviews with a range of qualified nurses. This was intended to increase theoretical sensitivity and find a clearer direction from the field rather than literature. Thus from the outset, at first unconsciously, a path was chosen that was closer to Glaser's approach than that proposed by Strauss. Interviews were conducted with 14 nurses grades D–H who worked in a variety of hospital adult settings; cycles of data gathering and analysis were used to maximise enhancement of sensitivity to critical issues.

Having gathered some initial data, the first question to be confronted was how detailed analysis was appropriate at this stage. Sandelowski (1995) recommends that while gaining this initial sense of the field, before the eventual direction of and focus of the study is discovered, too close a 'line by line analysis' can result in word overload. At the other extreme, notes in transcription margins seemed too superficial. As a compromise, therefore short segments of data, approximately 50–100 words long, were examined. Analysis took the form of identifying one or two key ideas, underlining and listing words that could represent categories or their properties, and generating questions to focus data. While this approach lacked the detailed comparative work to generate theory, it was valuable in this early phase, being detailed enough to avoid the danger of 'concept spotting', while moving the analysis forward from the obvious and concrete to seeking more abstract ideas. Comparison of data segments and codes initiated an ability to write memos, even if most of these early ideas were later subsumed as the theory developed.

This initial data collection and analysis helped to narrow the focus the study from its initially very broad field, to the experiences of newly qualified staff. The next phase of data collection, therefore, had sufficient direction to begin the grounded theory analysis in earnest. Starting with a seemingly large amount of data from just the first two interviews, the detailed guidance provided by Strauss and Corbin (1990), appealed. At this stage, despite intense reading, my understanding of the two approaches was limited; I was apprehensive about the multiple skills required to use this approach but was not sure how to begin analysis without the use of detailed rules of procedure. An example of attempting to use the Strauss approach is shown in Fig. 4, using a comment made by a nurse describing the period in which she had successfully completed her training, but had not received registration documents ('PIN number').

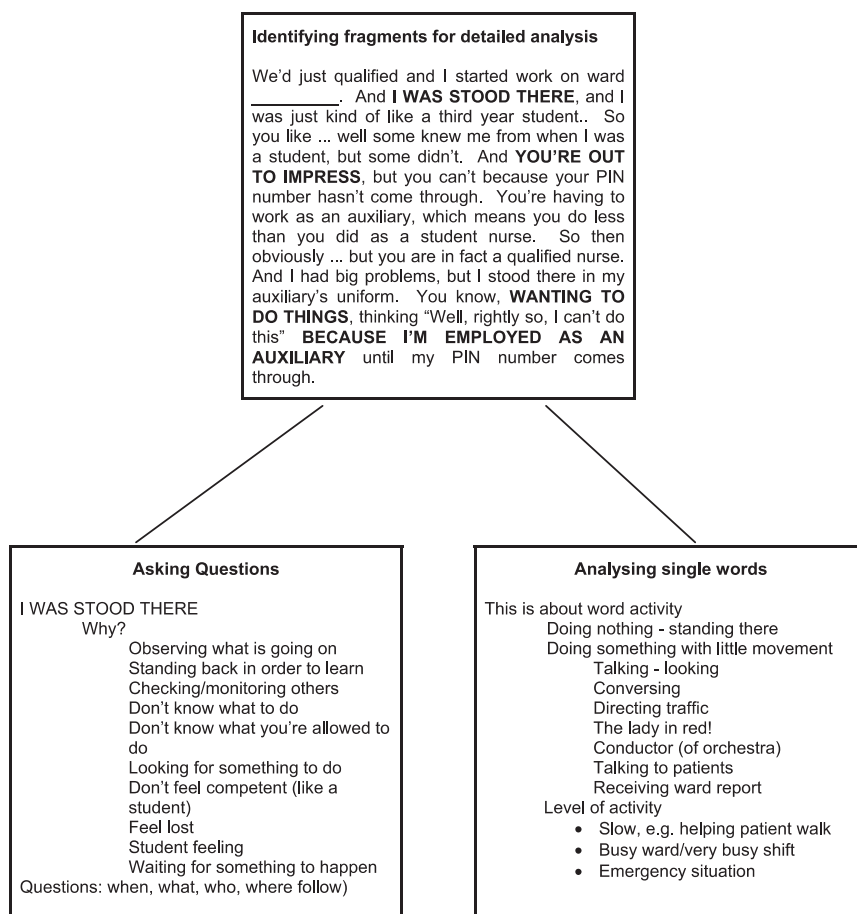


Fig. 4. Analysis using Strauss and Corbin's (1990) techniques.

This detailed comparative work was an example of 'the technical tail beginning to wag the theoretical dog' (Melia, 1996, p. 376) which, rather than opening up analysis moved it down irrelevant paths which effectively closed off the research. Researchers vary in the extent to which a tendency to interpret spontaneously must be developed or contained, so different approaches will suit both the research problem and the researcher themselves. Trying out a method of analysis led to the discovery that the data itself could stimulate many ideas when fragmented into 'data bits' generally consisting of a single phase. Analysis therefore continued in this more spontaneous fashion, with data rather than technique being the focus (Glaserian approach—see Table 1), although sometimes it was recognised that analysis could naturally follow any of the techniques that had previously limited interpretation. For example, using the same data segment as before (Fig. 4), the analysis illustrated in Fig. 5 is both less complex and more profitable.

The codes are multiple and often simplistic, but with the notes and memos (Fig. 6 provides an example of a

memo which tracks natural refitting and subsuming of categories), they capture the meaning of the data. Analysis continued along these more flexible lines, with data, rather than interpretative exercises, generating codes and memos.

Rather than a clear division of substantive and theoretical coding, there were frequent recording cycles with many categories being subsumed by others until a theoretical framework incorporating a limited number of categories emerged (Table 1). The frustrations and difficulties of coding data means that it is tempting, at times, to select an attractive code to be the core concept (Strauss and Corbin—Table 1), but experience soon shows that this does not work. A decision was made to start writing the theory beginning with the period immediately before registration, where the student practices the staff nurse role under supervision and anticipates becoming a registered nurse. This practice period may be considered as the beginning of transition as there is continuous growth with further role experience as a staff nurse. Yet paradoxically, there are co-existing sharp contrasts between student and staff



(a)	<p>We'd just qualified/and I started work on ward ____/ And I was stood there/and I was kind of like a third year student.</p> <p>being qualified being new uncertainty student feeling</p> <p>This is an example of 'novice feeling'. You are new, the ward is new, the role is new. There is a need to become orientated to the ward. (Novice feeling had been explored in previous memos.)</p>
(b)	<p>So you like ... well some knew me when I was a student/but some didn't/And you're out to impress</p> <p>being known belonging proving self</p> <p>(A long memo on belonging was written in relation to these data bits)</p>
(c)	<p>but you can't because your PIN number hasn't come through.</p> <p>Waiting PIN Role ambiguity</p>

Fig. 5. Analysis based on data alone.

- Novice feeling was later subsumed in the discontinuity of growth resulting from registration and changing expectations. The importance of familiarity with the ward that lessens disorientation is currently being subjected to detailed comparative analysis.
- Proving self has become centralised more to *personal* need, it aids or is perceived to aid acceptance into the team. The team is an important supporting aspect of developing as a staff nurse, but acceptance is of greater importance than belonging.
- Role ambiguity during the period between successful completion of training and learning and becoming a registered nurse has only been analysed in isolation. Here it clearly creates uncertainty but whether the effect is temporary or links to the uncertainty and conflict when newly registered is not yet known.

Fig. 6. Retrospective notes on analysis.

nurse; thus disrupted continuity emerged as the core category. In contrast to the earlier attempt to select a core process, this enabled other categories to integrate more naturally (Table 1) and, as Glaser (1998) notes, the more natural emergence led to confidence in the relevance of the theory; a confidence strengthened by the immediate affinity felt by newly qualified nurses when the theory was presented to them.

## 2. Conclusion

Glaser (1998) suggests that researchers should stop talking about grounded theory and get on with doing it, which seems like good advice. The novice researcher should set aside 'doing it right' anxiety, adhere to the principle of constant comparison, theoretical sampling

and emergence and discover which approach helps them best to achieve the balance between interpretation and data that produces a grounded theory. It is worth bearing in mind that qualitative analysis is a cognitive process and that each individual has a different cognitive style. A person's way of thinking, and explanation of analysis, may seem crystal clear to someone with a similar cognitive style and very confusing to another person whose approach is different. It is wise to remember, too, that the aim is not to discover *the* theory, but *a* theory that aids understanding and action in the area under investigation. The discussion presented here is a personal perspective and example to illustrate adoption of the Glaserian approach. It aims to help others grasp the approaches to grounded theory and is only a starting point for others who will develop their own understanding of grounded theory by doing it.

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