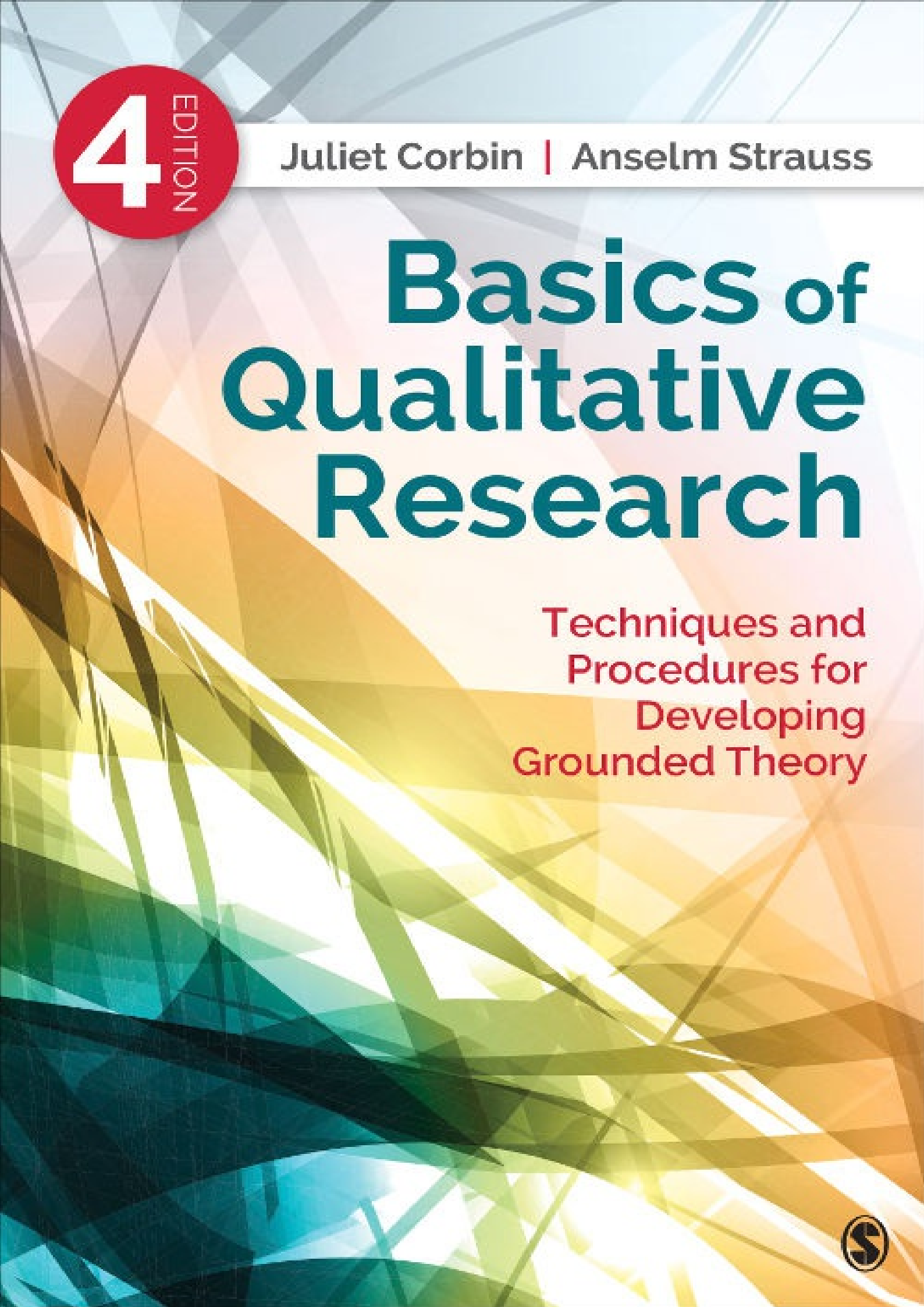
4 EDITION
Juliet Corbin | Anselm Strauss
Basics of Qualitative Research
Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory

Basics of Qualitative Research

Fourth Edition

To Anselm

December 16, 1916–September 1996

Scholar and Humanist

Who touched the minds and lives of all who came into contact with him

Basics of Qualitative Research

Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory

Fourth Edition

Juliet Corbin

International Institute for Qualitative Methodology

Anselm Strauss

SAGE

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Brief Contents

Detailed Contents

About the Authors

Preface

> Also at my intellectual core perhaps is the sense that—however naĬve you thinks this is—the world of social phenomena is bafflingly complex. Complexity has fascinated and puzzled me much of my life. How to unravel some of that complexity, to order it, not to be dismayed or defeated by it? How not to avoid the complexity nor distort interpretation of it by oversimplifying it out of existence? This is of course, an old problem: Abstraction (theory) inevitably simplifies, yet to comprehend deeply, to order, some degree of abstraction is necessary. How to keep a balance between distortion and conceptualization? (Strauss, 1993, p. 12)

Since *Basics of Grounded Theory* was first published in 1990, this book has come a long way. When Anselm Strauss and I wrote the first edition of this book it was meant primarily for our own students. We never thought it would attract much of an audience beyond that group. In preparing to write this fourth edition, I went back and looked at some of those earlier editions and was surprised to see how much the book has grown in depth and breadth.

Never fear, the basics of *Basics* have remained the same for each edition. Over the years chapters have been expanded and contracted, been combined and broken apart, all in an effort to make the book easier to read. This edition also is an attempt to make the book more readily understandable to beginning grounded theorists. All of the chapters have been closely examined by me and re-organized with new headings added to each chapter. Parts of each chapter have been rewritten to increase clarify of major concepts. There are additional examples provided in each chapter to illustrate major analytic points especially in regards to analyzing data for context and integration. Some of the denser chapters from the third edition have been broken apart to make it easier for readers to grasp the material they contained. In Chapters 2, 3, and 4, there are new sections on ethics applying that notion to the major points made in those chapters. A new feature, "Insider Insights" short writings from former students and colleagues have been added to chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 to provide readers with optional viewpoints. The emphasis of the book is on analysis. It is not meant to be all-inclusive and for that reason there are suggested readings at the end of each chapter in Part One and in the chapter on writing and doing presentations to fill in areas where the book might be lacking such as with interviewing.

This book has been divided into three parts with a short introduction to each, Parts 1, 2, and 3. The material provided in Part 1 of this book contains the background, the essential procedures, and outlines the steps necessary to construct a grounded theory. Part 2 demonstrates how to apply that material to actual data so that readers can follow the progress of a study from initial data collection to integration. Part 3 is practical in nature. It offers suggestions for writing papers, monographs, dissertations, and doing presentations along with demonstrations of how to write an outline for each. There is a chapter that discusses how to evaluate the quality of one's own and other's grounded theory and a short new section on application of theory to research, teaching, and practice. The final chapter is one devoted to student questions and answers. I want to make it clear to readers that the three parts of the book are not meant to be read separately. The material in the first part of the book is meant to be used in conjunction with the second part with readers going back and forth between a discussion of procedures and demonstration of application of those procedures. Readers can go to

Part 3 to find answers to questions posed by other students, questions that they too might have.

Part 1 of this book includes Chapters 1 through 11. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to Strauss's approach to grounded theory. Chapter 2, formerly a part of Chapter 1, now stands alone. It presents the philosophical background for this methodology. In Chapter 3, there are practical considerations for getting started on a grounded theory research project with an additional section on the requirements for the IRB committee. Chapter 4 introduces the notion of analysis and discusses some of its properties. Chapter 5 gets to the heart of analysis by presenting some procedures and techniques for doing analysis. The order of the next 2 chapters Chapters 6 and 7 have been arranged differently from those in the third edition on the advice from reviewers of this book. Chapter 6 on memos and diagrams now follows Chapter 5. Chapter 7 on theoretical sampling follows. It discusses theoretical sampling, a specialized form of data gathering particular to grounded theory. Chapters 8 and 9 formerly one chapter are separated now with Chapter 8 explaining the importance of locating major concepts in context and Chapter 9 emphasizing the relevance of bringing process into the analysis when constructing theory. Chapter 10 discusses integration—the final step in theory construction. Part 1 concludes with a new chapter, Chapter 11, a brief chapter on the use of computer data analysis programs in qualitative research.

Throughout Part 2, I'll will be working with different types of data, including interviews, memoirs, and historical materials. Each chapter has been cut back somewhat for this edition. Each chaper focuses on a different aspect of analysis. In Chapter 12, the emphasis is on concept identification or open coding. In Chapter 13, the emphasis is on concept elaboration. In Chapter 14, the focus is on analyzing data for context a form of axial coding. Chapter 15 explains how to bring process into the analysis and Chapter 16 demonstrates integration. Readers of this text will notice that for teaching purposes I break analysis down to its major elements. I acknowledge that analysis is more complex than these breakdowns imply because persons' thought processes are more complex. As analysts are breaking data down, they are also noting relationships. As they are delineating concepts, they are also identifying properties and dimensions. Throughout the analytic process, they are working toward integration. The breakdowns are made so that novices can put a name on what they do and be somewhat systematic and at the same time flexible about their analyses.

A research study is not complete until it is critiqued and made available to others. This final part of the book, Part 3, deals with practical matters related to evaluation and publication. Chapter 17 offers suggestions for preparing dissertations and monographs, writing papers, and doing presentations. Chapter 18 presents criteria that can be used by grounded theorists to evaluate the quality of the their own work, theses and dissertation committees and granting agencies and readers of grounded theory studies to evaluate the quality of the studies.It also includes a new section on applying one's theory to research, teaching, and practice. Chapter 19 responds to questions often posed by students and other researchers regarding grounded theory. We hope that these sections provide a fit conclusion to the book.

Most of all, this book remains a tribute to Anselm Strauss and the legacy he has left behind. It has been an honor and joy to write and his memory remains buried deep in these pages.

Juliet Corbin

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I want to thank my husband Dick for his support and encouragement during the long process of getting this edition completed. I also want to thank Vicki Knight for talking me into writing this edition and then pushing me hard to finish the book. Yvonne McDuffee, Vicki's assistant, has been an immense help in keeping track of all the details and I appreciate all her efforts. Megan Markanich is a wonder for her excellent and rapid work of copy editing. In addition, I am most appreciative of the comments and suggestions provided by the following persons who reviewed the fourth edition manuscript and provided such helpful suggestions and comments. They are:

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Finally, I want to express my gratitude to the colleagues and former students who have contributed to the book through their "Insider Insights." They are a welcome addition to the book.

Part 1: Introduction to the Grounded Theory of Anselm Strauss

These first eleven chapters in Part 1 are purposefully abstract. They are not meant to demonstrate the method but to set the tone and provide the background for doing analysis. I feel it is important that readers of this text know something about the method before they begin doing it. The reason is that so often novice researchers take a very dogmatic, rigid approach to doing analysis. They want structure because they don't understand what they are doing or why. They want a formula that lays it all out for them step-by-step. But qualitative research is not meant to have a lot of structure or rigid approach to analysis. It is an interpretive, very dynamic, free-flowing process, and unless researchers understand the basics of what they are trying to do, they lose these aspects of analysis. Their research becomes superficial and fails to provide the novel insights into human behavior that give qualitative research its dynamic edge.

This text was not meant to be read beginning with the first chapter and moving forward until the end. It is meant to be used flexibly, with movement back and forth between chapters. Users can arrange the chapters in the manner that best works for them. For example, after studying the more abstract chapters on analysis and analytic strategies—Chapters 4 and 5—readers can move to Chapters 12 and 13 for illustrations on open coding (Chapter 12) and coding to develop and link concepts (Chapter 13). After studying the abstract chapter context in Chapter 8, readers can move to Chapter 14 to see how analysis for context is carried out during a research project and so on. I arranged the chapters using a logic that made sense to me. Readers may approach the text using another form of logic, and that is okay.

Chapter 1
Inspiration and Background

> If what is designated by such terms as doubt, belief, idea, conception, is to have any objective meaning, to say nothing of public verifiability, it must be located and described as behavior in which organism and environment act together, or interact. (Dewey, 1938, p. 32)

Table 1.1 Key Terms

Grounded theory: Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed this qualitative methodology—the purpose of which is to construct theory grounded in data. The method presented in this book reflects Strauss's approach to grounded theory analysis.

Methodology: A way of thinking about and studying social phenomena

Methods: Techniques and procedures for gathering and analyzing data

Qualitative research: A form of research in which a researcher(s) or designated coresearcher(s) collects and interprets data, making the researcher as much a part of the research process as participants and the data they provide

Overview

> Like Coleridge and Kublai Khan, I woke up dreaming, but since it isn't a complete dream but only the germ, I thought out the words and here they are.
>
> —Anselm Strauss

In the third edition, the preceding quote and the paragraphs that followed were located toward the end of the chapter. However, after consideration, I couldn't help but feel that in this fourth edition they belonged at the beginning of the chapter as they were placed in the second edition. I couldn't think of a better way to begin this book than with the words of Anselm Strauss! Although he has been dead now for over a decade, he is very much alive in the method that follows.

Persons choose to do research because they have a dream that somehow they will make a difference through the insights and understandings they arrive at through their research. But it is not enough to dream about doing research. Dreams must be brought to fruition by actually following through. This chapter will introduce readers to a methodology that provides a means of achieving research dreams. The methodology is not perfect, and we acknowledge this. However, it is a proven method that has been used successfully for over 40 years by countless students throughout the world—some taught by us, others who were not. Though we wish

we could reach across the world and train everyone who is interested in learning how to do **grounded theory**, we know that this is not possible. Therefore, we have written this book with the hope that we can become "teachers–mentors in absentia." Like all good teachers, our purpose is to stimulate a love for doing research that will remain with our readers throughout their careers and provide readers with a solid foundation in data analysis.

Points to Keep in Mind

When reading this chapter, students are advised to keep the following points in mind:

- Describe qualitative research.
- Introduce grounded theory as a form of qualitative research.
- Present testimonials by our students about grounded theory.
- Explain why theory construction is important.
- Differentiate theory from description.
- Introduce ethics as it relates to grounded theory research.

Qualitative Research

We begin our text by locating grounded theory within the broader context of **qualitative research**. This section will provide the following:

- Description of qualitative research
- Explanation of why researchers choose qualitative over quantitative methods
- Summary of characteristics of qualitative researchers

Description of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a form of research in which the researcher or a designated coresearcher collects and interprets data, making the researcher as much a part of the research process as the participants and the data they provide. Qualitative research utilizes an open and flexible design and in doing so stands at odds with the notion of rigor so important when doing quantitative research. There are many different types of qualitative research each with its own purpose and structure (Creswell, 2013). (For just some of the possibilities, see the list under "Suggested Readings" at the end of this chapter.) The focus of this book is upon one type of qualitative research called *grounded theory.*

Explanation of Why Researchers Choose Qualitative Over Quantitative Methods

Why do some researchers choose to use qualitative rather than quantitative **methods**? Here are some of the most frequently given reasons:

- To explore the inner experiences of participants
- To explore how meanings are formed and transformed
- To explore areas not yet thoroughly researched
- To discover relevant variables that later can be tested through quantitative forms of research
- To take a holistic and comprehensive approach to the study of phenomena

However, we think there are additional reasons why some persons choose to do qualitative research. Committed qualitative researchers tend to frame their research questions in such a way that the only manner in which they can be answered is by doing qualitative research. In addition, qualitative researchers are drawn to the fluid, evolving, and dynamic nature of this approach as opposed to the more structured designs of quantitative methods. In addition, they enjoy serendipity and making discoveries. Statistics might be interesting, but it is the endless possibilities to learn more about the human response that attract them. Qualitative researchers want the opportunity to connect with their research participants and to see the world from their viewpoints. Furthermore, they enjoy playing with words, making order out of seeming disorder, and thinking in terms of complex relationships. For qualitative researchers, doing research is a challenge—one that brings the whole self into the process. This is not to denigrate quantitative researchers. In fact, all researchers share curiosity about the word and a determination to find answers to questions that will improve the social condition or lead to social justice. But there is no doubt that qualitative researchers are of a certain type, and once bitten by the "qualitative bug," they seek out opportunities to continue doing this form of research.

Summary of Characteristics of Qualitative Researchers

Over the years, we've found that qualitative researchers tend to share the following characteristics, and it is these characteristics that attract them to this form of research:

- A humanistic bent
- Curiosity
- Creativity and imagination
- A sense of logic
- The ability to recognize variation as well as regularity
- A willingness to take risks
- The ability to live with ambiguity
- The ability to work through problems in the field
- An acceptance of the self as a research instrument
- Trust in the self and the ability to see value in the work that is produced

Grounded Theory Methodology

Grounded theory is a form of qualitative research developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) for the purpose of constructing theory grounded in data. Though the methodology was developed by two sociologists, its use is not limited to the social sciences. It has applicability to many disciplines for the following reason. It allows for identification of general concepts, the development of theoretical explanations that reach beyond the known, and offers new insights into a variety of experiences and phenomena. This section will present the following:

- Brief history of grounded theory methodology
- Unique features of grounded theory methodology
- Types of data
- Analysis of data

Brief History of Grounded Theory Methodology

After graduating from his doctoral program at the University of Chicago, Strauss held a variety of teaching positions. In the 1950s, he was invited to start a doctoral program in nursing at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). Soon after arriving at UCSF, he applied for and received a grant to study death and dying using fieldwork methods. He enlisted the assistance of a nurse named Jeanne Quint Benoliel to help with the research project. Barney Glaser, a recent doctoral graduate from Columbia University, also joined the team as a coresearcher. Glaser's background was in quantitative research, and his expertise added another dimension to the team. The results of the study on dying were reported in *Awareness of Dying* (Glaser & Strauss, 1965).

During their work together, Glaser and Strauss worked out a methodology that combined their mutual sociological backgrounds with their diverse but complementary approaches to doing research. The methodology they developed became known as grounded theory. It was published in the text *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The publication of *Discovery of Grounded Theory* was groundbreaking. It argued against what Glaser and Strauss called "armchair theorizing" while emphasizing the need to build theory from concepts derived, developed, and integrated based on actual data. Their book also provided a set of flexible procedures for analyzing data.

Though Glaser and Strauss continued their personal relationship throughout Strauss's lifetime, the death and dying study was the only major research project that they carried out together. For some years after the study, Glaser taught grounded theory to doctoral students at UCSF. Eventually he left the university setting. Strauss continued teaching and doing research at UCSF, including teaching the qualitative methodology courses.

It stands to reason that by working with other colleagues and over time that Strauss would develop his own style when doing grounded theory. It's not that he departed from the methodology developed by him and Glaser but that he had his own techniques or ways of thinking about data when doing analysis. More will be

said about this in Chapter 2. The Strauss (1987) approach to analysis was first made evident in the book *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*.

It is not differences between Glaser and Strauss that are important. What is important to remember is that had it not been for that fateful meeting and collaboration between Glaser and Strauss during the death and dying study, there probably would not be a methodology called grounded theory today.

Unique Features of Grounded Theory Methodology

Aside from its emphasis on theory development, what makes grounded theory unique from other forms of qualitative research? The answers to this question are quite simple. First, the concepts out of which the theory is constructed are derived from data collected during the research process and not chosen *prior* to beginning the research. It is this feature that grounds the theory and gives the methodology its name. Second, in grounded theory, research analysis and data collection are interrelated. After initial data are collected, the researcher analyzes that data, and the concepts derived from the analysis form the basis for the subsequent data collection. Data collection and analysis continue in an ongoing cycle throughout the research process.

Types of Data

In grounded theory, data are collected by a variety of means. The most frequently collected types are interviews and observations. However, data collection is not limited to these types. Just about any type of written, observed, or recorded material can be used, including videos, journals, diaries, drawings, internal documents and memos, memoirs, Internet postings, and historical records.

Analysis of Data

Regardless of the type of data used, they are analyzed by means of a process termed *constant comparisons.* In doing constant comparisons, data are broken down into manageable pieces with each piece compared for similarities and differences. Data that are similar in nature (referring to something conceptually similar but not necessarily a repeat of the same action or incident) are grouped together under the same conceptual heading. Through further analysis, concepts are grouped together by the researcher to form categories (sometimes referred to as themes). Each category is developed in terms of its properties and dimensions, and eventually the different categories are integrated around a core category. The core category describes in a few words what the researcher identifies as the major theme of the study. Taken together, the core category and other categories provide the structure of the theory. The properties and dimensions of each category fill in the structure by providing the detail. A more in-depth discussion of the research process is found in the chapters that follow.

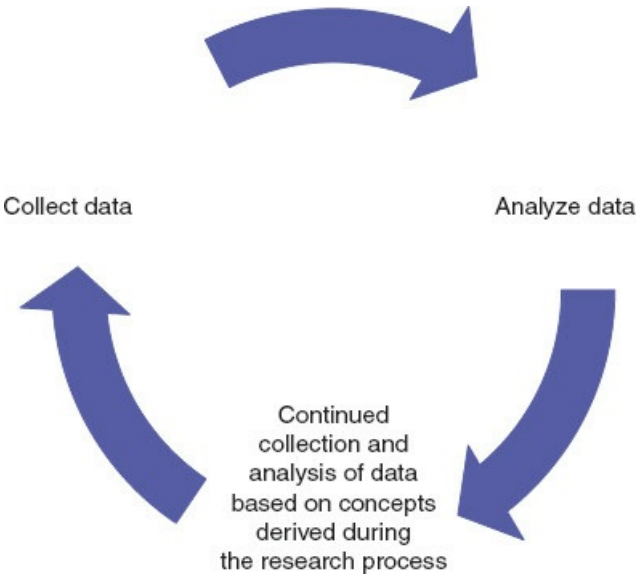

Diagram 1.1 Interrelationship Between Data Collection and Analysis

Testimonials From Our Students Regarding Grounded Theory

Not every researcher wants to develop theory or is attracted to qualitative methods. For many researchers, grounded theory is an unknown entity—something they may have been introduced to in a research class and have wanted to learn more about. Perhaps they've been tempted to try it but need a little more information. A good way to find out more is to read about other students' experiences with using this method. Here is some of what we've noticed about our students and some of what our students have to say about grounded theory:

- They enjoy the mental challenge.
- They are open and flexible.
- They hope that their work has relevance beyond academia.
- There is complete absorption in the work.

They Enjoy the Mental Challenge

Our experience comes from students we have taught or have counseled; therefore, we can't speak for all persons who have used this method. However, from the students we have worked with, we've noticed the following. They tend to choose this method because they enjoy the mental challenge of constructing theory. They are not afraid to draw on their own experiences when analyzing materials, having rejected more traditional ideas of "objectivity" that warned of the dangers of using personal experience. Our former students regard their ideas as provisional, modifiable, and open to negation as new knowledge is accrued. When it comes to doing the analysis, researchers trained by us tend to be flexible—a characteristic enhanced in seminars and occasional team research where they are open to criticism and can enjoy the play of ideas in the give-and-take of group discussion. For example, consider the following statement (the statement has been part of previous editions but is an example of how many qualitative researchers think and work; therefore, we repeat it here):

I'm part of a writing group that has met about once a month for a couple of years. We pass around work in progress and criticize it, sometimes help with analytic rough spots. Recently an old member of the group returned and described to us her unsuccessful attempt to start a similar group in another location. Participants in her group had followed the same procedures we had, in form, but had gotten very harsh with each other's work and focused more on competitive speeches than genuine collaboration. Our group tried to analyze why we'd been successful, and realized that it had a lot to do with the fact that four of us had been through the grounded theory [seminar]. It isn't just that we shared an analytic focus, though, because in fact we're very different. The striking thing was that we had learned to work together in a collaborative and supportive way. (L. Star as cited in Strauss, 1987, pp. 303–304)

They Are Open and Flexible

Two of the most important characteristics we try to develop in our students are to be open to serendipity and flexible in their approach to data collection and analysis. The lack of a structured design in grounded theory research makes it difficult for beginning users of the method to know how to proceed at first—especially those trained in quantitative research where there is a set design. They have to learn to live with a considerable amount of ambiguity regarding the meaning of data. They may not know at the start the direction the research will take. Researchers must be willing to follow the leads in the data, altering the type and place of data collection to allow for concept development. In our seminars, we teach students to be open to the many different possible meanings of data. We advise them about how easy it is to make errors in interpretation and caution them about jumping to conclusions regarding meaning too soon. We ask our students to resist the urge to choose a core category before gathering a sufficient amount of data. We emphasize that constructing a theory is a deliberate and careful process and that researchers have to take the time to do it correctly. In addition, they must be self-reflective about their role in theory construction. Most of all, we teach our students to be skeptical of established theories, however enticing they seem, unless these are eventually grounded through active interplay with data.

They Hope That Their Work Has Relevance Beyond Academia

As with most researchers, our students hope that their work has some relevance for both academic and nonacademic audiences. This is because qualitative researchers take seriously the words and actions of the people studied. Or, as poignantly expressed by one researcher, "I saw that being an intellectual didn't have to be removed from people's lives, that it could be connected directly to where people were in the world and what they thought about it" (Fisher, 1991, p. 8).

There Is Complete Absorption in the Work

Almost inevitably, researchers trained in qualitative analysis become completely "absorbed in the work," which though not always "in the foreground [of our lives] is never gone" (A. Clarke, personal communication, March 21, 1990).

That sense of absorption in and devotion to the research process and the enhanced sense of integrity that comes with it are reflected in the following description written by another student. What the student is describing is the nature of the interaction that took place when she presented her data to the class during one of our research seminars. She was concerned that the class would misread her data because of the cultural differences between them and the participants. What she discovered was that the class was very sensitive to

the need to see the data in light of cultural differences. We quote her at length because her words eloquently emphasize many of our assertions about the characteristics of students trained in grounded theory methods and how they look at data. The presenting student, trained in public health, worked for three or four years on a Sioux Indian reservation and during that time became engrossed with this question: What are these people's basic conceptions of health, for their conceptions are so different than ours? Next is an excerpt of a memo the student wrote to the instructor regarding her perception of the nature of the class interaction.

> *These concerns and fears [that the class would misread her non-Western, cross-cultural data] were systematically and carefully dispelled over the course of the two-hour session. I watched very carefully and listened intently to what people said and how they worked their ideas and images through the data, carefully questioning of me when more information was needed, and not jumping to conclusions in advance of important additions. The students seemed to search carefully for the richness in the data, picking out critical issues and playing them off against one another for more meaning, noting several possible interpretations to many situations. I was quite overjoyed at the degree of fit between what these analysts were identifying and what I had heard and seen while doing the work. Both the integrity and precision aspects of these sessions were spared by and sustained by the pedagogical style, which is to say (for it cannot be separated from) the formulations of Interactionist epistemology and the conceptual and analytic framework of qualitative research. (K. Jurich as cited in Strauss, 1987, p. 304)*

Grounded Theory Is an Important Methodology

With all the different qualitative methods available, why choose grounded theory, which is after all a theory-development method? We think that grounded theory methodology remains important for the following reasons. This section will explain them.

- Grounded theory offers explanations.
- Why choose grounded theory methodology?

Grounded Theory Offers Explanations

People have been trying to make sense out of their experiences since time began. They want to know why certain things happen, and from the earliest written accounts of humans, we've learned that they had many explanations or theories for events. Most of their explanations were derived from superstition and at best were unsubstantiated guesses. Through the years, scientific knowledge has freed us from reliance on superstition; however, humans still seek explanations for why things happen. And to this day we look to theory for answers. The knowledge gained through grounded theory methodology enables persons to explain and take action to alter, contain, and change situations. Furthermore, grounded theories can be revised and updated as new knowledge is acquired.

Why Choose Grounded Theory Methodology?

Why should a researcher choose grounded theory method over other forms of descriptive or theory-building qualitative research? Grounded theory methodology has been around for a long time and provides a tried-and-true set of procedures for constructing theory from data. The procedures enable researchers to examine topics and related behaviors from many different angles—thus developing comprehensive explanations. The procedures can be used to gain new insights into old problems as well as to study new and emerging areas in need of investigation. The procedures can be used to uncover the beliefs and meanings that underlie action, to

examine rational as well as nonrational aspects of behavior, and to demonstrate how logic and emotion combine to influence how persons respond to events or handle problems through action and interaction. A theory developed using the procedures outlined in this book provides a strong foundation for further studies using quantitative measures. These procedures have proven to be culturally sensitive and applicable to individuals as well as to larger organizations and societies. Furthermore, grounded theory methods can be used to develop substantive theories as well as more general theories. Though methodologies aimed at theory construction and this methodology, in particular, have their critics, there is no denying that the procedures of grounded theory work. One only has to look to the body of knowledge that it has produced over the years. (See Suggested Readings at the end of this chapter.)

Difference Between Description and Theory

Students often have difficulty differentiating between description and theory. They may use a methodology like grounded theory and think that they have developed theory when in fact they have not. In Chapter 4, we explain the differences in greater depth. However, in this section, we introduce the idea that there is a difference between the following:

- Description
- Theory

Description

Said simply, description tells about an event or happening while theory offers explanations for why events or happenings occur. Good examples of description are some novels and straightforward journalism. Description provides detailed background information, tells about an event(s), and relates how persons experience that event. Descriptive qualitative research is insightful and relevant and also has its place in knowledge development. Sometimes the difference between descriptive qualitative research and theory is confusing because both description and theory are based on concepts and both use interpretive methods of analysis to arrive at those concepts. Both use the words of participants to bring abstract ideas to a human level of understanding. But while rich and thick description provides concepts and tells an interesting story, it is not theory.

Theory

What makes theory different from descriptive qualitative research is the overarching structure—the skeleton or framework that explains why things happen. At the top of the structure stands a term that describes in a few works what the theory is all about. For example, my (Corbin, 1987) study of pregnant women with chronic conditions used the term *protective governing* to explain how women working with the health care team took action to minimize the risks associated with a complicated pregnancy and maximize the chances of delivering a healthy baby. What made it theory was the fact that the study not only talked about women's fears and what they did at different stages of the pregnancy (description) but also explained how women came to identify the various levels of risks they perceived themselves to be in at any time during the pregnancy.

Then based on those assigned levels of risks—and after consideration of the various options open to them—they came up with strategies and tactics to minimize those risks in order to have some measure of control over the pregnancy outcome. The study explained how it was that women under varying conditions of risks played an essential role in securing a positive outcome.

Description plays a part in theory development by filling in the details once the theoretical structure is given form. For example, in my theory of protective governing, there was a description of the types of information women gathered in arriving at their definitions of the level of risks. There were also descriptions of the various factors women were balancing when making decisions about what to do. There were descriptions of the many different strategies women employed to manage the pregnancy, their chronic condition, and their fears. Also there were descriptions of the different types of relationships women had with their partners and the health care team at various points in the pregnancy.

Theory begins essentially in the same way as description: with concepts. It evolves just as does description with the development of major concepts (we call these *categories* or *themes*) in terms of their properties and dimensions. However, here is where theory differs. In addition to well-developed categories (themes), there has to be linkages made between the categories to each other and to an even more abstract concept that stands above the rest that we call the "core category." The core category captures in a few words the major theme or the essence of the study and enables all the other categories and concepts to be integrated around it to form the theoretical explanation of why and how something happens. It may not be the only explanation that can be derived from data, but it does offer a logical and plausible one. If grounded theory methods are used in the manner in which they were designed and if researchers follow through by carrying out that last step of integration, the chances are that they will develop theory.

Ethics

In a research approach that blurs the line between researcher and participant, ethics becomes a central issue. From our standpoint, we see three major areas that call for ethical consideration. These are ethics as applied to the following:

- Participants
- Research
- Researcher

Participants

Since the researcher and participants often meet face-to-face, researchers must take measures to obtain consent, maintain confidentiality, and develop an atmosphere of mutual trust. Furthermore, participants are volunteers. Their belief systems and values may differ significantly from those of the researcher. Nevertheless, participants should be treated with dignity and their time respected. Keep in mind that researchers are there to gather information and not to make judgments.

Research

When it comes to the research, the researcher has several ethical responsibilities. First, there has to be integrity of method. Naturally, there is some flexibility when using a method. There are times when it is necessary to alter procedures to meet the demands of the research situation. However, researchers can't pick and choose which parts of a methodology to use based on what parts suit them or are convenient and then leave the remainder. The different parts of a methodology are meant to work together and must be taken as a whole in order to produce the best results.

Second, though it is acknowledged that there are always time and financial constraints when engaging in a research project, the researcher owes it to participants and to the research process to make a commitment and follow through on a study. This means it is not okay to take shortcuts or be sloppy when gathering data and doing analysis.

Third, there is the responsibility to participants and the profession to publish the results. Participants give freely of their time with the understanding that the information they provide, though not likely to help them, may possibly help others. Failure to publish indicates that the implied bargain made between researchers and participants that the information they provide will benefit others has not been kept. Also, researchers have the responsibility to contribute to the knowledge base of his or her profession. A profession can't exist or grow without a base of knowledge. It is the continuous generation of new knowledge that keeps a profession relevant over time.

Researcher

Not all professionals want to be researchers. Some want to be excellent teachers or practitioners. Often the work environment is such that persons feel compelled to do research and publish in order to obtain a promotion or gain professional respect and recognition. Ethically, research should never be undertaken lightly. Persons should not do research because they have to but because they want to. It may be that during the course of persons' professional lives that questions arise and can only be answered by doing research.

Once a research project is undertaken, the researcher has an ethical responsibility to self, to participants, and to the profession to produce the highest quality work that he or she is capable of. Doing research is an opportunity for growth. Doing research broadens understanding and gives insight into people and situations that would never occur otherwise. At the same time, doing intensive interviews or observations can be draining especially in emotionally charged situations. A researcher can't help but be emotionally touched by the stories told by participants. It is important from an ethical standpoint that when a researcher begins to feel overwhelmed or that he or she is becoming too emotionally involved, he or she puts aside the research for a short time to care for the self. A researcher can't do justice to the participants or the research if he or she is physically and emotionally drained or loses the ability to think critically. Keeping a diary of the research process can help a researcher take a critical look at self and also serve as a release of some of the stress of doing research.

Summary of Key Points

There are many reasons for choosing to do qualitative research but perhaps the most important is the desire to step beyond the known and enter into the world of participants, to see the world from their perspective, and in doing so to make discoveries that will contribute to the development of empirical knowledge. A qualitative researcher should be curious, creative, and not afraid to trust his or her instincts. Though there are different styles and approaches to doing qualitative research, the focus of this book is upon grounded theory and in particular Strauss's approach to doing grounded theory.

Grounded theory is a qualitative methodology that aims at constructing a theory from data. Though there are similarities between description and theory, theory differs from description in that its categories and concepts are integrated around a core category to form a structure that offers a theoretical explanation about the why and how something happens. What makes grounded theory unique among other qualitative methods is its approach to data collection and analysis. The researcher does not begin the research with a pre-identified list of concepts. Concepts are derived from data during analysis. Analysis begins with collection of those very first pieces of data. Concepts derived from initial analysis guide collection of subsequent data. Each data collection is followed by analysis. This process of data collection followed by analysis continues until the researcher constructs a well-integrated and dense theory.

In qualitative research, the lines between researcher and participant are often blurred during the data collection and analysis. This close contact creates ethical challenges in regards to the participants, to the research, and for the researcher.

Activities for Thinking, Writing, and Discussing as a Group

1. Sit down and write a paragraph or two about what attracts you to doing qualitative research. Explain how you think your personal characteristics will enhance your ability to do good qualitative research.
2. In a group, discuss the qualities of a good qualitative researcher and how these qualities might be fostered through proper mentorship and the teaching–learning situation.
3. Peruse the journals in your field, and pick out one or two research papers that claim to be based on grounded theory methodology. Focus on the methodological process. How did the researcher(s) explain the process? In your judgment, did the researcher(s) actually develop theory, or did their findings remain at the level of description? Explain.
4. Discuss in class what you think are the ethical challenges of qualitative researchers. If you were keeping a diary of your research experience, what kinds of things would you put into it?

Reading Options and Alternative Perspectives on Qualitative Research

Introduction to Qualitative Methods

Barbour, R. (2014). *Introducing qualitative research: A student's guide* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Flick, U. (2014). *An introduction to qualitative research* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mayan, M. J. (2009). *Essentials of qualitative inquiry.* Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Mills, J., & Birk, M. (2014). *Qualitative methodology: A practical guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Richards, L., & Morse, J. M. (2013). *Readme first for a user's guide to qualitative research methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rossman, C. B. (2012). *Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Somekh, B., & Lewin, C. (Eds.) (2011). *Theory and methods in social research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Newer and Different Qualitative Methods

Gubrium A., & Harper, K. (2013). *Participatory visual and digital methods*. Walnut Creek, CA: West Coast Press.

Leavy, P. (2013). *Fiction as research practice.* Walnut Creek, CA: West Coast Press.

Norris, J., Sawyer, R. D., & Lund, D. (Eds.). (2012). *Duoethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: West Coast Press.

Pelto, P. J. (2013). *Applied ethnography: Guidelines for field research*. Walnut Creek, CA: West Coast Press.

Ethics

Long, T., & Johnson, M. (2007). *Research ethics in the real world*. Edinburgh, UK: Elsevier.

Van Den Hoonaard, W. C., & Van Den Hoonaard, D. K. (2013). *Essentials of thinking ethically in qualitative research.* Walnut Creek, CA: West Coast Press.

Examples of the Use of Grounded Theory to Study Different Cultures

Escado´n, S. (2006). Mexican American intergenerational caregiving model. *Western Journal of Nursing Research, 28*(5), 364–585.

Huang, X.-Y., Lin, M.-J., Yang, T.-Y., & Sun, F.-K. (2009). Hospital-based home care for people with severe mental illness in Taiwan: A substantive grounded theory. *Journal of Clinical Nursing, 18*, 2956–2968.

Legault, A., & Ducharme, F. (2009). Advocating for a parent with dementia in a long-term facility. *Journal of Family Nursing, 15*(2), 198–219.

Saiki-Craighill, S. (2001). The grieving process of Japanese mothers who have lost a child to cancer, part II: Establishing a new relationship from memories. *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing, 18*(6), 268–275.

Schoot, T., Proot, I., Meulen, R. T., & De Witte, L. (2005). Actual interaction and client centeredness in home care. *Clinical Nursing Research, 14*(4), 370–393.

Research Articles That Are Good Examples of Theory

Pryor, J., Walker, A., & Worrall-Carter, L. (2009). Opting in and opting out: A grounded theory of nursing's contribution to inpatient rehabilitation. *Clinical Rehabilitation, 23,* 1124–1135.

Schoot, T., Proot, I., Meulen, R. T., & De Witte, L. (2005). Actual interaction and client centeredness in home care. *Clinical Nursing Research, 14*(4), 370–393.

Vandall-Walker, V., & Clark, A. M. (2011). It starts with access! A grounded theory of family members working to get through critical illness. *Journal of Family Nursing, 17*(2), 148–181.

Chapter 2
Theoretical Foundations

> It is out of interest in the act itself and the relationship of thought to the act itself that the last phase of more recent philosophy dealt with above, that is, pragmatism, arises. Out of the type of psychology which you may call "behavioristic" came a large part of the stimulus for a pragmatic philosophy. There are several sources, of course; but that is one of the principal ones. (Mead, 1938/1956, p. 404)

Table 2.1 Key Terms

Assumptions: Working axioms that lie behind methodology

Interactionism: "Interactionists study how we use and interpret symbols not only to communicate with each other, but also to create and maintain impressions of ourselves, to create a sense of self, and to create and sustain what we experience as the reality of a particular social situation." (http://sociology.about.com/od/I_Index/g/Interactionist-Perspective.htm)

Methodology: A way of thinking about and studying social phenomena

Methods: Techniques and procedures for gathering and analyzing data

Pragmatism: "An American movement in philosophy founded by C. S. Peirce and William James and marked by the doctrines that the meaning of conceptions is to be sought in their practical bearings, that the function of thought is to guide action, and that truth is preeminently to be tested by the practical consequences of belief." (http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pragmatism)

Worldview: Beliefs and attitudes about the world

While there are several different approaches to grounded theory methodology (Morse et al., 2009), the **methodology** presented in this book reflects Strauss's approach to doing grounded theory. This methodology's epistemology has come to it in a two-step evolution involving both the tradition of Chicago **interactionism** and the philosophy of **pragmatism** inherited largely from John Dewey and George Herbert Mead (Fisher & Strauss, 1978, 1979a, 1979b; Strauss, 1991). To understand Strauss's approach, it is necessary to know something about the philosophies that underlie his approach. It is not necessary to share Strauss's **worldview** or **assumptions** to use this methodology. However, for those persons who want to know why his methodology has taken the form that it has, we present the following chapter.

Points to Keep in Mind

When reading this chapter, students are advised to keep the following points in mind:

- Pragmatism and philosophy of knowledge
- Worldview: A combination of Dewey and Mead
- Ontology: Assumptions about the world
- Impact of recent trends on this methodology

Pragmatism and Philosophy of Knowledge

For those readers who might not be familiar with interactionism or pragmatism, we present a brief review of some of the major points of the philosophy in relation to knowledge. These points are relevant to understanding Strauss's approach to grounded theory. The points can be broken down into the topics that follow:

- The creation of knowledge
- The relationship between problematic situations and reflective inquiry
- Temporal aspects of thinking and process
- The relationship between knowing and culture
- Experience as integral to inquiry
- The cumulative nature of knowledge
- The usefulness of knowledge as a basis for action

The Creation of Knowledge

The influential pragmatist writings were published mainly in the first three decades of the twentieth century by Dewey (1917, 1922, 1929, 1938) and Mead (1932/1959, 1934/1962, 1936/1972, 1938/1956). The writings present an innovative philosophy of knowledge, easily recognizable as the framework for Strauss's methodology. Both Dewey and Mead assumed, for instance, that knowledge is created through action and interaction. Dewey (1929) stated, "Ideas are not statements of what is or has been but of acts to be performed" (p. 138). Or, more properly speaking, knowledge arises through (note the verbs) acting and interacting of self-reflective beings.

The Relationship Between Problematic Situations and Reflective Inquiry

Typically activity is precipitated by a problematic situation where one can't just act automatically or habitually. According to Dewey (1929), "All reflective inquiry starts from a problematic situation, and no such situation can be settled in its own terms" (p. 189). Mead (1938/1972) stated, "Reflective thinking arises in testing the means which are presented for carrying out some hypothetical way of continuing an action which has been checked" (p. 79). The issue before the actor is the resolution of a problem. Its answer is uncertain, and judgment of it can be made only in terms of further action (consequences) directed by the provisional answer.

According to Dewey (1929), "The test of ideas, of thinking generally, is found in the consequences of the acts to which the ideas lead, that is in the new arrangement of things which are brought into existence" (p. 136).

Temporal Aspects of Thinking and Process

The activity of thinking, even at its quickest and most spontaneous, has temporal aspects. The envisioned end of action affects whatever action is actually taken—and often it is altered in midstream as the actor reassesses its effectiveness. Past memories and recollections also enter directly or indirectly into action. Dewey (1929) stated that "reflective thought, thinking that involves inference and judgment, is not originative it has its test in antecedent reality as that is disclosed in some non-reflective immediate knowledge" (p. 109). Because of this temporality of action—in a world of contingencies—the pragmatists were also concerned with processes. Again, as noted by Dewey (1929), "Because we live in a world in process, the future, although continuous with the past is not its bare repetition" (p. 40).

The Relationship Between Knowing and Culture

The pragmatists did not subscribe to a then-popular duality of person and group (or collectivity). So, even if it is a single person rather than a team or an organization that discovers or creates some new understanding, he or she is able to do this only because of having been socialized into the cultural perspectives and beliefs of the times. "Neither inquiry nor the most abstractly formal set of symbols can escape from the cultural matrix in which they live, move and have their being" (Dewey, 1938, p. 20). So the pragmatists believed in the accumulation of collective knowledge. (Though this point may seem obvious to us today, there are still philosophers of knowledge who give unquestioned primacy to the individual knower.)

In this assumption, the pragmatists were looking closely at natural science (mainly biology) as a model. Pragmatists believed that new knowledge was provisional until checked out empirically by peers (society). A summarizing paragraph from "Scientific Method and the Individual Thinker" ends in this way:

> *In both of these processes, that of determining the structure of experience which will test by experiment [that is, controlled inquiry] the legitimacy of any new hypothesis, and that of formulating the problem and the hypothesis for its solution, the individual functions in his full particularity, and yet in organic relationship with the society that is responsible for him. (Mead, 1917, p. 227)*

Experience as Integral to Inquiry

The experiences of whoever is engaged in an inquiry are vital to the inquiry and its implicated thought processes. Dewey (1929) stated the following:

> *Insofar, we have the earnest of a possibility of human experience, in all its phases, in which ideas and meanings will be prized and will be continuously generated and used. But they will be integral with the course of the experience itself, not imported from the external source of a reality beyond. (p. 138)*

The Cumulative Nature of Knowledge

There is still the question of what is called *validity,* or what philosophers call *truth,* and the pragmatists were centrally interested in that passionately contested question. The answer for them lay in the consequences. "A

definition of the nature of ideas in terms of operations to be performed and the test of the validity of the idea by the consequences of these operations establishes connectivity within concrete experience" (Dewey, 1929, p. 114). They are careful to emphasize that acts of knowing embody perspectives. Thus, what is discovered about "reality" cannot be divorced from the operative perspective of the knower, which enters silently into his or her search for—and ultimate conclusions about—some event. This pragmatist position does not at all lead to radical relativism (as currently in one version of postmodernism). Radical relativism reasons that since no version or interpretation can be proven, no certainty about any given one can be assumed. Instead, the pragmatists, like practicing scientists in their day or ours, must make a couple of key assumptions. One is that truth is equivalent to what we know—but eventually it may be judged partly or even wholly wrong. Another assumption is that despite that qualification, the accumulation of knowledge is no mirage. The world is not flat, nor is the Milky Way the center of the universe; neither can be disregarded the discovery of electricity, with all its theoretical and practical implications. Some persons may not believe in evolution or in a spherical earth, but generally those matters are part of accumulated belief. Perhaps knowledge about societies and human activity is less cumulative, but the pragmatists and undoubtedly most social scientists believe some social knowledge certainly is cumulative and provides the basis for the evolution of thought and society.

The Usefulness of Knowledge as a Basis for Action

One last pragmatist position vis-à-vis the philosophy of knowledge is that knowledge is useful for practice or practical affairs. The pragmatists saw no necessity for assuming a yawning gap—another false dualism—between knowledge and everyday action. Dewey (1929) said the following:

> *Our discussion has for the most part turned upon an analysis of knowledge. The theme, however, is the relation of knowledge and action; the final import of the conclusions as to knowledge resides in the changed idea it enforces into action. (p. 245)*

Indeed, they (knowledge and action) both feed into each other. Knowledge leads to useful action, and action sets problems to be thought about, resolved, and then converted into new knowledge. In a continuously changing world, generating one contingency after another, this interplay of practice and inquiry is also continual. (This is the philosophical equivalent to enunciating the scientist's interplay between data and theory.) This is why the pragmatists drew no hard and fast line between everyday ("commonsense") thinking and the more systematically controlled scientific types. They didn't address—but would certainly have applauded—views of organizational action, for instance, much of which is hardly haphazard but carefully planned and evaluated.

Beyond the Practical

The pragmatists were not just interested in practice or the practical. They addressed matters like those of aesthetics and ethics, of language and meaning, and other notions equally abstract. Mead (1938/1972) stated, "Pragmatism holds no brief against aesthetic experience. It is an activity to be acknowledged like all other human activities, and like these faces its own problems, those of appreciation, and solves them by reflection" (p. 98).

Summary

Though Strauss was deeply impressed by pragmatism and interactionism during his educational years, the formulation of these philosophies into a worldview did not come until much later in his career. In fact, his worldview, though visible over the years in his teaching, and approach to methodology was not fully articulated until the publication of the book *Continual Permutations of Action* (Strauss, 1993), which occurred shortly before his death.

The point that I want to make here is that when Glaser and Strauss (1967) wrote *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, they were not thinking in terms of formulating a methodology based on a theoretical foundation, such as pragmatism or interactionism. However, these philosophies were deeply rooted in Strauss, and over time, they manifested themselves in how he thought about the world and his approach to doing analysis. In his researching, teaching, and writing, Strauss wasn't trying to develop a new method or a separate branch of the original grounded theory. In his studies, he used the basic procedures set forth in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), including comparative analysis, asking questions, theoretical sampling, and saturation while identifying, elaborating, and integrating concepts.

Worldview: A Combination of Dewey and Mead

Over the years, the philosophies of pragmatism and interactionism merged with Strauss's experiences in teaching, talking with colleagues, and doing research, leading to a worldview that found its way into his teaching and approach to doing research. This section will present that worldview.

What was the nature of Strauss's worldview? Here is a quotation that summarizes it in a few words:

> *We are confronting a universe marked by tremendous fluidity; it won't and can't stand still. It is a universe where fragmentation, splintering, and disappearance are the mirror images of appearance, emergence, and coalescence. This is a universe where nothing is strictly determined. Its phenomena should be partly determinable via naturalistic analysis, including the phenomenon of men [and women] participating in the construction of the structures which shape their lives. (Strauss, 1993, p. 19)*

What kind of theory might fit the nature of the worldview assumed in the previously given quotation? It would have to be a theory that captures the complexity and ambiguity inherent in events and behavior; that shows change as well as permanence in situations; that explains that while action and interaction may be routine today, they might just as well be problematic tomorrow; and a theory that while answering questions leaves open the possibility today's answers may ultimately become the questions of tomorrow.

Ontology: Assumptions About the World

Probably most researchers who use this methodology (and certainly those who use only its procedures) have not reflected upon the assumptions that underlie it. Though method evolves with time and practice, there is another source of influence. Researchers bring their many aspects of self and experiences to the research process. These, sometimes even unconsciously, enter into how data is interpreted.

Where we are leading is to a set of assumptions that lie behind Strauss's approach to analysis and the

research strategies explicated in this book in order to acknowledge how they influenced his approach to analysis. For instance, the assumptions about the inevitability of contingencies, the significance of process, and the complexity of phenomena direct us to locate action in context, to look at action and interaction over time (process), and to examine action and interaction in routine as well as problematic situations in order to obtain a better understanding of how these relate.

Assumptions That Lie Behind the Way Strauss Interpreted Data

Most of the following assumptions were derived from pragmatist and interactionist philosophies. As readers become more familiar with this book, they should easily grasp the relevance of the assumptions to this version of the methodology. We reproduce some of the assumptions here. For a more in-depth discussion of the assumptions, see Strauss (1993).

One thing I want to point out is that while grounded theory is often criticized for not taking emotions into account, this is not necessarily true. Notice Assumption 10. Emotion is there. It just is not seen as separate from action.

Assumption 1. The external world is a symbolic representation, a "symbolic universe." Both this and the interior worlds are created and recreated through interaction. In effect, there is no divide between the external or interior world (Blumer, 1969).

Assumption 2. During early childhood and continuing all through life, humans develop selves that enter into virtually all their actions and interaction and in a variety of ways (Mead, 1959).

Assumption 3. Meanings (symbols) are aspects of interaction and are related to others within systems of meanings (symbols). Interactions generate new meanings as well as alter and maintain old ones (Mead, 1934/1962).

Assumption 4. Actions are embedded in interactions—past, present, and imagined future. Thus, actions also carry meanings and are locatable within systems of meanings. Actions may generate further meanings, with regard to both further actions and the interactions in which they are embedded (Mead, 1934/1962).

Assumption 5. Contingencies are likely to arise during a course of action. These can bring about change in its duration, pace, and even intent, which may alter the interpretations as the interaction proceeds (Mead, 1959).

Assumption 6. Actions are accompanied by temporality, for they constitute courses of action of varying duration. Various actors' interpretations of the temporal aspects of an action may differ according to the actors' perspectives; these interpretations may also change as the interaction proceeds (Mead, 1959).

Assumption 7. Courses of interaction arise out of shared perspectives, and when not shared, if action–interaction is to proceed, perspectives must be negotiated and brought into alignment (Blumer, 1969).

Assumption 8. Actions (overt and covert) may be preceded, accompanied, and/or succeeded by reflexive interactions (feeding back onto each other). These actions may be one's own or those of other actors. Especially important is that in many actions, consideration of the future is included in the actions (Dewey,

1929). The reflective reviews and evaluations made along the action–interactional course may affect a partial or even complete recasting of it (Dewey, 1929).

Assumption 9. Actions are not necessarily rational. Many are irrational. Yet rational actions can be mistakenly perceived as not so by other actors (Dewey, 1929).

Assumption 10. Action has emotional aspects. To conceive of emotion as distinguishable from action is to reify those aspects of action. For us, there is no dualism. One can't separate emotion from action; they flow together one leading into the other (Dewey, 1929).

Assumption 11. Means–ends analytic schemes are usually not adequate for understanding action and interaction. These commonsense and unexamined social science schemes are much too simple for interpreting human conduct (Strauss, 1993).

Assumption 12. A major set of conditions affecting actors' perspectives, and thus their interactions, is their memberships in social worlds and subworlds. In contemporary societies, these memberships are often complex and are overlapping, contrasting, and conflicting. They are not always apparent to other actors (Strauss, 1993).

Assumption 13. A useful fundamental distinction between classes of actions and interactions is between the routine and the problematic. Problematic actions and interactions involve *thought,* and when more than one interactant is involved, the interaction may take the form of *discussion.* An important aspect of problematic action is the potential for *debate*—disagreement over issues or their resolution. That is, an *arena* is formed. The arena can affect the future course of action (Dewey, 1929; Strauss, 1993).

Impact of Recent Trends on This Methodology

This methodology does not dismiss contemporary thought but embraces it. However, in order to present Strauss methodology, neither can one dismiss the methodology as he practiced it. Though pragmatism and interactionism and the assumptions that flowed from them laid the foundation for this methodology, there is no doubt that contemporary thought also has had some influence. This section will briefly review some of the more contemporary philosophical trends and ideas that have influenced my thinking about methodology and how I present Strauss's methodology in this book. This section will discuss the following topics:

- Influences
- The gap between writing about and doing analysis
- Nature of "reality"
- Theories are constructions
- Concepts are the foundation for knowledge
- Practical application of knowledge
- The need for self-reflection

Influences

With the publication of the *SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), qualitative researchers were made acutely aware of the evolution taking place in qualitative research. Over time, some researchers have simply walked away from the more traditional approaches to doing qualitative research. Others, like me, have tried to hold on to what is good about the past while at the same time seeing the necessity to update a method or perhaps present it in a more updated way to bring it more in line with contemporary thought. Like most persons, I have chosen parts of both past and present and rejected others from a smorgasbord of ideas, based upon who and what I am.

There is no doubt that I have been influenced to some degree by the writings of contemporary feminists, constructionists, and postmodernists. I especially admire the works of both Clarke (2005) and Charmaz (2006) and how they have applied postmodernist and postconstructivist paradigms to grounded theory methodology, thus taking up the challenge of Denzin (1994, p. 512) to move interpretative **methods** more deeply into the regions of postmodern sensibility. In this section, I want to explain how my approach to analysis has been affected by recent directions in qualitative research, while still retaining most of Strauss's basic approach to doing analysis. I think what readers will notice is that there is not that much difference between some of the ideas presented in the assumptions based on pragmatism and interactionism and those that can be found in contemporary thought about how theory (a form of knowledge) is constructed through interaction.

The Gap Between Writing About and Doing Analysis

Readers of this text should remember that this is a basic book about analysis. It's an attempt to take an extremely complicated process and make it understandable to beginning qualitative researchers. I know full well that something occurs when doing analysis that is beyond the ability of a person to articulate or explain. Something is lost when making that translation. I agree with Denzin (1998) when he says, "Interpretation is an art that cannot be formalized" (p. 338). Yet, without some formalization of method, how can a methodology be taught in a text and passed on to future generations—especially those who might not have the benefit of studying with other qualitative researchers? I would say that this book is less about a specific methodology and more about teaching persons how to think more self-consciously and systematically about data.

I want to emphasize that techniques and procedures are tools to aid with analysis and not directives. No researcher should become so obsessed with following a set of coding procedures that the fluid and dynamic nature of qualitative analysis is lost. The analytic process, like any thinking process, should be relaxed, flexible, and driven by insight gained through interaction with data. It should not be so structured that it relies solely on procedures or—I might add—computer programs.

Nature of "Reality"

I realize there is no one reality out there waiting to be discovered (Geertz, 1973); however, I do believe there are external events such as a full moon, a war, or an airplane crashing into a building. As Schwandt (1998) stated, "One can reasonably hold that concepts and ideas are invented (rather than discovered) yet maintain

that these inventions correspond to something in the real world" (p. 237). However, it is not the event itself that is the issue in our studies; it is the meaning given to events as evidenced in the action–interaction that follows. Each person experiences and gives meaning to events in light of his or her own biography or experiences, according to gender, time and place, and cultural, political, religious, and professional backgrounds. To see the validity of this statement, one only has to turn on the television and listen to a group of people discussing an event, such as a president's speech. There is much discourse and sometimes outright conflict about what was said—especially if politics are involved—but rarely a total agreement about the meaning of what was said. What a viewer sees and hears are multiple viewpoints on the same topic with no apparent consensus. Add to this picture the notion that what is being seen and heard on the television is filtered through the viewer's interpretation of the event based upon his or her personal history and biography, and we get a very complicated picture: one that at best can never be fully understood or reconstructed by the researcher.

Theories Are Constructions

I agree with the constructivist viewpoint that concepts and theories are *constructed* by researchers out of stories that are constructed by research participants who are trying to explain and make sense out of their experiences and lives, both to the researcher and themselves. Out of these multiple constructions, analysts construct something called *knowledge.* Schwandt (1998) said the following:

> *In a fairly unremarkable sense, we are all constructivists if we believe that the mind is active in the construction of knowledge. Most of us would agree that knowing is not passive—a simple imprinting of sense data on the mind—but active; mind does something with these impressions, at the very least forms abstractions of concepts. In this sense, constructivism means that human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as construct or make it. We invent concepts, models, and schemes to make sense of experience and, further, we continually test and modify these constructions in light of new experience. (p. 237)*

Though readers of research place their own interpretations on data, the fact that these are constructions and reconstructions does not negate the relevance of findings nor the insights that can be gained from them. I believe that we share a common culture out of which common meanings are arrived at through discourse. I also want to emphasize that Strauss always saw analysis as an interactive process, a dialogue that takes place between the researcher and the data. For him, concepts were names placed on data based on a researcher's interpretation of the meaning of data.

Concepts Are the Foundation for Knowledge

Though I realize that knowledge is constantly evolving in light of new experience, perhaps it is the nurse in me that is talking, but I believe analytic work necessitates some degree of conceptual language to talk about "findings." Without a conceptual language, there is no basis for discussion, conflict, negotiation, or the development of a knowledge-based practice. We can't have practitioners walking around doing things without having a disciplined body of knowledge, along with experience, as the basis for their actions. Knowledge may not mirror the world, but it does help us to understand it. If you were a patient in the intensive care ward, would you want just anyone coming in off the street to take care of you? Or would you prefer a nurse working from sound theoretical principles, a nurse who understands that no theory should be applied dogmatically but

rather should be reevaluated and adjusted to meet the situation at hand? Therefore, I will continue to believe in the power of concepts and advocate their use.

Practical Application of Knowledge

I am practical in what I want to accomplish with my research. Coming from a nursing background, I want to develop knowledge that will guide practice. In drawing upon my pragmatist and interactionist (Hughes, 1971; Park, 1967; Thomas, 1966) orientation and keeping with the social justice aim of feminist research (Oleson, 1998), I want to bring about social change and make persons' lives better.

The Need for Self-Reflection

I agree with the feminists in that we don't separate who we are as persons from the research and analysis that we do. Therefore, we must be self-reflective about how we influence the research process and, in turn, how it influences us. Hamberg and Johansson (1999) explained what they did to be self-reflective, and I, too, try to carry this out:

> *For this reflexive analysis, we have reread the coded interviews to scrutinize parts featuring tension, contradictions, or conflicting codes—passages that had often been discussed when we were striving to find reasonable and legitimate interpretations. We have also read our memos to recall our instant reactions during, and after, the interviews and our discussions when we compared our coding. (p. 458)*

I think that I make it very clear in the memos that I wrote while doing the mini-research project on Vietnam described in the second part of this book that I tried to keep a record of how the research was affecting me. Actually, I felt a strong need to write my experiences and feelings down because I was often so disturbed. I truly identified with the stories that I was told and read. I was involved. But I also was concerned with my role as investigator and the need to tell my participants' stories. I certainly would never want to exploit my participants and did give them an opportunity to read and give input into chapters that involved them. I told them that the interviews would be used in a methodology book, and they agreed to this. I also worried about ethics and made certain that they were agreeable to putting their words into print as some of them were very graphic, but their words tell the story far better than I—a woman who has never been to war—could.

Ethics in Relation to Pragmatism and Interactionism

Though the philosophies of pragmatism and interactionism do not provide specific ethical guidelines for conducting research, a methodology based on these philosophies automatically leads to certain ethical considerations. For example, the viewpoint that the individual is a thoughtful, purposeful, interacting being who takes action to solve problems points to the importance of treating participants and the data they provide with value, dignity, respect, and confidentiality. The notion that knowledge is derived through interaction leads to the necessity of acknowledging the role that participants as well as the researcher play in the research process. It also points to the importance of basing reforms on the meanings persons assign to the events and problems in their lives. Doing so is more likely to make any reforms that come out of the research pertinent and acceptable to the persons to whom they are directed.

Summary of Key Points

Strauss believed in the value of theory and its importance in knowledge development. With Glaser, he developed a method known as grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). When it came to doing analysis, he had his own style of thinking and working with data. This could be expected since both Glaser and Strauss had different life and research experiences as well as educational and philosophical backgrounds. Strauss's philosophical background was rooted in pragmatism and interactionism. Though he wasn't necessarily thinking in these terms when grounded theory was initially developed, over time these philosophies became more and more central to his way of thinking. They formed his worldview, informed his approach to analysis, and were eventually articulated as a set of assumptions with methodological implications.

The methodological implications of the assumptions can be summarized as follows. The world is a complex place. There are no simple explanations that can be given for why events occur. Rather, events are the result of multiple factors coming together and interacting in complex and often unanticipated ways. The actions and interactions that follow are often unpredictable, subject to change, and based on the meanings given to those events. Since persons are varied in their responses, it is important to obtain multiple perspectives on events and to build variation into analytic schemes. Furthermore, to understand the human response, it must be located within the personal and larger social, psychological, political, temporal, economic, and cultural context. Though contextual factors or conditions don't determine action and interaction, they explain why events occur and give insight into the factors that facilitate or constrain the ability to act under certain circumstances. Process denotes adaptive changes in action and interaction taken in response to changes in conditions. As such, it is integral to analysis. But process does not stand alone. To have theory, the adaptive changes that occur in action and interaction must be tied back to conditions and the meanings given to events. Though action and interaction stand at the heart of Strauss's approach to analysis, his approach is not devoid of emotion. Emotions enter meanings that are assigned to events and are part of the contextual factors that influence response to problems and events through action and interaction.

Theoretical knowledge is relevant to time and place and must be updated to keep pace with change over time. However, the notion of change does not negate the need for theoretical explanations. Theory allows persons to gather information, give meaning, and make sense of what is happening around them. Based on that meaning, individuals or groups are able to construct sensible plans of action for managing problems and reaching desired goals.

An important consideration in theory building is what the researcher brings to the research process in terms of philosophies, experience, professional background, and interests. These factors influence the choice of topic, approach to analysis, and where the emphasis is placed. Therefore, the final theory that is constructed though grounded in data is a representation of both participant and researcher. Another researcher could take the same data and by placing a different emphasis on the data construct a different theory. However, this does not negate the validity of the theory. The most important thing is that whatever theory is produced is grounded and that it gives another insight and understanding into human behavior. It is the accumulation of knowledge over time that is most important, and the more theories professionals and laypersons have to

explain what is going on around them, the better able they are to shape lives.

Activities for Thinking, Writing, and Discussing as a Group

1. Think about philosophies that you have studied. Which ones impressed you the most, and what have you taken from them?
2. Write a paragraph or two describing how you think your personal philosophy or beliefs about the world might influence your choices of research methods and how you might approach analysis.
3. Discuss in class the ethical implications of pragmatism for (a) treatment of research participants, (b) how data is gathered and handled, and (c) how the research process is carried out and findings are reported.

Suggested Readings

Alternative Perspectives

Bryant, A. (2009). Grounded theory and pragmatism: The curious case of Anselm Strauss. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 10*(3), article 2. Retrieved from http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1358/2850

Chamberlain-Salaun, J., Mills, J., & Usher, K. (2013). Linking symbolic interactionism and grounded theory methods in a research design. From Corbin and Strauss' Assumptions to Action. *SAGE Open, 3*(3). Retrieved from http://sgo.sagepub.com/content/3/3/2158244013505757.full

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative inquiry* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Plumber, M., & Young, L. E. (2009). Grounded theory and feminist inquiry: Revitalizing links to the past. *Western Journal of Nursing Research, 32*(3), 305–321.

Willis, J. W. (2007). *Foundations of qualitative research: Interpretive and critical approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

More Information Regarding Pragmatism and Symbolic Interactionism

Reynolds, L. T., & Herman-Kinney, N. H. (2003). *Handbook of symbolic interactionism.* Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

For German Speakers

Mey, G., & Mruck, J. (2007). *Grounded theory reader.* Netherlands: VS Verlag.

Strübing, J. (2014). *Grounded theory: Zur sozialtheoretischen und epistemologischen Fundierung eines pragmatistischen Forschungsstils* (Rev. and enlarged ed.). Wiesbaden, Germany: VS Verlag für

Sozialwissenschaften.

For Those Interested in Reading More About Strauss's Perspective

Strauss, A. S. (1993). *Continual permutations of action.* New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Chapter 3
Practical Considerations for Getting Started

> You are desperate to communicate, to edify or entertain, to preserve moments of grace or joy or transcendence, to make real or imagined events come alive. But you cannot will this to happen. It is a matter of persistence and faith and hard work. So you might as well just go ahead and get started. (Lamott, 1994, p. 7)

Table 3.1 Key Terms

Nontechnical literature: These are materials that can be used as primary data to supplement interviews and field observations. These include but are not limited to biographies, diaries, memoirs, manuscripts, records, reports.

Research problem: The general issue or focus of the research

Research question: This is the specific query to be addressed by this research. The question(s) sets the perimeters of the project and suggests the methods to be used for data gathering and analysis.

Technical literature: Research reports and theoretical or philosophical papers characteristic of professional and disciplinary writing

The emphasis of this book is on analysis. However, before getting started on analysis, there must first be a topic, a problem, and some data. This chapter will present an overview of some of the practical issues to consider before beginning the research. The chapter is not meant to be all inclusive because there just isn't enough room in a book on analysis to cover every topic in depth. There are many other books that are specifically written on these topics—some of which are presented at the end of the chapter under Suggested Readings.

Points to Keep in Mind

When reading this chapter, students are advised to keep the following points in mind:

- The research problem
- The research question
- Data collection
- Important considerations before beginning data collection
- Perspectives, biases, and assumptions
- The literature

- Theoretical frameworks

The Research Problem

One of the most difficult aspects of doing qualitative research is choosing the **research problem** for investigation. Choosing the *right topic* is especially important when doing qualitative research because it is something that a researcher will be involved with for some time. When it comes time to make that decision, a researcher can look to the following sources for ideas. The sources are as follows:

- Advisor or mentor
- Technical and nontechnical literature
- Personal and professional experience
- Pilot projects

Advisor or Mentor

One way to arrive at a research problem is to ask for suggestions from a professor doing research. Often, he or she has an ongoing research project and would welcome having graduate students do a small part of the project. This source of a problem area tends to increase the possibility of getting involved in a doable and relevant research problem. This is because the more experienced researcher already knows what needs to be done in a particular substantive area. On the other hand, a choice arrived at in this manner may not be the most interesting to the student. Ultimately, the final choice of topic should be something that engages the researcher's curiosity.

Variant on Advisor or Mentor

A variant on the advisor- or mentor-suggested problem source is to follow up on a professional or collegial remark that an inquiry into "such and such" would be useful and interesting. This is often a more palatable source of a problem—especially if a researcher has some inclination toward that substantive area. For example, the interest of a woman who is athletic might be sparked by a remark made by a mentor such as, "I notice that women who exercise tend to feel more comfortable with their bodies." This broad and open statement can lead to all sorts of questions. How are women's images of body and exercise formed? How do school athletics, health beliefs, advertising and media, school, and cultural attitudes affect women's body image and willingness to exercise? What is the process through which women who regularly exercise come to know their body and its strengths and limitations? What is the range of athletic activities that women are most likely to engage in? Why these activities and not others? How does body experience with exercise translate into other aspects of women's lives?

Funding

Still another variation on the advisor- or mentor-assigned problem is whether or not funds are available for research on certain topics. In fact, faculty sponsors may steer students in directions where funds are available.

This is quite a legitimate suggestion, as often those are problem areas of special need.

Technical and Nontechnical Literature

The literature can be a stimulus to research. Sometimes the literature points to a relatively unexplored area or suggests a topic in need of further development. Or a researcher may notice contradictions or ambiguities among the accumulated published studies and writings. The discrepancies suggest the need for a study that will help to resolve those uncertainties. Alternatively, a researcher's reading on a subject may suggest that a new approach is needed to solve an old problem even though it has been well studied in the past. Also, while reading the literature, a researcher might come across a finding that is dissonant with his or her own experience, and a study might lead to resolving that dissonance. Finally, reading may simply stimulate curiosity about a subject. The minute a potential researcher asks the question, "What if?" and finds there is no answer, there is a problem area.

Personal and Professional Experience

Personal and professional experience can be helpful in the following ways. A person may undergo a divorce and wonder how other women or men experienced their own divorces. Or someone may come across a problem in his or her profession or workplace for which there is no known answer. Professional experience frequently leads to the judgment that some feature of the profession or its practice is less than effective, efficient, humane, or equitable. So it is believed that a good research study might help to correct that situation. Some professionals return to school to work for a higher degree motivated by a reform agenda. The research problem that they choose is grounded in that motivation. Choosing a research problem through the professional or personal experience route may seem more hazardous than the suggested or literature routes. This is not necessarily true. The touchstone of a potential researcher's experience may be a more valuable indicator of a potentially successful research endeavor than another, more abstract source.

Pilot Projects

A researcher might have an interest in a general area, such as how work gets done in large organizations, but no specific idea of what to study in that area. A good way to refine a problem area is to do a few pilot interviews or observations and ask persons working in an organization about their greatest concerns or problems. Paying attention to what is important or problematic to persons in the area is the key to where the focus of any research project should be.

The Research Question

All research inquiries necessitate a question(s) to guide the inquiry. However, qualitative research questions tend to be broader and less specific than those in quantitative research. The topics covered in this section include the following:

- Defining issues

- Framing the research question
- Writing the proposal
- Other related points

Defining Issues

The manner in which a researcher asks the **research question** is important because it determines, to a large extent, the research methods that are used in the study. Another important aspect of the research question is that it helps to establish the boundaries of what will be studied. It prevents a researcher from becoming distracted by unrelated and unproductive issues that take time and may not contribute to the study.

Here is the dilemma: Does a researcher choose qualitative analysis because the problem area and the question suggest it? Or does a committed qualitative researcher frame the question to fit the method? Is it a conscious or unconscious process that determines the research approach, as Pierce (1995) suggested? This issue is difficult to respond to because the answer is not clear. Although the basic premise is that the research question(s) dictates the method, it is our belief that persons tend to be more disposed toward either quantitative or qualitative research. For example, even when a problem area suggests that either qualitative or quantitative methods might be used, committed qualitative researchers tend to frame the question in a manner that enables them to carry out the project using qualitative methods because it is the approach that most interests us. There is no reason for us to belabor this point; we only want to emphasize that some problems clearly suggest one form of research over another and that investigators should be true to the problem. However, at the same time, researchers must remain true to themselves and their research preferences. For example, if a researcher wants to know which of two educational interventions to stop smoking has the best results, a quantitative study might be a better choice. However, if a researcher wants to know why persons continue to smoke even though they know cigarettes are potentially harmful to health, then a qualitative study might be a better way to find answers to this question.

Framing the Research Question

What do questions look like in qualitative studies? How do they differ from those of quantitative studies, and why? Qualitative studies are usually exploratory in nature. They aim at hypothesis generating rather than hypothesis testing. Therefore, it is necessary to frame the research question(s) in a manner that provides the investigator with sufficient flexibility and freedom to explore a topic in some depth. Also underlying the use of qualitative methods is the assumption that all of the concepts pertaining to a given phenomenon have not been identified, or aren't fully developed, or are poorly understood, and further exploration is necessary to increase understanding. While research questions in qualitative studies tend to be broad, they are not so broad as to give rise to unlimited possibilities. The purpose of the question is to lead researchers into the data where they can explore the issues and problems important to the persons or groups under investigation by asking further questions based on incoming data.

The research question in a qualitative study is a statement that takes the general research topic area to be studied and tells the reader what there is about this particular topic that is of interest. Here is an example of

how a researcher might write a qualitative research question: How do women with pregnancies complicated by chronic illness manage their pregnancies? This question, while it may be considered too general and nonspecific in quantitative investigations, is a perfectly good one for conducting a qualitative research study. The question tells the reader that the study will investigate women who happen to have a chronic condition and are pregnant. The study will be looking at management of the problems associated with such pregnancies from the women's perspective—that is, from the point of the women's perceptions of the problems and what they do to handle these. An assumption of the study is that participants want to have their babies and will do what they think is necessary to ensure that their babies are healthy. Despite assumptions, however, in any grounded theory study, a researcher should have an open mind and be open to contradictions to assumptions.

Writing the Proposal

Writing the proposal for a qualitative research project follows the same format as for quantitative studies. It's just that the information put under each area will be pertinent to qualitative process. Among its feature will be the research problem, a description of the potential significance of the study, a delineation of the research question(s), a brief review of the literature, an overview of the proposed methodology, the data-collection process, method of analysis, and perhaps a proposed timeline. At the end of this chapter, there are some suggested readings regarding the proposal writing process.

Other Related Points

There are a few other points to make about the research question(s) in grounded theory studies. A grounded theory study need not be confined to individuals. The investigation can be focused on families, organizations, industries, and other fruitful lines of endeavor. Here is an example taken from the literature of questions pertaining to an interactional and organizational study. Shuval and Mizrahi (2004), in their study of boundaries of institutional structures, the dynamics of configuration, and the nature of permeability, asked the following questions:

> *How do organizational and cognitive boundaries relate to each other? Why do biomedical practitioners allow the invasion of competitors? How do alternative practitioners "fit" into the social and geographic space of clinic and hospital structures? What mechanisms or rituals of acceptance or rejection are visible in practice settings? (p. 680)*

In their biographical study of three generational families, Rosenthal and Völter (1998) asked the following questions:

> *How do three generations of families live today with the family and collective past during the Nazi period? What influences does this past of the first generation, and their own ways of dealing with it, have upon the lives of their offspring and on the ways in which the latter come to terms with their family history? (p. 297)*

Data Collection

There can be no research without data. This section will cover the following topics related to data collection:

- A research journal

- Sources of data
- Interviews
- Observations

A Research Journal

At the inception of a research project, it is important for a researcher to initiate a research journal or diary in which he or she keeps a record of all the activities present and future that transpire during the research process. This includes appointments, summaries of discussions, proposal writing, problems, dates, important information regarding committees and review boards, and decisions made over the course of the research as well as why each was kept. This is separate from memos discussed in Chapter 6. The value of the research journal is that it enables a researcher to become more self-aware not only of his or her biases and assumptions but also of the reason for making certain decisions and to obtain insight into his or her own behavior. An interesting aspect of doing research is that we've discovered how much we are influenced by the research process as well as the degree to which we influence the outcomes. Listening skills and sensitivity to other persons have grown as a result of interviewing persons and listening to their stories. Keeping a diary or journals enables the researcher to see the research process evolve and to note changes in self that might occur as the research progresses.

There should be a few words written in the diary or journal after each data-collection session; otherwise, important information may be forgotten. The researcher should jot down a notation of any problems that might have occurred and how these were handled. The diary or journal should include notes regarding researcher reaction during data collection as well as reactions of participants—especially if sensitive topics are discussed. More will be said about the journal under the heading of "Perspectives, Biases, and Assumptions" later in this chapter.

Sources of Data

One of the virtues of grounded theory studies and qualitative research in general is that there are many different sources of data. These include but are not limited to interviews, observations, videos, documents, drawings, diaries, group meetings, memoirs, newspapers, historical documents, and biographies. In any study, depending upon the problem to be investigated, a researcher can use one or several of these sources alone or in combination. Also, a researcher may combine interview with observation, then perhaps add documents or videos to interviews. Since the focus of this book is on analysis, we'll not go into detail about the numerous methods of data collection. Instead, we confine our discussion to a few major points. We'll focus on interview and observation because these are the most popular modes of data gathering in grounded theory and other forms of qualitative research. Beginning with Chapter 12, we will demonstrate how memoirs can become sources of data.

Though many factors contribute to the quality of analysis, one of the most important factors is the quality of the materials being analyzed. Persons sometimes think that they can go out into the field and conduct interviews or observations with no training or preparation. Often these persons are disappointed when the

data they are able to gather are sparse. Interviewing and observing are skills that take training and practice to acquire.

Interviews

There are basically three types of interviews. There are unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and structured interviews. All are used in qualitative research, though some are better than others for grounded theory purposes.

Unstructured Interviews

Our experience has demonstrated that unstructured interviews—those not conducted according to a prestructured interview guide (Corbin & Morse, 2003)—provide the richest source of data for theory building. Participants are able to talk more freely about those issues and problems pertinent to them. Unstructured interviews give participants more control over the course of the interview. Participants are able to determine what subject to talk about, at what pace, in what order, and to what depth. In addition, unstructured interviews provide researchers with the ability to follow up during subsequent interviews, with the same or a different participant, on concepts found to be relevant to the evolving theory and in need of further elaboration.

Doing unstructured interviews is not easy. It takes practice to listen with an open mind and an open agenda and not let nervousness or embarrassment on the part of researchers inhibit the free flow of information from participants. There are ways to get unstructured interviews going and to keep them going. For example, a researcher might ask the following:

> *Tell me about your experience with cancer. I want to hear the story in your own words. After you have completed your narrative if I have questions about what you've said or need clarification about a topic (concept), I'll ask you. But for now just talk freely.*

The use of the unstructured interview format does not mean that researchers have no influence over the course of an interview. Researchers set the main topic to be investigated. Nonverbal as well as verbal reactions made by researchers do not go unnoticed by interviewees. Participants might alter what they are saying or doing in response to researcher's reactions; therefore, researchers must be aware of their influence on the interview session. A researcher may bring a participant back on topic if the narrative drifts to a completely unrelated topic. However, a researcher has to assess carefully why the participant might have shifted the topic. What a researcher initially thinks is unrelated may, with further analysis, prove to be relevant to the discussion. For example, when I was interviewing couples managing chronic conditions at home, I found that when I first arrived in a home that participants wanted to show me pictures of their families or talk about their work or hobbies. At first, I didn't understand the reason for such talk. But on further examination of data, it became obvious that participants were trying to tell me that they were more than just their illness or condition. Sometimes participants find it too painful or embarrassing during an interview to continue discussing a topic. They need to withdraw for a moment to recover or redirect. This is where sensitivity on the part of the researcher comes into play. A thoughtful and caring researcher will allow participants to set the course and take the time that they need. It is always possible to return to the topic or ask additional questions at a later time.

To underscore the previously given point, Mishler (1986) viewed interviews as a form of discourse between a researcher and the person being interviewed. He said, "Questioning and answering are ways of speaking that are grounded in and depend on culturally shared and often tacit assumptions about how to express and understand beliefs, experiences, feelings, and intentions" (Mishler, 1986, p. 7). He went on to explain how the interview is shaped both in its construction and meaning through the questions that are asked, the pauses, facial expressions, and other verbal and nonverbal communications that occur between the respective parties.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Some researchers prefer semi-structured interviews because they enable researchers to maintain some consistency over the concepts that are covered in each interview. In a semi-structured interview, some topics are chosen before beginning the research based on the literature or practice. However, when and how the topics are presented is not structured. Many researchers feel more comfortable having a list of topics to fall back on—especially if participants are not overly talkative.

In semi-structured interviews, the same topics are covered in each interview. After the questions on the list have been covered, participants are free to add anything else to the interview that they might feel is relevant to the discussion. Also, researchers can ask additional questions to clarify certain points or to delve further into a topic. This form of interviewing makes it more difficult to be certain that the issues and problems relevant to participants are covered or that concepts derived during analysis of previous interviews are followed up on. Sometimes participants have something important they might want to add but because the researchers didn't ask about it the participants didn't think researchers were interested in that topic.

Structured Interviews

Structured interviews are interviews conducted using an interview guide. Each interviewee is given the same set of questions. Structured interviews provide consistency but are probably the least effective means of data collection in grounded theory research for several reasons. First, with a structured interview, the ability to make adjustments during data collection based on analysis of previous interviews is missing. This flexibility is necessary for theory construction. Second, structured interviews take away much control of the interview process from participants. This is because the topics that are covered are those deemed important by the researcher and perhaps are not the issues or problems important to participants. This goes against the whole nature of grounded theory, which is based on grounding the theory in the concerns and problems of participants. It has been our experience that participants usually respond only to the questions that are asked. They are too shy or reluctant to bring up other topics.

Issues in Interviewing

One of the most difficult aspects of interviewing for beginning researchers is facing periods of silence. The uninitiated researcher tends to jump in with questions or comments either redirecting the interview or breaking the thought process of the person being interviewed. Two German biographical researchers, Riemann (2003) and Schütze (1992a, 1992b), have developed a style of interviewing and analysis that takes silences into account. They are considered important aspects of the interview and are analyzed for possible meaning.

It is not unusual for qualitative researchers to come across persons who agree to be interviewed but have little to say once the interview begins. Often the problem is that potential interviewees are uncomfortable and need a little nudging to get them talking. When this happens, and it has happened to all of us, it is good to have a couple of backup questions. Asking a few questions or talking about something of interest to both participant and interviewee often relaxes participants. It gives them a sense of direction, helps build trust, and shy respondents become more confident and talkative. A person may not have thoroughly thought about an issue and needs time to think for a few minutes before getting started with an interview or continuing further with a topic. Some topics generate a lot of emotion and a participant has to retreat into silence for a moment to gain composure. A skilled interviewer lets the interviewee guide the course of the interview and allows him or her to reveal information at his or her own pace while accepting pauses as part of the process. Information is likely to become more personal as confidence builds and participants realize that the interviewer is not there to pass judgment but to listen to what he or she he to say.

Though most persons don't mind being tape-recorded, participants often offer some of the most interesting data as soon as the tape recorder is turned off. There are many possible reasons for this. One reason for these end-of-interview "revelations" is that the interview process provides participants with the opportunity to talk in depth about issues that perhaps they hadn't talked much about before giving them greater insight into their own behavior. Participants might want to share this new insight once they've had time to think about it. Another reason, and probably the more plausible explanation, is that some persons feel embarrassed or uncomfortable revealing what they consider "sensitive information" when the tape recorder is on. They know the interviewer will use the material, but it is the thought of possible voice identification that makes them feel uncomfortable despite assurances that the tape will be destroyed after transcription. It is a good idea for an interviewer to bring pencil and paper in addition to a recorder to an interview just in case the recorder breaks down or the interviewee feels more comfortable talking with the recorder off. This researcher usually asks for permission to take notes, and interviewees have always agreed. If it is impossible to write notes at the time, interviewers should write down what they recall as soon as possible after leaving the interview site.

Observations

Fieldwork is often more difficult and certainly more time consuming than doing interviews. Perhaps this is one reason why interviewing is the method most frequently used by qualitative researchers. Some researchers think of fieldwork as specific to anthropologists—something to be done in exotic places—but observation is a fruitful means of data gathering regardless of whether it occurs far or near home. Though doing observations is usually more time consuming than doing interviews, it has a lot to offer qualitative researchers and should be considered as an alternative or additional form of data collection.

Reasons for Doing Observations

The reason why observations are so important is that it is not unusual for persons to say they are doing one thing but in reality they are doing something else. The only way to know this is through observation. Anselm Strauss related an interesting story about what he and his coresearchers discovered when data collecting during their study of psychiatric institutions. They asked psychiatrists about their treatment philosophies as part of an

interview. Later they did observations on the patient care units. What they discovered was that there was often a discrepancy between the philosophy of treatment expressed by psychiatrists and their actual treatment plans. When confronted with this fact, the psychiatrists responded, "You asked what our treatment philosophy was, not necessarily how we treat patients. We treat on the basis of what works for this patient" (Strauss, Schatzman, Bucher, Ehrlich, & Sabshin, 1964).

Another reason for doing observations is that persons are not always aware of, or able to articulate, the subtleties of what goes on during interactions between themselves and others. Observations place researchers in the center of the action where they can see as well as hear what is going on. Patton (2002) stated, "Creative fieldwork means using every part of oneself to experience and understand what is happening." He went on to say, "Creative insights come from being directly involved in the setting being studied" (p. 302).

Issues When Doing Observations

Observations have their potential drawbacks. A researcher may give meaning to a witnessed action–interaction, but unless that meaning is checked out with participants, the researcher's interpretation may or may not be correct. That is why it is beneficial to combine observation with interview or leave open the possibility to verify interpretations with participants. Patton (2002) stated the following:

> *Nonverbal behaviors are easily misinterpreted, especially cross-culturally. Therefore, whenever possible and appropriate, having observed what appears to be significant behavior, some effort should be made to follow up with those involved to find out directly from them what the behavior really meant. (p. 291)*

There is so much going on in any social scene that it is difficult to know where to begin when doing observations. Many qualitative researchers use an observational guide, but sticking to an observational guide is not advised in grounded theory studies because they structure the observations too much and don't foster discovery. Therefore, knowing how to proceed in a grounded theory study is important. A researcher can begin by standing back and letting the scene before him or her unfold. Since it is impossible to capture every bit of what is going on in a setting, the observer can start by jotting down a few general notes describing the area under observation such as what routine activities are going on, the personnel present, the pace and timing of activities, interactions taking place, and so on. At the same time, the researcher will be watchful for incidents or happenings that seem to be particularly interesting for some reason and that might bear closer inspection. If an incident happens that appears to be significant, the researcher can focus in and take detailed notes on what is happening, what is being said and done by whom, where, and with what consequences. The researcher can then follow up with questions about the incident with those involved and perhaps even come up with a concept or two to describe what was happening in the situation. This concept can later be followed up on in future observations in the same or another setting.

From our perspective, the important thing to keep in mind when doing interviews or observations is that concepts drive the research process. Where do these concepts come from? Let us give an example from our observational research of the roles and functions of nurse managers of hospital units (unpublished study). I began my first fieldwork session by meeting a head nurse as the nurse prepared for her day and followed her throughout the day, taking detailed notes about the head nurse's general routines. In addition, I focused on

nonroutine incidents or problematic situations the head nurse encountered and took detailed notes about actions and interactions. Later that day, I related to the head nurse what she had observed and asked the nurse to explain what was happening in order to elaborate upon or to correct any misinterpretations that the researcher might have. The following day, I met with Strauss to analyze the previous day's field notes. The concepts and questions derived during that analytic session gave me some areas to look for when making the next set of observations. In addition, I was also alert for different events or happenings that might indicate new concepts.

Important Considerations Before Beginning Data Collection

This section will discuss the following:

- Committees and institutional review boards
- Interview and observational guides
- Informed consent
- Confidentiality and anonymity
- Researcher responsibilities

Committees and Institutional Review Boards

No data collection can begin before researchers have presented their proposal to either their thesis or dissertation research committee members or in-house research committees for review. Next comes presenting the research protocol to institutional review boards (IRBs) for review. IRB groups usually have a standard form that describes what should be included in the protocol as well as the consent form. They also require a copy of the interview and observational guide and a copy of the consent form. For example, when I was doing my research on pregnant women with chronic illness as part of my doctoral program, I first had to present the research proposal to my doctoral committee. Once the proposal was accepted, I was ready to move on. I obtained a copy of the research protocol requirements of the two universities with which I affiliated—one where I was a student and the other where I was employed—and then completed the required information and presented it to the universities' committees. The protocol included a title for the research; the research question; the research design and method to be used; the target population; a description of how data collection would proceed; the proposed number and types of participants to be included; information that no financial compensation would be given to participants; an explanation of how data would be handled and the rights of participants protected; researcher qualifications and supervision; proposed sites for data collection; a copy of the interview guide and consent form; how possible problems during data collection would be handled; description of potential risks to participants; telephone numbers; and referrals for care of participants, if needed. Once the protocol was reviewed, requested changes were made, and permission was granted, I went to the proposed data collection sites and presented my protocol for review by their IRBs. I wanted to obtain data from two different hospital clinics and, therefore, had to present the protocol to IRBs at each site. IRB committees usually meet once a month. Once that permission was obtained, I went to the clinics in which I was given permission to gather data and presented the study to those in charge and to other

relevant employees in order to let them know I had all the needed permissions. I also wanted to obtain their cooperation in obtaining research participants. Staff usually approached potential participants first, briefly explained my study, and asked if they would be interested in talking to me. Those who were willing to listen to a description of my study were given an in-depth explanation of what would be expected of them in terms of participation and time involvement, how long the study would go on, and what my role would be. Participants were told there would be no financial reimbursement for their participation. Then they were offered the option to refuse or participate at this time. Willing participants were given a copy of the consent form. We both signed the form in the presence of a witness, and a copy was given to the participant along with pertinent phone numbers. The participant was advised of her right to withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy to her care or penalty. Only then was I able to collect data.

Interview and Observational Guides

Most committees and IRBs require the use of interview or observational guides even in grounded theory studies. This does not present a problem. Most researchers are sufficiently familiar with the literature related to the area they want to study or have experience in that area and can put together an interview or observational guide. The guide serves as an introduction into an interview or observation; however, it should not be used to structure the interview in a grounded theory study. What is important to put into the research protocol given to IRBs is that participants will be free to bring up topics that are of importance to them that might not be covered in the interview or observational guide. If the topics are of a sensitive nature, researchers will remind participants that the data might possibly be used in publications and then give them the opportunity to change the topic. Regardless, anonymity will be protected. If participants ask researchers to turn off the tape recorder, they should do so. If participants change their mind and do not want the material used, the researchers have an obligation to delete the material even if the request is made sometime after the interview.

Informed Consent

A researcher can never be certain why persons agree to be research participants; all a researcher can do is ask potential participants if they are willing to participate in a study and then be sensitive to their nonverbal as well as verbal responses. If after reading the consent form and hearing an explanation about the study there is hesitation on the part of a potential participant, it may be an indication that the participant is not certain if he or she wants to participate. It may be that a potential participant needs further explanations about the research or assurances about confidentiality. However, if after providing additional information a person still seems reluctant, that person should be excused from participation and given assurance that there will be no repercussions now or later because of the lack of participation.

Once persons or a group agree to participate, the potential participants should be asked to sign two consent forms: one copy for the researcher and the other for the participant. At the same time, participants should be assured even though they have agreed in writing to participate in the study that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time during the research process without repercussions or jeopardy to their job or health care, or whatever the case might be. It may be necessary during the course of a study to re-inform

the participant of the nature of a study and his or her right to re-consent or refuse to continue—especially if unexpected or embarrassing events occur during the course of an interview or observation. A researcher may also feel that he or she can't continue with an interview or observation if something happens that makes him or her uncomfortable or fearful. Always use good judgment and trust your instincts. Researchers should explain to participants that anything they say or do will be kept confidential; all identifying information will be removed from transcription and field notes; and if there are recordings, once the transcription is completed the recording will be erased or deleted.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Maintaining anonymity and confidentiality of participants are important aspects of doing research. There are many different techniques for protecting anonymity and confidentiality, and these are fully discussed in text on data collection and also in books on ethics (see Suggested Readings at the end of this chapter). Most institutions have IRBs and committees in place to ensure that safeguards to confidentiality and anonymity exist.

Researcher Responsibilities

The steps that a researcher will take are spelled out in the research protocol that is submitted to the school and/or IRBs. It is the researcher's responsibility to follow through with the procedures indicated in the protocol.

In addition, researchers have a responsibility to treat participants in a manner that they would want to be treated throughout the research process. A safe rule is if the researcher doesn't think he or she would like it, then participants probably won't like it either. There is another point to be made: People have the right to let their voices be heard. Sometimes a researcher feels uncomfortable or awkward obtaining and listening to interviews or reporting on something that is observed because of some personal bias against certain behaviors, a fear that they might be revealing the identity of participants, or that it might prove embarrassing. However, participants usually give consent to participate in a research study because they want the story told even if what they have to say is very personal. However, if participants request that something they said or did be removed from the interview or observation, the researcher has an obligation to do so.

While confidentiality is of utmost importance, if a researcher witnesses or hears something (such as abuse) during an observation or interview that is potentially harmful to the participant or others, the researcher has an obligation to report that behavior to the appropriate authorities. An exception would be when studying persons who are engaged in illicit behaviors, such as drug addiction or prostitution. However, even in these cases, if a person's life is in danger the researcher has an obligation to notify the appropriate authorities. Maintaining the confidentiality of participants is important not only when collecting data but also later when writing the findings. Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland (2006) stated the following:

> *One of the central obligations that field researchers have with respect to those they study is the guarantee of anonymity via the "assurance of confidentiality"—the promise that the real names of persons, places, and so forth will not be used in the research report or will be substituted by pseudonyms. (p. 51)*

There are exceptions. Some participants specifically request to have their name used, and with written consent, the researcher may do so. However, both Strauss and I usually assign participants a number or a pseudonym and try to disguise the situation if we think that the participant is likely to be recognized by others.

There is one additional point that we want to make. A researcher should never remove documents from an organization without authorization or consent. Some documents contain confidential information that could be harmful to the persons or the institutions involved if that information becomes public. Sometimes information is proprietary and not for sharing because of potential competition.

Perspectives, Biases, and Assumptions

Every researcher has perspective, biases, and assumptions that they bring with them to the research process. These impact every aspect of the research from the topic chosen to study to the audiences for whom articles and books are written. This is a given fact about which there is no dispute. The questions are as follows: Is it always harmful? What can be done about it?

This section of the chapter will explore the following:

- Researcher biases and assumptions
- Strategies for controlling intrusion of perspectives, biases, and assumptions
- Differing opinions

Researcher Biases and Assumptions

In Chapter 2, we described how Strauss's background in pragmatism and interactionism has shaped his worldview, his assumptions, and his approach to analysis. These have been built into the methodology. A researcher can accept or reject the method on the basis of this knowledge. In addition to the worldviews, biases, and assumptions that are built into method, each researcher brings his or her set of these characteristics to the research process. This is not necessarily bad in all aspects—especially when it comes to choosing the research problem, setting the research question, and choosing the audience for whom to write. Naturally, if a researcher is in the field of education, he or she would want to study problems related to his or her discipline because that is the area to which the researcher wants to contribute. The same goes for sociologists, psychologists, nurses, and physicians as well as persons working in the communications field, engineering, and so on.

It is when it comes to analysis that perspectives, biases, and assumptions can have their greatest impact. The impact comes in the meaning given to data, the concepts used to stand for that meaning, the questions that are asked, and comparisons that are made. Naturally, being a nurse, I would approach analysis from this perspective. This can be good because it keeps the findings within the discipline of choice. But it also has its drawbacks. For example, when doing my study on pregnant women with chronic conditions, my analysis denoted that most of the action–interaction in the scene centered around the notion of risks, which varied from high to low over the course of the pregnancy and sometimes over the course of a day. So I started

organizing my data into patterns, trying to match women's actions and interaction with risk level. What I found was that actions and interactions did not always match risk level. I went back and again studied the data. It finally dawned on me that I was assigning women into risk categories according to the medical definition of the risks rather than according to women's perceptions of the risk level, which sometimes differed from the medical definition. Once I had this insight, I went back and looked at women's definitions of the risk level and found that the actions–interactions that they took matched. I had made the assumption that the women would have the same definitions as the health care team. My new insight busted that assumption wide open.

Strategies for Controlling Intrusion of Perspectives, Biases, and Assumptions

Keeping a Journal

The first thing a researcher can do is be aware. Though researchers can never know the full extent of their biases, they can make an effort to get in touch with those different aspects of self and think through how these might impact the research projects they are about to embark upon. This is where the journal is most useful. In the journal, researchers can start at the beginning of the project, asking why they decided to study this problem, and ask these research questions and not others. During data collection, the researchers can note their reactions to what is being said or done. It is important to be aware during an interview of the reciprocal influence that participant and researcher can have on each other. Researchers can influence what participants say or do based on verbal and nonverbal responses. Participants can bring about a response in researchers, making them feel angry, sad, happy, or uncomfortable by what they say and do. The journal is the place where a researcher can write this down. The same holds true for analysis. Not only is it important for researchers to keep a record of the products of analyses in memos, but it is also equally important that they keep a record of their own responses to data, checking themselves out in the meanings they are giving to data, the concepts they use, and the types of questions they are asking. One added point here is that feeling overwhelmed, fatigued, and torn between multiple responsibilities can all affect how a researcher responds to data, and notations about these should be included in the journal. When it comes to finalize the research and write, the accumulation of all that has been written in the journal can be helpful. The researcher can check for signs of biases and assumptions and make note of these when writing about the research—especially when discussing limitations. Sometimes an article or chapter in a book can be written detailing the author's experience, acknowledging biases and steps taken to limit their intrusion.

Using the Method

Grounded theory methodology has some built-in checks and balances, and while these do not eliminate the intrusion of biases or negate assumptions, they can help control for these. The first aspect of method that is useful is the constant comparisons that are made throughout the research where data is matched against data not only for similarities and differences but also for consistency, with researchers being able to check into how they give meaning and conceptualize. Then there are the questions that researchers can ask of the data. The more questions about possible meaning that are asked during open coding, the more analytic options researchers have to consider when giving meaning and to check out against incoming data. There are the other analytic strategies (see Chapter 5) like the use of *metaphors, turning data upside down,* and *asking what if*

that can help researchers think about data in new and different ways, which is always helpful. *Waving the red flag* is another way of reminding researchers about the possible intrusion of assumptions.

In summary, the intrusion of perspective, biases, and assumptions can't be completely eliminated when doing a grounded theory or any qualitative study. However, intrusion can be controlled to some degree by keeping a research journal that fosters self-awareness and the systematic application of research strategies that provide researchers with an assortment of analytic options that can be matched against data for possible meaning. Examining the researcher's influence on the research process is important, as Chesney (2001) stated the following:

> *I support the autobiographical analysis of self, not as separate from or in competition with the ethnographic words of the women but as a nurturing bed to place the research finding in and as part of the transparency of the research process. Reflecting honestly and openly has helped me retain some integrity and develop insight and self-awareness, and it has given me a certain self confidence. (p. 131)*

Differing Opinions

The degree of importance that researchers attach to maintaining self-awareness and the extent to which they implement strategies to control intrusion of biases and assumptions varies. Each researcher must consider how much time and effort to put into keeping a journal and recording feelings and thoughts. However, there is still some debate about the ability of persons to have insight into the self. Cutcliffe (2003) made an interesting point when he asked how we can completely account for ourselves in the research since so much of what transpires takes place within the deeper levels of consciousness. Nevertheless, reflexivity remains, as Finlay (2002) stated, a "valuable tool" to do the following:

- Examine the impact of the position, perspective, and presence of the researcher;
- Promote rich insight through examining personal responses and interpersonal dynamics;
- Empower others by opening up a more radical consciousness;
- Evaluate the research process, method, and outcomes; and
- Enable public scrutiny of the integrity of the research through offering a methodological log of research decisions. (p. 532)

I found self-reflection to be a very natural and necessary process when doing the research project on the Vietnam War veterans presented in Chapters 12 through 16 in this book. Self-reflection was cathartic, and it helped me to see how I was slanting the data collection and analysis. I noticed that as I reviewed and thought about what I wrote in the memos, some were more reflective of my emotional response to the data than a conceptualization of what my respondents were telling me. I rewrote those memos, but I could certainly see how the self enters into data collection and analysis. Not that it is all bad; it's just that it is important to be aware. See Wicker (1985) for an excellent discussion on "Getting Out of Our Conceptual Ruts."

The Literature

Researchers bring to the inquiry a considerable background in professional and disciplinary literature. This background may be acquired while studying for examinations or simply to "keep up" with the field. During

the research itself, analysts often discover biographies, memoirs, manuscripts, reports, or other materials that seem pertinent to the area under investigation. The question that arises is as follows: How can the literature be used to enhance rather than constrain analysis? To begin with, readers can be assured that there is no need to review all of the literature in the area of investigation beforehand. It is impossible to know prior to beginning a grounded theory study what concepts will be derived from data and what their relevance to the research will be. Also, researchers don't want to be so steeped in the literature that they are constrained and even stifled by it. It is not unusual for a student to become greatly distressed when coming across a study or theory that deals with the same topic he or she wished to study, and that appears to cover the topic thoroughly. The student wonders what new knowledge can be derived by further research. Rest assured that since each investigation is somewhat different, new information will be uncovered. Becker (1986) made a good point when he said, "Use the literature, don't let it use you" (p. 149).

There are two kinds of literature relevant to our discussion of grounded theory:

- The technical literature
- The nontechnical literature

The Technical Literature

In this book, ***technical literature*** refers to research reports, theoretical or philosophical papers, and other information characteristic of professional and disciplinary writing. Though the following list is by no means exhaustive, it does describe how the technical literature may be used:

- Making comparisons
- Enhancing sensitivity
- Providing descriptive materials
- Supplying questions for initial observations and interviews
- Stimulating analytic questions
- Confirming findings

Making Comparisons

Concepts derived from the literature can provide a source for making comparisons within and between data as long as the comparisons are made along conceptual lines and at the property and dimensional level and are not handled as data per se. If a concept derived from data seems similar or opposite to one recalled from the literature, then a researcher can examine both concepts for similarities and differences. For example, suppose a researcher is studying *coping* with the loss of a spouse due to an accident at work. It is the property of *suddenness* of the loss that is an issue in this case. The researcher might look at the literature for examples of coping under other conditions, such as coping with a death that has the property of *expectedness,* such as after a long illness. Then the researcher would compare the two situations— suddenness and expectedness—looking for similarities and differences in coping. What making comparisons of this type does is help researchers to become sensitive to what is in the data but that might have been overlooked before.

Enhancing Sensitivity

Familiarity with relevant literature can enhance sensitivity to subtle nuances in data. Though a researcher does not want to enter the field with an entire list of concepts, some may turn up over and over again in the literature and also appear in the data, thus demonstrating their significance. When this happens, the important question for the researcher to ask is the following: Are these concepts truly derived from data, or am I imposing these concepts on the data because I am so familiar with them? For example, it is not unusual for students in areas such as nursing and psychology to label everything as coping because this concept is relevant professionally. However, coping may not be the best term to describe what is going on in this particular research. An analyst has to learn to think outside the box and get away from professionally overused concepts, such as coping. However, if a concept is truly relevant, the question to ask is how the concept derived during the research is the same or different from that in the literature.

Providing Descriptive Materials

There are times when published descriptive materials can be useful to a researcher. Descriptive writings with little or no interpretation often provide illustrations of a concept. Reading such literature is almost like reading field notes collected for another purpose. Such largely uninterpreted findings can stimulate thinking and make an analyst more sensitive to what is in his or her data. It can also suggest questions that a researcher can ask of participants. Themes or concepts derived from another study may have relevance to a researcher's present investigation in the sense that a researcher continues to develop or expand upon the concept. However, to repeat what we said earlier, researchers must be very careful to identify the form a concept takes in their study rather than simply borrowing from previous research or another researcher's study.

Supplying Questions for Initial Observations and Interviews

Before beginning a project, a researcher can turn to the literature to formulate questions for initial observations and interviews—especially if the intent is to conduct semi-structured interviews. Questions derived from the literature can also be used to satisfy human subjects committees by providing them with a list of conceptual areas to be investigated. After the first interview(s) or observation(s), the researcher can adjust questions based on concepts derived from analysis of initial data. Though new concepts will be derived from the data, at least the original questions or topic areas indicate the overall intent of the research and demonstrate a degree of professional knowledge in the researcher—something important to ethics and dissertation committees.

Stimulating Analytic Questions

The technical literature can also be used to stimulate questions during the analytic process. For example, when there is a discrepancy between a researcher's findings and that of other studies reported in the literature, that difference should stimulate the researcher to delve more deeply into his or her own data in order to identify contextual differences, recheck hypotheses, and examine assumptions.

Confirming Findings

When the investigation is over and it is time to write up the findings, the literature can be used to confirm findings or just the reverse—findings can be used to illustrate where the literature is incorrect, simplistic, or

only partially explains phenomena. Bringing the literature into the writing not only demonstrates scholarship but also allows for extending, validating, and refining knowledge in a field. A researcher who has done a thorough job of investigating his or her topic should not feel insecure about his or her discoveries—even if they do not match what is said in the published literature. Such discrepancies can point the way to new discoveries.

The Nontechnical Literature

Nontechnical literature consists of letters, biographies, diaries, reports, videotapes, memoirs, newspapers, catalogues, memos (scientific and otherwise), and a variety of other materials. The nontechnical literature can be used for all of the purposes just listed. In addition, it has the following uses:

- Primary data
- Supplemental data

Primary Data

The nontechnical literature can be used as primary data—especially when the investigation is of a historical or a biographical nature. Since it is often difficult to authenticate and determine the veracity of some historical documents, letters, memoirs, and biographies, it is very important to cross-check data by examining a wide variety of documents and supplementing these if possible with interviews and observations. In the chapters on analysis, beginning with Chapter 12, you will see how I made use of memoirs and historical documents as primary data.

Supplemental Data

The nontechnical literature can be used to supplement interviews and observations. For example, much can be learned about an organization, its structure, and how it functions (that may not immediately be visible in observations or interviews) by studying its reports, correspondence, and internal memos.

Theoretical Frameworks

Before closing off this chapter, I would like to say a few words about theoretical frameworks. Though theoretical frameworks are appropriate for use in many other types of qualitative research, we do not encourage their use in grounded theory studies. Keep in mind that the whole purpose of doing a grounded theory is to develop a theoretical explanatory framework, so why would a researcher want to begin the research with one? It would contradict the purpose of the method. However, once analysis has been completed, it makes sense for researchers to compare their theories to established theories for similarities and differences and to be able to locate their theories within the larger body of professional theoretical knowledge. The previously given explanation can be used to explain to committee members why there is no use of a theoretical framework.

Take note that in some qualitative research reports—even in grounded theory studies—there is sometimes a mention of the use of theoretical frameworks or philosophies. Next, we briefly describe how these are used:

- Justifying choice of methodology or approach
- Building upon a research program
- Offering alternative explanations

Justifying Choice of Methodology or Approach

A little different take on the use of theoretical frameworks occurs when researchers come to the investigation with a Marxist, feminist, or interactionist philosophical orientation. A perusal of journal articles reveals that qualitative researchers often use philosophies to justify their choice of a particular methodology. For example Cannaerts, Dierckx de Casterlé, and Grypdonck (2004) used the philosophy of symbolic interactionism to explain their choice of grounded theory as a methodology to study the nature of "palliative care." Reid (2004), at the onset of her research monograph titled "The Wounds of Exclusion," positioned herself as a feminist conducting feminist action research. In explaining what this means, she said, "In the rendered account that follows I have attempted to hold myself accountable back to the research participants and to myself for my critical analysis and responsible use of power" (p. 6).

Building Upon a Research Program

If researchers are interesting in extending a substantive theory developed from a previous study, they can use the previous theory to provide insight, direction, and an initial set of concepts to use as a starting point for developing new concepts and expanding old ones. However, researchers should *remain open* to the possibility that a previously developed theory may not fit with the new data and be willing to let go if they discover that the *imported* concepts do not fit. The importance of remaining open is essential even for experienced researchers working on their own programs of research. Take, for example, the concept of *awareness* derived from the Glaser, Strauss, and Benoliel study of dying reported in the book *Awareness of Dying* (Glaser & Strauss, 1965). The notion of different levels of awareness was used to explain how the various interactants (health professionals, family, and the dying person) managed information about a patient's knowledge of his or her dying. A researcher interested in developing a middle-range theory of *information management* could begin with awareness, as described by Glaser and Strauss, and use it as a basis for researching how information is revealed or kept secret in marital infidelities, by spies, and by closeted gays. New categories would most likely be discovered and previous categories elaborated. Through further research projects examining different populations, the concept of awareness could be raised to an even greater abstraction such as one of information management. See the Strauss (1995) article titled "Notes on the Nature and Development of General Theories" for a discussion on developing, checking, and linking general theories.

Theoretical frameworks developed from a grounded theory study can be used to guide future quantitative studies by suggesting variables to be investigated and research questions and for framing the research findings. For example, Vanhook (2007) used concepts derived by Corbin and Strauss (1991a, 1991b) through qualitative studies to guide her quantitative research of women with strokes. The concepts provide the structure for her study, down to her choice of measurement tools. Each tool was chosen to measure a component of comeback: physical recovery and rehabilitation, psychological adjustment to loss, and re-

adaptation to the life course.

Offering Alternative Explanations

There is not just one theory that can be developed from data. Different researchers coming from different perspectives and even the same researcher can come up with alternative theoretical explanations. For example, interviews from the Corbin and Strauss (1988) study of couples managing chronic conditions at home were initially analyzed from the standpoint of the "unending work and care" needed to keep chronic conditions stable, prevent crises, and live with disabilities. That same data could also have been analyzed from the perspective of the different forms of interaction that take place between couples regarding illness management, such as *collaboration, altercation,* or *separation.* Or the data could have been analyzed from a biographical perspective. That is how the biographies of each person and the couple are altered or changed when one or more partner has a serious chronic condition.

It is important to point out that even within a theory there are cases that don't seem to fit. Usually, these cases represent the extreme range of a concept rather than residing in the norm and can be presented as such. In cases that represent one or the other extreme of a concept, the researcher can offer an alternative explanation. Or perhaps the researcher needs to go back and rethink his or her theory and come up with an alternative scheme that has a better fit.

Summary of Key Points

This chapter covered many different topics—each related to getting started on the research inquiry. The topics include the research problem; the research question; data collection; important considerations before beginning data collection; perspectives, biases, and assumptions; the literature; and theoretical frameworks.

Choosing the right topic for investigation is very important. What is the right topic? It is one that has the potential to offer valuable and new knowledge to a field. There are several sources of research problems. A problem may be suggested by a professor or colleague. It may be derived from the literature or from a researcher's experience. Whatever the source of the problem, it is important that a researcher has an enthusiasm for the subject because he or she will have to live with it for some time. The research question is also important. The research question(s) specifies the topic to be covered during the research and helps the researcher to stay focused and avoid straying too far from the topic. The original question in a grounded theory study is often broad and open-ended. New questions arise during analysis, leading the researcher in directions often unanticipated at the beginning of the research.

There are many types of data that can be used in grounded theory studies. Almost anything can be used as data, including memoirs, documents, films, newspapers, and historical accounts. Also, more than one type of data can be used in the same study. The types of data most frequently used are interviews and observations. Analysis is only as good as the data that is collected. In grounded theory studies, unstructured interviews and observations are preferred because they allow participants the opportunity to discuss the issues and problems that are most important to them and to go into topics in considerable depth. Semi-structured interviews and

observations are sometimes used, but they do not provide the range and depth of data that are possible to collect in unstructured interviews. If semi-structured interviews are conducted, time should be allotted at the end of the interview for participants to add topics that are important to them. Structured interview guides are useful for doing surveys but are not recommended for grounded theory studies.

Maintaining self-awareness is an important consideration when doing grounded theory or any other form of qualitative research because of the direct involvement of the researcher in the research process. Assumptions, values, perspectives, experiences, and professional background enter into the decisions that a researcher makes during each phase of the research process but especially during data collection and analysis. Though it is impossible to free the research process entirely from intrusion of biases and assumptions, there are ways to keep intrusion to a minimum. The first thing to do is to acknowledge that biases and assumptions exist. Keeping a research journal is a good place to keep a record of reactions during data collection and analysis upon which a researcher can do a type of self-analysis. Another strategy for limiting the intrusion of biases and assumptions is in making use of grounded theory's analytic strategies. Some are designed to open up data and make the researcher aware of all the possible meanings that might be in data. The use of constant comparisons enables researchers to check and recheck the meanings they have assigned to data against incoming data.

Researchers come to the research process with some degree of knowledge of the literature related to their professional specialty and interests. It is impossible to discount this knowledge when planning a research project. The important thing to learn is when and how to use the literature so that it enhances rather than detracts from analysis. Having too much knowledge about the subject under investigation can bias interpretations and block discovery of new concepts. Furthermore, since concepts are derived from data during analysis, it is impossible for a researcher to know before beginning a study which concepts he or she thinks will be most significant to the theory. A researcher can do a thorough search of the literature once the theory is constructed and compare and contrast his or her concepts to those in the literature.

However, proposals and human subject and dissertation committee members require some knowledge of the literature and often an interview or observational guide. Technical literature can provide initial questions and concepts and, during the research itself, ideas for theoretical sampling. Nontechnical literature can be used as primary and supplemental data, for comparisons, and as the foundation for developing general theory. The important point for a researcher to remember is that the technical literature can hinder creativity if it is allowed to stand between the researcher and the data. But if it is used for comparative purposes, it can enhance the ability to identify properties and dimensions of concepts from data.

Though theoretical frameworks are sometimes used in qualitative research, their use is discouraged in grounded theory studies because the whole purpose of a grounded theory study is to construct theory. When broad perspectives such as symbolic interactionism, feminism, and Marxism are used, they tend to be used more as justification for the use of a particular methodology or as a guiding approach to the research rather than to structure analysis. Also, a researcher interested in developing a middle-range theory from a substantive theory can use a previously developed theory as a theoretical base for exploring the core concept across different groups, thereby increasing the theory's depth, breadth, and level of abstraction.

Activities for Thinking, Writing, and Discussing as a Group

1. Write a paragraph describing the source of the problem for your research topic. Or, if you don't have a topic, explain how you might go about finding one based on the information provided in this book.
2. Take your research topic and write two questions from it: one qualitative and one quantitative. Then, describe how the questions would lead to different methods of data collection and analysis.
3. Discuss how the technical literature can enhance or hinder the qualitative research process.
4. Peruse the research journals in your field, and note how the qualitative studies make use of theoretical or conceptual frameworks. Bring several examples to the group for discussion.
5. Discuss in class possible perspectives, biases, and assumptions that come from within the discipline, and explore how these might influence the research process. Discuss how keeping a research journal might increase self-awareness and limit intrusion.

Suggested Readings

Proposal Writing

Denicolo, P., & Becker, L. (2012). *Developing research proposals.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Design

Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Interviewing

Brinkmann, S. (2014). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Salmons, J., Vision2Lead, Inc., & Capella University. (2014). *Qualitative online interviews: Strategies, design, and skills* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fieldwork

Lofland, J., Snow, D., Anderson, L., & Lofland, L. (2006). *Analyzing social settings* (4th ed.).Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Rossman, G. B., & Rallis, S. F. (2012). *An introduction to qualitative research* (3rd ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Assumptions and Bias

Wicker, A. (1985). Getting out of our conceptual ruts: Strategies for expanding conceptual frameworks. *American Psychologists, 40*(10), 1094–1103.

Ethics

Hammersley, M., & Trainou, A. (2012). *Ethics in qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lynn, L. R., & Goldsmith R. E. (2013). *Case studies for ethics in academic research in the social sciences.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sieber, J. E., & Tolich, M. B. (2013). *Planning ethically responsible research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Chapter 4
Prelude to Analysis

> In reading of scientific discoveries one is sometimes struck by the simple and apparently easy observations which have given rise to great and far-reaching discoveries making scientists famous. But in retrospect we see the discovery with its significance established. Originally the discovery usually has no intrinsic significance; the discoverer gives it significance by relating it to other knowledge, and perhaps by using it to derive further knowledge. (Beveridge, 1963, p. 141)

Table 4.1 Key Terms

Analytic tools: Mental strategies used by analysts to assist with interpretation of data. Making constant comparisons is an example of such a tool.

Coding: Denoting concepts to stand for meaning

Concepts: Words used by analysts to stand for interpreted meaning

Dimensions: The range over which a property can vary; an important concept in grounded theory because it accounts for differences and brings density to the theory

"Feels right": Indicates that after being immersed in the data for some time a researcher has a certain degree of confidence that interpreted meanings reflect what participants are trying to convey through words and actions and emotions

Memos: Written records of analysis. See Chapter 6.

Microanalysis: Detailed coding for and around a concept, looking for properties and dimensions

Properties: Characteristics or qualities of concepts that define, give specificity, and differentiate one concept from another

Qualitative analysis: Thought processes that go on when interpreting data and assigning concepts to stand for meaning

A researcher cannot continue to collect data forever. Sooner or later, *something* has to be done with that data to give it significance. That something is termed *analysis.*

What is **qualitative analysis** or **coding**? *Coding* and *analysis* are often used interchangeably. However, for us there is a difference. Some persons think of coding as going through data and denoting **concepts** to stand for that data. The end product is a list of codes. There is no record of the thought processes that went into denoting those concepts. So the question remains on what basis was that interpretation made? *Analysis* for us

refers to both the concept and the thought processes that go behind assigning meaning to data. Analysis is exploratory and gives consideration to different possible meanings in data and then keeps a record of the thought that took place before arriving at a possible meaning. The thought process is recorded in a memo. This makes analysis a dynamic and evolving process. Meanings are assigned and reassigned based on comparisons with incoming data.

To arrive at meaning, analysts brainstorm, make comparisons, try out different ideas, eliminate some interpretations, and expand upon others before finally arriving at an interpretation. Let us provide the following example to make this point and set the tone for the chapter to follow. A sculptor friend of Dr. Strauss once invited us to his workshop. While there, we started to talk about creativity. Around the workshop were pieces of metal of various shapes and forms. The sculptor explained how he works. First, he studies different pieces of metal to see the possibilities contained within them while letting his imagination run free. Once he gets a vision in his mind, he tries it out. If the resulting piece of sculpture doesn't *work* aesthetically, it is dismantled, and the process is repeated again and again until the sculpture looks and **"feels right."** It's the same with analysis. Of course, not just one piece of "sculpture" or theory can be created from the same group of materials or data. The concepts and theory that are finally constructed have to feel right to the analyst. This can only be arrived at after considerably trying out different conceptions during analysis. Another analyst may arrive at a different theory. As with different sculptors, even when working with the same material, different outcomes are possible.

Points to Keep in Mind

When reading this chapter, students are advised to keep the following points in mind:

- Aims of research
- The nature of qualitative analysis
- The use of analytic tools in analysis
- The logic of grounded theory analysis
- Ethics

Aims of Research

There are three main outcomes possible when doing qualitative research. There is description, conceptual ordering, and theory. The purpose of grounded theory is to construct theory. Thus, theory construction is being emphasized throughout this book. However, not all qualitative researchers are interested in theory building. Some are more interested in doing grounded description or something we call "conceptual ordering." The choice between description, conceptual ordering, and theory depends upon the training, skill, time, type of qualitative method used, and purpose of the research. Since beginning researchers often have difficulty distinguishing between the different possibilities, in this section of the chapter we'll discuss description,

conceptual ordering, and theory.

- Description
- Conceptual ordering
- Theory

Description

People commonly describe objects, people, scenes, events, actions, emotions, moods, and aspirations in their everyday conversations. Not only do ordinary people describe, but also so do journalists and novelists as well as technical, travel, and other nonfiction writers. Description draws on ordinary vocabulary to convey ideas about things, people, and places. For example, one might hear, "The streets were quiet early in the morning, and I looked forward to hitting the open road in my new convertible automobile." Description also makes use of similes and metaphors when ordinary words fail to make the point or more colorful mental pictures are called for (Lakoff & Johnson, 1981). Consider the following scene described by Márquez (1993): "It was a brilliant morning in early August. One of those exemplary postwar summer Sundays when the light was like a daily revelation, and the enormous ship inched along, with an invalid's labored breathing, through a transparent stillwater" (p. 117). The imagery is colorful and vivid, and it is easy for the reader to put him- or herself into the scene.

Description Is Part of Communicating

Persons literally could not communicate without the ability to describe. Description is needed to convey what is going on, what a setting looks like, and what people are doing and saying. The use of descriptive language can make ordinary events seem extraordinary. Great writers, like Gabriel Garcia Márquez and Gustave Flaubert, know this and strive to make their details so vivid that readers can actually see, taste, smell, and hear what is going on in a scene. Even those of us with less well-developed narrating or writing skills use description to relate our adventures, thoughts, and feelings to others.

Descriptions Are Not Objective

Descriptions may seem objective, but they are not. Even basic description involves purpose (otherwise why describe?) and audiences (who will see or hear the description?) and the selective eye of the viewer (Wolcott, 1994). For example, police reports are focused on criminal or investigative issues. Though certainly subject to personal and political bias and perspective, they are relatively straightforward and meant to be read primarily by superiors and other interested parties. Journalists' accounts of newsworthy criminal events are likely to be written more colorfully. The latter tend to reflect some personal, political, or organizational stance and are meant to inform and move newspaper readers.

Descriptions Are Selective

In short, the descriptive details chosen by writers are usually consciously or unconsciously selected based on what they saw or heard, or thought important. Though description is often meant to convey believability and to portray images, it is also designed to persuade, convince, express, or arouse passions. Descriptive words can

carry overt and covert moral judgments. This can be true not merely of sentences but entire books—as in exposés or in serious volumes that aim at reform. Even seemingly objective reports like those of police or journalists may reflect deep prejudice and moral judgments, without the individual being aware of those attitudes and feelings. Aesthetic judgments, too, are conveyed through descriptions: "The young soprano's voice was delicate, airy, though at the upper ranges she occasionally wobbled just the slightest, but generally conveyed the spirit of the character; she has a great future in opera." Sometimes the aesthetic and the moral are joined. Take, for example, the negative reaction of critics and audiences to early Impressionist paintings. Later, these same paintings became the favorites of museum visitors and art collectors throughout the world, bringing to their present owners millions of dollars when they go up for auction.

Description as the Basis for Greater Abstraction

It is important to understand that description is the basis for more abstract interpretations. Descriptions already embody concepts, at least implicitly. Even at the highest levels of abstract science, there could be no scientific hypotheses and theoretical or laboratory activity without prior or accompanying descriptions. Though description is clearly not theory, description is basic to theorizing.

Example of a Descriptive Study

Chaiyawat and Jezewski (2006) did a descriptive study on "School-Age Children's Perception of Fear."

This study examined how 13 school-age children in grades 3 to 6 described fear from their perspectives. The data were analyzed using content analysis within a framework of grounded theory method. Findings revealed several culturally specific aspects of fear. The most common fears expressed were fear of ugliness and violence. Other fears included being alone, being in the dark, seeing blood, hearing about or seeing renditions of spirits and ghosts, and being exposed to death and the dead. Under ugliness came fear of reptiles, such as crocodiles and snakes, and cockroaches. Though most children expressed fear of ghosts, the fear was related only to those with ugly faces. In relationship to violence, car accidents were a major source of fear, along with fire and violence on TV. Fear reactions were categorized as being physical, mental, and behavioral. To handle their fears, children developed coping strategies with avoidance being the most common strategy. Children turned away, closed their eyes, covered their eyes, and ran away. Being protected and secure also reduced the fear. Another coping strategy was being distracted either by the children distracting themselves or being distracted by others.

Notice that this study produced some interesting but not very complex findings. The findings are reported under three main categories, or themes, of *fear reactions, types of fears,* and *strategies for handling the fears.* Under each category, there is much descriptive information. However, there is no attempt to explain or theorize regarding why such fears exist in Thai children by relating them to conditions or to explain how and why fears develop and change over time and which types of strategies are most likely to reduce fears under which conditions. There is no core explanatory concept to pull the findings together.

Conceptual Ordering

Description is also basic to what we call *conceptual ordering*. The latter refers to the organization of data into discrete categories (and sometimes ratings) according to their **properties** and **dimensions**, then the utilization of the description to elucidate those categories. Most social science analyses consist of some variety—and there are many types—of conceptual ordering. Researchers attempt to make sense out of their data by organizing them according to a classificatory scheme, such as types or stages. In the process, items are identified from data and defined according to their various general properties and dimensions. Take restaurant ratings such as in the *Michelin Guide*. Restaurants are often rated dimensionally ranging from three stars to no stars based on properties such as quality, taste, presentation, ambience, value, and the complexity of the wine list. How each restaurant varies dimensionally across each property provides the basis for the more general rating. Ratings of restaurants are often biased toward reviewers' preferences, which do not necessarily reflect the taste of the general public. Yet to be given three stars, two, or even one in the *Michelin Guide* is very prestigious and assures a restaurant's success. When presenting ratings, researchers are almost certain to include various amounts of descriptive material to explain their ratings. The chief reason to discuss conceptual ordering is because this type of analysis is a precursor to theorizing through its development of properties and dimensions.

We have no example of conceptual ordering, though conceptual ordering is probably well known to most researchers in the form of measurements. If one wanted to conceptually order the results of the previously given study, one might take each of the three major themes of the research, putting the most important first, and under each list the specific descriptive concepts and ask respondents to rate these. For example, under types of fears, each specific type of fear, such as ghosts, death, blood, etc., could be listed and the children asked to rate themselves from 1 to 5 according to how much fear they felt when confronted with each of these objects. The same could be done with strategies such as on a scale of 1 to 5, which strategy are you most likely to use when you see images of ghosts, etc.?

Theory

What do we mean by *theory*? For us, theory denotes a set of well-developed categories (themes, concepts) that are systematically developed in terms of their properties and dimensions and interrelated through statements of relationship to form a theoretical framework that explains something about a phenomenon (Hage, 1972, p. 34). The cohesiveness of the theory occurs when a researcher designates an even more abstract concept (the core concept) to stand above the other concepts. The core abstract concept summarizes in a word or two what the theory is all about and provides a means for integrating the other concepts around it. It is this last step of integration of concepts around a core concept that elevates description or conceptual ordering to the level of theory.

Theory Remains Relevant

In recent years, theory development seems to have fallen out of favor, being replaced by *lived experience* and *narrative stories*. Not everything can or should be reduced to one clever theory or theoretical explanatory scheme, as helpful as that theory might be. However, theory remains relevant as a foundation for explaining

phenomena and for providing concepts and hypotheses for subsequent research. A person has to wonder where the world would be if there were only stories and no theories. We probably would never have been able to put a man on the moon, develop computers, or build houses out of glass. Researchers have to make choices and should choose the approach to research that is most suitable to the problem under investigation and to their time, interest, and motivation.

Theorizing Involves Defining and Differentiating Concepts

Theorizing is interpretive and entails not only condensing raw data into different levels of concepts but also developing concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions (the level of description). However, theory construction does not end there. The most important aspect of theory is showing the relationship between concepts by (a) defining the main issue, event, or problem area under investigation as perceived by participants; (b) explaining the potential context for action–interaction; (c) relating the action and interaction to the meaning given to problem, issue, or event and explaining how this action and interaction is subject to change with changes in context; and (d) relating the results or outcomes to action and interaction. Constructing theory necessitates that an idea be explored fully and considered from many different angles or perspectives. The *research activities* entail researchers making comparisons and decisions and acting in relationship to a multitude of questions that arise along the entire course of the research. At the heart of theorizing lies the interplay between researcher and data out of which concepts are identified, developed in terms of their properties and dimensions, and integrated around a core category through *statements denoting the relationships between them all.*

Different Levels of Theory

Theories may be substantive, middle range, or formal (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 32–34). A theory of *information management* derived from a study of how gays handle disclosure–nondisclosure of their sexual identity to physicians is an example of a substantive theory. The broader concept of information management, derived from the first study, can be used next to study disclosure and nondisclosure by car dealers trying to influence the choice of cars in potential buyers. Studying information management in another setting such as car salesmen will add more concepts, further develop and broaden original concepts, and potentially increase the abstraction of the core category, thereby raising the theory to a middle-range theory. If a researcher takes the middle-range theory of information management and uses it to study disclosure and nondisclosure between two countries negotiating a nuclear disarmament and as a result of that study adds more concepts and raises the level of abstraction even higher, he or she is on the way to developing a more general theory. In other words, formal theories are less specific to a group or place, are broader, denser, and can be used to understand a wider range of social concerns and problems. It is the investigation of a broad concept such as information management in many different types of situations that enables a substantive theory to become a formal theory and have broader applicability.

Example of a Theory-Developing Study

Zoffmann and Kirkevold (2005) conducted a grounded theory study at a Danish university hospital in

which they investigated the interactions between 11 persons with diabetes who had poor glycemic control and their health care providers. The researchers identified "Keeping Life and Disease Apart" as the core category of the study. The relationship between health care professionals and patients was characterized by one of disconnection and conflict. Though both groups shared the goal of improving glycemic blood levels, professionals gave different priorities to life versus disease control when it came to solving the problem of how much priority to place on the illness and its regimen and how much to place on life. The researchers identified three different interactional approaches used by health professionals during their diabetes control counseling and explained it was the interactions that determined the nature of the conflicts. Conflicts were reported to remain unchanged when health professionals took a *compliance-expecting approach* to care. Conflicts became more pronounced and the relationship deteriorated when professionals took the *failure-expecting approach* to care. However, conflicts were diminished or resolved in the *mutuality-expecting approach* to care.

Note that these authors developed a substantive or topic-specific theory. They identified the nature of the conflict as one characterized by disconnect and conflict between health care professionals and patients; hence, "Keeping Life and Disease Apart" explained that conflict arose between the two groups because each group placed different priorities on normalizing life versus disease control. The authors identified three patterns of interaction used by health professionals and showed the relationship between the nature of interactions and outcomes. In other words, the researchers theorized that the nature of interaction between health professionals and patients regarding control over glycemic blood levels led to situations in which conflict was sustained, increased, or diminished. They tied it all together by using the concept of "Keeping Life and Disease Apart" to define the phenomenon around which the conflict centered.

The Nature of Qualitative Analysis

We've made the argument previously that we think of analysis or coding as more than going through a document and denoting concepts at the end of each line to stand for data. There is a series of mental activities that take place that somehow lead to the label that is placed on data. Of course, all researchers who are denoting concepts from data go through some sort of interpretive process that they may or may not be conscious of. We believe that interpretation is a very complex process that should never be taken lightly and that the process the research goes through in arriving at their interpretations should be a conscious one as much as possible. In this next section, we want to explain just what analysis is. Having this background will make it easier to go about doing analysis in a more conscious way. Now some students may find this discussion too abstract. They may want to skip it and go right on to strategies for analysis. This chapter is optional. However, we believe it is important. More experienced researchers might find it reinforcing, and novice researchers might want to come back to it once they've read more of the book and have some experience with doing analysis.

One way to describe analysis is in terms of its properties. In this next section, we'll list the various properties of analysis and discuss each in some depth. Here is a list of the properties:

- Analysis is an art and a science.
- Analysis involves interpretation.
- Analysts are interpreters and conveyors of meaning.
- More than one theory can be derived from data.
- Concepts form the basis of analysis.
- There are different levels of analysis.
- Analysis is a process.
- Analysis begins with the collection of the first pieces of data.
- Early analysis is generative.
- Delineating context is an important aspect of analysis.
- Analysts make use of analytic tools to carry out analysis.

Analysis Is an Art and a Science

Analysis is both an art and a science (Patton, 2002). The *art* aspect has to do with the creative use of procedures to solve analytic problems and the ability to construct a coherent and explanatory theory from data, a theory that feels right to the researcher. To bring the art aspect into analysis, a researcher must remain flexible in his or her use of procedures. He or she must learn to think outside the box, trust his or her instincts, and be willing to take risks. Dr. Strauss used to say that analysts have to be able to spin straw (raw data) into gold (theory). The art aspect of research transcends all forms of research, and it is doubtful that any significant piece of research could be accomplished without it. Beveridge (1963) explained it this way:

> *New knowledge very often has its origins in some quite unexpected observation or chance occurrence arising during an investigation.... Interpreting the clue and realizing its significance requires knowledge without fixed ideas, imagination, scientific taste and a habit of contemplating all unexplained observations. (p. 147)*

Art of Analysis

The art of analysis requires knowing what ideas to pursue, how far to develop an idea, when to let go, and how to keep a balance between conceptualization and description.

Though qualitative research is an art, there must also be the science part to call the product research. Sandelowski (1994) said the following:

> *Celebrating the art in qualitative research is not an imprimatur for anarchy or for ignorance. Qualitative researchers are not free to make wild forays into fancy; they make, but cannot fake. Nor are they free to be ignorant of the logic and aesthetic of the varieties of research strategies encompassed by the label qualitative research. (p. 58)*

The Science of Analysis

The science aspect of qualitative research is not "science" in the traditional sense of experimental designs and hypothesis testing. The science comes from "grounding" interpretations in data. Interpretations are not wild guesses. Interpretations are based on data and are always under scrutiny and validated against further data (Blumer, 1969, pp. 25–26; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). When we use the term *validate,* we don't mean to imply that we are testing hypotheses in a quantitative sense. *Validating* here refers more to checking out

interpretations with participants and against data during the actual research process and altering or discarding interpretations that appear to be contradicted by incoming data. In this way, a system of checks and balances is built into the analytic process, though as with all systems it is not perfect.

Balance

In all qualitative analysis, there has to be a balance between the art and science. Though findings are constructions, they are not "novels" in the traditional sense of imaginative yarns or tales meant to entertain. There can be no flights of fancy, as Sandelowski (1994) stated. Nor is qualitative research controlled laboratory science. How far the analysis varies dimensionally from art to science depends upon the philosophic background of the researcher, his or her discipline, and the qualitative method he or she is using.

Analysis Involves Interpretation

Analysis involves making interpretations after careful consideration (Blumer, 1969). Interpreting means assigning meaning to raw data in the form of concepts. The very notion of interpreting implies that a concept is a researchers' understanding of the meaning implicit in the words and actions of participants. Denzin (1998) stated the following:

> *Interpretation is a productive process that sets forth the multiple meanings of an event, object, experience, or test. Interpretation is transformation. It illuminates, throws light on experience. It brings out, and refines, as when butter is clarified, the meanings that can be sifted from a text, an object, or slice of experience. (p. 322)*

Denzin (1998) does not stop there. He went on to say, "So conceived, meaning is not in a text, nor does interpretation precede experience, or its representation. Meaning, interpretation, and representation are deeply intertwined in one another" (p. 322).

Concerns Regarding Interpretations

When doing analysis, there is always the concern: "Am I interpreting the data correctly?" "Am I being true to the data?" Naturally, researchers want to do the best research they can. Even experienced researchers sometimes have insecurities when approaching data. However, there is no need to fear qualitative research or analysis. Qualitative analysis builds upon natural ways of thinking. To quote Schatzman (1986), "Underlying this paper is the contention that analysis is a natural process of thinking learned very early in social life along with language and almost constantly in experience" (p. 1). Every day, we as human beings are interpreting our own and other's actions. The only difference is that when analyzing data we use procedures more self-consciously and aim for more accurate interpretations.

Interpreting, Though Not Exact, Has Value

Though interpretations are not exact replications of data but analysts' impressions of that data, it does not mean that findings are novels. Interpretation is not exact science. It never can be. But the very fact that something is an interpretation doesn't mean that it is flawed to the point of being irrelevant or useless. Doing qualitative research remains an important endeavor. It can open minds, bring another's experience to life, and explain that which we might not otherwise understand. Just as research can change or improve the lives of participants and others, going through the research process can also make a difference in the life of the person

doing the research. It certainly changed my nursing practice. It brought me out of the role of an "authority on health care" to one of cocreator or negotiator of care with my patients (Corbin & Cherry, 1997). Through qualitative research, I learned that patients often knew more about their illnesses, their body's responses to them, the problems, and the regimens designed to control them than I could ever know because they had to live with their conditions every day. Therefore, patients' input should be considered when planning care.

Analysis Is Never Finished

One additional point is relevant. Analysis is never quite finished, no matter how long a researcher works on a study. Since researchers are always thinking about their data, they are able to extend, amend, and reinterpret interpretations as new insights into data arise with continued immersion. Such revisions are part of the qualitative process. As Denzin and Lincoln (1998) stated in the introduction to Part II of *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials,* "Part II explores the art and politics of interpretation and evaluation, arguing that the processes of analysis, evaluation, and interpretation are neither terminal nor mechanical. They are always ongoing, emergent, unpredictable, and unfinished" (pp. 275–276).

Analysts Are Interpreters and Conveyors of Meaning

When analysts interpret data, they are translators in the form of concepts of other persons' words and actions. They make the voices of other persons heard and are the go-betweens for participants and the audiences they want to reach. As every language translator knows, it is not easy to ascertain meaning. Words can have different meanings from one language to another and from one situation to another. I learned this from experience. On more than one occasion, I have worked with translators while teaching in a foreign country. Invariably, students who are fluent in the two languages laugh at something the interpreter says because the direct translation conveys something other than what I intended. Or students will tell me that they are not certain how much of the presentation was understood by the general audience because the translation was so poor. Obviously, something was lost in translation. Though it is discouraging to me when I hear students say the translation of a book or presentation was "not very good," it does provide a lesson for all of us who are attempting to bring the words of our participants to life through research. Interpretations are not exact, and sometimes researchers are a bit "off." Furthermore, some interpreters are better at it than others. And because qualitative analysis is not an exact science, interpretations will never be 100 percent accurate.

More Than One Theory Can Be Derived From Data

It is impossible to say that there is only one theory that can be constructed from data because qualitative data are inherently rich in substance and full of possibilities. Though participants speak about a topic, they don't determine the perspective or lens through which the analyst will interpret it. It is possible for different analysts to arrive at different conclusions even about the same data because each is examining the data with a different analytic focus or from a different perspective. Furthermore, the same analyst might look at the same data differently at different times. In other words, data talk to different analysts in different ways. For example, interviews with persons who have chronic illnesses can be examined from the angle of illness management (Corbin & Strauss, 1988), identity and self (Charmaz, 1983), and suffering (Morse, 2001, 2005; Riemann &

Schütze, 1991). If someone were to examine the interviews conducted by these respective researchers—especially if they are unstructured interviews—that person would find that the interviews are not that much different in substance. What is different is the prism through which the analyst viewed the data. Management, identity, and suffering can all be found in data about chronic illness, and all are valid interpretations. Each of these interpretations presents a slightly different perspective on chronic illness, and that taken together helps to understand the phenomenon more holistically.

Concepts Form the Basis of Analysis

When doing analysis, analysts turn raw data into concepts. The concept that stands for the raw data is based on the meaning analysts believe is conveyed by participants in that data. The reason for using concepts rather than raw data is that concepts allow analysts to group similar data under one heading, thereby reducing the amount of data analysts are working with. In addition, concepts are the bricks that form the structure of theory. Concepts are how we communicate; they are part of language and contain within them cultural as well as personal meanings.

There Are Different Levels of Analysis

Analysis can range from the superficial to in-depth. Superficial analysis tends to skim the top of data. Superficial analysis does not challenge thinking, nor does it present new understandings. In-depth analysis digs beneath the surface of data to explore all possible meanings. In-depth analysis develops concepts in terms of their properties and dimensional variations. Since in-depth analysis goes deeper into a subject, it is likely to generate new and broader knowledge. Of course, doing this type of analysis takes more time and effort. Though these authors are biased toward taking the time to do an in-depth analysis, they also recognize that researchers have different levels of motivation, priorities, training, direction, and resources available to them to carry out their research projects. Many would-be qualitative researchers lack trained mentors to guide them. These researchers are often uncertain about how to proceed, lack confidence, and often do not even know what constitutes "good" analysis. They may go from method book to method book, looking for answers, finally doing what they can manage on their own, often settling for less than what they intended or are capable of. Then, too, some research projects do not demand a detailed analysis. There might be a few questions added to a quantitative study that require some degree of qualitative analysis. In such projects, a summary of major themes may be sufficient. At the other extreme, it is possible to overdo analysis, making it so detailed that reading the report is boring.

Analysis Is a Process

Analysis is a process that goes on throughout the research. Researchers are constantly updating and revising concepts, adding new concepts, identifying new properties and dimensions, and seeing new relationships between concepts. This is what qualitative analysis is about. Theory grows as insights grow, and insights grow with greater immersion in data. Since analysis and re-analysis could go on forever, researchers have to determine when it is time to let go, accepting that every study will have its limitations.

Analysis Begins With the Collection of the First Pieces of Data

Novice researchers often ask, "When should I begin the analysis?" In grounded theory, research analysis ideally begins after completing the first interview or observation and continues that way throughout the research process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987). This integrated approach to data collection and analysis allows researchers to identify relevant concepts, validate them, and explore them more fully in terms of their properties and dimensions. The gathering of data based on analysis of previous data is termed *theoretical sampling*. Theoretical sampling is essential to constructing in-depth and broad theory. More will be said about theoretical sampling in Chapter 7.

Danger of Collecting All the Data at Once

Though the ideal in grounded theory is to follow up every data-collection session with analysis, this is not always possible. Sometimes researchers travel long distances to collect the data and have to go from one data-collection session to another. Or life gets in the way and it is time to conduct another scheduled interview before analyzing the previous one. However, whenever possible we advocate following up each data-collection session with analysis. The danger of going out to collect more data before analyzing previous data is twofold. First, theoretical sampling is difficult or impossible because the researcher can't follow up and gather the type of data necessary to develop a concept fully. Second, a researcher is likely to feel overwhelmed when confronted with masses of data that need to be analyzed. Integrating data analysis into data collection provides a sense of direction of where to go and what to do next. It allows the researcher to stay on top of the research process.

Early Analysis Is Generative

At first, analysis is open and free, much like brainstorming. The open and generative nature of early analysis is difficult for some researchers to comprehend and much less accept—especially those steeped in the rigors of quantitative approaches. Beginning qualitative researchers often worry that somehow brainstorming and trying out possible meanings indicates that they are "putting something" on the data. What novice researchers don't realize is how easy it is to jump to conclusions about the meaning of data. Taking the time to consider all possible meanings helps researchers to avoid early foreclosure and to become more aware of their own assumptions and how these enter into interpretations.

Delineating Context Is an Important Aspect of Analysis

When collecting data and doing analysis, delineating the context or the conditions under which something happens, is said, done, or felt is just as important as coming up with the "right" concept to stand for data. Context not only grounds concepts but also minimizes the chances of distorting meaning or misrepresenting intent. Filmmakers and novelists can take events, words, or pictures out of context and insert them into other contexts to make a political or social statement. They can spin, twist, add, subtract, or embellish characters and events as they see fit to shape a story according their creative visions. But researchers are not working with the same creative license. They have to be true to the data as much as possible.

Analysts Make Use of Analytic Tools to Carry Out Analysis

Analytic tools are the mental strategies that researchers use when doing analysis. Making constant comparisons and asking questions of data are examples of such tools. Every analyst, whether conscious of it or not, uses mental strategies during analysis. Think of going to the grocery store to buy oranges and being confronted with two bins of oranges that are each of a different variety. What takes places is a type of analysis. The shopper examines the oranges from each bin in terms of size, color, quality, and price; makes a judgment about value; and then buys the oranges that are the best value for the intended purpose. In this book, we make use of the same types of strategies used in everyday life—only we try to make their use more self-conscious and systematic. The analytic strategies we present include some of our own. Others have been borrowed from other analysts. In fact, we have devoted Chapter 5 to exploring these techniques.

Choice of Strategies

The choice of strategies analysts use depends upon the training, experience, and skill of the researcher. As analysts become more comfortable working with data, they are more likely to expand the use of strategies drawing from a repertoire developed over the years. Analysts should use the strategies with which they feel most comfortable, matching the strategy to fit the analytic task at hand.

Microanalysis

In the 1998 edition of this book, we talked about a form of analysis we termed *microanalysis*, a form of open coding. When analyzing data and denoting concepts to stand for meaning, we are coding or creating a set of codes. One of the questions that students often have is, "How does microanalysis differ from other kinds of coding or analysis?" Microanalysis is a form of coding that is open, detailed, and exploratory. It is designed to focus on certain pieces of data and to explore their meaning in greater depth and develop concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions. Microanalysis is most likely to be used in the early exploratory stages of analysis when an analyst is trying to get some sense of the meaning of data and to find concepts that reflect that meaning. Microanalysis is a very valuable tool. It is like using a high-powered microscope to examine each piece of datum up close. We, the authors, often begin our research projects using microanalysis, and Strauss used it a lot in his seminars on analysis. In microanalysis, we are generating possibilities and at the same time checking out those possibilities against data, discarding those that prove to be irrelevant and revising interpretations as needed. (For a brief example of microanalysis, see the excerpt from a class session located at the end of this section.) This section of the chapter will explore the following topics:

- The value of microanalysis
- Misconceptions about microanalysis
- Microanalysis complements more general analysis
- Example of microanalysis

The Value of Microanalysis

Why do we value microanalysis so highly? We value it because it enables us to think differently about things. Think about Einstein and Darwin. They were able to arrive at conclusions that went against the conventional wisdom of the time because they were careful observers of detail and kept an open and exploratory mind about what they were seeing. Blumer (1969) said it a little differently but very well:

> *How does one get close to the empirical social world and dig deeply into it? This is not a simple matter of just approaching a given area and looking at it. It is a tough job requiring a high order of careful and honest probing, creative yet disciplined imagination, resourcefulness and flexibility in study, pondering over what one is finding, and a constant readiness to test and recast one's views and images of the area. (p. 40)*

Misconceptions About Microanalysis

Though most persons agree that microanalysis is a valuable analytic tool—especially once they see it in action—there remains the misconception that we advocate the use of microanalysis throughout a project. That would be a daunting task, and it is likely that the analysis would never get done. The truth is that microanalysis is used selectively and usually at the beginning of a project. Its purpose is to open up the data and generate ideas, to get the researcher deep into the data, and to focus in on pieces of data that seem relevant but whose meaning remains elusive. It also helps to prevent early foreclosure because it forces a researcher to think outside of his or her frame of reference. It is time consuming and takes some practice. But the payoff is considerable.

This reminds me of a story often told by my husband. When he was working as an engineering manager, problems often arose in the product line, and he would send his engineers to look for the problem. Often, the engineers would speculate that the problem was due to "this or that" without closely observing and analyzing the situation. Based on speculation rather than observation or testing, they wanted to make changes in a procedure—changes that could be very costly if their hypotheses were wrong. Whenever engineers behaved in this way, my husband would ask, "But how do you know this is the problem? Did you study the problem and gather all the data that would confirm or negate your assumptions?" Usually the answer was no. My husband would send the engineers back to the field and tell them not to return until they microscopically studied the problem and had all the necessary detail in hand. Studying data closely takes time in the beginning, but it saves time later because the researcher has a solid foundation for moving forward with the analysis.

Microanalysis Complements More General Analysis

Microanalysis complements and supplements a more general analysis. Whereas microanalysis looks at the detail, general analysis steps back and looks at the data from a broader perspective: "What are all these data telling us?" It is easier to do—especially for beginning analysts who might be unsure of themselves. Though microanalysis and general analysis are used together in our approach to analysis, some researchers prefer a more general analysis—especially if they are interested in gross identification of themes and not so interested in the details involved in concept development. However, even when doing a more general analysis, one must still challenge one's interpretations. Each possible interpretation should be checked out against incoming data before arriving at any conclusions. With more general analysis, there is less depth to analysis, and one can easily jump to conclusions. Again, it gets down to balance, not under- or overdoing microanalysis or general analysis but knowing just when and how to use each.

Example of Microanalysis

Next is an example of a class session conducted in the early 1990s. The class was doing microanalysis under the guidance of Dr. Strauss. (See Strauss, 1987, pp. 82–108, for a longer example of open coding.)

Class Session

Before moving into the next chapter, we'd like to provide a brief example of microanalysis taken from one of our class sessions. What is so interesting about the session is how many possibilities are generated from just one small piece of data and how words often take on different meanings depending upon how they are used or interpreted. Also note how the variety of interpretations guide deeper exploration of the data and give rise to comparative analysis.

Field note quotation:

When I heard the diagnosis, it was scary. I panicked. Everything was doing well early in this pregnancy and I felt good: no morning sickness and I had a lot of energy. Then all of a sudden, I was told I had diabetes. What a shock since this is my first baby. My main concern is for the baby. I worry about the baby. I want this baby so much. I am really scared 'cause I waited so long to have this baby, and I don't want anything to go wrong.

Class Discussion and Commentary

T = teacher

S = any student

T: Let's focus on the first word *when.* What could *when* mean?

S: It represents time to me. A point in time. Some time, indeterminately, in the past.

T: Well, it could stand for some time in the future, like, "When the telephone rings I will answer, because I anticipate he will be calling."

S: *When* also stands for a *condition*: something is happening that a question forced you to look at.

T: Suppose the word isn't *when,* but *whenever.* What then?

S: Then it means to me there's a repeated time—a pattern of something happening.

T: So that's a different kind of condition for something that follows because of some event or events.

T: But suppose instead of *when,* the speaker said "at the time"?

S: Oh, then it might mean telling a story with the *when* further back in time, maybe.

T: Okay, so far we have been minutely focused on that single word and some variant

alternatives. Now, what about possible *properties* of *when*?

S: It could be sudden. Or not sudden. . . . Or unexpected (or not). . . . Or the accompanying events noticed only by you and not by others or noticed by others, too. . . . Or they might be unimportant—or very important.

T: We could dream up lots of properties of this *when* and its accompanying event(s). There's no end to them, and only some of them might be relevant to your investigation and in the data, though that has to be discovered. But notice how my *question* forces you to look at *properties* and *dimensions.* Now, let's think about the phrase "I heard the diagnosis." What about that first word *I*?

S: Could have been we who heard—or was told the diagnosis—or they, like parents. This would have made a difference.

T: And *under what conditions* would it be told to a kinsmen, or parent, or to the patient? And what might be the different consequences of this? Now what about the verb *heard*?

S: Oh, a diagnosis might be written. Or shown to the patient (also), like on an X-ray if she were diagnosed for TB or had a shattered hip.

T: Presumably there'd be different conditions in which each of those would occur as well as perhaps different *consequences* of them. TB is interesting, because often the diagnosis is accompanied by the listener's skepticism; therefore, the physician shows the X-ray. Of course, the patient is unlikely to be able to interpret it, so he or she has to take the diagnosis on faith—or reject it if not trusting—so we are talking about the issue of legitimacy of the diagnosis. That gets us methodologically into the question of the possibly different relevant *properties* of diagnoses. What might some be?

S: A partial list of properties named by the students are "difficult to make," "obscure versus well known," "symbolic like cancer, or not particularly symbolic," "important (to oneself, to others, to the physician, to all)," "expected or not," "awful or actually reassuring when worst is expected or preceded by days of anxious waiting," "easily believable."

T: Then there are some interesting *theoretical questions* about the announcements of diagnoses, and the *structural issues* behind the answer to each. *Who* (and why)? (Your well-known family physician, a strange specialist, a resident in the hospital, or if you are a child then your mother?) *How* (and why this way)? (Think of the difference between a sudden and abrupt announcement in an emergency ward, by an attending resident, to a mother of "your child has died" as compared to how coroners pace their announcement of death after knocking on the door of a spouse. *When?* Right away, after a judicious interval, etc. Or when other the father had arrived so that both could be told about their child's death? In hospitals, if someone dies at night, the nurse usually doesn't announce on the phone but is just likely to signal that things have gotten worse and waits for the

spouse or kin to arrive so that a physician can make the announcement. *When* here also includes a parent or spouse announcing the death to other kinsmen—later, sometimes hours later and questions about how they do that, and whether face-to-face or on the telephone, etc.

Can those kinds of questions also stimulate questions to be asked in interviews, too? Yes, they certainly can stimulate descriptive questions.

T: Now, in the next phrase in that sentence, notice "everything was going well." That could possibly turn out to be an in vivo concept, a phrase used repeatedly by pregnant woman, and so representing events probably important to them—and so it should be to us as researchers. So we take note of it, just in case it should turn out to be relevant to our work. . . . What could this phrase, as such, mean analytically?

S: Well, it strikes me as indicating temporality, a course of something. . . . And the course is anticipated, there's a normal course (as well as ones that go off course). . . . Which means they are evaluating whether it's normal or not. . . .

T: Yes, but that means there must be criteria (properties), which in fact she names later in the sentence. But note also that it is she who locates herself dimensionally on this course. Analytically, we can ask why she (using commonsense criteria) and not the physician or a nurse is doing the locating? What we are talking about here is a locating process and the locating agents. If you think comparatively, you can quickly see that in other situations, for different structural reasons, there will be different locating agents. Like the economists will tell you that you are entering a recession—you might never recognize you were otherwise. Now a related phrase here is "early in this pregnancy." Leaving aside the *this*—for here, she is surely comparing it with other another one or ones—think about "early in." How does she know this!

S: Every mother knows there's nine months in the course of a pregnancy and so can locate herself. It is cultural, commonsense knowledge.

T: Again thinking *comparatively*—and to startle you a little with an extreme but analytically stimulating comparison—think of what happened in Germany when Hitler attained high office. People interpret this event in very different ways, though with hindsight we can see that Germany was by then deep into its evolution of Nazism. Who were the locating agents? How did they know where in the course Germany was? How did they achieve legitimacy for others—or not? What were the consequences for oneself (say you were a Jew) of correctly or incorrectly reading this evolutionary course? Such questions that are raised by these kinds of comparative cases (and even extreme ones are useful early in the research) can stimulate your thinking about the properties of women, such as the interviewee who is thinking about and reacting to her pregnancy in the sense of

applying the same questions about "locating" to her situation (not the idea about Nazism). . . . Notice also that these kinds of comparisons, even when not as extreme as this one about Hitler, can stimulate you to ask questions about your own assumptions and interpretations of the pregnancy data. These kinds of questions jolt you out of your standard, taken-for-granted ideas about pregnancies and their nature and force you to consider the implications of your assumptions in making the analysis.

S: It seems to me that there is a crisscrossing of two temporal courses. There's the mother's course of a hopefully successful pregnancy. And there's the baby's course, dependent biologically certainly on the mother's physiology but involving a different set of concerns. (The rest of the quoted paragraph certainly suggests that.) Socially they involve different actions too, like preparing for the baby's entry into the family and acting "right" during the pregnancy for the baby's foreseen welfare.

T: You are pointing to different phenomena, and you could coin two different *concepts* to stand for these, also a concept to represent what you call "crisscrossing." I would call it "intersecting" or linking, as in axial coding. You are also pointing to sequence and phases of actions and events, another aspect of the temporality noted earlier. There is also *process* or movement through phases of action.

The Logic of Grounded Theory Analysis

Knowing the logic behind analysis is very important. Knowledge of the logic is what gives researchers the power to flex procedures, redirect the research design to make it more reflective of data, and handle any problems that arise during data collection or analysis. The purpose of analysis is to reduce the amount of data a researcher has to work with by delineating concepts to stand for data. Very rarely does anyone want to read all of a researcher's field notes. In subsequent chapters, we'll outline the logic behind the procedures and processes we discuss. Here we'll start at the beginning with concepts.

- Concepts form the structure of theory.
- Concepts vary in levels of abstraction.

Concepts Form the Structure of Theory

Concepts form the structure of theory. Blumer (1969) emphasized the importance of concepts to research when he stated the following:

> *Throughout the act of scientific inquiry, concepts play a central role. They are significant elements in the prior scheme that the scholar has of the empirical world; they are likely to be the terms in which his problem is cast; they are the categories for which data are sought and in which data are grouped; they usually become the chief means for establishing relations between data; and they are the anchor points in interpretation of findings. (p. 26)*

Concepts are derived from data. They represent analysts' interpretation of the meaning expressed in the words or actions of participants. Concepts provide a way of grouping or organizing data in order to reduce the

amount of data that a researcher is working with. Data is reduced because incidents sharing some common characteristic(s) are grouped under the same conceptual heading. Think of a bird, plane, and a kite, and ask what they all share in common. The answer is *flight*. The notion of flight enables analysts to group these diverse objects together and to explore each of these objects in greater depth, detailing their similarities as well as differences in terms of flight. For example, analysts might ask, what allows each of these objects to fly, and how long and how far can they fly? In doing so, analysts discover some interesting information about the concept of flight in general as well as the peculiarities of flight as they apply to each group.

Concepts Vary in Levels of Abstraction

Concepts vary in levels of abstraction. There are basic-level concepts. Basic-level concepts are the conceptual names given by a researcher to "raw" data. There are also higher-level concepts that we call *categories*. Categories are more abstract terms that denote the major theme that a group of basic-level concepts are pointing to. For example, flight is a higher-level concept than is bird, kite, or plane. Flight explains what these objects have in common even though how far, how fast, and "how come" is different for each. If we want to understand flight in all its dimensions and variations, we have to examine flight in respect to all the different objects that fly (or many of them anyway), comparing each for what is similar and what is different, then building our theory from there.

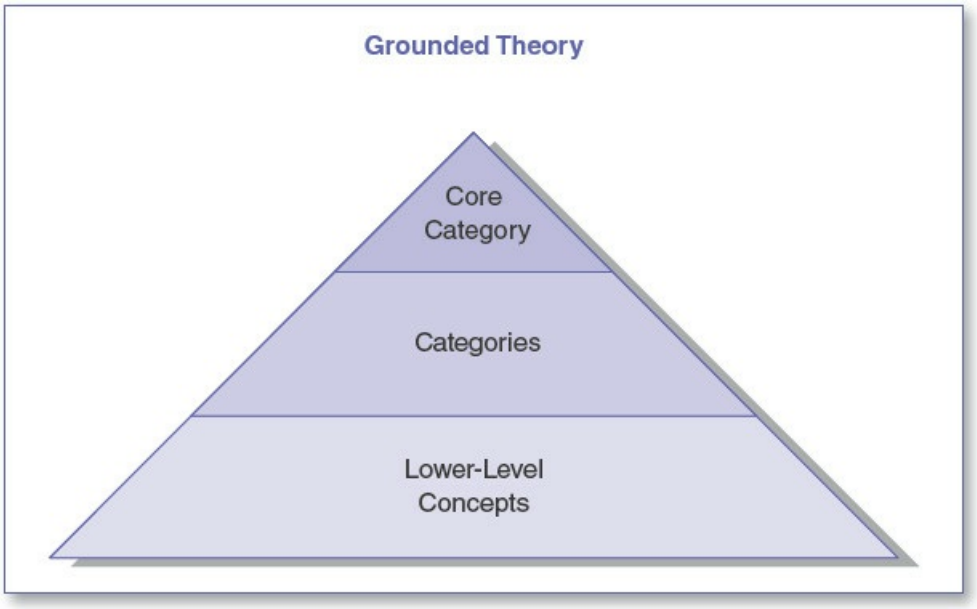

Diagram 4.1 Constructing a grounded theory is like building a pyramid with each level of concepts standing on top of the others.

By using basic-level concepts as the foundation for our theory, we are never too far removed from the data, thereby grounding the theory. Also, basic-level concepts provide the detail, interest, and variation that make theory relevant. While basic-level concepts provide the foundation, higher-level, more abstract concepts provide the structure or framework of a theory. They help hold the theory together. As concepts move toward greater levels of abstraction, they gain greater explanatory power, meaning they can accommodate more detail

under them. However, at the same time, they lose some of their specificity. In the end, a well-crafted theory is a blend of detail and abstraction.

Sensitivity

Data collection and analysis have traditionally called for *objectivity.* Today it is acknowledged that objectivity as it is traditionally defined in research can't be applied to qualitative research. The reason is that qualitative researchers interface with participants and the data. They bring with them their perspectives, training, knowledge, assumptions, and biases, which in turn influence how they interact with participants and interpret data (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). Instead of objectivity, qualitative researchers aim for *sensitivity,* or the ability to carefully listen and respect both participants and the data they provide. The question is "How can we use what we as investigators bring to the research process in order to increase our sensitivity?" (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987). This section of the chapter will examine the following:

- The nature of sensitivity
- Influence of professional knowledge and experience
- Professional knowledge and experience can enhance sensitivity.
- Sensitivity grows over the course of the research.
- Sensitivity is important in cross-cultural research.

The Nature of Sensitivity

Sensitivity stands in contrast to objectivity. It means having insight as well as being tuned in to and being able to pick up on relevant issues, events, and happenings during collection and analysis of the data. Sensitivity requires that a researcher take the role of the other—walk, so to speak, in that other person's shoes—and try to discern the meaning of words and actions of participants. Of course, there is always the possibility of asking participants to explain further and to validate researcher interpretations.

Sensitivity does not mean forcing meanings on data. At all times, the researcher must keep in mind that findings are the result of the interplay between data and what a researcher brings to the analysis, and all interpretations should be considered provisional until supported by additional data or verified with participants.

Forcing (Glaser, 1992) a researcher's ideas on data is more likely to happen when researchers ignore the relevance of self in the interpretation process and think that it is the data talking without considering that "data is talking, yes but through the eyes of the researcher." The more researchers are aware of the subjectivity involved in data analysis, the more likely they are to consider the provisional nature of interpretations and the need to verify interpretations against further data and with participants.

Influence of Professional Knowledge and Experience

Insight into data does not occur haphazardly. Theories, professional knowledge, and experience influence interpretations and inform our research in multiple ways, even if quite unconsciously (Sandelowski, 1993). To

quote Dey (1993), "In short, there is a difference between an open mind and an empty head. To analyze data researchers draw upon accumulated knowledge. They don't dispense with it. The issue is not whether to use existing knowledge, but how" (p. 63).

Professional Knowledge and Experience Can Enhance Sensitivity

As researchers move along in the analysis, it is their knowledge and experience (professional, gender, cultural, etc.) that enables them to dig beneath the surface and respond to data. Though experience can blind researchers' perception, it can also enable researchers to understand the significance of some things more quickly. That's because researchers don't have to spend time gaining familiarity with surroundings or events. While a fresh outlook is often important, sometimes it takes a new researcher two to three weeks in an area just to feel comfortable, and during that period, much time—and data—can be lost. Four things are important to remember:

1. Always compare knowledge and experience against data, never losing sight of the data themselves.

2. Work with concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions, because concepts keep the researcher focused on the similarities and differences between events rather than being overwhelmed by descriptive detail.

3. It is not a researcher's perception of an event that matters. Rather, it is what participants are saying or doing that is important. For example, in a study of hospitalized patients' responses to, or experience with, hospital equipment, I might know that a certain piece of equipment in a hospital is used to take X-rays. But it is not my knowledge that is relevant but the meaning of the X-ray to the participants and how those meanings are formed and transformed over a participant's hospitalization. Does the participant describe the equipment as an outdated machine, a physical threat, something beneficial or lifesaving and therefore to be endured? Is the experience painful, frightening, or uncomfortable? How was the procedure explained, and what was the nature of the interaction during and afterward?

4. What helps to keep researchers focused on the data is having a comparative base to work from. A researcher might say to himself or herself, "To me, this is a piece of diagnostic equipment, an inanimate object, a useful medical tool—all properties of the equipment. But I am seeing this from the perspective of a nurse. Do patients describe their experiences in the same way, or do they see it differently? What meanings do they assign the equipment? What emotional responses did contact with this piece of equipment generate?" The descriptions given by a participant tend to stand out when they are contrasted against descriptions given by other participants or the researcher.

Sensitivity Grows Over the Course of the Research

It is amazing how sensitivity builds when a researcher is working with data. Sometimes analysts come upon a piece of datum and are stuck, unable to discern its meaning. What these authors have discovered is that researchers often carry their analytic problems around in their heads as they go about their daily activities. Then perhaps while reading the news, talking with a colleague on the phone or via e-mail, or awakening from

a dream, an insight occurs and researchers are able to make sense out of data. Technically these insights pertain to the data, even though the insight was stimulated by another experience.

Background, knowledge, and experience not only enable researchers to be more sensitive to concepts in data but also enable them to see connections between concepts. As the famous biologist Selye (1956) once wrote, "It is not to see something first, but to establish solid connections between the previously known and hitherto unknown that constitutes the essence of specific discovery" (p. 6). In other words, we have to have some background, either through immersion in the data or through personal experience, in order to know what we are seeing in data is significant and to be able to discern important connections between concepts.

Sensitivity Is Important in Cross-Cultural Research

Though I am not an expert in cross-cultural research, I do know that sensitivity is especially important when dealing with other cultures. There is a wonderful book by Eva Hoffman (1989) titled *Lost in Translation.* Hoffman, born in Poland, immigrated to Canada at the age of seven. One of the things that became apparent to Hoffman when she arrived in Canada was that her lack of proficiency in the English language limited her ability to express complex thoughts and reactions to the new country.

Researchers should carry that message with them—especially when doing cross-cultural research. Unless one is fluent in a foreign language or culture, much of the complexity inherent in the data is lost to the researcher. As teachers, we have been struck by the fact that foreign students doing research in their own countries often encounter concepts for which there are no English equivalents. For example, one of our students, Noriko Yamamoto, studying caretaking of dementia patients by family members, identified two Japanese concepts that had no direct English translations. These concepts were used to express changes in the level and quality of the interaction as a parent's dementia increased. The two concepts were *amaeru,* used to describe the younger caregiver seeking indulgent love from a care recipient who is still able to respond, and *amayaksu,* used to describe the offering of indulgent love by the caregiver when the care recipient was no longer able to respond with love (Yamamoto & Wallhagen, 1998).

There are techniques that researchers can use to increase sensitivity in cross-cultural studies. For example, Chesney (2001) used Pakistani advisors to help her understand what participants were telling her. She expressed that at times she wished she had been Pakistani herself to bridge the cultural and language barrier. See Green, Creswell, Shope, and Plano Clark (2007) for an excellent discussion on handling diversity in research.

Ethics

While it is common to think of ethics in regards to data collection, researchers sometimes forget that maintaining ethical standards applies just as much to doing analysis.

First, there is the handling of data and what to do with "certain types of data." Persons often pour their hearts out during an interview, and sometimes they confide information that appears strange or untruthful, leading the researcher to question how to handle that data during analysis. It would be easy to overlook or

discount this data. In fact, it becomes even more important to identify what a respondent was trying to convey because whatever the incident was, it had to have some significance for the participant to mention it. If a researcher is certain that certain data is "untruthful," a researcher can put that data aside. Then the question is, Why the untruth?

Second, data is extremely valuable. Persons provide it with the assumption that researchers will make good use if it. That means that researchers should not take shortcuts when doing analysis but put as much time and energy into analysis as necessary to produce quality theory. It is not easy to transcribe interviews, think about data, write **memos,** and think more about data, but this process is necessary if the researcher is to do justice to the data and the persons providing it.

Third, cross-cultural research places an even greater burden on researchers. It's not easy to step outside of one's own frame of reference or culture in order to accurately represent data. As much as we think we understand, we might not. Therefore, it becomes very important to obtain the assistance of representatives of a culture when doing analysis and to bring back findings to participants for validation.

Summary of Key Points

Analysis is the act of interpreting data for meaning. Our version of analysis involves taking data apart, conceptualizing it, developing concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions, and then integrating the concepts around a core category. In the beginning of a study, analysis is usually detailed, or "microscopic," because researchers want to explore all possibilities before focusing in on any one interpretation. Later analysis tends to be more general in order to fully develop concepts and explore relationships between them. In our approach to qualitative analysis, concepts form the basis of analysis. They are the foundation of research whether the aim is theory building, conceptual ordering, or description.

In brief, describing is depicting, telling a story—sometimes a very graphic and detailed one—without a lot of interpretation or attempt to explain why certain events occur and not others. Conceptual ordering is classifying events and objects along various explicitly stated dimensions and often rating them in terms of importance. Theorizing is the act of constructing an explanatory scheme that systematically relates concepts to each other around a core concept. Though a theory is a construction derived from data viewed through the eyes of the researcher, doing qualitative research remains a valuable endeavor. It is up to researchers to do the best that they can to maintain the integrity of the data and represent as accurately as possible the intent of participants.

Insider Insights — Grounded Theory Research

Here are a few pages written by a colleague describing his experience with doing grounded theory research. Included are links to his dissertation and to an article he published on his results.

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Link to Dissertation

Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange (Trace)

http://trace.tennessee.edu/do/search/?q=author_lname%3A%22Busby%22%20AND%20author_fname%3A%22Steven%22&start=0&context=8852

Journal Article Based on Dissertation Research

Busby S., & Witucki-Brown J. (2011). Theory development for situational awareness in multi-casualty incidents. *Journal of Emergency Nursing, 37*(5), 444–452.

When I was asked to offer some ideas that may be helpful to students or other beginning grounded theorists, I was all too happy to have the opportunity to save others some of the struggles I faced during the nearly two years I worked on the development of my own grounded theory (GT). Let me provide some background that will hopefully make my recommendations more meaningful. For my doctoral dissertation, I wanted to better understand situational awareness (SA) as it pertained to emergency healthcare response in the field. I searched literature for what seemed like millennia, to find that almost all of the conceptual and theoretical work done regarding SA had been done from an aviation perspective. Oh well, I thought, theory is theory, right? Because of my overall immature research view, I planned to forge ahead and do a quantitative design using factor analysis to assess the impact of each of three major factors from established theory of SA, on the overall concept. That, I assumed, would apply nicely to the concepts of SA in multi-casualty incidents.

As I looked into the aviation theory selected more closely, it became obvious that the small subtle changes that occur in SA, for example, when sitting in the pilot seat of a jet fighter, may not translate well into the overall SA needs of providers managing large and chaotic emergency medical events. What to do? There was no established theory in the literature regarding SA specific to field-level emergency response. Would I actually have to contemplate developing theory? This question had to be addressed. As I wiped the beaded sweat off my forehead, the blur of past-studied grand theory running through my mind, I began to appreciate more than ever that grand theory helped to establish nursing as a profession, and is absolutely necessary. But now that nursing is clearly a profession, we may need more middle-range and substantive (situation-specific) theory to drive practice, so that practice can drive further research, in cyclic fashion.

I had been told during my doctoral studies many times that the research question drives the type of research methodology ultimately selected for use. How can I do theory testing when no situation-specific theory exists? This was the veritable crossroads at which I arrived. What a surprise! You mean I cannot answer my research question with a quantitative "hard science" approach? After the shock wore off, I understood that SA being both a process (the process by which it is developed) and a product (what is known and when), would require

that both of these pieces be developed. The way to do it? Develop theory that will search out "process," to reveal how the "product" is derived. Accepting the fact that this was what I needed to do and moving forward led me on one of the greatest learning and growing journeys of my life. Actually having undertaken the very rigorous process of developing grounded theory (there were those who advised me not to take on such a lofty goal during my doctoral studies), taught me more about overall research than crunching numbers in a factor analysis ever could have.

So, with this background provided, I decided to include my advice in a list format. I have shared these particular ideas because they were ultimately and absolutely vital to the success of my overall project. Below each I have briefly explained the piece of advice in more detail. My hope is that these humble offerings are in some way helpful to you as you begin your own journey into theory development.

Recommendations

1. **Once decided upon, be satisfied that GT is the right solution to the stated question, and that theory development is complex and time-consuming. Be in it for the long haul.**

There is no greater satisfaction, whether anyone acknowledges your work or not, than knowing that you did things the right way. Feeling as though I had done this was one of the defining events of my life. Don't take short cuts. It will pay off when you are defending or presenting and will make your outcome much more impactful. Thin conceptual or theoretical development becomes painfully obvious when one attempts to explain things to an audience with questions. In other words, do not rush it just to get "done." I would say this: A researcher who rushes to get their research "done" is already finished. Theory development takes time and if you are not in it for the long haul, then do not start.

Do line-by-line coding throughout the analysis and then do incident to incident comparisons to squeeze as much meaning out of the data as possible. This allows for the emergence of a fuller meaning than individual codes can provide alone and is critical to the naming of larger, more abstract umbrella concepts. It will also make axial coding, or the relating of concepts to one another (what theory is) much more doable as the theory emerges.

2. **As an expert in the area under review, be an instrument in, and not the focus of, what emerges.**

You will naturally gravitate to an area in which you have expertise and interest. Your knowledge is helpful when used appropriately. But, it will help to do coding in a group with both transcripts that you have already coded (with those around you blinded to your own codes), and with ones that you have not yet coded. Others' views of the transcripts and of how you are seeing things may reveal important insights or biases in your own view.

Rather than control for variables, qualitative research seeks to capture broad variability. Allow yourself to be critiqued…maybe even…dare I say it, wrong. It is liberating to find that you had the wrong idea about something and yet that you were sufficiently committed to the process to acknowledge that. It also means that you were personally big enough to question your own ideas about something, and professional enough to

know that the world of "meaning" is larger than your own view of it. So do not jump to conclusions just because it may be expedient. Allow meaning to emerge.

Make a good decision about where to start. As you select your area of interest, allow it to be broad enough to produce "thickness," but not so broad that you cannot get your hands around it. Theories tend to balloon. So bite off enough of the "process" to be meaningful without trying to do too much.

3. **Be rigorous, not sloppy.**

So many potential methods are emphasized, but one thing that cannot be over-emphasized is not only a good audit trail for category (conceptual) development, but also memos about how you make decisions for the relationships that exist between concepts. The most important limitation to minimize is the lack of adherence to the basic established approaches for grounded theory development, especially if you are totally new to qualitative research. No research project is perfect; accept that. That is why we do not use the word "proof." Outcomes only lend support for positions. So, understand the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research, decide on your basics, and stick with them. If you have an overall "quantitative" orientation, some things may initially seem counter-intuitive. For example, analysis in GT is on-going, and not done just at the end of data collection. This is not true in quantitative work. So, trust the process.

Activities for Thinking, Writing, and Discussing as a Group

1. Compare and contrast qualitative versus quantitative methods of analysis.
2. Think through and write a short paragraph describing what you think a researcher is trying to achieve analytically with qualitative analysis and how that differs from the aims of quantitative analysis.
3. From your professional research journals, choose three research articles: one that represents description, one that represents conceptual ordering, and one that represents theory development. Do not necessarily rely on how the article is presented by the author. Sometimes persons call their findings theory when in fact they are not. Bring the articles to class, and explain why you think these articles represent examples of description, categorizing, or theory development.

Suggested Readings

Kosny, A., MacEachen, E., Lifshen, M., & Smith, P. (2014). Another person in the room: Using interpreters during interview with immigrant workers. *Qualitative Health Research, 24*(6), 837–845.

Pandit, N. R. (1996). The creation of theory: A recent application of grounded theory method. *The Qualitative Report, 2*(4). Retrieved from http://www.nova.edu/ssss/OR/QR2-4/pandit.html

Chapter 5
Strategies for Qualitative Data Analysis

> The purpose of an exploratory investigation is to move toward a clearer understanding of how one's problem is to be posed, to learn what are the appropriate data, to develop ideas of what are significant lines of relation and to evolve one's conceptual tools in the light of what one is learning about the area of life. (Blumer, 1969, p. 40)

Table 5.1 Key Terms

Analysis: The act of taking data, thinking about it, and denoting concepts to stand for the analyst's interpretation of the meaning intended by the participant

Analytic strategies: Thinking techniques used by analysis to help with their interpretations

Asking of questions: An analytic device used to open up the line of inquiry and direct theoretical sampling

Coding: Denoting concepts to stand for data

Constant comparisons: The analytic process of comparing different pieces of data against each other for similarities and differences

In vivo code: Concepts using the actual words of research participants

Theoretical comparisons: An analytic tool used to stimulate thinking about properties and dimensions of categories

Theoretical sampling: Sampling based on properties and dimensions of concepts

The purpose of this chapter is to provide readers with a selection of **analytic strategies** that can be used by researchers to help them with their **analyses.** Over the years, Anselm Strauss developed a repertoire of analytic strategies that he used. But Anselm Strauss is not alone. Every one of us uses strategies in our daily lives to analyze what is going on around us. For example, when a woman goes into a store to buy a dress or pants, she usually doesn't buy the first dress or pair of pants the salesperson shows her. She tries on several items, comparing them for fit and price. She asks herself or others who might be with her how a garment looks on her and if the color and style flatter her. Notice that the woman doing the buying is asking questions and making comparisons even though she may not be consciously aware of doing so. It just comes naturally. Asking questions helps persons to understand things, and making comparisons between objects helps persons to differentiate between objects based on their properties—size, style, color, and fit—then to choose the one that meets those criteria.

Analysis requires a similar thinking process. During analysis, researchers are moving rapidly between the abstract and the concrete. They are constantly asking questions and making comparisons. While managing the details of data, they are simultaneously looking for relationships and trying to identify patterns. Beginning analysts are not used to thinking in such deliberate ways about data. Anselm Strauss used to say that his classes were less about teaching a methodology and more about teaching students how to think in logical and systematic ways. This is where analytic strategies come in. They are heuristic devices to help analysts do the deliberate type of thinking required to carry out in-depth analysis.

Points to Keep in Mind

When reading this chapter, students are advised to keep the following points in mind:

- Getting into the data
- Purposes of analytic strategies
- Types of analytic strategies

Getting Into the Data

Every analyst develops his or her ways of doing analysis. What is important is remaining flexible and responsive to the data, research goal, and amount of time a researcher has to devote to the analysis. We can't speak for all analysts. All we can do is explain how we approach data and how we read it. Before beginning to code, we read the entire interview, field note, or document as well as view the video, resisting the urge to do any analysis at this time. The idea behind this first reading is to enter vicariously into the life of participants, feel what they are experiencing, and listen to what they are saying through their words or actions.

Once we've read and digested the entire document, we begin initial **coding**. (See Chapters 11 and 12 for examples of beginning coding and analysis.)

1. We look for natural breaks in the manuscript—a section or paragraph—and use these as cutting-off points. Usually these breaks denote a change in topic—but not always. An analyst doesn't want to work with too large of a section of data or it will become cumbersome and maybe even overwhelming.
2. At this point, we can begin coding line by line, using a truly inductive approach.
3. Or we can step back and look at the piece of data that we've chosen to analyze and reflect upon what we think is the main idea being expressed in the section. Since the process of open coding is exploratory and leading to concept identification, we ask questions of the data, think about a piece of datum for a while, and apply many of the strategies explained next before coming up with a concept. This concept is tentative to be checked out against other data as we work more with the section of data or match it against data in subsequent interviews. But at least we have a sense of direction, something to launch us into the analysis.

4. Then we start going through a section doing a more detailed line-by-line analysis to verify initial interpretations, and if satisfied, we start coding around that initial concept, looking for explanations, the problems persons are dealing with—what it is that people say and do? To aid with this detailed analysis, we make **constant comparisons** and ask questions such as the following: What is being said or done? Who is doing it? Why? We make use of the analytic strategies listed below in the next section as needed. The answers to our questions and results of comparisons validate original concepts and enable us to start developing concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions.
5. The first concepts we come up with will probably be lower-level concepts or properties and dimensions of the initial concepts. It is not always the case that initial concepts are lower-level concepts. Sometimes initial concepts turn out to be categories. However, a researcher might not know this until later in the research.
6. Sometimes the meaning of data is not very clear, and we find it difficult to put a conceptual name on it. That's okay because all early analysis is exploratory, and conceptual names are tentative. Concepts can be named and renamed throughout the analysis and often do as sensitivities to meanings become clearer as the research process proceeds. Flexibility of design and the ability to make change is one of the strengths of the grounded theory method. A researcher is not stuck with concepts (or *variables,* as they are termed in quantitative research). As new interpretations are made, names of concepts, how they are thought about, and how they are related to each other can be altered to create a better fit with the data. That is why the method is called grounded theory because the researcher is constantly evaluating interpretations against data.
7. If a main idea or concept is repeated in subsequent data or in the next interview, we have some validation of the original concept. Then as we obtain more data, we continue developing a concept, adding to it more properties and dimensions from the new data.
8. If we become stuck while doing analysis, we again turn to analytic strategies such as turning a situation upside down, using **theoretical comparisons,** asking what if…, and looking at the different possible meanings of a word.
9. We always record our analysis in memos.

Analytic Strategies

Meaning is not inherent in words. Words take on meaning when they are given so by users (participants in the case of research) and readers. Analysis involves working with data. Analysis is the act of taking data, thinking about it, and denoting concepts to stand for the analyst's interpretation of the meaning intended by the participant.

A researcher can think of analysis as "mining" the data, digging beneath the surface to discover the hidden treasures contained within. Here is how Miles and Huberman (1994) referred to coding and its relationship to analysis: "To review a set of field notes and to dissect them meaningfully while keeping the relations between the parts intact is the stuff of analysis" (p. 59).

Analysts make use of analytic strategies when coding. Each analyst has his or her own repertoire of analytic strategies. Howard Becker (1998) referred to the strategies he used when analyzing data as "Tricks of the Trade." The naturalist Charles Darwin, according to Blumer in *Symbolic Interactionism* (1969), also had his strategies for analyzing data:

> *Darwin, who is acknowledged as one of the world's greatest naturalistic observers on record, has noted the ease with which observation becomes and remains imprisoned by images. He recommends two ways of helping to break such captivity. One is to ask oneself all kinds of questions about what he is studying, even seemingly ludicrous questions. The posing of such questions helps to sensitize the observer to different and new perspectives. The other recommended procedure is to record all observations that challenge one's working conceptions as well as any observation that is odd and interesting even though its relevance is not immediately clear. (pp. 41–42)*

This section of the chapter will explore the following:

- Purposes of analytic strategies
- Analysts should develop his or her own repertoire of strategies.
- The use of strategies varies with the stage of the research.

Purposes of Analytic Strategies

Analytic strategies help analysts to do the following:

- Distance themselves from the technical literature and personal experience that might block the ability to arrive at new interpretations of data
- Avoid standard ways of thinking about phenomena
- Stimulate the inductive process
- Not take anything for granted
- Allow for clarification or debunking of assumptions of researchers as well as those of participants
- Listen to what people are saying and doing
- Avoid rushing past "diamonds in the rough" when examining data
- Force the asking of questions that can break through conventional thinking
- Allow fruitful labeling of concepts and provisional identification of categories
- Identify properties and dimensions of categories

Analysts Should Develop Their Own Repertoire of Strategies

There is nothing magical about our analytic strategies. They are reflective of how many people think. We use them in our own ways and for our own purposes and in different combinations. Analysts are encouraged to develop their own repertoire of strategies. The number and type of strategies researchers will use will vary with the type of qualitative research, with training, experience, and discipline. Miles and Huberman (1994) began with a list of codes (concepts) derived from the literature; next, they revised the concepts by comparing the original concepts against actual data, revising and discarding as indicated. Glaser (1978), in *Theoretical*

Sensitivity, provided a list of 18 coding families, the purpose of which was to sensitize researchers to possibilities in the data and to bring analysis up to a theoretical level. Schatzman (1991) developed an analytic process that he referred to as "dimensional analysis." He stated that research findings tell a story and that researchers need a perspective to select items from the data for the story, to create their relative salience, and to sequence them. Schatzman (1991) offered the following *matrix* (similar to Strauss's [1987] notion of coding) as a means of framing the story in terms of its explanatory logic. His matrix looks something like this:

The Matrix for Explanatory Paradigm

(from) Perspective

(attributes) Dimensions–Properties

(in) Context (under) Conditions

Action/Process (with) Consequence

Schatzman worked closely with Strauss; therefore, his emphasis on dimensions and their importance to analysis fits very nicely with our own approach to analysis. Other researchers use different types of analytic schemes to either organize or arrive at an understanding of the data. For example, Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland (2006) suggested the use of *focusing* as a prelude to analysis. The purpose of focusing is to do just that: getting the researcher focused in on the research process. Focusing includes strategies such as examining the data for possible topics on which to concentrate, arriving at an understanding of those topics by asking questions of them, and treating them in a manner that will arouse interest. When it comes time to do the actual analysis, Lofland and colleagues (2006) offered the following group of sensemaking strategies: social science framing, normalizing and managing anxiety, coding, memoing, diagramming, and thinking flexibly. Another qualitative researcher, Dey (1993), proposed strategies such as "using checklists," "transposition" (what if? questions), "making free association," and "thinking by shifting sequence" (p. 86–88) to get at the essence of data.

Many of the strategies used by Strauss are similar to heuristic devices proposed by Wicker (1985). Among the heuristic devices suggested by Wicker are (a) playing with data by applying metaphors, imagining extremes, making diagrams, and looking at process; (b) considering context by placing problems within larger domains and making comparisons outside the problem domain; (c) probing assumptions and making opposite assumptions; and (d) scrutinizing key concepts (p. 1094).

The Use of Strategies Varies With the Stage of the Research

There are two basic analytic strategies that are used throughout the research process. These are the making of comparisons and the **asking of questions.** One might say that making comparisons and asking questions are basic procedures for doing any research, but they are especially important in grounded theory research. In fact, grounded theory is often referred to as the "constant comparative method." However, there are other strategies and variations of these that are used less often but more pointedly depending upon the stage of the research and the analytic problem at hand.

Types of Strategies

Anselm Strauss was a thinking man who brought analysis into his everyday life. In this section of the chapter, we want to share some of the analytic strategies that we've found useful when we analyze data. Hopefully, readers will make them their own and use them consciously and wisely, always keeping in mind that these are optional tools that should be used to help with analysis and not be used to force data. The strategies are presented here:

- Questioning
- Making comparisons
- Thinking about the various meanings of a word
- Using the flip-flop technique
- Making use of life experience
- Waving the red flag
- Looking at language
- Looking at emotions that are expressed
- Looking for words that indicate time
- Thinking in terms of metaphors and similes
- Looking for the negative case
- Using other analytical tools

Questioning

The first analytic strategy is the use of questioning. It is, as Blumer (1969) emphasized and Darwin told us, fundamental to analysis. Every researcher wants to ask good questions—ones that will enhance the discovery of new knowledge.

Asking questions enables researchers to do the following:

- Probe
- Develop provisional answers
- Think outside the box
- Become acquainted with the data
- Be useful at every stage of analysis

Asking questions is a strategy useful at every stage of analysis, from the beginning to the final writing. It has many functions. One of these is to help researchers overcome a writing block. In a book by Ann Lamott (1994) titled *Bird by Bird,* the use of questions is suggested as a way of getting a writing project off the ground. Lamott believed that asking questions helps a writer get past that initial block of not knowing where to start. Though Lamott was talking about writing and not data analysis, the two have a lot in common. Both have the potential to create a situation of being blocked and having difficulty getting off the ground.

Types of Questions Asked Need Not Be Earth Shattering

The questions asked of data in the beginning of analysis need not be earth shattering or clever. They just have to start analysts thinking consciously about possible meanings of data. Suppose a researcher is studying spousal caregivers and the first paragraph of the first field note says something like this:

> *It was a very difficult decision to put my husband in a nursing home, but I couldn't physically or emotionally care for him anymore. I am 85, and it was just getting to be too much. But he died only six months after I put him there. Now I wish I had kept him home.*

At the beginning of a project, analysts need a way to break into the data. One way to do this is to ask exploratory questions. They can ask brainstorming types of questions such as these: What does "getting to be too much" mean? What is this woman trying to tell us about herself, about her spouse, their relationship, and the meaning of nursing home and "placement" in the context of that relationship? What if she had kept him home? Then what? Would the outcome have been different? How does age of the caregiver affect placement? If the wife were younger, would she have been able to continue to care for her husband? How long did she care for him? Did she have help? All of these questions are directed at getting an analyst to think about what it is like for a woman to be 85 and in a long-term marriage and having to place her husband in a nursing home.

Asking Questions Helps Analysts Take the Role of the Other

Asking questions and thinking about the range of possible answers helps analysts take the role of the other in order to better understand the problem from a participant's perspective. We are not suggesting that the answers that a researcher might come up with are considered part of the findings. No, the questions are just to get the analyst thinking about what this participant as well as future ones might be telling us. To give another illustration, while interviewing a young woman about teen drug use, the participant says, "Getting drugs is easy for teens. There is an obliging supply network." The concept the analyst chooses to work with is *obliging supply network*. To get the analyst thinking about this topic and to obtain a better idea of where the participant is coming from, the analyst might ask questions such as the following: Who is doing the supplying, and how is contact made between participant and supplier? What does the word *obliging* mean to her? Where is this person encountering the obliging supply network—at parties, during school breaks on campus, when students go off campus for lunch, around the campus after school, at local teen hangouts? These questions help an analyst enter the world of the participant and to think about how and why it is so easy for her and other teens to access drugs.

Analysts Must Use Their Common Sense

We are not saying that analysts must ask an unlimited number of questions about every piece of datum on a page. Analyzing data in such detail is not practical. It would take too long to completely analyze one set of field notes. Being an analyst means using common sense and making the right choices about what bits of data to ask questions about and for how long to do so. There is no right or wrong about analysis. Nor are there rules or procedures that must be followed at all times and circumstances. Analysis is intuitive and requires trusting the self to make the right decisions.

Asking Questions Leads to More Questions and Answers

Asking questions of data can occur at any time and place. A researcher can think about data while driving or getting ready for bed. The value of questioning is that once a researcher starts asking questions about data, more questions come to mind, enabling analysts to probe deeper into the data and to collect more relevant data. What becomes obvious upon asking questions is how little analysts know about a topic—even those they might be familiar with—and how more information is needed to fully develop a concept. When analysts probe, concepts become something more than just labels for raw data. They take on meaning.

Types of Questions

In addition to the questions of who, what, when, where, how, and with what consequences, there are other types of questions that are useful when doing analysis. Next, we have listed some of the types of questions that can be asked of data:

1. There are *sensitizing questions.* These tune the researcher in to possible meaning of data. Questions of this type might look something like this: What is going on here—that is, what are the issues, problems, concerns? Who are the actors involved? How do they define the situation? Or what is its meaning to them? What are the various actors doing? Are their definitions and meanings the same or different? When, how, and with what consequences are they acting? How are the actions the same or different for various actors and in other situations?

2. There are *theoretical questions.* These questions help a researcher to see process and variation and to make connections between concepts. Theoretical questions might look as follows: What is the relationship of one concept to another—that is, how do they compare and relate at the property and dimensional level? (See the next section on the making of theoretical comparisons.) What would happen if? How do events and actions change over time? What are the larger structural issues here, and how do these events play into or affect what I am seeing or hearing?

3. There are *practical questions.* They are the questions that provide direction for **theoretical sampling** and that help with development of the structure of theory (if theory development is the research goal). These questions include, among many others, the following: Which concepts are well developed, and which are not? Where, when, and how do I go next to gather the data for my evolving theory? What kinds of permission do I need? How long will it take? Is my developing theory logical, and if not, where are the breaks in logic? Have I reached the saturation point?

4. There are the *guiding questions.* These are the questions that guide our interviews, observations, document gathering, and analyses of these.

The questions we ask over the course of a research project will change over time. Questions are based on the evolving analysis and are specific to the particular research. Usually at the beginning of the research, questions are open ended then tend to become more focused and refined as the research moves along. A question at the beginning of a series of interviews might look like this: Have you ever taken drugs, and if so, what was the experience like for you? In later interviews, the same general question will still be relevant; however, the researcher will want to ask questions that give further information about specific concepts, their

properties, and dimensions.

Making Comparisons

Doing comparative analysis is another one of the staple features of social science research, and it is for us also. Usually, it is built into a project's design, whether explicitly or implicitly. For instance, when sociologists compare gender behavior with respect to sexual activity, criminologists compare the rates of homicide between ethnic groups, or anthropologists comment on the differences between rituals or other cultural behaviors, they are making comparisons. Such comparative studies are often very valuable. We consider making comparisons invaluable to analysis. We offer two different types of comparisons: constant comparisons and theoretical comparisons. Constant comparisons are standard and used throughout analysis. Theoretical comparisons are used whenever a researcher is overwhelmed by details and needs to gain some distance on the research. Detailed explanations of each are given next.

Constant Comparisons

Making constant comparisons refers to the act of taking one piece of datum and examining it against another piece of datum both within and between documents (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in order to determine if the two data are conceptually the same or different. Data that appear to be conceptually similar are grouped together under a conceptual label. This type of comparison is essential to all analyses because comparisons allow researchers to reduce data to concepts, to develop concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions, and to differentiate one concept from another. Let's return to our study of spouse caregivers for an example. In the next paragraph, our 85-year-old female caregiver goes on to say the following:

> *Since my husband's death, my life has seemed so empty. You know we were married for 65 years. That's a long time to be with somebody. Even though he was ill and in the nursing home, at least I knew he was there. Now I'm alone. I know it was time for him to die, but I don't know if I'll ever get over the loneliness.*

In comparing this passage with the earlier passage by the same elderly woman, we can see that each section of the interview is addressing a different phenomenon. In the first quotation, the woman is dealing with the issue of *placement* and her feelings about this. In the second, she is not only mourning her husband's death but also dealing with the *loss* of companionship that comes from having to live alone after 65 years of marriage. Placement and loss, though related to each other, have to do with different aspects of something larger, a phenomenon not yet identified by the analyst. The nature of the relationship between these concepts will become clearer with further analysis. In subsequent interviews, incidents that are coded as placement will be compared for similarities and differences with other incidents from previous interviews labeled as placement. The purpose of within-code comparison is to uncover the many different properties and dimensions of a concept. Each incident coded as placement has the potential to bring out different aspects of the same phenomenon.

Summary Statement

To summarize briefly, people do not invent the world anew each day. Rather, they draw upon what they know to try to understand what they do not know. In this way, they discover what is similar and different

about each object and thus define the object in question. For example, take a bed and a sofa. We know that a bed can be used as a sofa and vice versa, but at the same time each object has its own characteristics and functions that make each unique. Similarities and uniqueness or differences are very important in theory building because it enables researchers to differentiate concepts by their differences but also in the end to integrate them together through a common thread.

Theoretical Comparisons: Devices to Stimulate Thinking

Theoretical comparisons are analytic devices—the purpose of which is to stimulate thinking about the properties and dimensions of concepts. Persons come to know things through their properties and dimensions. An orange is an orange because it looks and tastes differently than a lemon, though each is classified as a citrus fruit. If the properties of a concept are evident within the data, there is no need to make theoretical comparisons. Theoretical comparisons are useful when we (a) are confused or stuck about the meaning of data, (b) don't know what might be properties or dimensions, and (c) want to think about data in different ways. The results of theoretical comparisons are not made part of the findings. Rather, their purpose is to sensitize researchers to what to look for in data or to suggest ideas for theoretical sampling.

Mechanics of Making Theoretical Comparisons

The mechanics of making theoretical comparisons are quite simple. A researcher takes a concept derived from data. That same concept is used to examine a situation from life or the literature that might be substantively different but to which the same concept might apply. Again, the findings from the results of this comparison are not used as part of the data. An analyst can make this type of comparison because he or she is working with a concept and not the case presented in data. For example, a researcher interviewing a nurse obtained the following data: "When working alone at night, I prefer to work with another experienced nurse. When I work with an inexperienced nurse, I end up carrying most of the workload."

To gain some understanding of what the nurse meant by *inexperienced*, the analyst can make a theoretical comparison using an example from another situation where being inexperienced might make a difference such as driving a car or building a house. In making theoretical comparisons, analysts are looking for the properties and dimensions of being inexperienced that highlight what the experienced nurse is trying to say in the data. For instance, an inexperienced driver or contractor might have the properties of being overly cautious, apprehensive, frequently seeking direction, afraid to deviate from the pattern, prone to making errors, unsure or him- or herself, afraid to act in a crisis, and so on. Now, with some idea of what it might mean to be inexperienced, the analyst can go back to the data to see if any of these properties are present but may have been overlooked at first because he or she didn't know what to look for. Or the researcher can collect data (theoretically sample) from inexperienced nurses to see if any of the same or additional properties come out in those interviews.

Close-In and Far-Out Comparisons

Sometimes when making theoretical comparisons, we use what we call *close-in comparisons,* or situations that are similar in type. Other times we use what we call *far-out comparisons,* or situations that on the surface appear to be very different but when examined at a conceptual level have more in common than would appear

at first. In making far-out comparisons, we are trying to break out of stereotyping by following the example of the sociologist E. C. Hughes, who enjoyed making striking and sometimes shocking comparisons, such as between the work of psychiatrists and prostitutes. Both belong to professions, have clients, get paid for their work, and as he stated, "Take care not to become too personally involved with clients who come to them with their intimate problems" (Hughes, 1971, p. 316).

Forces Analysts to Think Abstractly

The making of theoretical comparisons forces researchers to move from describing the specifics of a case and to thinking more abstractly. A difficulty of beginning qualitative analysts is that they become too focused on the details or the specifics of each case and fail to stand back to think more abstractly of what is common between the cases, something necessary when constructing theory.

To use an example, when a person goes out to buy a racehorse, the issue is not whether or not a particular horse is good looking. Rather, what is important are the properties of the horse, how fast it runs, how old it is, what its state of health is, and how it compares with other horses along these same properties. Of course, there is a lot more to know about a racehorse before one invests money to buy one, but thinking in terms of specific properties and then checking a horse in terms of these properties helps an investor to make a good choice.

Summary of the Use of Comparisons

Comparisons help analysts to do the following:

- Grasp the meaning of events that might otherwise seem obscure
- Sensitize researchers to possible properties and dimensions that are in the data but remain obscure due to a lack of sensitivity on the part of the researcher
- Suggest further interview questions or observations based on evolving theoretical analysis
- Move more quickly from the level of description to one of abstraction
- Counter the tendency to focus on a single case by immediately bringing analysis up to a more abstract level
- Examine their assumptions, biases, and perspectives as well as those of participants
- Reexamine findings, the reanalysis often resulting in the qualification or altering of the initial interpretations
- Make it more likely that analysts will discover variation as well as general patterns
- Ensure the likelihood of a more fluid and creative stance toward data analysis
- Facilitate the linking and densification of categories

Thinking About the Various Meanings of a Word

During the course of an interview, researchers often think that they know what respondents mean when they make a statement. However, when they get home and take a closer look at the interview, they discover that perhaps they didn't really understand what the participant was saying. There are various levels of meaning and various meanings that can be contained in a word or statement—especially if the meaning by the speaker is vague. A researcher should not jump to assigning a meaning without first exploring carefully all possibilities.

When we talk about exploring the meaning of a word or a phrase, we do not mean that analysts should use this strategy on every word in a document. The researcher has to be selective about the choice of which words to spend time exploring and explore only those that are unclear. Sometimes meaning is obvious from the context. Sometimes it is not so obvious. Or a researcher may be suspicious that the taken-for-granted interpretation is not the only meaning that could be assigned and that there is something deeper there. When this happens, it is time to do some thinking.

Technically, doing analysis of a word, phrase, or sentence consists of scanning a document—or at least a couple of pages of it—then returning to focus on a word, or phrase, that strikes the analyst as being significant and analytically interesting but unclear in meaning. Then, the analyst begins to list all of the possible meanings that come to mind. With this list, the analyst can turn to the document and look for incidents, or words, that will point to meaning. For instance, take a phrase mentioned by a teen when talking about taking drugs—namely that teens use drugs as a "challenge to the adult stance." The word *challenge* can have many different meanings. Since the interviewee did not specify what she meant, figuring out what the participant meant becomes a challenge for the researcher. *Challenge* could mean confronting the parent with statistics or other information. *Challenge* could also indicate a way of rebelling, a way of learning something about oneself or about drug use, a way of escaping from parental authority, and a way of defining who one is. All of these are possible interpretations. It is up to the analyst to take the list and search for clues in the data indicating the most likely meaning within the context of the rest of the interview. The researcher might find that none of the possible meanings on the list are supported by data. In that case, the researcher could go back to the participant and ask.

Using the Flip-Flop Technique

Flip-flopping consists of turning a concept inside out or upside down to obtain a different perspective. To use another concept pertaining to teens and drug use, let us look at the word *access,* which is described by our respondent as being "easy." In order to better understand what is implied by easy access, we can ask the opposite: What would happen to teen drug use if access were "difficult"—that is, if one had to travel a long distance to obtain drugs, ask around a lot, or pass a certain test before obtaining a drug? Would difficult access make a difference in the amount or type of drug used? To continue with this example, if one thinks about difficult access, one might conclude that there might be fewer places to buy the drugs, that they might be less available in places where teens hang out, and that the drugs might be more expensive. Returning to the concept of easy access, the researcher then stands back and, thinking in conceptual terms, looks for properties such as degree of accessibility, amount of cost, and locations where they can be purchased.

Making Use of Life Experience

We share a common culture with our research participants and often experience events in similar cultural ways. In order to gain insight into a participant's experience, researchers can at times draw upon personal experiences that are similar to that described by a participant for comparison purposes. It's not that researchers' experiences are identical to that of participants but that certain properties might be found in both situations. For example, if a researcher were studying elderly people and wanted to know how they adapt physical space to meet their functional needs, the researcher might have an elderly parent or aunt who comes to mind and who has also had to cope with the same problem. Since it is impossible to completely block out the parent's or relative's experience, why not put that knowledge to good use? It is possible to use the experience of Mom or Aunt Julia not as data per se but to stimulate thinking about various properties and dimensions of spatial use?

As the authors of this book, we can hear our critics saying "bias"—bias at the suggestion of using personal data. We are not suggesting that a researcher impose his or her experiences on the data. Rather, we are suggesting that researchers might want to momentarily escape from their data and put their focus on a situation that will get them to think more conceptually and in terms of properties and dimensions. Experience may even offer a negative case or something new to think about that will make researchers confront their assumptions about specific data.

Waving the Red Flag

Analysts and research participants bring to the investigation their biases, beliefs, and assumptions. It is important that researchers acknowledge this happens and that they remain alert looking for instances when biases, assumptions, or beliefs are intruding into the analysis. Recognizing this intrusion is often difficult because meanings are often taken for granted. Sometimes researchers become so engrossed in their investigations that they don't even realize that they are no longer questioning data but have come to accept the assumptions or beliefs of their own or those of respondents. A researcher must walk a fine line between getting into the hearts and minds of respondents while at the same time keeping enough distance to be able to think clearly and analytically about what is being said or done—a good reason for the researcher to keep a journal of his or her responses and feelings.

Whenever researchers hear terms such as *always* or *never,* it should raise a red flag in their minds—and so should phrases such as, "it couldn't possibly be that way" or "everyone knows that this is the way it is." Remember, as analysts we are thinking in dimensional ranges and words such as *always, never, everyone,* and *no way* represent only one point along a continuum. We want to also know the *sometimes* and the conditions that are likely to lead to *sometimes* versus *always* or *never*. For example, a student in one of our seminars was studying the use of interpreters in clinics treating Asian women. The student explained that when no female interpreter is available to translate for a female patient, a male interpreter is sometimes called upon. The use of men in these cases is problematic when the female patient has sexual or gynecological problems because these topics are considered too sensitive to be discussed in mixed gender company.

From an analytic standpoint, the concepts of *taboo* and *never* stand out, immediately waving a red flag in our minds. It would be very easy for persons familiar with Asian cultures to accept this stance and not raise

any further questions about the matter. Yet, the concept of taboo brings up some very interesting questions. What happens in life-threatening situations when a woman's life is immediately at stake? Would the woman or the interpreter let her die because no one is willing to talk about what is happening? Or are there subtle ways of getting around taboos by making inferences, by providing subtle clues, or using nonverbal communication? Would a sensitive clinician who is familiar with this population pick up on what is not being said and follow up on it? Would the woman find an excuse to leave and then come back at another time? To simply accept what we are told and never question or explore issues forecloses on opportunities to develop more encompassing and varied interpretations.

Analytic Moral

The analytic moral is not to take situations or sayings for granted. It is important to question everything—especially those situations where we find ourselves or our respondents "going native" or accepting the common viewpoint or perspective. Also, when we hear a term such as *sometimes,* we want to explore the conditions that bring about *sometimes* and determine if there are other situations that also produce *never* or an *always.* We search for and welcome contradictory cases so that we might find examples of how concepts vary when conditions change. And, even if *never* is the situation, we want to know what the conditions are that make this so. We should remember that people are very resourceful. Over the years, they seem to find strategies for managing or getting around many different types of situations. Finding these variations adds depth and gives our concepts greater explanatory power.

Looking at Language

People often use language in interesting ways. Examining how respondents use language can tell us a lot about a situation. Take the passage we quoted earlier about the elderly woman who put her husband in a nursing home. The woman says, "It was a very difficult decision to put my husband in a nursing home, but I couldn't physically or emotionally care for him anymore." Notice that she is using the first-person language of *I* and not *we,* which tells us that she views putting him in the nursing home as her decision to make. Did her husband have any input into the decision? Does she have children, and were they involved in the decision? If not, why? Does the fact that she alone made the decision account for how she feels about placement?

Language is also interesting in the sense that persons often conceptualize events for us. Often the terms that they use to express something are so conceptually expressive that we can use them as a code. When someone says, "I guess I'll just have to come to terms with my disabilities," they are giving us the concept *coming to terms.* When we think about it, this concept is very descriptive of what happens, and it would be difficult for the analyst to find a better term. When we use the words of respondents as a code, we call this an **in vivo code**, indicating that a concept is a term used by the participant. Language is often rich and very descriptive and worth paying attention to.

Looking at Emotions That Are Expressed

Situations or events that are significant enough to be mentioned in an interview may provoke a range of emotions in participants and in the researcher. When doing analysis, it is important to bring emotions and

feelings into the analysis. Emotions and feelings cue the analysts as to the meaning of events to persons. Consider the following data taken from an interview conducted by me of a man whose wife had breast cancer:

> *When we first discovered the lump in her breast we probably reacted like most people do. At first we thought it was probably nothing, but it should be checked. I think secretly we were both very upset and scared. She did get it checked and then it became apparent that it was probably suspicious and that she would probably have to have surgery. Then we became very frightened because we had both been educated that cancer was a very life-threatening thing. And you have to act quickly to do something about it and that is what we did. (Excerpt from field notes)*

Looking at this couple, an analyst is struck by the fear generated by obtaining a diagnosis of possible cancer. The meaning given to the cancer by this couple was that it was a "life-threatening" event, and this frightened them into acting quickly to do something about it.

Looking for Words That Indicate Time

The use of *time*-related words often denote a change or a shift in perceptions, in thoughts, events, or interpretations of events. Time words are words such as *when, after, since, before, in case,* and *if*. Time words help researchers frame events and indicate conditions, and they are important when we are trying to identify context and process. Reexamine the quote from the field notes where the husband is describing events surrounding his wife's surgery for breast cancer. The word *when* makes us take notice. It frames the events that followed and marks entry into the cancer experience. The word *then* that follows several lines later denotes a shift in the experience from it "might be cancer" and we are secretly afraid, to it probably is cancer, we need surgery, and we are "very frightened" because cancer is life threatening.

Thinking in Terms of Metaphors and Similes

We frequently use metaphors in our everyday lives to explain things to others and ourselves. When we call someone "a fox," we are implying that he or she is sly and cunning, perhaps intelligent and purposeful. If we say that someone is "like a turtle," we mean that a person is slow but persistent. Our research participants often use metaphors and similes to describe events and convey emotions. Lakoff & Johnson (1981) wrote a very interesting book describing how persons use metaphors to talk about things. Researchers can use metaphors to help them make a statement or express an idea. For example, a person might describe undergoing cancer treatment as "going through hell" or "fighting a battle." The use of even a few words can create images in our minds and hint at meaning of the experience.

Looking for the Negative Case

The negative case is a case that does not fit the pattern. It is the exception to the main theme or core concept of the research. Though a researcher might not find a negative case, searching for that case is useful because researchers can use it to offer alternative explanations. Looking for the negative case provides for a fuller exploration of a concept. A negative case adds richness to findings and points out that life is not exact, that there are always exceptions to almost any explanation.

Using Other Analytical Tools

So What?

Another analytic tool is asking so what? A researcher could ask these questions of the couple described earlier: Why is making this discovery significant? So what if there is a lump? What does it mean to this couple now and to their future? Answers to these questions can better help the researcher to understand why the couple felt that they needed to take immediate action.

Structure of the Narrative

Still, another technique involves looking at the structure of the narrative—that is, looking at how it is organized in terms of time or at what point in the life story the narrative starts, how it proceeds, and how it ends. Are there gaps in the story? Is context brought into the narrative? Looking at how participants structure the story gives the analyst some sense of how the participants locate events in their lives and the salience of these events.

What If?

Then, too, analysts can play the "what if? game" with data. What if the couple ignored the lump? How would the experience now and in the future be different? Or what if the lump was discovered on a mammogram or routine physical exam rather than by the couple? Or if the lump was discovered while on vacation or living abroad rather than at home, how might they have reacted? Letting the mind drift and thinking about other scenarios helps the analysts to look at the data with fresh eyes. For example, in the previously given quotation about breast cancer, the respondent implies that the most natural thing in the world for a woman to do when she finds a breast lump is to run to the doctor. But is it? There are women who dismiss a lump as unimportant or are too fearful to follow through. Analysts might ask the following question: What are the background, education, and experiences of this couple that they became suspicious and went to a doctor? Asking questions such as these enable researchers to get at contextual factors explaining why this couple became suspicious when others might not have.

Ethical Considerations

An important part of doing analysis is reflecting back on who we are and how we are shaped and changed by the research. It is important that a researcher take the time to practice these strategies and make them part of his or her way of thinking. Without practice, the use of the strategies becomes forced rather than skillful. The ethics of doing qualitative research demand that a researcher not jump to conclusions about meaning and that every attempt is made to explore all possibilities and then to check these out against data or with participants.

Summary of Key Points

In this chapter, we've presented a set of analytic strategies that can be used to help with analysis. The importance of using these strategies can't be stressed enough. Analysts want to generate findings that have substance and that contribute to knowledge in their professional fields. To generate new knowledge requires sensitivity to the multilayers of meaning that are possible in data. Analytic strategies are heuristic devices that

promote interaction between the analyst and the data. They are used to probe the data, stimulate conceptual thinking, increase sensitivity, promote the possibility of alternative interpretations of data, and generate the free flow of ideas. Most important for analysts to keep in mind is that analytic strategies are to be used flexibly, with understanding and with purpose.

In addition, the thoughtful use of analytic strategies fosters awareness of how bias and assumptions influence analysis. Though some analysts claim to be able to bracket their beliefs and perspectives when analyzing data, putting aside professional perspective is not always possible. Perspectives and assumptions are deeply ingrained and their influence often imperceptible. We find it more helpful to acknowledge our biases and consciously use experience as a strategy to help us think differently and more broadly about data. In addition to the use of analytic strategies described here, we suggest that analysts keep a personal journal during the data-gathering and analytic processes. Journal keeping provides a record of the thoughts, actions, and feelings that are aroused during the research.

Insider Insights — Powerful Tools for Analyzing Data

My Experiences Teaching and Using Chapter 5 of Corbin and Strauss

By MarySue V. Heilemann, PhD, RN

Associate Professor, UCLA School of Nursing

Over the years, it has been my experience that things really come together for the students of my advanced qualitative research course at UCLA when they start applying the analytic tools from Chapter 5 of the Corbin & Strauss text to do data analysis. In my class, this is after they transcribed and completed initial coding on three or four interviews that they themselves conducted, as part of their pilot study for this course.

By this time in the course, the students are well aware that they need to move from coding to the development of categories/concepts through articulation of properties and dimensions. However, they don't seem to grasp HOW to do this until we try out a few of the strategies from Chapter 5 together in class. This is when the light bulbs really seem to turn "on" and students start to grasp the fun and exciting aspects of data analysis that they didn't previous understand. This is highly motivating for students, and I consistently receive great feedback from them about this class experience, in particular.

I have found that the group experience usually works best if I provide each of the students with some samples of my own data so we can do analysis together in class. Students have told me that they feel less pressure when working with someone else's data, and they feel more freedom to "make mistakes" as well. Typically, I intentionally choose segments of data (quotes) that address some aspect of one particular theme or category that I found to be richly present in my data. After introducing the study aims and giving a brief overview of the demographics of the sample, I would inform the students of the theme of our focus. Then, I would provide the students with paper copies of the data excerpts stapled together in a packet. For example, this year, I decided to pull some quotes from four interviews done with different women approximately three

months after they completed an innovative treatment program for depression. I explained to the class that "being ready for treatment" was the theme but that I was not sure if it was a category or subcategory yet, so I wanted us to look at these quotes together to analyze them. All of the pages with data had line numbers on the left-hand side of the page and a wide right-hand margin. This helped us quickly locate any quote that a student might refer to. I did not provide my own codes of the data, but the students were aware that I had already coded the data and that I was very familiar with it. In the packet, I included a brief introduction to each participant whose quotes were included. After this introduction, I gave the students about 20–30 minutes to read the excerpts and mark the data to identify segments that they thought pertained to "readiness" or "being ready." Then, together as a group, the students shared what they saw in the data related to "being ready." They identified quotes, and I noted them on the board with line numbers. After asking a few questions of the data as described by Corbin & Strauss in Chapter 4, we started to make comparisons. Our goal was to look for variation and/or patterns across cases. We also discussed what and how we would write in memos about what we were discussing and how we would further explore the issues that came up in a future memo.

Next, I asked the class to identify a word or phrase that caught their attention in the data. This led to many more questions and group discussion, which allowed students to see how differently their classmates used language. They realized that there were varying ideas about the meanings of different words or phrases that were in the data, which was eye opening for them. It showed them that they should not be so sure that they immediately knew what a participant's quote meant.

After "looking at language," we used the flip-flop technique to examine the concept of "readiness." We discussed the opposite of readiness, which got everyone in the class talking. Students found that while many agreed, some disagreed on how to define the opposite of readiness. This lively discussion drew them back into the data to see how the participants used the term in the context of the interview.

We continued on using the techniques, one by one, always discussing our ideas together as we went along in relation to the data from these four interviews. From "waving the red flag" to "looking for words that indicate time" to zeroing in on a participant's use of metaphors, the students enthusiastically "mined" the data for what they could find. This year, as in years past, students found that this was easier to do than they expected, as long as they understood the analytic tools. Since it was not their own data and we were doing this as a group, the exercise had a spirit of exploration and playfulness for them.

Students have told me that they felt that this experience was a breakthrough because they realized they could loosen up and really "dig around" in the data as they analyzed it and even when they were coding, if appropriate. They felt more willing to "dig in" because the analytic tools showed them HOW to move back and forth in the data. They said that when they were looking for something in particular, such as how emotions were expressed or how words like "always," "never," or "everything" popped up in the data, they felt that they knew what to do when they saw it. They felt confident. Knowing what the tools were and then using them together in a group showed them that they "had permission" to dig below the surface in a new way.

The follow-up assignment to this in-class exercise was for students to go home and use the analytic techniques with their own data, write about it, and turn in a bundle of memos. In reviewing the memos that

were turned in, I can see that students favored the strategies of asking questions of the data, making comparisons, looking at language, noting expressed emotions, and using personal experience. In a recent office hour appointment with a visiting scholar from Italy who is auditing my class, I noticed a line of data in a manuscript we were reviewing for publication based on her research. I asked the scholar to look again at a line of data she included in the manuscript, and she immediately said with a huge smile on her face, "Ahhhhh! Now I see that this data is waving the red flag!" Indeed, the line of data included the participant's use of the terms "always," "everything," and "every time" in one sentence. Finding this led us to a more productive analysis of that portion of the data. Yesterday, a doctoral student who took my course two years ago but who is currently deep into data analysis of her dissertation called me last week with a desire to review some of the techniques in relation to how she was doing analysis now. After a fruitful and vigorous discussion, we noted how these techniques are useful in all stages of grounded theory analysis: early, middle, and late. Together, these experiences only reinforce to me the importance of making time to do experiential teaching of the analytic strategies of Corbin & Strauss's Chapter 5. The benefits seem to be endless!

Activities for Thinking, Writing, and Discussing as a Group

1. As a class or alone, apply some of the techniques described to analyze passages from the field notes in Appendix A. These field notes are taken from a biographical study exploring the meaning of life-threatening events to persons and how they incorporate these events into their lives. The event in these field notes is chest pain. If you prefer, you may use some of your own or a group member's field notes. Share the results of your analysis with the group, and explain how you think their use enhanced the analysis. What did you think about that you might not have if you had not used them?
2. Think about other analytic techniques that you as an analyst might add to the list of analytic techniques. Discuss these with your group.

Suggested Readings

Bazeley, P. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: Practical strategies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Saldana, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Chapter 6
Memos and Diagrams

> To exercise maximum control over his experiences, the researcher requires an efficient system for recording them. Novices may think of note-taking and recording principally as devices that help with remembering and with the storage and retrieval of information. They are correct, but only on a rather mechanical level.... What our researcher requires are recording tactics that will provide him with an ongoing, developmental dialogue between his roles as discoverer and as social analyst. (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973, p. 9)

Table 6.1 Key Terms

Diagrams: Visual devices that depict relationships between analytic concepts
Memos: Written records of analysis
Theoretical sampling: Focused data gathering for the purpose of moving the analysis forward and elaborating categories and relationships

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the reader to **memos** and **diagrams**—two very important analytic tools. As Schatzman and Strauss stated in the quotation at the beginning of the chapter, memos and diagrams are more than just repositories of analysis. When researchers write memos, they are doing analysis. They are dialoguing with data and moving the analysis further. Strauss (1987) stated, "Even when a researcher is working alone on a project, he or she is engaged in continual internal dialogue—for that is, after all, what thinking is" (p. 110).

Points to Keep in Mind

When reading this chapter, students are advised to keep the following points in mind:

- Introduction to memos and diagrams
- A research illustration
- Memos and diagrams
- General features of memos
- General features of diagrams
- Sorting memos

Introduction to Memos and Diagrams

When doing analysis, researchers are interacting with data. They are examining it, making comparisons, asking questions, coming up with concepts to stand for meaning, and suggesting possible relationships between concepts. In other words, a dialogue is occurring in the mind of the researcher. Writing a concept in the margin doesn't preserve that dialogue or indicate how concepts might relate to each other. Memos and diagrams fill this role. The following is an example of analysis as recorded in memos and diagrams.

A Research Illustration

In this next section of the chapter, we present a short research illustration of analysis, memo writing, and diagramming that shows the relationships between these. The illustration should reassure readers that there is nothing magical about doing analysis, writing memos, and doing diagrams. The memos and diagrams pertain to analysis of the "pain experience." As readers will notice, all a researcher needs to get the analytic process going is a small bit of data. We want readers especially to pay attention to the fact that we are not just putting labels on concepts when we are doing analysis or coding. Yes, we are denoting concepts to stand for meaning; however, in addition, we are developing concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions, both of which are important for defining, densifying, and refining concepts. The development of concepts is just as important in descriptive research as it is in theory construction.

Notice how we write the memos. At the top of the memo is the code or concept that is our interpretation of what we believe the data reflects. Notice, however, that more than just a concept is denoted in the memo. Some memos will also denote what seem to be properties and dimensions of the code (that are also concepts but lower-level concepts). Other memos and diagrams will show relationships between concepts.

Memos and Diagrams

MEMO 1

Example of a Memo Showing Open Data Exploration

April 4, 1997

Concept: The Pain Experience (The code here, or concept, is reflected in the title given to the memo.)

(Field note excerpt)

> *The pain in my hands from arthritis is really bad in damp cold weather. I wake up with it in the morning and it lasts throughout the day. I hate to take medication because of all the possible side effects so the only time it seems to get better is at night when I am warm in bed and under the covers. (Quote from interview with subject #1, p. 1 of field notes)*

In my memo, which is an example of analysis of the field notes, I write the following:

This woman is describing her "pain experience"—that is, how she experiences pain and its relief. The description is from her perspective and reflects her experience; it is not any objective measure of pain. We can see in her description that she expresses she is having pain in her hands. Pain is the event of the problem. The properties of her pain can be conceptualized in the broad terms of *intensity, location,* and

duration. When she says that the pain is "really bad" at times, she is giving us a dimension of the property of pain intensity. The location of the pain, she tells us, is in her hands, and it is of "long" duration, lasting throughout the day. Another aspect of that pain experience is pain relief. She tells us that her relief comes in the form of "warmth at night" and that she is "reluctant" to take any medication. Pain relief is possible under conditions of warmth. The possible use of medication is dismissed at least at this point in her pain experience. All of the properties of the pain, including its management and relief, are part of her pain experience, which of course is very individualized.

Commentary on Memo and Diagram

The previously given memo and the diagram that follows (see Diagram 6.1) are not complicated or extensive, but they do get us started on our analysis. We have a concept—"the pain experience"—and we've identified some of the properties and dimensions of this particular woman's pain experience (intensity, duration, and location). We also have the concepts of "pain management" and "pain relief." Now we could go back to the data to look for further descriptions of her pain experience in the same interview or we could turn to the interview with another research participant and compare the two descriptions. Or before doing the latter, we could write additional memos off of the field note to help us think about what we want to look for when we go back to the field to do another interview. Here we want to make a very important point. Every analyst must choose the depth of analysis he or she is reaching for and how much time he or she is willing to put into a study. We don't want to oversimplify the analytic process but neither do we want to overwhelm our readers with memo writing. We, the authors, continue to write memos off previous memos until we run out of ideas because that's how we work. But every analyst has his or her own approach, style, and work rhythm. In this book, we want to provide information that is of benefit to experienced as well as novice researchers. We would be doing our readers a disservice if we did not provide a range of both complex and less complex memos. We leave it to our readers to select the level of complexity of analysis they are reaching for and how much time they are willing to invest in memo writing.

After writing the memo and doing the diagram, we continued with our analysis, writing a second memo building upon the first memo.

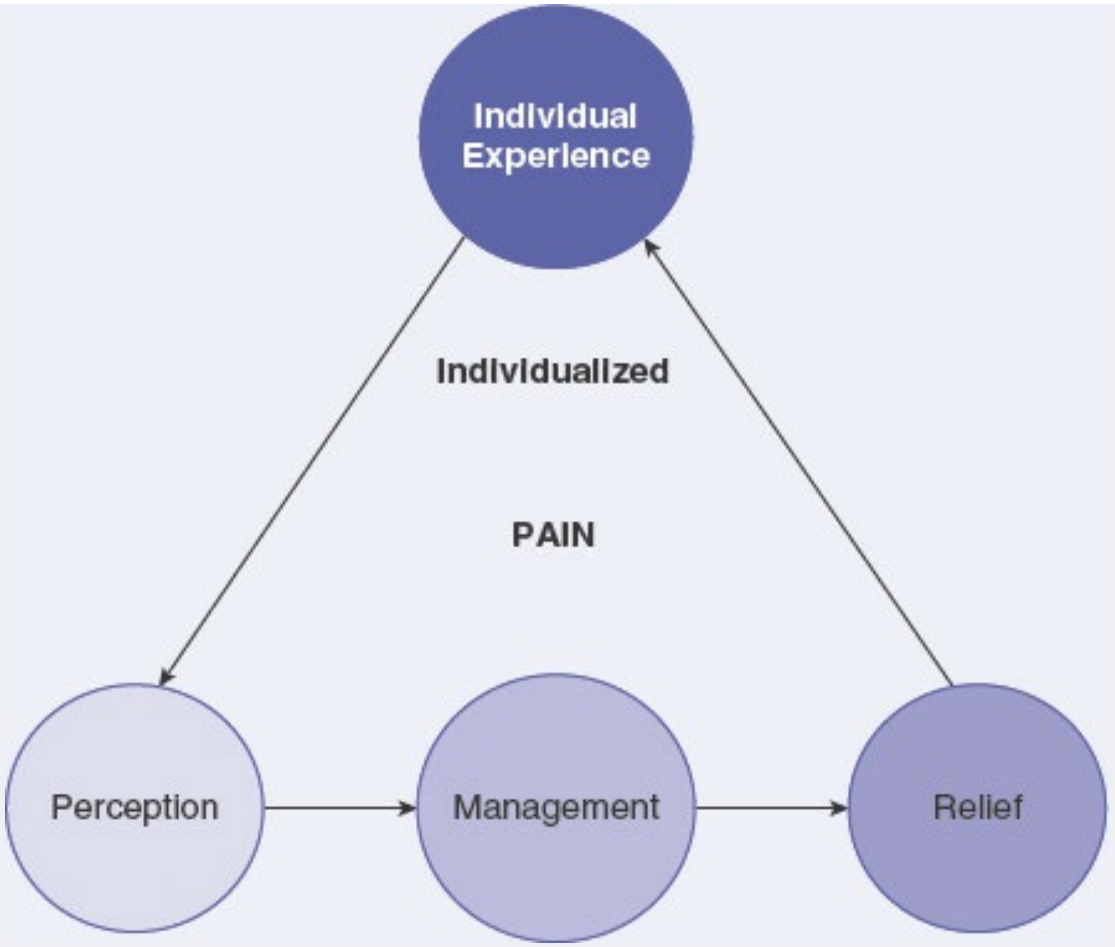

Diagram 6.1 Early Diagram on the Pain Experience

MEMO 2

Example of a Memo That Explores the Pain Experience Further in That It Identifies or Develops the Properties and Dimensions Further

This is a more abstract memo that is based on data. The memo's purpose is to sensitize us to possible properties and dimensions so that when we read subsequent data we know what to look for.

April 4, 1997

Concept: The Pain Experience

Taking off from the previous memo, we can hypothesize that pain can vary dimensionally in intensity from severe to mild, that it can be located anywhere in the body and in more than one place at the same time, and that it can last (duration) a short or long time—that is, continuous, intermittent, and temporary over the course of time. This gives me a range of dimensions, all of which enter into the pain experience. Also, with this type of pain and for some persons, it is possible to obtain relief under certain conditions, so that pain relief can vary from possible to impossible, be temporary or permanent depending upon the person, the type or cause of pain, and a person's response to it. To make it more complicated, it seems that

perception of pain or the pain experience can vary depending upon many factors or conditions such as location of pain in the body—some areas being more sensitive than others—, degree of activity one engages in, time of day, and even odd things like weather. Finally there is the property of duration of the pain. Duration can vary dimensionally as "continuous," "intermittent," or "temporary." In the previous case, one might say that the pain is intermittent. But how do all the various dimensions or variations along the properties of pain enter into the pain experience? Also, I have another question: What is the meaning of pain to this person? The meaning comes in the form of the action–interaction that she can carry out or can't carry out because of the pain. Hmm! I have to check on that. The "subjective experience" of pain incorporates many factors, and it is up to me to follow through on this when examining the data. There are other conditions that might influence the pain experience, but these other conditions are not brought out in this particular field note including pain history—both present and previous experiences with pain relief. Oh my! Pain relief and treatment are big areas that I've not yet explored but will have to before this study is over. As I continue to collect data and analyze the interviews, I'll be looking to see if any of the points made previously are present in the data and can be incorporated into my theory.

Commentary on Memo and Diagram

In this memo and the diagram based on the memo (Diagram 6.2), we are laying out possible dimensions of pain and how they relate to the pain experience. Notice that memos and the diagram reflect a systematic thinking about the topic. The analyst is using already-collected data to stimulate thinking. Another point about memos is that they force analysts to ask questions of the data, questions that will direct **theoretical sampling,** a concept explained in Chapter 7. When the analyst returns to collecting data, he or she will be increasingly sensitive to those areas brought out in the analysis, listening carefully to how persons describe their pain experience, including the pain history, experiences with pain relief, and treatment. These ideas need further exploration through data collection.

Here is another memo written off the same field notes. This memo is more speculative than previous memos that came out of the data and is meant to give direction for theoretical sampling and to help the analyst break out of the analytic ruts that block thinking. The ideas that arise in a brainstorming memo are not incorporated into the study.

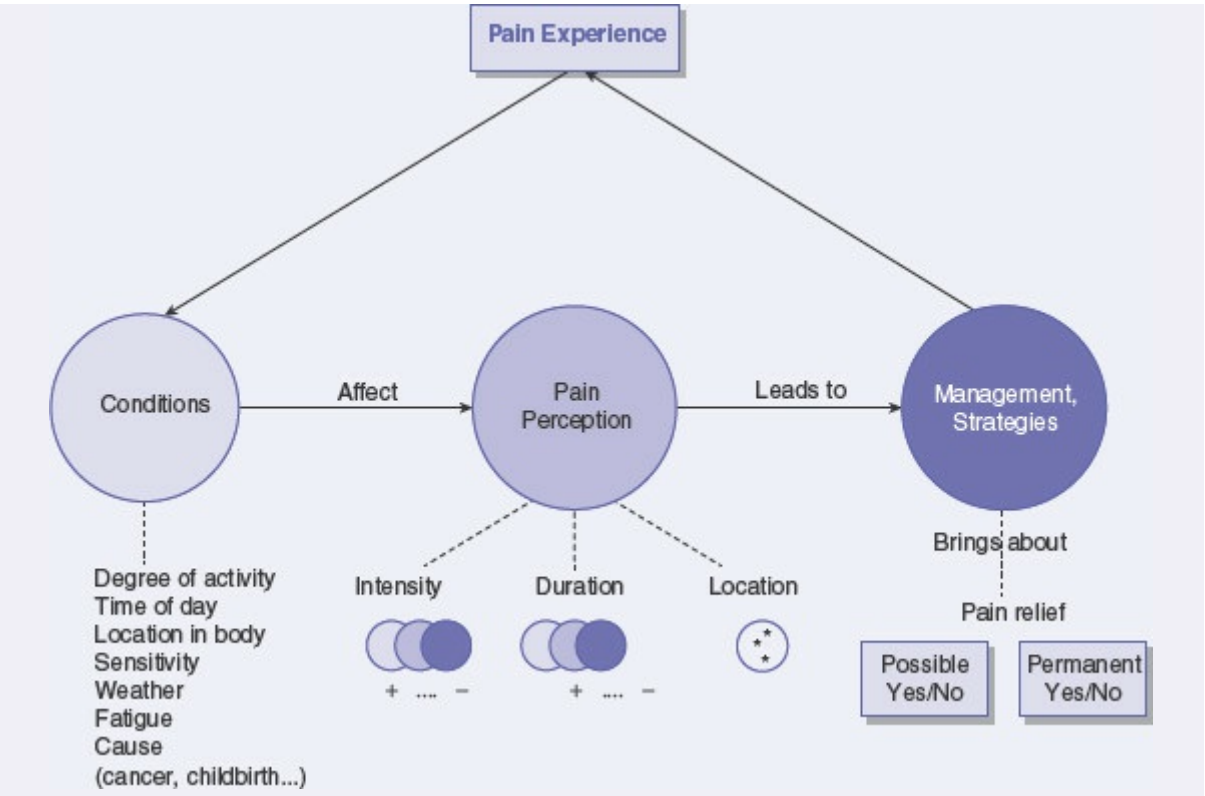

Diagram 6.2 Further Development of the Pain Experience

MEMO 3

Example of a Comparison and Question-Asking Memo (Again, the purpose of this type of memo is to extend my thinking and to make me more sensitive to data.)

April 4, 1997

Concept: "The Pain Experience" and Its Properties and Dimensions

Working from my personal experience, professional training, and the literature, I know that arthritis is certainly not the only cause of pain. One can also have pain from an injury, say, a pulled muscle or a mild burn. Pain then can vary in type from burning to sharp, dull, and even throbbing. It can be described as "horrible," "overwhelming," "disruptive," or just an "irritant." Pain is perceptual. That means no two persons experience pain in the same way because of who they are and what they bring with them to the pain experience. Some persons need a lot of pain medication after surgery. Other persons need less. It's because each person has a different pain threshold and different reactions to pain. Another point is that the pain experience has a trajectory, or course. The experience of pain does not begin with this pain but reaches back into the past, has a present, and enters into the next pain experience. Also, this particular pain experience can vary, being more or less intense over time. Thus, I now have some ideas for theoretical sampling, such as looking for situations of temporary versus chronic pain, intense pain versus more mild pain, and a pain history that includes relief from pain versus a history of unsatisfactory pain management. As I think about it, the pain experience is influenced by a combination of many factors such as intensity,

duration, and whether or not it can be relieved partially, entirely, for good, or temporarily, as well as history. I recall a woman who had post-herpetic pain that never went away. She eventually died, but her death was not from the pain per se but probably because she was so fatigued by its constancy. Her history of "searching" for pain relief was a long one. In the end, she just had to learn to live with the pain and decided that fighting it every day just was no longer feasible, getting at the meaning of pain and implications for daily life or biography. I can see that I have a lot of work to do to discover the relationships between pain and its properties, pain relief, and the pain experience. I also have a few questions that I would like to ask when I do that sampling. I should look at individuals with chronic pain. It is the property of being chronic that is driving the data collection with different conditions, such as rheumatoid arthritis, herpetic pain, sickle cell anemia, and cancer. I should also look at those with temporary pain. Here it is the property of pain being temporary that is driving the data collection. I should go to persons with pain related to childbirth, surgery, or an injury to find temporary pain. Burns and amputations are both interesting areas because the pain may be temporary or chronic depending upon complications. Still another question is what are the various patterns of the pain experience? Are there various patterns of experiencing pain that crosscut these various properties? How is the meaning of pain derived? Does whether or not pain is expected or not expected make a difference? Does the ability or probability to obtain relief make a difference? I mean, if one expects or believes that relief will come with treatment versus the belief that there will be no relief despite treatment, does this make a difference in the experience? If pain is expected, what are the steps that are taken to prevent or lessen it? How do persons control their lives or activities to minimize pain? How do factors such as culture, age, and gender; how long the pain has been going on; intensity; and efforts at relief affect the pain experience?

Commentary on Memo and Diagram

The long memo and the diagram based on the memo (Diagram 6.3) are not complete, but they do demonstrate how a researcher thinks comparatively chronic and temporary to extend her or his thinking about properties and dimensions before going back into the field. The idea is to collect data on these two extremes and then compare those data to see how properties and dimensions vary. Understanding a phenomenon like the pain experience, which is very complex and personal in nature, takes a lot of thought and data collection in a variety of areas. In the memo and diagram, the reader can also see how categories and subcategories become linked around a phenomenon such as the "pain experience" as he or she works with the data. But before anything hypothesized about in a memo or diagram is built into findings, the researcher needs to collect data and make the necessary comparisons. To have rich, dense theory or description, an in-depth analysis together with directed or theoretical sampling is necessary.

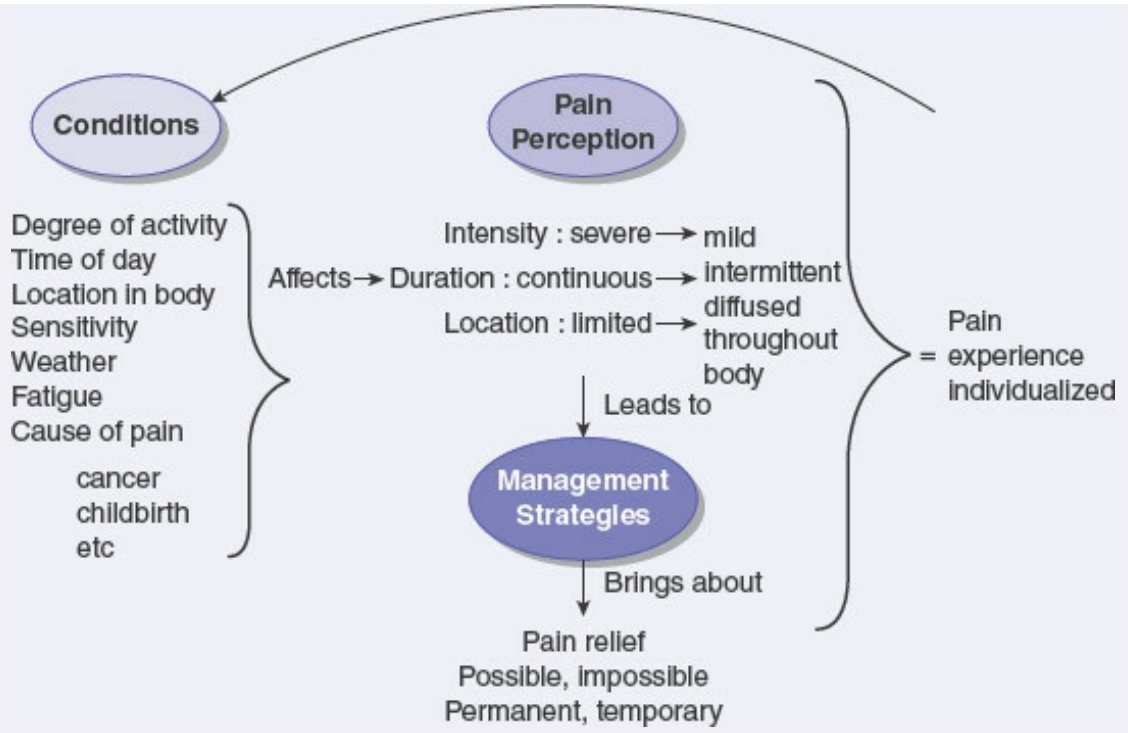

Diagram 6.3 Diagram for Pain Experience

MEMO 4

Example of a Summary Memo That Demonstrates the Relationships Between Conditions, Actions–Interactions, and Consequences

June 18, 1998

Concept: A More Advanced Memo on the Pain Experience

After months of collecting data and being immersed in the pain stories of others, what is the overall pain story to be told? I think the story is somewhat as follows. Pain is a difficult experience unless the pain is very mild and of very short duration. Every time I did an interview, I could feel the intensity of suffering of people who were experiencing severe pain as they spoke about their pain. The meaning of severe pain then is "suffering." People are driven to find relief, but relief is often elusive. The search for relief often takes them down dead-end paths with emotions ranging from anger to depression for many reasons—not the least of which the lack of control over their lives and the suffering that they endure. Though there are many treatment options available, finding one that works specifically for you is not easy. There are a lot of trial and error strategies involved. It seems to me that pain tolerance, which is an interesting concept, diminishes when the pain is of long duration and people are fatigued or worn down by its constancy. Searching for relief can be compared to being lost in a dark forest at night, as one is trying to find a way through, an escape, but the escape path is blocked and difficult to locate in the dark. People sometimes become desperate, wondering if the suffering will ever end and sometimes wishing for death as an escape from their pain. Pain can take over a life. Sometimes life revolves around periods of pain and relief.

"Everyday life" is a very important concept here because of the potential impact of pain on everyday activities. Everyday life has the potential to be disrupted very little or greatly. People seek relief not only to "get away" from the suffering but also so that they can "get on" with their lives. Pain is such a personal experience that it is difficult to explain, and acute temporary pain is very different from chronic severe pain. I do see some patterns emerging. There are those persons who experience acute temporary pain. Their pain experience may have been intense, but for the moment that intensity is forgotten when the situation has passed. Their pain experience is defined by how the pain was handled and the treatments made available for controlling it. Some persons within this group describe the pain experience as horrible or poorly managed. Others describe it as not so bad. Whatever the pain experience, it becomes incorporated into a person's pain history, coming back into play in future episodes of pain whether acute or chronic. There are those who suffer from chronic pain. They have developed management strategies for controlling its intensity and impact on daily life. They often describe their pain as bearable though they would rather be without it and continue to search for a cure. Their pain experience is modulated by the support and recognition that they receive from others and the hope that the situation is temporary. There are still avenues open to them. Then there is the group—"the constant pain sufferers"—in which every day is a pain experience. Suffering defines their lives. Everyday activities are severely limited. Depression is moderate to severe, as one would expect. There is little hope that the situation will improve. Their stories are touching.

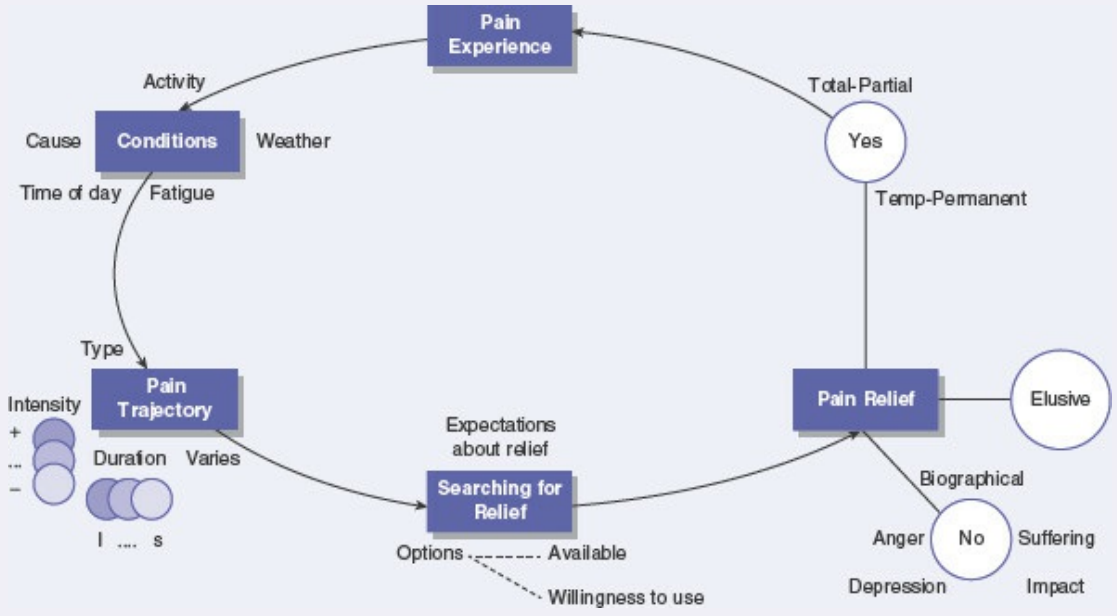

Diagram 6.4 More Advanced Diagram of the Pain Experience

Commentary on Memo

This memo, though speculative, provides direction for theoretical sampling such as looking at chronic versus temporary and persons whose lives are defined by pain and suffering versus persons who have learned how to control their pain. The memo also gives the researcher some potential new concepts such as "constant pain sufferers" and "pain history," greater sensitivity, and ways to look at future data. (See

Diagram 6.4.)

MEMO 5

Example of Memo Developing the Story Line

June 20, 1998

Concept: Exploring Story Line Options

I ask myself this question: What is the main concept, or story line, that integrates these various groups? I am left perplexed. I know there is "searching for relief from suffering," but that seems such a logical and common explanation. It is a process that goes on but doesn't explain or do justice to these varied experiences. There has to be an even better explanation. Hmm! I want to focus on the "suffering" that comes with pain, what it is like to have pain, to suffer whether that pain is temporary or permanent. I keep coming back to the imagery of a forest at night and the darkness, which so reminds me of living with pain, being in darkness that is suffering both physically and often psychologically, the fear, the stumbling, the fatigue, and the discouragement. There is "wandering in the darkness of pain." It doesn't tell the whole story though. I can't yet put the feeling into words just yet. I'll have to keep thinking about the problem, and hopefully, the right conceptualization will emerge.

Commentary on Memo

As the reader can see, memos do wander as the analyst tries to think things out. And sometimes the analyst isn't ready to do an integrative diagram on the major theme because he or she hasn't arrived at an overarching scheme yet. Memos express the analyst's own emotions and frustrations at having an inner sense of what is going on but being unable to articulate it at this time. And the inability to complete a diagram tells the analyst that he or she still has more thinking to do. Writing memos and doing diagrams force the analyst to keep searching for the "right" conceptualization. That is why memos and diagrams are such powerful analytic tools.

Now having the previous example, our readers can see why we feel just denoting a concept to stand for data is not sufficient. It just doesn't reflect the thinking that goes into analysis. The only way to keep a record is through memos and diagrams. This statement will become clearer in Part 2 of this book in which we take readers through an actual research demonstration. But this chapter is devoted mainly to memos and diagrams, and I still have much to say about these before progressing further. This section has a few general points to make about memos and diagrams. It will discuss the following:

- Forms and functions
- The importance of getting the memo and diagram habit
- Keeping track of analysis
- Helpful hints

Forms and Functions

Memos and diagrams have different forms and functions depending upon the stage of the research. When writing memos and doing diagrams, researchers don't necessarily think about the kind of memo or diagram they are doing. They just brainstorm and let loose with their thoughts. But if researchers examined memos or diagrams, they would find that memos and diagrams have several functions. One of the early reviewers of this text explicates the various functions. Though not necessarily limited to these functions, we present the reviewer's analysis next (see Table 6.2).

The Importance of Getting the Memo and Diagram Habit

Though doing qualitative analysis involves developing many different skills, one of the most important is getting the "memo and diagram habit." Writing memos should begin with the first analytic session and continue throughout the research process. Doing diagrams is more periodic but nevertheless very important. Doing memos and diagrams should never be viewed as chores or as tasks to be agonized over. They are also not to be confused with finished papers ready for publication. Rather, memos and diagrams begin as rudimentary representations of thought and grow in complexity, density, clarity, and accuracy as the research progresses. One of the complaints we often hear from students is that writing memos and doing diagrams is time consuming. They say that they would rather make a few notes in the margins of their field notes. Or they write a couple of memos but no more. We puzzle over those remarks. Writing memos and doing diagrams is part of doing analysis. Memos move the analysis forward and as such are just as important to the research process as data gathering itself.

Table 6.2 Types of Memos

1. Opening data exploration
2. Identifying or developing the properties and dimensions, concepts, or categories
3. Making comparisons and asking questions
4. Exploring relationships among conditions, actions–interactions, and consequences
5. Developing the story line

Source: Courtesy of an anonymous reviewer.

Keeping Track of Analysis

Qualitative analysis involves complex and cumulative thinking that would be very difficult to keep track of without the use of memos and diagrams. Furthermore, thoughts change over time. Writing memos and doing diagrams enable researchers to keep a record of those changes and to see the progress or lack of progress in the analysis. Also, most research projects go on for several months at a minimum. Some extend for years. How could researchers remember what they were thinking months earlier unless the thoughts were written down someplace? Then, too, many studies are conducted by teams of two or more persons, and researchers need a

way to store and share their individual as well as mutual analytic sessions. Without memos and diagrams, it would be difficult to keep the lines of communication open and to retrace the process by which the researchers arrived at their final findings.

Helpful Hints

There are a few helpful hints we'd like to offer regarding writing memos and doing diagrams:

- Date memos and diagrams.
- Create a conceptual heading for each memo and diagram.
- Keep a research journal.
- Know the difference between memos and field notes.
- Use ethics as applied to memos and diagrams.

Date Memos and Diagrams

Dating memos and diagrams is important because it enables analysts to keep track of the progress he or she is making in developing the theory. As analysis progresses, new data lead to increased insights. By going back and arranging memos and diagrams by date, researchers can view that progress. Dating also enables researchers to keep track of concepts and subconcepts they are using to prevent duplication and oversight. Reviewing memos and diagrams by date also allows researchers to notice if several different categories sound alike. The analyst can then compare the categories for similarities and differences. If the two categories are found to be too similar, they can be combined under a different heading.

Create a Conceptual Heading for Each Memo and Diagram

Placing a conceptual heading at the top of each memo and diagram makes the contents more readily accessible. A researcher can cross-reference memos that relate two or more categories (plus include date, page number, and all other identifying information for easy retrieval). Also, in the memo, reference the data that gave rise to the memo (this happens automatically with computer programs). Later, when writing, the actual data can be used to illustrate that concept. Be conceptual rather than descriptive when writing memos. Memos are not so much about specific incidents or events but about the concepts derived from data. It is the denoting of concepts and their relationships that moves the research from raw data to theory. Remember to be flexible and relaxed when doing memos and diagrams. Worrying about correctness can stifle creativity and freeze thought. And don't worry about form or function when writing memos; just go with the flow and develop your own style and techniques.

Keep a Research Journal

Undertaking a research project is a biographical journey. Since researchers figuratively enter the world of participants during data collection and analysis, they both influence and are influenced by the research process. It is impossible to immerse oneself in the data and not be affected by it. Data provides new insights and understandings of people. Researchers are often touched by the stories they hear and respond with empathy and expressed emotions. Life experiences and professional backgrounds, biases, and assumptions—even if

unconscious—influence how researchers read and interpret data. Writing memos and doing diagrams often makes biases and assumptions obvious to the researcher. That is why it is helpful to do periodic self-reflection and keep a notebook or running log, separate from memos, to record feelings, impressions, and responses during the research process. Self-reflection helps the researcher to gain a little distance and to be more conscious of how and when biases and assumptions are influencing interpretations.

Know the Difference Between Memos and Field Notes

One of the reviewers of this text suggested that field notes are in a way a form of memo. Patton (2002) said, "Recording and tracking analytical insights that occur during data collection are part of fieldwork and the beginning of qualitative analysis" (p. 436). Whenever observations of events are made, the observations are filtered through the eyes of the researcher, who can't help but start thinking about and classifying the information. It just kind of happens spontaneously because persons tend to think consciously, or not in terms of concepts. And there is no reason not to jot down analytic ideas while in the field, for as Patton (2002) went on to say, "Repressing analytical insights may mean losing them forever, for there's no guarantee they'll return" (p. 406).

The point to be made is that if a researcher is out in the field collecting data, theoretical ideas are stimulated by data, and it is appropriate to jot those ideas down before the researcher forgets them. In fact, it is almost impossible to be purely descriptive when writing during observations or interviews while in the field because we naturally name and categorize what we see (Wolcott, 2001). However, we want to make a distinction between field notes and memos in order not to confuse novice researchers about the nature or importance of each. Field notes are data that may contain some conceptualization and thoughts about these. Memos, on the other hand, represent analysis and are separate from field notes. They are lengthier than jottings and include more in-depth thinking about a concept. They are usually written after a researcher leaves the data-gathering site. And as such, they are more complex and analytical. For persons who are interested in ways of keeping memos and field notes separate, Schatzman and Strauss (1973) offered the following scheme: They suggest writing observational notes (ONs) that describe the actual events. Then they suggest writing theoretical notes (TNs), denoting the researcher's analysis of those events. And finally, they suggest writing methodological notes (MNs), or reminders about some procedural aspect of the research (pp. 99–101). Writing memos while out in the field is discouraged, as a researcher might become so engrossed in the writing that he or she fails to make notes about what is going on in the field.

Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland (2006) described ONs as being reports of events or interactions observed in the field. Such notes might also include a description of the setting and perhaps some informal interviewing. I follow a similar process. When I am out in the field, I write ONs. Then when doing the analysis at home, I write memos. For example, in the study of the articulation of patient care by head nurses, Strauss and I wrote many memos based on my observations. During each fieldwork session, I followed a head nurse as a shadow, writing down to the best of my ability each thing that each head nurse did and said along with descriptions of the setting (there was never any problem with writing in notebooks except when writing would be inappropriate as during therapy sessions). At the end of the observational session, I reviewed the day's notes with the head nurse, going over the incidents and obtaining the head nurse's explanations for his

or her actions–interactions, serving as a kind of informal interview and verification session.

Within the next day or so, I met with Strauss, and we would take an incident described in the field notes, analyze it, and write memos of our discussions, using the same approach to analysis as we did with interviews. It was during the analytic sessions that interpretations and impressions of those incidents were derived and from which memos were written. Our suggestion for field researchers would be to write ONs documenting each incident, including as much description as possible, then to write memos from the ONs—incident by incident—in a manner similar to interview data, always keeping in mind there is perhaps some conscious and unconscious analysis that occurs when gathering data.

Use Ethics as Applied to Memos and Diagrams

Since researchers are usually working at the conceptual level when writing memos and doing diagrams, there is less likelihood of putting the type of personal information in them that might break confidentiality of participants. However, before sharing memos and diagrams with colleagues or using them as examples, all identifying information should be removed. There is one additional point. Researchers have an ethical responsibility to participants to present them fairly and to show the complexity and range of issues that participants are dealing with in their daily lives. It is difficult to construct a theory that has density and shows variation without keeping a record of properties and dimensions of categories in memos and without doing diagrams.

General Features of Memos

There are some general features of memos that analysts should be familiar with. We turn to these next.

- Memos vary.
- Each analyst has his or her own style.
- Memos have functions beyond storing information.
- Memos can be sorted, ordered, and reordered.
- Analysts should write memos after every analytic session.
- Summary memos help with integration.

Memos Vary

Memos vary in content, degree of conceptualization, and length, depending upon the research phase, intent, and the materials researchers are working with. In the beginning stages of analysis, memos appear awkward and simple. This is of no concern. Remember, no one but the analyst (and possibly committee members) will have access to the memos. Later in the analysis, memos become longer and take on more depth. Writing memos of any length is not a problem with qualitative data computer-assisted analysis. Computer programs for qualitative data analysis (QDA) are widely used today. Most programs allow for integrating memos and diagrams into the analysis.

Researchers are advised not to record memos directly onto their field notes or interview transcripts as they

are inclined to do. I say this for several reasons:

1. It is difficult to write memos of any length or to do diagrams on field notes because usually there is insufficient space to develop ideas.
2. Some of the original concepts may be revised as the analysis proceeds, and these might be misleading and confusing when analysts return to a document to recode and are confronted by the old codes written in the margins.
3. It is difficult to retrieve information—in other words, to combine or sort memos—if the margin of a field note or interview transcript is the only place where information has been stored.

Each Analyst Has His or Her Own Style

Each analyst develops his or her own style for doing and storing memos. Some analysts use computer programs; others use color-coded cards or white boards, while still others prefer putting copies of memos into binders, folders, or notebooks, though these last two methods are somewhat out of fashion with QDA programs. The method that analysts use for recording and managing memos is not important. What is important is just doing them.

Memos Have Functions Beyond Storing Information

While the contents of memos are crucial to keeping a record of analyses, they have functions in addition to storing information. Among the most important of these is that they force analysts to work with concepts rather than raw data. Also, they enable analysts to use creativity and imagination, often stimulating new insights into data. Another function of memos is that they are reflections of analytic thought. A lack of logic and coherence quickly manifests itself when analysts are forced to put ideas down on paper. Memos indicate when a category is well developed in terms of its properties and dimensions or when further development is necessary. Data collection can then be directed toward filling in these categories.

Memos Can Be Sorted, Ordered, and Reordered

One of the most valuable aspects of memos is that they can be sorted, ordered, reordered, and retrieved according to the evolving analytic scheme especially with QDA programs. This ability becomes useful when it comes time to write about a topic or when analysts want to cross-reference categories or evaluate their analytic progress. Reviewing memos can also reveal which concepts are in need of further development and refinement.

Analysts Should Write Memos After Every Analytic Session

In fact, the writing of memos is an analytic session—especially for analysts working alone. However, it is not always necessary to do long memos. When stimulated by an idea, an analyst should stop whatever he or she is doing and capture that thought on paper. A few generative ideas or sentences often suffice. When an analyst has more time, he or she can write a lengthier memo.

Summary Memos Help With Integration

Summary memos should be written periodically. Summary memos pull together all the information a researcher has on a concept and to get a sense of how major concepts might fit together. This not only helps move the research along. It also helps with final integration because summary memos contain all the major ideas of the research. Integrative diagrams can be used to display those ideas visually. Summary memos make it easier to identify the core category and write the thesis, dissertation, or research report.

General Features of Diagrams

Much that I've written previously regarding memos has equal application to diagrams. However, a few more words are required to point out issues specific to diagrams. This section of the chapter will provide the following:

- Definition of diagrams and their usefulness
- Examples of diagrams

Definition of Diagrams and Their Usefulness

Everyone is familiar with diagrams. They are conceptual visualizations of data, and because they are conceptual, diagrams help to raise the researcher's thinking beyond the level of description. Diagrams enable researchers to organize data, keep a record of their concepts and the relationships between them, and integrate their ideas. Diagrams help researchers explain their findings to colleagues and others in very systematic and organized ways. Most of all, doing diagrams force researchers to think about the data in "lean ways"—that is, to reduce data down to their essence. A researcher can do qualitative analysis without doing diagrams, but as is so often said, "A picture is worth a thousand words." Miles and Huberman (1994) are two researchers who use diagrams extensively for organizing data and illustrating conceptual relationships. They had this to say about diagrams:

> *Conceptual frameworks are best done graphically, rather than in text. Having to get the entire framework on a single page obliges you to specify the bins that hold the discrete phenomena, to map likely relationships, to divide the variables that are conceptually or functionally distinct, and to work with all of the information at once. (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 22)*

Examples of Diagrams

Early diagrams are not elaborate. Like early memos, they are quite simple and hint at, rather than describe, relationships. Here are some diagrams from previous studies. Notice that they are very simple and help the researcher think about possible relationships. These diagrams were taken from Strauss (1987).

	Homogeneous Patients	*Heterogeneous Patients*
Easy work		
Difficult work		

Diagram 6.5 Homogeneous/Heterogeneous Patients: Easy/Difficult Work

Source: Adapted from Strauss (1987).

Phases of Illness	Number of Machines		Frequency			Duration	
	Few	Many	Few	Intermittent	Often	Short	Forever
Early							
Middle							
Late							

Diagram 6.6 Illness Course: Machine-Time Dimension

Source: Adapted from Strauss (1987).

Pain Tasks	Consequences For						
	Illness Trajectory	Life and Death	Carrying On	Interaction	Ward Work	Sentimental Order	Personal Identity
Diagnosing							
Preventing							
Minimizing							
Inflicting							
Relieving							
Enduring							
Expressing							

Diagram 6.7 A Balancing Matrix

Source: Adapted from Strauss (1987).

With time and verification of possible relationships against actual data, notions about relationships become solidified, and diagrams become more integrative and complex. Many revisions took place in these diagrams before the authors arrived at the final versions.

Diagrams 6.8 and 6.9 were derived during a study reported in *Unending Work and Care* (Corbin & Strauss, 1988).

Sorting Memos

The image that comes to my mind when I think about sorting memos is of an inexperienced researcher standing with stacks of memos in his or her hands and then dropping them one by one on the floor, letting them fall where they will. The piles that result represent a fortuitous sorting of the concepts. There are times when we all feel this way—especially when we are inundated with conceptual ideas but can't quite understand how they come together. Yet those of us with experience know that the research does eventually come together. After months of gathering data, studying the data, writing memos, and doing diagrams, there is that inner sense, or gut feeling, of what these data are all about. It's difficult to explain, but the story of our

participants becomes part of us. It's not that we have a chronic illness, or are drug addicts, gamblers, or new mothers. Rather, it is that we've listened to their words, observed their actions, felt their emotions, taken on their burdens, and so understand what it is like for them. The final story may not be easy to synthesize into just a few words, but it is there in our minds. From our general reading of the memos, we can write a descriptive story (see Chapter 16). Then using the categories or themes we've developed over time, we can translate our descriptive story into a written *analytic rendition* of the theoretical formulation (see Chapter 16).

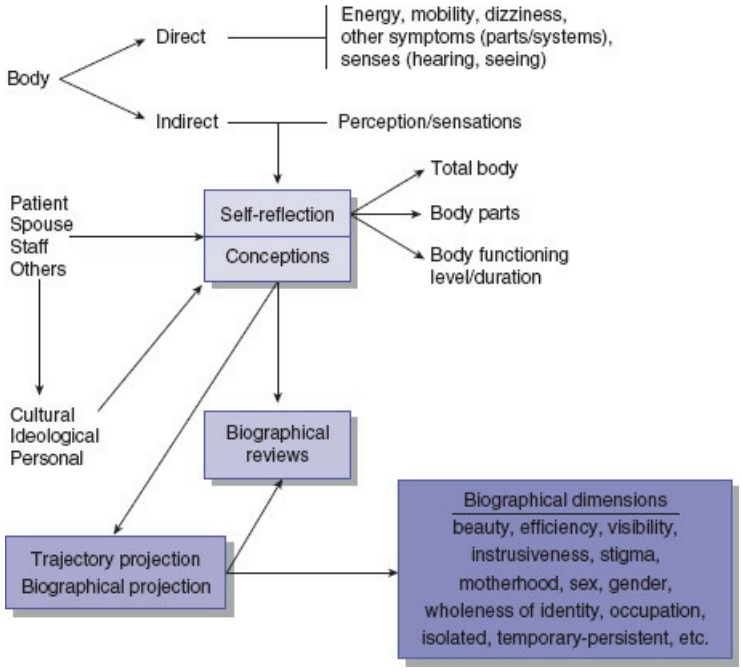

Diagram 6.8 Body, Biography, and Trajectory

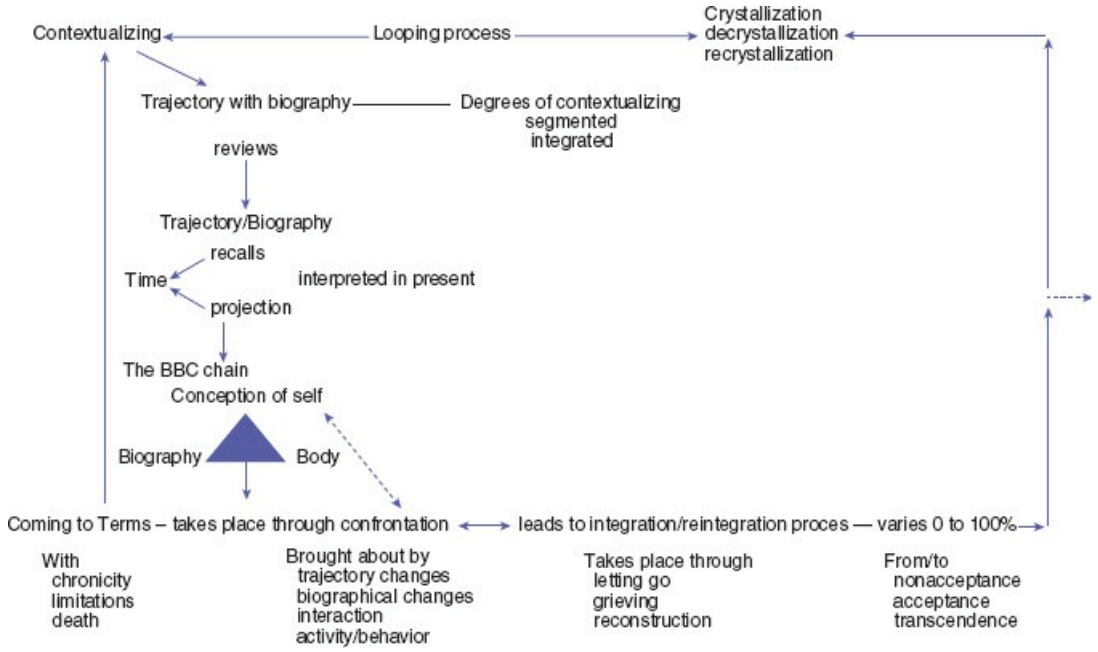

Diagram 6.9 Time Reflection Process

With construction of a written analytic rendition, the researcher can try out the analytic scheme with research subjects, colleagues, committee members, friends, spouses, and companions. The final grouping of memos into specific topics as well as a whole enables researchers to write on each topic in detail as well as to present an integrated theory.

Summary of Key Points

When analysts sit down to analyze those first field notes, they often feel overwhelmed by the task in front of them. It is difficult for novices to know where to start, what to look for, or how to recognize "it" when they see it. The words on a page may appear as an undifferentiated mass with little or no meaning other than what is most obvious. It happens to all of us, so do not be concerned if it happens to you. The idea is just to take that first piece of datum and sit down and write a memo about it. It is not unusual for early confusion and uncertainty to be reflected in memos and diagrams. Just remember that whatever a researcher writes in a memo or puts into an early diagram is less important than getting started with the analysis.

Early analysis is about gaining insight and generating initial concepts. In order to make sense out of data, one must first "chew" on it, "digest" it, and "feel" it. The researcher has to take the role of the other and try to understand the world from the perspective of participants. This can be done in memos. Memos and diagrams are essential aspects of analysis whether the research aim is description or theory. As explained, memos and diagrams are more than just a list of concepts. They stimulate and document the analytic thought processes and provide direction for theoretical sampling.

Furthermore, without memos and diagrams, there is no accurate way of keeping track of the cumulative and complex ideas that evolve as the research progresses. Diagrams are visual representations of the relationships between concepts. The purpose of diagrams is to facilitate, not hinder, the analytic process. They, too, evolve and become more complex as the research progresses. Some persons are more adept at doing diagrams than other persons. There is no need for concern if one has difficulty doing diagrams; just do your best. Some persons are just not visual.

As a final note, there are no rules governing the writing of memos or the doing of diagrams. Each analyst develops his or her own style that carries him or her through the research process. Both memos and diagrams are useful later, when writing for publication and giving talks about the research.

Insider Insights — Memoing and Diagramming

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Memoing. It is not well understood nor appreciated. We are happy to share some of our observations about memoing from our perspectives as student and supervisor.

We see some students who "do" memoing by having a never-ending conversation with their data, spinning around in their thoughts as the months, and then years pass by. The result is a bunch of jottings lying around without any coherence among them, as well as whispers by others questioning, "Why is it taking her so long to finish?"

Some other students, however, think memoing is something to be checked off on a list. They create the one "perfect" memo to demonstrate to their supervisory committees that they know how to memo, and then they move on. Memoing is understood as peripheral or getting in the way of analysis.

But memoing *is* analysis. Findings cannot be found and dissertations can't be completed, without memoing. For us, we use memoing to clarify, magnify, and generate. We use memoing to clarify ideas because it requires us to flesh out the possible qualities, circumstances, and consequences of an idea. Memoing also magnifies important ideas that may not immediately jump out of the data. Spending time writing about a seemingly tangential idea can shed light on an aspect of the data that may go unnoticed while coding. Memoing also generates meaning by taking the analysis to places it would not have gone if we did not pay particular attention to documenting the tensions in and questions and hunches about our data. Furthermore, clarifying, magnifying, and generating all inform the coding process. For example, future codes can come out of memoing.

So memoing moves the analysis forward.

We think about it as "thawing." Perhaps we think about thawing because we write this on the first day of spring in our northern climate, but thawing captures for us how our thoughts become fluid—or move from a solid to a liquid—in order to take a different shape. Like an ice cube melting. This fluidity not only allows our thoughts to move, but to move in different and unanticipated directions. When we allow our thoughts to thaw, we allow ourselves to actively wander and wonder

It's easier to understand memoing or thawing when you juxtapose it with coding. Sometimes we generate hundreds and hundreds of codes, especially at the beginning of analysis, and build our categories from these codes for a stable structure. Coding can promote a very compressed way of thinking about the data. The

process can result in freezing around the data while searching for the "right" words. Coding *may* make you rigid trying to come to some kind of resolution.

Like that block of ice.

Memoing opens up the analytic space to many possibilities taking us in unanticipated directions. Eventually, there will be a contraction (winter eventually returns), but only after appreciating broader possibilities.

How do you do it?

Of course we are all used to word documents or options provided in software packages that enable memoing. But there are more unconventional methods that can be used to expand creativity. Diagramming thoughts helps visualize relationships between ideas, codes, and categories. Diagramming facilitates quick documentation of newly forming thoughts without having to immediately generate a coherent articulation. Ideas are not lost. Similar to diagramming is drawing. Ideas can appear in visual symbols before written word. Exploring the visual through the physical gestures of drawing can help flesh out the meaning of a code. For example, Maxi has explored the code "connect" through repeatedly drawing the image of a "hook," which had been in her mind while memoing about connect. The physical act of drawing the hook freed her from the effort of trying to find the right language to describe connect. In addition, diagrams and drawings can remain in the memory as a visual cue, acting as a platform for the analysis to jump forward. Another method is audio recording the verbalization of an idea. Talking through an idea can be fruitful, especially when you are not in a place to write or you are in conversation with someone else. Just because your computer isn't in front of you doesn't mean you can't memo. Technology has made recording easy as most smartphones have built in microphones. You can even capture thoughts in public places. Maxi has often recorded on her smartphone while walking down the street as it looks like she is having a telephone conversation. Conversations with peers can be recorded, as well. We often turn on the recorder when we talk about Maxi's analyses. In addition to audio, video recording or pictures can also be used to document ideas that can stand on their own or be combined with writing later on.

This is not to say that writing should be abandoned, but it can take other forms versus formally typing or writing a memo. Maxi will often e-mail Maria her ideas about the data because she feels it helps her process to communicate her thoughts *to* someone. She will then print off the e-mail, scan it, and import it into the data analysis software. She also photocopies and scans written notes, even ones on napkins.

What we like best of all about memoing is that we believe it is the cure for analytic inertia. It is most effective when you are trying too hard, when you are trying to see something, in a highly logical and linear way.

Next is another Insider Insights. This insight points out the value of diagrams and explains how the author uses them.

Insider Insights | **Properties, Dimensions, and Diagrams**

By Shigeko Saiki-Craighill

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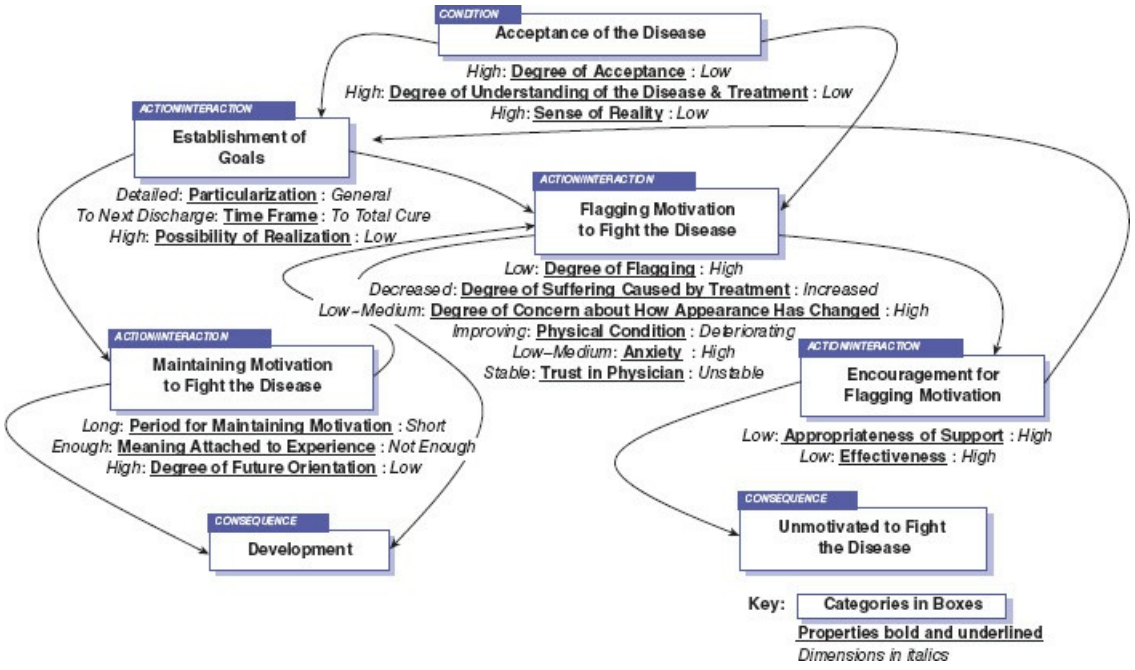
At the core of the grounded theory approach is the process of making connections between groups of concepts as categories to indicate phenomena and thereby developing theory. This may be clearly grasped, but the part of this process that can be most difficult to understand is the application of properties and dimensions to indicate the relationships between categories. To help with this, a schematic diagram can be used as a method of visualizing these relationships. In this exercise, a separate diagram is developed for each phenomenon, with each category in a box. The initial condition is placed at the top of the diagram, the consequences at the bottom, and the various actions–interactions in between. Under each category box, various properties are listed (in this sample diagram, they are bold and underlined), and the polar dimensions are written on each side of the property (here noted in italics). Arrows are then drawn from each side of the category box to the other category boxes, indicating the results of the corresponding dimensions aligned to that side of the box.

As an example, this is a simple diagram based on the experience of children with cancer. The initial condition is *acceptance of the disease.* On one side, if the property "degree of acceptance" has a dimension that is high, and the "degree of understanding the disease and treatment" and "sense of reality" are also high, this condition will lead to the action–interaction of *establishment of goals.* However, if these properties are all low, it will lead to the *flagging motivation to fight the disease.* To follow this diagram one more step, the *establishment of goals,* can have properties of "particularization" with goals that are either very detailed or very general; a "time frame" that is oriented toward the next discharge from the hospital or toward a total cure; and a "possibility of realization" that is either high or low. Depending on the dimension of these properties, the patient will be able to *maintain the motivation to fight the disease* or will have *flagging motivation.* These relationships can be followed throughout the diagram, leading to the final consequence of this phenomenon as either further *development* of the child or the child becoming *unmotivated to fight the disease.*



Saiki-Craighill Diagram

This sort of visual representation of the relationships makes it much easier to share ideas with colleagues and generate a productive discussion on the rationale for how categories are linked and the implications of changes in the dimensions of certain properties. Furthermore, it helps to reduce the researcher's bias by emphasizing the logical relationships between categories and separates them from their temporal relationships (that is, the order in which they were presented in the data).

Other advantages of this exercise include highlighting mistakes and omissions. If the categories and properties are ill formed, it quickly becomes evident in the diagramming process. Also, if there are missing categories or properties, gaps in the diagram will appear. The researcher can review these gaps before conducting further data collection and use this information as a tool for developing proper theoretical sampling. Overall, this exercise provides a powerful tool to see beyond the most obvious framework a researcher may be using to approach the data and allow him or her to visualize unexpected ideas through the process of abduction.

This diagram by Saiki-Craighill first appeared in Japanese in a book with the English title of *Narrative on theLife and the Illness.* It was published by University of Tokyo Press in 2008. The title of it could be translated into English this way: *The Experiences of Children Fighting With Pediatric Cancer* on pages 103 to 132.

References

Saiki-Craighill, S. (2006). *The grounded theory approach* (Shinyosha, in Japanese).

Saiki-Craighill, S. (2008). *Applied grounded theory approach* (Shinyosha, in Japanese).

Saiki-Craighill, S. (2012). *A seminar in qualitative research methodology* (2nd ed.) (Igaku Shoin, in Japanese).

Saiki-Craighill, S. (2013). *Data collection methods using the grounded theory approach* (Shinyosha, in Japanese).

Activities for Thinking, Writing, and Discussing as a Group

1. Turn ahead to the field notes located in Appendix A. Now, begin to analyze the data, putting your thoughts down in memos. Try to write different kinds of memos, using the memos provided in this chapter as patterns. Naturally, with these limited data, you'll not be able to write an integrative memo but you should be able to write a couple of memos about concepts you've identified and about some of the properties and dimensions of those concepts.
2. Make a couple of diagrams reflecting your analysis to this point.
3. Now bring your memos and diagrams to the group meeting, and discuss them with the other group members.
4. Each group member can present a memo for discussion.
5. Based on the group discussion, write a group memo summarizing all of the ideas.
6. Do a group diagram, putting all of your thoughts together.

Suggested Reading

Strauss, A. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists* (pp. 109–128, 170–182, 184–214). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Chapter 7
Theoretical Sampling

> The most productive scientists have not been satisfied with clearing up the immediate question but, having obtained some new knowledge, they make use of it to uncover something further and often of greater importance. (Beveridge, 1963, p. 144)

Table 7.1 Key Terms

Saturation: Saturation is usually explained in terms of "when no new concepts are emerging." But saturation is more than a matter of no new concepts. It also denotes the development of concepts in terms of their properties and includes showing their dimensional variation.
Theoretical sampling: A method of data collection based on concepts derived from data. The purpose of theoretical sampling is to collect data from places, people, and events that will maximize opportunities to develop concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions, uncover variations, and identify relationships between concepts.

One of the major issues confronting grounded theorists is what data to collect and when, where, and how in order to make those significant contributions to knowledge. This chapter explores the notion of **theoretical sampling**—a method of data collection particular to grounded theory. What makes theoretical sampling different from conventional methods of sampling is that its data collection is open and flexible and for a very good reason. It enables analysts to follow the lead of the research and direct data collection to those areas that will best serve the developing theory. The research process feeds on itself. It simply keeps moving forward, driven by its own power. In theoretical sampling, the researcher is like a detective. He or she follows the leads of the concepts, never quite certain where they will lead but always open to what might be discovered.

This format of this chapter will be different from previous ones. It will be organized according to questions most often asked by novice grounded theorists. This chapter will provide the following:

Points to Keep in Mind

When reading this chapter, students are advised to keep the following point in mind:

- Questions and answers about theoretical sampling

Questions and Answers About Theoretical Sampling

What Is Theoretical Sampling?

Recollect that concepts derived during analysis form the basis of theory. In theoretical sampling (see Diagram 7.1), it is concepts and not people, per se, that are sampled. So when researchers sample theoretically, they go to places, persons, and situations that will provide information about the concepts they want to learn more about. Unlike conventional methods of sampling, researchers do not go out and collect all the data before beginning the analysis. Analysis begins after the first data are collected. Data collection is followed by analysis. Analysis leads to concepts. Concepts generate questions. Questions lead to more data collection so that the researcher can learn more about those concepts. This circular process continues until the research reaches the point of **saturation**—that is, the point in the research when all major categories are fully developed, show variation, and are integrated.

Does Theoretical Sampling Provide Flexibility?

In conventional sampling, data collection is prestructured; the design sets who will participate, from where, how many, and of which types. In grounded theory research, there is an identified population (e.g., pregnant women with chronic medical conditions) and a setting (high-risk maternity clinics), but the rest is open. There is no definite number of participants or number of specific types because in theory construction it is important that researchers have the flexibility to sample participants and settings based on concepts in need of development. We are looking for situations to sample that will demonstrate different properties of concepts and show variation. However, it is necessary to provide institutional review board (IRB) committees with an anticipated number of participants. If the researcher doesn't need that many participants, there is no problem. If more participants are needed, the researcher will have to amend the proposal, return to the IRB committee, and request permission for additional participants. Therefore, it is better to request a larger number of participants to begin with.

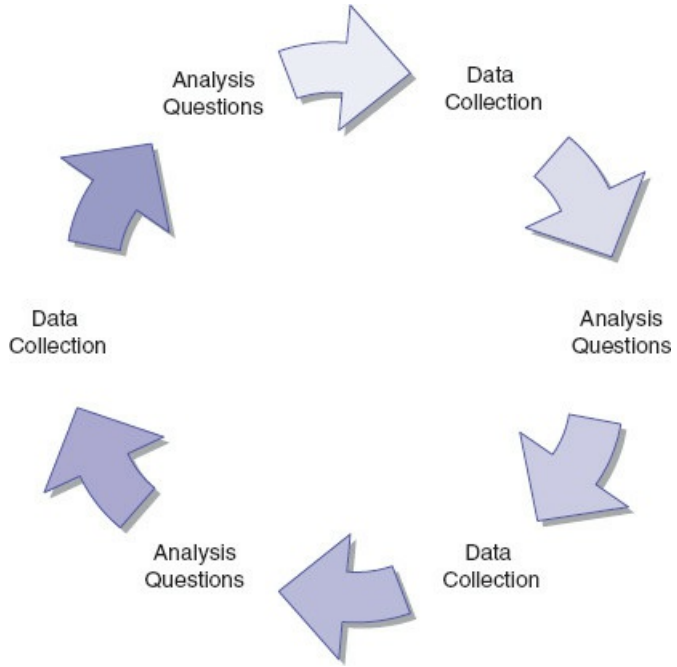


Diagram 7.1 Theoretical Sampling

Now, researchers have to be practical. There are times when researchers don't have the flexibility to theoretically sample in the manner suggested. They may be restricted to collecting data where, when, and from whom it is available. This usually occurs when researchers have to travel some distance to obtain participants or when participants are only available within a specific period of time.

The problem with collecting data without following it up with data analysis is that when it finally becomes time to do analysis, researchers may be overwhelmed by the sheer amount of data they've collected and don't know where to begin. Also, there may not be the opportunity to gather additional data should it be necessary to saturate a category. This will create gaps in the theory. Later in this chapter, I'll explain what researchers can do if it is not possible to gather additional data.

What Advantage Does Theoretical Sampling Have Over Other Forms of Sampling?

Theoretical sampling is concept driven. It enables researchers to discover the concepts that are relevant to this problem and this population and allows researchers to explore the concepts in depth. Theoretical sampling is especially important when studying new or unchartered areas because it allows researchers to explore issues and problems from many different angles and to keep their minds open for discovery. Most of all, it enables researchers to take advantage of fortuitous events. Consider the following example from a study by Corbin and Strauss of the role of nurse managers in keeping the flow of work going in hospitals. A concept we were working with was "Disruptions in Work Flow."

While I was collecting data, there was an earthquake of 7.4 on the Richter scale. This natural event provided the opportunity to return to the data-collection site to sample work flow in terms of how nurse managers responded to disruption and to test our hunches about "workarounds" when work is "disrupted" by an unanticipated event. Questions that we asked were the following: Was the flow of work altered? How? What new arrangements were put into place to keep the work of patient care going? The results were fascinating because what we discovered was that the work flow was not disrupted for very long; in fact, it soon resumed, albeit in creative ways. Patients were more involved in their own care. Units were combined. Whole units were moved to other buildings. Signs were put up, marking the new parameters of units, and staff was reassigned. Had we been using more conventional methods of sampling, we might not have been able to take advantage of this situation to learn more about workarounds and their relationship to work disruptions.

To make another point, theoretical sampling is cumulative. Each new event that is sampled builds upon concepts derived from previous data collection and analysis, adding new properties, dimensions, specificity, or variation to a concept. Moreover, sampling becomes more specific with time because the purpose is to fill in gaps in properties of concepts and add variation. In the initial data collection, a researcher collects data on a wide range of areas, letting participants talk freely or observing in general ways. It's kind of like fishing; the researcher is hoping something important will come out of the data. Once the initial analysis has taken place, analysts have some concepts to work with.

How Does One Proceed With Theoretical Sampling?

In doing theoretical sampling, the researcher takes one step at a time. The first thing to do is to gather some data. This is followed by analysis, leading to more data gathering and analysis until each category is well developed in terms of density and variation. In theoretical sampling, researchers ask questions of data then look to the best source of data to find the answers to those questions. Though human subject and dissertation committees want to know in advance what persons or groups will be sampled and what questions will be asked of those participants, theoretical sampling makes it difficult to predict the answers to these questions with certainty. A researcher using theoretical sampling never knows what twists and turns the research will take. But there are ways to handle this problem with committees. Researchers provide committees with a general number, an interview, or observational guide and include in the proposal the option of asking further questions about new concepts if issues arise during interviews or observation that are not covered in the initial guide. Also, as stated previously when writing their proposals, researchers can make the number of participants or observations larger than anticipated so that there is the flexibility to gather more data, if necessary.

The procedures for theoretical sampling are simple: The researcher follows the analytic trail. Perhaps the easiest way to convey what we are trying to say is to jump ahead to the demonstration research project on Vietnam War combatants that begins in Chapter 12. One of the first concepts to come out of analysis of the first interview was "The War Experience." During the first interview, the participant (a nurse) described his Vietnam War experience as "not too bad"—the "not too bad" being a dimension of his experience. This led the researcher to ask, "How come? What made 'his experience' not so bad when all I had heard about the war was how terrible it was? Could that difference be attributed to the fact that this participant was a *noncombatant* rather than a *combatant,* or was there something else that affected his perception of the experience?" This question directed me to start collecting data on combatants so that I could determine if being a combatant affected perceptions of the "war experience" or if perhaps there were other variables that might have affected soldiers' perception of the war experience.

The second interview was done with a combatant. It revealed a considerable difference in how participants talked about the war experience. What struck me during analysis of the second interview was how much a combatant's war experience centered on "survival." So survival became another concept that I wanted to know more about. Another important concept to come out of the second interview was the degree of anger and the "lack of healing" that was still present in the stories told by veterans—even 30 years later. This led me to ask this question: Why so much anger for so long? What is there about the war experience regardless of whether or not a soldier engaged in combat that creates anger, and why the lack of healing? Still another concept was the "wall of silence." What was it about the experience that veterans did not want to talk about it? Having these new concepts and a lot of unanswered questions meant that I had to gather more data about these concepts. But I had difficulty getting veterans to talk to me, which led me to read memoirs written by Vietnam veterans who were combatants. I also did more reading of memoirs written by veteran nurses to get a comparative sample. In addition, I looked to other war participants—for example, air force and navy pilots—comparing the nature of their experience with those of marine and army service personnel.

After analyzing more data, the concept of "culture" in which the Vietnam War was fought seemed to take on considerable relevance. Therefore, I went back to the data but this time instead of memoirs I went to

historical documents to find out more about the "culture of war." Analyzing data about the culture of war identified a series of "problems" that posed a threat to "survival" to combatants. This discovery led to a further examination of the strategies that combatants used to survive battle and overcome some of the physical and psychological risks associated with being in a war. Based on those findings, I wanted to know more about specific "survival situations"—that is, how persons responded to them. The final question regarding the research was this: What core concept would best describe the ability to survive the physical, social, and psychological risks posed by war? The answer came in the form of the concept of "reconciling multiple realities" and this question: What were some of the different realities that soldiers had to deal with living in a war zone?

Notice that as I proceeded I was constantly following up on analytic leads derived from analysis. There was no way I could have known ahead of time the sampling path I would follow, yet all the time I stayed within my target population of Vietnam veterans. It was the analysis of data and the questions about concepts that came out during analysis that determined what kind of data I needed to collect and what I would focus on in those data. Another researcher might have gone in a different direction, yet anyone reading my analysis in the following chapters can follow my logic. The direction the research takes depends upon the nature of the data and the analyst's interpretation of the data, bringing the researcher and data together in the process.

How Does a Researcher Keep the Sampling Systematic and Consistent Without Rigidifying the Process?

In theoretical sampling, the researcher is not so much concerned with consistency as with following up on important theoretical leads. As new analytic concepts arise during analysis, the researcher needs to be free to follow up on questions without concern of whether or not the same question was asked of previous participants. At the same time, consistency is not usually a problem because as persons tell their stories there is often much consistency between them. One of the important pieces of information that I learned from reading Vietnam War memoirs was the degree to which each memoir appeared to be written from the same basic script—the desire to survive—though many of the details were different, of course, because of individual and situational differences. Remember that it is concepts that are being sampled, and usually important concepts will appear in data obtained from other participants, though the form they take might be different. And if they are not found in the other data, then the researcher should ask, "Why not?" If at the conclusion of an unstructured interview or observation relevant topics are not covered, the researcher certainly can ask questions about these—especially if he or she feels that the topics are relevant to the study.

How Much Sampling Must Be Done?

The answer to this question is both simple and complex at the same time. It is simple in the sense that a researcher continues to gather data until reaching the level of data "saturation." It is complex in the sense that arriving at saturation is not that easily attained. Saturation is usually explained in terms of "when no new categories or relevant themes are emerging." But saturation is more than a matter of no new categories or themes emerging. It also denotes a development of categories. In other words, a researcher has to do more than come up with a list of categories or themes. They have to define categories in terms of their properties

and dimensions, show how that concept varies under varying conditions, and relate the categories to each other and to the core category. To arrive at those explanations, researchers must continue data collection until the theory is dense and logical and there are no gaps in the explanations. It would not be sufficient to say simply that the experience of combatants in war can be reduced down to survival. The researcher has to explain how and when survival takes on meaning, what survival looks like under different conditions, and what some of the consequences of survival are.

Only when a researcher has explored each category or theme in some depth, identifying its various properties and dimensions under different conditions, can the researcher say that the research has reached the level of saturation. In reality, a researcher could go on collecting data forever, adding new properties and dimensions to categories. Eventually, a researcher has to say this concept is sufficiently well developed for purposes of this research and accept what has not been covered as one of the limitations of the study. It is important that a researcher not conclude a study too soon. Sometimes when researchers say they have saturated their categories, they do so because they don't have an understanding of what *saturation* really means. Or they have run out of willing participants, time, money, or energy and perhaps have to conclude the study sooner than they wanted, leaving gaps in the overall story. It is important for researchers to keep in mind that though it is difficult to set a number, it is rare that five or six one-hour interviews will provide sufficient data to lead to saturation. Not only will categories not be fully developed in terms of their properties and dimensions, but there will also be no opportunity to validate the evolving theory through further data collection and with participants. What we would expect from such research would be a rather superficial and underdeveloped theory—one that looks more like a skeleton than a fully fleshed-out theory and one that contains nothing new. The only exception would be for masters-level students where the purpose of doing the research is to learn the process and not so much to develop new knowledge.

At What Point in the Research Does a Researcher Sample Theoretically?

Theoretical sampling begins after the first analytic session and continues throughout the research process. That is, the concepts that are derived from the first data that are collected provide the areas from which data will be collected in the next data-collection session. The researcher doesn't necessarily begin an interview or observation by asking questions about a concept in the next interview or observation but allows the participant to proceed at his or her pace while keeping the concept in mind. If a participant fails to bring up an incident related to the concept in question, then at the end of an interview or observation a researcher can ask questions that are designed to elicit information about that concept. Even when writing about the findings, it is not unusual for a researcher to have new insights, discover that some categories are better developed than others, and uncover breaks in the overall logic. All of these are indications that further data collection or a reanalysis of previously gathered data is indicated. Often the answers to questions or information that researchers need to fill in categories are in the data. A lack of sensitivity in the researcher to the relevance of data is not uncommon in the early stages of analysis. Remember that sensitivity to meaning grows with immersion in data. A later reexamination of data is often enlightening, and researchers discover that much of what they were looking for is already there.

How Does a Researcher Know When Sufficient Sampling Has Occurred?

A researcher knows when sufficient sampling has occurred when the major categories demonstrate specificity, are dense in terms of properties, show dimensional variation, and are well integrated. When carrying out theoretical sampling, researchers are on the lookout for opportunities or situations that will maximize similarities and differences within and between concepts. Throughout the research, the investigator should take advantage of fortuitous incidents that occur. However, any data that the researcher collects through theoretical sampling must have relevance to the analysis. In other words, if the researcher is observing in a facility and an important manager dies, it is not the death of the manager per se that is relevant but what that death means in terms of concepts the researcher has developed as part of the research, such as *work flow* or *organizational structure.* Sometimes committee members have agendas of their own and send novice researchers off on a *data- collection tangent* that has no relevance to the research. It is also easy for novice researchers to get carried away when out in the field because so many interesting things are going on. Just because someone says, "Wouldn't it be interesting to 'such and such,'" this is no reason to go off on a wild goose chase. Stay focused. Look for situations that offer variation or different properties of the concept in question. Don't be concerned. If something is really important, it will come up again in the data.

What If I Have Already Collected All of My Data Before Sitting Down to Do My Analysis? Can I Still Do Theoretical Sampling?

Theoretical sampling means sampling data on the basis of concepts in order to further develop those concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions and add variation. It is possible to use already-collected data. I used memoirs as data in the study on Vietnam War veterans to further develop concepts. Since researchers sample data and not people or places, they can sample any data that provides the information about the concepts they want to know more about. As stated previously, it is not unusual for researchers to return to previously analyzed data and look at them quite differently at a later stage of the research. Incidents or events that were once overlooked or discounted may now take on significance. If analysts are not able to collect additional data to fill in gaps, then the gaps become part of the limitation of the study.

Where Does a Researcher Get a Sample?

In looking for areas to sample, analysts determine what type of data is most likely to provide answers to questions and fill in gaps in categories. Let us clarify a point before continuing with this line of thought. In the Vietnam veteran study that begins in Chapter 12, it became clear that I had to go out to find a group of combatants so that I could try and identify what difference it made to be a combatant versus a noncombatant. I did obtain a couple of interviews but at the time was not able to obtain more. So I went to memoirs to find my answers. However, when it was context that I was interested in, I went to historical documents because I knew they most likely would provide answers to questions such as how the United States got into the war, why, and what some of the policies were, who set them, and why these policies. Then, when I needed more information about the concept of surviving, I returned to the memoirs. I went back to the data and looked specifically at incidents I labeled "survival" strategies under different conditions and analyzed these in more depth. Sometimes, in order to sample theoretically, a researcher has to collect more data, and sometimes the

researcher can return to data that have already been collected.

What Are Some Sampling Matters That a Researcher Must Consider Before Starting the Research?

At the beginning of a study, there are many sampling matters that researchers must consider. The initial decisions made about a project give researchers a sense of direction and a place from which to begin data gathering. What happens once data collection is under way becomes a matter of how well the initial decisions fit with what researchers are uncovering in analysis. Initial considerations include the following:

1. *Decisions made about the site or group to study.* This, of course, is directed by the main research question. For example, if a researcher is interested in decision making by executives, he or she must go to those places where executives are making decisions to observe what goes on.
2. *Decisions made about the kinds of data to be used.* Does the investigator want to use observations, interviews, documents, memoirs, biographies, audiotapes or videotapes, or combinations of these? The choice should be made on the basis of which data have the greatest potential to capture the kind(s) of information desired. For example, a researcher might want to use memoirs and other written documents in addition to interviews and observations when studying executive decision making. If a researcher is studying interaction between groups, it is only logical to observe in addition to doing interviews, because observations are more likely to reveal the subtleties of interaction.
3. *Decisions made about how long a site should be studied.* A site is studied as long as it provides the data that researchers are seeking. Remember, it is not sites or persons per se that are the objects of analysis but concepts. Usually researchers choose sites or persons based on concepts in need of further development. The possibilities are unlimited. Initially, decisions regarding the number of sites and observations or interviews depend upon access, available resources, research goals, plus researchers' time schedule and energy. Later, these decisions may be modified, as the study progresses, based upon questions that arise during analysis. Data collection continues until all categories are saturated.

Can Interview and Observational Guides Be Used to Collect Data?

With theoretical sampling, interview and observational guides are not as relevant because which concepts are being sampled and to what degree changes over the course of the research. However, researchers can't get through the IRB or research proposal committee without an indication of the type of questions that will be asked of participants or something about the kinds of observations that will be made. A student or experienced researcher usually has some basic knowledge to draw from when putting together a questionnaire or observational guide—either from experience or the literature. Putting together a list of questions or areas for observation should not be that difficult. As stated earlier, to have the flexibility to carry out theoretical sampling, a researcher can add a sentence or two to a proposal, stating that it may be necessary at some time during the data collection to gather data on concepts deemed important to participants but not listed in the original proposal in order to fully develop the theory. Since it is participants that bring up those incidents, there should be no problem.

As a practical matter, once researchers have decided upon a target population, place, time, and the kinds of data to be gathered, they are ready to develop a list of interview questions or areas for observation. Initial interview questions or areas of observation might be based on concepts derived from literature or experience or —better still—from preliminary fieldwork. Since these early concepts haven't evolved from "actual" data, any concepts so derived should be considered provisional and kept or discarded depending upon what the data are showing. Nevertheless, early concepts often provide a departure point from which to begin data collection, and many researchers (and their committee members) find it difficult to enter the field without some broad conceptualization of what they are going to study.

Once data collection begins, the initial interview or observational guides (used to satisfy committees) give way to concepts derived from analysis. Adhering rigidly to initial questions throughout a study hinders discovery because it limits the amount and type of data that can be gathered. It has been my experience that if a researcher enters the field with a structured questionnaire, persons will reply only to the questions that are asked of them—and often without elaboration. Respondents might have other information to offer, but if the researcher doesn't ask the right questions or doesn't let the participant guide the interview or observation, participants are reluctant to volunteer additional information, fearing that the additional information might disturb the research process. Unstructured interviews, using general questions such as "Tell me what you think about…?" or "What happened when…?" or "What was your experience with…?" give respondents more room to explain what is important to them (Corbin & Morse, 2003).

Are There Variations on Theoretical Sampling?

As with all research, there is the "ideal way" of doing things and there is the "practical way." Sometimes a researcher has to settle for the latter. Here are some variations:

1. *A researcher may look for persons, sites, or events where he or she purposefully can gather data related to categories, their properties, and dimensions*. For example, when Strauss and associates were doing a study on the use of medical technology in hospitals, one team member noted that machinery in hospitals had several properties (Strauss, Fagerhaugh, Suczek, & Wiener, 1985). The properties included (among others) cost, size, and status. The team then proceeded to sample events and sites within a hospital, where the similarities and differences among these properties of machinery would be maximized. They went to observe the computerized axial tomography (CAT) scanner, a big and expensive machine that had been given considerable status among diagnosticians. However, CAT scanners represent just one extreme type of hospital machinery, a fact to keep in mind when collecting data. It is also important to sample machinery that might be less costly, less prestigious, and less reliable to have a comparative base. In the previously given case, the researchers were driven to sample by the concept that the "work of patient care" might be influenced by the particular properties the medical machinery used as part of their care, thus integrating two categories: "patient care" and "medical technology."
2. *A researcher may gather data very systematically (going from one person or place to another on a list) or by sampling on the basis of convenience (whoever walks through a door or whoever agrees to participate)*. This is a more practical way to gather data and probably the method used most often by beginning researchers.

In other words, a researcher takes who or what he or she can get in terms of a sample, hoping they will provide the types of data they are looking for. This does not mean that comparisons aren't being made on the basis of concepts during analysis. It's just that the researcher must accept the data that he or she gets rather than being able to make choices of who or where to go next.

Often, differences in data emerge naturally because of the natural variations in situations. For example, when we began our study of work flow in hospitals, we knew little about either the particular hospital or the wards or the head nurses; we simply proceeded from unit to unit, spending time with any head nurse who was willing to participate in the study. In the end, we found that each unit was different in terms of organizational conditions, the number of patients and types of work done, and how the flow of work was organized and maintained over time. Because of those differences, there was ample opportunity to sample theoretically based on concepts. But the ideal remains to let the questions about concepts that are derived during analysis guide the next data collection.

3. *A researcher may find that differences often emerge quite fortuitously.* A researcher often happens upon theoretically significant events quite unexpectedly during field observing, interviewing, or document reading. It is important to recognize the analytic importance of such an event or incident and to pick up on it. This comes from having an open and questioning mind and from being alert. When an analyst happens upon something new or different, he or she must stop and ask, What is this? What can it mean?
4. *A researcher may return to the data themselves, reorganizing them according to theoretically relevant concepts.* An example of this form of sampling occurred during a study of high-risk pregnant women, when it became evident to the researcher that she was categorizing women according to her (the researcher's) perception of risks, which was medical. Women, on the other hand, were acting on the basis of their perceptions of risks, which sometimes did not coincide with the medical definition. In other words, sometimes the women saw the risks to be higher and sometimes lower than did medical personnel. The discrepancy became noticeable when I looked at management strategies or actions of the women and tried to match the type of action to risk level. It didn't always work; women didn't always follow the medical regimen, and sometimes they left the hospital against their doctor's advice. I asked why and looked at the data again for clues. It became obvious that women sometimes took matters into their own hands based on their understanding of the risks. They determined what action was necessary on their part to contain the risks as they saw them. I then went back and reorganized her findings, concentrating on action, and related it back to how women defined the risks. Then the women's actions began to make analytic sense.

Note that in any one interview or observation there are often several incidents pertaining to the same concept, and each is coded separately. For example, in the study of high-risk pregnant women, sometimes over the course of one week, perceptions of risks varied depending upon what was going on with the status of the chronic condition, the baby, and the pregnancy. This meant coding each incident separately because risk definitions and management tended to vary accordingly.

5. *During analysis, researchers may want to sample incidents and events (either from new or previously collected data) that enable them to identify significant variations.* By asking what difference a particular type of machinery makes to the type of care given to patients, the researcher is able to relate "type of care" with "type of machinery." Questions to be asked include how the patient is prepared, how risks are managed, how the work is parceled out, who schedules and coordinates it, and so on.
6. *Relationships between concepts, just like the concepts themselves, are compared across sites and persons.*
7. *A researcher should never become upset by not being able to choose a site or obtain access to a theoretically relevant site or person(s).* Rather, he or she should make the most out of what is available to him or her. When it comes to events and incidents, rarely will a researcher find two or more that are absolutely identical in every way. Rather, in each incident there will be something different, be it conditions, interaction, or consequences, that will provide the basis for making comparisons and discovering variation. If the analyst is comparing incidents and events on the basis of the concepts, looking for properties and dimensions, then he or she is doing theoretical sampling regardless of how the data were actually gathered. It may take longer to uncover process and variation—and to achieve density—when a researcher can't purposefully choose persons or sites to maximize variation, but through continued and persistent sampling, eventually differences will emerge.
8. *Toward the end of the research, when a researcher is filling in categories, he or she may return to old sites, documents, and persons, or go to new ones to gather the data necessary to saturate categories and complete a study.* Analysts are constantly comparing the products of their analyses against actual data, making modifications or additions as necessary based on these comparisons. As such, they are constantly validating or negating their interpretations.

Can I Sample Data From a Library, and If So, How?

Some investigations require the study of documents, newspapers, or books as sources of data. Just how does one go about this? The answer is to sample exactly as you do with interview or observational data, with the usual interplay of coding and sampling.

If you are using a cache of archival material, this is the equivalent of a collection of interviews or field notes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 61–62, 111–112). However, the documentary data may not be located in one place but scattered throughout a single library, several libraries, agencies, or other organizations. Then you must reason, just as with other types of data, where the relevant events or incidents are to be found and sampled. Will they be in books about particular organizations, populations, or regions? You can answer that question by locating the materials using the usual bibliographic computer research techniques. The Internet is a good source of information. The only problem comes in verifying the accuracy of that information since often it is unedited.

A special kind of document consists of the collected interviews or field notes of another researcher. It is customary to call the analysis of such data by the term *secondary analysis.* A researcher can code these materials too, employing theoretical sampling in conjunction with the usual coding procedures.

How Do Researchers Maintain Consistency When a Team Is Gathering the Data?

When working with a team of researchers, each member must receive copies of all field notes and interviews and any memos that are written by individual team members as well as those memos written during group sessions. It is important that each researcher knows the categories being investigated so that he or she knows what to listen for or what types of questions to ask at the end of an interview or what to look for during fieldwork. Equally important is that the team meets regularly and frequently to analyze together portions of data. As data pile up, it may be impossible for every team member to read all of the interviews or field notes. In that situation, it is important to have team meetings and to share memos; otherwise, communication breaks down, the process gets muddled, and individual researchers may not know which concepts need further development.

How Does Theoretical Sampling Differ From More Traditional Forms of Sampling?

In quantitative research, sampling involves randomly selecting a portion of a population to represent the entire population to which one wants to generalize. Thus, the overriding consideration is this: How representative of the larger population is the target population in terms of certain characteristics? In reality, a researcher can never be certain that a sample is completely representative. In quantitative research, procedures such as randomization and statistical measures help to ensure that there is a representative sample. In qualitative investigations, researchers are not so much interested in how representative their participants are of the larger population. The concern is more about representativeness of concepts and looking for incidents that further develop them.

Is Theoretical Sampling Difficult to Learn?

Theoretical sampling is not difficult to do. However, it takes a lot of trust in self and the research process to let the evolving analysis be the guide. This comes with time and experience.

What About Research Design—What Is Its Relationship to Theoretical Sampling?

Unlike statistical sampling, theoretical sampling cannot be planned before embarking on a study. The specific sampling decisions evolve during the research process. Of course, prior to beginning the investigation, a researcher can reason that events are likely to be found at certain sites and within certain populations. Realistically, when writing proposals for funding agencies, it is important to explain both how the researcher will sample and the rationale for such.

Summary of Key Points

In theoretical sampling, the researcher lets concepts derived during analysis guide the data-collection process. The basis for sampling is concepts, not persons. Relevant concepts are elaborated, integrated, and refined through a process of purposefully going to populations and sites that will maximize the potential for discovering further properties and dimensions pertaining to these concepts. Theoretical sampling continues

until all categories are saturated—that is, until all relevant properties and dimensions have been identified and there is variation built into the theory. However, practicality is an important concept when doing research. Researchers may not be able to gather data on whom, where, and when they want. Sensitivity grows over the course of the research, and researchers are often amazed to discover that when they return to their data they find what they are looking for. They just overlooked it in the first reading of the data. There are always limits on what can be accomplished during a research investigation, and researchers should do the best they can with what they have and accept their limitations.

Insider Insights — Practices to Exercise Conceptualization in GTM

The following insider insight does not pertain to theoretical sampling per se. Rather, it presents a summary of many of the topics that have been covered and that will be covered in the remainder of this book. Though somewhat abstract for beginning researchers, it provides much food for thought and would provide a good basis for launching a discussion in the classroom.

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The transition from description to conceptualization is a cognitive and heuristics operation bold and tough, almost like a jump into hyperspace. Yet along the GTM [ground theory methodology] analysis there is always a time when you have to move from the more descriptive early stages of coding, more adherent to the data, toward a higher level of abstraction by constructing concepts, categories, themes. Conceptualizing is one of the salient and unavoidable features, a trademark (Charmaz, 2006) of GTM. Without it the analysis would produce a flat, insignificant, not relevant and uninformative theory: definitely grounded, certainly fitting the data, but meaningless and useless. This Glaser and Strauss (1967) statement is explicit in their seminal work, and its logic is impeccable within the GTM inductive reasoning. However, its practical consequences are too often underestimated and its application very difficult to put into practice, especially for novices. In fact a good researcher, accurate and rigorous, has been trained with the very appropriate idea that one cannot say anything more than what is suggested in the data. Conceptualization belongs to theoreticians, to those who deal with social, political, educational, psychological, or even religious problems with a speculative and abstract perspective and that produce, legitimately, conceptual elaborations, without any reference to the empirical reality. Those who have been trained in the empirical research, especially those who came to GTM from quantitative studies, have assimilated in such a powerful way the Wittgenstein's enunciation that one should be silent on what he/she cannot talk about, that he/she is stuck in the moment when reaching the point in the research when it is necessary to make the leap from the description to conceptualization. To

conceptualize means exactly to talk on the very thing that one should be silent.

Two of my most brilliant students had opposite characteristics: one was educated in philosophy and had studied theology. He had an excellent intuition ability, to make inferences, to categorize unrelated phenomena and to synthesize them within a single category. On the contrary, in collecting data and in the first steps of the analysis he tended to be hurried and inaccurate, to jump too quickly to conclusions. The other was formed as an anthropologist and she had conducted ethnographic field research very scrupulously, with care and respect to the data. She was very good, zealous and rigorous in data collection and in the early stages of coding, careful not to take anything for granted, to develop the meanings intrinsic to portions of text, to transcribe with care and attention, to exercise self-reflexive attention on their way of looking at the data. On the contrary, she was not as good when it was time to move from the initial concepts to organizing them into categories and then to intuit connections between them. Even more difficult for her was to integrate the theory and to conceptualize the overall theory into a diagram that brought together the elusive and centrifugal information that came from the data. Both were particularly brilliant students and it was a pleasure to see them working together. They were also linked by a sincere friendship and even if sometimes they came inevitably into conflict, when they could cooperate, which occurred very often, they were really a research power.

Their case is emblematic, but I believe that persons who do research are inclined either more toward description or toward conceptualizing because of their nature, education or personal history. To carry out GTM both skills are needed. It is also necessary to somehow learn to do the one you are less inclined towards. In this sense, working with a willing research mate can also be an educational experience as demonstrated in the example of my two students.

Doing GTM requires serious training and the growth of personal theoretical sensitivity (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, chap. 6), and even if learning method and developing sensitivity can't be increased through mindless repetitive use of exercises, it is important to understand the some repetition of exercises is a fundamental heuristic virtue because they help researchers develop the characteristics and skills they need to be good researchers. I have detailed elsewhere (Tarozzi, 2011) the virtues of exercises, which I summarized as follows:

1. Being able to live in the chaos
2. Being able to suspend the judgment (bracketing)
3. To increase the sense making ability, to give meaning to the world
4. Caring relational dimension
5. Cultivating insight
6. Conceptualizing ability

The last ability (6) has to do with the abstract thinking, with theorizing, with [philosophizing]. GTM requires theorization and theoretical skills, a philosophical stance, to be able to conceptualize, to go beyond description. It is basically philosophical thinking, which requires the application to empirical research some forms of the abstract thinking. In the final analysis, abstract thinking is in all respects a philosophical

endeavor. The need for a mental shift from description to conceptualization, which is the main feature of the theoretical sensitivity, is also essential to create the conditions for the emergence of the insight. Insights appear suddenly, they surprise us in the most unexpected moments, they seem to come from far outside, and to not even being part of ourselves. Yet it is possible to cultivate them, or at least not to keep away from them when they come to visit us. For example, when, in the course of the analysis, the whole mind is totally absorbed in the coding processes, you risk an analytical implosion, to remain entangled into a web of self-referenced and sterile concepts. Then you need to stop and think. Suspend coding and get away from the flow of data analysis and collection, to move the mind elsewhere. These periodic breaks create room for the appearance of insight. You should step out of your office, away from your computer, from coding sheets, transcripts, and books, and instead go outside, take a walk, a swim, a run, a climb in the mountains.

To cultivate this ability to conceptualize, which is counterintuitive and almost unnatural for qualitative researchers, I have developed some personal strategies that I later tried to convey to my students engaged in GTM inquiry. Obviously they are personal expedients, not general rules. Everyone has to find strategies consistent with their own personality, their own worldview, their own culture, their own history, but I hope that the following hints will provide some stimuli or some inspiring examples.

The first strategy, widely used by many grounded theorists and highly developed by Clarke (2005), is *conceptual mapping*. Conceptual maps help to make a synthesis and to find the elements that unify; they are the common thread that unites concepts and categories, which up to that point, following promising descriptive clues, guided in different directions. In my experience, what especially helps is to draw on large shared whiteboards. This combines the designing of charts or graphs, with the collective discussion within the research team that helps to elaborate discursively every graphic sign that appears on the whiteboard. Typically I audio record these long discussions. The transcript of the comments that emerged during the construction of conceptual maps often is more relevant and illuminating for conceptualization than the maps themselves.

Yet over time, I also realized that the cognitive styles of each researcher are different and that the paths leading to conceptualization from empirically identified categories are extremely diverse. Not everyone has a visual thinking, and not everyone sees the concepts and their relationships in terms of geometric forms connected by lines and arrows. Others are, for instance, more narrative. In fact, I always found very effective the use of a *narrative strategy* to move from the descriptive to the conceptualizing level in a systematic and unified manner. This strategy consists in telling to another, a critical friend, a story. The narrative follows the entire path of the research, the development of the research question, through the various turning points, second thoughts, and finally to the elaboration of the categories. The story is the strategy that is most likely to help the researcher identify the core category, the key concept that integrates the analytical tale. Indeed, to tell the natural history of a research (Silverman, 2000), summarizing the steps that led to construct a theory means identifying that narrative center, capable of unifying the many directions toward which categories are heading.

To tell the story of a long research trail—full of obstacles, corrections, rethinking, etc., as every qualitative footpath—is an analytical work of theoretical building that better works if the friend does not know very much of the topic. In such a way, we would be forced not to take anything for granted. This allows us to ask questions about phenomena and interpretive categories, pinpoint connections, explicate steps, and merge

several streams into a large narrative river capable of holding everything together.

A final strategy that I have often adopted myself and I have recommended to my students is to mark a sharp *change of the context* within which I conduct my analysis. The early stages of open and focused coding are conducted sitting at a desk, whether working pencil and paper, whether using specific software. The analyst should work in a room that does not allow too many distractions because all the attention must be focused on details of the text to be coded, without interferences and with the highest concentration possible. Conceptualization conversely, in the theoretical coding, requires open and airy spaces. That's why at this point, even overcoming intimate resistance, I turn off the computer, put memos and transcripts aside, and go outdoors. Personally, I find particularly effective doing long walks and when I was teaching at the University of Trento, I had the good fortune of being close to the Alps, where hiking in the mountains is truly exceptional.

I often accompanied my students on top of Mount Stivo, a beautiful mountain, familiar to everyone, as it dominates the Rovereto's valley and it is clearly visible from the window of my office at the university, where I worked and I received the students. Walking and climbing not only allows you to open the mental space for the emergence of another kind of thinking it enables you to expand your gaze. Too often the analyst becomes too close to the text, and getting out into open spaces has a powerful symbolic meaning and effect on me. Walking to reach a peak requires following a trail. It necessitates effort to climb and to follow a marked path (although deviations are always possible and often enjoyable). But the reward of the effort, the goal of finally reaching the top, implies achieving a point that opens up a different and broader horizon. Or, there appears before me a new mountain to climb one that I had not seen before. In addition just as I could see the top of Mount Stivo from my office window, from the top of the mountain I could see the building where my office is located. Changing the perspective in radical ways from the usual way you look at the things is a useful conceptualizing exercise that helps bring out different ways of thinking. It favors the emergence of deep thought, of great synthesis, and of the construction of large speculative scenarios.

To move from description toward conceptualization is certainly difficult, somehow away from the ordinary experience of an empirical researcher. But this shift, vital in GTM, is definitely possible through personal strategies and highly rewarding.

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Activities for Thinking, Writing, and Discussing as a Group

1. Think about theoretical sampling. What is the logic behind it? How does it enhance the research process? What are some of the drawbacks to this type of sampling as you see them?
2. In a few sentences, write down how you might go about theoretical sampling in your study.
3. Discuss in a group how you might explain theoretical sampling in a proposal for a human subjects committee.

Suggested Readings

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Chapter 8
Context

> The relation of the event to its preceding conditions at once sets up a history, and the uniqueness of the event makes that history relative to that event.... All of the past is in the present as the conditioning nature of passage, and all the future arises out of the present as the unique events that transpire. (Mead, 1959, p. 32)

Table 8.1 Key Terms

Conditional/consequential matrix: An analytic strategy that helps analysts identify the range of possible conditions that are operating in any situation and in turn the range of consequences that result from action–interaction

Context: Context is a complicated notion. It locates and explains action–interaction within a background of conditions and anticipated consequences. In doing so, it links concepts and enhances a theory's ability to explain.

Paradigm: The paradigm is an analytic tool that helps analysts code around a category. It consists of a perspective or a set of questions that can be applied to data to help analysts sort out concepts and establish linkages.

Process: Adaptive changes in action–interaction taken in response to changes in conditions

I made the point in earlier chapters that theory is different from description in that it not only tells what happens but also offers explanations. Therefore, in order to go beyond description and to construct theory, it is necessary to link action–interaction to the conditions in which it occurs and to which persons are responding to when they act and to the outcomes that result when certain actions and interactions are taken. So how do we get beyond description to construct theory? We have to begin with the premise that when persons act and interact they are consciously responding to something that calls for a response. That something is given meaning, and any actions and interactions that are taken are directed at handling or managing that something based on the meaning the person has given to it. Therefore, when analyzing data for the purpose of constructing theory, we look for events or happenings (sets of conditions) and how persons define or give meaning to these (as problems, challenges, obstacles, goals, etc.). We look for the action–interaction they take to manage or handle the problems, challenges, or goals. Then I look at the consequences that resulted from action and interaction. In doing this, we are relating action–interaction and consequences back to conditions—therefore, enabling our theories to explain and to provide some control over outcomes. After completing our research, we should be able to say something like this: Under these conditions, and given this meaning, one can expect that this action or that action will be taken, and this will be the result,

though I want to point out that when it comes to human behavior there is always the element of surprise and, unlike physical phenomena, human behavior isn't always predictable. For example, when I was working in a clinic caring for elderly persons, I noted that whenever a certain gentleman came into the clinic or went to the doctor, his blood pressure was elevated even though he was supposedly on a diuretic medication to lower his blood pressure. Finally, I thought to ask him if he was taking his medication. He replied with this:

> *I am elderly and have trouble walking. Often restrooms are not close by. Therefore, when I come to the clinic or go to the doctor I don't take my blood pressure medicine that morning in order to prevent having an "accident" with my bladder.*

His inaction makes perfect sense under those conditions even though the consequence was an elevated blood pressure. Knowing this, a practitioner could say this:

> *Under conditions that a medication given to an elderly patient to control blood pressure brings about side effects that can be difficult for the person to manage when he or she is away from home, the person is likely not to take that medication, and the result is likely to be an elevated blood pressure. Therefore, I'll prescribe a different medication that will have few side effects and hopefully keep his blood pressure more stable.*

Different researchers have a different way of handling the notion of **context**. For example, Glaser (1978) uses his six *C*s, and Clarke (2005) talks about situational analysis. I suggest that readers of this book use this chapter in conjunction with Chapter 14.

Points to Keep in Mind

When reading this chapter, students are advised to keep the following points in mind:

- Context
- The paradigm
- The condition/consequential matrix

Context

In order to develop theory and fully understand and explain the purpose of action–interaction, we have to locate it within context. To do otherwise only tells part of the story and leads to description rather than theory. Analyzing data for context is a little more complicated than listing codes in the margin. Some persons code for concepts first and then go back and write memos about their concepts and link concepts. We don't work that way because we see it as duplication of work. Rather, depending upon the stage of the research, we try to develop our concepts and/or link them during the initial analysis to avoid having to guess at relationships later or having to go through all the data again to determine how concepts relate to each other. Later in this chapter, I will offer some analytic tools to help researchers build context into their analyses. This section of the chapter will provide the following:

- Definition of context

Definition of Context

Context is a broad term that includes many things. It includes events, the set of circumstances or conditions that make up part of any situation, the meanings given to these (a problem, goal, etc.), the action and interaction persons take to manage or achieve desired outcomes, and the actual consequences that result from their action. From an analytic standpoint, context often is expressed in the explanations or reasons that persons give for what they say, think, feel, and do (action–interaction) in response to the problematic situations or events that occur in their lives. Consider the following section of an interview. I conducted the interview as part of a study conducted by Corbin and Strauss in 1985 on couples managing chronic conditions at home. The interview is with a man who is quadriplegic because of a fall from a tree.

> *Sometimes I feel good about myself, sometimes I don't. I say who am I? I am M. a quadriplegic. For a quadriplegic with my injury I think quite well of myself. As a 40-year-old man who was injured when he was 28 I haven't gone a hell of a long way. I can't give her or do the things I would like to. I would like to give my wife a nice house. If and when she wants something done around the house it takes someone with the physical abilities to do it, whether it is put a picture on the wall or whatever. I can't do that for her. My hobbies before the injury were physical activities. I can't do those things anymore. I can't. I have a physical weakness. I have lots of bladder problems so it means sticking around the house, drinking lots of water, taking pills, this thing and the other. That also dwarfs the ability to get out and do. In that I am not satisfied. On the other hand I don't sit here all day and think about it. If I can get through the daily routine, whatever it is I am quite satisfied. Depression just isn't there. Maybe there was too much of depression that first year. I'm probably just as satisfied with my life as anyone else. I would not have married if it were not this way. Being in a wheelchair and all the other problems associated with it are so magnified out of proportion that is unbelievable. I couldn't have accepted the responsibility of marriage unless I was certain that she was an asset and not a liability. Having more money was not a concern of mine until I got married.*
>
> *I took out an insurance policy that matures in 20 years so that she has something after I am gone. She could care less but her having something is important to me. I see my life as foreshortened. Nobody [who] sits in a wheelchair day after day with as many bladder and kidney problems, takes medications such as a low form of formaldehyde, and has all the X-rays like I do lives very long. (Excerpt from field notes)*

After reading the field note once, go back and read it again this time more carefully. Notice how the man being interviewed explains (a) his feelings about himself and his marriage, (b) what he would like to do but can't do (failed action–interaction), (c) what he can do and why he does it (completed action–interaction), and (d) his planning for the future (anticipating consequences) all within the background of his disability (the major condition). In other words, he is contextualizing. He is explaining what being disabled means to him, the problems he faces because of it, and the action he can or can't carry out because of his disability. He is linking some of the possible future consequences to himself and his wife to actions he is taking now. In doing so, he is linking background conditions with action–interaction and consequences.

When analyzing data for context, researchers make use of the same basic analytic tools they used in earlier analysis. They ask questions and make comparisons and write memos and do diagrams. When researchers are coding for context, they are doing what Strauss (1987) called "axial coding." They are locating and linking action–interaction within a framework of subconcepts that give it meaning and enable it to explain what interactions are occurring, and why and what consequences real or anticipated are happening because of action–interaction. Now perhaps readers can see the influence of pragmatists' and interactionists' perspectives on the researcher method.

When researchers are coding, it is likely that some of the concepts they identify will refer to conditional factors, some concepts will denote action–interaction, while other concepts will stand for anticipated or actual consequences or outcomes, all of the components that make up context. However, since concepts do not wear

labels indicating whether they stand for action, or conditions, or consequences, beginning analysts might have difficulty sorting out differences. This is where the **paradigm** and the **conditional/consequential matrix** come into analysis.

The Paradigm

The paradigm is an analytic tool to help analysts carry out axial coding or coding around a category. It consists of these main features:

- Conditions
- Actions–interactions
- Consequences or outcomes

After a brief introduction, this section of the chapter will discuss each of these features in some depth.

Introduction to the Paradigm

When researchers analyze data, they break it apart into sections; the sections usually represent normal breaks in the data or a switch to a different topic by the participant(s). The sections are further broken down into pieces of data as researchers compare one piece of datum against another then denoting concepts to stand for that data. But a list of concepts doesn't make theory. Concepts have to be woven or linked back together to tell the original main story of the research or observation but in conceptual terms.

When we speak of weaving here, we are speaking not of final integration but of linking of lesser concepts around higher-level concepts we call categories. Categories themselves can be combined when there is overlap reducing the number of categories that make up the final theory. Weaving begins with researchers denoting their interpretation of the major ideas or themes expressed in the section of data they are working with.

To give an example of a category, look back at the data presented in the introduction to this chapter. A theme of those paragraphs might be something like "body failure." Body failure denotes this analyst's interpretation of the meaning that the injury has for the participant of the study. The interpretation is based on the participant's words when he states that because of his injury he can no longer do many things he previously did or would like to do now for himself and his wife. We can go further and say why his body failure is so difficult for him is because it has the properties of being permanent, extensive, and it also makes him more susceptible to complications and that it has the potential for "failed action." It is the properties of body failure that have created for him a set of problems—physical, psychological, and social or relationship—that must be managed or overcome by making use of whatever body abilities he has remaining.

The meaning that body failure has for him is described in terms of the problems the participants outline for him. There are relationship problems: It broke up his first marriage. There are physical problems with his bladder for which he must take medication that could in the long term be toxic. Furthermore, he can't work, or give his wife a nice house, or do activities that he used to like to do. He then goes on to tell us how through action–interaction he is able to make use of his remaining abilities doing those things for his self, wife, and

their home that he knows will take some of the burden off of his wife, who works and also goes to school. The consequence of his carrying out what action that he can is that he feels pretty good about himself and is relatively satisfied.

The terminology used in the paradigm is borrowed from standard scientific terms scientists used in relationship to theory. It consists of the conditions, actions–interactions, and consequences. In addition, the terms used by the paradigm are consistent with the logic and terms expressed by persons in their everyday descriptions of things: "When this happens, I do this, with the anticipation of having this result." An important point to remember is that the paradigm is only a tool and not a set of directives. The logic behind the paradigm is that analysts can use it to sort out and arrange concepts by asking questions and thinking in terms of possible linkages. A common mistake among beginning grounded theorists is that they fixate on the specifics of the paradigm and code only for these features. Being overly concerned on identifying conditions or actions–interactions or consequences rigidifies the analytic process. Something is missing when analysts think of coding only in terms of the specifics of the paradigm, and that something is the eloquence that gives qualitative research its soul.

Conditions

Conditions are but one aspect of the paradigm. Conditions answer to the questions about why, when, and how come. They refer to the perceived reasons that persons give for why things happen and the explanations that they give for why they respond in the manner that they do through action–interaction. These explanations may be implicit or explicit in field notes. That is, sometimes persons use words that cue analysts that they are about to explain or give reasons for behavior, such as *because, since, due to,* and *when,* which is then followed by *action–interaction*. Consider the following quote:

> *I married my wife because she seemed satisfied with herself not like me with those unattainable goals that I would like to achieve but can't. She comes from a Christian background with high moral standards, which means a lot to me. I wouldn't want to marry anybody on the terms that she would have to give up this or that because of me. I didn't want her to have to give up anything. She seems satisfied with the way things are. She still works around people in wheelchairs all day, and there are a lot of references to the chair, yet she leaves her shoes on the bedroom floor or jumps in the car and leaves my chair outside. She is not preoccupied with me as a man in a wheelchair. I told her I would never want a child of mine to marry someone in a wheelchair, and she almost came unglued. She said, 'What right do you have to make that value judgment?' Her values were there before I met her. (Excerpt from field notes)*

Note the use of the word *because* in the first sentence. In the quote, he is giving us the reason why he married the woman he did (the action that he took). The reasons (conditions for marriage) were that she was satisfied with herself and the way things are, is Christian and has high moral standards, is not preoccupied nor does she treat him as a man in a wheelchair; she has values that appeal to him.

Actions–Interactions

Actions–interactions make up the second big category in the paradigm. They are the actual responses people or groups make to the events or problematic situations that occur in their lives. The relationship between an event or a set of circumstances and the action–interaction that follows is not a direct cause and effect relationship. People give meaning to events; have feelings about them; think about them; and only then

perceive them as problems, as challenges, or as goals, and only then do they respond through action–interaction. Action–interaction answer to questions such as the following: What meaning (in the form of a problem, goal, etc.) was given to these conditions or set of events? What particular action–interaction was taken to manage the problem or reach that goal? Here, I continue with the same interview:

> *The first thing that I did after the injury is to try to achieve self-dependence. I couldn't see life worth living if I had to be in a nursing home or had to depend on someone all the time to do my care. The thought of giving up my independence was one of the reasons why I was reluctant to marry again. My first marriage broke up because of my disability…. I spent six or seven months in the hospital and after that kept going back. After I finally got out of the hospital, she [his first wife] told me that she was sick and tired of living with a cripple and hoped she would never see another wheelchair again and left. I'll always remember that. (Excerpt from field notes)*

Here the interviewee explains the meaning that being disabled had for him: Life wasn't worth living if he had to be in a nursing home or be dependent for the rest of his life. Thinking about being dependent or living in a nursing home gave him the motivation to work toward becoming independent. Notice that the meaning he attached to being disabled came not only from his own perceptions of the actions or activities he would no longer be able to carry out but were in addition derived through social interaction with his first wife and her attitude toward his disability, which in turn led to the breakup of the first marriage (from his perspective). Another consequence was his reluctance to marry again.

Consequences

Consequences are anticipated or actual outcomes of action and interaction. Often before taking action persons take into account possible outcomes (e.g., I might develop complications if I don't follow my diabetic regimen). Then based on those possibilities, persons make choice among options regarding which actions–interactions to take. Sometimes outcomes occur as anticipated. However, sometimes outcomes do not happen as expected, and an actor has to adjust his or her action–interaction to fit with the new and evolving situation (process to be discussed more in Chapter 9 that follows). Anticipated or actual consequences can be to self or to others and can be physical, psychological, or social. Consequences can generate emotions (anger, guilt, fear) and can spur further action or change the direction of action–interaction. Let's continue with the interview:

> *I feel guilty if I don't get in there and do something around the house. I had to do those things when I lived alone. In fact, it is harder now because when I lived alone I didn't have to pick up after someone. I can't get out and make those big accomplishments, whether it be catching a string of fish or bringing home the big paycheck. Helping around the house is something that I can do. It is a survival thing for me. (Excerpt from field notes)*

Notice how in the quote it is the interviewee's anticipation of feeling guilty that makes him want to do things around the house to help his wife (also because he loves her). Doing things that help her has several consequences. First, his work around the house takes some of the burden of caring for him and the home off of his wife, who is tired after working all day. Second, it also makes him feel less disabled because he feels that by doing what he can it makes up to some extent for the things he can't do. Being able to do things is a strategy for psychological survival.

Notice something else that comes out in this short quote. In fact, that something else is present throughout this interview but perhaps is more covert than overt. This man is always measuring his abilities and his inabilities to act against societal expectations—especially in terms of his perceptions of gender roles and values (for example, it is a man's role to bring home the paycheck). Perhaps he is not aware he is doing this but he is.

Cultural and social expectations are important conditions operating in any situation because indirectly or directly they can facilitate or constrain the ability to act and interact. In the next section of this chapter, I take up the conditional/consequential matrix a tool for sensitizing researchers to the range of conditions and consequences that can be part of context.

The Conditional/Consequential Matrix

The paradigm is a tool to help analysts to organize and link concepts. It reminds us to look for the reasons, or explanations, persons give for the action they take. The conditional/consequential matrix, henceforth, is to be referred to as the matrix. I don't believe that every possible condition or consequence must be brought out in the research. Rather, I hope that researchers will use this analytic tool to help them enrich their analysis. This section of the chapter will look at the following:

- Differences between the matrix and the paradigm
- Description of the matrix

Differences Between the Matrix and the Paradigm

While the paradigm is helpful, it doesn't help researchers bring complexity into the analysis. The matrix fills this gap in analysis by looking at the following:

- Range of conditions and range of possible outcomes
- The complexity of the relationships between conditions, actions–interactions, and consequences
- Different actors, different perspectives
- The importance of micro and macro
- Putting it all together

Range of Conditions and Range of Possible Outcomes

Researchers are well aware of the assumptions, perspectives, cultural backgrounds, wants, and experiences they bring to the research and how these influence their interpretations in the form of the concepts that they substitute for raw data. Research participants also have their experiences, wants, assumptions, cultural background, financial status, and education that they bring to the event or problematic situation. These influence how people interpret and give meaning to events or happenings and the form their actions–interactions ultimately take. Beyond what the individual brings to the problematic situation or event in terms of abilities, motive, and so on, there are many conditions originating outside the individual that can influence the form and scope of action–interaction. The outside or macro conditions facilitate or constrain action–interaction by providing or limiting resources persons have to work with; setting policy, rules, and regulations; establishing cultural expectations; and so on. Also, action taken by individuals or groups have consequences outside of the individual that can, in turn, bring about a change in policy, rules, culture, availability of resources, and so on. Not all possible conditions will be present in any set of data, but when they are there, researchers should try to sort them out and trace the relationships to action–interaction.

The Complexity of the Relationships Between Conditions, Actions–Interactions, and Consequences

Conditions and consequences do not exist in a vacuum; they interact and impact upon each other in varied and dynamic ways, giving complexity to situations. Actions–interactions are always taken by persons to shape or handle the problems or situations that arise out of the events that occur in their lives. Since one event and the action that follows often leads to another, and to another—like links in a chain—the relationships between events and action–interaction are often complex and difficult to sort through. Furthermore, the relationships between conditions, subsequent interaction, and consequences rarely follow a linear path. Conditions and subsequent action are more likely to bounce off one another like billiard balls, leading to consequences that one cannot always predict in advance. This point is clearly brought out in the following quote taken from a book written by McMaster (1997) about the Vietnam War. What McMaster is getting at is that the United States didn't go to Vietnam thinking in terms of taking part in a long-term war. In the beginning, they sent a few troops to train South Vietnamese soldiers. However, due to a variety of events that occurred in both the United States and Vietnam—such as the assassination of President Kennedy, the "supposed" attack of an American ship in the Gulf of Tonkin, and the inadequacy of the South Vietnamese fighters, events that could not have been foreseen when Kennedy sent the first troops—the subsequent actions taken by the United States and North Vietnam resulted in the United States being drawn into a full-scale war:

> *The Americanization of the Vietnam War between 1963 and 1965 was the product of an unusual interaction of personalities and circumstances. The escalation of U.S. military intervention grew out of a complicated chain of events and a complex web of decisions that slowly transformed the conflict in Vietnam into an American war. (McMaster, 1997, p. 323)*

Conditions and consequences usually exist in clusters and can associate or covary in many different ways—both to each other and to related action–interaction. Furthermore, with time, and the advent of contingencies, the clusters of conditions and consequences can either change or rearrange themselves so that the nature of relationships or associations that exist between them and action–interaction also change. Think about how the United States went into Iraq to get rid of a dictator and his alleged chemical weapons, and once this goal was accomplished, the United States discovered they were about to leave behind a broken country and became involved in nation building.

Different Actors, Different Perspectives

Action and interaction are not confined to individuals. They can be carried out by representatives acting on behalf of nations, organizations, and social worlds. Furthermore, interaction can be directed at individual or groups representative of nations, organizations, social worlds, and so on.

This point is illustrated in an event reported by Lieutenant Alvarez, a navy pilot shot down early in the Vietnam War and taken prisoner by the North Vietnamese. One day a group of prisoners, including Alvarez, was taken from their prison cells and paraded through the streets of Hanoi. As the prisoners made their way through the streets, the Vietnamese people who were lining the streets began to verbally and physically abuse the prisoners. Though these men were prisoners and no longer dropping bombs, they remained symbols of America and the war; thus, they were viewed as legitimate targets of the North Vietnamese people's anger (Alvarez & Pitch, 1989, pp. 144–149).

The relationships between micro and macro conditions are not always visible to individual research

participants. This point has implications for data collection. Each participant in a situation comes with his or her own set of reasons for action–interaction, and rarely does each person have a grasp of the whole situation. It takes listening to many voices to gain understanding of the whole.

The Importance of Micro and Macro

The distinction between micro and macro often made by researchers is an artificial one. Most situations are a combination of micro conditions (those related to the individual) and macro conditions (those distinct from or outside the individual—that is, historical, social, political, etc., conditions) interacting with each other. As analysts, we are interested in the interplay between micro and macro conditions because it is the interplay between these that makes the situations so complex. For example, a person who has diabetes might want to eat a healthy diet of fruit and vegetables but because he is elderly and living on a pension he lacks the money to buy the food he needs. Here, we see micro and macro conditions interacting to constrain the man's ability to act in a desired manner. He wants to eat the right foods, but he lacks the financial resources to do so. His pension that originates outside of his self is too small to take care of all his living expenses. The person in talking with the researcher might say something like this: "My pension barely pays the rent, leaving very little to buy food. Healthy food is so expensive." Here, the individual is putting together micro with macro, his own situation, low income, and the situation outside of himself that is the expense of healthy food, which is out of his control.

Pulling It All Together

The analytic picture presented in the previous discussion is one of multiple and diverse patterns of connectivity with discernible shifting patterns of interaction over time. Though experienced researchers often have their own devices for keeping track of these complex sets of relationships, a researcher new to qualitative analysis may feel overwhelmed. It is important to remember that not every path a researcher follows will lead to discovery of an analytic gold mine. Nor is it ever possible to discern all the possible connections between conditions, action–interaction, and consequences. Every analyst has to accept that there are limitations to what can be discovered based on access to data, degree of analytic experience, and amount of personal reserves. I acknowledge that doing this complex analytic work is not easy and that persons reading this book will pick and choose where to go with their research efforts.

Description of the Matrix

All this time I have been talking about the matrix as a set of ideas. The problem lies in translating abstract ideas into an easily understood diagram. The diagram I have devised does not capture the complexity of the set of ideas I have presented previously.

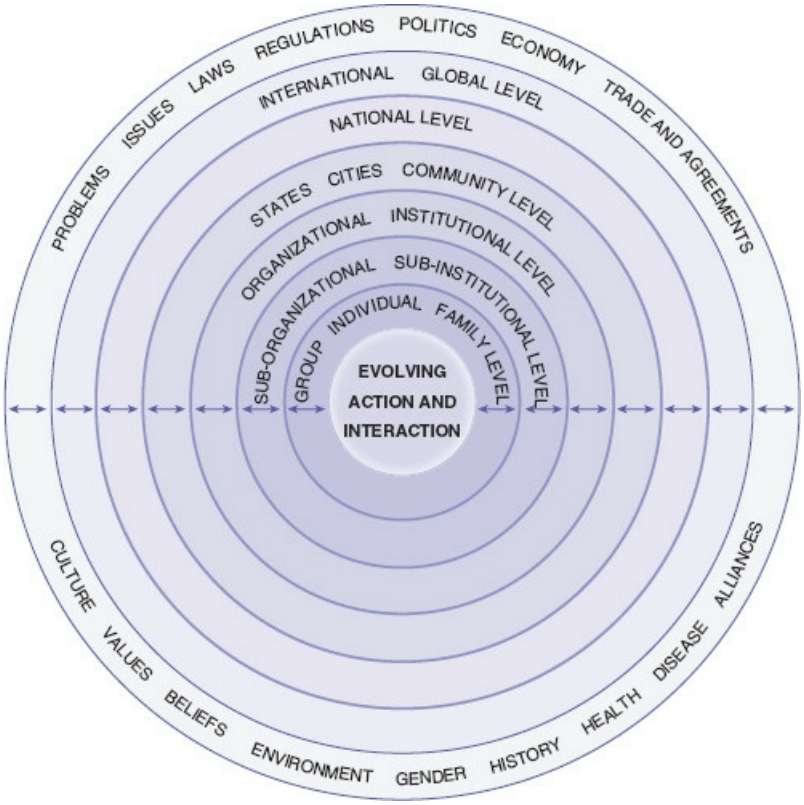

Diagram 8.1 The Conditional/Consequential Matrix

The model of the matrix consists of a series of concentric and interconnected circles with arrows going both toward and away from the center (see Diagram 8.1). The arrows represent the intersection of conditions and consequences and the resulting chain of events. Conditions move toward and surround action–interaction to create a complex background within which action–interaction takes place. Other arrows move away from interaction, representing how the consequences of action–interaction move outward. One of the limitations of the diagram is that the flow appears linear. A more likely metaphor is billiard balls each striking the other at different angles, setting off a chain reaction that ends with knocking the appropriate ball(s) into the pockets.

The matrix is meant only to be a conceptual guide, a reminder of how complex situations are, and it is not a definitive procedure, such as making comparisons. The matrix can be modified to fit each study and data. To maximize use of the matrix as an analytic tool, each area is presented in its most abstract form. Items (sources of condition and consequences) to be included must have their root in data, thus depend upon the type and scope of the phenomenon under investigation. Usually researchers using the matrix have altered the classification scheme to suit their own purposes or, based on their critiques, developed alternative approaches (see Clarke, 2005; Dey, 1999; Guessing, 1995).

Beginning at the outer edges of the circle, I have placed names on some of the conditions that can impact and be impacted by any level of the matrix. The conditions include but are not limited to such items as international and national politics, governmental regulations, agreements and conflicts between and within governments, culture, values, philosophies, economics, history, and problems and issues, such as global warming. The next area I have designated as the international and global level and the next the *national* or *regional* level. Next comes the *community*—state and city level. Included in this area are all of the conditions

previously listed but as they pertain to a particular community, giving it singularity among all other communities. The next circle represents the *organizational and institutional level*. Each organization or institution has its own purposes, structure, rules, problems, histories, relationships, and spatial features. (Some institutions and organizations might be international in scope but how rules are interpreted and practiced often is individualized to communities or even to individuals.) Still another circle represents the *sub-organizational and sub-institutional level*. The next circle represents the collective, group, and family level. Most important is the center that represents evolving action and interaction that is carried out through individuals, groups, and collectives to flow into and out of every other level. Think of spokes on a wheel with energy flowing to and from the center.

Researchers can study any substantive topic within any area of the matrix. For example, researchers might study health care at a national level, focusing on recent legislation, policies, and emerging organizations related perhaps to a national health care plan. Or researchers could move down several levels of the matrix and study how a recent national health care law impacts the management of chronic illness by families. Or researchers could study decision making in an organization such as how insurance companies decide what procedures and illnesses to cover and what the costs of the insurance will be for each group of individuals. Regardless of area of focus, it is important to keep in mind that conditions in the outer levels, such as health care policies of a nation (e.g., national health care or the lack of it), will filter down and affect individuals and groups at each level of the matrix. Conversely, problems that arise in individuals or groups in the lower levels of the matrix can ultimately reach back and have an impact on present or future legislation. A good example of this is a recent controversy in the United States regarding birth control measures that lead to abortion that ultimately went to the Supreme Court for a decision. A family operated business with a small number of employees went to court challenging the new health care law passed in the country that states that businesses with over 50 employees must provide contraceptive and abortion coverage to employees as part of their health care insurance policies. The family that owned the business argued that they were willing to provide coverage for 16 forms of contraception but not for 4 others that they believed led to abortion, such as the IUD and the morning-after pill. After going through the lower courts without the situation being resolved to the satisfaction of the company, the Supreme Court decided to hear the argument. After listening to both sides, the Court arrived at the decision that forcing the owners of the company to provide abortion-inducing contraception was against their right to practice their religion as they believe fit under the Constitution. Thus, the health care law had to be narrowly altered to protect constitutional rights under the right to freedom of religion.

Other substantive areas that might be studied include, but are not limited to, the following: identity, decision making, social movements, arenas, conflict and consensus, awareness, social change, work, information flow, and moral dilemmas. Each of these can be studied within any area. Time, history, biography, space, economics, gender, power, politics, and so on are all potential conditions that *can be* relevant to any substantive area studied in any area outlined in the matrix. The important thing is that no item (be it gender, age, power, etc.) should be stated as being relevant to the evolving theory unless there are data to support it.

This concludes our discussion of the matrix. Just remember to use it creatively and in ways that fit your

study. The Insider Insights that follow the Summary of Key Points demonstrate the creative way that one grounded theorist made use of the matrix as part of her dissertation research.

Summary of Key Points

From an analytic standpoint, context is expressed in the meanings and explanations or reasons (conditions) that persons give for what they say, think, feel, and do (action–interaction) in response to the problematic situations or events that occur in their lives. Analyzing data for context is essential for persons wanting to construct theory because it locates action–interaction within a set of conditions and identifies the consequences that are likely to result of that action and interaction. It is this aspect of theory that enables it to offer detailed explanations of behavior. Evolving action and interaction stand in the heart of context. They are responses taken by persons to manage or handle events or happenings based on the meanings given to events and happenings. As part of daily life, persons seek and give explanations. When providing these explanations, persons are indicating the conditions or the why's they do or don't do things, linking action–interaction to conditions and to actual or anticipated consequences. Though there are key words that indicate conditions such as since and when, for novice researchers teasing out of raw data the differences between conditions, action–interaction, and consequences can be difficult. The paradigm is an analytic tool designed to help analysts keep action–interaction in the center while sorting out the relationship between it and other concepts derived during analysis. Some of the other concepts will denote conditions, and some will denote actual or anticipated consequences. Take the following example: "If I don't help my wife around the house, I feel guilty. She goes out to work all day, but because of my disability I can't work." Feeling guilty is an anticipated consequence of not helping. The reason or condition the interviewee gives for helping with household chores in the home is his disability, and because of it, he is unable to have a job while his wife has to work.

The conditional/consequential matrix is another analytic tool. It, too, puts action–interaction in the center. Its purpose is to help researchers understand that conditions and consequences often interact in dynamic and complex ways and that there are a range of areas out of which conditions may originate and a range of areas that consequences of action–interaction might impact. Conditions present themselves in the meanings persons give to things as well as micro or macro factors that can facilitate or constraint the ability to act/interact. It is not conditions in the abstract sense that is important from an analytic standpoint. What is important is how research participants give meaning and respond to conditions through action–interaction. For example, a person might say the following:

> *I didn't go to the doctor yesterday because at the last minute my sister called and said her car broke down and she couldn't take me. So I called and got another appointment for early next week. This time I plan to take a taxi and schedule ahead so that I don't have to rely on my sister. I should have known she would come up with some excuse not to take me.*

Not having a ride from her sister because her sister's car broke down is the condition (reason she gives) for not keeping the original appointment with the doctor. It is also the condition (reason she gives for) why she decided to take a taxi to her next appointment.

Insider Insights	The "Aha Moment"

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As a neophyte grounded theory (GT) researcher, I wanted my data analysis to be as unbiased as possible. To reduce potential biases I kept a journal during my research investigation. In the journal I wrote my biases both before and during data collection and analysis. I looked back at and added to this journal frequently, which was extremely helpful in my GT work.

As my research continued I also kept a record of analysis and brainstorming sessions in memos along with the diagrams of my concepts. The writing of memos was integral to the GT process and gave me opportunities to look at the data and concepts from various angles. This allowed me to identify and appreciate the deeper meanings of the concepts and determine how they fit into categories. Once the categories and subcategories were derived from the data, I began to see patterns. I tried to put the concepts into diagrams for a visual representation of their relationships both to each other and the main theme of the research. These steps took time, patience, discussion, and a large amount of rethinking about these relationships.

As I began my analyses of the telephone interview transcripts, I chose to utilize the paradigm model as a tool to assist me to think about relationships within the data in order to identify the context and to link it to the process. Open, focused and axial coding were used to determine codes or concepts and to ultimately sort them into categories. This sorting was a dynamic process that occurred throughout the analysis of each interview transcript and the constant comparisons that were applied to the data. In the early part of the investigation, codes that were used were expanded and then contracted as guided by the data. Using the paradigm model, there emerged ten categories and 89 codes. I managed the data manually in order to gain a deeper understanding of the process of GT analysis. Although the paradigm model was a useful tool to use in this stage of the research, it became apparent to me that information that was emerging from the data was much richer, deeper and more dynamic than the linear paradigm model could depict. This led me to utilize the conditional matrix as it applied to advocacy.

The conditional matrix, as explained by Corbin and Strauss (2008), can be used to explain the complexity of a topic by enriching the analysis and helping the researcher sort through the range of conditions and consequences associated with location of and response to events (p. 91) especially as they can change in relation to the context. In addition to using the paradigm model, the conditional matrix, as specified by Corbin and Strauss, allowed me to compare the data and gain a better understanding of it through a deeper, more substantive analysis. Through ongoing constant comparison, theoretical sampling, discussions with Dr. Corbin and further data diagramming to ascertain relationships of codes, the coding process described above had some categories and concepts subsumed under a smaller number of categories with their respective subconcepts, therefore showing six categories and 55 codes.

Using this smaller number of codes, I sought to construct a visual representation of the codes' relationships to each other. Drawing this initial diagram was the first stage toward the creation of the Sessler Branden

Advocacy Matrix (SBAM). Once the original SBAM was created, a series of discussions with Dr. Corbin occurred so that I could refine what was emerging. Finally, through ongoing analysis of the data, rethinking the categorical connections of the concepts, diagramming the data multiple times, a final model was set up with the three main categories, eight subcategories, and 41 codes. As I continued to employ constant comparison, it became clear to me that the main categories that emerged were actions with subconcepts representing actions, interactions, skills, and knowledge. This process brought deeper meaning to the data while clarifying the findings and led to the discovery of the Sessler Branden Advocacy Theory (SBAT). All of this is diagrammed in the SBAM and comprises the central phenomenon, the final five component actions, the foundational conditions composed of internal and environmental characteristics, intervening conditions and the conditional context.

The SBAT allows for the dynamic nature of advocacy to be shown as it relates to the process, outcomes/goals, and conditions as they emerged from the data. The advocacy matrix is not a procedure but rather a representation of the actions and interactions that have emerged from the data regarding the advocacy action by the nurse.

Let me describe how the matrix is constructed by explaining it through a story line that also reflects the inductive nature of the action from the ground up. The story line, which explicates the complexity of the theory, simplifies it through a narrative (Sandelowski, 2004) while moving beyond a mere presentation of the data to a higher level of thinking about the raw data and having it be pragmatic.

Foundational conditions of internal and environmental characteristics form the base of the SBAM. As the nurse considers advocating, he/she must identify his/her internal characteristics. Environmental characteristics that are around the nurse can affect the nurse's course of action. The internal and environmental characteristics come together in multiple combinations thus creating the *conditional context,* which shapes the advocacy act. It must be identified by the nurse before the decision to advocate is made and needs to be present at each level of the matrix as the nurse traverses it.

The foundational conditions and the context lead to the main topic "To Advocate," as can be seen in the matrix below. To advocate which is made up of the *component actions* including two assessment components and three goal components. The *assessment components,* to identify and to strategize, form the beginning of the advocacy action. If the nurse is unable to completely and/or successfully identify or strategize on an issue, then the nurse may need to return to either assessment component as represented by the feedback arrows. The arrows represent the ability of the nurse to return to either action to achieve success in these steps before moving forward in the SBAM.

The three *goal components* include to facilitate, empower, and promote. Goal components are identified by the nurse after the assessment components are complete. The goal components must be identified by the nurse and are specific to the conditional context of the issue. They may need to be changed or altered if the context changes. Each goal component may not be realized with each advocacy action and may need to be reassessed and reevaluated in an ongoing basis throughout the actions and interactions in the advocacy matrix. Therefore, the five components to strategize, identify, facilitate, empower and promote within the large triangle form the main actions of the core phenomenon to advocate. The main action to advocate can occur by

the nurse, engaging in its necessary assessment and goal components that remain the same on every level of the matrix.

Levels of the SBAT matrix, in which the advocacy action occurs are seen in the concentric arcs above the advocacy triangle, are comprised of individuals, groups, organizations, communities, and national, international and global arenas. Acts of advocacy may be effected upon individuals, groups, or multiple groups, as indicated by the arrows pointing from the advocacy triangle into every arc level, and may subsequently be directed to successively larger groups or even smaller groups as represented by the arrows radially traversing the arc's components in outward and inward directions, respectively.

The data suggest that as one goes further out into the levels of the SBAM, the advocacy may become more difficult and/or complicated reflecting more layers of understanding that are needed for the larger, more complex systems and the larger number of people with whom to build relationships. Conversely, earlier successes in the matrix may accelerate the advocacy process because the nurse has more relationships built, knowledge acquired and information learned on which to base the next advocacy action. This is why building relationships and knowledge, combined with planning, are integral to a nurse's success across the SBAM. What determines the direction of the advocacy is the success of an advocacy act or the need to acquire more information or knowledge to move forward.

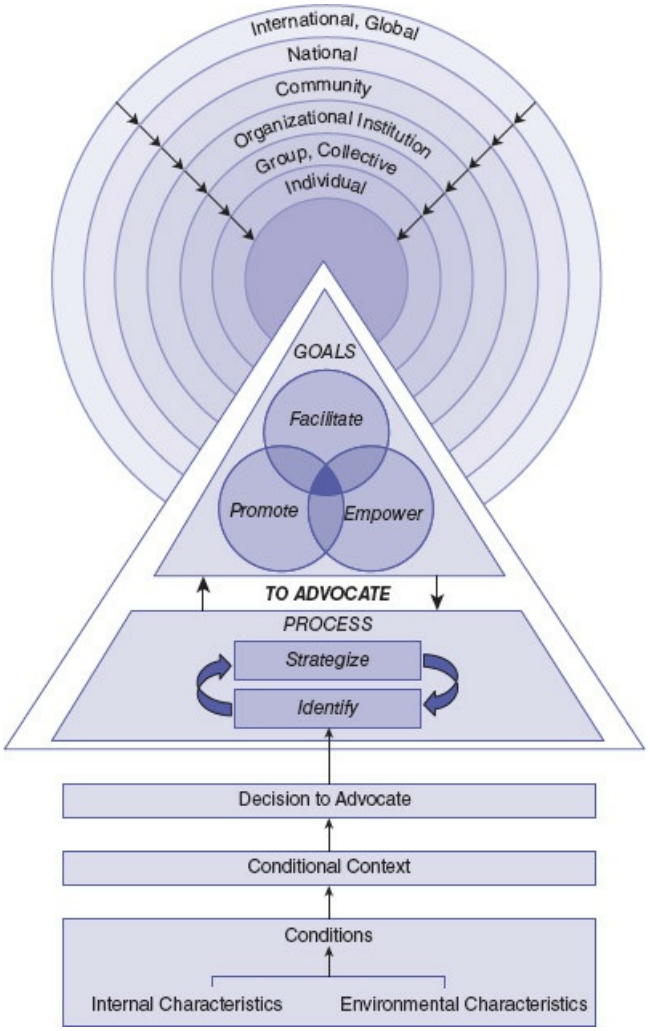
As the nurse progresses across the advocacy matrix, the journey is not necessarily direct or linear; rather, the dynamic nature of it allows the nurse to retreat or advance through the matrix as needed. Upon retreat or advance through the matrix, the nurse advocate will reassess and reevaluate at each level and component of advocacy.

As the nurse advocate traverses each advocacy matrix level, negative and/or positive influences may change the nurse's direction of traversing the levels and stages of it. As the construct emerged from the data, negative influences were generally perceived as barriers by the participants. They may prevent the nurse advocate from getting to the next stage and/or level, whereas positive influences were perceived by the participants as helpful to the advocacy process and having the capacity to facilitate the nurse advocate's movement forward within the advocacy matrix. I call these negative and positive influences *intervening conditions*.

The nurse needs to constantly reassess, reevaluate, strategize, identify and establish support, relationships and coalitions in order to move outward or through more complex levels on the matrix. With the influence of intervening conditions, which can happen between any two stages or levels of the SBAM, the nurse may need to remain in a matrix level or drop back a level to achieve the advocacy step, as indicated by arrows that point forward and backward/outward and inward on each advocacy matrix level. The level of negativity a nurse encounters may be decreased through interactions with or interventions by peers/team support, mentors, others. Finally, the timeline to become an advocate is not measured in units of time but rather by experiences across a nurse's career.

As can be seen, the process of and context for advocacy are interrelated because if the context condition(s) change(s), the process of action/interaction will need to be altered or adjusted to achieve the goal. This process is integral to the advocacy action because there will frequently be intervening conditions, causing the context to change, forcing the process to shift in how it will be applied. The SBAT has bridged the existing

knowledge with a substantive, pragmatic theory that can be applied and utilized by any nurse in any situation where advocacy is needed.



The Sessler Branden Advocacy Matrix

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Sandelowski, M. (2004). Using qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research, 14*(10), 1366–1385. doi:10.1177/1049732304269672.

Sessler Branden, P. (2012). *The nurse as advocate: A grounded theory perspective* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3556945)

Activities for Thinking, Writing, and Discussing as a Group

1. Take a problem or event in your life—one that you don't mind sharing with the group. Think about

how you responded to that problem or event through action–interaction, and explain the reasons for the actions you took or failed to take. Place these within a framework of conditions or consequences from the most macro to the micro. Write a memo about this, and bring it to class for discussion.

2. As a class, discuss the Insider Insights presented as part of this chapter. What do you think about the way that the student made use of the matrix?

Suggested Readings

For an excellent discussion on the value of the matrix and how it can be used in research, see the following:

Clarke, A. E. (2005). *Situational analysis.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hildebrand, B. (2007). Mediating structure and interaction in grounded theory. In T. Bryant & K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of grounded theory.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Chapter 9
Process

> To men of science truth is not the venerated body of doctrine the great principles of which were long ago discovered by wiser men than we, who can only elaborate upon them. It is instead a growing animated thing, warm as with life and often taking unexpected ways; not to be bound (however handsomely) in any hundred books, but written in that great volume of the universe so many characters of which man yet must learn. (Sinnott, 1968, pp. 197–198)

Table 9.1 Key Terms

Context: A conceptual term used to denote relationships between concepts and to locate action and interaction in the web of conditions and consequences that surround it
Process: Represents the rhythm as well as the changing and repetitive forms of action–interaction plus the pauses and interruptions that occur when persons act and interact for the purpose of reaching a goal or solving a problem

In the previous chapter, I argued that to develop theory, action–interaction had to be linked to the conditions that persons are responding to and trying to manage or shape when they interact. Action–interaction also has to be connected to consequences. If these connections are not made, the findings are more descriptive than theoretical. They may be informative and give insight, but they lack the ability to explain how persons act and interact to shape and gain control over events and happenings in their lives. However, up to this point, I've talked about the action–interaction in a rather static way. But conditions are *not* static events. Conditions are subject to time and place. In order to reach desired goals or outcomes, actors must match interactions to changes in conditions. This responsive and dynamic form of interaction I refer to is **process.** As process, interaction has both changing and repetitive forms, pauses, interruptions, and varying movements. This chapter should be used in conjunction with Chapter 15, which demonstrates analyzing data for **context**.

Points to Keep in Mind

When reading this chapter, students are advised to keep the following points in mind:

- Introduction to process
- Overview of process
- How to analyze data for process

Introduction to Process

I begin our discussion of process with two scenarios unrelated to research but that nevertheless help explain what I mean when I use the term.

Scenario 1

When listening to a piece of music (well, some music anyway), a person can't help but be struck by all the variations in tone and sound. We know that music—whether it be jazz, popular, classical, or any variation on these—is composed of a series of notes, some played fast, some slow, some loud, others soft, sometimes in one key, sometimes in another, often with movement back and forth between keys. Even the pauses have purpose and are part of the sound. It is the playing of these notes with all their variations and in coordinated sequences that give music its sense of movement, rhythm, fluidity, and continuity. To me, process is like a piece of music. It represents the rhythm as well as changing and repetitive forms of action–interaction plus the pauses and interruptions that occur when persons act and interact for the purpose of reaching a goal or solving a problem.

Scenario 2

The next scenario is perhaps an even more graphic illustration of my understanding of process. Recently, I was seated in the waiting room of a small airport. Having nothing to do but wait, I began to take an interest in what was going on in the coffee shop nearby. It was a modest shop, of a type that can be found in any small town in the United States. There were between 20 and 25 persons seated around the room at tables and at the counter. There was one waitress and one cook. The waitress moved from table to table, taking orders and then taking the orders to the cook, who after preparing the food gave it to the waitress to be delivered to the waiting customers. The same waitress also received the money from customers and rang it up at the cash register. From time to time, the waitress stopped to talk to customers, pour more coffee, and clear the tables. She generally kept moving her eyes ever watchful for signs of customer needs. Though each situation was a little different and her interactions differed in form and content, they were all part of a series of acts pertaining to an overall process that might be called "food servicing work." The scene was not a very dramatic one. In fact, it was quite routine and surely repeated day after day in much the same way in coffee shops all over the country. Though routine, there was a continuous flow of activity, with one sequence of actions flowing into another. There were interruptions to the flow of work and small problems to be solved, but these tended to be resolved as part of the ongoing flow of action. Watching the scene made me realize this: "Ah, now that is process!"

When there are multiple actors working together to reach a goal or manage a problem, it becomes more complicated because they must coordinate their actions–interactions and overcome differences in opinion or changes in conditions that might block and in other ways alter action and interaction. Take the restaurant that was just described. The waitress and the cook must align their actions in order to serve the customers within a reasonable period of time. The cook prepares the food, and the waiter or waitress serves the food while it is still hot. Customers also have to align their actions with those of the cook and waitress or waiter, meaning

that they have to wait for their food patiently and they can't change their order once the cook has begun to prepare their food. Now imagine what would happen to the action or to the "flow of work" if we varied the conditions. What if several large groups of persons came in at the same time, with still only one cook and one waitress to wait on them? Imagine how this would change the pacing of the work—the cook's ability to take orders and prepare the food and the waitress's ability to get the orders to the cook, pour that extra cup of coffee, and serve the food before it has cooled down. Customers might have to wait longer for their food and complain if the wait is too long. What if the cook suddenly becomes ill and the waitress has to cook as well as serve the food or decides to close the shop and leave the customers sitting there? Suppose that a waitress is inexperienced and slow and the customers are tired of waiting for their food and begin to complain. Would the pleasant, friendly interaction taking place between customers and the waitress turn into one of impatience, frustration, and even anger? Each of these different scenarios could potentially alter or shift the nature of the action–interaction. Since conditions tend to change (think of change in the number and type of customers coming to and leaving from the restaurant), over time there must be adjustments in the timing of the ordering, preparing, cooking, and delivering of the food to keep customers happy and willing to return.

Overview of Process

Process is an important aspect of analysis because it gives life to action–interaction. It shows the ability of persons even to adjust and respond to subtle changes in what is going on around them. Process has certain properties: (a) It has a *variable nature,* (b) there are different ways of conceptualizing process, (c) it has routine action–interaction, and (d) process can be broken down into subprocesses.

See Diagram 9.1 for a visual representation of process.

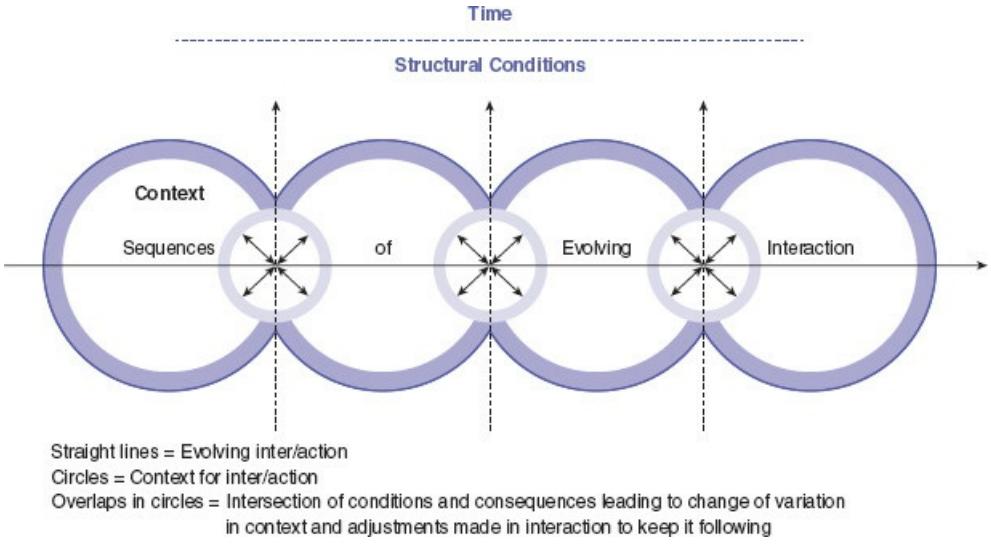

Diagram 9.1 Visual Representation of Process.

Source: Guest, MacQueen, & Navey (2013).

Variable Nature of Process

Action and interaction consist of a sequence of related acts. When I speak of process, I'm speaking of the continual adjustments in those acts as persons attempt to adapt to changes in conditions. One could say that, at best, process is like a coordinated ballet or symphony, each movement graceful, aligned, purposeful, sometimes thoughtful, other times routine, with one action flowing into another. At its worst, it might resemble a soccer riot, the acts misaligned, disrupted, random, uncontrolled, nondirected, and sometimes hurtful. Most human interaction probably lies somewhere in between. The sequences of action–interaction do not proceed as gracefully as in a ballet, nor are they as chaotic as in a riot. In fact, much of what we see and hear as analysts can be dull and routine.

Conceptualizing Process

Process is often described in developmental terms such as phases or stages, implying a linear or progressive nature to it. Sometimes this is the best approach. However, if one thinks of action–interaction as consisting of a series of related acts, not all process is developmental. Process doesn't necessarily proceed in a progressive and linear fashion. Process can be a series of related acts taken toward some end. The action and interaction that make up process can stall for a while and go forward or backward or up and down but always adjusting. Think of the example of the restaurant. There was nothing developmental about the action–interaction between the waitress and the cook as they aligned their actions–interactions to best serve the customers. Using a developmental model fails to capture the dynamic nature of action–interaction and the constant adjustments and alterations in the sequence of acts that take place to keep pace with changes in conditions. Keep in mind also that process is not necessarily always psychosocial. The action and interaction that make up process can also be educational, legal, managerial, political, military, and so on.

Routine Action–Interaction

The study of process is important for understanding routine as well as nonroutine or problematic situations. The study of routine action–interaction pertains to those acts taken on a regular basis. Just because action–interaction is routine does not mean that the actors are not making adjustments. Take, for example, a person with diabetes trying to maintain blood sugar levels within an acceptable range. Taking daily insulin injections may be necessary each day. But since diet and exercise can vary from day to day, the person with diabetes may have to adjust the timing and amount of insulin taken in order to keep the blood sugar stable. Studying routine action–interaction has broad implications for knowledge development. Studying the routine enables researchers to identify the patterns of action–interaction that make it possible to establish and maintain stability and social order, expanding our understanding of how persons or groups manage to go through everyday life. For example, when Strauss and I were studying work in hospitals, we discovered that each hospital unit had its routines in the form of tradition, policies, procedures, and rules that allowed the units to function on an ongoing basis and deliver patient care. Staff did not have to start each day trying to figure out what to do. There were even routines established to handle *unplanned* events, such as routines for managing a patient with a cardiac arrest. Knowing how these routines functioned to keep the flow of work going enabled us to better understand how hospital units were able to deliver care on a 24-hour basis despite the changes in staff and changes in patient acuity that occurred with each shift.

Subprocesses

Process can be broken down into subprocesses. Subprocesses are also concepts; they explain in more detail how the larger process is expressed. For example, in my study of pregnant women with chronic illness, I identified the major process to be *protective governing.* Protective governing represented the means (the process) by which the pregnant woman, her partner, and the health team worked together to minimize the risks associated of a complicated pregnancy and increase the chances of having a positive outcome for mother and baby. Protective governing was broken down into the subprocesses that showed how protective governing occurred. These were *assessing the risks, balancing the options,* and *taking action to control the risks.* The actions and interactions taken to control the risks tended to change as conditions in the illness and pregnancy changed over the course of the pregnancy. The change in action and interaction was based on a new assessment of the risk levels and review of options available for managing the risks. The major process of protective governing and its subprocesses of assessing the risks, balancing the options, and taking action to control the risks occurred in every case and were engaged in consistently throughout the course of the pregnancy.

There is another major point to be made about process before moving on. Sometimes persons ask, What is the difference between a phenomenon and a process? To us, *phenomenon* stands for the topic being discussed or a happening, such as *survival. Process* stands for the means or actual things people say and do to get there. For example, combatants who went to Vietnam wanted to survive the war experience. *Process* represents the action–interaction or strategies used by combatants to increase their chances of surviving.

How to Analyze Data for Process

Analyzing data for process has certain advantages. In addition to giving findings a sense of "life," or movement, analyzing data for process encourages the discovery of patterns and the incorporation of variation into the findings. Patterns and the variations they demonstrate show how actions–interactions change under different conditions. Analyzing data for process makes use of the standard analytic techniques of making comparisons and asking questions. It requires that the analyst follow a course of action–interaction, note any changes, and relate the changes back to conditions. (Again, I refer you to Chapter 15.)

Closely examine the following field notes. They are taken from an interview of a husband whose wife had breast cancer. The first paragraph describes a series of acts related to the discovery of a lump in his wife's breast. The couple stated their willingness to have surgery by explaining the many reasons why surgery was the best and only option for them at the time.

When we first discovered the lump on her breast, we probably reacted like most people do. At first we thought it is probably nothing, but it should be checked. I think secretly we were both very upset and scared. She did get it checked, and then it became apparent that it was suspicious that she would probably have to have surgery. Then we became very frightened because we had both been educated that cancer was a very life-threatening thing. And you have to act very quickly to do something about it, and that is what we did. I think that one reason we did act quickly is because we were abroad for three and a half years. We had been out of touch with a lot here and a lot of the things that had been happening in health and medicine and alternatives. Of course, if you have never been close to someone who has a chronic illness like cancer you never think of it. You are never too interested in alternative therapies because you think you don't need them. We had always been fairly health conscious, but we drank and ate things like everyone else. So, M. went through the surgery, and I think I was very supportive. I was very emotional and very upset about it. I was also in the process of

starting a new job and doing some consulting because we had just barely been back about a month and were still unpacking, and so it was a very tough time. Somehow we always managed to get through the tough times together, and I think it is because we give each other a lot of support. I think there were times when we were probably so tense that we argued about things because we were so scared. (Excerpt from field notes)

Now compare the second paragraph to the first. Once the immediate threat to life was over and after gathering more information about cancer, probable causes, and treatments (new set of conditions), the couple was no longer certain that the traditional medical approach to managing cancer was the only management option open to them. They felt it was up to them to take a more active role and make the sort of changes in their lives that would improve their health and minimize the chances of the cancer reoccurring. Notice how the husband is giving the reasons for why the couple took charge of the situation. In giving the reasons, he is contextualizing or locating action in the changes in conditions, which include not only the surgery being over with but also the anticipated consequences of better health and less chance of recurring cancer.

She had the surgery, and she didn't need to have any kind of therapy or radiation therapy and so we were very happy about that. For a day or so, you just feel well she has pulled through it and everything is okay. Then you begin reading then you realize that maybe everything isn't okay—that maybe it isn't all cut away and the doctor says you don't have to have any therapy and go ahead and do what you want to do. Of course, M. has always done a lot more reading than I have in the health field or anything related to health. She started reading and talking to people and sort of intuitively wanted to be a vegetarian because she was only home from the hospital a couple of days, and I went and bought—we were still eating meat then—organically fed chicken, and she decided that she was going to be a vegetarian.

Analyzing Data for Process at a Formal Theory Level

What happens when the focus of the research is building *formal,* rather than generating *substantive,* theory? Is the analysis much different? When building format theory, it is not so much the types of questions asked that are different; it is the approach to data collection that is different. General theory building is concept driven. A researcher begins with a concept such as "awareness" or "stigma" and by selecting different groups or sites compares and contrasts data between the various groups or sites at a conceptual level. The concepts used at the beginning of such a study are those that were derived from a researcher's previous line of research. The idea is to add additional properties and dimensions to known concepts and to add new concepts—ones that may not have been derived in previous studies. Adding properties and dimensions and adding new concepts raises abstraction, adds density, and broadens the applicability of the original theory. For example, Strauss (1978) wanted to formulate a formal theory of *negotiations.* He began with a concept of negotiation, and examined negotiations under a variety of different conditions. He looked at negotiations between representatives of nations, judges in law courts, political machines, clans and ethnic groups, and also insurance companies and their clients. By comparing and contrasting these various groups for similarities and differences, he was able to identify the components of the negotiation process that transcended all groups, providing a more abstract and broader understanding of negotiations. At the same time, he was able to identify those aspects of negotiation that were particular to each group, showing the wide range of variation between groups, whereas a researcher interested in the concept of negotiation at a substantive level would confine data collection to one main group —for example, between buyer and seller in a housing transaction.

Next is a memo on the process of deterioration. The memo was written as part of a research project by us that investigated management of chronic conditions by couples at home. The memo outlines the process of deterioration and was meant to serve as a foundation for writing a chapter on the topic. Notice that

deterioration is introduced as one phase of the illness trajectory and that deterioration is broken down into mini phases—each phase comprising of different conditions along with different management strategies with each phase connected through a sense of downward movement.

MEMO

Deterioration Phase of the Illness Trajectory—October 1984

The deterioration phase of illness is the trajectory phase that persons are most familiar with. What we have developed in our study is perhaps a more complex conceptualization than is usual and will draw out some of its implication for trajectory management during this phase.

Deterioration pertains to that time in the illness or condition trajectory when efforts at illness management are no longer effective at preventing further physiologic deterioration. The deterioration may lead to death and/or a worsening in symptoms and increase in limitations. Along with the physical ramifications of deterioration are the biographical impact and the changes it brings to everyday life. The medical goal of management is to slow deterioration down, find new ways of handling disabilities and symptoms, or make the person as comfortable as possible while coming to terms with possible death and making arrangements for home care.

To understand more consider the following. Deterioration is only one of the several trajectory phases that a person may pass through over the course of an illness or condition. Deterioration may progress slowly or quickly; be expected or not; and may be suspected, unsuspected, or known to the person with the illness, spouse, or other family members. Not every illness or condition passes through the deterioration phase. Some conditions remain stable throughout a person's life, and they go on to die from something else. Much of the effort of managing deterioration actually takes place at home and not so much in the hospital or nursing home unless the individual has no one to care for him or her at home. That means that caring for the individual must be balanced against other types of activities involved in maintaining a home as well as consideration given to the psychological ramifications that accompany deterioration. There may or may not be outside services in the home such as hospice care, but most often in the beginning there is only temporary help. Unless a person is under the care of hospice, he or she may be hospitalized one or more times during deterioration to handle complications or crises only later to be returned home.

Mini Phases

Early Phase

When symptoms worsen and the early signs of deterioration first appear, the health care team and individual or partner will work at trying to stabilize the situation and slow down the progression. There may be occasional insights into a worsening in the future, but the person and spouse and family may still have hope that the situation will reverse itself or at least slow down substantially. The couple may seek a second opinion, visit a specialized clinic, seek out alternative forms of medicine, make themselves available for clinical trials, or agree to undergo painful treatments or medications with multiple and harmful side effects—things they might not have considered before. Some persons may decide to take trips, do

financial planning, complete a project, or carry out other activities they've always wanted to do or put off before because they were too busy. Many persons at this stage are still able to carry out their activities of daily living though they may be too ill to go to work every day. There may be depression, mood swings, reviews of past life, and attempts to put life in order as persons try to make sense out of what is happening and come to terms with a shortened future. While some persons remain active and face up to what is happening, others remain in denial and refuse to admit to themselves and others what is happening.

Middle Phase

The deterioration may temporarily slow down or there may be some slight improvement—at least that is the way some persons perceive their condition at this time, refusing to acknowledge the inevitable. Others may become alarmed as they notice a worsening of symptoms and an increased limitation in their ability to carry out activities. At this time, there is a greater need to come to terms with the past and settle any unfinished business at work or with relationships. Lots of time is spent reviewing the past with the self or with others and also with an attempt to psychologically deal with the loss of those biographical plans for the future that will no longer be possible. Some persons withdraw further into themselves while others reach to others, preferring not to dwell on what is happening to them. There is now a sense of immediacy about life and a dwelling in the present. For some, every day becomes a struggle to manage disabilities and handle new symptoms that may or may not be controlled with medication. Being weaker and sicker is now a part of everyday life. Persons now have to accept what they have not accomplished and that certain dreams and hopes are no longer possible. The spousal and family division of labor may have to be revised as well as new arrangements for care made and new resources brought into the home to help the couple and family deal with the reality of the situation. Counseling may be necessary to help the couple deal with feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, and with fears. Even at this point, there are persons who refuse to accept or deal with what is happening. They still hold on to the hope of getting better. While this may be helpful in some situations, in others it prevents the family from making closure and doing the planning necessary to ease the transition back to a "normal" life after the ill person is gone.

Final Phase

In the final phase of deterioration, there may be even more symptoms such as pain and fatigue and greater limitations in ability. The person may be transferred to a nursing home but often remains at home with the help of hospice. In either case, the individual is no longer able to participate in normal biographical roles or in some cases do his or her own physical care. Greater flexibility in daily routines is necessary among family members to accommodate an ever-increasing difficult situation, which is tentative and different from day to day and even hour to hour. The whole family may be in some sort of biographical limbo, afraid to leave town or go too far away from home because they are uncertain how much longer the individual will last. An increasing number of outside resources may be needed and rather than the situation being one of calm, different groups of resource providers may be in and out of the home all day long. Visitors in the form of family and friends, knowing that time is short, stop by to say goodbye —more for their own sake than for the person with the illness conditions who may put on a happy face for the visitors despite being in great pain or extremely fatigued. More time is spent on reviews of the past,

and the individual may want to settle any remaining unfinished biographically related business. How long this phase lasts before the person drifts into the dying phase is variable. Though this phase is difficult for all family members but especially for the couple, it doesn't mean that all life stops. Much of daily life goes on as persons try to normalize the situation, and there can even be joyful times and appreciation of the time that is remaining. However, for those persons who are in extreme pain and heavily medicated, dying and death can't come fast enough.

MEMO

Example of Process as Nondevelopmental Adaption to Changes in Conditions

This memo was written as part of our (mine and Strauss's) study of how head nurses kept the flow of patient care going in hospitals. It is exploring the process of "keeping the flow of work going." The unit about which the memo was written was a surgical intensive care unit. The memo represents a description of the types of action–interaction taken by the head nurse in response to economic changes occurring in the hospital at the time. The title of the memo is "Staffing Under Conditions of Economic Constraints: Keeping the Flow of Work Going." Notice how the nurse is weighing her options and trying to come up with the appropriate action and interaction that will enable her to provide the needed nursing coverage while staying within financial parameters set for her by the hospital administration.

The major issue on the unit at this time seems to be maintaining staff coverage under conditions of economic constraint. There is a shortage of money at this time because the new budget for this year has not yet been allocated. This puts certain constraints on the head nurse. In fact, staffing is usually the responsibility of the day charge nurse, but because of the financial constraints, the head nurse took the job back. She knows how to get more for less. We might say then under conditions of economic shortages the organizational climate becomes one of cost cutting and increased cost effectiveness with action and interaction directed at trying to find ways to provide for adequate staffing and safe patient care without spending any money.

The work in hospitals must continue 24 hours a day, seven days a week. How does the work keep going on such a continuous basis while adjusting for differences on each hospital unit and for contingency? What structural conditions are operational, and what processes allow for the continuous flow of work within those conditions? Among the important structural conditions are daily *shifts*—usually three different groups of staff each day—and a head nurse who is available mostly during the day shift but who must delegate responsibility for management to charge nurses when she is not there for the evening and night shifts. Also, there are accreditation standards to maintain, finances to manage, and many different kinds of patient care units and departments each with their own staffs and work to get done. Central subprocesses in "keeping the flow of work going" are planning, making arrangements, establishing standards and routines, delegating responsibility, having a division of labor, and maintaining the lines of communication. In the next example, we will see many of these conditions and the responsive processes put into place by the head nurse to solve a problem that she is having in staffing.

The Conditions or Constraints the Head Nurse Now Is Working Under

1. This is an ICU; therefore, a certain nurse-to-patient ratio is mandated by the hospital accreditation agency.
2. There has recently been a low patient census on this unit due to fewer surgeries, whereas the medical surgical, nursing home, and psychiatric units are full. These other units also bring in more money to the hospital. The ICU's staffing has been cut with staff relocated to other units that have 100% productivity. The result is less staff available to the ICU and the lack of possibility of hiring more staff if needed should patient load increase because of the lack of money.
3. The head nurse has been told that there is no money available to call the nurse registry, to use intermittent staff, to give compensation time off, or pay overtime unless it is an emergency. In other words, she has to try all alternatives first. This is because the unit already has something like 9,000 hours in compensation time accrued but only $1,200 left in the account to pay for that time.
4. Right now, the head nurse has a slight staff cushion because she never knows when an emergency will happen and patients will be brought to the unit. She has to have the staff meet the hospital accreditation requirements. However, she has been asked to allocate some of her staff to the medical ICU. She doesn't want to.
5. Tonight, she has requested that more staff be available because there is supposed to be two open-heart surgeries, and they would come to her unit post surgery. She has to plan coverage for this. However, sometimes surgeries are cancelled, and then she has to call staff and ask them not to come in.

Strategies the Head Nurse Is Using to Manage Staffing Under the Previously Stated Conditions

1. She can make a telephone call to a regular staff nurse to negotiate a desired night off if she will come in tonight to work from 7:00 pm until 7:00 am. The night charge nurse really needs another nurse to work tonight.
2. She can demonstrate to nursing administration using the patient acuity system (staff ration adjusted according to how sick and how much care a patient needs) that the acuity of the patients necessitates at the very least she should have X number of staff available.
3. She can call the nursing supervisor (the next step up in management) and ask her if she will override the no extra staff mandate and ask permission to have an extra nurse work tonight and offer compensation time to that nurse.
4. She can call the cheapest employee that can do the job first, then a part-time person, or someone she doesn't have to pay overtime to. In fact, one of the reasons she has taken over the job of figuring out coverage is because she knows the salaries of each employee and who is the least expensive to bring in. The most logical solution would be to call in an intermittent staff member who is the most skilled, but she must be practical cost-wise. She doesn't want to break the rules because "money must come from somewhere."

5. She calls staffing a "juggling nightmare." Does she call in staff using the notion of anticipating the need, or does she wait and see if one or both of the surgeries are cancelled? She doesn't want to end up with extra staff that she has to pay and who have nothing to do.
6. Also, she can't have staff coming in during regular staff times because if surgery isn't over or the patient doesn't come out of recovery until 8:00 pm then she has extra staff from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm. The most practical thing to do is not call a nurse to work until the time needed and have the nurse work, say, from 8:00 pm until 8:00 am. This would mean asking recovery to hold the patient until staff can arrive.
7. She could also just have someone "on call" and hold off on actually coming in until she is certain the surgery is taking place.
8. If she can't get staff, then she'll have to come in and do the job even though she worked at her job all day.
9. She could call other units like the medical ICU to see if they have extra staff they could send.
10. She could negotiate different days off with staff so that there is greater coverage earlier in the week when more surgeries take place.

Decision Made by the Head Nurse and Consequences

1. Much of the head nurse's time is spent calling around and trying to negotiate with staff, making her not available to take care of other problems happening on the unit. After calling around, she determines that she will have to come in and provide coverage.
2. The head nurse has to take home all of the paperwork she didn't get to finish during her shift.
3. She had to give up personal plans to provide the extra coverage.
4. There is a lot of frustration and discontent among staff with the working conditions.
5. There is the potential for errors or inadequate patient care to occur because of the nurse having to work so many hours.

Summary of Key Points

Process is a notion that describes how persons adjust action–interaction to meet the often- competing demands created by changing conditions with the aim of reaching desired goals or outcomes. Though process is often presented in development terms, there are times when process is more situational such as when a person or group is trying to solve a problem, as was the case of the head nurse presented in the memo that was previously given or the example provided at the beginning of this chapter of the waitress and the cook working together to serve customers in a small coffee shop. When analyzing data for process, researchers should aim at capturing the ability of human beings to think through and adjust their action and interaction to solve

problems and reach goals whether acting alone or in conjunction with others. This applies regardless of whether or not they are looking at a developmental process, such as becoming a mother or soldier or researcher—or whether researchers are studying a dynamic process such as surviving the risks of war. To capture process in data means analytically following the course of what a researcher has determined to be the main goal of action–interaction in a study, such as "keeping the flow of work going," and by asking questions and making comparisons; note how the action–interaction changes under different conditions, and then follow through to determine if desired goals or outcomes were achieved and with what consequences.

Activities for Thinking, Writing, and Discussing as a Group

1. With this chapter and with the previous chapter (Chapter 8) in mind, readers of this text should begin to see how many of the tenants of pragmatism and interactionism have been incorporated into the method. In class, discuss how you see these tenants operating in the method.
2. Bring research articles in journals that are related to you or are in fields of professional study that show process, and discuss how process is presented in these articles. Discuss if you think the choice of how process was presented fits the study. How could it have been presented differently?

Insider Insights — A Memo on Process

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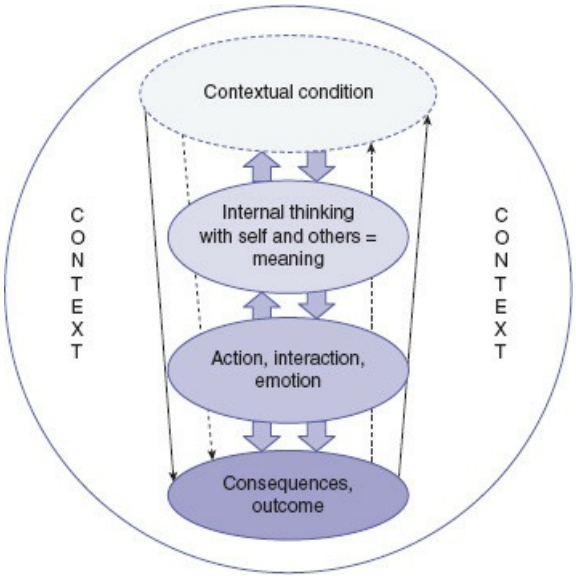
At first, I did not think the "process" was difficult to understand. That action/interaction/ emotion was what a person did that was meaningful to me and viewed as a process. Later I understood that action/interaction/emotion was merely a static description of a situation. Maybe I did not read the theory well enough, because I thought I "had got it." Maybe for a while, I somehow understood what to do, but that transit from static description to linking the concepts of actions to concepts of conditions (showing the process) was too heavy or too scary and it ended up in descriptions. Again, to link action/interaction/emotion to outcome, goal, or problem was somehow understandable. The difficulty is to show the linking in an explanatory way and not as statements.



Another challenge was that I thought I understood what *context* and *condition* meant or implied, but I did not. It took a while before I realized that "conditions" make/form constitutes the context. To understand *process* I think you have to understand the meaning of what concepts are. It took a while (do not ask me why) to realize that *concept* in grounded theory does not necessarily consist of one word. Concepts consist of several words and can sound like "the wall of science" or "the changing self" (from BQR, 2008, p. 183) and represent words that stands for ideas/products of analysis.

Writing this memo about process has been useful in clarifying my thoughts.

To dare thinking independently and creatively, I think you have to understand the whole picture of the grounded theory. I am on my way.

Suggested Readings

Ching, S. S. Y, Martinson, I. M., & Wong, T. K. S. (2009, March). Reframing: Psychological adjustments of Chinese women at the beginning of the breast cancer experience. *Qualitative Health Research, 19*(3), 339–351.

Escadón, S. (2006, August). Mexican American intergenerational caregiving model. *Western Journal of Nursing Research, 28*(5), 564–585.

Chapter 10
Techniques for Achieving Theoretical Integration

> In the final analysis, regardless of the number of illustrations, the reader is most likely to understand only with practice, in using, these techniques. Again, using our analogy for training for sports is instructive. The procedures are not automatic and require sustained mental effort. But this is what makes theory construction fun and personally rewarding. As we achieve some progress—discovering some new concepts or theoretical statements—our patience is rewarded with a new vision of our social world. Theory construction is exactly like being an explorer and it contains all the fun of adventure as well as the hard work. (Hage, 1972, p. 5)

Table 10.1 Key Terms

Core category: A concept that is sufficiently broad and abstract that summarizes in a few words the main ideas expressed in the study

Integration: Linking categories around a central or core category to form theory

Theory building as stated by Hage (1972) is an adventure. There is a whole new way of thinking to master, theoretical sampling as a form of data collection to learn, procedures to become skilled at, obstacles to overcome, and difficult choices to make. Few grounded theorists know before they begin the research adventure how it will end; that is part of the discovery. Although readers of this text have taken an extensive and thoughtful learning journey up to this point, there remains that final destination to reach before the journey is over. That final destination is **integration**. I suggest reading Chapter 16 in conjunction with this chapter for examples of the ideas presented in this chapter.

Points to Keep in Mind

When reading this chapter, students are advised to keep the following points in mind:

- Some general points about integration
- Techniques to aid integration
- Steps necessary to finalize the theory

Some General Points About Integration

Before presenting techniques for achieving integration, it is necessary to review some general points:

- Integration is important.

- Definition of a core category
- Criteria for choosing a core category
- Difficulty in arriving at a core category

Integration Is Important

Integration is important to theory construction for the following reasons. An umbrella has many spokes. The spokes provide structure and give the umbrella form or shape. But it is not until the spokes are covered with some kind of material that the object becomes an umbrella and can be used to keep the rain off of a person. In other words, spokes alone don't make an object an umbrella. The same is true for theory. Concepts alone do not make theory. Concepts must be linked and filled in with detail in order to construct a dense and explanatory theory. Admittedly, integration is not easy for novice researchers. Paul Atkinson, a coauthor of an excellent textbook on field research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983), stated this in a personal communication:

> *This aspect—making it all come together—is one of the most difficult things of all, isn't it? Quite apart from actually achieving it, it is hard to inject the right mix of (a) faith that it can and will be achieved; (b) recognition that it has to be worked at, and isn't based on romantic inspiration; (c) that it isn't like a solution to a puzzle or math problem, but has to be created; (d) that you can't always pack everything into one version, and that any one project could yield several different ways of bringing it together.*

Definition of a Core Category

The **core category**, or concept, which is also known as the central category, represents what researchers determine is the main theme of the research. A core category is a concept that is abstract and broad enough to be representative of all participants in the study. In addition, it is the category among others that seems to have to greatest explanatory power and the ability to link the other categories to it and to each other. Finally, the core category is one that is sufficiently abstract and can be used in future studies that perhaps are not substantively identical and are similar at a conceptual level, thereby raising the theory to a more general level.

Criteria for Choosing a Core Category

Strauss (1987, p. 36) provided a list of criteria that can be applied to a category to help researchers determine if a concept qualifies as a central category.

1. It must be sufficiently abstract so that it can be used as the overarching explanatory concept tying all the other categories together.
2. It must appear frequently in the data. This means that within all, or almost all, cases there are indicators that point to that concept.
3. It must be logical and consistent with the data. There should be no forcing.
4. It should be sufficiently abstract so that it can be used to do further research leading to the development of general theory.

5. It should grow in depth and explanatory power as each of the other categories is related to it through statements of relationships.

Difficulty in Arriving at a Core Category

It is not unusual for novice researchers to have difficulty arriving at a core category. They are so caught up on the details of the researcher that they find it difficult to stand back and determine which among the many concepts represents the major theme running through the research.

Failure to Write Memos Throughout the Research Process

One of the reasons some researchers have difficulty formulating theory is that they fail to write long, thoughtful memos throughout the research process. A researcher cannot expect to arrive at integration if at the end of the research the only thing the analyst has to work with is a list of concepts or codes and some quotes from the raw data pertaining to each code but no memos. Theory building is a process of going from raw data, thinking about that raw data, delineating concepts to stand for raw data, then making statements of relationship about those concepts and linking them all together into a theoretical whole. Each of these steps has to be recorded into a form called "memos."

Don't Understand the Difference Between Description and Theory

Another reason some researchers have difficulty with final integration is that they don't understand the difference between description and theory. In theory building, it is the word *explanatory* that makes the difference. Description describes something—an event like the death of a spouse or sickness in a child or a takeover of an organization. It describes the nature of the event, how persons felt about it, what they were doing at the time, and what they are doing now—all of this often in considerable detail. In-depth journalism is a good example of description. Most descriptive studies are presented as a series of themes that emerged from data with no indication of how those themes are related to each other or any ability to predict how other persons might act under similar circumstances. Theory, on the other hand, explains why events, happened and how persons give meaning to those events then based on that meaning and the resources they have to work with and what they think, do, and say—something alone or with others—to respond, live with, change, or shape their worlds to deal with that event. Theory shows process or the adaptations persons make big and small in the actions and interactions they take to align or match their actions and interactions to changes that are occurring in conditions, keeping in mind that desired goal or outcome in mind.

Lack of Confidence in One's Own Analytic Ability

A third reason why some researchers may have difficulty identifying a central category is a lack of confidence in their analytic ability. Students are often concerned about the possibility of imparting meaning to data that is not accurate or making the wrong choice. Making an analytic error is always a possibility. However, researchers have to trust that by the time they are ready to integrate their categories that they have some notion of the major theme of the study even if they are not fully conscious of what that is. After all, they have been immersed in the data for many months and hopefully writing thoughtful memos. All that may be

needed to make the final conceptual leap is encouragement from a colleague or teacher. Simply being able to tell the *analytic story* to another person often helps analysts gain perspective and generate confidence.

Two or More Possibilities

Sometimes analysts can't decide between two or more possible core categories. When this happens, I suggest that researchers reread several of the interviews or observational notes (ONs), trying out each possible choice for fit. Usually after making several comparisons for fit, the researcher finds that one concept does have more explanatory power than the others.

Techniques to Aid Integration

Once researchers have decided upon a core category, it is time to integrate their findings around the core category. This section presents several analytic techniques designed to help them with this task. The techniques are especially useful when analysts are perplexed—that is, sensing that the data are beginning to gel but not quite sure how to explicate those intuitive feelings on paper. There are several techniques that can be used to facilitate the integration process. Among these are the following:

- Writing the descriptive summary memo
- Writing the conceptual summary memo
- Making use of integrative diagrams
- Reviewing and sorting through memos
- Thinking in terms of metaphors or similes
- Talking with a professor or colleague

Writing the Descriptive Summary Memo

By the time researchers begin to think about integration, they have been immersed in the data for some time. They usually have a gut feeling of what the research is all about even though they may have difficulty articulating what that is. One way to move beyond this impasse is to sit down and write, in a few descriptive sentences, the story line of the data. When I say *story,* I mean theme. At this point, there is no need for formality or thinking in terms of concepts. It is one time when description is the best approach. It may take two, three, or even more starts before researchers are able to synthesize in a few descriptive sentences what the research is all about.

After two or three times of writing the research summary memo without success, researchers can reread several interviews or observations. In doing so, they can ask, "In a general sense, what seems to be going on here? What theme keeps striking me over and over when I read these interviews or observations or watch the videos? What notion comes through in the data even though it may not be said directly?" This technique works only if researchers read the interviews or observations for the general sense and not focus on every detail.

Take the following example of the descriptive summary memo from my study of pregnant women with

chronic conditions:

> *The main story seems to be about the protective actions taken by women with pregnancies complicated by chronic conditions to manage the perceived level of risks to their babies and selves present at any point in their pregnancy. The pregnancy/illness was defined to be on-course when illness or pregnancy conditions were under control and they perceived the risks to self and baby to be low to moderate. The pregnancy/illness was defined to be off-course when the pregnancy or medical conditions were perceived not under control and the risks were perceived to be high or of crisis proportions. The desired outcome remained a healthy baby and the women in this study did what they thought was necessary to control the pregnancy and illness and minimize the risks in order to reach that desired outcome even if it meant going against medical advice at times. Women were not passive participants in this process. They not only were responsible for monitoring the pregnancy through such things as baby movements but also for carrying out the medical regimen at home. They also took very active roles in management decisions and were reluctant to go along with tests or medical treatment that they believed would be more harmful than helpful to their babies. They carefully weighed the risks and made judgments about the right thing to do.*

(For another example of a descriptive story memo, see Chapter 16.)

Writing the Conceptual Summary Memo

Once analysts have a sense of the main theme running through the research identified as the core category, they are ready to write the conceptual summary memo. When I say *summary memo,* I mean a synopsis of the research findings. However, in this memo, the main ideas are expressed using the categories derived during the research including statements of the relationships between the categories to each other and to the core category. It is still an abstract story without all of the detail included but contains sufficient information to serve as a blueprint for writing the dissertation, paper, or monograph. Following up on my pregnancy study, here is an example of the summary memo I put together.

MEMO

The Substantive Theory of Protective Governing

"Protective Governing" has been identified as the core category of this study (Corbin, 1993). The concept denotes the actions and interactions taken by pregnant women (in conjunction with the health care team) to maximize the chances of having a healthy baby and self at the end of a pregnancy complicated by one or more chronic conditions.

Protective governing consists of three main subprocesses: "assessing the risks by interpreting the cues," "balancing the options for management," and "taking action to control the risks."

Assessing is defined as the process of identifying and interpreting the cues leading to a definition of the potential risks. The definition of the risk level was *perceptual* rather than *actual.* The data that women used to assess the risks were derived from physical body cues, interactional cues, objective cues, and temporal cues.

Physical body cues pertain to signs such as the status of the illness and the number and types of symptoms and the status of the pregnancy including presence or absence of cues such as bleeding, contractions, edema, unaccounted for weight gain and so on. Interactional cues pertain to the verbal remarks and nonverbal signs from the woman's partner, family, friends, and most of all the health care

team. Objective cues refer to the results of tests that were done either to check on the status of the illness, pregnancy, or the baby such as amniocentesis and ultrasound. Temporal cues had to do with the stage of the pregnancy and the potential viability of the fetus should it be born prematurely. With some illness conditions, the greatest time of risk was early in the pregnancy, and with some conditions, the risks came later in the pregnancy like with diabetes when the greatest risk came about the time and after the 36th week.

Balancing denotes the process of giving consideration to all the potential medical and obstetrical actions that could be taken to keep the illness and pregnancy stable or to bring the illness or pregnancy back into stability when the medical condition worsened or pregnancy complications developed. Consideration of other children and home responsibilities also were part of the balancing.

"Taking action to control the risks" refers to the "joint actions" taken by the women and the health care team in order to achieve a healthy outcome. The major actions–interactions taken by the women and the health professionals were aimed at containing and reducing the risks in order to maximize a woman's chances of having a healthy baby and self. The "risks" had the following properties: They tended to vary from high to low and could change dramatically over the course of the pregnancy based on certain conditions. Among the conditions were the severity of the illness and how stable it remained over the course of the pregnancy, possible complications from the use of medical and obstetrical treatments and tests, the presence or absence of obstetrical complications, and proximity to the time of delivery. It is important to point out there that though there were actual known risks it wasn't "actual" risks that were at issue. It was a woman's and the health care team's *perception* of the risk level that influenced the actions that they took. Because it was perception of risks and not actual risks that was at issue, an interesting feature of the research was that the women and health professionals sometimes had different perceptions of what the risks level was. And since women acted on the basis of their assessment of the risk level, which might or not be consistent with the assessment of their physicians, they sometimes acted contrary to medical or obstetrical advice. It was only during crisis situations that women tended to put aside any reservations they had regarding how the situation should be handled and completely delegate management of the situation to their physicians.

The *definition* of the risk level was identified as the context in which protective governing, or the process of managing, took place. Protective governing was identified as a dynamic and evolving process because perceptions of the risk level could change dramatically even over the course of a day and as a result call for very rapid changes in controlling action. Four different contexts were identified: the *on-course lower risk context, the on-course higher risk context, the off-course noncritical context,* and the *off-course critical context.*

On-Course Lower Risk Context

Assessing cues: risks not much higher than a normal pregnancy though pregnancy bears watching

The problem: Keeping the pregnancy on course and the risks low

Controlling adjunctive control: Health care team "overseeing the well being of the mother and fetus" and mother "investing in a healthy baby and self"

Balancing: “Making preparations for baby” and “making an emotional investment” (telling everyone, calling baby by name, etc.)

When perceptions between women and health care team differed: Engaging in “tactics and countertactics” to convince the other such as teaching, negotiating, giving threats about possible outcomes

Losing a measure of control over the outcome by not stabilizing the illness but in the end regaining control

The payoff: A healthy baby

On-Course Higher Risk Context

Assessing cues: Little higher risk but still on course because mother and baby are doing well

Controlling cooperative control: Health care team “looking out for the woman and fetus” and “mother protecting the fetus from harm”

Balancing: When there are fewer options, “dealing with uncertainty of outcome,” a “sense of fear,” and “holding off preparations for baby”

Achieving better control of the illness and pregnancy and reducing the risk level. However, the potential for the illness worsening or pregnancy problems is always present.

The outcome: I’m glad we did it.

Off-Course Noncritical Context

Assessing the cues: Risks defined as having risen higher because the pregnancy or illness has moved off course so that is there is an increase in illness or pregnancy symptoms such as the fetus not moving as frequently as it should or not growing in utero

The problem: “Bringing the pregnancy and/or illness back under control”

Controlling: “Entrusted control,” the health care team “increasing their efforts” to control the illness or pregnancy (more tests, hospitalization), and women “taking the necessary measures” such as agreeing to hospitalization or bed rest at home

Balancing: “Making trade-offs,” “retraining efforts at home or work,” “being hospitalized temporarily,” “holding off on preparations for baby,” “losing trust,” and “retaking control over the management” when options regarding management differed

Lowering the risks by “regaining some measure of control” over the illness and pregnancy

Outcome: A healthy baby—a fantastic relief

Off-Course Critical Context

Assessment: Cues indicate level of risks are very high. Immediate intervention is required to save mother and baby such as fetal heart tones diminish or absent, toxemia in mother.

Problem: "Reduce the risk" factors by restabilizing the illness and pregnancy.

Control: "Relinquished control," health care team "taking over full control," "women giving over control"

Balancing: "Having no choice" and "feeling helpless"

Containing the risks by saving mother or losing baby (one baby died, one had problems)

Outcome: It would not have been worth taking the risk if the baby had not been healthy.

(For another example of a conceptual story memo, see Chapter 16.)

Making Use of Integrative Diagrams

Diagrams are useful for sorting out the relationships between categories and can serve as an outline for writing the conceptual story. Diagrams are helpful because they force analysts to work with data at the category level rather than focus on the details or all of the properties and dimensions pertinent to each category. Diagramming also demands that analysts think very carefully about the logic of relationships, because if relationships are not clear, then diagrams come across as muddled or confused. A diagram need not contain every concept derived in the research. It should focus on categories. Diagrams should flow, the logic apparent without a lot of explanation. Also, integrative diagrams should not be too complicated. Diagrams with too many words, lines, and arrows make it difficult for the viewer to follow. The details should be left to the writing. See Diagram 10.1.

Reviewing and Sorting Through Memos

Memos are the storehouses of ideas generated throughout analysis. (See Chapter 6 for more details about memos.) Generally, memos begin as simple documents. They pertain to one concept and are exploratory, consisting more of questions than answers. As the research progresses, memos generally become longer and are likely to explore relationships between two or more concepts. This means that later memos often contain the clues to integration—especially summary memos. Sometimes the main concept emerges early in the research; it is just that the researcher doesn't recognize its significance until much later.

Memos are usually sorted by categories. However, sorting can become more and more difficult as memos begin to link two or more concepts. When there are many linkages between concepts, the retrieval function of computer-assisted analysis programs is most useful. They allow researchers to sort and resort concepts until a logical theoretical structure is constructed. It is our experience that students are able to discern patterns and processes, but even with all the memos in front of them, they have difficulty making the last analytic leap to integration. Confronted by many different concepts and categories, they become confused and uncertain. This is to be expected. Rereading memos can be very helpful—especially if researchers listen to the ideas expressed

in memos and look for recurrent themes. Sooner or later the "aha!" experience will come.

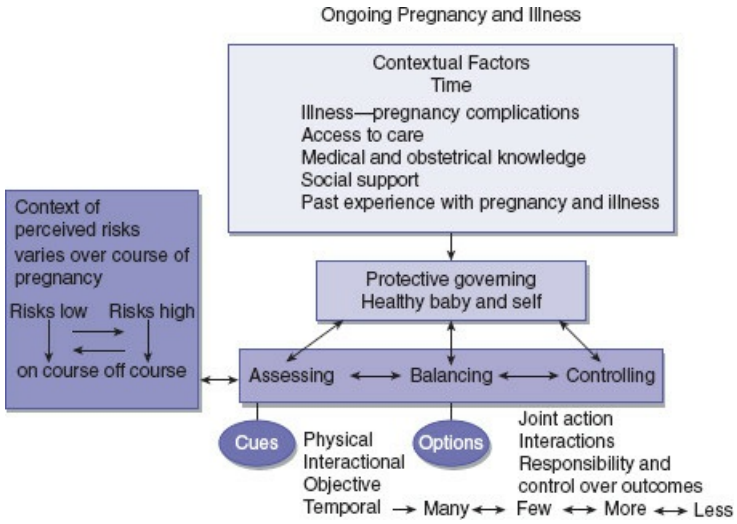


Diagram 10.1 Protective Governing

Thinking in Terms of Metaphors and Similes

If all of what was previously stated fails, researchers can try to think in terms of metaphors and similes. Metaphors and similes can help researchers step outside the research long enough to gain the conceptual distance needed to step out of the detail and see the main story line. Thinking of theory construction as an adventure is an example. Some researchers turn to the literature to look for metaphors or other concepts that might be useful. This is not our usual practice because the concept chosen from the literature may explain some but not all of the research findings, leaving analysts more muddled and confused than they were before. However, examining the literature at this point can help researchers start thinking about how they might place their findings within the larger body of professional knowledge. Our experience has been that the core category or concept can be found in the study, though it may take some effort to bring it forth.

Talking With a Professor or Colleague

If a researcher still has difficulty with integration, it is time to sit down with a teacher, consultant, or colleague. The professor or colleagues can help the researcher gain distance by requesting that the researcher explain the research in a few short sentences. Every time the researcher starts getting into the detail, the professor or colleague can stop the narrative and ask the student to get back to the basic story in the data. Asking the researcher to do a diagram in front of the teacher or colleague is helpful. When consulting with students about integration, Anselm Strauss always requested that they take their main categories and start diagramming them while at the same time explaining to him how they thought those categories were related. He would encourage students to arrange and rearrange the categories until one stood above the rest.

Steps Necessary to Finalize the Theory

Once a researcher has outlined the overarching theoretical scheme, it is time to finalize the theory. Finalizing

the theory consists of the following:

- Reviewing the scheme for internal consistency and logic
- Filling in poorly developed categories
- Trimming the theory
- Validating the theory
- Dealing with outlying cases
- Checking for variation

Reviewing the Scheme for Internal Consistency and Logic

A theoretical scheme should flow in a logical manner and should not have inconsistencies. If the analytic story, memos, and diagrams are clear, consistency and logic should follow. Sometimes during the final writing a researcher senses that "something" is not quite right. One or more concepts or the final ideas still need work. When this happens, the researcher should go back and review the memos and once more make use of diagrams. But unless the analyst knows what he or she is looking for, or what is missing, diagramming will not help.

A place to begin is with the central category itself. A central category, like any category, must be defined in terms of its properties and dimensions. The definition should come out of the data. Even if the central category was not named in earlier memos, when the analyst reviews the memos, he or she should find references in the data to the idea. Sometimes the analyst is almost there but without realizing he or she has taken the wrong stance toward the data. That is, it is easy to look at the data from the perspective of the analyst and assume that respondents are coming from the same perspective. For example, when I was writing my dissertation, a research project that looked at management by women of pregnancies complicated by chronic illness, something seemed wrong with the logic. The women did things such as leave the hospital against medical advice, stating that they felt that the treatment they were being given in the hospital was bad for their babies. This disturbed me until it finally dawned on me that even though I thought I was being impartial, in reality I was assigning risk levels to the women based on my (a health professional) definition of the risks and not looking at it from the women's perspectives. Women viewed the risks quite differently and acted more on the basis of their definitions of the risks that in turn was the basis for their actions, such as leaving the hospital when they thought the medications being used to control the illness might harm their baby. In other words, it is easy to be blinded by a researcher's own perspective without even being aware of it. Often, it is not until a researcher goes back to the data in order to check the final analytic scheme that professional bias comes to light. With that realization, a researcher can return to the data with greater sensitivity and insight and redo the analytic scheme. When I went back and looked at risks from the women's perspectives, it explained why the women did what they did, and I was able to redo the conceptual story so that it now fit with the data.

The next step is to check the theory for internal consistency and logic by verifying development and saturation of each category. Each category should be developed in terms of its properties and dimensions, and considerable variation should be built into it. To check for internal consistency and logic, researchers can ask

questions such as these: Are categories well differentiated? Are they clearly defined in terms of their properties? Are there dimensional ranges? If categories are not well differentiated or if some categories are thin with little detail, then analysts should go back to memos or go back to the data and do further analysis.

Filling in Poorly Developed Categories

In theory building, analysts are aiming for density as well as abstraction. By *density*, I mean that all (within reason) the salient properties and dimensions of a category have been identified and variation within those properties is built into the category. Density and variation are what give a category precision and increase its explanatory power. Poorly developed categories are evident when making diagrams and sorting memos.

Filling in can be done through review of either memos or raw data, looking for data that might have been overlooked. Or an analyst can go back into the field and selectively gather additional data about that category through theoretical sampling (see Chapter 7). Filling in often continues into the final writing phase. Analysts always find gaps when they begin to write. The problem is deciding when to let go of the research. Not every detail can be well developed or spelled out. In the research example of Vietnam War combatants that follows in Chapters 12 through 16, not much was done with the concept of "homecoming." Though I realized that this was an important concept, because of time constraints, I was not able to gather the data necessary to elaborate on this concept.

The ultimate criterion for determining whether or not a theory is complete is *theoretical saturation* of categories. This term is perhaps the most widely misunderstood and incorrectly used concept in grounded theory and other qualitative research. It is often used as an excuse to legitimate discontinuing data gathering after five to ten interviews. But theoretical saturation is not that simple. It is not determined by how many interviews or observations are done. It means that each category is well defined and developed in terms of its properties and dimensions and includes sufficient variation to show the range to which the categories apply. If at the end there are categories lacking in defining details, it is up to the researcher to fill in gaps.

Trimming the Theory

Sometimes the problem is not poorly developed categories but concepts that don't seem to fit or add anything to the overall theory. These are usually extraneous concepts—nice ideas—but ones that were never fully developed most probably because they did not appear much in data or seemed to trail off into nowhere. My advice is to drop them for this study—especially if the researcher wants to graduate within a reasonable amount of time. If the concepts are interesting, the analyst can pursue them at a later date, but there is no reason to clutter a theory with concepts that lead nowhere or contribute little to its understanding.

Validating the Theory

When I speak of validating, I am not talking about testing in the quantitative sense of the word (more will be said about this topic in Chapter 18). What I mean is the following: A theory is constructed from data, yes, but by the time of integration, it represents an abstract rendition of that raw data. Therefore, it is important to determine how well that abstraction fits with the raw data and to also determine if anything important was

omitted from the theoretical scheme. There are several ways of validating the scheme. One way is to go back and compare the scheme against the raw data, doing a kind of high-level comparative analysis. The theoretical scheme should be able to explain most of the cases. Another way to validate is to explain the findings to respondents and request that they comment upon how well it seems to fit their understanding of the problem under investigation or if there is anything important that was left out. Naturally, a theory is general. It doesn't fit the details of every participant because the theory is a reduction of data and built upon a compilation of cases, but participants should be able to recognize themselves in the larger sense of each category even if the details are different.

Dealing With Outlying Cases

It is not unusual to find outlying cases—those that fall at either extreme in the dimensional range of a concept or that seem quite contrary to what is going on. For the most part, these outliers represent variations of the theory or present alternative explanations and should be accounted for in the theory.

Checking for Variation

One of the problems with some theoretical schemes is that they fail to account for variation. They present process in a developmental fashion, implying that every case moves from A to B to C at the same pace and with no reference to the conditions that are operating to move the case upward and forward or that might hinder or stop movement permanently or for a time. This is problematic because it makes the theory appear artificial, like every person or organization goes through identical steps with identical timing and identical conditions. I know that life does not fit into neat little boxes. There are always variations within a process—some persons move slower, some faster, some drop out, and some follow a different path altogether. This means that even within patterns and categories there is variability with different people, organizations, and groups falling at different dimensional points along some properties. Researchers should go through their theory and make certain that considerable variation has been accounted for.

Summary of Key Points

For researchers who are interested in theory construction, this chapter presents some strategies to facilitate integration. It was explained that integration occurs around a core category. The core category is a broad and abstract concept that describes in a few words what the researcher considers the main theme or finding of the study. Once a commitment is made to a central idea, the other categories are related to it through explanatory statements of relationships. Though persons think of integration as something that occurs at the end of analysis, in reality it begins early in the analysis and grows slowly over the course of the research. However, the final act or conscious act of integration usually occurs after all the categories are saturated and the researcher is ready to end the research process. But even when it comes time to write the theory, there may still be the need to refine and tighten some of the categories or validate some of the relationships between categories. Several techniques can be used to facilitate the integration process. These include telling the descriptive synopsis, writing a descriptive and conceptual summary memo, doing a conceptual diagram, and sorting and reviewing

memos.

Once the theoretical scheme is outlined, the analyst is ready to finalize the theory by trimming off excess and filling in poorly developed categories. Poorly developed categories are saturated through further theoretical sampling (see Chapter 7). Finally, a theory is validated by comparing it to raw data or by presenting it to respondents for their reactions. A theory that is grounded in data should be recognizable to participants, and the larger concepts or categories should apply to each case. However, the details or variations seen within categories may not pertain to each participant.

Insider Insights — Researching Creativity Creatively

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My initiation into grounded theory began when I embarked on my PhD research about adolescent students' experiences of creativity. It became evident that creativity is widely viewed as elusive and difficult to explain, even amongst creativity researchers: "Of all the things that is [*sic*] hard to understand . . . creativity is certainly one of the hardest, and most mysterious" (Baer, 2003, p. 37). However, this was not a good reason to eschew trying. In fact, not wanting to shy away from a challenge and driven by a desire to make sense of the world and contribute in some way, this type of observation only served to motivate me. I was curious about adolescents' creative processes and products, as well as how their personal dispositions and environments influenced their creativity. The lure of grounded theory was engaging with theory construction in a field where there was little empirical knowledge about the experiences of creativity from the perspectives of the creators themselves (in this case, adolescent high school students). I identified with Strauss' fascination with making sense of the complexity of social phenomena and with the goal of generating theory to contribute to empirical research and professional practice. The more research I did, the greater my depth of realization of the complexity of creativity. Meanwhile, I grappled with the challenge of how I could construct a substantive grounded theory that explained the complexity of adolescents' creative experiences without overcomplicating nor oversimplifying the phenomenon. An example of my experience of working through this was in the development of my core category.

From early in my research, a recurring theme or concept was that creativity was about "difference": "being different," "thinking differently," or "doing something differently." This alone, however, was too simplistic and did not fully convey the complexity of the process. Throughout the concurrent data collection and analysis process, I was able to probe this further through focus groups, individual interviews, an online discussion

forum, and emails with twenty high school students creative in domains as diverse as mathematics, science, technology, fiction and non-fiction writing, music, theatre, visual and multimedia art, film, and everyday life. The students, at times, took on a coresearcher role with me, by providing feedback on whether or not my emerging findings reflected their experiences, which assisted with theory development and saturation. I wrote numerous and varied memos, drew copious diagrams to help me make sense of my data, and utilized grounded theory analytical strategies such as the Paradigm to look at my data through alternative lenses. I saw the value of such strategies in pushing me to raise my analysis from raw data and individuals to abstract concepts, categories, and theory. Data collection and analysis took place over approximately two years. Therefore, I required a method of keeping track of my cumulative and evolving thinking, which became increasingly complex. Memos and diagrams provided these records.

Memos were a form of analysis in of themselves, because analysis and insight occurred while I was writing them. I used the memos as an ongoing dialogue with myself. Early memos were rudimentary and reflected my uncertainty. I was relieved to learn that this is natural in the initial stages of trying to make sense of data. These memos ranged in scope: from posing questions for further data collection (as part of theoretical sampling) to proposing potential "answers" or findings; from pondering possible concepts, categories or relationships to challenging the credibility or resonance of my findings; from comparing to contrasting; from conjecture to verification; and various other forms of data exploration and theory development. Most importantly they helped me develop my core category as I progressed from description of what adolescents being creative think and do and who they are, to abstraction that explained the complexity and diversity of experiences of adolescents perceiving and pursuing opportunities to be novel and defy the norm (all the while trying to contribute something new while not being too simple or complex!).

Diagrams were used to create visual representations depicting relationships among data. Initially, the Paradigm grounded theory tool provided an introductory structure for capturing "process," which is emphasized in grounded theory studies. Early diagrams, like early memos, were more simple and descriptive, whereas later diagrams became increasingly complex, integrative, and theoretical. I returned to diagrams regularly, and each one went through many iterations. They were useful for clarifying my thoughts, revealing gaps in my understandings, as well as communicating my findings to other people. Reflecting on, explaining, and being questioned on my diagram as to "What's it all about" was key in helping me develop my core category. As my thoughts began to crystallize, diagrams provided a focus for checking if each concept or category was linked to the core category and if these connections better explicated my theory.

Grounded theory encouraged me to use my "creativity and imagination, often stimulating new insights." This is not to say it allowed me to create results I wanted or simply make things up, but it valued the constructions of knowledge I was making that were grounded in the data, rather than compelling me to apply an existing framework or theory to structure my findings. Therefore, an unforeseen but welcome aspect of my study was the extent to which it challenged my own creativity to construct an original theory of adolescent creativity; I needed to creatively research creativity. I learned much about creativity through my own experiences as a researcher, as well as those of my participants. Reflexivity increased my awareness of the interplay between the data and myself, and helped to ensure I was not forcing my ideas on the data. An advantage of this reflexivity was that my creative experiences sensitized me to potentially important issues

This process of abstraction led to the development of my core category, which was *Perceiving and Pursuing Novelty: Not the Norm.*

Activities for Thinking, Writing, and Discussing as a Group

Find a grounded theory research article in a journal and bring it to class. As a class, examine the article to determine the following:

1. Is the research presented indeed theory or is it description? Give the reasons for your assessment.
2. If you determine the research is theory, what is the organizing concept?
3. What are the major categories, and how are they related to the organizing concept?
4. Is the theory dense with well-developed properties that show variation?

Suggested Reading

Lassig, C. J. (2012). *Perceiving and pursuing novelty: A grounded theory of adolescent creativity* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia. Retrieved from http://eprints.qut.edu.au/50661/

Chapter 11
The Use of Computer Programs in Qualitative Data Analysis

Question: "I've heard that there are some very good computer programs available that can help with analysis. Do you know anything about these and how they are used?"

Answer: In 1962, a man named Douglas C. Engelbart was asked to write a summary report for the Air Force Office of Scientific Research, Stanford Research Institute in Menlo Park, California. Recently, while surfing the web, I came upon a copy of that report. Considering the year that the report was written, I found it to be quite fascinating because the words were so prophetic. Consider the following paragraph taken from that report:

> *You can integrate your new ideas more easily, and thus harness your creativity more continuously, if you can quickly and flexibly change your working record. If it is easier to update any part of your working record to accommodate new developments in thought or circumstance, you will find it easier to incorporate more complex procedures in your way of doing things. This will probably allow you to accommodate the extra burden associated with, for instance, keeping and using special files whose contents are both contributed to and utilized by any current work in a flexible manner—which in turn enables you to devise and use even more complex procedures to better harness your talents in your particular working situation. (Engelbart, 1962, p. 5)*

What Engelbart (1962) was getting at in his report was the ability of the computer to augment the human mind by doing a lot of the detailed and tedious work involved in many endeavors, thus freeing up the user to be creative and thoughtful. And this really is what computer programs do for qualitative analysis. They make many of the chores—like recording, sifting, and sorting through data—a lot easier, leaving the researcher freer to do the thinking necessary to do "quality" analysis. However, it's not that using a computer program necessarily leads to quality qualitative analysis. Most of the classic qualitative studies that we are all so familiar with in our respective fields were not done using computer programs. Anselm Strauss played around with various computer programs—especially ATLAS.ti and NVivo (called NUD*IST in his day)—because he found them fascinating. However, when it came down to doing the actual research, he used his computer to write and maybe sort memos but never actually as part of the analysis. I do believe that if Anselm were coming of age today, things would be different. He would take advantage of what computer programs had to offer for data analysis and use them to augment his already prolific and creative mind.

Notice that Engelbart (1962) did not say that computers do the thinking for analysts or users of a program. Computers become more sophisticated every day, but their so-called "brains" remain inferior to the human one at least to this point. Even the most sophisticated software programs for qualitative analysis do only what the programmers program them to do and in turn what their users tell them to do. But what they can do is plenty. Before I get into what computer software programs can do for qualitative researchers, let me provide a word of caution. Novice researchers tend to be very tentative in their approach to analysis. They don't trust themselves or the research process and hold on to methodological procedures or computer software programs

as lifelines. What researchers have to remember is that it's not computer programs that make great discoveries or generate creative findings. It's researchers who make use of the programs to enhance their own capabilities to be creative and make discoveries.

Today the use of computer programs is standard in the field of qualitative data analysis (QDA). Why? Because the present generation has grown up with computers and sees their potential. Computers are extensions of their selves. I can only dream about the future possibilities of future computer software programs for data analysis. But for right now, let me review for you some of how they can be used.

From my perspective, some of the most important contributions of software programs to QDA are as follows:

- Researchers can work with many different types of data in written, audio, and video forms.
- Programs contribute to creativity in the sense that researchers are able to try out different views of data, looking at relationships first "this way" and then "that way" without having to spend a lot of time retrieving and organizing data. The computer does the retrieval and layout work while the researcher does the mind work.
- With the use of a computer program, the researcher can always retrace his or her analytic steps, making the research process transparent to self and others and leaving the ability to construct an audit trail at the researcher's fingertips (Guba & Lincoln, 1998).
- Then, too, the researcher doesn't have to guess at what he or she was thinking or wrote in memos months ago. These quickly can be retrieved from the data bank, making the analysis more consistent and the findings more reliable.
- The researcher doesn't have to ask, "Did I already use this code, and how?" All the researcher has to do is look to the list of codes and turn back to the raw data and any memos written on the subject.
- Want to do a diagram? It's easy; just turn to the graphic part of the program.
- Computers certainly increase "methodological awareness" (Seale, 2002, p. 108) because the researcher has an indisputable record of his or her decisions. The image in front of the researcher is like a mirror indicating flaws in the logic, undeveloped categories, and insufficient conceptualization.
- With the data right out there, researchers can't pretend to have achieved *saturation* or *conceptual density* when they have not.
- One of the greatest values of computer programs comes at the time of writing the research. It is so easy to access concepts, return to the raw data to verify, find examples and quotes, retrieve memos, do diagrams, correct mistakes, find gaps in logic, and most of all rewrite.

Despite the benefits, I worry that for some persons using computer programs for analysis will stifle creativity, mechanize the analytic process, or worse do what Agar (1991) and Fielding and Lee (1998) feared, which is leading users down a path in which they succumb to "technological determinism" or letting the computer program rather than the analyst structure the analysis. Some programs are more sophisticated than others. Some are more difficult to use than others. My advice is as follows.

- Try out different programs. Many can be downloaded over the Internet for limited use.
- Find the program that works best for you. But remember that you don't want to be so concerned about learning and using a new software program that the research becomes secondary or lost somewhere in the process.
- The challenge should be doing the research, not spending time learning how to use a program.
- What you don't want is for the computer program to direct the research. By that, I mean it's easy to follow the boxes or windows outlined by the program, thus letting the program guide the research process rather than the researcher using the program as an extension of self to store, retrieve, organize, and reorganize ideas about the data.
- Analysis is about thinking, and thinking is the one thing the computer can't do yet.

Next I've included an excellent summary of features and considerations (see Table 11.1) in selecting QDAs by Guest, MacQueen, and Namey (2012) reproduced from their textbook *Applied Thematic Analysis* (pp. 226–231).

Summary of Key Points

Since this chapter is so short and there are several summaries within it, there is no point in repeating the material here—just as I began this chapter differently with a question rather than an introduction and I end this chapter with a conclusion rather than a summary. Dey (1993) stated, "Computers can help us confront data more effectively, by making it easy to analyze data in different ways" (p. 227). Despite the value and many uses of computer-assisted analysis, I still worry about the production of sterile findings and all the other possible pitfalls of using computer programs for qualitative analysis. Just the very name given to these programs—computer-assisted analysis—implies to some degree that the programs will lead the researcher through the analytic process rather than the practical needs of the analysis dictating the use of the programs. However, I realize that I came to the use of computers relatively late in life. Young researchers today no doubt have the technical ability to use computer programs creatively and in a manner that will enhance the quality and credibility of their research. And who knows what the future of computer programs will hold. Perhaps someday they will do the thinking for us.

Table 11.1 Features and Considerations in Selecting QDAS

Logistics		
Feature	Questions to Consider	How the Software Options Vary
Price	How much of your budget are you able to allocate to QDAS? Will this be a one-time use of QDAS or a longer-term investment? Does your organization or institution have a site license or support a particular software package?	The cost of QDAS ranges from free shareware, to student pricing and educational site discounts, to full commercial price. $0 to >$2,000.
Platform/ operating system	Is the software compatible with your computer and operating system? If you are working in teams, do all team members have access to appropriate computers?	Most QDAS programs are PC-based and run on MS Windows; several of these can be used on a Mac by running Parallels, BootCamp, or similar program.
Speed and stability	How much data (overall file size) will you have? How many (complex) searches will you want to perform of the complete data set? What are your computer's memory and processor specifications?	In general, QDAS can handle large volumes of data, but the larger your file size and the more complex the task, the slower the programs tend to run. (See Koenig for comparison of previous versions of QDAS.)
Languages supported	Will you need or prefer to have the software interface in a language other than English?	QDAS programs generally allow you to work with data in any language, though the software interface typically remains in English. Some programs now offer Spanish, French, Portuguese, Japanese, Simplified Chinese, and German interfaces in addition to English.
Customer support	Does your organization or institution support the software? What is your preferred method of accessing formal software support?	Customer support services range from extremely accessible and helpful to difficult to access and understand. Institutions sometimes purchase site licenses and/or have an on-site expert in a particular QDAS program.
File location	*Data security issues* If you store files locally, is your computer encrypted? If storing on a network, is access limited? (And if so, can you access the network remotely?) If you use a QDAS program's Web-based storage system, what are the security measures in place? What level/frequency of internet connection is required?	*QDAS file location* Some programs require specific data storage locations, while others are more flexible. The main options are to store data locally, on a shared network, or on the Web. Each has implications for data security and ease of file sharing.
	File-sharing issues Are you going to be working alone or in a team? Will you need to share multiple versions of an analysis project among colleagues?	*Data file location* Many programs make a copy of the original data, which are then incorporated into the "project" as internal data; some require that data remain stored according to a specific file path that the program accesses as external data. The former is more conducive to file sharing than the latter.
User interface	Do you prefer to see several windows at once? How much are you willing to consult the manual? Do you prefer hotkeys to mouse clicks? Have you worked with a QDAS previously? (And if so, are there things about that program that you liked or disliked?)	Most QDAS programs are Windows-based in some regard, but the degree to which they are and the version of Windows they mimic are highly variable. Some are more intuitive than others, some provide multiple options for performing the same task, and some allow a degree of customization of the main fields and toolbars.
Team-Based Functions		
Feature	What to Consider	How It Varies
Team access	How would you like to structure and distribute the team coding and analysis tasks?	Most QDAS programs allow analysts to work in separate copies of the same QDAS project and then merge versions; a few allow simultaneous work on the same project, with all changes saved automatically.
Merge capabilities	Will you require the capability to merge either different projects or different versions of the same project? Would you prefer to work simultaneously on the same project and have the program handle all merging?	Most QDAS packages provide some kind of merge feature; those that offer simultaneous access and instant merging may be less equipped to merge *different* projects together.
Intercoder agreement	Will you want the software to facilitate intercoder agreement assessments? How would you like to measure intercoder agreement?	The intercoder agreement functions in QDAS packages vary on method of assessing agreement: some measure percent agreement per code, some provide kappa scores per code, and some allow export of data to separate programs for calculation of agreement.

Table 11.1 (Continued)

Research log or journal	If sharing and merging files, how will you maintain version control? How will you document who has done what in the project? What kind of analysis activities would you be most interested in logging? How might that work in a particular software system?	A few QDAS programs contain a command log or archive function to keep track of operations and changes. It is usually possible to come up with a work-around to maintain a study log within other QDAS (through a combination of save techniques and memos or notes). In some cases, it is more effective to simply keep a separate activity log.
Data Types		
Feature	What to Consider	How It Varies
Document types	What types of document files will you be working with?	A few QDAS programs restrict the types of document files you can import into the software, but most support the following: .txt, .rtf, .doc, .docx, .pdf.
Multimedia files	What types of multimedia files will you be working with? Do you want to be able to transcribe audio within the program? Do you want to be able to parse video? Is it important to you that audio/video is synced with text?	Programs vary; where multimedia files are supported, the following types are likely accepted: .mp3, .wma, .wav, .mpg, . mpeg, .mpe, .mp4, .avi, .wmv, .qt, .bmp, .gif, .jpeg, .tiff.
Quantitative data	Will you be incorporating quantitative data sets in your analyses?	Programs vary; where multimedia files are supported, the following types may be accepted: .xls, .xlsx, .txt, .mdb.
Qualitative data sets	Will you need to incorporate previously coded or analyzed qualitative data into your current analyses?	Some QDAS packages make it easy to import analysis projects from other software programs; with others it is possible but tricky; with some it is not possible.
Geospatial data	Would you like to link your data to spatial referents?	Several QDAS programs allow linkages to Google Earth maps; at least one imports Google Earth screen shots as visual data (though you could do this manually as well).
Codebook	Is there a particular way you like to organize your codebook? Do you prefer alphabetical to hierarchical arrangement of codes? Would you like to have code definitions linked to the codes or accessible from the codebook? Would you like the QDAS to scan your data and suggest codes? Would you like to be able to add codes to the codebook from within the coding function? Would you like to be able to import or export a codebook from/to another program?	QDAS programs vary on all of the issues identified at left. In terms of structure, most will allow hierarchical and/or alphabetical ordering of codes in the code list view; some will allow further customization. Some have an actual separate "codebook" with predefined fields, while many simply add codes to the list and allow you to define their properties. Importing/exporting functions for codebooks are of varying utility, when available.

Data Tagging and Coding Functions		
Feature	What to Consider	How It Varies
Code application	What's your preferred mode of coding? Will you do all coding on screen or some on paper to be entered later? Do you want to be able to automatically code structured text by speaker or question?	QDAS coding features include drag-and-drop coding, autocoding, quick code (by line number), menu-based code selection, right-click coding, and similar uncoding techniques. Most programs offer multiple choices for code application.
Code application display	Do you want visual confirmation each time you add a code to data? Would you like to see all codes applied to a data segment? Would you like to turn on/off coding displays? Would you like to be able to assign specific colors to specific codes?	All QDAS allows you to see what codes have been applied to a segment of data; in most cases display of this information is the default, but in some you must turn on the display or hover over the segment to see the codes applied.
Memos, comments, annotations	How would you like to make notes or comment on your thoughts as you move through coding and analysis? Would you like to append notes to specific files, groups of files, or the whole project (or all of these)? Would you like to link notes to other notes or other files? Would you like to see all attached notes when viewing coded data output? Would you like to be able to see all of your notes without data attached?	Almost all QDAS has some feature to facilitate capturing your commentary on the data, whether it is called a memo, comment, or annotation. Some programs include more than one feature, each defined by a specific commentary role.
Demographics	How do you plan to incorporate demographic information into your analysis? Would you like to link demographic characteristics to an entire file? Would you like to group files by defining demographic characteristics?	Given the range of files accepted by most QDAS, it is increasingly easy to link previously collected demographic information to the qualitative data in your project by importing it (in .xls for example). Many programs also allow you to add defining characteristics to a data file within the QDAS. In either case, links between the demographics and data allow for grouping and filtering.

Table 11.1 (Continued)

Data Exploration and Reduction Features		
Feature	What to Consider	How It Varies
Coded text retrieval	How would you like to view coded data (how much header or accompanying information would you like)? Would you like coded data reports to be interactive (where clicking on a particular data segment would take you back to that item)?	All QDAS excels at search and retrieval; the differences between programs consist of ease of use, interactivity, and options for additional information (other codes applied to the same segment, demographic, or category information).
Code searching	What types of search techniques are most useful to you? (e.g., AND, NEAR, XOR, PART OF)	As above, QDAS programs generally excel at code searching as well, but differ on ease of use. Most include Boolean, proximity, and semantic operators that can be combined to define distinct search criteria.
Matrices	What kinds of data would you like to be able to include in a matrix display? Would you prefer numeric or textual output? How important is it to you that cells in the matrix output are active (i.e., can be clicked on to take you to source data)? In what format would you like to export your matrices?	QDAS programs typically provide a range of matrix functions to assist in finding and exploring relationships among data, sources, codes, etc., particularly code frequencies and co-occurrences. Some are directly linked to various data displays. Programs vary on whether/how queries are saved and/or exported.
Word search	Will you want to do word searches? Word counts? Key-word-in-context or regular expression pattern reports? Would you like to search one file or the whole data set? What type of output are you interested in?	Most QDAS offers some word search or word count function; the flexibility of defining the search (within and across files) varies.
Data displays	What kind of data displays will you find helpful? Would you like to construct your own theoretical model within the software? Would you like the software to build charts, cluster analysis dendrograms, or plots based on your sources, coding, or data?	QDAS programs are increasingly expanding ways to visually display your data. Various maps, charts, models, cluster analysis, and multidimensional scaling are available options.

Insider Insights — Grounded Theory and QDA Software: Some Words

By César A. Cisneros Puebla

COMPUTACIÓN CUALITATIVA CONSULTORES

Nuevo sitio web: http://www.computacioncualitativa.com.mx/

Cellular: 5518 037470

Since Dey (1993) to Saldaña (2009) the approaches to coding have been broadly discussed to introduce the novices and students into the art of conceptualizing and theorizing qualitative data. Such books have included ideas about using software. There are [some other] seminal books related to qualitative data analysis that along with software manuals are indispensable for any researcher interested on using computers. Here I will focus on what are basic pros and cons of using qualitative software programs in general. I don't recommend any program in particular. This time I will assume the reader is looking just for an overview.

A glib association has been made for years between grounded theory methodologies and QDA software because of the terminology used by some software. Friese (2012, p. 73) is very clear, on contrary, that such coincidence doesn't mean the same. She has mentioned several times the coincidence (2012, pp. 44 and 63, v.gr.) but she asserted clearly, "Open coding option in ATLAS.ti is unrelated to the process of open coding in grounded theory" (2012, p. 89). What she calls NCT method of analysis is very different to grounded theory because it hasn't any prescription of particular way of coding (2012, p. 93).

Nowadays the discussion seems to be based on what grounded theory methodologies let us do when it is

applied to build useful knowledge with assistance or without assistance of computer programs. Friese (2014, p. 19) is concerned about the category names in the code tree to conclude about the uselessness of some screenshots used for Corbin and Strauss (2008) when showing how use MAXQDA in the third edition of *Basics*. Rather than a discussion of how to conduct "a good computer-assisted analysis" it seems like the competition between commercial qualitative software programs is the central focus.

Lewins and Silver (2007) and Silver and Lewins (2014) are useful resources to read about seven different programs (first edition includes Qualrus and second edition doesn't because Dedoose replaced it). It is important to compare such programs in terms of features to planning and managing the project, writing analytical memos, reading and commenting on data, searching for words or phrases, developing a coding schema, coding, retrieving coded segments, recoding, organizing data, hyperlinking data, testing ideas, mapping and generating reports, or diagramming findings.

Grounded theory methodologies are flourishing around the world, and new approaches are emerging. Charmaz (2014), for example, is integrating new voices to reflect on contested versions and revisions. But the questions about not what software application but specific program routine or strategy is most suitable for particular coding based on Strauss and Corbin or Charmaz approaches are still around as Woolf (2014) is striving to show. From my perspective it is important to be aware of the affordances and constraints of each computer program as Paulus, Lester, and Dempster (2013) have recently proposed instead of forcing the discussion on what software strategy is closest to the methodology.

Working with textual data is no longer the only way to apply grounded theory methodologies. We can work now with images and audiovisual data and even with geographical coordinates. For this reason it is recommended to make decisions about software programs based on our research questions as well as on the basic social processes we are going to analyze.

Depending on our computer skills and our research interests, any qualitative software program is available to assist us in creating theories and models. How software tools give access to different kinds of memos, how it is giving us a chance to rename or resort codebook, what tools are designed to hyperlink resources out of the project, and so on and so forth are some of the questions to be taken into account. The usefulness of any software program depends on the researcher's creativity and sensitivity to the data. Our complex digital world is bringing us the challenge to analyze diverse kinds of data, and grounded theory methodologies can't be tied only to particular software.

Qualitative Software Websites

1. Commercial software programs:

   ATLAS.ti: http://www.atlasti.com/index.html

   HyperRESEARCH: http://www.researchware.com/

   MAXQDA: http://www.maxqda.com/

   NVivo: http://www.qsrinternational.com/

QDA Miner: http://provalisresearch.com/

Qualrus: http://www.qualrus.com/

Transana: http://www.transana.org/

2. Open source software programs:

   Open Code: http://www.phmed.umu.se/english/divisions/epidemiology/research/open-code/ Open Code was originally developed by Umea University in Sweden to follow the first steps of the grounded theory methodology.

3. Web-based software:

   Dedoose: http://www.dedoose.com/

Useful resources

CAQDAS Networking Project: http://www.surrey.ac.uk/sociology/research/researchcentres/caqdas/

ATLAS.ti blog: http://atlastiblog.wordpress.com/resources/

The Qualitative Report: http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/web.html

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Lewins, A., & Silver, C. (2007). *Using software in qualitative research: A step-by-step guide.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

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Activities for Thinking, Writing, and Discussing as a Group

1. Since students often have some experience or exposure to different types of software for QDA, it would be very helpful in class to share among the group their experiences with that software and how they've used it or plan to use it as well as to discuss the pros and cons they've discovered through its use.
2. Try out some of the free-trial programs available for data analysis, and report back which ones work best for you.

Part 2: Research Demonstration Project

This second part of the book is not meant to be read separately from the first part. Rather, I expect students and their professors and even experienced researchers to move back and forth between the more abstract explanations of method provided in Part 1 to Part 2 where there is a demonstration of how the method is applied to data. For example, when reading Chapter 6 on memos, readers might want to examine some of the memos provided in Chapters 12 through 16 to see how they can be used to facilitate and keep track of actual analysis.

Over the years, I have discovered that it is one thing to read about qualitative analysis and quite another to do it. Therefore, the following five chapters are devoted to demonstrating how Dr. Strauss and I actually did and I still do analysis. The idea behind this demonstration project is to show students that analysis is not something to agonize over. It involves a natural way of thinking. It is a fluid and generative process of breaking data apart, trying to understand the intended meaning, denoting concepts to stand for that meaning, and weaving the concepts back together so that the analytic products form an abstract but representative rendition of how persons or organizations experience events, manage transitions, and handle problematic situations. As the reader moves through the next five chapters, he or she will notice how the process of constructing theory occurs from early concept identification to integration. The analysis is presented as a series of memos detailing the thinking process that the researcher went through in order to arrive at her final interpretation of data.

Throughout Part 2, I'll will be working with different types of data, including interviews, memoirs, and historical materials. Each chapter will focus on a different aspect of analysis.

In Chapter 12, the emphasis is on concept identification or open coding. In Chapter 13, the emphasis is on concept elaboration or axial coding. In Chapter 14, the focus is on analyzing data for context. Chapter 15 explains how to bring process into the analysis, and Chapter 16 demonstrates integration. Readers of this text will notice that for teaching purposes I break analysis down to its major elements. I acknowledge that analysis is more complex than these breakdowns imply because persons' thought processes are more complex. As analysts are breaking data down, they are also noting relationships. As they are delineating concepts, they are also identifying properties and dimensions. Throughout the analytic process, they are working toward integration. The breakdowns are made so that novices can put a name on what they do and be somewhat systematic and at the same time flexible about their analyses.

Since time usually lapses between reading the early chapters of this book and arriving at the final chapters, it may be helpful to have a little refresher about the method before going through the materials we are about to present next. The review materials are presented as a series of statements. Students can copy this summary and keep it in front of them as they do their own analyses.

1. Doing analysis and denoting concepts to stand for data is called "coding."

2. Coding means "thinking abstractly." The idea behind coding is not complicated. One does not just take a phrase from raw data and use it as a label. Rather, coding requires searching for the right word or two that best describe conceptually what the researcher believes is the meaning of that data. Sometimes participants provide us with useful concepts. We call these participant-provided concepts "in vivo codes."

3. There are two basic analytic strategies for analyzing data using this method. These are making data comparisons and asking questions of the data. In addition, there are other heuristic devices or analytic strategies a researcher might use to "step outside of biases" and "get inside" data. These devices, or thinking strategies, are also useful for identifying situations that might be used for theoretical sampling. The thinking strategies include among others the following: thinking about the various meanings of a word, making theoretical comparisons, turning the situation upside down, and thinking in terms of metaphors and similes.

4. There are many levels of concepts. Concepts stand for the researcher's interpretation of the meaning contained in data. Though it is impossible to say with absolute certainty that any interpretation of data is absolutely correct, usually as researchers continue to work with data, sensitivity to meaning grows. With continued sensitivity and checking and rechecking of interpretations against incoming data, it soon becomes evident if a researcher is grossly mistaken. And since with this method there is the possibility of checking out meaning with participants since they are as much a part of the research as the researcher, any misinterpretations can be revised.

5. Concepts can range from lower-level concepts to higher-level concepts with different levels in between. All concepts, regardless of level, are derived from data. It is just that some are more abstract than others. Early on in analysis there may be many concepts, but as the analysis continues, concepts tend to be grouped and can be subsumed under other more abstract concepts. Recall the earlier example of bird, kite, and plane in Chapter 4. Though each of these objects is distinct, taken together they can be grouped under the heading of "objects of flight."

6. Higher-level concepts are referred to as categories, and lower-level concepts are subcategories. Categories are more abstract concepts—the ones under which lower-level concepts can be grouped. The lower-level concepts, or subcategories, define and provide explanations of the categories. Categories denote the main themes of the research and to reach the level of category data pointing to that category must be found in some form in all the data. Therefore, it is impossible to know very early in analysis what the main categories will be because there is not enough data to support their relevancy. Some of the original concepts may turn out to be categories and some may not. If a concept is not able to group a number of lower-level concepts, it may not reach the level of a category.

7. Like any construction project to build a theory, there must be a foundation. Once there is a foundation, the remainder of the building can be developed. Lower-level concepts provide the foundation. They point to and lead to categories that represent the common element uniting a group of lower-level concepts. Once placed under a category, the lower-level concepts become the properties and dimensions that specify and differentiate categories and show variation within them.

8. Doing a detailed analysis of the first few interviews or observations allows researchers to get into the data, develop sensitivity, and obtain a good sense of what the research is all about. Once the momentum is established, the analysis builds on itself. Ideas about the research become exciting discoveries, and the analysis moves along at a much faster rate. Analysis proceeds much more rapidly because a researcher has concepts to work with. Meaning of data is clearer so that brainstorming and comparing every word or phrase is no longer needed. Later analysis is a matter of elaborating and filling in the detail, which is not so demanding.
9. Denoting context, process, and integration are necessary aspects of analysis when doing a grounded theory in order to increase a theory's ability to explain and have applicability to situations relevant to a field of study.
10. Events—things that happen—not only are things out there in the universe but also bring about sets of conditions or situations that affect persons and groups. Events or situations may be anything. For example, they could be teaching a group of children algebra, creating a beautiful sculpture, arranging a family or corporate picnic in the park, or someone having a disability or an illness as well as a city's lack of finances or immediate decisions to be made about the future of a business. The persons involved in the situation or event give it meaning. That meaning may be that it is problematic, something to be managed, or involves a goal to be reached. Since persons are not passive recipients of conditions or situations but thoughtful and responsive beings, they take some form of action–interaction in order to solve problems, gain control over situations, shape outcomes, and reach a goal. When analyzing data for context, researchers are looking for the reasons persons give for the action and interaction that they take. But persons may not be aware of or be able to articulate the range of conditions that are facilitating or constraining their ability to act though they feel the implications of these conditions. For example, in the demonstration research project on the Vietnam War that follows, there were political reasons for the rules of engagement under which the war was fought. The men doing the fighting might not have known the political motivations of those making the rules or the specifics of the rules, but they felt the effects of the rules in the form of the risks to their survival because of the constraints the rules placed on their ability to take defensive action–interaction. Action–interaction can be constrained or facilitated by conditions such as personal ability, motivation, knowledge level, environmental factors, cultural practices and taboos, economic and political factors, and so on. As analysts, we want to understand not only the reasons persons give for their action–interaction but also the broader sets of conditions that are creating the problematic situations and the factors that are facilitating and constraining persons' ability to take action and interaction. Weaving these explanations into our explanations (always within limitations of time and materials available) increases the explanatory power of our theories.
11. Consequences also enter into context in the sense that their anticipation is often part of the calculus persons make before taking planned or strategic action. Consequences are also the outcomes of action and as such often become part of the conditions leading to the next set of actions and interactions taken.
12. Process denotes adaptive changes in action–interaction. Action–interaction occurs in sequences. With

the passage of time—even short periods of time—the conditions that make up the action–interactional context are likely to change. The changes in conditions may be due to external events or to something that transpires during the transactional sequence. As conditions change, action–interaction also may have to change in order to bring about desired outcomes—that is, to match action–interaction to the changing set of circumstances.

13. Integration refers to the weaving of categories around a core concept. The core concept stands for what the researcher determines to be the main theme of the research. The core category should be present in some form in each case.

14. Memos and diagrams are the repositories of analysis. Memos become more abstract and complex over time. Memos are important for keeping track of the various properties and dimensions of categories as well as for recording possible relationships between categories. They contain ideas for theoretical sampling and keep the researcher honest and grounded. Diagrams force researchers to work with concepts "and show where the gaps in logic exist." When it comes time to write the findings, all the information researchers need are found in memos and diagrams.

15. In grounded theory studies, the design can't be established ahead of time. This is because the concepts derived from analysis are what drive the research along. Sampling on the basis of concepts is called "theoretical sampling." The purpose of theoretical sampling is to go to persons and places that will maximize the opportunity to develop categories to their fullest extent in terms of their properties and dimensions.

16. The research is not completed until all categories are fully saturated. Too often, saturation is misinterpreted, and analysis is terminated prematurely. It is not enough to have a few categories. There must be considerable development and integration of those categories.

17. Before doing any detailed analysis, it is important for a researcher to read a document through, resisting the urge to write in the margins. This is done so that the researcher has a mental picture of the whole interview or observation. Without the larger picture in mind, a researcher might get too caught up in a few words or phrases.

18. Once a researcher has read through the document, he or she can begin the process of generating and elaborating concepts. A good way to do this is to look for the natural breaks in the document. Sometimes an interviewee goes on and on about a topic, and the analyst might have to make some arbitrary breaks so as not to get too weighed down. Once an analyst decides on a section to work with, he or she may take one of two different approaches.

19. He or she might stand back and take the broader perspective and ask these questions: What in the larger sense seems to be going on in this section of data? What is the main idea or activity that is being expressed? What is this person trying to tell me in a general sense? Sometimes "what is going on in the data" is not clear. This is when coding requires "thinking outside the box" (Wicker, 1985). This means putting aside preconceived notions about what the researcher expects to find in the research and letting the data speak while quietly listening.

20. A second approach would be starting at the beginning and taking a true inductive approach, something we call line-by-line analysis. This is especially useful if data are not clear or a researcher is having difficulty seeing anything new in the data—that is, his or her preconceived notions or biases are preventing him or her from making sense of the words on the page.
21. Usually researchers use a combination of the two approaches that were just presented—that is, doing a detailed analysis of some parts of a document and maybe using some of the analytic strategies pointed out in Chapter 5. On other parts of the document, a researcher might take a section and step back to ask what is going on here in an abstract sense, coming up with a concept, and then coding around that.
22. Once a researcher has some sense of the main idea that is being expressed in a section of data, he or she can begin a more detailed analysis of the section by asking a series of questions such as these: What is the action being taken? Who is doing it? When? Where? How? Why? Then he or she can give each of the responses a conceptual name.
23. The actual procedures used by any analyst are not as important as the task of identifying the essence or meaning of data. Analytic strategies you recall from earlier chapters are just tools. The greatest tools researchers have to work with are their minds and intuition. The best approach to coding is to relax and let your mind and intuition work for you.

Chapter 12
Open Coding
Identifying Concepts

> But my favorite way of developing concepts is in a continuous dialogue with empirical data. Since concepts are ways of summarizing data, it's important that they be adapted to the data you are going to summarize. (Becker, 1998, p. 109)

Table 12.1 Key Terms

Categories: Higher-level concepts under which analysts group lower-level concepts that then become its subcategories. Categories are sometimes referred to as themes. They represent relevant phenomena and enable analysts to reduce, combine, and integrate data.

Coding: Delineating concepts to stand for interpreted meaning of data

Concepts: Words that stand for interpreted meaning of data, the conceptual name enabling researchers to group "raw data" with other "raw data" that share a common meaning or characteristic, such as a bird, kite, and plane that have flight in common. This reduces the amount of raw data a researcher has to work with.

Dimensions: Variations within properties. Dimensions give specificity and range to concepts.

Properties: Characteristics that define and describe concepts. For example, flight has the property of duration. Duration of flight will vary from long to short depending upon the object that is flying.

Before beginning this chapter, we suggest that readers read the review of grounded theory methodology included in the introduction to Part 2. This review will refresh in the minds of readers the main points made in the first 11 chapters and clarify what I will be doing analytically when I am analyzing the Vietnam research data.

Points to Keep in Mind

Students are asked to keep the following points in mind when reading this chapter. They indicate what the researcher is emphasizing analytically in this chapter.

- Breaking down data into manageable analytic pieces
- Brainstorming with data in order to arrive at possible meaning
- Delineating concepts to stand for meaning

- Differentiating between levels of concepts
- Applying comparative analysis, asking questions, and using other analytic techniques
- Beginning to develop some concepts
- Generating memos as part of the analytic process
- Making use of theoretical sampling

Analysis: The First Interview

This research project demonstrates how we work. Keep in mind that other researchers may work a little differently. The way I present analysis in this and the following chapters is as follows:

1. First there will be a piece of raw data. That piece of data will be used as a springboard for analysis. I'll use memos to illustrate what I'm thinking as I analyze data. At the top of each memo there will be a concept that represents my interpretation of the data I'm working with. Other researchers may have other interpretations or disagree with mine. The idea here is not to quarrel with everything that I say but to note the process I'm going through. Sometimes the conceptual name I give at the beginning of the analysis will change over the course of the research as I rethink the materials and get into my analysis more deeply.

2. Next, I'll present a memo that reflects my thinking while analyzing that piece of data. Readers do not have to read every memo in detail. The idea is to get a sense of how the analysis is growing in depth over time.

3. Each memo has been assigned a number, is dated, and is titled with a concept. An analyst always wants to come up with the most abstract concept possible so that a concept has application beyond this one incident or participant.

4. Some memos are longer than others. Remember that this is the first analysis of the first interview. Memos will become more accurate, complex, and longer later in the study as analysis accumulates.

5. Periodically, I'll write a methodological note (MN) explaining what we are doing or have done and why.

Refer to Appendix B with Participant 1 to read through this interview in its entirety.

MEMO 1

June 10, 2006

Concept: Locating the Self At Time of Entry to the Military

Raw Data

Basically, I come from a middle-class family—very patriotic, God fearing, and religious. We were a very loving family and continue to be. I have three brothers and one sister. My father is dead. My mother died in her 80s. We all [get] together for a family reunion at least one time a year. I left home at 16. I worked a couple of years at menial jobs—well, not necessarily menial but low paying. I worked as an orderly in a hospital, and that's how I became exposed to the nursing profession and decided to pursue that. I was 21 years old when I was first licensed as a nurse. Now that I'm 50, I have a long history of nursing in there. This was back in the 1960s. I worked one year at a veteran's hospital in the city of X, where I was exposed for the first time to veterans, people who had been to wars. Primarily, there were elderly World War I people,

some middle-aged World War II people, and a few Korean veterans thrown in. And I was pretty much interested in listening to them talk about their experiences and all that, so in 1966 when the government finally made a commitment to Vietnam, sending lots of men and women and materials, I volunteered to go.

Memo Analysis of Raw Data

In the data that was just presented, the participant is basically providing background information, describing who he was before, and giving explanations for why he enlisted. Nevertheless, the data is important. The participant begins the interview by telling us something about his life before he went into the military and in that way giving an explanation for why he enlisted. I am not certain why he began the interview in this manner because I wasn't at the interview. Perhaps he was asked to provide this information by Strauss before beginning the interview. Or perhaps the participant felt it was necessary to set the stage and explain who he was then versus who he is now. I'll conceptualize the core concept of this paragraph as "Locating the Self and Explaining His Decision to Volunteer." In the same paragraph, there are several lower-level **concepts** that hint at the meaning going to war had for him before he actually got there. Here, the interviewee is talking about his "prewar self." I need to make this distinction because after he gets to Vietnam he may "locate himself" differently, and certainly now looking back he thinks differently about those times. Other concepts that are part of that locating or part of the explanation he gives are "family background" that includes even more specificity such as "middle-class," "religious," "God fearing," "close," and above all "patriotic."

"Patriotism" is an interesting idea in need of further exploration. I doubt that everyone who served in Vietnam did so because he was patriotic. The draft was still in operation at the time of the Vietnam War. I think the significance of patriotism here is that later in life this participant became more cynical about the country and on patriotism. At the time of enlistment, he was caught up in the notion of country and patriotism. Patriotism hints at the meaning of war for him as when your country needs you, you respond.

Another possible concept is "path to war" in that he is describing those things that got him to Vietnam. Later we may decide that "path to war" is a better concept than locating. I really don't know at this point and therefore will subsume "path to war" under "locating." The concepts under "path to war" include hearing war stories, being a nurse, volunteering (which is a concept that we want to come back to), becoming a "six-week wonder," being an officer, and being quickly dispatched to the war zone. I must say that his "path" has the **dimensions** of being "straight" and "quick." There is no indication of inner conflict about going to war or negative feelings about the war itself at the time.

Methodological Note

Note in the previously given memo there is a main concept—"locating"—that describes what I perceive to be the theme of the first paragraph. If I were analyzing the data by putting labels in the margins rather than writing memos, we would put "locating" in the margin next to the appropriate data in the paragraph along with the other concepts I delineate from in that same paragraph. The manner in which a researcher analyzes data is a personal matter, and persons should go about it in the manner that they feel most

comfortable with. The way I do analysis is in memos because I'm not just putting labels on data but identifying and beginning to develop concepts at the same time. In this case, I am making some connections between "locating" and the lower-level concepts that relate to it: "family background," "patriotism," and "path to war." It is important to point out that while I refer to concepts as higher-level and lower-level concepts, it's not the notion of higher and lower that is important. The concepts I call "lower-level" concepts, such as "family background," "path to the war," and "patriotism," are the qualifiers or extenders of "locating." They are the **properties** and dimensions of locating and explain where the participant locates himself before going to war. One of the mistakes made by beginning analysts is the failure to differentiate between levels of concepts. They just put labels on concepts and don't start early in the analytic process building concepts. It is much more work to build concepts later on in the analytic process when all a researcher has to work with is a list of concepts and can't differentiate which are higher-level concepts and which are descriptors or properties of those concepts.

The higher-level concepts signify the main idea or theme expressed in a section of data. The researcher now has a name to put on similar data when analyzing the next interview. When analyzing the next interview, the researcher can compare data between the two interviews and say that this person is also "locating." What does this next person say about "locating" that is different from or similar to the data in the first interview and that will enable me to further develop the concept we named "locating"? For example, the new person might say something like "before I was drafted I was always in trouble, causing my family much grief, so coming into the military was the best thing for me and for them." Or he or she might say, "I signed up for the military because I came from a family with little reserve money, and it was the only way I could get money to go to college" or "I came from an immigrant family, and I wanted to do something for my new country, so I volunteered to go into the army." In each of these cases, the person is "locating" the self before entry into the military, bringing out and showing the dimensional variation in the concepts of "family background" as well as reasons for "volunteering." Identifying dimensional variations in concepts increases the density of a theory and enables a theory to explain differences.

In this section of data, "locating" can be qualified more specifically such as designating it as "at the time of entry into the military." The analyst can then look at data to determine how the "self" changes after being in war by following through with the concept throughout the interview to determine that is how a person "locates the self" prewar, during the war, and in the postwar period. To make it clear, "locating the self" is the analyst's interpretation of what the respondent is saying when providing the details about how he perceived himself.

MEMO 2

June 10, 2006

Concept: The War Experience: Being a Noncombatant Versus Being a Combatant

Raw Data

I . . . most of the time I was there I worked in transport and an evacuation hospital. We went out in helicopters and picked up people from aide

stations, which were pretty much . . . it's hard to say because there were no really defined lines. The lines could change every day, two to three times a day, but the aide stations were in areas of conflict. We would transport the most seriously wounded back to Saigon, which was about 75 miles away and the less seriously injured back to the evacuation hospital, which was about 25 to 30 miles away.

Memo

The important concept, or theme, of this paragraph is the "War Experience." This is the concept I would write in the margin or designate as a code in a computer program if I were analyzing data by just putting conceptual labels on data. Since I am analyzing data in memos, I write the concept at the top of the memo and then continue with the following. The "War Experience" represents a change, a transition from the earlier data in which the participant was telling us something about his family background. Now he is talking about being in Vietnam and his experiences there. Because he was a nurse, he can be conceptualized as being a "noncombatant." Being a noncombatant seems to be a relevant variable affecting what might be called the "War Experience." I wonder how being a noncombatant is different from being a "combatant," or the soldier who actually engages in frontline fighting. Being a noncombatant doesn't necessarily mean that a person is sheltered from the war experience as indicated in this interview. This man did fly into battle zones that I'll designate conceptually as "zones of conflict" and transported the wounded back into what I'll call "zones of safety," which in this case was about 75 miles away, but he never had to kill someone to save his own life. So what does it mean to be a "combatant"? I need more data in order to understand the differences between combatants and noncombatants in war. However, I can play an analytic comparative game based on what know from general readings about war. Being a combatant means that a person's "life is at risk" much of the time. Combatants see their "comrades wounded" and "killed." A combatant has a mind-set of "kill" or "be killed" in "battle." Also, being a combatant means constant "fear and stress" during contact with the enemy. Being at war is in some ways similar to being a "hunter," but it has that added twist of being both "hunter" and potential "prey." It's like a mad video game where each side is out to get the other, but in the case of war, the "kill" is for "real." The "enemy" is there to kill you and will if you don't kill him first. I'm not certain that a person can fully comprehend the meaning of war and the constant stress and fear associated with being simultaneously hunter and prey unless one has been there.

Noncombatants don't engage in combat unless they are in the wrong location at the wrong time. They don't leave the zone of safety to go out to kill the enemy and only do so if they somehow come under attack. This particular noncombatant's job was to "care for the injured." His exposure to "enemy fire" was "intermittent" mostly when he flew on missions to pick up the wounded from the battlefield. Being a noncombatant doesn't lessen the contribution to the war effort, but it does frame the experience differently. Of course, it depends upon one's role. Medics on the battlefield do get shot at and wounded even though they are not directly engaged in combat. I know from my readings that many of the nurses who went to Vietnam had many of the same stresses during war and many of the same adjustment problems afterward that combatants did (Moore, 1992; Smith, 1992; Van Devanter, 1983).

This comparison directs me to do some theoretical sampling on "combatants."

Methodological Note

A new concept stands at the head of the previously given memo. After comparing the data in the first paragraph with the data in the second, it is obvious that the topics are different. This one talks about his actual experience in Vietnam, hence conceptualized as the beginning of his "war experience." This concept is a good one in that everyone in the study will have a war experience, and each is likely to be a little different. Yet, the memo while delineating some lower-level concepts remains exploratory because it stimulates more questions than it answers. In addition to making comparisons and asking questions, there was the use of one of the other analytic strategies—the "what if" strategy—and asking this comparative question: What is the difference between combatant and noncombatant? By comparing being a "combatant" versus a "noncombatant," this participant's experiences stand out. When I made this comparison, I did not have data yet on "combatants." I had to do what we call a "theoretical comparison." In a "theoretical comparison," analysts rely on experience or anecdotal material to make the comparison rather than comparing one piece of data with another. None of the ideas on "combatants" that came out of "theoretical comparison" will be put into the study. The technique is used only to amplify the meaning of data in this document regarding what it means to be a "noncombatant." More important, making this "theoretical comparison" started me thinking and wanting to know more about being a "combatant."

MEMO 3

June 10, 2006

Concept: A General Memo: The Military System

Memo

This memo is not related to a specific piece of raw data but rather a thought that came into my mind while doing the memo that was just given. Reading about how wounded are taken to different areas depending upon the degree to which they are injured reminds me that the military is a "giant system" of "rules" and "arrangements." The military must transport soldiers and supplies from one place to another, provide care for sick and wounded soldiers, feed the troops, provide ammunition, come up with plans for attack, and so on. In the military there are policies, arrangements, and systems for doing everything. Also, there is strict discipline—a necessity for the welfare of the group. How else could you get a bunch of young men to go out and shoot at the enemy and be shot at in return? Soldiers must obey orders even if those orders are wrong or don't make sense. The logistics of carrying out a war is mind-boggling. I noticed when watching the war in Iraq on television that there was a whole military system established to wage and support the war. Without soldiers, there would be no war, and without this whole backup and support system, the soldiers couldn't fight a war. I think that how soldiers feel about a war partially can be explained by whether or not they feel supported by this backup system as well as explained by how they feel about the war they are fighting. Are backup systems—like helicopter support and additional troops—there when you need them? Are supplies available? Do you get time to rest between battles? Are you

adequately cared for when you are wounded? This is where Participant 1 comes into the picture; he was part of this support system, providing care for the wounded.

Methodological Note

Notice the mental dialogue or brainstorming that is occurring in the memo between the data and researcher. In the memos, I'm asking questions, making comparisons, and throwing out ideas. Though dialoging with the data may seem tedious and at times rambling, it is important to the analysis because it stimulates the thinking process and further directs the inquiry by suggesting other areas for further data collection called theoretical sampling. Most of all, it helps analysts get inside the data and to start to feel them at a gut level.

Researchers often have a great deal of curiosity but often have little experience with the topics that they are studying. To understand what it is like to go to war, or the "war experience," the analyst has to get a feel for the experience through the words of the participants. Notice that the analysis does not seem to be "forced." Asking questions and making comparisons come naturally when working with data. Though analysts can never fully understand another person's experience, the more that they work with data, the more sensitive they become to meaning. One more point is this: If I were working as part of a larger team, then the team members would be having similar discussions among themselves. Working as part of a team is fun. The ideas of others stimulate thinking, and pretty soon, everyone is participating and moving the analysis forward. Analysis seems to proceed at a much faster rate because of this reciprocal stimulation of ideas. It is important, though, that one person be the designated "note keeper" so that memos can be written at the time or later.

MEMO 4

June 11, 2006

Concept: Locating the Self: Trying to Find Meaning

Raw Data

Let's see . . . I was pretty young—21 years old—and very patriotic and gung ho and thought that we had every right to be there and doing what we were doing. I was very much anti-Vietnamese like most of the soldiers always feel about their enemies.

Memo

Once more, the respondent is locating himself trying to find meaning for his decision to enlist in the army and go to Vietnam. He lists these personal characteristics: patriotic, gung ho, and he thought "we had every right to be there and doing what we were doing." He was "anti-Vietnamese" because this is the way "soldiers are supposed to feel" about the enemy. In making this statement, it is almost like he is looking back trying to explain why he enlisted both to himself as well as to the researcher. But this locating makes a very important point. To understand a "war experience" from the viewpoint of those who participated in

that war, a researcher can only view it through participants who are "looking back" explaining who they were then. How they view their experience and the war at the time of the interview might be very different from how they felt back then. Between his going to Vietnam and the time of the interview, this man has come to see war differently. Later in the interview, he makes a very important point. It is difficult to evaluate an experience when you are "living it." There is the experience as you "live it" and experience as you "reflect" back on it. Only when we look back can we put our actions and experiences into perspective. Looking back is always a construction from the knowledge of the present. There is another assumption made here by the participants—that soldiers are supposed to feel that way about the enemy. How are soldiers supposed to feel? I don't know.

MEMO 5

June 11, 2006

Concept: Inconsistencies in War

Raw Data

I guess during the time I was there I started to become aware at little nips at my conscience—inconsistencies—but don't think that I paid much attention to them. There was too much going on to have really given a lot of thought to that. And I'm not sure that it's not some sort of unconscious mechanism that keeps you from looking at what you're doing and evaluating it. I don't know if it's because you don't want to or you choose not to. I'm not sure. It's pretty hard when you're in the middle of something to be evaluative while you're doing it.

Memo

It was during the "Vietnam War experience" that our participant first became aware of "nips at [his] conscience" that led to his change in attitude about war. Something is happening to him that is changing him from the rather naïve young man that entered the war zone to one who is becoming aware that all is not as it was portrayed in the movies. Stimulating the "nips at [his] conscience" were events that he perceived to be inconsistent, but inconsistent with what? I presume he means with the moral standards of the society that he came from. What is the meaning of this word *inconsistent*? He goes on to tell us that at the time he didn't dwell on these "nips at [his] conscience" because he was too busy "being in the experience," caring for the wounded.

MEMO 6

June 11, 2006

Concept: Psychological Survival Strategies

Memo

This is another memo written off the previously given field notes. Naturally, all persons have "psychological strategies" for handling moral contradictions and inconsistencies—avoidance being one of those strategies. I'll code his "avoidance" as "psychological survival strategies" because, as our participant

tells us later in the interview, it would be difficult to survive psychologically and physically in a war if one dwelled too much on what one was seeing or doing. He talks about not dwelling upon or "evaluating." Later in the interview, he talks about "becoming hardened" by the experience. That is, with time, he learned not to feel things so deeply. Constant exposure to something does tend to desensitize one, and maybe that is what he means by "hardened." There are now two different psychological survival strategies: "avoidance" and "hardening." I'm sure as I go on with this study I'll find many more.

MEMO 7

June 11, 2006

Concept: My Reflections on the "War Experience"

Memo

I want to step outside this interview and write a broader memo about the "war experience." I want to get my mind thinking about some of the properties of the "war experience." It appears that the war experience can vary from "[not] all that bad" (he doesn't go so far as to call it good) to "very bad." The experience goes on "over time"; therefore, one's experience can vary over that time. The experience, though "ongoing," usually takes place during youth; therefore, the war experience has potential consequences for the present and future biography of the individual. It can hasten maturity by forcing one to become responsible, self-reliant, and capable. It can also have negative effects—especially if one becomes injured or bitter, angry, and unforgiving. Most of the men who go to war are young and somewhat innocent about what war is all about at first. "Images of war" are romanticized and derived from oral stories and reading. Before the Vietnam War, movies tended to glorify war heroes and not really show the horrors. Being at war, "in the experience," changes one's images to a more realistic view of what it is all about. Calling the experience a "strange" time in his development still confuses me. Perhaps he is indicating that war is a surrealistic experience that one can never really be prepared for no matter how much military training one gets. You have to "undergo" the experience before you can really appreciate it. It is like stepping into a world that even in your worst nightmares you could never have imagined.

MEMO 8

June 11, 2006

Concept: The Culture of War and Its Inconsistencies

Raw Data

A lot of things that I hold sacrosanct, such as the value of human life, I guess I saw . . . diminish. I was there from 1966 to 1967 during the Tet Offensive when the North Vietnamese fought back and really won a great victory. I can remember in this one village, the village was called "Cu Chi," after they had been routed, there were dead Vietnamese, these were South Vietnamese, killed by the Vietcong, and they were stacked along the road like racks of firewood, and I can remember not having any emotion about that. It was just like "Hey, this is war!" This is what kind of happens. So that kind of confused me because before that the thought of someone dying would send me into some sort of scurrying behavior.

Working in a hospital, if someone is dying, you really get concerned and upset about that.

Memo

As we read these words—"a lot of things that I hold sacrosanct, such as the value of human life, I guess I saw . . . diminish"—we are struck by what might be called the "culture of war" and the moral contradictions it implies. Then there is the personal change that occurs when one is forced to live and survive in this culture. Because killing and death are so prevalent, one begins to accept these as the norm. I see the "culture of war" as a major theme running through this interview. It is the context or backdrop in which meaning of war develops and action and interaction take place. The "culture of war" will probably become a category as I proceed with this analysis because the more I get into this study, the more impressed I am with this notion of a "culture of war," which definitely is different from "civilian culture." So, what is the culture of war, and how does it differ from civilian culture? Civilian culture encompasses the values, traditions, beliefs, and standards of the society persons grow up in. These values, etc., define our attitudes and actions on an everyday basis. What is the culture of war? The culture of war is defined by the military system. It, too, has its own set of rules and norms. To function in a culture of war, civilian attitudes and beliefs must be put aside and new ones adopted. In a culture of war, it is okay to shoot someone designated as an enemy. The intent of war is to defeat the enemy by any means open to you within the "rules of engagement." In a civilian culture, we don't normally go around shooting someone, and if someone is ill or hurt, we do everything that we can to save the person. How difficult it must be, then, to set aside the values that are "bred" into you by the society. Somehow, a person has to "reconcile the inconsistencies" between civilian life and war in order to function and therefore to survive. The comment "Hey, this is war!" says it all because war means death and destruction. It is one of those "psychological survival strategies" used by our participant and probably others for "reconciling the inconsistencies" between civilian and war culture. Now I have another "psychological survival strategy" and that is "redefining moral values to fit with the situation."

MEMO 9

June 13, 2006

Concept: Coming Home and Getting on With Life

Raw Data

I stayed there for a year. In retrospect, it was not a terrible year. It went very fast. It was very maturing for me. Um . . . it was in 1967 that I came back. That was when the peace movement was starting to be heard very vocally. I remember my first stop after Saigon was the San Francisco Airport. They made us take off our uniforms and change into civilian clothes because people in the airport were throwing things at the soldiers coming back from Vietnam and calling them murderers and things like that. That made me really mad. I thought I had gone over there and taken part in something all well and good, and how could they treat us like that?

Memo

In the words that were just given, the interviewee turns from Vietnam to "coming home." This section is fascinating because in it he describes the transition from war to home. For him, the transition is rather

smooth. He goes on with his life doing those things that he had planned while he was still in Vietnam. The reason that he gives for doing this postwar planning is revealing. It provided him with something to hold on to, probably helping him to survive. He gives us another survival strategy: "planning for the future."

He also points out that when he got home he found another inconsistency. People at home did not hold the same view of the war or his participation as he did. It made him angry to think that he and others had answered the call to serve their country and risked their lives only to return home and be treated as somehow "unclean" for having done so.

MEMO 10

June 13, 2006

Concept: Growing Disillusionment: A New Meaning of War

Raw Data

Over the years, my feelings about that have changed. It was senseless for us to have been there. It's hard to lose your patriotism. It's hard to give that up.

Memo

This is a short bit of information but a significant one. It ties together nicely with his "evolving meaning of war." When he went to war, he saw it as the "right thing to do," and over the years, he began to think of war as "futile." But a lot happened between then and now. It wasn't only the war but the social unrest, subsequent wars, and the advent of AIDS. The war was the catalyst for change in the sense that it opened his eyes. The reality of seeing men who were injured and death sowed the seeds of disillusionment. Events that occurred afterward helped those seeds to grow. Change begins when the first "moral inconsistencies" and "nips of [his] conscience" happen and continue into the present. "Change of self" and "change in the meaning of war" are important themes running through this interview. I think part of the disillusionment has to do also with peace marchers who hassled returning soldiers and anger at the lack of recognition from society for those who fought in the war. In addition, there is anger at a government who sent the young men to war while at the same time failing to make a total commitment to fighting it. I wonder how prevalent this anger is among those who served in Vietnam. One need not have gone to Vietnam to be disillusioned with war or government. Our respondent seems to be struggling to find meaning in an experience that carries with it so much emotion and inconsistency.

Methodological Note

In the previous memo, I could have coded the interviewee's feelings as "change in attitude" or as "losing patriotism" as beginning researchers often do. But what an analyst tries to do is to get at the essence of

what is being said—that is, try to understand what the underlying issues are rather than focusing on the obvious. We are also linking the concept of "disillusionment" to the concept the "meaning of war" and describing how that meaning evolves over time and place and as a result of a variety of experiences, each one feeding into the other. Also note that some of the memos put together two concepts such as "war experience" and "psychological survival strategies." These memos are examples of axial coding to be explained further in Chapter 14 because they show the relationships between two or more concepts.

MEMO 11

June 13, 2006

Concept: War as a Maturational Stepping-Stone: The Changing Self

Raw Data

What I think that the experience did to me is give me the motivation to do something. I was maybe 22 or 23 by then. I don't remember which, but by then I had formulated plans of what I wanted to do when I was discharged. I came back to X to finish my [military] time out there. I applied to the university and received a bachelor's and master's in nursing.

Memo

This participant points out that going to war gave him the motivation to continue his education and to do something with his life. He mentions several reasons for war being a maturational experience later in the interview—things like having to take responsibility, having good role models, and finally learning to accept himself as being gay (see the full interview in Appendix B). It was only "one year out of his life"—"one point" in his total development. I wouldn't say that war was as much of a "turning point" for him as it was an important "developmental milestone." So there is another process described in this data: "the changing self." In his case, it was a maturational process. The war was a stepping-stone to a change that occurred in the self.

MEMO 12

June 13, 2006

Concept: The Wall of Silence

Raw Data

I was very busy. I worked part-time and went to school. I was really too busy to think about that whole experience. I just put it on the back burner and went on with my life. I really, at this point, can say that there weren't any major negative affects of the war on my life. It's hard to know over the years how my feelings about war and killing have changed. It's hard to say what caused the change—whether it's a maturation process or whether it was just becoming aware of all the inconsistencies and feeling the futility of war. I normally have avoided situations where I would bring this stuff back into consciousness. I have never gone, never went to watch a movie about Vietnam. Those never had any appeal to me at all. I don't know why they don't appeal. I never tried to maintain any friendships with any of the people who I knew in Vietnam. I got out of the military. I knew I never wanted any more of that, so I got out.

Memo

One of the fascinating aspects about this whole Vietnam experience for us is the "wall of silence"—an internal wall built around the "war experience," a wall built around the experience both within the self and with those outside the self. Ex-military don't really want to think about or talk about war—especially with outsiders. When I tried to get participants for this study I was met with a "wall of silence." Only one person responded at first to my call for volunteer participants. Another person responded to our call for participants but did not want to be interviewed. He said, "I can't talk about Vietnam to my wife; why would I talk to you?" [He means me, the researcher]. All I can conclude is that for many Vietnam veterans the war was a very "disturbing experience," to put it lightly. And when the soldiers came home, the reception they received pushed them farther behind their wall. They don't even like talking among themselves, as is so evident in this interview. This man never talked about the war with his partner or his brothers. This participant maintained his wall of silence intact by "keeping busy," "not talking to others," "not reading books or seeing movies about Vietnam"—in other words, not doing anything that would bring back the "memories." I know from my experiences when doing research on head nurses at the Veterans Administration Hospital that some veterans still have nightmares and "flashbacks," and some turned to drugs and alcohol to blot out the war and all that happened.

Methodological Note

By now, readers should have a good idea of how to begin analysis and the function of memos in the analytic process. At the beginning of analysis, all concepts and any **categories** or themes are considered provisional and will be checked out against further data and either added to, discarded, or modified. The following memos were written after going through the entire interview and summarize and synthesize my thinking about the "war experience" at this point.

MEMO 13

June 14, 2006

Concept: General Impressions of Entire Interview

Memo

After several days of working with this interview and thinking about it, I'm struck by the underlying ambivalence that I feel runs through it. I still see in his words a lot of anger and buried feelings about the war. It is difficult to explain, but I'll try. I feel that so much is being covered up—perhaps not intentionally but glossed over, sugarcoated. It isn't that the participant doesn't say things; he does. But it is the way that he talks of how he responded to things like bodies "stacked like racks of firewood" in Cu Chi. Everything is explained away as "this is war" and things like this are to "be expected." The interview is almost like the way the most recent war in Iraq was covered by television reporters. It was sanitized. Viewers never saw the blood, the sweat, or the fear. This participant worked in a field hospital and flew missions in

helicopters to pick up the injured. He must have witnessed terrible things: soldiers with limbs torn off, their guts exposed, and body bags by the dozens. He must have come into contact with soldiers who went crazy from the fear and constant stress. He doesn't talk about this. It's the emotion that is missing, the feeling. He does say that being in Vietnam changed his feelings about things, that he was "hardened" by the experience. But the raw emotions provoked by the war are sealed off in some deep, dark place. Underlying his story, one senses the anger and the guilt. There is anger at government for bringing men to Vietnam and then not fully supporting them by declaring it as a "war." There is anger at it being a futile "war that solved nothing." There is anger with the peace marcher for saying that the war was wrong because he knew men gave their lives for what some considered a "wrong war." There is anger at himself and guilt for believing in country and for allowing himself to be taken in by the notion of patriotism and romantic images. And there is guilt and anger for not being more compassionate or caring of the "enemy," who also was human and hurting. His trip to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is touching and very revealing. He wanted recognition for those who had given their lives. He wanted a band, a crowd to be there, someone to say that the war was worthwhile. But he stood there alone. It is interesting that he went to the memorial looking for the name of the brother of his friend and then after seeing it he walked away, burying any emotion, not wanting to return again. As he says later in the interview, the government never really declared Vietnam a war. This is what makes interviews done after the fact so interesting. I get from him that "looking-back perspective." I see war through his different lenses of then and now. I also see that even after all these years it is difficult to penetrate that wall of silence.

MEMO 14

June 14, 2006

Concept: Summary Memo of Themes/Categories

Memo

In this interview, we see several themes or categories evolving.

1. The first theme or category is the "culture of war." By that, I mean that war has a culture all its own, a culture where things happen that often come into "conflict" with "civilian" norms and standards of behavior. These conflicts are experienced as "nips at conscience" or, better still, as "inconsistencies." In addition, the culture of war is a surreal one, taking place in a country so foreign to one's own. There is an "enemy," who if given a chance will kill or capture you. It is a culture of rules set up and enforced by the military machine that fights wars, a machine that each soldier must obey—going where they tell him or her, when they tell him or her, and doing what they tell him or her to do. If they tell you to go into the jungle to battle with the enemy, you have to do it even if you're frightened. It is a culture of battles, death and destruction, and sometimes overpowering fear calling for psychological and physical survival strategies. It is a culture that just by the very act of taking responsibility and surviving accelerates the maturational process. Under this heading, I would put concepts such as "the enemy," "zones of conflict" and "safe zones," "military systems," "combatants" and "noncombatants," and "psychological and physical

survival strategies."

There is also the theme or category that at this point I'll call "the changing self." I don't quite know what to do with the category at this time, but it seems to have to do with a gradual change in the self brought about by the war experience. There is the patriotic, gung ho individual starting out. Many of the men are very young, and through the experiences that take place during that year or more in Vietnam, the person is transformed sometimes for better and sometimes for worse. For our respondent, the Vietnam experience was a maturational process. It helped him recognize who he was and to set up plans for the future. Other soldiers might be affected very differently, and that remains to be seen in future data. The respondent grew up quickly knowing that someone "out there" wanted to kill him. I think under this theme would come concepts such as "path to the war," "self-locating," "war as a stepping-stone," "experiences during the war," and "experiences immediately after the war" such as "getting on with life."

The third theme has to do with the "evolving meaning of war." Many of the young men, just as our respondent did, entered the war full of enthusiasm and with romantic notions of war. In the end, they were disillusioned by the futility of this war. "Nothing changed, nothing was accomplished." Under this heading, I place concepts such as "volunteering," the "peace movement," and the "wall of silence." I find silence throughout this interview. Ex-soldiers don't want to talk about their war experience. They don't go to see movies or read books about the war. Among the reasons presented in the literature for this wall of silence are the nature of the experience itself—that is, the viciousness of some of the battles and tenacity of the enemy and the despondency of seeing so many dead and wounded bodies, especially when those bodies were of comrades. Added to this experience as Isaacs (1997) makes it clear is that there was the lack of recognition of the sacrifice and pain soldiers experienced when soldiers returned home. There were no bands and no parades for them as there were in other wars. In fact, soldiers were often blamed for the war and the destruction that occurred there. Also, some soldiers like our respondent felt that the government never really committed itself to the war. They sent men off to fight without a clear purpose other than some vague ideological reasons of a fight against communism then didn't adequately support them once they got there. They didn't understand the enemy and underestimated them as a fighting force.

MEMO 15

June 14, 2006

Concept: Questions and Directions for Theoretical Sampling

Memo

Coding this interview has left us with a series of questions that will be used to guide further data collection, or what we call theoretical sampling. This participant was in the army and a "noncombatant." After all the analysis that went on in relationship to this interview, I'm left with an important question: What was the war like from the perspective of combatants?

Methodological Note

From a methodological standpoint, the questions raised previously are important in that they direct the next data gathering. Analysis began with an interview that provided the concepts of "combatant" and "noncombatant." The interview was with a noncombatant. What came out of the analysis is that this man's experience with the war was certainly very different in many ways from what we would have expected because he said being in Vietnam was "not such a bad experience." It is, to use the methodological language, his "dimensionalizing" of the experience as "not so bad" that has led me to ask these questions: What would that experience look like for a combatant—a person who has to fight the enemy? Would it be experienced and explained in the same or a different way?

This is how theoretical sampling comes about. The concept of the "war experience" is dimensionalized—in this participant's words, it was "not so bad." My intuition tells me that the reason he thinks it was not so bad is because he was not engaging in battle and having to kill people. This question led me to gather data from combatant(s) (theoretical sampling) in order to determine if combatants describe the war experience in the same way or differently from noncombatants. In doing so, I am not only extending my understanding of the war experience but I am also looking at how the concepts "combatant," "noncombatant," and "war experience" relate to each other.

List of Concepts or Codes

At this point, I have many concepts or codes about which I have written memos. What is important is not so much the list itself but the fact that I have memos in which I explore the concepts. These same concepts will be carried over and developed further in the next chapter. Or they may be discarded or combined depending upon my interpretations of the new data. In addition, new memos will be written and more concepts added to the list.

1. Locating the Self: At Time of Entry
2. Volunteering Versus Being Drafted Versus Draft Dodging
3. Being a Noncombatant Versus Being a Combatant
4. The Enemy
5. Zones of Safety and Zones of Conflict or Killing Zones
6. Military Systems
7. The War Experience and Strategies for Blocking Out or Minimizing Inconsistencies
8. The War Experience
9. The Culture of War and Its Inconsistencies
10. Psychological Survival Strategies
11. The Enemy and Psychological Survival Strategies

12. Letting Down the Emotional Guard
13. Moral Contradictions of War and Psychological Survival Strategies
14. Inconsistencies Within the Military System
15. Normalizing the Situation: Another Survival Strategy
16. Moral Contradictions
17. Coming Home and Getting on With Life
18. The American Failure: War-Hostile Environment
19. Growing Disillusionment: A New Meaning of War
20. War as a Maturational Stepping-Stone: The Changing Self
21. The Wall of Silence
22. Breaking Through the Wall of Silence
23. Survival
24. Trying to Find Meaning: Going to the War Memorial

Methodological Note

The purpose for listing these concepts here is to provide readers with a memory refresher as I move into the next chapter. If the researcher is using a computer program, the concepts or list of codes are readily available. But remember, just listing concepts is not what doing grounded theory is about. It is the thought that goes into those concepts and the development of concepts in terms of properties and dimensions that is the important part of analysis.

Summary of Key Points

This chapter demonstrates early coding. I began by breaking down the data into manageable pieces, reflecting upon that data in memos, and conceptualizing the data based on our interpretations of the meaning of data. To arrive at my interpretations, there was a lot of brainstorming, questions asked about the data, comparisons made, and a lot of reflective thought. There was some attempt to do some development of concepts such as "locating the self" at the time of entry. Also, a couple of possible themes or categories were delineated, though at this point the categories remain unverified and undeveloped. Almost all of the analysis in this chapter provided direction for the next set of data collection. Directing the next data collection session is this question: How does being a "combatant" change perceptions of the "war experience"? In the next chapter, I'll pick up with the analysis where I left off, building upon previous analysis using the next set of data; however, the emphasis will be on concept development in terms of properties and dimensions and not just identification

of concepts.

Activities for Thinking, Writing, and Discussing as a Group

1. Go back to the Points to Keep in Mind section when reading this chapter, and look for examples in my coding of each of these points. Bring your examples to class for discussion.
2. Write a memo about the analytic process and what you learned from reading the chapter. Discuss your memo with the group.
3. As a group, take a piece of data, an interview, or an observation provided by one of the group members or the instructor and go to work analyzing it. Do your analyses in different ways. First, just label the concepts in the margins. Next, rather than just labeling, write a couple of memos detailing the thinking that went behind the conceptual levels you came up with. Discuss the difference between the two approaches to coding.

Chapter 13
Developing Concepts in Terms of Their Properties and Dimensions

> On the part of the researcher, creative and solid data analysis requires astute questioning, a relentless search for answers, active observation, and accurate recall. It is a process of fitting data together, of making the invisible obvious of linking and attributing consequences to antecedents. It is a process of conjecture and verification, of correction and modification, of suggestion and defense. (Morse & Field, 1995, pp. 125–126)

Table 13.1 Key Terms

Comparative analysis: Comparing incident against incident for similarities and differences. Incidents that are found to be conceptually similar to previously coded incidents are given the same conceptual label and put under the same code. Each new incident that is coded under a code adds to the general properties and dimensions of that code, elaborating it and bringing in variation.
Conceptual saturation: The process of acquiring sufficient data to develop each category or theme fully in terms of its properties and dimensions and to account for variation.
Open coding: Breaking data apart and delineating concepts to stand for interpreted meaning of raw data
Theoretical sampling: Data collection based on concepts that appear to be relevant to the evolving story line

In this chapter, we will continue with the demonstration research study of Vietnam veterans and build upon the analysis begun in Chapter 12. Directing this phase of the analysis is the following question: How was the Vietnam War experience different for combatants versus noncombatants? Data collection and analysis will proceed as follows. I'll take data from Participants 2 and 3, who were combatants, and compare their data with those data from Participant 1, who was a noncombatant. Comparisons will be made at the concept level. To be more specific, data will be broken down into manageable pieces. Each piece of datum will be examined closely. If data in the two new interviews is conceptually similar to data from the interview analyzed in Chapter 12, then it will be coded using the same conceptual name, but this time I'll be asking this: What else is being learned about this concept? This enables me to elaborate on a concept in terms of its properties and dimensions, extending my understanding of the concept. For example, if an incident in the second interview is coded as "locating the self" at the time of entry, I'll then want to know where this participant located himself at the time of entry. I'll ask what more there is to be learned about "locating the self at time of entry." Any differences noted will be used to elaborate and expand the original concept. Also, I'll be looking for additional concepts that might not have been in the previous data.

In addition to making comparisons along conceptual lines, I'll continue to ask theoretically based questions that will lead to further **theoretical sampling.** Research is a continuous process of data collection, followed by analysis and memo writing, leading to new questions and more data collection. In this approach, the original question(s) is modified over and over again in light of what is being discovered during the analysis. This means that while the original question is important in setting the parameters of the study, it is not as important as the questions that come up during the study that are intended to keep the analysis and the research moving forward. This entire data-collection and analysis process continues until researchers are satisfied that they've acquired sufficient data to describe each category or theme fully in terms of its properties and dimensions and that they've accounted for variation (which is what we mean by **conceptual saturation**).

Before I began analysis of the first interview, I only had a general and very open-ended question. That question was, "What was the Vietnam War experience like for persons who served in Vietnam during the war?" I had no idea where I was going with the study. I let my interpretations of data from that first interview guide the next data collection. The analysis of the first interview led me to question the difference in the war experience between combatants and noncombatants. Notice that the question is a little more specific after analysis of the first interview. I am examining the "war experience," using **comparative analysis** in comparing combatant with noncombatant and looking for similarities and differences in properties and dimensions. This is what theoretical sampling is all about. It is intentionally looking for events and situations, making those comparisons, and in the process further developing concepts. Allowing the data to guide the research is perhaps too open-ended for some researchers—especially novice researchers. Some researchers and their committees prefer a more structured approach. A more structured approach is not necessarily wrong. However, theoretical development of concepts is more likely to occur if researchers are free to look for answers to questions that arise during analysis. Grounded theory is a learning process, and with encouragement, time, and practice, researchers are more willing to trust their instincts and follow up on interesting data leads.

Points to Keep in Mind

In this chapter, I'll be focusing on the following points. Students are encouraged to keep them in mind when reading this chapter.

- Comparison of data between interviews along conceptual lines
- The asking of questions that further concept development through theoretical sampling
- The identification of tentative categories
- The linking of properties and dimensions to concepts

About the Interviews Used in This Chapter

The interviews used in this chapter are somewhat different from the one that was used in Chapter 12. In that chapter, I worked with an interview that can be described as an "unstructured interview." The participant was allowed to tell his story as he saw it, and only when he had finished his narrative did the interviewer ask

questions about points that were brought up in the interview and needed further elaboration. The next two interviews are different and are what might be called "semi-structured interviews" because the participants responded to questions posed by the researcher. The questions were derived from analysis of the first interview. The researcher allowed the participants to add any other data that they might want to provide. Doing the interview in this manner was not a matter of choice.

I prefer doing face-to-face unstructured interviews, but doing this was impossible at this time. However, I did acquire additional interview material that is important as part of furthering the analysis along. After analyzing the first interview, I realized we had to interview "combatants." Unfortunately, I didn't know anyone who had served in Vietnam as a combatant well enough to ask for an interview. I decided to go to the Internet to see if I could make contact with Vietnam veterans and perhaps find some potential research participants. I found a chat line for Vietnam War veterans and made a request for research participants. There was only one response.

At first, I was disappointed that persons didn't jump at the opportunity to participate in my study. In fact, one veteran wrote, "If I can't talk to my wife about this experience, why could I talk to you?" Good point! The one Internet person who agreed to be interviewed for this study, Participant 2, said he would be willing to answer questions about his experience as part of his desire to educate others about the Vietnam War. In fact, he often speaks to groups about the war. Participant 2's responses to questions are brief but very honest and powerful.

Ethical Considerations

Additionally, I want to assure readers that we did take measures to maintain ethical standards when conducting interviews via the Internet. The website I worked with is a closed one, and the participants had to contact me. I could leave a message on the site, but I couldn't chat with anyone. For the two participants I did eventually obtain from the website, I did fully disclose the reason for the interviews and the use to which the materials would be put. I even sent the participants a copy of the chapter in which the materials were used so that they could respond and raise any objections. I obtained signed consents and took measures to ensure confidentiality and anonymity (Flicker, Haans, & Skinner, 2004; Hamilton & Bowers, 2006).

Analysis of Interviews

There are two parts to the interview with Participant 2. Both parts of the interview can be found in Appendix C. The analysis will begin with the first part.

MEMO 1

June 20, 2006

Concept: Locating the Self: Entry to the War

Raw Data

I was 21 when I went to Vietnam. I came from an average southern family in X—my father being a schoolteacher, coach, and athletic director.

My mother was a homemaker, and I had one sister 19 months younger than me. I wasn't married or engaged. My father was a World War II combat veteran flying 50 combat missions on a B24 out of Toretta, Italy. My family was supportive of my choices, not necessarily of the war in Vietnam.

Memo

The concept of "locating the self" applies to this interview also. In this interview, the biographical information was given in response to a direct question posed by the researcher. This respondent's "family background" is quite similar to that of Participant 1. Participant 2 came to the war from a middle-class, close, and supportive family. His dad served in the military during World War II. The fact that both participants I have data on came from middle-class, intact families is quite interesting because one often hears that the men who served in Vietnam were mainly minorities or from low-income families. Though there may have been a disproportionate number of men and women in Vietnam from minority or low-income backgrounds, obviously not everyone fits that profile. What is different between the two men is that Participant 1 had training as a nurse and therefore was not likely to become a combatant. He didn't volunteer to become a marine. Becoming a marine puts you out in the front lines as a "combatant." Turning back to the concept of "self at the time of entry" in my analysis, we have identified properties that pertain to "age," "education," and "family background." From this case, we can extrapolate "young" as a dimension of age (25 or younger). Dimensions of family background include "middle-class," "intact," "patriotic" or "having a sense of duty," and "supportive family." Dimensions of education include "having some college."

Methodological Note: Computers in Analysis

During analysis, researchers carry a lot of different ideas around their heads. Computers can be used to keep a running list of concepts and a log of memos. In Chapter 11, I explained that computer programs enable analysts to shift concepts around, retrieve memos, and provide easy access to what already has been done. In that sense, computers are an excellent analytic tool and can be added to the other analytic tools presented in this book. But computers don't do the thinking needed to move a study along. As stated previously, only a person can do that. That is why the human element is such an important part of doing qualitative research. Computer programs are exciting, but analysts should not be fooled into thinking that data analysis programs relieve them of the responsibility of doing the analysis. Recall from the last chapter that the analysis focused on the concept of the "war experience." I hypothesized that the "experience" might be quite different if the person was a "combatant" versus a "noncombatant"; therefore, I decided to gather data from a combatant. The idea was to check out my hunch that the description of the experience would be quite different.

What is interesting from a comparative standpoint is that our two participants share much in common in terms of who they were at the time of entry and family background. Therefore, any differences are probably related to what happened to them after they arrived in Vietnam, though this needs to be checked out further. The question that remains when examining data is determining what made a difference in the

experience, and could this be related to the fact that one was a combatant and the other a noncombatant, or was there something else significant that made the difference? As I proceed with this chapter, the reader will notice that when I do the analysis, I often use the terms *we* or *us* or *our*. These words refer to the reader as well as the researcher because I am taking readers along on an analytic journey.

A reader need not read every word in Chapters 12 through 16. I've included considerable detail for persons who are interested in watching the analytic process unfold. But others can skim through the memos and focus on only those that interest them.

Note: The analysis in the previous chapter was focused on **open coding**—that is, concept, identification, and exploration. This chapter builds on that foundation and begins to elaborate concepts while also identifying new ones.

MEMO 2

June 20, 2006

Concept: Being a "Volunteer"

Raw Data

I was a volunteer as all marines were when I entered service in 1964. I did not serve with any draftees in Vietnam.

Memo

Again, the respondent is a "volunteer." He served in an all-volunteer Marine Corps group, thought to be by marines as an "elite" and "well-trained" corps. This stands in stark contrast to Participant 1, who described himself as a "six-week [army] wonder." This participant gives the date that he joined the marines: 1964. From a war standpoint, this is important because at the time he volunteered, the only U.S. military persons being sent to Vietnam were there in an advising capacity. Their job was to train and support the South Vietnamese Army. This tells us that the participant didn't join the marines expressly for the purpose of going to Vietnam. It was by chance that he ended up there. He said it was not the "cause" per se that attracted him to the marines; it was what the Marine Corps stood for, the defense of our country and protection of our rights guaranteed under the Constitution. We have some contrast here from our first respondent. Participant 1 volunteered for the Army Nurse Corps to stay one step ahead of the draft. The United States had increased its involvement in Vietnam, and he knew he would probably be sent to Vietnam. He didn't mind because "at the time" he thought that the country "had a right to be there" and "it was the right thing to do." If Participant 1 had not thought that he would be drafted, he probably would not have volunteered for military service. Participant 2, on the other hand, went to Vietnam because he was already a marine, and it just so happened that the war was escalating. The "paths to war" were different, but they both ended up in the same place: Vietnam.

MEMO 3

June 20, 2006

Concept: Being a Combatant

Raw Data

I was a combat Marine rifleman also certified in 3.5-inch rocket launchers.

Memo

Now I get to the heart of the matter. This participant was a "combatant." In fact, he defines himself as such. He was a frontline soldier who fought the "enemy," a contrast from our first participant, who only came into contact with the enemy when the enemy happened to be wounded. It will be interesting to follow the data and note how his "being a combatant" shapes our understanding of the war experience.

MEMO 4

June 20, 2006

Concept: The Enemy, the War Experience, and the Culture of This War: A Concept-Linking Memo

Raw Data

The Vietcong were a very well-trained and disciplined military force that gained footholds in local villages by terror, killing, and torture.

Memo

From this quote and our analyses up to this point, we can hypothesize that "the war experience" is partly defined by the "enemy" one is fighting. This participant defines the enemy as "well-trained" and "disciplined" (these are properties of the concept "enemy" as this participant describes them). He even qualifies the discipline and training, stating that the enemy was "well-trained." He tells us more about the "enemy." He says that it "controlled villages and villagers" often through a "campaign of terror." Part of the "culture of this war," then, is that ordinary people were "caught up in the war," providing sanctuary and support to the "enemy" often against his will. This made it difficult for American soldiers to define who the "enemy" was because every citizen (man, woman, or child) was potentially an "enemy." So combatants not only encountered a "well-trained" enemy but they also had to contend with villagers, whom they saw as posing a threat to their well-being.

Methodological Note

Notice the linking of the several concepts in the previous memo: the "war experience" with the "enemy" and the "culture of war." The linking is happening even though this is only the second interview. The linkages are tentative only. The possible relationships between these concepts will be checked out against incoming data.

MEMO 5

June 20, 2006

Concept: The War Experience, Military Systems, and the Culture of War (Three Concepts Linked)

Raw Data

Marines like myself were extensively trained to follow orders, no question why or the politics of the situation. I could and would kill without hesitation as that was my job, and I was trained to do just that. It doesn't take long for one to get into the groove seeing his friends wounded and killed. The killing becomes a habit and self-defense as time goes on and you survive. Marines fight for other marines and the corps, not necessarily the cause.

Memo

I should note here that he tells us that "combatants" who were marines were "extensively trained" to follow orders describing for us who at least this group of combatants "were" and "what" their job was. The "culture of war" is a culture of "killing," and that was this man's "job." I guess this really defines what constitutes a "combatant" from, say, a noncombatant. They not only come into contact with the "enemy" but are also trained to "kill" the "enemy." The notion of kill or be killed was a large part of the daily "experience" of "combatants." The fact that killing becomes taken for granted should not come as a shock to anyone. As a soldier, you may not like killing; however, as this participant states, you do what you must do to "survive." It is this participant's reaction to his dead and wounded comrades that is interesting to me. Does one really get "into the groove" of seeing death happen? Or is getting "into the groove" one of those "blockers," a "psychological survival strategy" necessary for survival? Another point this participant raises is that he was not fighting for "the cause" as such. "The cause" is too abstract and too far out there when you come into battle. "In a battle, soldiers are fighting for their lives and for the lives of their comrades." It's that basic.

MEMO 6

June 20, 2006

Concept: Caught in the War (New Concept)

Raw Data

I was always supported when I served. There were a few of us who did not want to be there, but no one wants to be in a life-or-death situation of combat if they have a choice.

Memo

As he says, few people want to go to war to be shot at or to shoot at others. The problem is that young men join the military for a variety of reasons—some ideological and some for the sake of having an adventure, to get a skill or training, or to get away from home. They have no idea when they set off what being in war entails. When the reality of war hits, it must be a real shocker to a young man who lived a middle-class life where people are basically nice to each other.

MEMO 7

June 20, 2006

Concept: Carrying the Burden (New Concept)

Raw Data

Every combat veteran, and some who were not, is affected for a lifetime by the killing, carnage, loss of friends and family. Some carry the burdens easier than others. Outwardly anyway.

Memo

Here, our respondent clearly describes it for us. The killing and carnage place a burden on combat veterans that they carry for life. "Carrying the burden" is an in vivo code. The men who fought in the Vietnam War ended up "carrying the burden" of war as opposed to the young men who received a deferment or who went to Canada to escape the draft. They fought to survive when many of their friends who stayed home did not, and many to this day carry the "burden" for having lost the war. It is interesting that some ex-soldiers have been able to come to terms with the war experience and the many losses they suffered. Perhaps it is because they had, and still have, a greater repertoire of "psychological survival strategies." Or perhaps it is because they've been able to talk about it and in talking let go of some of that burden. I want to mark this concept—"carrying the burden"—because for me it explains some of the residual anger and the "wall of silence" of some vets.

MEMO 8

June 20, 2006

Concept: Carrying the Burden and Meaning of War (Linking Memo)

I am struck by the "burdens of war" that this man carries within him to this day. Along with that burden is "unresolved anger." I am placing "carrying the burden" in my evolving list of important concepts. I also see that I am developing some concepts further, such as the concept "meaning of war." For this man, the Vietnam War came to be viewed as a "dishonorable peace." This is in contrast to his feelings about country and war when he enlisted, indicating to us that meaning of war is constantly evolving. It is his perception that honor comes from winning a war and not pulling out. As far as he is concerned, in accepting the negotiated settlement, America turned its back on *the 58,000 who lost their lives and approximately 300,000 who were wounded.*

Journal Note

As a researcher, I find working with these materials very difficult. I feel the pain of these men. I know that only persons who have participated in a war in any capacity can come to terms with the experience. I feel very inadequate at conveying the depth of feeling contained in the words that were just given. I know that as a researcher I have a very deep responsibility to those who trust me with their stories to present those stories accurately and fairly. It is their side of the story that I'm trying to capture in this study. To really bring out the complexity of their experience, it must be placed in the context of everything else that was going on at the time, including the peace marches.

Methodological Note

Based upon analysis of Participant 2's statements, I have more questions to direct further theoretical sampling. I want to know more about "the war experience," "the culture of war," and "unresolved anger." To do so, I have to gather more data, digging deeper into what it means to be a "combatant."

MEMO 9

Part II of Interview With Participant 2

June 10, 2006

Concept: The Psychological Aftermath of War and the Wall of Silence (Linking Two Concepts)

Researcher Question to Participant 2: In the first interview, which by the way was done with a good friend of mine, several themes came out, and I wonder if you could respond to them. I wonder if you might say more about the following ideas. One is about the "culture of war" and how the culture of war comes into conflict with standard behavior. Because of that conflict, at times my friend had "pangs of conscience" about what he was seeing and doing. But the only way to survive that was to push those thoughts aside, see the enemy as the "enemy"—one who would kill you if given the chance, call them "gooks" to distance oneself from them being human, and just not talk about it. In fact, he had never talked about the war with anyone during or after the war up until the time of the interview. He just blended into the college campus when he returned home, avoiding all antiwar activities and discussions on campus. Did any of that haunt you then or afterward, and how did you deal with it?

Raw Data: Participant Response

It has haunted me every day of my life. Not a day passes that I don't remember something about that era. I never mentioned or talked about Vietnam to anyone, including my wife of 37 years until the late 1990s.

Memo

These are powerful words. This participant makes it very clear that one does not kill or watch fellow soldiers be killed and then walk away from the experience unscathed. There is emotional pain, remorse, regret, and terrible memories that one lives with. One way to function in the everyday world is to bury those memories deep within the "self" and avoid anything that will trigger the pain and suffering to put up the "wall of silence," as described by Participant 1. But I also wonder if part of the reason for not talking about one's experiences in Vietnam is the fear that others won't understand and therefore make judgment on your actions. How do you explain what you went through, the visions that haunt you, the things you had to do, and the fear that returns in the night? To carry that experience for so many years—and not be able to let go—really points to the depth of the experience and its lingering effects. The pain is almost paralyzing in the sense that it is difficult to talk about, even with those whom one holds most dear.

MEMO 10

June 20, 2006

Concept: Survival: A Matter of Chance?

Researcher Question: I guess what I'm getting at is that you say that you thought of [the war] as a survival experience, but what were the strategies that enabled you to survive?

Raw Data: Participant Response

> *Surviving the war was a matter of pure luck. You happened not to be in the wrong place at the right time. That was merely luck. You could not survive the war by being careful, a coward, or trying to stay in the rear with the gear. I know guys who served an entire combat tour without even a briar scratch, and then I knew others who were there less than 30 days and [were] nearly blown in half.*

Memo

Our participant here is talking about "physical survival," which he describes as a "matter of chance." This war had a high death and casualty rate precisely because the enemy was "well-disciplined," "well-trained," and described by some as "cunning." In fact, Moore and Galloway (1992) stated, "From that visit I took away one lesson: Death is the price you pay for underestimating this tenacious enemy" (p. 49). According to my readings, the enemy often hid in villages and placed mines and booby traps along the paths that they knew marines would pass. Though villagers often passed along these same paths, they were not injured, indicating that they probably knew where the mines were placed (Anderson, 1981). When a soldier was wounded, the enemy used him as bait because they knew that a marine would never leave another marine—dead or wounded—behind (Waugh, 2004). The enemy hid snipers in trees, and it was difficult to see them because of all the foliage—hence the defoliation with Agent Orange. If you can't see an enemy or a trap, then your "survival is threatened" and you have to get rid of the foliage either by burning it with napalm or dropping Agent Orange. It makes sense from a military standpoint. Unfortunately, there were consequences of the military strategies to the innocent villagers who were "caught in the war."

MEMO 11

June 20, 2006

Concept: More on Psychological Survival Strategies

Researcher Question: How did you deal with the death that was happening all around you?

Raw Data: Participant Response

> *Death and mutilation is all around you in war, and it becomes a matter of acceptance and habit. You mentally try to remove yourself from all the carnage and put our mind in another place and another time. Your mind spends hours upon hours at home in a warm, dry, clean, safe bed with family and loved ones. It's my opinion that marines were better trained than some of the other services to deal with the carnage—not better GIs but just better trained and much closer to each other.*

Memo: Making Comparisons and Elaborating on and Linking Concepts

Death, destruction, and mutilation "make up the culture of war." If one is going to "survive a war," then one has to accept the "realities" of it and come to terms with killing and death. I think it is interesting that this participant tells us something very similar to what Participant 1 told us. Our first participant stated that "formulating [his] plans about the future" and "psychologically removing himself from the scene" helped him survive. He daydreamed about what he would do when he got out of the military. This participant also projected himself at home, thinking about returning to his safe, warm bed and to family. I guess "thinking about a future" and about home not only helps you to escape mentally but also gives you the "mental steel" to keep going despite the bloodshed and difficulties. I code this psychological survival strategy as "mental escaping," but this label hardly does justice to the complexity or profoundness of it. This quote does tell me that both combatants and noncombatants had to use psychological survival strategies to keep themselves going.

MEMO 12

June 20, 2006

Concept: Psychological Strategies: Mentally Removing the Self

Researcher Question: How do you turn that off?

Raw Data: Participant Response

I was able to mentally remove myself from the carnage. I always felt if I dwelled on it and allowed it to consume me I would be the next one hit.

Memo

This little quote says it all, verifying the previous hypothesis about the role of psychological strategies. One must mentally remove oneself from what is going on. To focus too much on the present would severely impact one's ability to physically and psychologically survive the "war experience."

MEMO 13

June 20, 2006

Concept: The Ghosts That Haunt

Researcher Question: Did you ever have any contact with the enemy . . . and what was that like?

Raw Data: Participant Response

The contact I had with the enemy was with the dead and dying. I watched several last breaths and can see each one today as I did then. We had intimate contact with the ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam—South Vietnamese Army), which in some cases I'm convinced were VC, the enemy. There were no differences in the Vietnamese friend or foe as far as the people were concerned. They were of a different culture and religion but human. I never view friend or foe as nonhuman or villains.

Memo

These words are so powerful—to think that all these years later he can still visualize the sight of dead and dying enemy, as well as the death of friends. These are the "ghosts that haunt" you forever. Friends and enemies are the same when injured or dead. They bleed, have pain, suffer, and are afraid of death. Many Vietnamese died and were wounded in this war too—a fact that is important to remember.

MEMO 14

June 20, 2006

Concept: Aftermath: Unresolved Rage, Anger, and Depression and the Wall of Silence (Linking Several Concepts)

Researcher Question: Then and now?

Raw Data: Participant Response

Since Nam and now, I put it completely out of my mind with friends, family, and loved ones. I avoided drinking completely as booze would bring on the most vivid mental attacks of rage, anger, and depression. I would not be talking about it today unless a great friend of mine through boot camp and Nam found me after 40 years and all the memories flooded back into my mind. Talking with a brother you served with is easy but not the general public. This guy was a machine gunner in my weapons platoon, and now we see each other regularly, which allows us to dump all the memories on each other, which is like taking a drug. I've been so lucky to have a woman in my life who never pushed the issue, never asked questions, held me quietly when the nightmares came, and gave me her unyielding support.

Memo

There is not only a "wall of silence" between himself and others regarding Vietnam but also a "wall put up within the self" to blot out memories and feelings about Vietnam. Alcohol lets down those defenses, and the anger, rage, and depression come flooding through. Other vets have turned to alcohol to blot out memories. Again, this gets back to the question of "healing." Participant 2 tells us about this underlying anger and rage. Though not expressed directly by Participant 1, I couldn't help but feel that he, too, had many unresolved issues, though certainly not to the same degree as Participant 2. I hypothesize the difference has to do with being in "combat." Conceptually, though, there are similarities between 1 and 2 in the sense that each has buried memories of Vietnam and had "nips at [his] conscience," which they both carry to this day not only as a "burden" but also as "ghosts that haunt."

Participant 1 has some good memories mixed with the not so good. Participant 2 doesn't seem to have any good memories. I wonder what there is about combat itself that generates such intense feelings. Not having been to war, I can only speculate. I am struck, however, that even in the memoirs written by Vietnam veterans that I've been reading there is a lot of rage felt toward the enemy. There is rage at seeing death and mutilation in your buddies and a strong desire to get revenge (Waugh, 2004). In fact, Bird (1981) stated, "The casualties taken in the fighting really got to us and uprooted us" (p. 43).

The rage expressed here also seems to be directed at the peace marchers, who are thought by many veterans to have brought the U.S. government to a point of accepting a "dishonorable peace" (Sar Desai, 2005). It seems amazing that after all these years, memories are still so vivid and the nightmares so real. Civilians go on with their lives after a war but for the GIs it seems that their lives are affected forever. It is

good that this individual has gained some relief by talking with his marine "brothers" and that he has a loving and supportive wife—both conditions for handling the memories that haunt after "coming home."

MEMO 17

June 20, 2006

Concept: Keeping Up the Wall of Silence

Raw Data: Participant Response

Ms. Corbin, in closing I just want to warn you if you don't already know that asking these questions of some Vietnam vets will bring on aggressive responses and sometimes verbal attacks including guys who patronize my website. I would say most of them as a matter of fact. I choose and never have edited the message board, and the guys know it. We offered our lives for freedom of speech as well as all other GIs who have served. Who am I to censor free speech? I've tried to accommodate teachers and students like yourself over the years with basic input to enable those who were not involved to the views of many—especially the views of veterans in a feeble attempt to create an understanding of their views. Just don't take it personal if some tell you to take a hike.

Memo

This participant is telling me that it is better not to disturb that "wall of silence." The hurt that these veterans feel must be deep and profound. Talking about the experience revives old memories and brings out the unresolved anger. But I still don't understand with any great clarity why there is so much rage so long after the war. It seems to be a nonspecific and diffused type of anger, not focused on a specific person or thing. Why the terrible memories, and why can't the GIs let go of the memories and the anger? What is there about war? This question needs to be examined further, and this is where theoretical sampling comes in. I say that veterans have the right to not speak about the war. After all, they earned it.

MEMO 18

June 20, 2006

Concept: Healing: A Summary Memo

What this part of the interview makes me realize is the degree to which the aftermath of war lingers and how little healing has taken place in some of these vets. It appears that the "ghosts of war" haunt men who served in combat and perhaps those who served in war support roles as well. The ghosts must be more than just ghosts of the dead. The ghosts must also include memories of battle, the noise, the fear, and the chaos. Though many vets live ordinary lives, beneath the surface in some there is a volcano that if disturbed can erupt as rage. O'Shea (2003) called this the "beast within," a beast that he says has robbed him of a good deal of his life.

Methodological Note

Note that with each interview, knowledge and understanding about the "war experience" grows. In coding

the interview with Participant 2, I came up with some new concepts such as "the ghosts that haunt" and "carrying the burden." Notice, also, that analysis leads to questions that in turn lead to further data collection and analysis. That is why I am such a strong believer in alternating data collection with data analysis. A researcher can't possibly know at the beginning of a study all the questions to ask participants. It is only through interaction with data that relevant questions emerge. If all the data is collected ahead of time, there is no opportunity to ask those questions of further participants or to verify or discard one's hypotheses about possible relationships between concepts.

Though the idea of doing theoretical sampling sounds rather complicated, it is not. It follows the logic of analysis. For example, I was struck by the concept of "residual anger." I wanted to learn more about it. I was able to gather more information (theoretically sample) about anger with the next participant, whom we will call Participant 3.

Participant 3

After my interview with Participant 2, I received an e-mail from another marine at the same website who said he was willing to speak with me. He did not serve in Vietnam but did serve in Bosnia and Grenada. I asked him, why the anger?

MEMO 1

June 21, 2006

Concept: Residual Anger and Coming Home

Raw Data: Participant Response

The anger comes from several avenues. It starts in boot camp. They are training you to protect, defend, and to kill if it comes to that.

They frustrate you, intimidate you, and irritate you because any sane person would not make you do the things that they do. Then if you do go to war and experience it, our anger splits, like an atom does, and creates heat. Anger is volatile. You are sent someplace to defend your way of life, to protect your country, her women and children, and her divine right to exist. You get mad because you don't understand why the [enemy] hates you because you're an American. It builds and builds because everything you were told as a child you have to protect. You are afraid it will be taken away. This adds to the anger. You do your job. You win, and you get to go home and everyone has been protected. No one loses sleep while I'm protecting you.

Now you begin to think it was a waste and your buddies died for nothing and you got shot for what? More anger. You're like an atomic bomb with its atoms splitting. It is a continual reaction. Add alcohol to this already-explosive mixture. You are in hell. You don't understand. You did it right. You were a marine and defended America. You did what you were supposed to do. Why does life hurt so bad, and why do I not want to be here anymore? You can't think it through. There is no logical thought pattern that will help you put this together. Now add the hormones, the dopamine, the epinephrine; because you were in a constant state of excitement and fear, your hormones that flow in the brain to maintain emotional stability are all screwed up and stuck high. You can't process it now if you wanted to.

The anger is actually a chain of events. Then it goes to a chemical reaction in the brain, then add the Jack Daniels to this, the anger does not go away until one of these chains are broken. That's why it takes years to "come home."

I hope this answers the question for you. Take this info and help more guys to be able to "come home." You will help me by bringing all of us home.

Memo

This data is "mentally heavy" material. How representative are the reasons that he gives for all young men who serve in combat? I have no idea. I am certain that what this participant is describing pertains to others as well, because the men do share a lot through their talk. To his list we would add the "sense of loss" that comes from seeing your buddies killed or wounded. I wonder how many Vietnam vets were diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. This is another concept I have to follow up on. I know from my experiences when doing research in veterans' hospitals here in the Bay Area that many of the vets being treated are on drug and alcohol units. I like the way this vet describes anger as a process that begins in boot camp and grows with the war experience. Many young soldiers go through boot camp, but not all come out angry. My educated guess is that a major condition for the anger is the intense pressure and stress of the war experience. Added to this, when a combatant comes home, is apparent indifference to what young soldiers experience as part of war on the part of society. I wouldn't say that the general population doesn't care but that they are caught up in their own lives. I also really like his "in vivo code" of "coming home." There is the "physical coming home," and just as important is the "psychological coming home" in the sense of "readjustment to civilian life," and this is a process that takes time. I don't think the vets are asking for bands to play but merely a little understanding and respect for what they have been through.

"Coming home," though, seems to be a time when problems arise. The men are too busy when in the midst of combat to think about what is happening around them. Thoughts are more about dreams of the future and what they will do when they get out. But when they get home, the war experience comes back in the form of flashbacks and other memories (the ghosts) to haunt them.

MEMO 2

June 20, 2006

Concept: Summary Memo: Coming Home

I like the concept of "coming home" and think that it should be a category. It marks transition back to civilian life. Upon coming home, many vets "carry a heavy burden" that manifests itself as flashbacks, bad memories, and anger. Some vets are able to let go of that "burden" as they take up satisfying lives once more. Others seem to be carrying the burden of Vietnam even to this day. I see "coming home" as a process that happens at different rates, and to different degrees, depending upon the individual, probably depending upon level of maturity, "psychological makeup," whether or not the person serves in combat, and his or her experiences in the war. It is more than a physical returning. It has to do with psychologically "letting go" of the "burden of war," which requires "burying the ghosts" that haunt them once and for all, if that is possible. Though the anger begins in boot camp, boot camp alone is not sufficient to produce that degree of anger. Lots of guys go through boot camp, and not all come out of the military angry. Boot camp has to be mixed with and tied to "war experiences." Degree of "healing" and

"letting go" of the bad memories and anger are likely to be related, among other things, to the support system that one has at home (hypotheses on the part of the researcher to be checked out against incoming data).

Methodological Note

More theoretical sampling is indicated regarding the concepts of "coming home" and "letting go." I then asked Participant 3 this question: Why is it so difficult for some vets to "let go" of that anger and to "come home" psychologically? Here was his reply.

MEMO 3

June 20, 2006

Concept: Residual Anger and Imprint of Horror

Raw Data: Participant Response

What I have found to be true is that a veteran goes through a grieving process—denial, bargaining, anger, and acceptance. After the "imprint of horror," a video is embedded into the memory of a soldier. The video often replays continually until the coping skills are exercised and the imprint is reduced. Anger stays as the primary emotion because this is where everything is stuck—anger at loss of life, loss of innocence, loss of the "fun years," loss of power, loss of any number of things. The average age of a service man is 18 to 25. What do you remember of those years, and why do you remember it? College, spring break, friends, all-nighters, etc. —these are fond memories in contrast of war for the veteran. The secret is to get the veteran to use coping skills they don't know they have because they were never taught to use them as you were with "critical thinking" in college. Emotionally, until the veteran uses coping skills, they can't advance in emotional or cognitive age. They are stuck with thoughts, hormone imbalance, etc. Some need not only counseling but medication also to help maintain psychological homeostasis. I learned how to use coping skills with meds, counseling, support network of other veterans, and my wife. That's why I am finally back in college going after what I wanted to be 15 years after the normal age of doing that. Regret is another hang-up. Have you ever done anything that you regret because you didn't think it was you really doing it? Regret turns into confusion emotionally, and it in turn creates anger. It's a cycle that continues until you break it.

Memo

Though Participant 3 represents a sample of one, his words do give me a lot of insight into why anger seems to hold on so long. First there is the "imprint of horror," a property of the "war experience." Then there are not only those horrible experiences that are imprinted into your brain but also the fact that while one is at war, the lives of civilians are going on quite normally. While a young man (or woman) is at war, he is too busy to think about this. But when he or she returns home, there is "lost time" and "lost experiences" that he or she can never make up. Add to that the terrible memories, the nightmares, the hormonal imbalance (strong doses of adrenaline and other stress hormones released during combat) and the perceived uncaring on the part of civilians—all of which build and continue to foster anger. Then there is "youth." Being young usually means being physically strong but not necessarily psychologically strong. Until the "cycle of anger" is broken through learning new "coping skills" and intervention, the anger is likely to remain.

MEMO 4

June 20, 2006

Concept: Summary Memo of Concepts

In this chapter, rather than making a list of concepts or codes like some researchers do, I am putting the concepts into a memo in which I begin to integrate them as part of the ongoing analysis. It is the integration process that moves the analysis along and another way of keeping track of concepts instead of keeping a list of codes.

What we take from analyses of these two interviews is as follows. First, there was greater development of the concept of "combatant" in terms of understanding what war is and identifying some of its properties and dimensions (see concepts in this memo). These two men tell me a great deal that brought my analyses further along and added new concepts. (In terms of Participant 3, readers can go to Appendix D to read the complete interview.) Combatants, especially marines, are well-trained and disciplined soldiers. Their job is to "engage the enemy" and "kill" or "be killed." During "battle," they fight not for a "cause" per se but to "survive"—their own survival and that of their fellow soldiers, who are the only persons they can really trust while on the battlefield. It can be said that the whole focus of combatants is on "surviving," and they develop a number of "psychological and physical strategies" to help them do so. Second, the experience of "fighting" really "changes combatants' selves" and places a "burden" in the form of the "ghosts that haunt"—a burden that they "carry" for the remainder of their lives.

Though a combatant is "trained to kill," killing really goes against all the "social mores" that persons learn growing up, leaving a person not only with "nips at conscience" but also a great deal of "anger" at having been forced into the position of having to do this. Third, there is a "major adjustment" physically, psychologically, and morally that must be made when going from "civilian life" to a "war zone" and another that must be made upon "coming home." But because of the "ghosts" and "pangs of conscience" that Vietnam veterans carry with them when they returned home, "adjusting" is not easy. Civilians do not fully understand what combatants go through. They placed on the shoulders of returning vets a civilian view of war and morality. They add to the vets' "pangs of conscience" and "ghosts" by calling the war an "unjust war" like somehow the vet was responsible for starting and maintaining the war. Then there is the notion of a "dishonorable peace," which vets believe doesn't take into account the lives lost and soldiers wounded both mentally and physically. The "rage" that begins in boot camp and that is fostered in combat is often reinforced upon "coming home" as the vet begins to compare him or herself to civilians that all this time have gone on with their lives and prospered.

The concept of "combatant" was developed considerably through this analysis. I also know quite a bit about the "anger" and what happens upon "coming home" that fosters continuation of that anger. But there still remains a big hole in this research. What occurs in combat that makes combatants so angry? How does a combatant feel while in battle? To answer these questions, I need to examine more data on "combat."

Methodological Note

Having determined that the war experience is in many ways very different for those who are combatants versus those who are noncombatants, I now want to learn more about what happens during "combat." I realize from my readings that "combat" can be many things from face-to-face engagement with the enemy to being a pilot out on a bombing mission and being shot at from below. I guess the main descriptor of "combat" is engaging to some degree with the "enemy" with the notion of causing harm and at the same time keeping the self safe. I need more data to continue with my analysis. I could try to reach more vets via the Internet or put out the word among friends, but at this point I don't have the time. Like many researchers, my time is constrained by the fact that I have to finish this book on time.

Theoretical Sampling and Expanding Understanding of the Concept "Combat"

Needing more data and not certain where to find it, I turned to memoirs written by Vietnam veterans. Once I discovered the memoirs, I felt that I found a treasure of information. I realize that the vets who wrote memoirs are probably articulate and introspective. Their stories may not be representative of those of all vets. But writers tend to be insightful, and perhaps for my research purposes, their writings can be most helpful. I think that many of the vets who wrote memoirs did so not only to explain what Vietnam was like to others but also for the purpose of helping them to "bury" the ghosts that haunt them. In reading and analyzing the memoirs, I'm theoretically sampling, following up on questions that were derived from previous analyses. I want to know the answers to questions such as the following: What is combat? What emotions does it generate? How do combatants react to it, and describe it?

Methodologically, it is important to point out that when coding memoirs, the analytic process is the same as it is with interview data. From the point of the reader, what is important is to note how I use the materials to sample theoretically and follow up on analytic questions that were raised in previous analyses. The first memoir that I coded was titled *Hill 488* by Ray Hildreth, a former marine. The coauthor of this book is Charles W. Sasser, a writer. The book was published in 2003 by Simon & Schuster and describes Hildreth's account of the battle that gave the book its name. Of the men who participated in the battle with Hildreth, one man received the Medal of Honor. Four men received Navy Crosses. Thirteen men received Silver Stars, and 18 men were given Purple Hearts. Some of the decorations were given posthumously. Though I'm certain that some of the events described in the book were dramatized to make a point, for the most part the overall story seems genuine. It is similar in tone to the other memoirs that I've read about Vietnam. Rather than using direct quotes, I've paraphrased the description given by Hildreth in the book.

Describing a battle is not easy even for soldiers who have participated in it. For the researcher trying to capture this experience secondhand, it is even more difficult. However, to understand why the war experience has such a profound and long-lasting impact on a young soldier, it is important to know what goes on in battle. I'll try to recapture aspects of this experience.

Ethical Considerations

Rather than using direct quotes from the book, I'll paraphrase the following memos so as not to violate copyright laws.

MEMO 1

June 21, 2006

Concept: The Recon Mission

Raw Data: Participant Response

While out on recon (reconnaissance) patrol, the recon team came upon a village with considerable enemy activity. Usually villages consisted of men, women, and children. But this village was different in its makeup of residents. It appeared to be an enemy base of operations. The recon team relayed this information back to headquarters, and soon there were American air strikes on the village. The recon patrol remained in their position, gathering further intelligence on enemy activities that continued to go on despite the bombings.

Commentary Memo

What this section of the memoir tells us is that the enemy did use villages to fight from. It also explains why villages were bombed, despite the civilians who were "caught in the middle" between the Vietcong and the Americans. Interestingly enough, the enemy did not withdraw or run away when the bombing began but continued their operations. Also interesting about this piece of information is that some combatants had the job of reconnaissance, or spotting the enemy for military strikes. However, being a small group of men alone in the jungle made them very vulnerable to attack, and since they were only supposed to "find" and not necessarily "fight," they had very little fighting equipment with them other than their rifles. They had to keep things light because when "finding," they were usually on the move.

MEMO 2

June 21, 2006

Concept: Discovery and the Waiting

Raw Data: Participant Response

The recon team would have been surprised by an enemy attack if one of the sergeants with them had not overheard a conversation on his satellite phone between some Green Berets on patrol and a South Vietnamese military group who also happened to also be in the general area but not close by. The warning was to be "wary" because a group of enemies were out and about and seemed to be looking for something or someone. Hildreth's (Hildreth & Sasser, 2003) recon team, upon hearing the message, realized that they had been spotted by the Vietcong, and they were the probable targets of the advancing army. Unfortunately for the men, it was getting dark and too late to call for a helicopter airlift out of the area. The recon team would have to hold their position and wait until morning for rescue. Traveling light, they had no heavy artillery with them. For defense, all they carried were their rifles, a little extra ammunition, and a few grenades. Preparing for a possible assault, the men were placed in two-man teams and placed in locations around the perimeter of the hill. For cover, there was only the tall grass.

Commentary Memo

This data tells us that combatants do not always go out of their bases seeking battle and therefore are not

always prepared for "battle." Sometimes the enemy comes upon them, and soldiers are unable to escape the enemy without a fight. Fortunately, this recon team was warned by overhearing the radio conversation, and they could at least be on the lookout and ready themselves somewhat. The problem was that they did not have with them any of the heavy guns or the types of weapons necessary to fight a difficult battle. At this point, the men did not know how many "enemy combatants" there were or how intense the attack would be.

MEMO 3

June 21, 2006

Concept: The Assault Begins

Raw Data: Participant Response

The men waited for the enemy to come. Finally, one of the soldiers saw movement and fired his gun in that direction. The men took the shot as a signal that the battle was about to begin. Hildreth said, "I froze in place, unexpectedly and totally scared to death" (Hildreth & Sasser, 2003, p. 197). One of the American soldiers soon was wounded. His screams pierced the night air. Hildreth found the screaming unnerving. Finally, a medic reached the wounded soldier and gave him a shot of morphine. The screaming quieted down. But the battle was just beginning, and this was the first of the wounded. This was the recon team's first experience with battle. About the experience, Hildreth stated, "Battle was difficult to grasp the first time you experienced it" (Hildreth & Sasser, 2003, p. 199). Using the satellite phone, the platoon called for air support. However, because it was so dark and the enemy was so near, sending planes to bomb was thought to be too risky to the Americans. The planes, however, dropped flares so that the American soldiers could more easily spot the enemy hiding in the tall grass. Hildreth saw the man next to him get killed. The death of a close comrade, he said, had a strong psychological affect on him. It made him realize that it could just as easily have been him.

Commentary Memo

Hildreth is giving us some insight into what happens in battle. Despite combat training, a soldier is never sure how he will respond. Hildreth's first reaction to battle was "fear" and to "freeze in place." As Participant 2 told us, to "do nothing" is not a good strategy if a combatant wants to survive. It only puts him at greater risk of injury or death. Yet, I can imagine the fear and confusion that occurs during those first few moments of battle. There is bound to be confusion, a few moments when a combatant is not sure what is happening or what to do. The data that was just given also tells us that death is never far away for combatants during a "battle." Survival is just as much a matter of "chance" as it is "daring" and "skill."

MEMO 4

June 22, 2006

Concept: The Second Assault

Raw Data: Participant Response

Despite being outnumbered by enemy soldiers, the recon team managed to temporarily repel the enemy. The American soldiers knew, however, that the enemy was just using the opportunity to regroup and plan their next attack. Hildreth said, "Nothing could be as bad as the waiting" (Hildreth & Sasser, 2003, p. 213). Finally, the soldiers on the hill heard the clicking of bamboo sticks (the enemy's way of communicating with each other) and knew that the second assault was about to begin. The second assault was fierce. There were heavy casualties. A helicopter tried to

reach the battle zone to pick up the dead and injured but was shot down; the pilot was killed. Other rescue helicopters in the area aborted the mission. The situation looked "hopeless." The enemy brought in a 50-caliber machine gun. Hildreth stated that when the gun went off, it felt like the whole hill was being ripped open. The platoon sergeant was wounded. Yet, every man who was alive though he might be wounded but able to fight did so. At this point, Hildreth stated that for him the battle took on a surreal quality. He was certain that they would all be killed. Of that time, Hildreth said, "I hadn't moved since the guy fell dead next to me with the top of his head blown off. I lay among the dead in a graveyard of the still unburied" (Hildreth & Sasser, 2003, p. 307). Again, despite their advantage, the enemy was repelled a second time.

Commentary Memo

It is interesting to note how combat training comes into play during actual battle. Though frightened and somewhat disorganized at first, the men automatically go into the mode of fighting back. Driving them is that survival instinct. There is, however, as Hildreth tells us, that feeling that you too will die, just like those around you. What is most interesting are the strategies men use, the "mental escape tactics" that include "giving battle a surreal quality," "standing outside the action," and "watching it go on" yet all the while "participating in it." These seem to be very important strategies for surviving the horrors of battle. The fear, the horrors, and smell of death are what vets want to bury deep within their selves not only at the time of battle but also later when they get home. The "war experience" is a "horrifying nightmare" that one can never fully escape, a battle that takes on a different quality but one that follows the vet home.

MEMO 5

June 22, 2006

Concept: A Turn in the Battle

Raw Data: Participant Response

Preparing to make the third assault, the enemy started yelling, "Marines, you die tonight" (Hildreth & Sasser, 2003, p. 261). Rather than demoralizing the marines, the cries of the enemy enraged and energized them. The marines started yelling back at the Vietcong. This went on for some minutes until the marines who remained alive and able to fight realized the absurdity of the situation. Here they were in the middle of a battle having a yelling match with the enemy. But somehow the act of yelling lifted them out of their sense of hopelessness and renewed their will to survive. Hildreth stated, "It was a turning point in the fight" (Hildreth & Sasser, 2003, p. 263). The marines' resolve was bolstered by the aid that they finally received from Tactical Air Support. Seeing the intensity of the battle, and even though it was still dark, American bombers moved into the area and started to drop bombs on the enemy. The bombs did not deter the enemy. They continued to advance. The marines who were still able to fight continued to do so. The battle ended around daylight. The marines were still holding the hill. But the price the recon patrol paid was high. Six out of the 18 men in the platoon were killed, and 12 were wounded. Of the wounded, only three were able to walk away without help. Of this experience, Hildreth stated, "None of us would ever be 19 years old again" (Hildreth & Sasser, 2003, p. 324). Waiting for the dead and severely wounded to be evacuated, Hildreth said, "I spotted movement among a group of VC corpses and I whirled and starting shooting in a rage" (Hildreth & Sasser, 2003, p. 325). He went on to say, "I went down and looked at the gooks I killed. They were the ones that killed Adams [his team member]. I looked at them and felt nothing. I didn't know if I would ever be able to feel again" (Hildreth & Sasser, 2003, p. 325). At this point, he said, "I was one sick, confused Marine. Fucked up from the shock and horror" (Hildreth & Sasser, 2003, p. 265).

Commentary Memo

"Being a combatant" seems to define the "war experience" in very definite ways. In the space of a few hours, a night in this situation, a young man lost the innocence of youth and became a man much older. So what is "war"? I can only state that war is a "fierce struggle for survival" though the military might define it differently—that is, in terms of a "cause." A "struggle for survival" is how the participants of this

study define war. It is the meaning they give to war. Being in battle seems to engender a range of emotions that can vary over the course of that battle: fear, horror, sorrow, hopelessness, shock, rage, and a determination to live. Being in battle can "fuck" one up. I suppose by "fucked up" Hildreth means mentally confused, dazed, left trying to understand how easily one can kill and be killed, and most of all enraged. Perhaps rage is an emotion necessary to overcome the built-in sanctions one has against killing someone else. It takes rage to "kill." As noted, once rage is set in motion and the adrenaline is soaring, it is difficult to turn off. Rage can lead to actions that a combatant might be sorry for later when he or she has time to cool off.

Methodological Note

I have analyzed now several interviews and memoirs. As I continue to read memoirs, I see the words expressed by Hildreth (Hildreth & Sasser, 2003) echoed in the memoirs of other ground soldiers, marines, and pilots. Those men who fought or flew in Vietnam seem to be telling the same general survival story, though the specifics might be a little different depending on which branch of service they served in and what their roles and experiences were. Among the memoirs that I've analyzed up to now include Alvarez and Pitch (1989), Bell (1993), Caputo (1977), Downs (1993), Foster (1992), Herr (1991), Marrett (2003), Moore & Galloway (1992), Nhu Tang (1986), Rasimus (2003), Santoli (1981, 1985), Terry (1984), Trotti (1984), and Yarborough (1990).

The memoirs validate my interviews and also demonstrate that the men (and women) who served in Vietnam carried the war home with them to an extent that many felt a need to write about it. At this point in the analysis, I have a lot more analysis-derived questions that need to be answered: Who exactly was this enemy, and why were they such persistent adversaries? How did America become involved in war way over in Vietnam? And what were the conditions—political, social, and environmental—under which men like Hildreth (Hildreth & Sasser, 2003) had to fight? I realize that these questions are contextual-related questions, which means that I have to extend my investigation and examine some of the broader more macro issues if I'm to understand the war better. I already have some of the more micro contextual factors in our existing categories—for example, "changes in self" from "time of entry" to "homecoming" and "beyond" and "psychological survival strategies." What I'm missing at this juncture in the analysis is the larger sociopolitical picture and its impact on the combat experience. As part of theoretical sampling, I turn now to the macro issues in the next round of data collection and analysis.

Summary of Key Points

Rather than just coming up with a list of concepts, I'm placing the concepts in a memo because it enables me to make the necessary linkages between them.

This chapter explored and developed the concept of "combatant," extending it to include the notion of "battle." Though exploration and development of the concept of combatant was the main focus of the analysis, new concepts were derived from the additional data—concepts such as "ghosts that haunt," "homecoming," and "carrying the burden." The two most important points for readers to take away from this chapter are (a) the importance of memos to analysis and (b) linking of concepts occurs rather spontaneously once the analyst gets over the initial phase of getting into the data. A researcher can readily see that it would have been impossible without the use of memos to keep track of all the ideas explored in this chapter—very few of us have that good of a memory—or to be able to follow up on important analytic questions through further theoretical sampling. The analysis became too complex and loaded with conceptual development to be retained without writing those thoughts down. I also want to point out that though computers are very helpful to analysis, even when using a computer analysts must not approach analysis in a mechanical way. It is the freedom to think, the ability of the researcher to change his or her mind, to check out ideas, and to follow the "data trail" wherever it leads that makes the findings derived through qualitative research so compelling and relevant and the process of getting there such an exciting voyage of discovery.

Normally, at the end of a research investigation the products of analysis are presented as a set of findings. There is little or only brief mention of what the researchers went through in the process of arriving at those findings. In writing this book, I wanted to give readers something more than just a book about procedures. I wanted to bring readers into the analytic experience with me. Next is a memo that I wrote after finishing the chapter. I place it here so that readers can obtain some insight into my analytic journey.

MEMO

June 21, 2006

Concept: Theoretical Sensitivity

It is interesting to note how much I've changed since beginning this research project. It's not that the interviews and memoirs that I'm reading are any different than they were at the beginning of the study but that I'm far more sensitive to what they are saying. It takes being immersed in the materials for some time before the significance of what is being said comes through. Sensitivity grows with exposure to data. I might say that analyzing data is like peeling an onion. Each time a layer of assumptions and beliefs is removed it takes the analyst that much closer to understanding. This is what is meant by "theoretical sensitivity"—being more in tune to the meanings of data.

Journal Note

In addition to increasing sensitivity to data, what I find interesting are the changes in my self since beginning this project. I can't help but be touched by the war stories I've read. I've seen movies and read books about war. But there is something about the interaction that occurs between analyst and data during analysis that has altered how I think and feel about combatants. It has to do with taking the role of the other, feeling for a short time what it is like to be a soldier. I know that we'll never look at a veteran of any war in quite the same way. I notice that as I work with data, I feel anger at the circumstances that brought

young men into combat in Vietnam and the rules of engagement that made it so difficult for them to fight that war. I'm saddened by what I perceive to be the suffering of some men both during and after the war, and I feel for the enemy soldiers and the civilian villagers who were "caught up in the war." It was a difficult period for all. At the same time, I know that we can't let our emotions get in the way of doing the research. It's okay to feel, but at the same time I must retain the ability to do justice to the stories of participants and not get so carried away by anger and other emotions that I become ineffective as an analyst.

There is still much I don't understand about how things were for combatants in Vietnam. To gain a better understanding of the problems, I have to delve deeper into the contextual factors that shaped the war experience—that is, the political, social, and historical conditions leading up to, during, and after the Vietnam War. This is the direction the research is leading me. The questions driving the analysis at this stage of the research are these: What were the conditions that combatants had to fight under? And what are the historical, political, and social factors that led to those conditions?

Activities for Thinking, Writing, and Discussing as a Group

1. Return to the Points to Keep in Mind section at the beginning of this chapter, and find examples in the analysis of this chapter that demonstrate each of the points. Bring these to class, and discuss how you think the researcher followed through on these points.
2. Think about the role of the researcher in this analysis and how the analysis might look different if the researcher had been different. How would you analyze the same data? What would you get from this?
3. Jot your ideas down and bring them to class for discussion.

Chapter 14
Analyzing Data for Context

> The U.S. debacle in Vietnam can be attributed primarily to the incorrect diagnosis of the reasons for the insurrection. The conflict was not as much pro-Communist as it was anti-Diem and later anti-Ky and anti-Thieu, all of whom failed to initiate and implement the much-needed political and socio-economic reforms. . . . The conflict called for a political rather than a military solution, probably to satisfy a widespread urge to reunify the country. (Sar Desai, 2005, p. 120)

Table 14.1 Key Terms

Conditional/consequential matrix: An analytic strategy to help analysts identify the range of possible conditions that are operating in any situation and in turn the range of consequences that result from action–interaction
Context: Context is a complicated notion. It locates and explains action–interaction within a background of conditions and anticipated consequences. In doing so, it links concepts and enhances a theory's ability to explain.
Process: Adaptive changes in action–interaction taken in response to changes in conditions

In the last chapter, it was established that "survival" of self and of fellow soldiers rather than the "cause" of containing communism was the main objective of the U.S. soldiers once they became "combatants" in Vietnam. In this chapter, we take up the notion of **context** in order to better understand why survival was threatened. My first task as an analyst is to explore the larger historical, social, political, cultural, and environmental conditions in which the war was fought. Since "conditions" in the abstract sense are not viewed as conditions by those fighting the war but as threats or risks to self and others, our second task is to link conditions to the "risks" perceived by combatants in any point in time. More importantly, we do not just list contextual factors as background material; we have to make the link between the larger set of conditions, the manner in which those conditions presented themselves to combatants—that is, their explanations, which are threats to survival—and the subsequent action combatants took to increase their chances to survive the threats.

Points to Keep in Mind

When reading this chapter, students are advised to keep the following points in mind:

- Exploring the political, social, environmental, cultural, and historical conditions that made up the context in which survival took place

- Examining how conditions presented themselves in a manner that they were perceived as threats to survival by combatants

Context of War

The first question to explore as we (readers as well as the researcher) theoretically sample the data before us is this: What made this war and the conditions combatants experienced particular to Vietnam? This is not to say that combatants in other wars have not experienced similar conditions, but Vietnam was different in that the reason for the United States going to war was rather vague (the threat of communism to a foreign country) while the risks associated with this war were very high. The conditions under which this war was fought had their foundation in the historical, political, social, environmental, and cultural conditions that set the tone and policies for the war. The decisions made by leaders in Washington and Hanoi were based on their individual and collective ambitions, understanding of past events, and national interests.

Our analysis of the social, political, and historical will take the form of memos. The memos seek to answer the questions of why, who, what, and where and are our first step in exploring the concept "context of war."

Journal Note

I must admit that I've been bogged down by the analysis for this chapter. There is so much material on the Vietnam War that sorting through it has left my head spinning. I feel like I have reached a point of oversaturation. After putting this project aside for a while, I came back to it, realizing that I'd been too caught up in the descriptive aspects of data and not thinking as conceptually as I should have been. By refocusing on the concepts rather than the details, I know I can get going again. Data for this section on context came from the following sources: Ellsberg, 2003; Isaacs, 1997; Langguth, 2002; McMaster, 1997; McNamara, Blight, Brigham, Bierstaker, & Schandler, 1999; Nhu Tang, 1986; Sallah & Weiss, 2006; Santoli, 1985; Sar Desai, 2005; Sheeham, 1988; Summers, 1999; Tucker, 1998.

MEMO

June 27, 2006

Concept: The Context of War

The "context of war" is one experienced by combatants as consisting of physical, psychological, and moral risks. The risks arise from the conditions that framed the combat experience, gave the war meaning, and threatened survival. To find out why and what the risks, I have to go back and look at *who* brought the United States into the war, *why* at this time and place, *who* set the policies for the war, and *who* was the enemy? *What* were the rules of engagement, *why* did the war last so long, and *what* finally brought it to an end? It's time to delve into some of those historical books.

This is a long but important memo. There is a lot more material that could be covered, but it is not in the interest of what we are trying to teach in this chapter to put it all in here.

Why Was the United States in Vietnam?

Why were U.S. combatants fighting in Vietnam? For many years, Vietnam was a French colony. A revolt against the French by the Vietnamese led to defeat of the French in 1954 and the development of a strong sense of nationalism. French departure did not result in a unified country. As part of the Geneva Accords, Vietnam was divided into two parts at the 17th parallel, a communist north and a noncommunist south. According to the Geneva Accords, the issue of reunification was to be resolved through free elections within two years. However, the South Vietnam government, with U.S. backing, refused to sign the Geneva Accords. Behind this refusal was a fear that if free elections were held, control of the country would pass into the hands of the communists. The U.S. fear was that if South Vietnam fell into communist hands, Cambodia, Laos, and the rest of Southeast Asia countries would follow in a sort of "domino effect" (Sar Desai, 2005, p. 68). It was this fear of communism and the domino effect that set the stage for U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

Meanwhile, South Vietnam had its political problems. In 1954, Ngo Dinh Diem was designated president of South Vietnam. He was a Catholic, originally from the North, coming into a traditionally Buddhist South Vietnam. Right from the start, Diem struggled militarily against religious and political opposition. Rather than use the financial aid he received from the United States to rebuild his country, Diem used the money to build and equip his army. He filled government posts in Saigon and administrative posts in local villages with relatives and friends, disrupting Buddhist traditions that went back for centuries. The Vietcong promised relief from the corruption of their South Vietnamese government. It is for these reasons that many villagers were sympathetic to the Vietcong, fighting against or at least not being helpful to U.S. troops, whom they saw as propping up the corrupt government. Though many of the communists went north when the country was divided, several thousand communists (the Vietcong) remained in the south in preparation for eventual reunification. When the Diem regime fell, political instability followed. As various military leaders fought for control, the gap in leadership opened the doors to infiltration by the North Vietnamese Army, who came to aid the Vietcong. North Vietnamese troops and supplies moved south via the Ho Chi Minh Trail. A good portion of the trail passed through neutral Cambodia and Laos, and thus was supposedly out of reach of the U.S. Army and South Vietnamese Army.

Who Brought the United States Into the War?

President Kennedy sent military advisors to the South Vietnamese Army. The basis for this decision was that the Vietcong could easily be defeated if the United States provided military assistance in the form of training, support, and intelligence to the South Vietnamese Army. When Kennedy was assassinated in 1963 and Johnson assumed the presidency of the United States, Johnson had his own agenda for the presidency and wasn't quite sure what to do with Vietnam. He relied on Kennedy policymakers to advise him.

McNamara, one of the young advisors left over from the Kennedy administration, became the chief "architect" of the Vietnam War. He had no military background. Rather, he worked for the Ford Corporation before becoming a presidential advisor and applied his business sense to war. McNamara's plan for the Vietnamese conflict consisted of the application of what he called "graduated pressure" to North Vietnam.

Who Was the Enemy?

Who was the enemy, and why did this enemy put up such a determined fight? In brief, for over 1,000 years, beginning with the Chinese, the Vietnamese fought to maintain their sovereignty and their identity. The last occupying force was the French government. A desire to gain their independence from France gave rise to a strong nationalist movement. Inspired by the revolution in China, many Vietnamese youth, both communist and noncommunist, went to China to train as revolutionaries in order to overthrow the French. The inspiration behind the revolutionary fever was not so much communism as it was nationalism. The Vietnamese, including Ho Chi Minh, were "nationalist first and communist second" (Sar Desai, 2005, p. 53). This sense of nationalism is what made them such a formidable enemy.

Who Were the Combatants?

The early 1960s were defined as the Kennedy years and were marked by a sense of idealism with service to country and mankind. At the same time, there was the Cuban Missile Crisis and considerable fear of communist aggression that would do away with the American way of life. Furthermore, a generation had passed since World War II, and images of war were not based on any reality but derived mostly from movies that focused on heroes rather than death and destruction. Thus, there were many young men ready to serve their country, to fight the communists. They were patriotic and not yet cynical about the war. That came later as the war dragged on and on and the lack of progress wore the troops and the country's morale down.

What Was the Strategic Plan for the War?

Under McNamara's plan, there would be no major assault. Rather, slow pressure would be applied through a series of controlled and limited military actions (bombing missions) conducted against North Vietnam. The purpose of the bombings would be to cripple the infrastructure of North Vietnam so that they would be willing to negotiate a peace agreement more favorable to South Vietnam. McNamara's plan was flawed from the start. First, it was a plan for "containment" and not a plan for winning a war. The plan was based on a civilian understanding of war and how war should be conducted rather than based on military strategy and conduct of operations. Every proposed military action had to be relayed and approved by Washington before it could be implemented, often delaying action until the strategic advantage of a military action was lost to the enemy. In other words, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, those responsible for carrying out the war, were given little opportunity to provide input into how the war should be conducted. In addition, they were not given the freedom to conduct the war in a manner that would allow them to win, leading to a sense of powerlessness.

Second, McNamara's plan of containment and strategic bombing ignored the fact that there was little infrastructure in North Vietnam to bomb. North Vietnam was not an industrialized society. Most of their arms and ammunition either came from China or Russia and from what they were able to capture from South Vietnamese troops (which had been American supplied).

Third, the plan failed to consider the determination of the North Vietnamese to reunify their country as was intended when the Geneva Accords were written.

Finally, the plan failed to take into consideration the impact that bombing would have on the Vietnamese people. Rather than breaking their will, it intensified it, generating a determination to fight regardless of the costs, making them a very determined enemy (McMaster, 1997, pp. 323–334).

Where Was the War Fought?

The war took place in the southern half of Vietnam mostly below the 17th parallel. In the early years, there were few, if any, actual combat troops in Vietnam. By 1965, it was becoming more and more obvious that the South Vietnamese Army, despite U.S. support, was no match for the Vietcong; thus, it became America's war. In order not to alarm the American public at the number of troops being sent to Vietnam, a piecemeal approach was taken to deployments, with the number gradually increasing over time. The first deployment consisted of 18,000 soldiers sent to South Vietnam to defend U.S. bases that had come under attack from the Vietcong. In 1968, the Tet Offensive occurred. Though Tet was a military defeat for the Vietcong—they were almost totally destroyed—it was a political victory for the North Vietnamese because the ferociousness and boldness of the attack turned American public opinion against the war. The North Vietnamese used the death and mutilation of U.S. soldiers as propaganda to fuel antiwar sympathy in the United States and for demoralizing American troops in Vietnam (Nhu Tang, 1986).

At the time of the Vietnam War, the country was unknown to many Americans. Vietnam was a country with a climate and terrain very different from the United States. Combatants fought in the jungle with constant humidity, heat, and rain—all of which made combat conditions very difficult. Furthermore, there were parasites, mosquitoes, and all sorts of other disease-carrying organisms that posed risks to the soldiers' health.

How did the U.S. involvement in Vietnam come to an end? Peace marches, media reports of atrocities, and the high death toll were among the many conditions that turned the American public against the war. A peace agreement was reached in Paris in 1974, resulting in the withdrawal of Americans troops and bringing an end to the war without a claim of victory. Following the withdrawal, the North Vietnamese Army launched a massive military campaign against the South Vietnamese Army. With the fall of Saigon in 1975, the communist takeover was complete. It is interesting to note that many noncommunist members of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam who fought so hard against the Americans felt sold out after the war. Thousands of South Vietnamese were persecuted or sent to prison camps for repatriation. Those who were able to flee the country did so and are now living as expatriates in France and other countries far away from the country they loved and fought so hard for. It seems that no one

really won that war. The following words written in the dedication of the book *A Viet Cong Memoir* by Nhu Tang (1986) make the point:

> To my mother and father.
>
> And to my betrayed comrades,
>
> who believed they were
>
> sacrificing themselves for a
>
> humane liberation of their people

Methodological Note

The previously given social, political, and historical conditions can be found in the various levels of the **conditional/consequential matrix** and answer the questions of who, what, where, when, and why. In grounded theory research, it is not sufficient to present a set of conditions simply as interesting background information. Since action–interaction stand at the heart of context, it is important to link conditions and the meanings given to these to actions–interactions. Combatants, for the most part, were not acutely aware of the conditions per se. Rather, soldiers experienced and gave meaning to the conditions in terms of the risks they perceived themselves to be in while in Vietnam. We turn to examining data in order to better understand how combatants perceived the situation in which they were fighting. What was it that they had to contend with?

Journal Note

I did not arrive at this point in the analysis easily. I had to do a lot of reading, thinking, and writing and rewriting of memos. One of the most salient points that I wish to convey is how important it was to have time to think about data. Sometimes the time I have is limited. I don't have a large grant that enables me to put aside my regular duties. I can't emphasize strongly enough that qualitative research can't be rushed. Researchers must set aside time for sensitivity to grow and for the evolution of thought to take place. I understand why students say that they don't like doing the detailed type of analysis presented in this book because they think it is too much work. I think of it as a lot of work too. At this point in writing a methods book, I would like to take a shortcut or find an easy way of doing this research. In the end, I know "quality" research can only be achieved if researchers we are willing to put in the time to carry out an in-depth analysis. Researchers can never shortchange the data, the participants, the profession, or ourselves.

Linking "Context of War" With "Survival"

Returning to the analysis, one of the concepts derived earlier in analysis was the "culture of war." The "culture of war" was described as the context in which combatants were operating. In this chapter, the concept "culture of war" is being renamed "context of war" and will be referred to as such for the remainder of the demonstration research project. In this section of the chapter, we (readers as well as researcher) want to return to the memoirs to answer the following question: How did combatants give meaning to and explain the conditions under which they had to fight? We are now "opening up" the concept of "context of war." It is important for us to understand the meaning combatants gave to the conditions because it will explain the basis for their subsequent action–interaction.

We return to the data on Vietnam to uncover how the larger sociopolitical conditions (macro) translated into combatants' perceptions of the immediate conditions under which they had to fight (micro). One memoir we found particularly insightful was titled *A Rumor of War* by Philip Caputo (1977), because it spells out the meaning of conditions from the perceptions of those fighting the war so clearly. Caputo (1977) said that his book is a "story about war," "what men do in war," and "the things that war does to them" (p. xiii). In other words, it is perfect for our purposes of discovering the link between our two concepts: "context of war" and the "survival."

Caputo joined the marines in 1963. He was sent to Vietnam on March 8, 1965, as a first lieutenant, where he served for about 13 months. He returned to Vietnam 10 years later in 1975 to cover the fall of Saigon as a journalist. The fact that he wrote his book from the perspective of both soldier and journalist makes him a valuable informant. In reading the data, I was specifically looking for combatants' perceptions of the conditions under which they were fighting. The men didn't always know what decisions were being made in Washington, but they felt or experienced these conditions in the form of "risks" or threats to survival. The risks can be conceptualized as "physical," "moral," and "psychological." The memos that follow are presented in terms of the conditions. The meaning given by combatants to the conditions in terms of risks can be seen in the memo notes beneath the headings.

MEMO 1

June 23, 2006

Condition 1: Idealism and Youth

We went overseas full of illusions, for which the intoxicating atmosphere of those years was as much to blame as our youth. (Caputo, 1977, pp. xiii–xiv)

Patriotic and idealistic young men joined the military with the notion of signing up to defend their country. Some enlisted, some were drafted. Since young soldiers' understandings of war were derived mainly from movies, most were "unprepared for the sight of bloodshed, the suffering, and hardship" that they found when they arrived in Vietnam. The "realities" of war hit hard, and survival called for a dramatic shift in attitude to one of "war presents risks of bodily harm"—a shift that took the romance out of the situation and replaced it with if not an "acceptance" at least a recognition that "war is about killing or being killed" and a soldier has to psychologically harden to the notion of bloodshed and death to

survive.

MEMO 2

June 23, 2006

Condition 2: A Sense of Powerlessness

Men were killed and wounded, and our patrols kept going out to fight in the same places they had fought the week before and the week before that. The situation remained the same. (Caputo, 1977, p. 182)

In reading the various war memoirs, there is a general feeling of powerlessness in combatants—a powerlessness to change the conditions they found themselves in. At the time of the Vietnam War, the draft was still in place. Though early combatants, especially marines, were volunteers, as time wore on there was a greater need for soldiers but fewer volunteers, and more and more young men were drafted into the army. They were sent to the front lines with only basic military training. Yet it was the "combatants" who saw the predominance of enemy action. And it was they who suffered the greatest number of war casualties. The name given to the frontline soldiers was "grunts," a word that says a lot. The grunts did the "dirty work of killing," were at the bottom of the military hierarchy, and had "the psychological as well as physical risks by little power to control the military situations" that they found themselves in. They had little control over where they went or what they did and no sense of accomplishment because they didn't seem to go anywhere.

The notion of powerlessness is an interesting one analytically. Perhaps it explains some of the anger the veterans carried with them after the war. At least I can hypothesize that and later check it out. There was little a frontline soldier could do except go where he was told, when he was told, and to do what he was told even if it didn't make much sense to him and even if he knew that his life was on the line.

MEMO 3

June 23, 2006

Condition 3: Confusing Rules of Engagement

The "rules of engagement" that defined this war can be called "confusing" at best. Listen to what Caputo (1977) had to say: "According to those rules of engagement, 'It was morally right to shoot an unarmed Vietnamese who was running, but wrong to shoot one standing or walking; it was wrong to shoot an enemy prisoner at close range'" (p. 218).

How does a young and inexperienced combatant find his way through the "physical, psychological, and moral risks" presented by the overt and covert rules called the "rules of engagement"? How can soldiers maintain their sense of "right and wrong" under conditions where there is a battle going on, killing is taking place all around them, they feel their life is being threatened, and yet they are not to shoot because

the circumstances are not right? It is no wonder that young men were confused, disillusioned, and disturbed by what they saw and did and in turn did things that they should not have done. Furthermore, if a soldier perceives his life to be in imminent danger, does he stop and think about things called "rules of engagement" or question the morality of things? Or does he just act and worry later?

MEMO 4

June 24, 2006

Condition 4: Fighting Someone Else's War

When Caputo first arrived in Vietnam, he was told he was being sent there to defend the air base in Da Nang and not to undertake an assault on the North Vietnamese Army. Early in 1965, the war was still defined as a Vietnamese war. Caputo (1977) was told this when he landed: "Okay, listen up. When you brief your people, make it clear that our mission is defensive only" (p. 35).

Yet with time, it became clear that the South Vietnamese Army alone couldn't hold back infiltration of the North Vietnamese military; the purpose of the U.S. military in Vietnam changed. It went from its early focus of providing reconnaissance, training, and support to becoming the "risks associated with being a major combatant force" in the struggle to prevent North Vietnamese from taking control over South Vietnam. Caputo (1977) said, "The war would no longer be only 'their war' but ours as well; a jointly owned enterprise" (p. 68). But it was difficult for young men thousands of miles away from home to understand the purpose of why they were fighting, especially for something as vague as communism in someone else's country.

MEMO 5

June 24, 2006

Condition 5: Entering a Frontier Between Life and Death

When the American military became *the* primary combatant force in Vietnam, they "took on the risks of entering a world that might be called the frontier standing between life and death." In a war zone, the danger of death or injury is always present. "Training" for combat is very different from actually "being in combat" because the stakes are much higher—one's life is on the line. There is a certain amount of learning that can only be accomplished by "living" the experience so to speak. If a soldier is to have a chance at survival, he has to very quickly make the transition from "novice" to "seasoned soldier," from nonkiller to killer, if the situation demands. Caputo provided some of the properties of "being seasoned" and also described some of the consequences.

Caputo (1977) explained the following:

We began to change, to lose the boyish awkwardness we had brought to Vietnam. We became more professional,

leaner and tougher, and a callus began to grow around our hearts, a kind of emotional flak jacket that blunted the blows and stings of pity. (p. 90)

MEMO 6

June 24, 2006

Condition 6: Fighting a Determined and Experienced Enemy

When American troops took over combat in Vietnam, they believed that it would be a short conflict because of perceived U.S. "superior" military strength. This turned out to be a false assumption. The risks were those associated with fighting an enemy that was well trained and highly motivated. The enemy knew how to use the jungle and village terrain to their advantage. They dug tunnels in which they hid supplies and even had living and medical facilities underground. They put booby traps and mines in and around villages and along trails. They were heavily armed and equipped by the Chinese and Russians. And they put their supply trails in Cambodia and Laos out of reach of American soldiers. The Americans may have had military technology but the North Vietnamese had skill and motivation.

MEMO 7

June 25, 2006

Condition 7: An Inhospitable Terrain

The Vietcong were not the only enemy the men had to fight in this war. Though the American soldiers received some jungle training, no training could quite prepare them for the risks associated with fighting in a jungle when they got to Vietnam. Soldiers had to make long marches in the heat and rain, cut their way through trees and bushes, and camp out at night in a jungle where they were subjected to mosquitoes, leeches, and jungle rot. It was an environment that can only be called "inhospitable" to American young men.

MEMO 8

June 25, 2006

Condition 8: A War With No Apparent Sense of Direction

The "policies" and "rules of engagement" established in Washington were perceived as creating risks by constraining the military's ability to act in a manner that would enable them to defeat the enemy. North Vietnamese soldiers could attack U.S. soldiers then retreat to the safety of Cambodia, Laos, or North Vietnam, knowing the soldiers could not supposedly pursue them there. (Under the established "rules of engagement," soldiers were not supposed to follow the enemy into Cambodia, Laos, or North Vietnam.

Planes flew secret missions over these territories, but even they were constrained in what they could do in these places by the rules set in Washington.)

Another apparent issue was that there was no American interest in permanently securing territory, creating psychological risks. Under the set rules of engagement, American soldiers fought a battle then retreated to their bases once the battle was over, leaving the enemy free to reclaim the land they had just fought and died for. Sometimes the U.S. soldiers had to go back and fight for the same territory again. This baffled the young soldiers, who could see no purpose for what they were doing. Even pilots wondered why they were called upon repeatedly to bomb the same areas at considerable risks to themselves. After the first bombing attack, the enemy was prepared and waiting for the planes. It seemed to combatants that there was no strategic plan. The constant loss of lives and high number of injuries coupled with no apparent military gain was demoralizing. As Caputo (1977) stated, "Men were dying but it wasn't accomplishing anything" (p. 213).

MEMO 9

June 26, 2006

Condition 9: Success Measured by Body Counts

The U.S. war policy adopted for the Vietnam War was to break the morale of the enemy and drive the communist Vietcong and North Vietnam regular forces back into North Vietnam. Military effort was directed at "search" out and "destroy." Success in battle was measured by "body counts." After each battle, soldiers had to go around and count the number of enemy and U.S. soldiers dead and wounded, creating both moral and psychological risks.

MEMO 10

June 26, 2006

Condition 10: A Cultural Divide

The young men fighting this war had little knowledge of Vietnamese culture or history. Many of the young soldiers didn't even know where Vietnam was before going there. The soldiers expected the Vietnamese villagers to react to situations as they would. When the Vietnamese villagers didn't behave in a manner that fit American expectations, it made the villagers seem less human. The cultural divide that existed created moral risks because it allowed the soldiers to dehumanize the Vietnamese and excuse themselves from atrocities they committed. On one of the patrols, Caputo's platoon came upon a village that had been burned down. At first, Caputo said, he felt shame seeing what another group of American soldiers had done. As he passed through the village, Caputo expected the villagers to show some emotion, like hate or anger, at the passing soldiers.

However, the villagers exhibited no outward emotion. Caputo states that the lack of emotion caused his pity to turn to contempt. Only years later could he understand why the villagers reacted the way that they did. Caputo (1977) said, "They had suffered so much—endless war, bad harvest, disease that they had learned to accept and endure" (pp. 124–125).

MEMO 11

June 26, 2006

Condition 11: A Constant Turnover of Troops

The tour of duty for combatants during the Vietnam War was more or less one year depending upon the branch of service. For some pilots, the duration of service in Vietnam was set at a year. For other pilots, duty was fulfilled after completing 100 missions. For marines, a tour of duty in Vietnam was 13 months, but for army soldiers it was 12 months. Since the normal tour of duty was a year or so, the frequent turnover meant that just about the time a soldier became "seasoned" and able to protect himself and others, his tour of duty was over. He was then replaced by a "novice," who was more of a hindrance than a help to the group, creating physical risks to the more seasoned soldiers as well as to the novice. In addition to the normal rotation plan, there was a high casualty rate in Vietnam, necessitating a need for replacement with novice or inexperienced soldiers. Being a novice had its drawbacks. It increased the risks of death from enemy fire because the new soldier lacked survival skills. It also increased the chances of accidents occurring or "friendly fire incidents."

MEMO 12

June 26, 2006

Condition 12: Seeing Fellow Soldiers and Friends Wounded or Killed

War not only generates fear and anger but also can bring about the moral risks of a desire for revenge. After several months in the battlefield as a platoon leader, Caputo was rotated out of the field and given a job back at headquarters. His new position consisted day after day of recording casualty rates of both Americans and Vietnamese. After some months of performing this task, Caputo stated that he began to suffer nightmares. Fearing that he was going insane, he requested a return to combat even though it would mean an increased risk of death or injury. He reported that he wanted to inflict on the enemy some of the suffering that he had endured.

MEMO 13

June 26, 2006

Condition 13: An Enemy Who Possessed Lethal Equipment

Over time, the intensity of the fighting increased. Battles were more ferocious and more frequent than they were when Caputo first went to Vietnam. When he later returned to the front lines as a journalist, he discovered that while he had been away, the nature of the war had changed. There was an increase in the number of North Vietnamese regular army troops, as opposed to the less well-trained Vietcong, operating in South Vietnam. The North Vietnamese were entering South Vietnam by means of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The North Vietnamese soldiers carried AK-47 rifles, hand grenades, and had Claymore mines supplied by China and Russia—all of which were lethal, increasing the risks of being wounded or killed. When Caputo (1977) returned to Vietnam as a journalist, he found "it was not really a guerilla war any longer" (p. 207).

MEMO 14

June 26, 2006

Condition 14: A Physical Wearing Down

With the intensification of the war, American soldiers made more frequent patrols to "search for" and "destroy" the enemy. There was less time to rest between forays into the jungle. The long marches in the heat, the lack of quality sleep, the meals taken on the run, the stress, strain, and fear, took a physical toll on the men and increased the physical risks they faced. Caputo (1977) said, "The company had run nearly two hundred patrols in the month I had been with it, and then there had been all those nights on the line. The men were in a permanent state of exhaustion" (p. 237).

MEMO 15

June 26, 2006

Condition 15: Fighting Despite Exhaustion

Despite complete physical exhaustion, Caputo and the men he was with were forced to spend more and more time searching out the enemy. One day Caputo and his platoon came upon a village that was supposedly a Vietcong stronghold. As the platoon made its way toward the village, Vietcong soldiers attacked the approaching U.S. soldiers. The Vietcong soldiers then fled, leaving the villagers to face the angry soldiers. Caputo says that when the men arrived at the village, they just "lost it." They whooped through the village, setting fire to every building they came across while the villagers looked on in horror. Caputo says he felt powerless to stop the men and powerless to stop himself. Burning of the village seemed "almost an emotional necessity" and a means of letting go of months of fear, frustration, and tension. This led to the risks that Caputo described as "we had to relieve our pain by inflicting it on others" (Caputo, 1977, p. 288).

MEMO 16

June 26, 2006

Condition 16: Survival in a Context of War: A Context Defined by Risks

So what does all of this mean for our analysis? It means that the "context of war" was perceived as presenting many risks or threats to individual and collective survival. The risks were physical, psychological, and moral. If combatants were to come out of the experience physically alive, psychologically sound, and with their moral integrity intact, they had to find strategies for overcoming or at least minimizing the risks. Engaging in combat day after day is difficult enough, but if one sees no gain in territory, no seeming purpose to the war or end in sight to the fighting, and a constant supply of enemy combatants ready to kill you, the only thing left for a combatant is to endure and survive until he can get out, hopefully alive.

Methodological Note

Following the analysis, readers can see how the research is continuing to evolve—that is, how it proceeded from open coding, to linking concepts, and to bringing context into the data analysis with further linking of categories. Coding is intense, but it is also very gratifying to see a project take shape. Though there is still much to do, I now feel that I have a sense of direction. I've let the results of my analyses guide the research process, and this is where it has taken me.

Summary of Key Points

The purpose of this chapter was to identify the context in which the combat experience took place and in doing so open up and expand upon the concept of the "context of war." We linked the concept of "survival" to conditions that in turn were perceived as risks or threats to survival. The risks were conceptualized by the researcher as falling into three categories: physical, moral, and psychological. The risks could be traced back to the larger social, political, and historical conditions that were particular to the Vietnam War. Opening up and elaborating upon the concept of "context of war" has brought the analysis forward, bringing it to the next logical step of analyzing data in order to identify the action–interactional strategies taken by combatants to contain the risks and increase their chances for survival.

Activities for Thinking, Writing, and Discussing as a Group

1. Go back to the Points to Keep in Mind section at the beginning of the chapter, and show examples of how the researcher followed through on those analytical points.

2. Using this chapter as a model, explain how knowing about context enriches understanding of an experience—in this case, the combat experience. Follow along with our analysis, and try to discern the logic behind how I went about extending and elaborating our concept of the "culture of war."
3. Explore in class how analytic focus on context relates back to the symbolic interactionist's and pragmatist's theoretical perspectives.
4. If you are working on a research project of your own, explain how you might bring context into your analysis.

Chapter 15
Bringing Process into the Analysis

> The plane banked and headed out over the China Sea, toward Okinawa, toward freedom from death's embrace. None of us was a hero. We would not return to cheering crowds, parades, and the pealing off of great cathedral bells. We had done nothing more than endure. We had survived, and that was our only victory. (Caputo, 1977, p. 320)

Table 15.1 Key Terms

Combatants: Persons engaged in battle with the enemy with the aim of killing or maiming the enemy before being killed or wounded themselves. Battles were engaged in not necessarily for killing but for the purpose of creating fear, gaining an advantage, or destroying property whether the battle was on the ground, air, or sea. Killing and wounding was a side effect of battle. However, in this war, success was said to be measured in body counts.
Process: Adaptive changes in the flow of action–interaction taken in response to changes in conditions, the changes deemed necessary to achieve desired outcomes or reach a goal. Action–interaction may be strategic, routine, random, novel, automatic, or thoughtful.

In the previous chapter, I brought context into the analysis. The link between conditions and surviving has to do with the perceived threats to survival in the form of physical, psychological, and moral risks brought about by conditions particular to this war. In order to increase the chances of surviving a tour in Vietnam, **combatants** had to contain or overcome the risks. This they did by implementing a series of action and interactional strategies aimed at survival as well as success in battle. This chapter will explore some of the strategies used by combatants during their tour of duty and in doing so bring **process** into the analysis. The focus of this chapter is upon further development of the context of war, but this time rather than focusing on the conditions I am focusing on action–interaction taken to survive the risks. Why the focus on survival? The concept of "survival" appears in some form in every interview and memoir. Despite all the talk about patriotism, desire for adventure, or wanting to be a pilot because a person loves flying, wanting to win the war once a young man is in Vietnam, the overriding goal becomes to live long enough to return home. Every interview and every memoir essentially is a survival story because the persons who were able to tell about their experiences were those who survived. When I sat down and thought about what I knew about survival, I found that I had a great deal of information floating around in my mind. Since surviving was not a one-time event but a continuous stream of action taken in response to the ongoing and changing conditions of war, process is automatically brought into the analysis.

Points to Keep in Mind

Students are encouraged to keep the following points in mind when reading this chapter:

- Further developing the concept of "surviving" by sampling data for properties and dimensions
- Exploring some of the action and interactional strategies used by combatants to increase their chances of surviving under different conditions of risks
- Showing how action–interaction adapts to conditions

Again, the format used in this chapter is one of memos. But now the memos represent more of a summary of previous analyses rather than open exploration. Notice how the nature of analysis changes over the course of the research. Summary memos are important because they help analysts to pull together the results of all the analysis up to this point. The first step I took to develop the concept of "surviving" was to reread memos from previous analyses. Based on my rereading of memos, I wrote a summary memo to keep the main issues in front of me while I did further theoretical sampling, looking for examples of situations that might threaten survival in order to determine what combatants did to enhance their chances of surviving under those conditions.

MEMO 1

July 8, 2006

Concept: "Surviving" and Linkage to "Context of War"

Memo

What do we already know about "surviving," and how does it link to "context of war"? Survival and context are linked through the notion of perceived risks encountered by combatants as they faced various war situations. The risks varied from high to low depending upon the conditions operating at any time. For the most part, combatants in Vietnam were not thinking in terms of the macro political or social issues that brought the United States into the war and them to Vietnam. They were mainly concerned with the conditions of risks they had to fight under and manage in order to increase their chances to survive.

To review, among conditions of risks were the following:

1. Possessing idealism and youth
2. Having a sense of powerlessness over the combat conditions
3. Confusing rules of engagement
4. Fighting someone else's war

5. Entering a frontier between life and death
6. Fighting a determined and experienced enemy
7. Encountering an inhospitable terrain
8. Entering a war with no apparent sense of direction
9. Measuring success in terms of enemy body counts
10. Encountering a cultural divide
11. Having a constant turnover of troops
12. Seeing fellow soldiers and friends killed
13. Fighting an enemy that possessed lethal equipment
14. Fighting despite physical exhaustion
15. Having physical exhaustion, leading to psychological and moral exhaustion

What is obvious to us is that just having a repertoire of survival strategies doesn't automatically guarantee survival. The risks were very high, and despite the use of strategies, there is always the element of fate. In addition, just as important to survival is the ability to match strategies to the conditions and adjust their use as needed. For example, if a combatant freezes for too long while under fire, the chances of his surviving are greatly diminished. Thus, there were a series of what might be called "intervening conditions" that enter into the survival picture; some enhanced the possibility of survival while others diminished the chances.

MEMO 2

July 8, 2006

Concept: "Surviving"

Memo

What are some of the intervening conditions that enhanced or detracted from the ability to survive the fighting conditions? Next are some that I've identified:

1. There are some conditions that enhanced a combatant's ability to make use of survival strategies. These include being a seasoned soldier, forming strong bonds with fellow soldiers, fighting as a member of a team, having good leadership, remaining focused during battle, having adequate and well-maintained resources and equipment, and having backup support during difficult times. Though each of the "intervening variables" is important, two stand out. These are "becoming a seasoned soldier" and "having good leadership." Being a seasoned soldier enabled combatants to read the situation accurately and act quickly and decisively under duress. Having a good leader was essential because good leaders kept up morale, provided guidance and discipline (very important to

maintain especially under conditions of duress), and coordinated action, thus increasing the chances of individuals and the platoons surviving.

2. There are some conditions that detracted from the ability to make use of survival strategies. These include being a novice at war, the inability to control fear and stress in the heat of battle, inept leadership, the lack of backup resources, and a "wearing down" over time—especially if fatigue is accompanied by demoralization. Perhaps the most important of these obstacles are inept leadership and wearing down. With wearing down physically, the ability to be alert to danger and respond quickly diminishes, while inept leadership can actually put a combatant in greater harm's way. The wearing down psychologically and morally detracted from the ability to cope with the stress and to make moral decisions.
3. Survival has a collective aspect to it. Survival not only necessitates individual action but also requires that persons work together as a team or act on behalf of others to increase chances of survival. We see this often with heroes, medics, rescue pilots, and backup and support staff like doctors and nurses, engineers, technicians, and supply persons. Even in a battle, soldiers have to work together to fight the enemy. Some soldiers, regardless of the danger, put themselves in the line of fire to save a wounded comrade. Medics—army and navy (navy medics were assigned to marine units as the marines didn't have medics of their own)—went into battle zones with combatants and took the same risks as the soldiers they accompanied. The enemy often used the opportunity presented by an injured soldier to shoot at the persons coming to his rescue. There were pilots whose main job in Vietnam was to rescue downed pilots, pick up the wounded, rescue a platoon trapped behind enemy lines, and provide backup assistance to ground troops that might have been caught in an ambush.
4. A condition that enhances the probability of survival is leadership. Though leadership has not been mentioned much in memos, from reading the memoirs it appears to be a very significant factor in survival. Good leaders maintain discipline and order. They keep up the morale of their troops. They foster teamwork. They know how their personnel react under pressure of combat. They know who they can trust to lead and support others, who they can't trust, how to solve problems, and how to get their men out of difficult situations with minimum losses. They can make things happen. They have the respect of their men, who are willing to follow their leader into battle because they know he'll do his best for them. *Inept* leaders make mistakes that put their men at risk. They don't have the ability to maintain order or discipline or to keep up the morale of their troops. With inept leadership, there is likely to be chaos rather than teamwork under pressure, increasing the risks to individuals and the group.
5. A major condition for surviving is the ability to make adjustments in action–interaction because during battle, conditions are continuously in flux.

Action and Interactional Survival Strategies

What I want to present next are different action and interactional survival strategies used by combatants to

manage the risks of war under different conditions, showing adaptations in the strategies in response to changes in conditions. This way of conceptualizing process is different from using the format of stages or phases but works very well in this study.

MEMO 3

July 8, 2006

Concept: Pattern of Strategies for Surviving

Memo

Surviving is defined as taking action and interactional strategies to manage risks under various situations of risks and adapting the strategies to meet the ever-changing conditions and subsequent risks. In other words, action and interactional strategies were responsive to perceived risks, and as the nature of the risks changed, so did the strategies to manage the risks in order to achieve the desired goal. I refer to the actions and interactions as strategic because they were purposefully aimed at enhancing the ability to survive deployment in Vietnam. Many of the strategies were used routinely—that is, in noncombat situations but aimed at combat preparedness. Others were more specific to handling problems that arose during combat situations. The important factor and what brings process into the analysis is that the strategies were adaptive to the situations, making surviving a very dynamic and ongoing process. The following depicts four different patterns of strategies used to manage risks under different conditions of war: combat readiness and individual action, team strategies and alignment of action, on-the-spot problem solving and coordinated novel action, and escape and evasion: extraordinary strategic action. Each will be discussed in turn.

Combat Readiness and Individual Action

Certain strategies were carried out during noncombat situations in order to maintain combat readiness. These strategies were characterized by their repetitive nature. They were repeated over and over in some form over the course of deployment. Though these strategies were required, the carrying out of the strategies was individualized as to when, where, and how. Another characteristic of these strategies was that they were aimed at maintaining psychological health and moral integrity as well as the physical wellness. The degree to which a combatant recognized and was willing to prepare for the risks was evidenced by the degree to which he carried out the actions and interactions necessary to keep him and his unit safe and in a state of combat readiness even when not engaged in actual combat because soldiers never knew when or where the enemy might attack.

Among the strategies and tactics aimed at reducing the physical threats of living in a hot, humid climate were the taking of malaria pills and the use of iodine pills to purify contaminated water, regularly checking the feet for signs of a fungal infection, carrying extra socks when going out in the bush, reporting physical problems to the medics before they became debilitating, keeping the canteen filled with clean water, maintaining adequate hydration, wearing a helmet, wearing sun protective clothing, maintaining military equipment close to one's person and in working order, being alert, and responding quickly to calls

to take cover. When out on patrol or when flying combat missions, combatants had to be especially guarded, scanning the environment looking for cues that would indicate danger, and watching out for the self and for fellow soldiers and other pilots (if a combat pilot).

To handle the psychological stress and strain associated with war, there were other strategies. Positive strategies included taking pride in winning a battle, accomplishing a mission, and forming bonds with peers. Not all strategies were constructive, however. Others, though perhaps psychologically helpful, were detrimental to physical health. For example, some combatants turned to excessive drug or alcohol use to numb the realities of war. These activities may have blotted out reality temporarily but tended to be destructive and addictive. Though not always used excessively, alcohol was often at the center of socializing because of its relaxing effects and social associations. Memoirs mention the use of alcohol when relaxing at beaches, in the "hooches" (living quarters for officers), and at parties. A tradition of pilots who were rescued after being shot down was to buy a round of drinks for the men who were involved in their rescue. Pilots who completed a tour of duty celebrated their survival with parties that usually included alcohol. On leave, combatants often went into the nearest town to party and to pick up women. They looked to any activity that might normalize their lives a little and relieve the stress.

Not every soldier or pilot drank, used drugs, or sought out women. Many used the off-duty time to engage in sport activities, write letters home, engage in social acts like playing cards, read or study, do charity work in villages, or just rest up before the next mission or combat. Other psychological strategies used included distancing the self from Vietnam by daydreaming about a girl at home or planning what to do with life after Vietnam. With time, many combatants were able to harden themselves to the sights and sounds of war or put the worst aspects of war into the back of their mind at least temporarily. A frequently used strategy was to demean the enemy, by calling them "gooks" and using other derogatory terms that somehow psychologically lessened the threat that the enemy posed.

To handle the ongoing moral dilemmas, the "nips at conscience," and the atrocities that combatants witnessed, combatants often reframed things that happened, referring to negative events as "the nature of war." There were religious services that combatants could attend to find renewal and solace. To maintain their sense of humanity, some of the medical personnel and some combatants worked in orphanages, shared their C rations with the Vietnamese villagers and soldiers from the south, and reached out to people in the villages, engaging in gestures of friendship.

Team Strategies and Alignment of Action

Over the years, the military established institutionalized interactional strategies for managing the increased risks associated with combat. These strategies often take the form of policies and procedures and are carried out through arrangements involving a division of labor between different levels and types of personnel. Considerable training is often involved in preparing persons to carry out these strategies, and they are time and place specific.

Though there are many examples of institutionalized strategies throughout the war for ground forces, flight, and naval personnel, the complicated and interactional nature of some of these strategies can be

seen in the activities that take place each time a pilot is sent out on a mission. Notice the team nature of the work and the necessity for an "alignment of action and interaction" if a mission is to be carried out successfully. Just one misalignment could result in loss of life.

To prepare to go into an inhospitable terrain and engage in combat with a determined enemy under rules of engagement established by politicians and military strategies, a pilot had to undergo several years of training in high-performance airplanes. Pilots were also required to attend jungle survival school, just in case they were shot down. Then when the time came for the mission, considerable planning went into every mission, from the top military officials involved down to the men who work on the airplanes. For the pilot, the day began before dawn with a briefing on the details of who would be flying which airplane, where, in which position, and to carry out what activities. After breakfast came "suiting up." Suiting up was necessary because of the risks presented by flying at high altitudes and at high speeds (Trotti, 1984, pp. 22–25). The first piece of clothing a pilot had to put on was the flight suit. This was made of a type of material designed to withstand life in the jungle should a pilot be shot down. On top of the flight suit went the G suit, an inflatable girdle that covers the vulnerable areas of abdomen, thigh, and calves. It was designed to prevent blackouts. After the G suit, the pilot put on a harness designed to keep him from being thrown around the cockpit during maneuvers and to spread the shock throughout the body should a pilot have to eject. Finally, the pilot added the survival vest. Its purpose was to provide the pilot with the objects he might need to survive if he was shot down. Among the objects contained in the vest were a gun, knife, codebook, maps, shark repellant, repelling ropes, radio transmitters, canteen of water, a pound of rice, fishing line, and even morphine for pain. It is only after putting on all of the articles of clothing that a pilot was ready to get into the plane. Once in the plane, the use of institutionalized procedures continued. First, the pilot had to be strapped into his seat with leg restraints to keep the legs tight against the seat in case of ejection. Next the pilot had to put on an oxygen mask and helmet, and after that, he was plugged in the G suit.

Of course, between missions, the plane had its institutionalized series of checks. Planes were checked over by supportive personnel after each mission for gunshot holes and other damage. Each plane had an assigned crew whose job it was to maintain the plane's ability to fly and to make certain that a plane was fueled and ready for takeoff at any time. Then there were the step-by-step procedures that each pilot had to carry out before and during takeoff. The purpose of the procedures was to ensure that the flight controls and communication systems were working. Then there were those personnel who gave direction for takeoff and landing.

Pilots in Vietnam often flew with a lead pilot and a wingman. When flying over enemy territory, a pilot had to focus on the target and therefore couldn't be watching out for enemy fire. The wingman's role was to cover the pilot while he dropped his bombs. Then the lead pilot covered the wingman while the wingman dropped his load of bombs. During a mission, air coordination is essential, and there are procedures for linking up with planes from different bases (each having a different role to play in a mission) and for refueling. If a pilot's time schedule is off, the delay can place all of the pilots and the mission in jeopardy. Fighter planes use a lot of fuel. Pilots usually have to refuel once or twice as part of a mission, and this, too, had its set of safety procedures. Upon reaching the target area, pilots use

maneuvering tactics like rolling, banking, and what pilots called "jinking" or changing altitude and direction every few minutes to avoid being hit by enemy gunfire. All of the previously stated action–interaction is necessary to carry out one mission. As Trotti (1984) said the following after completing a mission to Hanoi where one airplane carrying two persons was hit and crashed (the pilots were rescued):

> *That was it. A hundred-man hours of labor for fifteen seconds over the target. We had expended 30,000 pounds of fuel and $2.5 million of airplane to put six tons of explosives on ten acres of real estate, and that's probably as much as we'll even know as to the value received for the price paid. (pp. 96–97)*

On-the-Spot Problem Solving and Coordinated Novel Action

Not every combat situation called for strategies that are routinely carried out. In every risk situation, there was always the possibility of contingency calling for "on-the-spot problem solving" and novel rather than routine action. Rescues or extraction of downed pilots or wounded soldiers during an ongoing battle were characterized by their intensity and the possibility of something going wrong. Though there were institutionalized procedures established for rescue, often rescues were complicated by contingency calling for on-the-spot problem solving to increase the chances of surviving. Perhaps some of the most dramatic rescue operations that occurred in Vietnam were those that involved the retrieval of American pilots whose planes were shot down behind enemy lines. The rescue operations, though planned, didn't always go according to plan. Defining features of rescue operations were the need for "coordinated" types of novel action. Rescue operations required highly trained individuals problem solving together. Usually, there were considerable risks to all parties involved—the rescuers as well as the person(s) being rescued. The sequence of activities and coordinated interactive nature of rescue operations can be seen in the following example. Notice the variety of risks the rescuers encountered and how they used on-the-spot problem solving and novel ways of acting to manage those risks.

During the Vietnam War, there were special teams established to rescue pilots shot down within enemy lines—usually over North Vietnam, Cambodia, or Laos. One aircraft that was defined especially as a rescue plane was the Skyraider, a single-engine, propeller-driven World War II vintage airplane. The usual procedure was for two Skyraiders to respond to the call of a downed pilot: the senior Skyraider pilot (senior in terms of service in Vietnam) and his wingman. The Skyraider pilots did not do the actual rescuing; that was left to helicopters. Rather, a Skyraider's role during a rescue operation was to act as a defense, keeping the enemy away from the downed pilot and rescue helicopter. Air force pilots who flew the Skyraiders were known as Sandys, as their call sign was "Sandy." Another aircraft involved in rescue operations was the helicopters known as the Jolly Greens. Its crew members were known as "Jollys."

Marrett (2003, pp. 156–161), a Skyraider pilot, told the following rescue story. An F-4 Phantom jet was shot down over the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos during a bombing mission. There were two pilots in the plane. One pilot was able to eject, while the other pilot, the senior pilot, went down with the plane. The surviving pilot suffered multiple fractures during the ejection but remained sufficiently conscious to activate his transmitter and notify the home base of his position.

Soon after the F-4 was shot down, two Skyraider pilots and a helicopter crew were dispatched to the rescue. As the planes approached the target area, one of the rescue Skyraiders was shot down. The pilot

managed to eject safely from his plane. Now there were two live pilots down in enemy territory: the original pilot and the rescue pilot. Since it was getting dark, rescue operations were suspended until morning.

At daybreak, two more Skyraiders and Jollys were dispatched to the area to complete the rescue. The badly hurt pilot was the first to be rescued. The other pilot hid in a tree, surrounded but unseen by a group of North Vietnamese soldiers. After locating the second pilot but before the rescue could be completed, another Skyraider was shot down. The Skyraider pilot died in the crash. The pilot shot down earlier had to remain hidden while waiting for rescue. A third rescue team was sent to the area, located the pilot, and prepared to descend for the rescue. While the pilot was being hoisted up into the helicopter, small gunfire erupted. One of the helicopter crew members moved to the open back of the helicopter to get a better shot at the enemy. As the helicopter was lifting, the helicopter gunner assigned to defend the helicopter from incoming fire was badly wounded in the leg, and the helicopter itself was hit. Attention was turned from the pilot being rescued, who now was in the plane, to caring for the wounded gunner, who was bleeding profusely. Meanwhile, the helicopter crash-landed. Miraculously, all six men aboard the helicopter including the injured man and the rescued pilot survived the crash. (This was the second crash in two days for the pilot.) Another helicopter was dispatched to rescue the six downed men, and eventually all were returned safely to the base.

Not only did this survival require many resources but it also took a lot of readjusting of action or contingency management to finally carry it off. When one plan failed, another backup plan had to be put into place immediately. The hallmark of rescue operations is the coordination of equipment, personnel, communications, and most of all the use of adaptive strategic action–interaction to handle problems as they arise.

Escape and Evasion: Decisive and Extraordinary Strategic Action

There were times in Vietnam when combatants were in extreme danger, such as when they were sent on a mission behind enemy lines, or were caught in an ambush, or an individual found himself behind enemy lines and no one knew quite where, or even if he was still alive. The defining characteristics of escape and evade strategies are the ability to make use of past experiences and acquired knowledge to adapt to changing risks. Unlike rescue operations in which other personnel take part in the rescue mission when a combatant is alone or with a small group, they must save themselves. Here is just one example of decisive and extraordinary strategic action taken to escape and evade the enemy.

This is the story of Specialist 4 James Young of Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Calvary as told by Moore and Galloway (1992). While out on patrol, a group of American soldiers was ambushed by the enemy. A fierce battle ensued. During the battle, it was noted that an American machine gun had been taken by the enemy and was being used to shoot at American forces. Specialist Young volunteered to leave the safety of the group and locate the position of the gun so that an air strike could be called upon to bomb the gun. While making his way through the tall grass, Young was hit by a bullet in the head. Wounded, he started to return to his unit only to discover that during the few moments he had been away from the unit, the enemy had surrounded the American troops. Young found himself in a situation where

he was wounded and cut off from his unit. All he had on his person were a few rounds of ammunition, a few hand grenades, a rifle, two canteens, and a small mirror. Unsure of where he was or where he should go, Young tried to recall where his unit had come from and decided to move back to that point. To protect himself from enemy fire while running away, Young shot into the trees toward snipers and threw his few hand grenades in the grass, dodging and zigzagging to avoid enemy fire. He could hear the enemy pursuing him. To outwit his pursuers, Young drew upon the skills he had learned while hunting as a young boy. He came to a stream and waded upstream. He filled his canteens in the stream for later use and drank all the water that he could. He left the stream in a rocky area so he wouldn't leave a trail that others could follow. He went into a valley where he would have a clear view of the trail behind him. It was getting dark. Young took refuge behind some rocks. There he took out his diary and wrote a note to his family with the hope that they would find the message if he did not return. By now, his head was hurting badly, and he was vomiting every time he tried to drink.

All through the night, Young remained awake, sleeping for only a few moments at a time. Toward morning, he heard the sound of helicopters overhead and knew they must be American. He tried to signal the helicopters using his hand mirror but was unsuccessful. To aid his escape, he followed their flight path, a strategy that took him close to American lines. There, the battle was still raging. Young hid behind a large log and waited for the battle to end. American planes started dropping bombs to dispel the enemy. Fearful that he would be injured by friendly fire, Young looked for safety in the tall grass. By now it was dark again. Young knew that if he crossed the grass separating him from his troops while it was dark, he would be shot by either his own men or by the enemy. So he spent another night in the bush. He covered himself with brush to stay warm. The fighting continued throughout the night. At daybreak, Young cautiously approached the perimeter of the American forces. He made it back to the safety of American lines just before the last American troops were airlifted from the area (Moore & Galloway, 1992, pp. 318–321).

In order to survive, Young called upon the repertoire of survival skills he had learned as a boy, adapting them to the terrain and risks he faced while attempting to return to his unit. Drawing upon previously developed survival skills—remaining calm and cautious and being highly motivated to survive—enabled him to escape and evade the enemy until he could make it back to American lines.

Methodological Note

I could stop here with the analysis. I've brought process and context into the analysis, and certainly this would be enough for some research projects. But I'm not satisfied because integration is still lacking. There are categories such as the "change in self" and "images of war" and "homecoming" not yet accounted for. That means more analytic work is necessary. The question concerning me now is this: How do we put this all together into a theory? Chapter 16 will focus on integration.

Summary of Key Points

A researcher might think of process in terms of phases, stages, levels, degrees, progress toward a goal, or sequences of action. In this case, process presented as a series of adaptive actions–interactions aimed at increasing the chances of surviving under different conditions of war. Some of the actions and interactions could be considered routine—that is, carried out over and over again under repetitive conditions. Other actions and interactions were novel, taken in response to problematic situations or contingency. Some actions and interactions were individualized, whereas others called for an alignment of action between various members of a group. There is no magic trick in identifying process in data. The researcher has to study the memos and raw data and look for how the main issues or problems are handled through action and interaction by participants and for how those actions and interactions change in response to changes in conditions. Identifying process and relating it to different structural conditions or different contexts helps the researcher to pull together many diverse pieces of data. Notice that the patterns represented here were derived from data but grouped by the researcher. Other researchers might come up with a different way of presenting the same material.

Activities for Thinking, Writing, and Discussing as a Group

1. Return to the Points to Keep in Mind section at the beginning of the chapter, and pick out several examples of how you think the researcher carried out these points. Bring these to class for discussion.
2. Discuss in class how you think bringing process into the analysis enriches a study's findings.
3. What do you think is the relationship of process to theory?
4. Can you think of other ways of putting process and context together?
5. How does the way we presented process in this chapter relate back to the pragmatist's and interactionist's perspectives presented in Chapter 2?

Chapter 16
Integrating Categories

What remained was sorrow, the immense sorrow, the sorrow of having survived. The sorrow of war. (Ninh, 1993, p. 192)

Table 16.1 Key Terms

Integration: Linking categories around a core category and refining and trimming the theory

Negative cases: Cases that stand in contrast to the main findings of a study. Though a researcher can continue to collect data, searching for the negative case, finding that negative case does not necessarily negate the analyst's conceptualization. Often, the negative case represents a dimensional extreme or variation on the conceptualization of data.

In the previous four chapters, I used a demonstration research project on Vietnam War veterans to illustrate how I analyze data. The analysis proceeded from open coding or concept identification to concept elaboration and linking, to analyzing data for context and process. In this chapter, I complete the demonstration project by illustrating how to integrate findings, the final step in theory construction. It has been my experience with teaching grounded theory that integration is the most difficult aspect of theory development. I want to assure readers that it is not easy for me either. At the same time, experience has shown me that integration is not beyond the reach of even the most inexperienced but motivated researcher. And when a theory finally comes together, it is such a great feeling—*vale la pena* to use a Spanish expression.

Points to Keep in Mind

When reading this chapter, students are advised to keep the following points in mind:

- Reviewing memos and diagrams
- Compiling the descriptive summary memo
- Making use of the integrative diagram and summary
- Refining the theory

Reviewing Memos and Diagrams

Throughout this book, I've emphasized the importance of writing memos and doing diagrams for researchers whose goal is to construct theory. Now the reason why I've placed strong emphasis on memo writing and

diagramming becomes clear. Writing memos and doing diagrams help researchers digest data and imprint concepts upon their minds. They help researchers build concepts and density into the theory and add variations. Then, when it comes time to integrate the concepts, memos and diagrams provide the information that researchers need to move forward. Since much time has passed between the beginning of a research project and reaching the point of integration, without memos researchers would have difficulty remembering all the details of their analyses. Rereading and sorting through memos and diagrams is like going back through the family collection of heirlooms. It brings to mind the treasures of analyses that have been carefully stored and makes the products of analysis available for the final analytic leap to integration. This section will outline how to proceed with the review of memos and diagrams.

Steps in Reviewing Memos and Diagrams

1. Read the memos, and examine the diagrams.
2. Sit and think about the main ideas expressed in memos.
3. Sort through and compile memos dealing with similar topics.
4. Try arranging memos by category headings into different theoretical schemes.
5. Choose the arrangement that best fits with the data.

Read Memos, and Examine the Diagrams

There are always moments of anxiety and a feeling of being overwhelmed when a researcher is confronted with the task of integration. The first things I did to get past that feeling was to sit down, breathe deeply, and try to relax. Only then did I reread the memos and examine the diagrams. It is amazing how often seemingly unimportant words written at the beginning of a study take on significance when a researcher is more steeped in analysis and has developed theoretical sensitivity. Things that were unclear to me before suddenly became clearer, and the structure of a theory began to gel in my mind.

Sit and Think About the Main Ideas Expressed in Memos

After reading the memos, I sat, thought, and talked with others about what I had read. I walked. I kept returning to the notion that while survival was the main theme running throughout the research, it didn't tell the whole story. Somehow I needed a better way to weave the other categories and subcategories into the theory. I had doubts about my ability to pull the research together and at times wished it would all go away.

Sort Through and Compile Memos Dealing With Similar Topics

I sorted through and compiled the memos in different ways, focusing on the categories and not on lower-level concepts. Each arrangement of categories told the story of survival with a different twist and placed the emphasis on a different major category. But none of the ways quite satisfied me. I needed a concept that stood

above the others. Then I had one of those aha moments.

During analysis of the first interview, I had identified the concept of "reconciling multiple realities" but didn't do much with it. After trying out different concepts and finding them to be lacking, I was struck by the possibilities contained in the idea of "reconciling multiple realities." That was my aha moment! I realized that though survival remains the main theme, reconciling multiple realities is a way to explain why and how some persons survive not only physically but also psychologically and morally. Using that concept would also enable me to bring together all the other categories. It seems to account for the changes that occur in the individual from the prewar self, to being a seasoned combatant, to going home and homecoming—changes that need to happen to increase the chances of survival. It also explains the adaptations that occur in action–interaction under different conditions of risks. I tried the concept out on data and other persons, and it seemed to fit. Now that I had identified a possible core category, the next step was to try and integrate the major categories around it. At this point, I felt a sense of relief that perhaps I'm on my way to integration.

Try Arranging Memos by Category Headings Into Different Theoretical Schemes

I had several major categories: "the changing self," "shifting images of war," "context of war," "survival strategies," and "homecoming." The potential core concept of "Survival: Reconciling Multiple Realities" put emphasis on the active component in survival and the profound changes in self and images of war that combatants must undergo to increase their chances of surviving given the different conditions of risks and the adaptations the different conditions require. Other concepts such as "the changing self," "shifting images of war," the "culture of war," and "survival strategies" all enter into the "war experience." I tried out different arrangements of these concepts.

Choose the Arrangement That Best Fits With the Data

Eventually, a researcher has to settle on a core concept. What struck me as being interesting was that *reconciling* necessitates by its very definition making transitions and making changes in the self and shifting images of war. I might even dare to say that *survival* has to do with how the different "realities"—before, during, and after the war—are reconciled to handle situations of risks and how each part comes together with the others to form the overall war experience. Reality is not the events of war per se but how those events are perceived and defined by persons in terms of risks presented by a situation. The concept I finally settled on was the core category of "Survival: Reconciling Multiple Realities." I think that it explains the total "war experience" by taking young men from the before, to during, and after of Vietnam. It meets all of the criteria for a core category as spelled out in Strauss (1987, p. 36) and certainly has implications for other studies of persons who have to adjust to difficult situations in their lives. I think what makes war rather unique is that there are not only physical risks but psychological and moral risks as well.

Though a theory that comes from data is grounded, the final "theory," or how concepts fit together, is constructed by the researcher. The concepts are based on data interpreted and organized by the researcher. Several different theories may be derived from the same data depending upon the perspective of the researcher and where he or she decides to put the emphasis. Even the same researcher may reorganize data at a later time

and come up with a different theoretical construction. For example, data that Strauss and I gathered during our study of couples managing chronic illness at home was organized around the notion of *Unending Work and Care: Managing Chronic Conditions at Home* (Corbin & Strauss, 1988). However, we could have chosen as our core category "Body Failure" or "Identity and Biographical Disruption." Both were important categories in the research, but the overwhelming problem our couples faced over time was the wearing down that occurred in each member of the couple and in the nature of their relationship because of the constant care and attention needed to manage chronic conditions at home. "Body Failure" and "Identity and Biographical Disruption" were built into the theory as conditions for or consequences of unending work and care.

Compiling the Descriptive Summary Memo

Having a core category is just the beginning of integration. The next step is pulling all the concepts together around that concept. At this point, novice researchers often have difficulty seeing the forest for the trees. There seems to be so much detail and so many concepts that it is overwhelming to think of how they might all fit together. The point is to step back and try to sum up the main ideas in a few descriptive sentences. This section of the chapter will discuss the following:

- Verbalizing the research findings in a few sentences
- Writing a summary memo

Verbalizing the Research Findings in a Few Sentences

I now had a possible core concept but was having difficulty sorting through all the data swimming around in my head. I realized that I had to forget momentarily about the concepts and tell the research story to a colleague or a participant or even a friend using only a few descriptive sentences, leaving out all of the detail. It had to be a coherent, logical story, so I let the other person ask the questions, challenge my ideas, and push a little. It helped to give the persons with whom I was speaking a copy or two of the interviews and memos so that they knew where I was coming from. I kept working on the descriptive story until I felt the story made sense, was logical, and fit with the data.

Writing a Summary Memo

Then I wrote down the main descriptive story as a summary memo. I kept the memo short. All I wanted to do was put together a skeleton of my ideas.

Let's return to the Vietnam study to see the descriptive story I've come up with.

MEMO

Descriptive Story of Vietnam Veterans

Young men go to war coming from a civilian culture with a prewar set of standards, values, and beliefs—the total of which made up their reality of what war was all about. Once in the military and in Vietnam,

the young men were confronted with the "reality of war" or what they perceived were a series of risks that threatened their very survival, psychological well-being, and moral integrity. If they were to survive, they had to put into place and utilize a set of military, psychological, and moral survival strategies—some they could carry out alone and some that had to be carried out as part of a team. However, unless young men were able to reconcile their prewar selves with the realities of war by becoming seasoned soldiers, it became much more difficult for them to carry out the necessary strategies needed to contain the risks. Then when they went home, now veterans of war, again they were confronted with a reality quite different from being in a war. Now they had to readapt to being civilians once again with its standards of behavior, but overshadowing their adaptions were the "ghosts of war."

Making Use of the Integrative Diagram and Summary

With the description story behind me, it was time to think more analytically or in terms of theory once again. At his point, I didn't want to work with every concept derived during the research because I knew it would be easy to become overwhelmed again. I just wanted to focus on the main categories and subcategories; detailing all the properties and dimensions of each category I knew would come later when it was time to write up the study. In this next section, I'll explore the following:

- Diagramming
- Writing the analytic summary memo

Diagramming

When it came time to integrate concepts around the core category, I found doing an integrative diagram very helpful. My experience with diagramming is that diagrams are a sure way to identify breaks in logic. They can be worked and reworked until the relationships between categories fall into place and the logic "feels right." To make my position clear, once a researcher begins to integrate major categories around the core category, the word *story* is no longer appropriate because researchers are no longer writing narratives or descriptive stories. Rather, researchers are now on the way to developing theory. The final diagram that researchers construct should show the skeleton of a theory—that is, it should show how the core concept and the main categories fit together.

Returning now to the research on Vietnam veterans, here is an example of how I pulled together the categories around the core concept of "Survival: Reconciling Multiple Realities." First, there is the diagram that was worked and reworked until I was satisfied. This is followed by a summary memo in which the theory was elaborated upon using major categories and their subcategories.

Survival: Reconciling Multiple Realities

Once the diagram is completed, the researcher is ready to put together the summary memo using the

diagram as a guide. Each category and the relationships between categories are described in the summary. Categories and related subcategories are placed between quotation marks. The summary memo and the diagram provide a guide for later writing the findings.

Writing the Analytic Summary Memo

Survival is the main theme of the research. Every person who participates in a war hopes to be a survivor. In this research, every action–interaction (the use of "survival strategies") carried out alone or as part of a team effort was aimed at surviving the risks. The risks arose out of conditions and varied with the arrangement of conditions that were ever changing, making surviving an ongoing and responsive adaptive process. Survival has certain properties. One either survives or doesn't. Also, a combatant can "survive" but come home wounded physically, psychologically, or morally. There is "physical survival," "psychological survival," and "survival of moral integrity." In order to engage in the many individual and collective strategies necessary to survive in a war zone, combatants had to make the adjustment in self and their images of war that made up the reality of their civilian life to the reality of risks associated with being in a war zone. This adaption has to occur quite rapidly—sometimes at the onset of the first battle. Then when the person, now a veteran, is discharged from the military, he or she has to reconcile to the realities of civilian life once again. This means leaving behind the physical behaviors, the psychological compartmentalizing, and different moral standards that were adopted in order to survive in Vietnam and conforming to the behavioral, psychological, and moral standards of the American culture. This culture had changed considerably between the beginning of the war and by the time the war had ended. I term this need to adjust the before war, during war, and after war self and images of war "reconciling multiple realities."

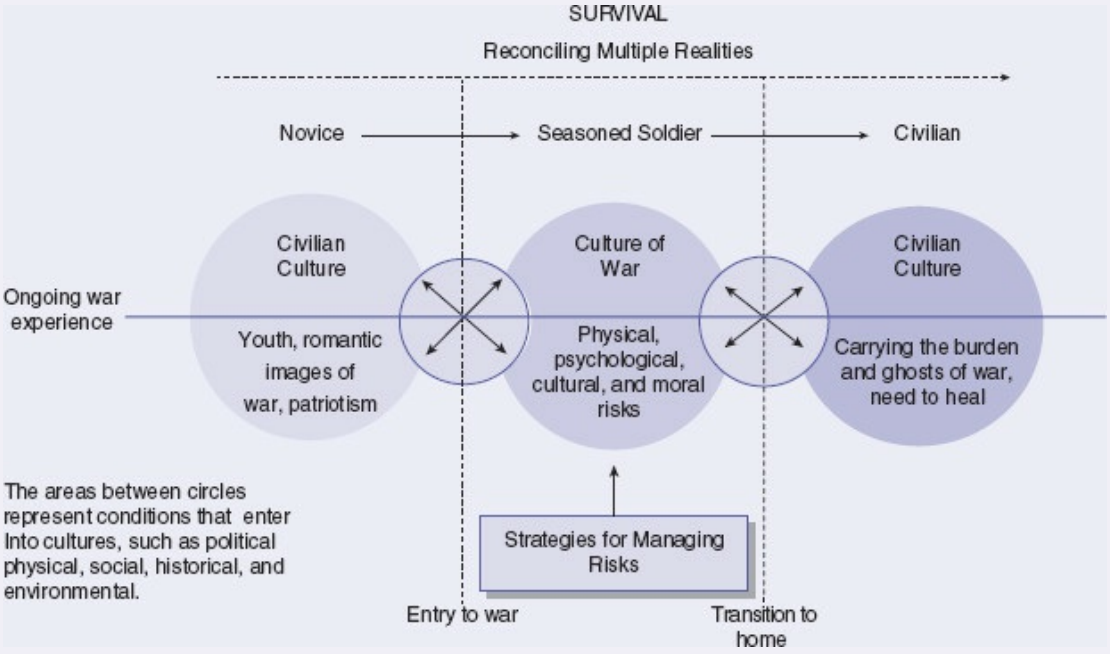

Diagram 16.1 Survival: Reconciling Multiple Realities

"Reconciling" necessitates "making adjustments" in "self" and in "images of war" then using the appropriate strategies to survive the perceived risks not only of war but also of life afterward. "Realities" refer to perceptions of the standards of physical, psychological, and moral behaviors that are part of the culture from "prewar civilian" to "combatant" and then to "veteran." Reconciling is not a one-time event but rather occurs repeatedly over time and with conditions encountered over the course of an individual's biography. Reconciling can be difficult because "realities" can be multiple and overlapping. When different "realities" come into conflict, it can sometimes trigger less-than-desirable action that threatens not only physical survival but psychological well-being and moral integrity as well.

"The changing self" refers to the changes that must occur within the individual as he or she moves from civilian life, then to combat, and to reentry into society after deployment. The self is comprised of many aspects such as student, worker, daughter, son, wife, husband, researcher, etc. (Strauss, 1969). The young men who went to Vietnam came from a variety of family, educational, and life backgrounds. Some came from middle-class families and others from lower socioeconomic ones. Some felt a deep sense of obligation to country, and others went to war because they were drafted. Regardless of background or why they went to Vietnam, once in Vietnam the young men had to make the same physical, psychological, and moral adjustments in the self that would enable them to handle the various situations of "risks" that they encountered as part of war. The changes to self included letting go of the "prewar civilian person," then going from a "novice" to "seasoned combatant," and finally becoming a "civilian" once more but this time with the experiences of war within him. Leaving the security of home and family and going to boot camp was the first step toward becoming a combatant. In boot camp or basic training, young men learned the basics of war. But basic training didn't fully prepare the young men for actual combat. It was one thing to practice making war and another to come up against a "real" enemy who wants to kill you by a variety of means. Survival depended upon the ability to move from being the "novice soldier" who arrived in Vietnam to being a "seasoned combatant" and doing so very rapidly. "Becoming seasoned" meant having the military skills and emotional and moral strength necessary to carry out the individual and collective strategies necessary to survive the risks associated with the various and ever-changing conditions of combat. Just as there were changes in "self" that had to occur in order to survive the war experience, there were changes in the self that occurred as a result of going to war. Some of the consequences were positive, and others were less so. Positive changes to "self" include "maturing," "gaining confidence," "learning new technical and social skills," learning how to care for the "physical self," figuring out how to "look out for others," and "learning to take responsibility for one's actions." Negative consequences to self included "becoming depressed," "becoming discouraged," "becoming angry," "becoming vengeful," and "losing one's moral integrity."

Because of the risks and negative experiences combatants experienced in war, another adjustment to the self was required upon homecoming. Some veterans returned home from war as physically and psychologically well as one could expect and with their morality intact. They may have had some adjustments to make, may have put up a "wall of silence," and on occasion may have encountered "ghosts that haunt"—the mental images of comrades, enemies, and civilians wounded or killed in the war—but with assistance from the military, their family, community, and friends were able to make the needed

adjustments and lead productive lives. Others had difficulty adapting to civilian life. They carried with them considerable anger, were plagued by "ghosts that haunt," and developed "traumatic stress syndrome." Many were wounded and disabled by war and required considerable medical as well as psychological attention. For veterans who couldn't let go of the anger and ghosts or who may have been severely injured or disabled, life became and still is a daily struggle.

"Shifting images of war" has to do with a young man's changes in perception of war. Before the war, many young men had "romantic" notions of war. Their notions were derived mostly from movies and television programs that focused more on heroes and battles that were eventually won rather than on the hardships and tragedies of war. At the beginning of the Vietnam War, many young men were convinced of the strength of the U.S. military and their ability to crush the enemy. They believed that the war would be over soon. The first shift in images of war usually occurs in boot camp, where future combatants are introduced to making war. But boot camp—despite how difficult it can be—is not quite the same as "being in war." It can't prepare a young man for the fear that arises upon that first encounter with the enemy or for the psychological trauma that occurs when a young man realizes it is either kill or be killed. In order to survive physically, psychologically, and morally, young men have to shift their romantic images of war to one that is more consistent with the "realities of war and death." Part of the shifting that occurs is learning to view "the enemy" as a foe who wants to kill you, recognizing the necessity of following "leaders," and learning that discipline is imperative. A combatant has to obey "rules of engagement" and "commands," even if doing so is disagreeable and doesn't make sense, or face court martial. Morally there is a fine line to walk in war. A combatant has to accept that though war "sanctions killing," at the same time combatants can't kill indiscriminately. Having a "strong leader" is important to survival. Strong leaders give direction, set boundaries, and maintain discipline. Even when a combatant is able to shift his or her images of war to fit with "perceived reality," there are consequences to the self. Some young men become so disillusioned or so fearful for their lives that they become psychologically traumatized. Some lose their moral compass and do things they wish they hadn't. When they return home after war, they often bring home with them "ghosts that haunt." War and killing that seemed so "right" in Vietnam often seems so "wrong" when seen from the perspective of civilian life. The clash of perspectives or images of war that many veterans experienced upon "homecoming" tended to increase their anger and created a sense of disillusionment with government and with fellow members of society. To many combatants, only persons who have been to war and who have experienced what they have can possibly understand the things they did in Vietnam and why they felt at the time they had to do it.

The "context of war" denotes the sets of war-related conditions and circumstances that gave rise to the risks perceived by individual combatants as well as the collective of combatants. Combatants gave meaning to the conditions they found in Vietnam by denoting them as risks that threatened their survival and therefore had to be managed through different forms of action–interaction. The context of war was derived from a combination of political, social, cultural, personal, economic, and historical conditions that defined the Vietnam War. Within the United States, the "context of war in the United States" went from tacit support for the war to an "antiwar movement" that divided the country and that made combatants' reentry into civilian life more difficult because of the accusations that were made by civilians. Sometimes

military personnel were spit upon and called “baby killers.”

The context of war included all the political and military decisions made at high levels of government and the military. It included the “physical and political environment” in which the war was fought, the nature of the “enemy,” the “rules of engagement” that were established, and the “high turnover of troops.” These conditions presented combatants with “physical, mental, and moral situations” that they perceived as “risks” or “threats” to their survival. The risks varied from high to low at any one time and tended to change depending upon the situation the men found themselves in. Over time and place, the risks were different because of the way conditions combined to create varying levels of risks.

Among the conditions that presented risks were the following:

1. Possessing idealism and youth
2. Having a sense of powerlessness over the combat conditions
3. Confusing rules of engagement
4. Fighting someone else’s war
5. Entering the frontier between life and death
6. Fighting a determined and experienced enemy
7. Encountering an inhospitable terrain
8. Entering a war with no apparent sense of direction
9. Measuring success in terms of enemy body counts
10. Encountering a cultural divide
11. Having a constant turnover of troops
12. Seeing fellow soldiers and friends killed
13. Fighting an enemy that possesses lethal equipment
14. Fighting despite physical exhaustion
15. Having physical exhaustion, leading to psychological and moral exhaustion

“Survival strategies” denote the actions and interactions carried out by combatants to increase their chances of surviving. Making use of those strategies depended upon combatants’ abilities to “reconcile” their selves and images of war to fit with the situation of risks presented by the various conditions. The survival strategies used by combatants had to be matched to the perceived risks and can be classified into the “personal,” “institutional,” “collective or rescue,” and “escape and evade” patterns. Though chance played a major role in who did and did not return from Vietnam, the active components of wanting to survive and the rigorous implementation of strategies necessary to survive conditions were essential to increasing chances of survival. Sometimes under conditions of prolonged exposure to the conditions of war, the burden of risks became so great that strategies to maintain physical, psychological, and moral well-being failed to mitigate conditions, and combatants began to “wear down physically and become

psychologically and morally exhausted."

"Homecoming" meant more than leaving the war zone. It meant leaving Vietnam behind and again having to reconcile "the self" and "images of war" to fit with the conditions veterans now found themselves to be in. The America that veterans returned to was culturally different from the way it was when combatants left to go to Vietnam. Gone was the sense of patriotic duty owed to one's country. Friends had moved on with their lives, and the country was undergoing a period of healing from the cultural divide created by the war. There was a lot of antagonism directed at soldiers who had served in Vietnam with veterans as well as politicians and others being blamed for what went on during the war. Not only did veterans have the culture to contend with when they came home, but they also brought with them "residual anger," "nips at conscience," "ghosts that haunt," and a sense of "alienation from society," along with "disillusionment" with government, society, and even in some cases with the self. The burdens veterans carried upon returning home called for "healing." "Healing" requires letting go of anger, guilt, remorse, and fear with the ongoing support of friends and family and therapy groups. To cope with the conditions they found at home, many veterans built a "wall of silence" around their Vietnam experience. They refused to talk about their experience with family and friends, preferring to bury their wounds and isolate themselves from that part of their life. With time, and with a lot of support, some veterans, while never forgetting, were able to "reconcile" the present with the past and readjust to civilian life. They were able to go on with their lives and be successful, having matured by working through the negative aspects of the war experience. Other persons had more difficulty with "healing." Some maintain their "wall of silence" even today. They remain angry, disillusioned, and alienated to various extents. Some have developed post-traumatic stress disorder, and some have turned to a life of alcohol and drugs to help them blot out the horrors they experienced.

In conclusion, the war experience can be described as an intense, powerful, and life-changing "survival" event that encompassed many "different realities" that have to be "reconciled, if a combatant is to survive." The war didn't necessarily end when the combatant returned from Vietnam but continued to haunt some veterans for the remainder of their lives. Even many of the veterans who were not combatants per se but who served in supportive roles like nurses, doctors, and engineers, etc., were profoundly impacted in similar ways as a result of war (Van Devanter, 1983).

While the wall memorial (a wall of remembrance) was erected in memory of those persons who died, it also carries within it the pain of those who survived. I remember being so struck in those early interviews by the "wall of silence" that the guys put up around themselves. Now I understand. It serves a very important protective function by enabling them to live with the "reality" of their "war experience."

Methodological Note

The previously given memo weaves concepts derived from analysis to present one explanation of the war experience. Though perhaps there might be a better explanation, the conceptualization of the war

experience as "Survival: Reconciling Multiple Realities" seems to fit the data. The major categories logically fit within the larger framework. While the framework does not account for why persons might not have survived (I have no actual data on these persons who are dead), it does provide some insight into what war is like for combatants.

When I started this study, I had no idea where it was going. I let the questions and concepts derived from analysis lead me. I was not a passive recipient of the data—rather a very active participant making comparisons, asking questions, thinking, writing memos, and doing diagrams. The interplay between analyst and data was constant, and I was "shaped" by as well as involved in shaping the data.

Refining the Theory

It is now time to take the theory and (a) check for gaps in the logic, (b) rework those areas that seem to be lacking, and (c) use all of the memos that I had written and sorted to fill in the information under each major category.

Checking for Gaps in Logic

After going through the theory over and over again, I can't find any major gaps in the logic. The concepts seem to fit together in the way I organized them. I passed the summary of the theory around, and others couldn't find any gaps either. Satisfied, I was ready to proceed to the next step.

Filling In

The core category was "Survival: Reconciling Multiple Realities." Reconciling multiple realities represents the "war experience" of combatants. It is what they had to do in order to survive—physically, mentally, and morally. Under the core category came several other major categories, including "the changing self," "changing images of war," the "context of war," "survival strategies," and "homecoming." The changing self and changing images of war represent the changes necessary in order for reconciling to occur as combatants met head-on the challenges presented by the context of war and upon homecoming. And "reconciling" was necessary in order for combatants to make use of the strategies that would enable them to survive physically, remain psychologically stable, and retain their moral integrity during the war and to heal once they got home.

All of the memos that I've written about major and minor concepts are now being sorted and used to fill in the details along with statements of how the concepts are related. By filling in, I explain how reconciling takes place through changes in self and images of war. I begin by describing who the combatants were before going to war, how they changed from novices to seasoned soldiers, and how being seasoned enabled them to use survival strategies to solve the various problems they encountered while at war and to heal upon homecoming. I bring in variation by describing the various situations combatants were faced with in war and the strategies that they drew upon in order to survive. I explain how when a combatant feels overwhelmed and strategies fail, he is likely to become demoralized, fatigued, and worn down physically, psychologically, and/or morally. "Wearing down" physically, psychologically, and morally during war perhaps partially explains why some

veterans have greater difficulty than others reconciling to civilian life. They were not able to let go of the "trauma of war," the "ghosts," and "anger." Some developed post-traumatic stress disorder.

Limiting Factors to the Study

I must add here that this research is not finished. To more fully understand the Vietnam War experience from the perspective of combatants, it would be important to collect additional and more varied types of data. It was beyond the scope of this book to do this because the focus was on methodology and not on the research. The research was for teaching purposes only. However, if I were to continue with the study, I would want to obtain more interviews with combatants and do interviews with representatives of different military services, such as navy members, mechanics, medics, doctors, nurses, chaplains, and others not represented. It would also be important to obtain data from other participants in the war—doctors, engineers, military leaders, politicians—who, though not directly engaged in combat, certainly shared indirectly in the combat experience. It would be interesting to gather data from young men and women who served during the Iraq War and war in Afghanistan and compare their experiences with those from the Vietnam War.

Journalists accompanied troops in Vietnam, and it would be interesting to have information regarding their experiences with the war and how they, through the images of war presented to the public, shaped the outcome of the war. It would also be valuable to obtain more insight into the "war experience" from the perspective of the "enemy." Then there was the whole peace movement at home. As part of this study, I would want to have more information about how the images of civilians at home were shaped and reshaped over time, by whom or what, and the role the antiwar movement had in bringing about the end of the war. There is the whole political aspect of behind-the-scenes activities that were going on in North Vietnam, South Vietnam, and the United States and the range of issues that impacted the ability to negotiate an end to the war. In order for any of this additional material to be relevant, it would have to be related back to the war experience of combatants because it was they who were the focus of this particular study. So there is a lot left to do.

Most research studies are not nearly as complicated or involved as the study of combatants in war. The important thing to remember is that regardless of a project's scope, researchers should include as many different perspectives on an issue or topic as feasible. Multiple perspectives add insight, richness, depth, and variation. It is also important to bring context into the discussion. It is not possible to arrive at every contextual factor that might impact upon the topic of study, but knowing how context enters into and defines situations and responses to those situations adds depth and validity to explanations. My advice is to work within the limits of the time, energy, and money but not to rush through a project too quickly. The quality and contribution of one's work depends upon the depth and breadth of the investigation.

Validating the Scheme

There are certain things that I did to validate the theory. I did send findings to the three interviewees of the study for their comments. There were not a lot of comments and no criticisms. The interviewees thought that the process by which I arrived at the findings was interesting. Also, after coming up with the scheme, I did

return to some of the better memoirs and reread them. I felt that the scheme held up to that scrutiny. I also talked to other veterans of Vietnam whom I met casually and they seemed to think that the scheme worked. I didn't look for **negative cases** because the Vietnam study was done to demonstrate the research process as part of this book. However, the topic remains interesting to me, and I would like to do more with it.

Summary of Key Points

Integration is the final step of analysis for researchers whose research aim is theory building. Integration is probably the most difficult part of doing analysis because it requires sifting and sorting through all the memos and looking for clues of how the categories fit together. Rereading memos, creating the story line, doing diagrams, and just plain thinking make up the techniques that analysts use to arrive at final integration. Just remember that doing qualitative analysis is an art as well as a science and that there is no time in the analysis where this becomes more apparent than at the time of final integration. The clues to integration can be found in the data as interpreted by the researcher, as demonstrated in this chapter. Where the art comes in is in the ability to "create novel explanations" based on data but that add new insights into phenomena. The researcher must recognize when the scheme isn't working (there are missing links in the logic) and when this happens to be willing to take the scheme apart and rework it again and again until the analytic story all falls into place and feels right.

Activities for Thinking, Writing, and Discussing as a Group

1. Return to the Points to Keep in Mind section at the beginning of the chapter, and find examples of how those points were carried out by the researcher.
2. Look for gaps or breaks in the logic, and explain how those gaps might be fixed through theoretical sampling.
3. Think of alternative core categories—ones that I might not have thought of—and write a summary memo showing how you would integrate the other categories around it.
4. Bring your summary memo to class, and present it for feedback.

Part 3: Finishing the Research Project

> If the artist does not perfect a new vision in his process of doing, he acts mechanically and repeats some old model fixed like a blueprint in the mind.
>
> John Dewey, Art as Experience, 1934, p. 50

At this point users of the book have had much to read and absorb and are ready to move on. Perhaps their data has been collected and analyzed and they have a theory in hand. However, the most carefully crafted theory is likely to lose its impact if it is not put into a form that makes it readily available to other professionals and perhaps lay persons. For many first time grounded theorists making a grounded theory available through presentations and publications presents another small mountain the cross. They question how to present the theory in a manner that is clear and concise and at the same time include sufficient detail to satisfy committees and colleagues without getting bogged down in the writing process. While there are standard models for writing up and presenting quantitative studies, there are fewer standardized guidelines to follow when it comes to writing up and presenting qualitative research in general and grounded theory in particular. The following chapter, Chapter 17, while not a prescription, does offer some suggestions to help new grounded theorist overcome their anxiety and take on the challenge of writing and presenting. A good way to begin is to read the chapter thoroughly and study how other grounded theorists have organized and presented their theories. Then stop second guessing yourself and just sit down and do it!

In addition, I want users of this method to have confidence in the theories they've constructed. It's a lot easier to stand up in front of a crowd of colleagues or to submit a paper for publication if the researcher believes in her of his own work. Confidence comes from knowing that the theory you've produced meets the standards for "quality." That is why I suggest that after completing the theory researchers apply the criteria provided in Chapter 18 to their theory and perhaps have other colleagues do the same. Any missing pieces can be filled in and mistakes rectified before "going public."

The final Chapter, Chapter 19, deals with student questions and answers. This chapter not only reflects many of the questions new grounded theorists have but in the responses to the questions offer suggestions on how they might respond to the questions of others about the method or theory.

Finally, I want to thank all of you for participating in this analytic journey with me. In this book I hope that I not only brought to "life" the method of Anselm Strauss but also passed on the research vision and wisdom he so willingly gifted to me and so many others.

Chapter 17

Writing Theses, Monographs, and Dissertations, and Giving Talks About Your Research

> It is in the act of reading and writing that insights emerge. The [work of writing] involves textual material that possesses hermeneutic and interpretive significance. It is precisely in the process of writing that the data of the research are gained as well as interpreted and that the fundamental nature of the research question is perceived. (Van Manen, 2006, p. 715)

The research act is not complete until the knowledge that has been generated through the investigation is made available to colleagues, practitioners, and interested laypersons. In addition, sitting down to write helps researchers clarify thoughts and discover breaks in logic, enhancing the quality of a theory. One of our former students, Paul Alexander, stated this in a memo dated September 19, 1996:

> *Writing forced me to see the whole theory and highlighted those parts that didn't fit so well.... So I would go back to the data.... This kind of building and verifying of various aspects of the theory continued throughout the writing process especially in specifying the relationships between areas of the theory. But there is still that inevitable question: How do I write up my findings so that the theory I constructed is accessible to my intended audience?*

Points to Keep in Mind

When reading this chapter, students are advised to keep the following points in mind:

- Keeping these thoughts in mind
- Preparing presentations
- Writing dissertations
- Writing monographs
- Writing papers for publication

Keeping These Thoughts in Mind

What might seem a daunting task—presenting and writing—is not really so difficult if the following three concepts are kept in mind. First and foremost, researchers need confidence that the theory they have constructed is representative of the data and is of high quality. Second, after careful editing based on feedback, a researcher has to let go of the writing project and let others judge the work. Third, knowing the audience is the key to successful presentations and writing. Each of these topics will be covered briefly.

- The issue of confidence
- Letting go
- Audiences

The Issue of Confidence

Having confidence in the theory a researcher has developed is essential. Confidence comes from constructing a theory that is logical, dense, and innovative. But how is a novice to judge that? A good place to start is to apply the criteria found in Chapter 18 to the research. If a researcher is honest in critiquing his or her own work and finds that all the requirements are met, the researcher can feel fairly certain that he or she has constructed a sound theory. Also allowing trusted colleagues and fellow researchers to review the theory before going public can provide valuable feedback and build confidence. But keep in mind that scanty data leads to a thin, poorly developed theory. The process of theory development can't be cut short. There has to be sufficient data to fill out categories and to show variation. Process and context have to be accounted for. If colleagues respond favorably, then researchers should feel reassured and feel that the research is ready to bring to a wider audience.

Here is another point to keep in mind. By the time a researcher has gone through the entire research process, established rapport with participants, and developed sensitivity to what is being expressed in the data, they have amassed considerable knowledge. Who else knows the topic of investigation to the degree that the researcher does? Even participants may not know how other participants feel and often are too focused on their own story to stand back and see the whole picture.

Of course there is always a certain amount of reticence about talking to an audience or sending an article out for review the first time. This is natural. Even experienced researchers sometimes get nervous before they speak or are uncertain how journal reviewers will react to their findings. Classroom seminars can give presenters confidence in their analyses and in public speaking. Speeches given at conferences, if favorably received, can add further validation of an analysis and encourage article writing. Nevertheless, for some persons there is a considerable amount of anxiety about whether a presentation or written paper has been accomplished effectively. After all, some people are perfectionists and cannot seem to settle for less than an ideal performance. That can mean, of course, no performance or a greatly delayed one. Others lack some measure of confidence in their abilities generally, and this spills over into questions about ability to accomplish this particular kind of task.

The best thing to do is to go ahead and do that presentation or submit that paper. Others will let you know where the problems lie, if any, through constructive criticisms. These criticisms should never be viewed negatively. Rather, they should be viewed as opportunities for discussion and growth. Rejection should not mean dejection but determination to try again. Over the years, I've learned that the suggestions of others didn't diminish but improved the quality of my work.

Letting Go

Having edited what probably should be the final draft, a researcher can have difficulty letting go of a manuscript. Letting go may not be due so much to a lack of self-confidence—though it can be that—but to a temporary failure of nerve. Have I really gotten the last details in? Got them right? These doubts are stimulated by the almost inevitable discovery of additional detail—both conceptual and editorial—and the relocation and rephrasing that occurs during each rewriting of a draft. Part of maturity as a researcher and

writer comes in understanding that no manuscript is ever finished or perfect. If a writer is fortunate enough not to have a personal, departmental, or publisher's deadline, then he or she may profit from putting aside the final draft for some weeks or even months in order to gain a bit of editorial and analytic distance from it. Also, a colleague or two might be pressed to read part or even all of the manuscript and to provide constructive feedback. Eventually a writer has to let go of his or her work, convinced that the manuscript is finished at least for the time being. A researcher can rest assured that once off to a publisher or committee there will always be feedback about improvements to make. The logic behind letting go is that writing is only part of a cumulative stream of conveying ideas. There are always other opportunities to rethink and rework an article. Incorporating one's own criticisms into one's writing is no different from responding to other people's criticisms.

The psychology of letting go is, however, more complex. Basically, it comes down to avoiding the trap of dreaming of the perfect manuscript and allowing oneself instead to be open to new projects, new ideas, and new data. It's important to strike a balance between the profitable reworking of drafts and cutting loose from them. Deciding how and when to do this is difficult. Of course, an experienced researcher familiar with the investigator's work or topic can always offer suggestions, but in the end, every writer must rely on his or her inner sense of rightness and completion.

Audiences

There is also the question of audience, and this is most important. Almost every presentation and written research report will be addressed to a different audience so that each will have to be done a little differently. Theses and dissertations must meet the requirements and expectations of committee members and universities. Each journal has its own area of specialty and audience. Presentations may be to other researchers, practitioners, and lay audiences. Not knowing your audience can lead to presentations going flat and papers being rejected. Do your homework! Spend a little time getting a feel for who will be receiving the information you are going to present. Read journals and attend conferences. Contact program planners and journal editors to find out if there are certain issue themes, and gear your writing or presentation to that theme, if possible.

If the researcher is writing a dissertation and is fortunate enough to study in a department that allows a certain degree of latitude in style, then he or she can write for audiences other than university committees. Book publishers usually reject theses presented in the original format, preferring a different form of presentation. So if you are allowed to write a thesis or dissertation in a style that approximates a monograph, then the conversion to a potential publication is rendered that much easier.

There are some crucial differences between monographs and dissertations. Chief among the differences is that the theory presented in a monograph should be conceptually fuller—that is, it should include greater depth and detail. Since there is more space and fewer page constraints, an author is freer to develop the analytic message. Moreover, there is less restriction on where the literature or methodology is placed. In a monograph, these can be built into the discussion of findings. In a monograph versus an article or dissertation, there can be a more extensive elaboration of categories and their relationships and a greater inclusion of

sections of field notes. The latter may include case studies and even long quotations from interviews, field notes, and documents. The author may always choose to digress at times, bringing into the discussion minor and side issues, as long as these are consistent with the main thrust of the monograph. Also, a monograph can include some issues that were omitted from the more restricted dissertation or not fully worked out during the dissertation research. Inconsistencies that crept into the more hurried writing of a dissertation should be corrected in the monograph. Dissertation committees tend to emphasize findings, whereas the readers of monographs are more likely to appreciate or at least accept an analytically based argument, as well as a broader discussion of the research materials.

When it comes to considering audiences, the author of a monograph has more latitude in choosing the style of presentation. In some part, the style should reflect the author's message, while taking into consideration the audience for whom the message is intended. Questions to consider are as follows: Is the intended audience all colleagues or a particular group of them, such as all nurses or just medical surgical nurses? Do I want to have readers from several fields, including perhaps readers from practitioner fields: for example, sociologists and social workers, psychologists, and clinical psychologists? What about writing for a lay audience? For a monograph to be maximally effective, its author should ask, "What do I wish to say to each of these audiences?" Or if several audiences are intended, then this should be asked: "What style can I use to reach each?" Usually, theory blended with sufficient descriptive detail to make it vivid and clear is the preferred combination. In short, the style and shape of presentation should be sensitive to and reflect the targeted audiences.

If an author wants to address both disciplinary colleagues and laypersons, reaching both audiences requires giving considerable thought to the use of vocabulary, terminology, case materials, overall mood, and other aspects of writing style. Many monographs published by sociologists have both collegial and nonprofessional readers as targeted audiences. Sometimes the targeted readers are the nonprofessionals—for instance, patients and their families—such as the book on epilepsy written by Schneider and Conrad (1983). Occasionally, monographs are directed at lay audiences, colleagues, and professionals. Then they are published as trade books, as in a book on remarriage after divorce (e.g., Cauhape, 1983).

Writing for multiple audiences is generally more complicated than writing for one's colleagues. Yet many researchers are eager or feel obligated by conscience to write for more than scientific or professional readers. Sometimes, too, they use their research as a platform for writing books that are not monographs. One possibility is to address policy issues, presenting an argument, though informed by one's research and perhaps also by professional knowledge (Strauss & Corbin, 1988). Or books can be written for practitioners, full of information based on research (e.g., Strauss, Schatzman, Bucher, Ehrlich, & Sabshin, 1964).

Preparing Presentations

Often, researchers present materials orally to see how a given audience will react before attempting to publish. Indeed, sometimes those who are being studied will directly or indirectly press a researcher, asking, "What are you finding? Can't you give us at least preliminary findings or interpretations?" Many investigators do oral presentations before publishing either in an attempt to satisfy participant curiosity or to get feedback from

colleagues. They even do this fairly early in their research projects. Qualitative research studies lend themselves to relatively early reporting because the analyses begin at the outset of the projects. It is not at all necessary to wait until analysis is completed to satisfy listeners with some of the fascinating stories told by participants. All of this advice may sound rather general although perhaps somewhat reassuring. Here are some practical suggestions for preparing a talk or speech:

- Define your audience.
- Choose one or two catchy categories.
- Prepare a topic statement and outline.
- Write out the presentation.
- Prepare a PowerPoint presentation.
- Practice, practice, practice.
- Make it interesting and fun.

Define Your Audience

Collegial audiences can absorb presentations at an abstract level and even talks devoted to research strategies and experiences. Other more mixed and professional and practitioner audiences respond more to stories or discussions about interesting categories or themes spiced with sufficient descriptive narrative or case materials to make them interesting. Researchers also need to choose carefully the appropriate level of vocabulary for each audience. A bad choice of vocabulary—one that uses too much professional jargon—can turn off an audience. Too simplistic a presentation can bore colleagues. It is most important that researchers say something worthwhile to listeners but at the same time stay within the time limit. The worst thing that a researcher can do is overload a presentation with material or go over time. An audience can only absorb so much and will begin to tune out if a presentation is too dense or too long. Also, it is unfair to other presenters if you take up part of their presentation time.

Choose One or Two Catchy Categories

Keeping in mind that a talk's content should be matched as far as possible to the audience, I suggest the following. To begin with, generally it's preferable *not* to present the entire set of findings in a short presentation—especially if one has developed theory. There is the risk of overloading the audience. It takes a great deal of skill to present an entire theoretical scheme clearly enough in 20 minutes so that listeners can both understand and remember it after leaving the room. A researcher can, of course, sketch the main descriptive story before turning to an elaboration of one of the more interesting features of the research. However, I believe verbal presentations are more effective—and certainly better grasped and remembered—if they focus on one or two catchy categories and include many descriptive examples and case examples from one or more research participants.

For example, if I wanted to do a presentation on findings from the study of Vietnam veterans, the entire theory is much too complicated for a 20-minute presentation. Therefore, I would begin by explaining the

main theme of the research, which is "survival." Next, I would focus on two important subconcepts of survival —"becoming a seasoned soldier" and "wearing down"—because they represent two intervening conditions related to survival: one enhancing the ability to survive while the other decreasing the chances to survive. I would explain how each affects survival and include case examples to demonstrate my points. I would make clear at the onset that I'm only presenting one part of the larger theory and suggest that if members of the audience want to know more about the research they can contact me.

Prepare a Topic Statement and Outline

Some people might ask, Why go through all the work of thinking through a topic sentence and making an outline? It's too much work. However, it is important work. Remember that you may have only 15, 20, or 30 minutes to make your point. You don't want to waste time on words that detract from the major point you are trying to convey. Having the topic sentence and doing an outline help the researcher keep the presentation focused on the topic. Returning to the example from a study of Vietnam veterans, my next steps would look something like the following.

I would review all of the memos pertaining to the topics I've chosen to talk about. Using the memos as a guide, I would write a short summary statement about the main points. The summary statement would contain the logic of the presentation and might look something like this example from the Vietnam study. "Survival" is the main focus of combatants. A young man going off to war comes into the war zone as a "novice" often with unrealistic and romantic images of war and a self that developed within a civilian and family culture including moral standards against killing. Upon arrival within the "context of war" with all its inherent risks, a young man must quickly adapt to the realities of war by making the changes in self and images of war that will enable him to move from "novice" to "seasoned combatant." A "seasoned combatant" is one who has developed a set of strategies for handling the varied physical, psychological, and moral risks found in war. Though fate plays a role in who survives and who doesn't, it is the ability to draw up survival strategies under various conditions that enhance the chances of surviving. However, if the stress and strain of combat are too great and prolonged, even "seasoned combatants" begin to "wear down," and their ability to respond to risky situations becomes lessened, putting combatants' physical survival at risks, threatening their sense of psychological well-being, and eroding moral integrity.

With that guiding statement in front of me, I would develop a clear outline. The outline need not be too long or detailed. It's a skeleton or sketch for what the presentation will include. Just a brief example again from the Vietnam study can be found next:

Example of an Outline for a Presentation

Survival: Reconciling multiple realities. Topic sentence and introduction

A. Definition of survival

B. Multiple realities and transitions to war

C. Combat and the physical, psychological, and moral risks war presents to survival

D. Why reconciling these realities is important to survival

Becoming a seasoned soldier

A. Definition of a seasoned soldier

B. Conditions that foster becoming seasoned

C. Strategies used by seasoned soldiers to increase chances of survival

D. How being seasoned contributes to survival

Wearing down

A. Definition of *wearing down*

B. Conditions for why it happens

C. Signs of wearing down

D. Possible impact on survival or being wounded

Conclusion. Suggestions for fostering development of "being seasoned" and preventing and recognizing signs of "wearing down."

It should be made clear to an audience that the researcher is presenting only one or more aspects of the total theory and that more about the theory can be found in future presentations and publications.

Write Out the Presentation

Not everyone who gives a presentation makes a written copy. Some persons prefer to go directly from their outline to PowerPoint to make slides of the presentation. Much depends upon how much time a person has. Some people wait until the last minute to prepare and skip the writing. I always write out my presentation for the following reasons. First, it makes it easier to check the logic and fill in any gaps. Second, it solidifies the presentation in my head so that when I we speak from my slides, the ideas will flow and nothing important will be forgotten. Third, often there is a request by members of the audience for copies of a presentation. Or sponsors of the research conference want to publish the presentations. Whatever the situation, the researcher is ready with a paper in hand. And finally, some presentations are given over and over again, albeit to different audiences. If a presentation is to be given more than once, it is important that it be well thought out so that there is no need for constant revision.

Prepare a PowerPoint Presentation

In the old days, researchers had to use overheads or photographic slides for presentations. This meant doing things ahead of time so that overheads could be made and slides processed. Today, preparing for presentations

is easy because of PowerPoint. With PowerPoint, just about any presentation can be done at the last minute—though I don't suggest it. To prepare a PowerPoint presentation, a researcher should go back to the original outline or the written form of the presentation and work from it. The great thing about PowerPoint is how easy it is to incorporate charts, diagrams, and pictures into the presentation. With all the technology available today, there is no excuse for a boring and incoherent presentation. Here is just one suggestion, though: Don't make the slides too dense or cluttered. Just include the major points—those that you want others to remember.

Practice, Practice, Practice

Practicing anything is a bore, but practice is useful for the novice presenter. First, practice enables the presenter to check how much time the talk will take. There is nothing worse than running out of time and having to either rush or omit parts at the end. Another mistake is talking too fast. Taping your practice presentation is a good way to evaluate your style and to see where the errors are. Practicing also enables presenters to notice and rework long and awkward sentences. It is important to hear the sound of your voice ahead of time because it sounds different in a large room. Fourth, practice allows the researcher to know where to put emphasis, where to put pauses, and when it might be possible to speak a little faster. Remember when speaking to a mixed-language audience that it is very important to speak slowly and distinctly, so allow a little extra time. Fifth, at large conferences, persons are often coming and going during the course of a presentation, and this can be very distracting. If the presenter is well practiced, there is less of a tendency to lose one's train of thought. A researcher can practice alone in front of a mirror and with a tape recorder. It's even better if a researcher can try out the talk on colleagues or family members, as they are likely to offer valuable suggestions.

Make It Interesting and Fun

Most audiences are supportive, so relax and enjoy the presentation and the audience will too. But listening to presentation after presentation at a conference can be boring. Also, much of the material presented at a conference is forgotten except by persons who might have particular interest in the topic. Do something to make your presentation stand out. A story or photograph can make a point in a way words can't. Jazz up your findings with colored slides, anecdotal stories, appropriate jokes, cartoons, or photographs to add interest while still keeping the talk professional. A person can say the most profound things, and no one may remember what was said because it was said in such an uninteresting or complicated manner. Another person can say very little of substance, but everyone responds because it was said with grace and humor. What we aim for is saying profound things in interesting ways. Don't worry if you make a mistake or if you stumble a time or two while making a presentation. Make light of your error, correct it, and move on.

Writing Dissertations

Most students are eager to graduate and obtain a paid position after graduate school. The one thing that stands between graduating and not graduating is the dreaded dissertation. The dissertation represents the

culmination of years of work. As well as completing it for their own sense of accomplishment, students also want to please their committees and meet university requirements. Guidelines for writing quantitative dissertations are clear since most follow a standard format. However, guidelines for writing qualitative dissertations are less clear. Many committee members have little or no experience with qualitative research and are uncertain on how to guide their students through the writing process. An advisor may not want to exert too much control over what is written but at the same time wants the finished product to meet academic standards. The university's and advisors' reputations are on the line when a student produces a dissertation.

While I want to provide some guidance regarding how to write dissertations, I don't want to rigidify the writing process by dictating what to include and how. However, I'll provide a few loose suggestions that students can use in their own ways. A common format for grounded theory dissertations can be summarized under the following headings:

- Chapter 1: Description of the Study and Significance of the Problem
- Chapter 2: Review of the Literature
- Chapter 3: Explanation of the Methodology
- Chapter 4: Overview of the Theory
- Chapter 5: Detailed Explanation of the Theory, Emphasizing Major Points With Detail and Examples Included
- Chapter 6: Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations

I won't discuss Chapters 1 and 2, as these are pretty standard. The only thing I might add here is that it should be much easier to state the research question and problem area after completing the research than it was when writing the original proposal. Often the original research question or questions have changed in light of what was discovered in the data. Along the same line, a student can update the literature review by adding to or revising topics covered in the original proposal to reflect the concepts derived and developed during the research. There still remains the question of where and how do I, a novice grounded theorist, begin to write the dissertation? I don't have a feel for how to organize and present all the material that came out of my analyses. Here are a few suggestions for students who might be wondering where to start:

- Read other dissertations.
- Ask committee members for their expectations and suggestions.
- Write the methodology chapter.
- Gather and review memos.
- Make an outline.
- Do a rough draft and obtain feedback.
- Revise as needed.

Read Other Dissertations

Since every grounded theory is different, I suggest that students read a variety of grounded dissertations to get

a feel for how other students have written up their findings. When I was ready to write my dissertation, I not only read every grounded theory study written by other students in the same university but also read and deconstructed every monograph written by Glaser and Strauss. I wanted to see how they explained their theories. If nothing else, reading other persons' grounded theories can give students confidence: "If others can do it, so can I." They can see that in comparison to others their own theory is just as innovative and well developed.

Ask Committee Members for Their Expectations and Suggestions

Committee members have opinions about qualitative research and about what they consider quality dissertations. If the principal advisor is familiar with and supportive of qualitative research, students can expect to proceed without a lot of conflict or difficulty. The problem comes when one or more committee members expect the qualitative dissertation to follow the format of a quantitative one. It doesn't work. The methodology chapter must reflect the tenets of grounded theory rather than grounded theory method made to fit with the methodological requirements of quantitative studies. And when it comes to findings, theories are complicated, and one or more chapters may be necessary to incorporate and explain the theory with all its details. And though diagrams are important for explaining a grounded theory, it is important that committee members be made aware that they should not expect statistical tables unless there is a quantitative component to the study. Usually researchers doing mixed-method studies don't construct dense and well-developed theory but tend to generate more descriptive findings to supplement or extend their quantitative findings.

Doing the dissertation is never easy, but students don't want make it any more difficult than it has to be. The process begins early in research with a students' choice of committee members—especially the principal advisor. My advice is to choose wisely. Some students choose committee members or advisors because of their status within the university or profession. Though highly regarded, these persons may not be the most qualified ones to take a student through a grounded theory study. Their expectations are often at odds with qualitative research procedures. Whereas quantitative research requires a structured design, grounded theory requires an open and flexible design. Based on concepts derived during analysis, it may become necessary to revise the data-collection process. When it comes to writing the methodology chapter, having committee members who are not aware of the differences between quantitative and qualitative or even in qualitative methodologies can cause a student much grief. Even when committee members are experienced qualitative researchers and grounded theorists, they may find it difficult to explain to students how to best present their findings. But faculty can tell students what they expect in terms of level of quality, time parameters, and organization. And they can direct the student to excellent examples of grounded theory studies within their own profession.

Write the Methodology Chapter

Writing the methodology chapter is important and may even be done before concluding the study. Writing gives students a sense that they have gone from a proposal to actually carrying out the method. Hopefully once having gone through the process they have a better understanding of the method, making the writing easier. At this point, the student may not be an expert but is no longer a novice. Writing the methodology chapter

also helps students put their findings into perspective because they've had to explain in clear and concise terms to others how they arrived at their theory.

The format for the methodology chapter is pretty standard even in grounded theory studies. There should be some discussion of why this methodology was chosen and something about the philosophy behind it, the methodological process, and the research design. There should be some discussion of participant recruitment, eligibility requirements, and protective measures taken to maintain the rights of human subjects. There should be an explanation of the type of sampling that was done and why. A researcher might explain that open sampling was used for the first few interviews, and as concepts were derived through analysis, theoretical sampling was added in order to develop important categories. Provide examples of how theoretical sampling was carried out whenever possible. Of course, in the chapter there should be a discussion of how the researcher obtained access to participants, the number of participants, and any problems that might have arisen during data collection. There could also be a chart describing the characteristics of the sample. The possibilities are endless, but the rule is that there should be sufficient information for readers to judge the adequacy of the research process. Writing memos and keeping a research diary will assist students in recalling the multiple shifts in assumptions and design that occurred throughout their investigations.

The most important part of the methodology chapter from my perspective is the section on data management and analysis. Data management should discuss the recording and transcription of data and explain how in grounded theory each data-collection session is followed whenever possible by analysis. The concepts derived during analysis then became the basis for subsequent data collection. An explanation of analysis should include a discussion of the different aspects of coding: open coding for concept identification; coding for concept development and elaboration; and coding for context, process, and integration with an explanation provided for each type of coding. Including examples of each type of coding can be helpful. A few paragraphs can be devoted to the role of memos and diagrams in grounded theory, the insights gained through them, assumptions that were challenged through discoveries, and if and how the design had to be altered as the researcher went along. An example or two of memos might be helpful. These are just a few ideas. Committee members might have other suggestions or requests.

Gather and Review Memos

The value of memos and diagrams becomes crystal clear when it comes time to write. All the information a student needs to draw from to write a clear and precise explanation of theory should be in the memos. This assumes that the student took the time to write memos after each analysis. Students who have not done much memo writing will find writing their grounded theory study more difficult. For those persons who have memos, I suggest the following:

1. First, review all the memos and even read a few field notes to make certain that your theory stands up to scrutiny. Look for poorly developed categories and gaps in the logic. If done correctly, memos should refer back to the field notes from which they were generated. Quotes from field notes will be useful when illustrating or legitimizing a concept.
2. Next, sort the memos according to category. Earlier memos should provide subcategories of the

category, which in the theory take the form of properties and dimensions. There may be many memos. Make use of summary memos that describe relationships between a category and its subcategories and various categories to each other. Read the final integrative memo and diagram carefully. The latter should provide the structure for the first findings chapter—the one that provides an overview of the theory.

3. The second findings chapter can illustrate how the process brought out in your theory works under different sets of conditions. This will bring the theory to life. Go back to memos that denote context and process because they contain a lot of the details. Use quotes and cases to illustrate the major points.

Make an Outline

With memos in hand, the student is ready to put together an outline of each findings chapter. Notice that I suggest breaking the findings down into two chapters. The first findings chapter provides an introduction to the theory. The second findings chapter is a more detailed chapter than the first and shows all the different categories, their relationships, and variations within the theory.

The nice thing about an outline is that it can be worked and reworked until the researcher is satisfied that every point he or she wants to make is the right place. If a researcher doesn't like the way the chapter is organized, he or she can try it another way. Keep in mind that there might be two or even three findings chapters depending upon the depth of the study. If measurements were added to the design, there may be another findings chapter explaining these.

Next is a sketch of two different examples of outlines based on the study of Vietnam veterans. A student who is planning to write a dissertation would probably do a more detailed outline. Just as a reminder, the format used here is just one example of how a researcher might organize findings. Each person's outline will be different depending upon the nature of the findings and how presenting the theory makes the most sense.

Outline, First and Second Findings Chapter: Overview of Theory

In the first findings chapter, I want to provide an overview of the theory and introduce and define the main categories and subcategories. In the actual writing, I would add one or more diagrams.

I. Survival: Reconciling multiple realities as main theme
   A. Survival
      1. Properties of survival
      2. Ability to survive dependent upon ability to reconcile multiple realities
   B. Reconciling multiple realities
      1. Definition: Making adjustments in "self" and "images of war" and using survival strategies appropriate to the situation
      2. Explanation of different realities—civilian life, life as a combatant, life after war

II. The changing self
    A. Many aspects of self—prewar, combat, homecoming self
III. Images of war definition
    A. Prewar
        1. Romantic images prewar
        2. Images begin to change in boot camp
    B. Combat
        1. Enemy as foe
        2. Kill or be killed
    C. Homecoming
        1. Clash of images: War that seems right in Vietnam is wrong upon homecoming
        2. Disillusionment with war
IV. Culture of war
    A. Definition: Context of physical, psychological, and moral risks that must be managed through action and interactional strategies in order to enhance chances of surviving
    B. Derived from combination of political, environmental, social, economic, historical, military, and personal conditions
    C. Survival potential increased by using appropriate strategies under different situations of war. Being able to use strategies facilitated by becoming seasoned and having good leadership.
    D. Chances of physical, psychological, and moral survival diminished and possibility of being wounded increased by being a novice, wearing down, and disillusionment with war

Second Findings Chapter

I. Action–interactional strategies carried out by combatants are used to increase their chances of survival both during war and upon homecoming.
II. Survival strategies under different conditions
    A. Combat readiness and routine strategies
    B. Routine team strategies and alignment of action
    C. On-the-spot problem solving and coordinated novel action
    D. Escape and evade decisive and extraordinary action
III. Homecoming
    A. Readjusting to civilian life after being at war
    B. Finding a country unsympathetic to the war and those who fought in it
    C. Carrying home the burdens of war

1. Residual anger
2. Ghosts that haunt
3. Disillusionment
4. Twinges of conscience

D. Putting up a wall of silence, a survival tactic

Another Example of How a Researcher Might Write a Findings Chapter

To write this chapter, I return again to the memos. They will provide the foundation for writing the outline and later when actually writing the chapter for filling in the detail. The findings chapter will show how the theory works under various sets of conditions. Therefore, I'll look for different situations in the memos and field notes that make our points. Keep in mind that unlike readers of this book, who have seen all the memos written over the course of the research, dissertation committees will not have access to all the information contained in the memos. Nor will they have copies of the interviews or observations, documents, videos, etc. It is important during the writing to include many field note examples. The information provided in the actual dissertation will be new material to committee members and readers of the dissertation.

I. Introduction
   A. The theory centered on the concept of "Survival: Reconciling Multiple Realities."
   B. By this, it is meant the ability to make the adjustments in the prewar civilian self and in images of war that will enable young men to adapt to the ever-changing and life-threatening risks associated with being a combatant and then returning home during and after the Vietnam War.
   C. The risks arise out of the many political, social, economic, historical, environmental, and personal conditions that came together to form the context of this war. (A listing of the risks would come here.) Managing the risks requires carrying out strategic and interactional strategies adapted to the varied situations combatants found themselves in.
   D. Strategies are grouped under the headings of developing routines for maintaining combat readiness, physical and psychological fitness, and moral integrity; team strategies and alignment of action; on-the-spot problem solving; and escape and evade decisive and extraordinary action.

II. Being a novice to war
   A. Description of the situation: Finding one's self in a war zone
   B. Action–interaction: Dealing with physical risks, fear, and moral inconsistencies
   C. Outcome: Becoming a seasoned soldier or being a casualty or being killed

III. Having prolonged exposure to war
   A. Description of the situation: Wearing down
   B. Action–interaction: Losing some measure of control over actions
   C. Consequences: Remorse, guilt, possible punishment, being killed or wounded

IV. Carrying out a mission

A. Description of the situation: Nature of the risks
B. Action–interaction: Working together as a team
C. Outcome: Completing the mission or being wounded or killed

V. Getting caught behind enemy lines
   A. Description of the situation: Finding oneself alone behind enemy lines
   B. Action–interaction: Evading and escaping the enemy
   C. Consequences: Escaping or becoming a prisoner

VI. Being a prisoner of war
   A. Description of the situation: Prisoner of the enemy
   B. Action–interaction: Staying alive and psychologically sound
   C. Consequences: Survival and release or breakdown or failure to survive

VII. Rebuilding a life: After the war
   A. Description of the situation: A changed self and changed images of war, many vets now carrying the ghosts that haunt and living with disabilities
   B. Action–interaction: Controlling the ghosts that haunt and putting up a wall of silence
   C. Consequences: Healing and adapting to disability and leading a productive life versus post-traumatic stress disorder and continued anger

The Final Chapter

The final dissertation chapter usually begins with a summary of the research. It goes on to discuss the conclusions reached by the researcher and includes some of the limitations of the study. There should be an explanation of how this research fits within the larger body of literature in the field, including a discussion of how this theory extends, supports, or contradicts other research and related theories. Finally, there should be suggestions for teaching, practice, and other research.

Do a Rough Draft and Obtain Feedback

Once a researcher has reviewed memos and diagrams and completed an outline, writing the first draft of the findings and final chapters should not be that difficult. Further insights into the meaning of data and improvements in the theory still will occur at this point. It is said that a theory is never completely finished. However, a student has to decide when it is time to let go. Once the drafts are completed, it is time to have committee members and perhaps colleagues review the manuscript. Hopefully they will do this within a reasonable period of time. Keep in mind that it is unfair to put undue pressure on committee members to meet a student's final deadline. Often, faculty members are working with several students—each with their own issues. Students need to give faculty sufficient time to provide appropriate and complete feedback.

Revise as Needed

It is rare that a dissertation is completely rejected by committee members. The principal advisor should have

been providing feedback along the way so that by the time a dissertation is completed only minor revisions are necessary. However, even at this point there may be some problems—often because one or more committee members don't understand grounded theory method. One of my students had a great deal of difficulty with some of her committee members when she first presented her dissertation. She wrote to me for help. It seems that the committee objected to the fact that the student's findings did not reflect her original question. It had to be explained to the committee that it is not unusual in grounded theory studies to go into the research with a question and set of assumptions only to discover that the findings show something entirely different. During the research, this student's participants kept saying over and over that the situation they found themselves in did not support the original question. The whole point of grounded theory is to discover the issues and problems from the perspective of the participants. The findings could not be discounted even though they may not have agreed with the original question. It was the original question that had to be revised to match what study participants were saying. Once the committee members understood the evolving nature of grounded theory method, the dissertation was accepted and the student received high praise.

Writing Monographs

Over the course of a research project, the investigator develops a strong sense of what the research is all about. He or she also has learned a great deal substantively about the problem under investigation. Both of these will come into play during the writing. Of course, a researcher needs other skills also, such as a sense of how to construct sentences and how to present an idea clearly. Unfortunately, a writer can be his or her own worst enemy. Aside from poor writing skills, a writer may have all the usual blocks described in books designed to help people write (see Becker, 1986; also Lamott, 1994). Writing requires doing the following:

- Creating a clear theory
- Visualizing the structure
- Deciding what to write
- Producing a detailed outline
- Converting dissertations to monographs
- Working as a team on publications

Creating a Clear Theory

When beginning to think about writing the results of a research project, the investigator should review the theory, making certain that it makes sense and there are no gaps in logic. Review integrative diagrams, and sort the memos, making certain that you are clear about the main analytic framework. This review is followed by further sorting of memos until there is sufficient material to write a detailed outline. The sorting might even raise some doubts about the analytic story or point out some of the breaks in logic. If so, don't be discouraged. The worst that could happen is that the analytic story becomes qualified and so improved. At any rate, the story must be translated into an overall outline. Some people do not want to spend the time writing an outline. Yet we find from our own and from colleagues' experiences that it is advisable to at least sketch an

overall logic outline. Otherwise, there may be gaps in the logic, and the monograph may appear disjointed.

There are additional procedures that can help bridge the leap between analysis and outline. The first is to think intently about the logic that informs the theory. Every research monograph—indeed, every research paper—will have an internal logic. Each has a few key sentences or paragraphs that signal the author's underlying logic or argument (Glaser, 1978, pp. 129–130). The main argument is central to any given publication (or thesis for that matter) and is often found in the first paragraph or pages and then again in the closing pages. When writing a thesis or monograph, unlike a presentation or even a paper, there should be an explication of the entire theory with all its variation built in.

Visualizing the Structure

A second procedure involves visualizing the architecture of the potential manuscript—that is, the conceptual form that the author wants the book or thesis to take. Visualizing the structure can be compared to creating a kind of spatial metaphor. For example, when writing *Unending Work and Care: Managing Chronic Conditions at Home* (Corbin & Strauss, 1988), we carried in our minds the following metaphor. Imagine walking into a house: First a visitor would enter and pass through the door and enter the foyer and then enter each of several rooms, spending time in each before eventually leaving the house through the back door. Then he or she would be outside and walk slowly around the entire house, looking into the main room through several different windows but now observing carefully the relationships of the various objects in the room. When the manuscript was finished, its form corresponded to this spatial metaphor: an introduction, a preliminary chapter, a large theoretical section composed of three chapters, then another long section consisting of several chapters that elaborated and drew implications from the theoretical formulations presented earlier.

Deciding What to Write

Qualitative researchers often encounter a difficult problem when trying to decide what to write about their findings. The source of the problem is the fairly complex body of data generated during the entire research process. The big questions are as follows: What of all this analysis should be included? How can I compress all of these findings into a couple of chapters? After all, the standard format for writing theses does not allow one to expound infinitum. In other words, how much depth does one go into when reporting the research? The answer is that first the writer must decide on what the main analytic message will be. Then he or she must give enough conceptual detail to convey this message to readers. The actual form of the central chapters should be consonant with the analytic message and its components.

This answer nevertheless fails to specify, whether for writing a thesis or monograph, how much and which conceptual details to include and which can be excluded. It all goes back to answering these questions: What was this research all about? What were the main issues and problems that these informants were grappling with? There should be sufficient conceptual detail and descriptive quotations to give the reader a comprehensive understanding of these. Participants and those professionals familiar with the theoretical area should feel satisfied that the story has been told and understood.

Producing a Detailed Outline

A third procedure for translating analysis into writing is to assemble a workable outline, then to write statements that link the sections together so that the writer remains clear about the progressive development of the theoretical presentation. Chapter outlines are detailed and ordered by thinking through what should be included in each section and subsection, keeping in mind the relation of the parts of the chapter to the entire book. Essential to these decisions, again, is the sorting of the memos that seem relevant. Even during writing, a researcher will frequently return to the memos for details and inspiration. The preface or opening chapter explains the purpose of the manuscript and perhaps even summarizes the analytic story—that is, what this thesis or monograph is all about. This statement as well as the outline itself can be revised if the investigator later deems it necessary.

Example of an Outline for a Monograph

If we were writing a monograph about the survival experience of Vietnam War veterans, the outline might look something like the following. Notice how in putting together this outline our understanding of the findings has advanced even beyond that found in Chapter 16 on integration. By the time a researcher concludes the analysis and begins the writing, it's not uncommon for the analysis to become even more refined. After all, the researcher has had more time to think about it. Only a broad general outline is provided here. Understand that a researcher would use the memos to fill in the details.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The war experience is a trajectory that can be broken down into periods: the prewar period, the war period, and the postwar period. Once the individual enters the combat period, combat must be considered a "survival experience" because "surviving" the risks of war becomes the main issue or problem during combat, and the fact that one has survived can bring about problems later during homecoming. There are two intertwining threads that run throughout the war trajectory, which are the self and images of war, and both of which must undergo change if the individual is to adapt to the different conditions presented by combat and the postwar period. This change is accomplished through a process of "reconciliation" in which there are adaptations made in images of war and self. The adaptations in images and self enable individuals to move from being prewar civilians to becoming seasoned combatants, and after deployment being postwar civilians. It is this ability to reconcile the various realities of each period that enable them to implement the various strategies necessary to enhance their chances for survival.

Chapter 2: The Prewar Period

The Self

During the prewar years, the "self" can be characterized among other things as youth, idealism, and inexperience with war. The prewar period includes the formative years that are influenced by family, cultural values and beliefs, education, and other experiences. Some of the youth were idealistic, patriotic, adventurous, and/or religious. Others were troubled. Some came from abusive families, and others had trouble with the law. Some joined the military out of a sense of duty and honor—others to avoid a jail sentence or to get away

from home. Others were drafted and didn't want to be there. These backgrounds, along with cultural beliefs and morals, are carried into war and influence the ability to make the necessary adjustments and remain alive and psychologically sound and also to retain moral integrity.

Images of War

Also formed during this prewar period are images of war. These images are derived mainly from war movies, television, and from stories carried over from World War II. In much of the media, war is or had been portrayed in a romantic sense. There is always a hero (or heroes) selflessly giving all for country and fellow soldiers. The United States is presented as invincible, and while suffering setbacks, it always emerges as a winner (a very important point that later impacted how veterans felt about losing the war). These images set the expectations that the youth brought with them to Vietnam: the belief that the war would be won by the United States and it would be short and adventurous. Once in the military, the youth were sent to boot camp, where they supposedly were turned into soldiers with some time spent on survival in a jungle. Those with advanced education or special talent often made it into Officers Candidate School, a specialty school like sniper school or flight school. During boot camp, the seeds of change in self and images of war are planted. Though boot camp is helpful in preparing youth for war and promoting the human bonds necessary for survival, there still isn't the fear of facing the enemy and knowing he is there to kill you—or the smell of blood and death.

Chapter 3: The War Period or Combat Experience

Upon arriving in Vietnam and experiencing the first battle, the self, the one that was before, and images of war are shattered. The fear, the blood, and death become "real."

1. The idealistic and adventurous youth that came to war is now faced with a multitude of problems that threatened his very survival. Surviving becomes the main focus of the war experience. Now survival may mean killing. It means growing up very quickly and implementing various action and interactional strategies necessary to contain the risks.
2. The risks arise out of ever-changing contextual conditions. The conditions consist of historical, political, sociocultural conditions of nations, and the personal ideologies and beliefs of those who set the policies and conditions of war from participating nations.
3. The conditions create a series of perceived risks that threatened survival. The risks are physical, psychological, and moral. Each situation is different; it was an individual's perception of the risks and psychological makeup that determine the type and number of strategies used—some carried out by the individual and others by the collective.
4. In order to overcome the problems and risks, certain things have to happen. Soldiers have to change the self to become "seasoned" and avoid "wearing down." Becoming "seasoned" and avoiding "wearing down" necessitated a "reconciliation of past self and images of war" and adjusting to the "realities of the situational present." Combatants had to be able to define situations realistically in terms of risks and take protective action.

Chapter 4: Survival Under Various Conditions of War

1. Survival action took the form of individual and institutional and collective strategies that were situational and aimed at preventing death and injury from wounds, maintaining health, supporting psychological well-being, preserving moral integrity, and most of all, having effective and experienced leaders.
2. Strategies have to be used or enacted in order to promote survival. Enabling their use are "facilitators of surviving." Blocking their use are the "obstacles" to surviving, including the element of fate.
3. Combatants who were successful reconcilers became "seasoned soldiers." They were able to make use of strategies to protect the self and avoid wearing down too far—and with a lot of luck survived. The unlucky ones didn't make it.
4. Multiple case examples of surviving under various conditions of war showed survival theory "at work."

Chapter 5: Postwar Period or Homecoming

Survival carried with it problems of its own.

1. First, there were the "ghosts that haunt," guilt, nightmares, and having survived while comrades died. The postwar experience led to post-traumatic stress disorder in some soldiers. Some veterans suffered heavy wounds and were permanently disabled. Healing for them was more than psychological—for it was also intensely physical. Though some veterans did heal and recall the war experience as being "not too bad" and "maturing," even they carry with them the scars of war.
2. There was a changed society. A nation that once supported the war (at least tacitly) now openly turned against it. There were antiwar demonstrations, draft dodging, and flag burning. Veterans were derided and made to feel dishonorable for the actions of a few. Veterans couldn't understand how and why attitudes changed so dramatically over the war years and why the youth who remained at home didn't understand the sacrifices they had made for their country. There were 58,000 soldiers who died in Vietnam, and an even larger number of combatants were wounded, many with permanent disabilities.
3. The social context that veterans found upon their return home called for another "reconciliation" of self and war. This reconciliation was necessary in order to "heal."
4. Some veterans were able to makes the adjustments in self and images of war and "heal" at least partially if not fully.
5. Other veterans were not able to reconcile or "heal." To survive, they put up a "wall of silence" to keep ghosts, fears, family, and society from breaking through and disrupting the fragile stability that keeps them afloat physically, psychologically, and morally. Drugs and alcohol were sometimes used to blot out thoughts of war, fears, and nightmares and to keep ghosts away. It is the only way that some veterans can function in society. Even today, 30-plus years later, some veterans are still angry and keep their thoughts about the war and themselves hidden behind the wall of silence. Some remain lost in a world of pain, alcohol, and drugs.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Implications

Today, there is a considerable knowledge about the impact of war on young men and women and programs established to help combatants make the transitions from war to home. Even the movies today about war are more realistic and less romantic image. But there still is not enough counseling or support for returning combatants—from either the military or the general public. One of the most important things to come out of this study is an understanding of the war experience from the perspective of combatants. The experience is one of a daily struggle for survival—not only physical survival but psychological and moral survival as well.

1. The most effective solution would be to avoid war altogether.
2. That being impossible, it is imperative that the military and society give young men and women the support and skills that they need to be able to "reconcile" their selves and images of war and bring them more in line with the different realities of war. Then they must be provided with the support and counseling necessary upon homecoming so that they can take that next step in reconciliation necessary for "healing."

Converting Dissertations to Monographs

How is a dissertation converted into a monograph? Guidelines bearing on how to do this were suggested implicitly in the preceding pages. However, the prior question that faces the author of a dissertation is this: Should it be written next in monograph form? Several questions pertaining to this decision should be carefully thought through—and preferably in the following order.

1. Are the substantive materials, findings, or theoretical formulations presented in the thesis sufficiently interesting to be worth my time and effort to write up for a wider audience or audiences? Some theses are natural candidates for such presentation. Other dissertations, no matter how important they may be to some colleagues, are not good candidates, though portions of their materials are likely to be published as articles and later may be widely cited.

2. If deemed sufficiently important, then how do I decide which are the most relevant topics and conceptualizations to include in a monograph?

3. Do I have sufficient time and energy to translate this thesis into a monograph? Am I really still interested in this subject matter? Am I saturated or bored with it? Have I had it? Is it really my forte, or should I move on to other, now more interesting topics or areas?

4. Converting the dissertation successfully can lead to very great personal satisfaction. Part of the commitment and resulting satisfaction may also derive from a sense of obligation to audiences, who ought to know about what one has discovered through the research.

5. There is still another question that many potential authors consider. Given a certain level of interest and sufficient time and energy, is it worth writing this monograph for career purposes? In some fields, writing a monograph (or other type of research-based book) is not especially important; papers published in refereed

journals bring more prestige. However, colleagues in other fields, including the social sciences and especially when recruiting candidates for faculty or when they themselves are considered for promotion, know that monographs often weigh more heavily than do papers in the evaluation.

After considering each of these questions, as well as sometimes being impeded or confused by the counsel of faculty advisors, friends, sponsors, or other intimates, an investigator is still confronted with the additional question of how to translate a thesis into a monograph. In fact, trying to answer this question is very likely to affect the decision whether or not to write a monograph, since it includes weighing the time and effort involved. The actual conversion of the dissertation can be carefully guided by considerations touched on in preceding pages. The writer must think carefully about the targeted audiences. Plus, equally careful thinking must be done about the topics, or concepts, or theoretical formulations that are likely to be of greatest interest or value to each audience. Those considerations lead to the issue of style. For instance, what format should be used? Should theoretical formulations be the major focus of the monograph and descriptive materials subordinated, or should these be kept in balance? Should a researcher argue the main thesis forthrightly, using existing theoretical formulations, or should he or she keep the argument low key or even implicit? Stylistic considerations, of course, also entail decisions about the kind and level of vocabulary to be used, modes of presenting selections from the data, the overall mood of the monograph, and so on.

As stated earlier, conceptual elaboration must be added to the original presentation in the dissertation. A researcher can do this by including theoretical materials already developed in the memos but omitted from the dissertation and by thinking through aspects of theoretical formulations that were left unclear, ambiguous, incomplete, and even inconsistent. Also, in a monograph, the writer probably will wish to discuss at greater length certain implications of the research with reference to the theoretical literature, as well as implications for future research and perhaps for practitioners or policy decision makers. Many researchers have found the experience of rewriting for a monograph tremendously rewarding. Others have translated theses into monographs primarily for career advancement and personal reputation, cashing in (literally) on that investment.

Working as a Team on Publications

When a project involves two or more researchers, then there is always a question of how publications should be written. The answers depend, understandably, on the relationships between team members, their respective abilities and interests, their responsibilities, and the amount of time available to each. Some publications are written by the principal investigator of the project, with varying amounts of input by other team members. Other publications involve more truly collaborative writing rather than just shared research. Presumably, the possibilities are numerous. The same is true of papers based on the team's research.

Writing Papers for Publication

Perhaps most dissemination of grounded theory studies occurs in papers written for journals. Today many of those journals are online publications, making the research available to an even wider audience. Given the

widespread availability of knowledge, grounded theorists want to present their research in the best light, and writing for a journal is somewhat different than writing a dissertation or monograph, as there are often constraints of topic and length. For the first-time grounded theorists, putting together that first journal article may seem quite daunting. Here are some things to keep in mind when writing papers:

- Audience
- Conditions for writing
- Journal selection
- Tailoring the writing
- Pitfalls to avoid

Audience

When it comes to writing articles, the potential author should first consider the audience he or she wishes to address.

1. The first possible group is colleagues. Writing for colleagues is important for scholarly purposes. It helps with gaining recognition and status in the field and is important for promotions. For colleagues, the researcher might write a paper with a major focus that is theoretical, substantive, argumentative, and/or methodological.

2. A second potential group is practitioners. Writing for practitioners is important because they hold the key to changing practice—something that all researchers owe to their participants. Papers written for practitioners may provide an overview of the theoretical frameworks. More important, the papers should include substantive findings along with case examples and suggestions for how those findings can lead to reform in existing practices and broad policy changes.

3. The third potential group is laypersons. Though some persons write about their personal experiences with illness or divorce, not all persons are able to write about their own experiences. Researchers have an obligation to participants to bring their findings back to them and other lay readers. Appropriate papers for lay readers would include papers describing substantive findings with lots of case examples. They would also include suggestions for reform of current practices or policies, self-help guidelines, or tactics for obtaining better services from practitioners or institutions as well as assurance that others share their own experience (as in living through a divorce or adopting a child).

Conditions for Writing

All research findings provide a firm basis for writing. Qualitative research studies provide a wide range of possibilities. There are theoretical analyses, substantive content, and practical implications. By completion of the research, the investigator should have considerable sensitivity to issues, audiences, and the strengths and weaknesses of actors and organizations. The qualitative researcher will draw on this knowledge, too, when making decisions about what to write, for whom, and how. Decisions concerning those issues rest on reasoning and procedures not appreciably different from those discussed throughout this chapter. Here are

some conditions that may directly affect how and for whom and whether certain papers will be written:

1. Researchers may decide to publish papers even relatively early during the research process. They may do this for different reasons—for instance, to present preliminary findings or to satisfy or impress sponsors, or because they have interesting material bearing on side issues that can easily be written up now but might not get written at a later, more hectic time.

2. Sometimes researchers write papers either because they feel obligated to publish on a given topic or because they are pressured to do so. Of course, this motivation will also affect what and how a researcher writes.

3. Researchers may also be invited to contribute papers to special issues of journals or edited volumes because they are known to be researching in given areas. They may also be urged or be tempted to convert verbal presentations into papers because listeners have responded well to them.

4. Another condition that can affect the writing of a paper is the existence of a deadline for getting the finished product to an editor. For some researchers, this can act as a stimulus, while others are daunted by any deadline.

5. The number of pages allowed by the editor also affects whether a paper will be written—at least for the particular publication—and what will be written and how.

Journal Selection

One of the most difficult problems facing a new researcher is selecting the right journal in which to present the research. Journals and papers have to be matched; otherwise, an article might be rejected and the time invested in writing it wasted. Or worse yet, the paper is accepted but for an inappropriate or insufficiently appreciative audience. Selecting an appropriate journal may be an easy task if the researcher knows a journal well, but if not, issues of possible journals should be carefully scrutinized. It helps to get the counsel of people who are knowledgeable about the specific journals of interest. This is especially true when addressing audiences outside one's own field, as when a social scientist writes for a social work or medical journal.

Perhaps the most important consideration when selecting a journal is the type of journal. Though grounded theorists sometimes have their research published in traditional quantitative research journals, most qualitative studies are published in qualitative journals whose purpose is to provide qualitative researchers with the opportunity to publish in refereed and professional journals. Therefore, when selecting a journal for publication, look for journals that primarily publish qualitative work or at least journals that often publish qualitative as well as quantitative studies. Also, it seems trite to say but when selecting a journal, a researcher should choose one that is aimed at the particular specialty area addressed in the research. For example, if the researcher studied an educational process, he or she might select an educational journal for publication. If the researcher examined an administrative process, then an administrative journal would be most appropriate. Online journals offer a wide range of options. Before selecting a journal, a researcher might want to consider publishing online because of the wide audience an article will reach. It is important to ascertain whether or not the journal under consideration is a refereed journal, as these journals provide greater prestige when it comes

to promotions. Another consideration is the number of articles a journal might receive from prospective authors and how many of those that they receive are published.

Tailoring the Writing

Once a journal is selected, there comes this question: How do I tailor the article to fit with the aims and style of the journal? The first thing a potential writer should do is read the information put out by the journal for prospective authors. This can usually be found online. Notice if the journal has special issues on selected topics scheduled for the future that might relate to your topic of investigation. If they do, get an article to them. If none of the topics for the coming year fit with your research, then look for another journal. Don't get hung up on publishing in just one journal. Another journal may be more welcoming of your topic.

Another question a potential author might have is this: What aspect of the research should be written about, and how? Topics for some papers seem to emerge rather naturally during the research process. For instance, in our study of chronically ill persons and their spouses (Corbin & Strauss, 1988), we were struck by the stylistically different approaches to management among couples. These ranged from highly collaborative relationships to ones characterized by considerable conflict. So, a paper was written on this topic explaining the properties of each variation (Corbin & Strauss, 1984).

One of the great things about qualitative studies is that there are many different aspects of the study that might make interesting papers. This is especially true for grounded theory studies in which there is special attention to developing each category in terms of its properties and dimensions. Any one or two of those categories can be written about in a paper. When writing about categories, the author should take care to show the range of variation and bring in many case examples.

In addition to writing about the substantive aspects of a study, papers can be written that address policy or are geared toward reform. Writing papers that suggest reforms or policy might be delayed because beginning researchers find it difficult to commit to a reform role. They feel uncomfortable taking on colleagues or getting involved in politics. It is not until they are sufficiently disturbed by what they are observing in practice that they are willing to get involved and do something. In some cases, directions for reform are not clear to the researcher, and more investigation is needed to enlarge upon or validate earlier findings. When it comes to writing about policy, arguments can be buttressed by data. They also can be explicitly or implicitly underpinned by a theoretical framework. For instance, in our book *Shaping a New Health Care System* (Strauss & Corbin, 1988), we gave an argument and suggestions for reform of the American health care system. Other papers can be written around methodological issues. Then the theoretical materials will be kept subordinate but still give coloration to the main line of the discussion. A methodological focus may need both substantive and theoretical illustration to make sense to the reader.

To return to our suggestion that a theoretically oriented article should be restricted in the number of categories or ideas discussed, the question, as usual, is this: How is that discussion developed? The same general answer can be given as when writing chapters of a monograph but modified for purposes of writing a paper. First, the researcher decides on a focus. What is the theoretical point that the writer wishes to make? This decision may arise during the course of the research, or it may actually be prompted by thinking about

the last integrative diagram or through sorting of memos. In regards to the Vietnam study, a paper may be written about survival in war, detailing the types of risks to survival, strategies used to modulate those risks, and the conditions that facilitate or constrain the use of strategies. With the chosen topic and the logic of the paper in mind, it is time to construct an outline of the paper. Just as with an outline for a monograph, once memos are gathered and read, the writer begins to piece together a paper, using ample illustrative cases to make the paper interesting and to make the theoretical ideas more concrete and available to a wider audience. Though it might be interesting to write an article about "Survival: Reconciling Multiple Realities" as a general phenomenon, usually the first papers are less than a complete theory. They are written with the idea of educating colleagues and perhaps a lay audience about a topic. The notion of generating more formal theory can be left to a later date.

Pitfalls to Avoid

For novice researchers, there is the temptation to present the entire theory in one long paper. Some researchers are so enchanted with their theories that they are not willing to leave anything out in the writing. Other researchers are concerned that unless all aspects of a theory are presented, readers won't understand or accept what they are trying to say. As we've stated, grounded theories are complex and dense with conceptualization. It is difficult to convey the entire theory in one paper. Our advice is, unless one is a very skilled writer, don't attempt to write the whole theory because it will only lead to frustration. It is preferable to provide a frankly stripped-down version detailing one or two categories, referring readers to the forthcoming papers. For example, Strauss and colleagues wrote a paper on "medical work" and its relationship to "safety work" and "comfort work" (Strauss, Fagerhaugh, Suczek, & Wiener, 1985). In another paper, this research team wrote about "safety work"—especially in relation to their continuous work with medical equipment that was so potentially hazardous (Wiener, Fagerhaugh, Strauss, & Suczek, 1979).

One danger when writing papers is permitting too much detail to flood thinking. Attempts to crowd too many findings into the short space of a paper may discourage the writer or at least impede the clarity of one's exposition. The working guideline here for what goes into a paper and what can be omitted—reluctantly or ruthlessly suppressed—can be expressed in the form of a dual question: Do I need this detail in order to maximize the clarity of the analytic discussion, and/or to achieve maximum substantive understanding? The first part of the question pertains to the analysis itself. The second pertains mainly to inclusion of data in the form of quotations and case materials.

As with monographs and theses, the drafts can be given a trial by sharing them with friends and colleagues and even with accommodating practitioners or laypersons, if the materials pertain to them. Again, a writer might wish to have drafts scrutinized by a writing group or a student research group if one is so fortunate as to belong to one. A writer must also incorporate relevant literature. If it is a theoretical paper, the author might wish to think through its implications in order to make recommendations for changes in policies or practices. Then, when finally finished—and even more, finally published—the researcher should already be on his or her way to thinking about, outlining, and beginning to write the next publication!

Summary of Key Points

Making oral presentations and publishing written reports about findings of research introduces still another challenge for the researcher. With so much complex material available, how does a researcher make choices about what to present, to whom, and how? Generally, in a verbal presentation or an article, it is preferable to present only one or two concepts (categories or themes) in any depth with maybe one or two others woven in as related features. In writing monographs, the researcher has a wider range of possibilities, but even here, he or she should carefully think through the logic and order of the material before doing a detailed outline. Dissertations present problems of their own, for a standard format must be followed. Again, the writer must carefully think through how much detail to include and how to present the most relevant facets of the conceptual scheme while still retaining flow and continuity. The important point to remember is that researchers who have completed an in-depth analysis will have plenty of interesting material to write about for months to come and an appreciative audience for these writings. Dissertations present a problem of their own because when writing the student must consider the expectations of committee members and the requirements of the university. There is no need to put all of the findings into one chapter. The findings can be broken down into two chapters with one being an overview of the theory and the second one showing how the theory functions under different conditions.

Activities for Thinking, Writing, and Discussing as a Group

1. Think about your present research project or one you might have completed in the past. What are some of the concepts that you might be able to write a paper or do a presentation on? Write an outline for a paper or presentation.
2. Take one or two of the concepts from the research on Vietnam. Write an outline for a paper. Consider the audience you want to write for and the journal you are targeting.
3. Bring your outline to the group and present it. Have them provide feedback. Where do you agree or disagree with their comments? How might your outline be revised and therefore improved?
4. Look through some of the journals that publish qualitative research projects. Take two papers: one that you consider to be a well-written one and one that you thought was too superficial and not very informative. Bring the papers to the group, and compare each along the various properties that you believe make for good writing.

Suggested Readings

Becker, H. S. (2007). *Writing for social scientists: How to start and finish your thesis, book, or article* (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wolcott, H. F. (2001). *Writing up qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Chapter 18
Criteria for Evaluation

> Quality is elusive, hard to specify, but we often feel we know it when we see it. In this respect research is like art rather than science. (Seale, 2002, p. 102)

As was well stated by Seale, *quality* in qualitative research is something that we recognize when we see it; however, explaining what it is or how to achieve it is much more difficult. Though I have been concerned with quality for some time (Corbin, 2002, 2003), I find this chapter on evaluation difficult to write. In reviewing the literature, I find that everyone agrees evaluation is necessary, but there is little consensus about what constitutes an appropriate set of evaluation criteria for qualitative research. Are researchers judging for *validity,* or would it be better when referring to qualitative evaluation to use terms like *rigor* (Mays & Pope, 1995), *truthfulness,* or *goodness* (Emden & Sandelowski, 1999), or something called *integrity* (Watson & Girad, 2004)? Then there is this question: Can one set of criteria apply to all forms of qualitative research? Also, if qualitative findings are referred to as constructions, and truth is considered a mirage, aren't evaluative criteria also constructions and therefore subject to debate? I agree with Flick (2002, p. 218) in that the problem of how to assess qualitative research has not yet been solved.

Despite all the controversy, as researchers we are aware that there should be certain standards. Since qualitative research has both scientific (Morse, 1999) as well as creative or artistic components, it stands to reason that the quality of the final product (findings or theory) should reflect both these aspects, a point made by Seale (1999, 2002). As stated by Whittemore, Chase, and Mandle (2001), "Elegant and innovative thinking can be balanced with reasonable claims, presentation of evidence, and the critical application of methods" (p. 527). The purpose of this chapter is to explore evaluation in qualitative research and to present some criteria for evaluating the quality of the methodology presented in this book:

Points to Keep in Mind

When reading this chapter, students are advised to keep the following points in mind:

- Review the literature.
- Define *quality* in qualitative research.
- Offer criteria for evaluating the quality of grounded theory studies.
- Demonstrate the use of these criteria to a grounded theory study.

Review the Literature

A good starting point for the study of any topic is the review of relevant literature. This is where I'll begin.

The literature review is grouped under the following topics:

- Validity and reliability
- Credibility and truthfulness
- Rigor
- The scientific and creative
- Credibility and applicability

Validity and Reliability

One of the issues frequently mentioned in the literature as it applies to qualitative research is *validity*. Perhaps the person most widely quoted on the subject of validity is Hammersley (1987). He stated that a research account may be considered valid if "it represents accurately those features of the phenomena that it is intended to describe, explain, or theorize" (Hammersley, 1987, p. 67). Winter (2000) offered an explanation of validity based on Foucault's (1974) definition of multiplicity of truths and went on to state that "[validity] appears to reside within the appropriation of research methodologies to those systems of truth that their processes best represent" (p. 67). It seems clear that these "experts" associate validity with a kind of "truth"—but truth in a broad and more pluralistic than traditional sense.

In fact, Silverman (2005) stated that validity "is another word for 'truth'" (p. 224). He proposed five strategies for increasing the validity of findings. The five steps include (1) engaging in the "refuting principle" by refuting assumptions against data as the researcher proceeds through the research, (2) using the "constant comparative method" by comparing one case against another, (3) doing "comprehensive data treatment" by incorporating all cases into the analysis, (4) "searching for deviant cases" by including and discussing cases that don't fit the pattern, and (5) "making appropriate tabulations" by using quantitative figures when these make sense as in mixed-method designs (pp. 209–226). Reliability according to Silverman (2005) can be achieved by tabulating categories if a researcher so chooses and also by being certain that when transcribing interviews all aspects of data are transcribed, even the most minute (pp. 209–226).

Morse, Barret, Mayan, Olson, and Spiers (2002) stated that "it is time to reconsider the importance of verification strategies used by the researcher in the process of inquiry so that reliability and validity are actively attained, rather than proclaimed by external reviewers on the completion of the project" (p. 9). In other words, the researcher should take strategic action during the course of the research to ensure a research's validity and reliability. Morse and colleagues listed several strategies for bringing strategic action into the research. These include "investigator responsiveness," "methodological coherence," "theoretical sampling," "sampling adequacy," and "saturation" (Morse et al., 2002, p. 9). The use of these strategies is reasonable, and they could be used with many types of qualitative research. However, though the strategies address the "scientific" aspect of doing qualitative research, they don't evaluate it for its creative aspects.

Credibility and Truthfulness

Creswell (1998; Creswell & Miller, 2000) proposed eight different procedures for achieving what Lincoln and

Guba (1985) called "credibility" and "trustworthiness" of findings. These include (1) "prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field," (2) "triangulation," (3) "using peer review or debriefing," (4) "negative case analysis," (5) "clarifying researcher bias," (6) "in member checks," (7) "rich thick description," and (8) "external audits" (Creswell, 1998, pp. 201–203).

Rigor

Chiovitti and Piran (2003) have delineated a list of criteria for achieving rigor in grounded theory research. The list includes (1) letting the participants guide the process, (2) checking the theoretical construction generated against participants' meanings of the phenomenon, (3) using participants' actual words in the theory, (4) articulating the researcher's personal view and insights about the phenomenon explored and specifying the criteria built into the researcher's thinking, (5) specifying how and why participants in the study were selected, (6) delineating the scope of the research, (7) describing how the literature relates to each category that emerged in the theory. No doubt, following these procedures would lead to rigor, but there is nothing in the list about context, process, density, variation, or usefulness or whether or not the product produced is actually theory. Nor is there anything in the list about "vividness, creativity, thoroughness, congruence, or sensitivity," which are criteria for validity as described by Whittemore et al. (2001, p. 531).

Pryor (2009, p. 1127) has developed a model that demonstrates how rigor is enhanced by adherence to procedures in grounded theory studies. See Diagram 18.1 below.

The Scientific and Creative

Charmaz (2006, pp. 182–183) offered a list of criteria for evaluating constructionist grounded theory. Of all the criteria I've read, I find hers the most comprehensive because the criteria address both the scientific and creative aspects of qualitative research. In listing the criteria, Charmaz pulled together much of what are good criteria listed in the literature that was just described. She broke her criteria down into four categories: (1) credibility, (2) originality, (3) resonance, and (4) usefulness. The list is quite substantial, and I don't want to reproduce it here. I will instead present a sample of the questions she listed that the researcher should be asking of his or her research. For example, under credibility, she said, "Do the categories cover a wide range of empirical observations? Are there strong logical links between the gathered data and your argument and analysis?" Under originality, she asked, "Are your categories fresh? Do they offer new insights?" Under resonance she asked, "Do the categories portray the fullness of the studied experience?" And under usefulness, she asked, "Does your analysis offer interpretations that people can use in their everyday worlds?" There is only one problem (this is not a criticism but a comment) that I can see with the evaluative criteria proposed by Charmaz. Her suggestions for evaluation require self-evaluation during and after the research process. Self-evaluation is tricky. It requires the ability to distance oneself from the research and a certain degree of sophistication and experience to know if the theory or findings actually match the criteria. Many of the articles in the literature that claim to be theory are in fact not theory but description. Not knowing the difference between these makes any report of self-evaluation of a grounded theory study suspect.

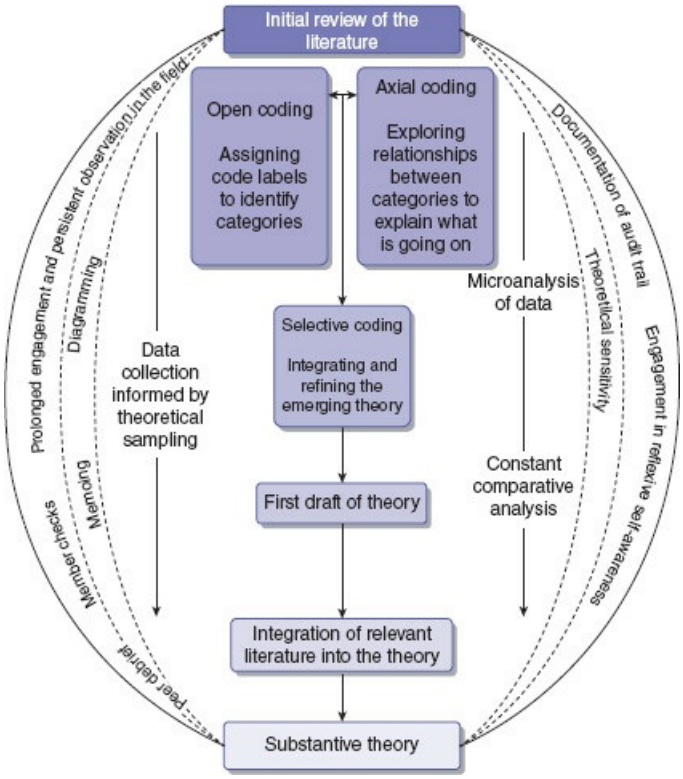

Diagram: 18.1 Schematic representation of the core elements of grounded theory and the strategies used to enhance rigor

Source: Pryor (2009).

Credibility and Applicability

Before moving on, I want to review one more piece of literature that I think is important to this discussion. In Glaser and Strauss's *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967), the authors made the following statement:

> *By the close of the investigation, the researcher's conviction about his own theory will be hard to shake, as most field workers can attest. This conviction does not mean that his analysis is the only plausible one that could be based on the data but only that he has high confidence in its credibility. (p. 225)*

Note that when Glaser and Strauss used the term *credibility*, they were using it to mean "believable," rather than "valid." In doing so, they were getting around the whole issue of truth. Glaser and Strauss offered the following criteria for judging the credibility of a study. Though written for theory-building research, the criteria also have significance for more descriptive forms of research. The first is that there be sufficient detail and description so that readers feel that they were vicariously in the field (thus able to judge for themselves). Second, there should be sufficient evidence on how the data were gathered and how the analysis was conducted (so that readers can assess how the researcher came to his or her findings or conclusions). Third, there should be multiple comparison groups, as this makes the credibility of the theory greater (because the findings are based on more than one group). Finally, the researcher should specify the kinds of data upon which his or her interpretation rests (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 223–235). .

In addition to credibility, Glaser and Strauss (1967) took up the notion of applicability, for which they also provided criteria. First, a theory should fit—that is, the area from which it was derived and in which it will be

used. Second, a theory should be readily understandable by laymen as well as professionals. Third, a theory should be sufficiently general that it can be applied to diverse situations and populations. Fourth, a theory should provide the user with sufficient control to bring about change in situations (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 237–250).

As I look back, I realize that even though Glaser and Strauss were talking primarily about theory-building research, they were on to something. If the research findings are credible—that is, believable or plausible and applicable in the sense that findings can be readily used because the findings provide insight, understanding, and work with diverse populations and situations to bring about desired change—then all this philosophic debate about truth, validity, and reliability is superfluous. In other words, the proof is in the pudding, so to speak. If it fits and it is useful because it explains or describes things, then rigor and vigor and truth and everything else must have been built into the research process or the findings would not hold up to scrutiny, would not explain situations, and would be invalidated in practice.

Conclusions

After reviewing all of the literature and giving it much thought, I've decided that I don't feel comfortable using the terms *validity* and *reliability* when discussing qualitative research. These terms carry with them too many quantitative implications (a personal bias). Somehow the word *truth* also bothers me in the sense that it seems that no matter how you define *truth*, the term carries with it a certain degree of dogmatism. I prefer the term *credibility* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) when talking about qualitative research. To me, the term *credibility* indicates that findings are trustworthy and believable in that they reflect participants', researchers', and readers' experiences with phenomena, but at the same time, the explanation the theory provides is only one of many possible "plausible" interpretations from data. Finally, I'm in agreement with Rolfe (2006) in that I don't believe that the same judgment criteria can be applied across qualitative methodologies because each methodology is based on a different theoretical foundation and has different procedures. Each method deserves its own set of judgment criteria; therefore, the evaluative criteria presented in this book should pertain only to research methods presented in this book.

Define *Quality* in Qualitative Research

The previously given material brings me back full circle to the issue of quality. Before presenting any criteria for judging the quality of a grounded theory study, I would like to explore what I mean by *quality* and some of the conditions that foster it.

- Properties of quality
- Conditions that foster quality research

Properties of Quality

What are the properties of *quality* as it applies to qualitative research? Quality qualitative research is research that makes the reader, or listener, stand up and say things like "wow," "I'm touched," "now I understand,"

"that has power," "I feel like I've walked in those participants' shoes," "there is so much depth in the study that it covers detail that I never knew about this subject and more," "this is something I can use in my practice, in my life." In other words, quality qualitative research is research that resonates with readers' and participants' life experiences. It is research that is interesting, clear, logical, and makes the reader think and want to read more. It is research that has substance, gives insight, shows sensitivity, and is not just a repeat of the "same old stuff" or something that might be read in a newspaper. It is research that blends conceptualization with sufficient descriptive detail to allow the reader to reach his or her own conclusions about the data and to judge the credibility of the researcher's data and analysis. It is research that is creative in its conceptualizations but grounded in data. It is research that stimulates discussion and further research on a topic. In other words, it is research that is both scientific and creative.

Conditions That Foster Quality Research

While all researchers want to do quality qualitative research, many qualitative studies are lacking in quality. They are superficial and sparse. Here are some of the conditions that enhance the ability to produce quality research:

- Methodological consistency
- Clarity of purpose
- Self-awareness
- Training in how to conduct qualitative research
- Sensitivity to participants and data
- Willingness to work hard
- Ability to connect with the creative self
- Methodological awareness
- Strong desire to do research

Methodological Consistency

The first condition is "methodological consistency" (Flick, 2002, p. 219; Morse et al., 2002). If a researcher says he or she is going to use a particular method, then he or she follows through, using all of the relevant procedures as designed. This is not to say that researchers can't be creative in their use of analytic strategies or how they carry out particular procedures. But if researchers do what Baker, Wuest, and Stern (1992) called "method slurring" or combine philosophically different qualitative methods, and if researchers use some but not all of the major procedures that are part of a method, they are likely to lose some of the credibility associated with that method. Methodologies are designed to do certain things and, with usage over time, have attained a certain degree of credibility when used in a manner consistent with the design. To mix up different methodologies, or use only certain procedures and not others, erodes at that credibility. For example, though there are many versions of grounded theory, the procedures themselves are consistent with the different versions: constant comparisons, the delineation of concepts and their development, theoretical sampling, and saturation. And for those researchers who want to build theory, there should be a core category around which

all the other categories are integrated. Therefore, if a researcher uses only one or two of these procedures or doesn't build theory, he or she can't claim to be doing grounded theory. It would be much more accurate to say that he or she is using some of the procedures associated with grounded theory to do a descriptive study.

Clarity of Purpose

A second condition is clarity of purpose. A researcher should be very clear at the onset of a study whether the aim is description or theory building. It is difficult to do quality research if a researcher is unsure about the difference between description and theory. Findings are likely to appear muddled and fail to live up to either good description or theory. The quality and value of a piece of research lies not in whether or not it is theory or description. As Sandelowski (2000) explained, qualitative description has its place in nursing research and, I might add, in other disciplines also. The value of any research study lies in the substance, depth, applicability, and innovation of the product that is generated.

Self-Awareness

A third condition is having self-awareness (Hall & Callery, 2001). Since a researcher (as interpreter) is such an integral part of both the research process and the findings, it is important that a researcher be aware of his or her biases and assumptions. Keeping a journal and/or writing frequent memos about a researcher's reactions and feelings during data collection and analysis can help researchers recognize the influence that they are having upon the research and, just as importantly, that the research is having upon the researchers.

Training in How to Conduct Qualitative Research

A fourth condition is that a researcher should be trained in doing qualitative research. What a researcher brings to the analysis in terms of qualifications, experience, and perspective as well as underlying philosophical orientation will make a major difference in the quality of findings. Many researchers want to do qualitative research. As a consequence, there is much variation in the quality of the qualitative research that is being produced. One of the problems, I suspect, is that many researchers think that doing qualitative research is easy and that anyone can do it. It is true that anyone can pull a few themes from data, but not everyone knows how to build well-developed themes, arrive at thick, rich description, or integrate findings into a theory. Doing quality qualitative research requires a sound educational foundation in qualitative methods with training in data gathering and analysis. No one would think of doing quantitative research without specific training, and the same goes for qualitative research.

Sensitivity to Participants and Data

A fifth condition is that a researcher should have feeling or sensitivity for the topic, for the participants, and for the research. To do good analysis, a researcher must be able to "step into the shoes of participants" and respond to data at a "gut level"; otherwise, an investigator loses some of the richness and depth of the data. Being a "distant" researcher may enhance the validity of quantitative research but can erode the credibility of qualitative research by preventing the researcher from developing the sensitivity, empathy, carefulness, respect, and honesty (Davies & Dodd, 2002) needed to accurately capture the viewpoint of participants.

Willingness to Work Hard

A sixth condition is that a researcher must be willing to work hard at doing the research. Doing qualitative research is like any worthwhile endeavor. It takes time and thought. A researcher can't be in a hurry. It takes time to write memos and to do all of the other tasks associated with qualitative research. There are no shortcuts that can be taken when doing quality qualitative research, whether one is doing descriptive research or theory building.

Ability to Connect With the Creative Self

A seventh condition is the ability to relax and get into touch with the creative self. Getting out of your conceptual ruts (Wicker, 1985) means being willing to brainstorm, turn things upside down, make theoretical comparisons, and think about things in new ways. The qualitative researcher has to be open to new ideas and use strategies flexibly and creatively in order to get at the essence or meaning of what participants are saying. In fact, Hunter, Lusardi, Zucker, Jacelon, and Chandler (2002), in their article "Making Meaning: The Creative Component in Qualitative Research," demonstrated how important creativity is to qualitative research.

Methodological Awareness

An eighth condition is *methodological awareness,* a term borrowed from Seale (2002, p. 108). This term indicates that a researcher should be aware of the implications of the decisions they make during the research process. Methodological awareness calls for anticipation of potential criticisms, and the carrying out of data collection and analysis in ways that contribute to credibility while attending to methodological problems as they arise.

Strong Desire to Do Research

A ninth condition is a desire to do research for its own sake. I believe that the reason I see so much variation in the quality of qualitative research is because there is so much push in master's-level programs and in academia to do research. There is this mystique that "doing research" is somehow the hallmark of an educated person. But some persons are better teachers or practitioners than they are researchers. And some persons are better researchers than teachers or practitioners. I believe that quality in qualitative research would be less of an issue if, as professionals, we would give credit to what persons do best—practice, teaching, or research—and not make everyone feel that they have to do everything including research.

Offer Criteria for Evaluating the Quality of Grounded Theory Studies

Despite all the controversy about criteria, there is a need to set some standards of quality for each form of qualitative research based on the methodology that was used. Since not all faculty members and not all journal reviewers are familiar with each and every possible qualitative method, having some standards to use as a basis for judgment are important. What components of method and theory can one expect to find in quality grounded theory study (Corbin & Strauss, 1990)?

The first thing I do when reviewing a grounded theory study is to read the thesis or article in its entirety without giving thought to specific criteria. I want to form a general impression. Are the findings well written?

Do they resonate and command my attention? Does the initial reading make me want to read more because of the promise of new knowledge? After the initial reading, I do a much more specific reading, looking for certain components of method and theory. I dislike using the word *criteria* because that makes the evaluative process seem so dogmatic, an "all or nothing" approach to evaluation. But if a researcher states that he or she is using grounded theory method for the purpose of developing theory, then one can expect that certain aspects of method and theory will be present. The aspects will be broken down into these components:

- Checkpoints that researchers and reviewers can use to evaluate the methodological consistency of a grounded theory study
- Checkpoints that researchers and reviewers can use to evaluate the quality and applicability of a grounded theory study

Checkpoints That Researchers and Reviewers Can Use to Evaluate the Methodological Consistency of a Grounded Theory Study

1. What was the target sample population? How was the original sample selected?
2. How did sampling proceed? What kinds of data were collected? Were there multiple sources of data and multiple comparative groups?
3. Did data collection alternate with analysis?
4. Were ethical considerations taken into account in both data collection and analysis?
5. Were the concepts driving the data collection arrived at through analysis (based on theoretical sampling), or were concepts derived from the literature and established before the data were collected (not true theoretical sampling)?
6. Was theoretical sampling used, and was there a description of how it proceeded?
7. Did the researcher demonstrate sensitivity to the participants and to the data?
8. Is there evidence or examples of memos?
9. At what point did data collection end or a discussion of saturation end?
10. Is there a description of how coding proceeded along with examples of theoretical sampling, concepts, categories, and statements of relationship? What were some of the events, incidents, or actions (indicators) that pointed to some of these major categories?
11. Is there a core category, and is there a description of how that core category was arrived at?
12. Were there changes in design as the research went along based on findings?
13. Did the researcher(s) encounter any problems while doing the research? Is there any mention of a negative case, and how was that data handled?
14. Are methodological decisions made clear so that the readers can judge their appropriateness for

gathering data (theoretical sampling) and doing analysis?

15. Was there feedback on the findings from other professionals and from participants? And were changes made in the theory based on this feedback?
16. Did the researcher keep a research journal or notebook?

Checkpoints That Researchers and Reviewers Can Use to Evaluate the Quality and Applicability of a Grounded Theory Study

1. What is the core category, and how do the major categories relate to it? Is there a diagram depicting these relationships?
2. Is the core category sufficiently broad so that it can be used to study other populations and similar situations beyond this setting?
3. Are each of the categories developed in terms of their properties and dimensions so that they show depth, breadth, and variation?
4. Is there descriptive data given under each category that brings the theory to life so that it provides understanding and can be used in a variety of situations?
5. Has context been identified and integrated into the theory? Conditions and consequences should not be listed merely as background information in a separate section but woven into the actual analysis with explanations of how they impact and flow from action–interaction in the data. Describing context enables potential users of a theory to compare for fit the situations under which the theory was developed to situations to which they might want to apply it.
6. Has process been incorporated into the theory in the form of changes in action–interaction in relationship to changes in conditions? Is action–interaction matched to different situations, demonstrating how the theory might vary under different conditions and therefore be applied to different situations?
7. How is saturation explained, and when and how was it determined that categories were saturated?
8. Do the findings resonate or fit with the experience of both the professionals for whom the research ended and the participants who took part in the study? Can participants see themselves in the story even if not every detail applies to them? Does it ring true to them (Lomberg & Kirkevold, 2003)? Do professionals and participants react emotionally as well as professionally to the findings?
9. Are there gaps, or missing links, in the theory, leaving the reader confused and with a sense that something is missing?
10. Is there an account of extremes or negative cases?
11. Is variation built into the theory?

12. Are the findings presented in a creative and innovative manner? Does the research say something new or put old ideas together in new ways?
13. Do findings give insight into situations and provide knowledge that can be applied to develop policy, change practice, and add to the knowledge base of a profession?
14. Do the theoretical findings seem significant, and to what extent? It is entirely possible to complete a theory-generating study, or any research investigation, yet not produce findings that are significant.
15. Do the findings have the potential to become part of the discussions and ideas exchanged among relevant social and professional groups?
16. Are the limitations of the study clearly spelled out?
17. Are there suggestions for practice, policy, teaching, and application of the research?

One could go on ad infinitum listing criteria, but the previously given material should be sufficient for establishing quality, credibility, and applicability of the theory. There are several additional comments about evaluative criteria that I would like to make.

First, the previously given evaluative components or criteria—whatever name one wants to give them—can be used by both self and others for evaluating the quality of a grounded theory study.

Second, no individual criterion or combination should be treated as hard-and-fast rules—either by the researcher or for readers who are judging others' research publications. Criteria are guidelines. Certain investigations may require modification of the research procedures and evaluative criteria to fit the circumstances of the research. Imaginative researchers who are wrestling with unusual or creative topics and analytic materials might depart somewhat from standard ways of doing and analyzing research. In such unusual cases, the researcher should know precisely how and why he or she departed from conventional ways of doing things, say so in the writing, and leave it up to readers to judge the credibility of the findings.

Third, researchers should provide a brief overview of what their research procedures were—especially in longer publications. This would help readers to judge the analytic logic and overall adequacy or credibility of the research process. It would also make readers more aware of how a grounded theory investigation differs from other modes of qualitative research. In specifying this information, readers are apprised precisely about what operations were used and their possible adequacies or inadequacies.

Finally, it might be useful in certain publications for a researcher to include a short explanation of his or her own research perspectives and responses to the research process. This enables readers to judge how personal reactions might have influenced the investigation and interpretations placed on data. Writing reflective memos and keeping a research diary are two ways of ensuring that the researcher will be able to do this at the end of the study (Rodgers & Cowles, 1993).

Demonstrate the Use of These Criteria to a Grounded Theory Study

A reviewer of this manuscript suggested that it might be worthwhile to continue with the Vietnam study by applying evaluative criteria to that study. This sounded like a pretty good idea. However, it must be kept in mind when reading this section that the study was meant to demonstrate how to do analysis, and as such, the Vietnam study was not a fully developed research project. Therefore, certain criteria may not be met to the extent that they would have been if the purpose had been to continue with the project. Also, criteria are usually applied to an article, dissertation, or monograph. Since this was not an actual study, the findings were not written up for publication. But applying them to the Vietnam study is worth a try and will point out where more work is needed. Each criterion that was just listed will be repeated and applied to the Vietnam study.

Checkpoints Related to Methodological Consistency

1. What was the target sample population? How was the original sample selected?

   The target population was U.S. Vietnam War veterans. The original interview was one done for another purpose and found to be so interesting to the researchers that it became the impetus for this study.

2. How did sampling proceed? What kinds of data were collected? Were there multiple sources of data and multiple comparative groups?

   After analysis of the original interview, inquiries were made on the Internet, requesting volunteer participants on different websites for Vietnam War veterans. There were different kinds of data collected: interviews and memoirs. There were comparative groups between combatants, such as army, marine, and navy groups, and noncombatants, such as nurses, journalists, and engineers. Comparisons were made within and between these different groups.

3. Did data collection alternate with analysis?

   Analysis followed each interview and became the impetus for questions asked in subsequent data collection.

4. Were ethical considerations taken into account in both data collection and analysis?

   Yes, participants were voluntary. Consent forms were obtained from interviewees—even from those participant volunteers from the Internet and from publishers of monographs as appropriate. The researcher even went back and obtained consent to use the original interview because it was being used for a purpose other than when originally done. Anonymity of interview participants was maintained. When no further veterans at the website agreed to participate in the study, the researcher did not attempt to force the issue. Credit was given to authors when memoirs were used.

5. Were the concepts driving the data collection arrived at through analysis (based on theoretical sampling), or were concepts derived from the literature and established before the data were collected (not true theoretical sampling)?

The first interview was an unstructured interview. There were no set questions guiding the interview. The participant was allowed to choose the topics and the pace. Subsequent interviews and analysis of monographs were based on concepts derived from analysis.

6. Was theoretical sampling used, and was there a description of how it proceeded?

   The first interview was done with a Vietnam veteran who was a noncombatant. This led the researchers to question whether the Vietnam War experience would be different for a combatant. Therefore, the next interview and those that followed were with combatants. Concepts such as "anger," "becoming seasoned," "ghosts that haunt," and "attitudes toward the enemy" derived from analysis of interviews, and memoirs guided data collection. Memoirs were analyzed in the same manner as interview concepts guided analysis and new concepts generated. Later in the study, data was sampled to determine how the core concept applied to different survival situations. Questions derived during analysis regarding conditions of risks led the researchers to gather data on contextual factors. In fact, throughout the analytic process, the researchers explained how theoretical sampling served as a basis for further data collection.

7. Did the researcher demonstrate sensitivity to the participants and to the data?

   The researchers appear to have shown sensitivity to the participants and to the data. They listened to participants' stories, attempted to walk in their shoes and understand the war from the veterans' perspectives, and didn't push the interviews beyond where participants wanted to go.

8. Is there evidence or examples of memos?

   There were multiple memos written throughout the study. The memos varied in depth and length as the study progressed.

9. At what point did data collection end or a discussion of saturation end?

   The study was not completed as part of the book; therefore, saturation was not achieved. The researchers would have preferred having more interviews with veterans of this war and perhaps subsequent wars, but it was not possible within the scope of this book, which was methodological and not a research monograph on the Vietnam War.

10. Is there a description of how coding proceeded along with examples of concepts, categories, and statements of relationship? What were some of the events, incidents, or actions (indicators) that pointed to some of these major categories?

    Coding progressed from open coding and the generation of concepts to grouping the concepts to form categories. When persons talked about who they were before going off to war, this was coded as "locating the self," which later became "locating the self at time of 'entry,'" "the self during combat," and "the self upon homecoming." The concepts are linked through the category "changes in self" as a young man moves from the naivety of "civilian life" prewar to facing an "enemy" in "combat," and then

to being a "civilian" once again upon "homecoming"—this time carrying with them the "ghosts that haunt." Another category was "images of war." These images changed from "romantic visions of war" before going to war, to "kill or be killed" during combat, and then to "disillusionment" and "anger" postwar.

11. Is there a core category, and is there a description of how that core category was arrived at?

    Yes, there is a core category: "Survival: Reconciling Multiple Realities." This category was arrived at because each war story was one of survival, and in order to survive, young men had to reconcile or adapt from being a civilian to becoming a combatant and a seasoned combatant at that, then to letting go of the combatant role to become a civilian once again upon homecoming.

12. Were there any changes in design as the research went along based on findings?

    Changes were made in the design when it became evident that obtaining more interviews would be difficult. Cultivating the relationships necessary to obtain further interviews would have taken too much time and delayed publication of the book. Since this was a demonstration research project, I looked for alternative methods of data collection. I turned to memoirs for data. The memoirs were analyzed in the same manner as interviews.

13. Did the researcher(s) encounter any problems while doing the research? Is there any mention of a negative case, and how was that data handled?

    The major problem was in obtaining participants for interviewing. There was and still is a wall of silence in the sense that veterans are reluctant to talk to nonveterans. No negative cases were encountered. Even those participants who were noncombatants were at risk and had the desire to survive the experience. They, too, had to reconcile their selves and images of war to fit with the perceived reality of the situations they encountered and use the same strategies as combatants.

14. Are methodological decisions made clear so that the readers can judge their appropriateness for gathering data (theoretical sampling) and doing analysis?

    Yes. Each methodological decision is explained under the headings of "Methodological Notes."

15. Was there feedback on the findings from other professionals and from participants? And were changes made in the theory based on this feedback?

    Analysis was sent to the few interviewees who participated in the study for feedback. There were no suggestions for changes. When the study was presented to methodological audiences, there were no comments or suggestions for revision. Some of this may be due to a reluctance to be critical.

16. Did the researcher keep a research journal or notebook?

    Yes, a research journal was kept.

Checkpoints Related to Quality and Applicability

1. What is the core category, and how do the major categories relate to it? Is there a diagram depicting these relationships?

   Yes, there is a core category that seems to fit the data. The core category is "Survival: Reconciling Multiple Realities." The other major categories such as "the changing self," "images of war," "survival strategies," "culture of war," "homecoming," and "wall of silence" relate to the core category in some manner as conditions, action–interaction, or consequences. Yes, there is a diagram.

2. Is the core category sufficiently broad so that it can be used to study other populations and similar situations beyond this setting?

   I think so. There are many different life-changing situations that call for survival of risks. Surviving risks refers not only to physical risks but also to risks that can also be moral, psychological, or social. Overcoming risks arising in any of these dimensions necessitates the ability to reconcile the multiple realities contained in situations, drawing upon a variety of strategies, each with potential consequences.

3. Are each of the categories developed in terms of their properties and dimensions so that they show depth, breadth, and variation?

   Most of the major categories are well developed. However, for subject matter of such depth, it would have been helpful to have more actual interviews with a variety of combatants and to have interviews with decision makers, those with injuries, war protestors, and more data on homecoming.

4. Is there descriptive data given under each category that brings the theory to life so that it provides understanding and can be used in a variety of situations?

   Yes, in Chapter 9. It is the descriptive details that add richness and depth and that show variation, lifting the findings out of the realm of the ordinary. They make the difference between thin, uninteresting findings and findings that are useful.

   In the memos, there are quotes from the memoirs and the interviews showing the data from which concepts were derived. The quotes also show how participants talk about their experience in Vietnam during the war.

5. Has context been identified and integrated into the theory? Yes, see Chapter 14.

   Conditions and consequences are not to be listed merely as background information but woven into the actual analysis. Context was brought into the data by showing how decisions made at the top through rules of engagement, the environment, the determination of the enemy, the tour of duty, cultural gap, etc., created conditions that led to a series of risks that combatants had to overcome in order to survive.

6. Has process been incorporated into the theory in the form of changes in action–interaction in

relationship to changes in context? Is action–interaction matched to different situations, demonstrating how the theory might vary under different conditions and therefore be applied to different situations?

Process and variation are brought into the theory. Survival is demonstrated under different situations of war that threatened survival. Each of the situations depicted in that chapter called for the use of different survival strategies that could only be put into effect if the combatants had been able to reconcile their prewar civilian selves and romantic images with new selves and images arising out of the "war experience" that is moving from novice to becoming seasoned soldiers. Later, they had to let go of their combatant selves and once again return to civilian lives.

7. How is saturation explained, and when and how was it determined that categories were saturated?

   Saturation was not completely attained because the researcher was not able to complete the study. This is one of the limitations of the study.

8. Do the findings resonate or fit with the experience of both the professionals for whom the research ended and the participants who took part in the study? Can participants see themselves in the story even if not every detail applies to them? Does it ring true to them (Lomberg & Kirkevold, 2003)? Do professionals and participants react emotionally as well as professionally to the findings?

   The stories told by participants were very touching. The researchers were very moved by the experience, and so are audiences who hear about the study.

9. Are there gaps, or missing links, in the theory, leaving the reader confused and with a sense that something is missing?

   Additional data in the forms listed in the answer for Question 3 would have strengthened the study. However, the theory seems logical, and the explanations make sense. The ability to resolve the multiple realities present within and between each set of conditions as men moved from civilian to combatant and then back again to civilian seems to explain why and how many men were able to survive given the risks they were facing.

10. Is there an account of extremes or negative cases?

    There were no negative cases encountered in the data that was gathered—another limitation of the study.

11. Is variation built into the theory?

    Variation is important because it signifies that a concept has been examined under a series of different conditions and developed across a range of dimensions, increasing its applicability.

12. Are the findings presented in a creative and innovative manner? Does the research say something new or put old ideas together in new ways?

The research demonstrates the risks associated with war and how difficult it is for a young woman or man to move from civilian, to combatant, to civilian life once again without becoming worn down, angry, and left with ghosts that haunt. Even in the best of circumstances, there are bound to be residual consequences of going to war in addition to physical wounds.

13. Do findings give insight into situations and provide knowledge that can be applied to develop policy, change practice, and add to the knowledge base of a profession?

    This research does give insight into how war is experienced by combatants, the adjustments that are necessary, and the strategies that are necessary to survive—all of which can be used to plan programs that include counseling pre-combat and post-combat.

14. Do the theoretical findings seem significant, and to what extent? It is entirely possible to complete a theory-generating study, or any research investigation, yet not produce findings that are significant.

    If a researcher simply goes through the motions of doing research without drawing upon creativity or developing insight into what the data are reflecting, then this researcher risks the possibility of arriving at findings that are less than significant.

    These findings, though incomplete, do seem significant. Few persons who have not been in combat realize the risks and trauma associated with it. This research gives insight into this and perhaps enables persons to have more empathy for and give recognition to those who fought for their country.

15. Do the findings have the potential to become part of the discussions and ideas exchanged among relevant social and professional groups?

    Yes, if they were made available to appropriate personnel. Unfortunately, since the study was incomplete, there will be no publications based on the findings. However, if I have the opportunity, I would like to finish the study.

16. Are the limitations of the study clearly spelled out?

    Yes, most of the data comes from memoirs. Having more interview data would have been helpful. Also, more data is necessary from different groups that participate in and contribute to war.

17. Are there suggestions for practice, policy, teaching, and application of the research?

    This part of the study is missing since it was not completed.

Making Grounded Theory Applicable "In..."

Glaser and Strauss (1967) argued that a grounded theory should be credible and that it should be applicable. Being credible is rather self-explanatory in that a theory either is or is not believable and it fits or doesn't fit with the area it purports to represent. The notion of being applicable is more open and leaves questions as to how. In the next section of the chapter, I take up the notion of applicability and give examples of how I have

applied theories we've developed. Grounded theory methodology and procedures are being used not only by researchers interested in basic research and theory development but also by practitioners who are looking for practical answers to problems that arise in practice. What then does application of theories derived by this method mean?

Theory provides a framework, or a guide, for reflective interaction, leading to the following questions: What theory is applied, in what areas, and for what purposes? My answer to this question will briefly address several areas of application. These areas are teaching, consulting, and policy. I also touch on how I've used a theory derived through grounded research to develop a theoretical framework for practice. Finally, I note some experiences in shortcutting full-scale theory making when time, energy, or funding are in short supply but where applications of conceptualization or even a very provisional theory can be useful.

I'll discuss the following:

- What theory?
- Theory as applied to teaching and consulting
- Theory as applied to policy
- Theory as applied to practice
- The chronic illness trajectory framework

What Theory?

I begin our discussion with the first question: What theory? This question is relevant because there are so many possible theories to choose from both within and between disciplines. My advice is to go with a theory that is grounded. A grounded theory does not have to be derived using this methodology. However, in order for theory to have application to practice, it should meet certain criteria. These were explicated Glaser and Strauss (1967, pp. 237–250). That writing emphasized four features of properly developed grounded theories that are relevant to application of any theory. The features are as follows:

1. Theory must closely fit the substantive area in which it will be used.
2. It must be readily understandable by laymen concerned with this area.
3. It must be sufficiently general to be applicable to a multitude of diverse daily situations within the substantive area—not to just a specific type of situation.
4. Fourth, it must allow the user partial control over the structure and process of daily situations as they change over time.

Though all theory should fit these criteria, a grounded theory has certain advantages because it is derived from the intimate interplay of data collecting, data examination, and systematic analysis. Grounded theories fit the substantive areas that have been studied (i.e., "the practice world") because they are based on that interplay. Since concepts are derived from actual data, often using respondents' own words, they are more likely to consist of terms that are familiar and usable to practitioners and those they work with. By virtue of

the use of constant comparative analysis and theoretical sampling leading to variation in concepts, the ensuing theoretical statements should be applicable to a greater range of situations, though sometimes with modification or extension. Hence, grounded theories should give or enhance some measure of control over changing conditions and their otherwise unimpeded consequences. (For full discussion of these points, see Glaser and Strauss, 1967, pp. 237–250.)

Our second question has to do with the areas to which theory can be applied. As mentioned previously, theory can be applied to teaching, consulting, and in making recommendations for general or specific policies.

Theory as Applied to Teaching and Consulting

We have learned that grounded concepts and theories can be very useful in both teaching research and consulting. Persons rarely think about using theories when teaching or consulting with others on research other than talking about the philosophies or theories that underlie certain methods. However, theories are sometimes quite useful when teaching qualitative analysis. When novice researchers are struggling with their analyses, it may be helpful to have them draw upon concepts, derived from other grounded theories, which might have relevance or give insight into their data. Utilizing others' concepts is an excellent way of verifying, expanding upon, and adding to the development of theories. Of course, any time a concept is "borrowed," so to speak, the concept must meet the criteria that was just established—that is, fit the area, be somewhat general, plus be clearly defined in terms of properties and dimensions, then used provisionally until verified against the present data. In other words, any borrowed concepts must "feel right" to the researcher and truly provide a handle for penetrating and explaining data that is before him or her. Sometimes the mere suggestion of a possible relevant concept is all it takes, and a student is able to go off on his or her own to do some very creative things. By expanding upon properties and dimensions, adding to variations, and demonstrating how a concept might apply to other substantive areas (e.g., applying the concept of awareness developed out of the dying studies to the study of gays), a student can add to a discipline's body of knowledge through theory extension. Concept use, of course, should never be forced, which has a tendency to occur whenever someone else's theory, in whole or part, is used. Nevertheless, concepts often provide a takeoff point.

Teaching and Consulting in Substantive Areas

In teaching and consulting about different substantive areas—say, the "social organization of work" or about "negotiative processes"—grounded theories provide a language for talking about the topics and give insight and understanding into behavior that is often lacking in the information obtained by more conventional research methods. For example, I found that my research in the area of chronic conditions had direct application to my teaching and nursing practice. I taught senior nursing students working with elderly persons —most of whom had at least one and sometimes more chronic conditions. Though nursing teaches students to look at persons from a holistic approach, for the most part, students find it difficult to think other than from a medical disease perspective. They find it difficult to understand why persons fail to follow their regimens, have difficulty finding ways to handle disabilities, or complain about the quality of their lives. In other words, they have no idea of what it means to live with chronic conditions and the physical, psychological, and social problems that arise due to the long-term nature of those conditions. When doing my

research, I spent time with persons in their homes listening to their stories and came out of the research with a whole new sensitivity and awareness of the scope of the issues and problems faced by persons with chronic conditions. They not only had to follow timely and costly daily regimens but also had to juggle family lives and sometimes work while struggling with disabilities and limited incomes. The insights and understanding I gained enabled me to tailor interventions to meet individual patient needs and to pass on my knowledge and experience to her students (Corbin & Cherry, 1997).

Theory as Applied to Policy

For application to policy decisions, a grounded theory is likely to offer suggestions in one or a combination of ways. Anyone interested in policy can conceivably profit from having more than one viewpoint or perspective on a particular problem or issue. In effect, when a theorist "grounds" or otherwise makes such suggestions, he or she inevitably is entering an existing policy arena. Researchers may do this as neutral parties (experts invited to testify) or as avowed advocates of a particular theory-based position, offering a fresh perspective on a policy issue. An example can be taken from Strauss's and my research. After we finished our study of couples with chronic illness, it became very clear to us that there were many gaps in the health care delivery system. Despite all the talk about chronic illness, the health care delivery remained focused on acute, highly technological care. In an effort to bring about reform, a policy-oriented book was published (Strauss & Corbin, 1988). To paraphrase from that book, we need to draw policy implications from this model. I suggest some that call for a radical shift of focus, organization, and resource flow in the health care system. The most important points are these:

- A chronic illness persists over a lifetime.
- When severe, it may have many phases.
- Hospitals mainly care for the ill during the acute (and sometimes the dying) phases of illness.
- Periodic visits to clinics and doctors' offices are mainly for stabilizing an illness or slowing down its deterioration.
- During all but the acute phases, it is the ill and their families who do the major work of managing chronic conditions in the home.
- Therefore, the home should be at the very center of care. All other facilities and services should be oriented toward supplementing and facilitating the work done at home.
- In this altered division of labor, practitioners continue to play vital and often crucial roles. Therefore, the two sides of the division of labor should be tightly linked through open communications. The last two points are of equal importance. Taken together, they imply an overall policy model that involves both care at home and care at health facilities. (p. 150)

At the time it was written, the previously given points offered a new perspective and some rather general recommendations without providing specific social or financial strategies for carrying out that perspective. Specifying the exact strategies needed to implement those points was left to political and economic strategists.

Theory as Applied to Practice

This brings us to the topic of practical application of theory. Just once have Strauss and I followed the route of suggesting a working model from a more general theory—not so much out of lack of interest, but up to this point we were lacking in opportunity. To show that it can be done, I would like to share some of the experience and steps with the readers.

Having just completed a study of chronic illness management at home by couples (Corbin & Strauss, 1988), which was a further extension of chronic illness studies done by Strauss and associates over the years, applying the more general theory that resulted from those studies seemed an appropriate step to take. However, to be useful, the abstract theoretical notions derived from the various studies had to be translated into the language and action mode of the discipline, which was nursing. Thus, a nursing model based upon the chronic illness trajectory framework was developed (Corbin & Strauss, 1991b).

The Chronic Illness Trajectory Framework

The framework begins with a description of how the original theory was developed, along with an explanation of its appropriateness to the area to which it will be applied. This introduction is necessary to show that the concepts were grounded and, therefore, should fit the population to which it would be applied. The title of the model was "The Trajectory Model of Care for Chronic Illness Management" with "trajectory" being the core category. The introduction was followed by a listing of major categories along with their definitions, plus an overview of how the categories were related. The major concepts were listed as trajectory phasing and subphasing, trajectory projection, trajectory scheme, conditions influencing management, trajectory phases, trajectory management, biography and everyday living activities, and reciprocal impact.

The next step was to define the terms in such a way that showed how they fit with the practice domains of the discipline. Here are a few lines from what Strauss and I (Corbin & Strauss, 1991b) wrote about the model:

> *A model rests upon its philosophy, and the philosophic orientation to which the trajectory framework gives rise can be termed "chronicity." This term can most effectively be elaborated by discussing its implications for nursing's four domains of concern: the person, health, environment, and nursing.*

A discussion then ensued about how the model fit with each of those four domains. For example, under the heading of "person" is the following statement:

> *Unless an individual is hospitalized, the everyday prevention and management activities rest with persons and their kin. Thus, persons and their families are active participants in the prevention and management processes holding in fact primary responsibility for both.*

Under the category of "health" can be found the next words:

> *The focus of care when it comes to chronic conditions is first of all prevention. But in persons with chronic conditions the aim should be in helping persons find ways to manage symptoms and disabilities and live and work with their conditions on an everyday basis.*

Notice in Diagram 18.2 the tie between our theoretical conceptions—especially those of trajectory projection, scheme, and management, which denote the purposeful and self-directional action and interactional aspects of illness management and the disciplinary areas of action. Similar action-related

statements were made for the domains of environment and nursing.

Diagram 18.2

Source: Corbin & Cherry (1997).

Next, a set of guidelines for nursing intervention was developed using the steps of the nursing process, the problem-solving vehicle through which nurses carry out patient care. The guidelines included ways in which to use the main concepts in each of the steps of the nursing process. For example, it was shown how the concepts can guide patient assessment, goal setting, gathering data on contextual conditions that might facilitate or constrain patient or nurse action, for establishing the focus and mode of nursing care, then for evaluating the effectiveness of nursing care (Corbin & Strauss, 1991, pp. 155–174). Notice how in the following figure (Diagrams 18.3 and 18.4) the model was translated into a workable framework for practice.

The ability to actually move from abstract theory to practice was a very exciting process for me because it demonstrated to me that grounded theories have direct application to daily work and that because they are grounded they fit the areas to which they were being applied. Throughout my teaching career, I continued to use the model in my practice and to teach it to nursing students. Here is one example of the "Chronic Illness Assessment Practice Guide" developed by Corbin and Cherry (unpublished) for assessing patient needs during different phases of the illness trajectory (see Diagram 18.5). A different guide was developed for each phase of the chronic illness trajectory. The guide was developed using the details derived from analysis of data gathered during the spouse study (Corbin & Strauss, 1988).

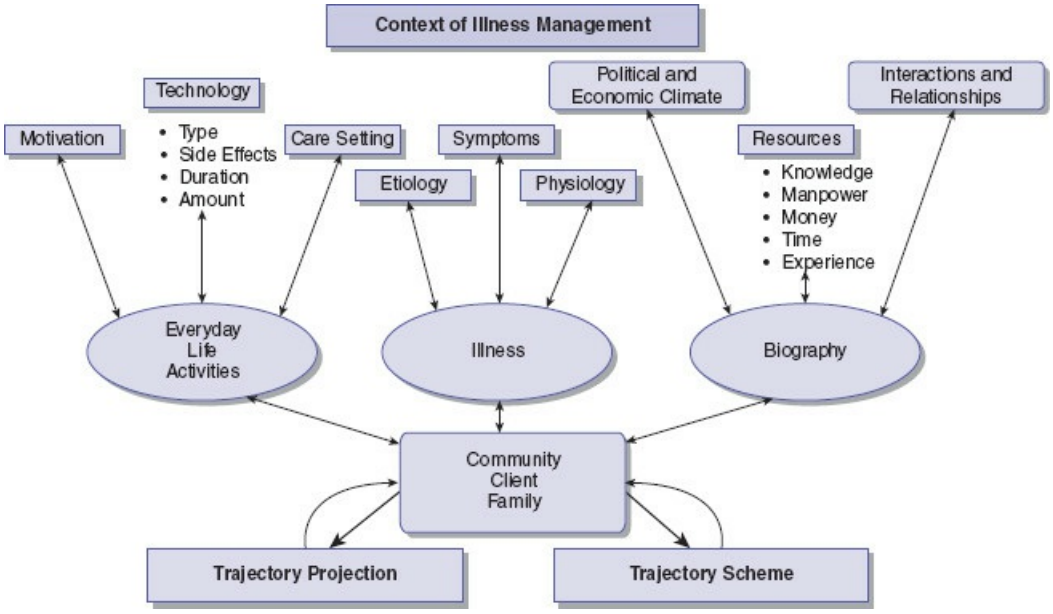

Diagram 18.3 The Negotiative Management Process

Source: Corbin & Cherry (1997).

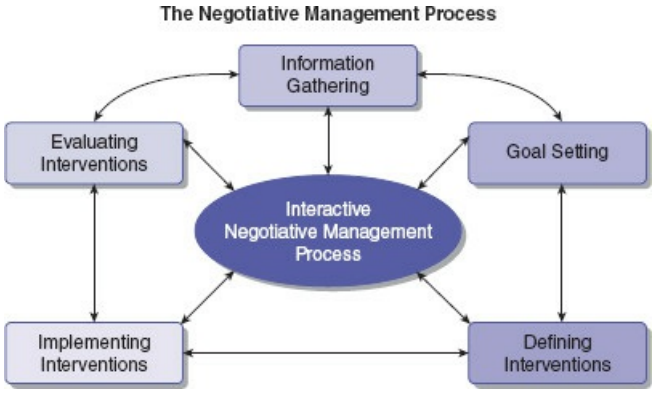

Diagram 18.4 Chronic Illness Assessment Practice Guide

Source: Corbin & Cherry, unpublished.

Preventing Crisis or Maintaining Stability Through Early Detection

Client Problem

The health provider and/or client detects a degree of difficulty managing: Circle All That Apply

Scale of 1–5: *1=Very Low 2=Low 3=Moderate 4=High 5=Very High*

1.	Deviation from client's normal physiological status necessitating further medical evaluation.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Need for supportive resources.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Need to address changes in client's physical, social, or mental status.	1	2	3	4	5

(Continued)

4.	Gap in regimen management.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Need for exposure to alternative treatment methods.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Need for case management.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Need for first aid or treatment of injury.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Need for foot care.	1	2	3	4	5

Health Provider Action Circle All That Apply

Briefly Describe:

1.	Provision of direct care.	Yes / No
2.	Teaching and demonstration.	Yes / No
3.	Counseling and advising.	Yes / No
4	Advocating for client.	Yes / No
5.	Case management.	Yes / No
6	Arrangement making.	Yes / No
7.	Referral making.	Yes / No

Total # of Actions Taken_____

Client Response

Client reports and/or demonstrates degree of management of: Circle All That Apply

Scale of 1–5: *1=Always Managed 2=Frequently 3=Half the Time 4=Sometimes 5=Never Managed*

1.	Deviation from client's normal physiological status necessitating further medical evaluation.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Need for supportive resources.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Need to address changes in client's physical, social, or mental status.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Gap in regimen management.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Need for exposure to alternative treatment methods.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Need for case management.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Need for first aid or treatment of injury.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Need for foot care.	1	2	3	4	5

General Outcome *Rate degree of success on scale of 1=High and 5=Low*

The client reports degree of success in preventing or managing complications through early detection.	1	2	3	4	5

Diagram 18.5

Summary of Key Points

The quality is what is often missing in qualitative research. When this happens, it is usually because researchers are not well trained, are in too much of a hurry, or are not certain how to judge the quality of their own and others' work. This chapter explores the notion of quality, examining it in light of the conditions necessary for achieving it. It then suggests some criteria for judging the credibility or plausibility of findings. Though I strongly believe that the notion of quality as applied to qualitative research should be taken seriously, the criteria presented here are meant as guidelines only. I still think that the findings speak for themselves, and when we see quality, we will know it. I also recognize that there are special research

circumstances requiring different approaches to doing research and standards of judgment. In these situations, it is important for a researcher to explain the specifics of why and what was done, leaving it up to readers to judge the results.

Two of the criteria for evaluating the value and effectiveness of a grounded theory are its fit and applicability to teaching, research, and practice. In this chapter, I demonstrated how Strauss and I and then Cherry and I adapted the findings from grounded theory studies of chronic illness, which were then applied to nursing practice and teaching.

Theories are not just abstract notions developed by researchers to advance their careers. They can have direct application to the real world through teaching, consulting, policy, and practice. The important issue to remember is that while theory is meant to explain and give understanding, it probably will never fully explain all aspects of every situation to which it is applied because of variation and contingency. The beauty of theory is that it is modifiable and can be extended, refined, and enhanced just as much through practice as it can be through research.

Activities for Thinking, Writing, and Discussing as a Group

1. Think about research studies that you have read. Pick out one that you thought of as having quality. What were the characteristics of the study that made you think so?
2. Would you describe the study as also being credible, plausible, or believable? Why or why not?
3. As an individual or as a group, take the criteria for quality and credibility outlined in this chapter and apply them to the Vietnam study presented in this book. Do you evaluate the study in the same way that I did? What are your criticisms, and how would you fix the study based on those criticisms?
4. Discuss the strengths and limitations of the study and what more needs to be done to provide greater quality and credibility.

Suggested Reading

Locke, L. F., Silverman, S. J., & Spirduso, W. W. (2011). *Reading and understanding research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Chapter 19
Student Questions and Answers

> Artists and writers, however, may present the single case, ignore the scientific (and even the popular) literature, and be unconcerned with "truth" or "reality," however that might be conceived. Researchers do not have such freedoms and cannot dodge their responsibilities to their participants while still expecting to be taken seriously and be considered to "do" research. Again, there are no shortcuts. (Morse, 2004, p. 888)

This chapter was originally written in response to questions raised by students in class, during consultations, and following presentations. The questions arise from various concerns. Some students are puzzled because certain procedures or techniques seem unclear, are ambiguous, or run counter to those used in more conventional research methods. Other students want to know how to respond to criticism from mentors, thesis committee members, and friends. This chapter has been placed at the end of the book, rather than at the beginning, because in answering the questions the responses summarize many of the major points made throughout the book. Some of the questions from previous editions have been carried over to this book because they are still questions I am asked today. Others are new. All of the responses, however, have been updated.

Questions and Responses

Question 1 I remember that when we met you said that it doesn't matter if one person or everyone in my study said something. If it's significant, it should be included, and that it's not about giving percentages or numbers to document findings. For example, saying 5 participants thought this, 10 participants said that. Like some of your work I've read, I've just used terms such as *some* or *most,* etc. However, one of my supervisors has a problem with me saying it's not about numbers and then using terms such as *some* or *most* without defining what percentage counts these words indicate. She is used to frequency and content analysis, so this seems to be a sticking point for her. Have you written about this anywhere, or do you have any advice for how to deal with this?

Answer There are a couple of issues brought up in your question. First, you mention that I said that if even one person says or does something that you as researcher deem to be important, you should include it in the study. My response to that is that it depends on what you mean. Remember that we are concerned with concepts and not numbers of persons or cases. If you are saying that of the 10 persons who are part of your sample only 1 person has brought up the issue, then you have to question, why this issue? Second, did you check with the other participants to see if this was an issue for them? If not, what is there about this concept that makes you think or say it is significant? Perhaps you saw some indications of that concept in the rest of the data that though not said directly was implied in the other interviews. Concepts may take different forms in different interviews; though at a conceptual level, they refer to the same thing. Remember in Chapter 4 the example of bird, kite, plane, and what they have in common is flight. Third, if a new concept appears in your

data, you need to do some theoretical sampling. Go back to your data again with greater sensitivity to see if the concept is there in any form. And go back to the same or other participants, and ask if the incident that you denoted as a significant concept applies in any way to their situation. Fourth, I would ask myself this: What role does this concept play in my evolving theory? Am I designating it as a category? A concept that reaches the level of a category should be found in every interview. If after doing some theoretical sampling to see if the incident you denoted as a concept does not come up in any other data and you can't explain its significance to the theory you are developing, then discard it. Lower-level concepts are another matter, as I'll explain next.

As for the use of numbers to describe each category, grounded theorists usually don't use them because it doesn't make sense for our purposes. However, if a committee member is adamant, there is no reason why you can't add numbers or percentages. The biggest problem we can see is that they are distracting to the narrative, and we've never seen a grounded theory or any theory for that matter that had numbers attached to it unless it is a mathematical model or is a combined methods study. Then, too, it depends upon what level of concepts you are talking about. The core category and the major categories should apply to and can be found in all participants in some form, though that form might vary. There may be fewer incidences of lower-level concepts because they show the dimensional variations in properties of those categories. If one takes the normal curve—though we hate to use that example—there are always outliers, persons who think, act, or respond differently from the larger percentage that are located in the middle of the curve. In a grounded theory, our purpose is discovery of concepts and to show how these concepts link together to form explanations. To broaden our explanations, we want to account for as much variation as possible. That is, the idea I was probably trying to put across when I said that one incident might be important, it is important in the sense of the variation it conveys. Remember, in grounded theory, we are sampling not persons but concepts. We are attempting to identify the range of variation present within categories and to build in all the variation we can find to increase the depth and breadth or explanatory power of our theory. We are not rating the categories or their properties in terms of level of importance; that we leave to quantitative studies. Providing the number of times that a concept related to a category appears in our data is irrelevant because it doesn't add to the theory.

Question 2 When writing the findings and discussion and recommendation chapters for the dissertation, should findings be presented and discussed by telling the story of the identified grounded theory (the grounded theory I came up with), or do I somehow need to also address if or how the initial research questions were answered? This is where I'm unsure. I was going to respond to my member by explaining how grounded theory is more about the search for the process (not necessarily the answers to the initial research questions).

Answer Your findings in a grounded theory are your theory and should be presented as such. A theory is not a story. A story is descriptive and not theory. Process is part of theory in the sense that it shows how the major action and interaction of the study changes over time to adapt to changes in conditions. If that is what you mean by *process*, then it should be part of your theory. As for the original question(s), that is another issue. When we go into a grounded theory, we have a general question in mind. It sets the parameters of the study

and defines from whom the data will be collected. However, when grounded theorists begin a study, they often don't know where the data will take them. The original question(s) may have to be altered to fit with the data. The original question(s) never should dictate the findings. The data as interpreted by the researcher dictate the findings. Sometimes over the course of a study the assumption that led to the formation of the original question(s) is completely discounted. After all, the purpose of a grounded theory is to gain new insights and understandings, then to use these insights to formulate an explanatory theory.

Question 3 As you analyze your data, do you compare findings to the lit as you go, or do you wait until you are done with your analysis and then go back and compare what you found to current literature? Sounds as though there are different takes on using literature, so I thought I would ask you. From your book, I believe it's discussed using the lit review to help develop initial research questions and then to compare to findings, but I wanted a bit more detail on what you do. I did a lit review to help guide my initial research questions and interview questions, and then after I was done analyzing, I compared my findings to the lit review I had done initially. I'm wondering now if I should have compared during analysis as well.

Answer It looks to me that you've used the literature appropriately. Most of the literature review comes after the research has been completed. It is used to validate findings and to show how your theory supports, adds to, or amends other theories dealing with the same phenomenon. Since it is not until late in a study that the researcher knows for certain which concepts will be categories or which concepts will be important and because the theory under construction is always evolving, going to the literature in the middle of a study can be a waste of time. It is better to do a thorough search once the theory is formulated and then bring the literature into the findings (as support for your concepts) and into the discussion chapter as appropriate. It will add more credence to your theory and locate your contribution to the wider body of disciplinary knowledge.

Question 4 I'm presenting my dissertation next week as part of the interview process here at my college for a tenure-track position. I have 35 minutes to present and 15 minutes for questions. Do you have any pointers about how I should spread my time with my PowerPoint? I just watched a dissertation defense this morning, and I liked how the student focused most of her time on the results. What do you suggest? I would love to hear what you look for when an applicant presents. Thank you!

Answer I think your inclination to go with the findings is the best way to focus your presentation. You might just mention your method in passing, but starting off with discussion of the method may distract the audience —especially if they are unfamiliar with grounded theory. You want to wow the committee, and the best way to do this is by presenting the findings from your study. Provide an overview of your theory, but use a lot of descriptive data—data they can relate to—to illustrate your concepts. Discuss how your theory contributes to the body of professional knowledge and how the findings might be used in clinical settings, in research to set policy. Be prepared to discuss your methodology (with a few slides), and if a question comes up during time allocated for questions, you can provide a brief explanation of how you arrived at your findings.

Question 5 I'm working on my dissertation, and I had a question I was hoping you could help me with. I am stuck! I'm using grounded theory and your *Basics of Qualitative Research* book as a guide. First of all, I'm glad your book keeps telling me my feelings of inadequacy are normal! I'm trying to name my core category, and I

keep questioning myself. I've labeled the core category but keep questioning my choice. I go around and around thinking maybe it is one of the other categories. I think my choice is the best fit because all of my concepts flow into this label nicely. This seems to be the most appropriate because it's general enough to allow for variability. So my question for you is this: Do you think I'm on the right track with my core concept? I would be so grateful for any advice you could throw my way.

Answer Stop doubting yourself. You've already answered your own question. You have lived with your study for months now. No one knows better than you what the main issue to come out of the study is. If your instinct is telling you that is the way to go, then listen. Furthermore, you tell me all of your other categories fit very nicely around that concept. That is a good indication that you are on the right track. Just keep going. You have it!

Question 6 I'm planning on doing a grounded theory study, and I'm using your (and Strauss's) latest text for reference. One of my committee members is suggesting that I do a pilot study of my initial interview guide. From listening to your seminar and reading your text, this does not seem to fit with grounded theory. From my understanding, each interview will build on the data from the previous interview or interviews. Am I correct on this? My rationale for not doing a pilot study would be that I want to use the data from every interview to do theoretical sampling and explore new leads as they emerge through analysis after every interview. It seems having an interview guide would rigidify the data collection too much. After the initial interview, I may need to ask new questions or tweak the initial ones to further explore new leads. Correct? Thank you for your time! Take care.

Answer You are absolutely correct in your interpretation of grounded theory, and your committee member is wrong. All you need is a questionnaire to get through human subjects and then perhaps to use with that first interview to get the interview going if a participant doesn't seem too forthcoming. Sometimes asking a few questions gets things started. To assure your committee member, let me add the following. Each person interviewed or observed may add something new in terms of concepts or that will further develop an already-identified concept. It is important to be flexible enough to follow through and add new concepts. When you are collecting data, you are collecting data at a concept level; each situation might be a little different. The differences bring out the variation, and with theoretical sampling, you want to be flexible enough in your data collection to be able to gather the type of data you need to further the development of your theory.

Question 7 Stephan, an anthropologist who is surrounded at work by psychologists, says, "They are continually asking, 'Where are the numbers?'" This is also a frequent question asked by thesis committee members and more quantitative researchers.

Answer Though there are some qualitative researchers who quantify their data, as a rule, qualitative researchers are not as much concerned with numbers as they are with identification of process and social mechanisms. Qualitative researchers seek to identify significant concepts and to explore their relationships. They are more interested in understanding and explaining than in testing hypotheses. If committee members insist on numbers, students can add a quantitative component to the study by including some relevant measuring instruments. These satisfy committee members and often provide additional findings of interest.

Question 8 I attended a workshop on grounded theory methodology last year. The teacher explained to us the three different stages of coding, naming them as open, axial, and selective. I also had a look at the latest issue of the grounded theory reader published last year. When I tried to apply all that I've learned to my own material (problem-centered interviews), I must admit that I felt completely confused about where to start, as there seem to be so many different kinds of grounded theory methodologies. Today, I had a look at your book on the basics of qualitative research from 2007, which seems to differ slightly from the 1990 edition. The latter is the one most often cited in German articles. I wondered if you could give me any advice on which grounded theory methodology to apply.

Answer There are a couple of issues brought out in this question. The first has to do with different grounded theory methodologies. The answer to that question is that there is no one or definitive grounded theory method. There are standard procedures that are used in all the various interpretations of grounded theory, and the purpose of each remains to build theory. Each seems to be based on a different theoretical foundation. The choice of which version of grounded theory to use has to do with which method has the greatest appeal to someone and who the teachers or mentors are and which version they are most familiar or friendly with. The quality of the grounded theory has more to do with the training, experience, motivation, and abilities of the person using the method than with the version of method itself.

As for differences in different versions of the same book, that can be expected. Methods evolve and people evolve. Usually a book is revised to bring it up to date somewhat but also on the basis of reviews provided by users of a book. Aspects of a book that, according to reviewers or users, seemed confusing or not well developed are clarified and expanded upon. We think the basics remain the same for each edition of *Basics of Qualitative Research.* The researcher is attempting to identify, develop, and integrate concepts. The procedures involve making constant comparisons and asking questions that will lead to theoretical sampling and saturation of the theory. To construct *quality theory,* the researcher should bring context and process into the analysis. Sometimes different words are used in the different versions for clarifying purposes. Some parts of a new version may place more emphasis on one aspect of analysis and add more examples than it did in previous versions. When this happens, it is usually in an effort to clarify, expand, and make a book more usable. In the end, our advice is to go with the version of the method and the edition of the book that most speaks to you.

Question 9 What is the focus of analysis, if not numbers?

Answer This question is a variant of "Where are your numbers?" The skeptic is assuming you can't arrive at conclusions unless you use statistical modes of sampling and analysis. For us, the unit of analysis is the *concept*. In grounded theory, the sampling procedures are designed to look at how concepts vary along a dimensional range, rather than measuring the distribution of persons along a dimension of a concept. Therefore, researchers collect data from places or persons and on things where they expect to maximize their opportunity of finding those variations. For example, in the Vietnam study presented in Part 2 of this book, after completing the analysis of the interview with Participant 1 in which he described his Vietnam experience as "not so bad," I followed up on that dimensional description of experience ("not so bad") and sampled combatants and even other nurse noncombatants in the same war in order to determine how they described their experience in Vietnam. I was looking for the range of variation in how persons described their

experiences—combatants and noncombatants just being the sources of those data. The ability to sample on the basis of concepts is very important because it provides researchers with the flexibility to follow the analytic leads and in doing so build variation and density into their findings.

Later, if researchers want to test some aspect of their findings by doing cluster analysis, correlations, or some other statistical analysis, they may do so. But always keep in mind that the primary purpose of doing qualitative research is discovery, not hypothesis testing. At the beginning of the research, the analyst doesn't know which variables are important or what their properties are—or how these vary dimensionally. Therefore, sampling is guided by concepts and what they tell us about phenomena rather than on numbers that tend to quantify phenomena.

Question 10 Can we use data that has already been collected? Must we code all our data? Should we sample randomly? Are there other ways of sampling?

Answer These questions often are raised because students (and other researchers) have already collected their data before coming to the seminar or before they begin their analysis. Sometimes, their concern is this: Do I have to start data collection all over in order to carry out theoretical sampling? Other times, the concern is this: How do I manage so much material—especially since I don't have unlimited time? The response to the first question is as follows. Essentially, working with data that have already been collected is not that much different from doing secondary analysis on one's own or someone else's data collected in the past. Researchers should approach already-collected data, secondary or archival materials, or memoirs exactly as they would any data. To handle these kinds of data, researchers characteristically begin by examining the earliest interviews, field notes, or documents for significant happenings and events. At first, they might scan the data and find a passage that interests them, then begin careful initial coding. Likewise, since sampling is done on the basis of concepts, a researcher can sample theoretically by sorting through interviews, observations, or videos and looking for incidents of relevant concepts and analyze these. Analytic problems do sometimes arise with already-collected or secondary data when researchers attempt to saturate categories or find variations in properties and dimensions, only to discover to their dismay that there are insufficient or incomplete data. When this situation arises, the analyst must either return to the field to collect additional data or live with gaps in the theory.

In response to the second question, the answer is, "No, not every single bit of data has to be analyzed 'microscopically.'" However, as stated earlier in this book, close inspection of data during the early phases of the research process helps the researcher get into the data and to identify beginning concepts that will serve as a foundation for subsequent data collection. Usually, microscopic analysis is done in the early parts of the analysis and then taken up again if more detailed analysis is necessary to fill in, link, extend, and validate categories through more data gathering and analysis. There is no substitute for intensive coding during the early phases of the research. Once the foundation of the analytic story is established, the researcher can be more relaxed in his or her approach.

Random sampling is more appropriate to quantitative studies than to qualitative ones for all the reasons just listed. As stated, qualitative researchers are not trying to test variables but to discover them. They want to

identify, define, and explain how and why concepts vary dimensionally along their properties. So while random sampling is possible, it could be detrimental because it prevents the analyst from theoretical sampling or following the leads in the data to arrive at answers to the questions designed to lead our analysis forward. As for other types of sampling, in almost any qualitative research, the first data are gathered through a variety of procedures—cashing in on lucky observations, using "snowball sampling," networking, and so on. The lucky researchers are those who have unlimited access to sites and who know where and at what times they might find the comparable situations that will enable them to extend and elaborate their concepts. Sometimes, researchers don't know which persons or places to go to in order to find examples of how concepts vary. Instead, they sample by "sensible logic" or by "convenience," hoping to come upon that variation. Variations almost invariably exist because no two departments, situations, or happenings are quite the same. Each situation has the potential to present different features of phenomena. The more interviews or observations that a researcher conducts, the more likely it is that conceptual variations will be found in data.

Question 11 Psychologists are taught to think up "mini-theories" out of their heads to see if they work. That's just the opposite of your way of doing research.

Answer These mini-theories are essentially hypotheses, perhaps grounded a bit in a psychological researcher's experience and reading. However, these hypotheses are not derived through systematic analysis of data and validated during the research process. From a practical standpoint, the mini-theories have merit, especially for practitioners who need knowledge to handle problematic situations. Much depends, of course, on how those mini-theories were derived. If not grounded, they can be misleading.

Question 12 Do qualitative researchers do much describing or descriptive quoting from interviews and their field notes? Some research reports feature more quotes than analysis.

Answer There seems to be a tendency among some researchers and some disciplines to do less analysis and more quoting, leaving the interpretation up to the reader. It all depends upon the method that is being used and the researcher's philosophic orientation. The position taken in this book is that while quoting makes fascinating reading, it doesn't lead to theory or provide the reader with any framework for making sense out of those readings. It doesn't explain why certain quotes were chosen over others or the underlying conceptual message of the research. That said, quotes do add interest and provide evidence for skeptics; therefore, a good sprinkling of them throughout a research report is important. For example, Strauss, Schatzman, Bucher, Ehrlich, and Sabshin (1964), in their book titled *Psychiatric Ideologies and Institutions,* presented materials bearing on the beliefs of psychiatric aides working in a psychiatric hospital. One of the points made in the materials was that the aides, though uneducated in psychiatric principles, nevertheless considered themselves to be "doing good" for the patients. The aides recognized the professional work of the nurses and physicians but sometimes thought that they did more good for specific patients than did the professionals with all their psychiatric ideologies. To convince potentially skeptical readers, long quotations from interviews with the aides were given. However, the more usual practice for these authors is to balance description and quotes with conceptual explanations. Individual qualitative researchers handle the matter of quotations differently, and it is suggested that students read a number of monographs and papers to get an idea of the variation.

Question 13 I did an organizational study of one factory in Japan. A colleague asked, "How can you generalize from studying just this one factory to all other Japanese factories?"

Answer The answer to this question is quite complicated. True, you can't generalize from one factory to all factories and from one country to another. But then generalization is not the purpose of qualitative research. The idea behind qualitative research is to gain understanding about some phenomenon, and a researcher can learn a lot about a phenomenon from the study of one factory or organization. Remember, as researchers, we are analyzing data for concepts and their relationships. Manifestations of concepts might be found 10 or more times in this one case. For example, in our study of work in hospitals, Strauss and I identified the concept of workflow as being relevant. They asked the question, "What enables the work to 'flow,' or keeps it going on a daily basis, and what happens when it is disrupted and why?" There is much to be learned about workflow through the study of one organization. However, it is impossible to learn everything there is to know about workflow from one case (person, family, factory, organization, community, and nation). Explanations based on a single case will be somewhat limited and require further study in other organizations in order to elaborate upon the concept. By specifying the contexts (set of conditions in which specific phenomena [concepts] are located), all we can say is that this is how and why the work is able to go on in this place at this time. If similar conditions exist in your organization, then perhaps much of what we've learned about workflow may help you to understand what is going on in your organization—or at least stimulate you to think about the concept of workflow as it pertains to the organizations you are studying.

Therefore, if a person asks a researcher, "Is this one case representative of all cases?" the answer is probably no in the traditional meaning of the word *representative.* However, if the same person were to ask, "Is there something we can learn from the study of one organization that might have application to another?" then the answer can be yes because the core concept that comes out of a study should be broad enough to have application beyond the organization from which the concept was derived, though the specifics might differ.

Question 14 If I am collecting data in a foreign country, should I translate my interviews into English in order to code them, or should I code them in the original language (providing of course I speak that language)?

Answer The usual reason given is that translating takes "so much" time. This question is one that is often asked by doctoral students from outside the country who are pressed by their thesis committees to translate their interviews into English. There are several reasons for doing only minimal translating. A main reason for doing some translating is so that English-speaking readers can get at least some degree of feeling or insight into what the interviewees are saying and thinking as well as a sense of what the coding looks like. On the other hand, there are considerable difficulties with capturing the nuance of meaning in translation. Few of us are specially trained or natively skilled at overcoming those difficulties—especially for extended passages. Foreign students report additional difficulties in trying to code in English. One such difficulty is that often there is no equivalent word in English capable of capturing the subtle nuances of the word in the original language. "Meanings," to quote Eva Hoffman (1989), become "lost in translation." For presentations or publications in a country other than the one where the data were collected (if the language is different), key passages and their codes can be translated, approximating the original as close as possible. However, as a general rule, too much valuable time and meaning can be lost in trying to translate all the research materials.

Also, many of the original subtleties of meaning can be lost in translation.

When working with students in foreign countries, we ask them to translate some passages; otherwise, we can't help them or critique their analyses. However, the student is asked whether a given translated word or phrase really approximates what the interviewee intended. Usually, after some discussion, an understanding is reached of what is meant by a word. In seminar or teamwork sessions, there are additional opportunities to explore the parameters of translated meanings and to avoid imposing outsider interpretations on the data. Naturally, when it comes time to write up the research, some of the quotes will have to be translated into the language of the publication. See, for example, Saiki-Craighill (2001a, 2001b).

Question 15 Are there special problems with doing qualitative studies in nonindustrialized societies or in industrialized non-European cultures? After all, so much emphasis is placed on close linguistic analysis in this methodology.

Answer This question raises a thorny issue, which surely deserves serious consideration. In a general sense, qualitative analysts face precisely the same difficulties when trying to comprehend the meanings of acts, events, and objects when these are profoundly "cultural" in nature. It is all too easy for people living in Western countries to misinterpret foreigners or persons only partly assimilated when comparing their acts and words to American ones. As the anthropologists have taught us, to avoid such misinterpretations, a researcher must spend a fair amount (some say a great deal) of time at the foreign site and engage in a lot of observation and conversations (informal interviews). Also, researchers must examine their own, often culture-based assumptions. Even with this counsel, anthropologists can't guarantee that misinterpretations (sometimes gross ones) do not occur.

However, if a foreign student is studying in the United States and wishes to collect data in his or her own country, then most certainly he or she can use this or other qualitative methods. It is important not to "borrow" theories derived from other cultures but to develop theory specific to reflecting a society's time and place. Alas, a mistake frequently made is to superimpose theories developed in one society upon another society. Even if cultural differences are very subtle, they are there. The imposed theories may sound good, but if not carefully evaluated in terms of fit, they can be misguiding.

As for the use of procedures, there is no reason why the procedures described in this book can't be used to analyze data collected in any country. After all, the procedures work when studying ethnic Americans or other subcultural groups like "punks" and "junkies," whose cultural meanings and behavior often differ from the usual. As an illustration, one of the American students studied conceptions of health among the Sioux Indians, living among them on a reservation and previously working there as a public health worker for several years. She concluded that anthropologists who had studied these people did not accurately grasp how Sioux philosophy of the world affected their conceptions of health and medicine—ideas very different than the usual Western ones.

Question 16 How does a researcher handle this much data?

Answer The answer to this question is similar to the response that was just given about previously collected

data. Suppose a student is studying a business organization that is flourishing despite a bad recession and wants to know how the organization has managed this feat—that is, the basis for the decisions they've made, the visions that guide their executive's actions, the incentives they provide, and so forth. The data might consist of organizational documents only—but masses of them. To begin, the analyst would choose some documents and familiarize himself or herself with their contents, just as if they were interviews. Then, once the analyst has a sense of the types of information the documents contain, he or she can begin intensive coding. With a beginning list of concepts, the analyst could turn to successive documents, analyzing each as if it were incoming data. Not every bit of data has to be analyzed. Once categories are saturated, the researcher can skim the remaining materials to see what new ideas they contribute to the findings.

Question 17 Can the analytic process be hastened or shortened? Also, many practitioners and professionals don't have the time required for theory development but want to do good research. What should they do?

Answer As stated in the quotation by Morse at the beginning of this chapter, there are no shortcuts to doing qualitative analysis. A researcher must go through the process (as it pertains to the method of his or her choice) if he or she wants to do thick, rich description or develop a dense, well-integrated theory. Researchers can choose not to saturate categories or look for context. Researchers can choose not to do memos and so on. It's all a matter of time, money, and training. However, findings will reflect this, and the researcher should be prepared to accept the limitations to the study brought about by their hastening of data collection and analysis.

Though many researchers claim to use a method such as grounded theory, in fact what some researchers do is pick and choose among the procedures, using those that most suit their purposes. They might make use of constant comparisons but not adopt theoretical sampling. Sometimes they use certain analytic procedures but use them in conjunction with other qualitative methods. This issue was addressed in Chapter 18 on evaluation, and it is suggested that the reader return to that chapter for further elaboration on what constitutes quality qualitative research. If a researcher identifies categories (themes), but doesn't want to take the time to develop the categories elaborately in terms of their properties, dimensions, variations, or relationships, then the findings will be "thin" and perhaps not very informative. Their study probably won't add much new knowledge to the profession. If a researcher chooses to use bits and pieces of a method, then he or she will lose some of the credibility that a consistent follow-through with a method provides.

Question 18 Can you say something about the work involved in doing qualitative analysis: the amount, kinds, and so on?

Answer First, there is the work of collecting data. Data may be collected by the primary investigator or by research associates or paid data collectors. Then there is the work of doing analysis, though we don't like to think of it as work in a negative sense. Analysis does take effort, and it is time consuming, but it also is very interesting and rewarding. A researcher using this method should allow himself or herself a considerable amount of time—especially if the researcher is doing the transcription of interviews as well as collecting the data. If the transcription is done by someone else, then perhaps the workload can be reduced somewhat. If the researcher encounters difficulties in data collection or in analysis, understandably there is more work.

Unquestionably, a most important issue bearing on the amount and kinds of work is the ultimate aim of the researcher. If the researcher is aiming for dense theory, then there will be more analytic work than in studies aiming at description. Yet doing a thick, rich description can also be complicated and time consuming.

If this book has been read carefully, the researcher is aware of the many forms of work involved in data collection and analysis. There is the work of data collection (with all the potential difficulties) and also of recording, perhaps transcribing (even translating), and then the coding. When all of this is finally finished, there is still the work of writing papers or books and making presentations. Before the study begins, there is the work of grant writing, of obtaining human subject committee consent, and so on. In short, the only major difference between doing theory-building research and other forms of qualitative analysis, or even other forms of research, is the amount of work that goes into the coding process. A computer can help with the work, but it still requires effort on the part of the analyst.

There is also the issue of what kinds of resources are needed for this kind of work, in addition to the requisite skills. Really, nothing is needed in addition to notepads, a telephone, a recording device, and a computer. Sometimes money is necessary for travel and occasionally for paying interviewees. A good research library can also be very helpful and even a necessity, but with computers, even these are becoming less important. Important also are one or more consultants or helpful friends. Included in your resource pool, if you are lucky, is an indispensable supportive spouse or significant other.

Question 19 What's the relationship of everyday life explanations to our theoretical explanations?

Answer As we said elsewhere, you must listen very carefully to what the actors are saying. Their words and expressions provide in vivo concepts, give meaning, and provide explanations. Also, everyday explanations are usually revealing of the actors' perceptions, ideologies, and unwitting assumptions. So note these, be respectful of them, and integrate actors' explanations into your own interpretations. The explanations that participants give us are the basis for our analyses. When they give explanations, they are contextualizing for us. Brining these into analysis is what grounds the theory.

Question 20 If you've been trained in psychoanalytic theory or some other disciplinary approach, how would you integrate this into qualitative analysis?

Answer The actual techniques and procedures for qualitative analysis can and have been used by people trained in different disciplines and with their respective theoretical approaches. What these disciplinary theories do is tend to focus the analysis on certain problems and at the same time provide a perspective for interpretation of data. For example, a person coming from a Freudian perspective might be more concerned with hidden motives and deep psychological meaning than an organizational sociologist, who is more interested in social organizational processes and structure. The important thing is to be aware that perspectives influence interpretation. A researcher who uses qualitative methods is interested in creating new understandings and explanations. Arriving at new understandings can be blocked if a researcher fails to think "outside the box." Procedures presented in this book have been designed to help researchers think differently about data but cannot guarantee it. It is up to the researcher to use them and to use them wisely. Once the analysis is complete, findings can be related back to the literature, provided the researcher explains where the findings

are the same and where they differ from the literature.

More specifically, there is a basic tenet of the methodology that is relevant to this question. All assumptions regarding preexisting theories are subject to potential skepticism and therefore must be scrutinized in light of your own data. The latter allow you to question and qualify as well as give assent to your received theories. Concepts must "earn their way" into a study and not be accepted blindly. ("Received" theories may work brilliantly for some data but not so well on yours.) Therefore, to summarize, psychoanalytic theory or any other theory must pass the "grounding" test.

Question 21 How many interviews or observations are enough? When do I stop gathering data?

Answer These are perennial research questions asked by all researchers using qualitative methods. For most theory-building researchers and for achieving a thick, rich description with data collection, it is safe to state that the researcher continues to collect and analyze data "until theoretical saturation takes place." By that, we mean that all categories are well saturated, and variation is built in.

However, there are always constraints placed on time, energy, availability of subjects, and other conditions that affect data collection. These can impose limits on how much and what types of data are collected. The researcher must keep in mind that if data gathering stops before theoretical saturation occurs, the findings may be thin and the story line not very well developed. Sometimes a researcher has no choice but must settle for a theoretical scheme that is less developed than desired.

Question 22 How is this methodology similar to and different from case analysis?

Answer This is another one of those complicated questions, because in some part the answer depends on what you mean by a "case" and its analysis. The book *What Is a Case?* (Ragin & Becker, 1992) reflects upon this problem. Two sociological authors asked a number of respected colleagues to discuss how they used cases in their research. There was a wide disparity both in the nature of these cases and in how they were analyzed. Frequently, when one speaks of cases, persons interpret that to be an in-depth study of a single person or group. Often these take the form of a narrative life story, a career, or the handling of a personal crisis. But a moment's reflection tells us that a case can also be a study of a business organization, an African village, or a public celebration. Whether the researcher is analyzing a single organization or several, the process of analysis remains the same if using this methodology. The researcher would sample theoretically and continue sampling, until categories are saturated.

Question 23 Is using a "basic social or psychological process" the only way to integrate a study? I notice that some researchers seem to assume this.

Answer Usually, when persons say this, they mean that the findings are integrated around a concept and explained in terms of how the concept evolves in steps or phases. No, the use of a basic social or psychological process isn't the *only* way to integrate the data to construct theory. This assumption (certainly not made in Barney Glaser's [1978] discussion of basic social processes) represents a grave underestimation of the complexity of the phenomena that are likely to be encountered in any given study. It also hampers the

potential flexibility of this methodology, restricting the strategies for integrating analyses. In every study, one finds process, but description of process should not be limited to steps and phases. Nor should description be restricted to basic social or psychological processes, unless the term *social process* also includes family, organizational, arena, political, educational, legal, and community processes, and whatever processes might be relevant to a study. In summary, one can usefully code for a basic social or psychological process, but to organize every study around the idea of steps or phases of social or psychological processes limits what can be done with this method.

Question 24 You emphasize that your method is both inductive and deductive, yet I often see it referred to in the literature as wholly or primarily inductive. Sometimes the reference is appreciative and sometimes critical. Can you comment?

Answer Again, this is a misunderstanding. In some part, it stems from a misreading of *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Glaser and Strauss emphasized induction because of their attack on "ungrounded" or speculative theories. The desire was to focus readers' attention on the inestimable value of grounding theories in systematic analyses of data. However, that book also emphasized the interplay of data and researcher. Since no researcher enters into the research process with a completely blank mind, concepts placed on data are abstractions of what researchers think are the meanings implied in data; therefore, concepts denoted to stand for data carry part of the researchers as well as participants within them. Of course, conscientious analysts attempt to validate their interpretations by comparing one piece of data against another, always looking for contradictions to their interpretations as well as validation.

Question 25 I am absolutely flooded with interviews. Unfortunately, I haven't been able to prevent the flood. I never dreamed I would get caught up in this situation and not be able to stop the stream of interviews. I am so sated with the interviewing and information that I can't even think of asking new interview questions. Worse yet, I haven't followed the rules and done analysis while interviewing. What should I do?

Answer Your plight puts you in exactly the same position as most interviewers who put off analyzing data until most of the data are collected. This situation is precisely why data collections should be guided by analysis. However, we understand this is not always possible, and researchers often get caught up in data gathering and then become overwhelmed with data. The best thing to do, if possible at this point, is stop interviewing for a while and begin to analyze the data you have. Get phone numbers, and make a later date with respondents. You will need people later to do theoretical sampling and to fill in categories and validate the evolving theory.

Question 26 Can you tell me something about the differences between the research method described in this book and, say, autoethnography?

Answer I can't tell you much about autoethnography because I admit that I am not an expert in this method. What I think is most important for the novice qualitative researcher to know is that each method has its own theoretical foundation, purpose, and procedures for collecting and analyzing data. Quality qualitative research can be done using many different methods. My suggestion is that a novice researcher wishing to conduct a qualitative research study should explore all of the different methods available before embarking on a study.

Different methods appeal to different researchers and work better to obtain different types of information. I probably would not be comfortable doing autoethnography for two reasons. I doubt I could be unbiased in analyzing data about myself. And second, I would feel uncomfortable revealing that much about myself. I could talk about myself in an anonymous interview but not reveal myself in a monograph. I would be too self-conscious. That is just my personal bias; each researcher has to determine what he or she feels comfortable with.

Summary of Key Points

This concludes our chapter on questions and answers. There are, no doubt, a great many more that could be asked. The chapter also concludes this book; thus, there are a few words of wisdom that I wish to convey to readers before closing. Readers are advised not to worry needlessly about every little facet of analysis. Sometimes a researcher has to use common sense and not get caught up worrying about what is the right or wrong way. The important thing is to trust oneself and the process. Stay within the general guidelines outlined in this book, and use the procedures and techniques flexibly according to your abilities and the realities of the study.

Activities for Thinking, Writing, and Discussing as a Group

1. Think about the questions you have about grounded theory that have not been answered in this book.
2. Write them down, and bring them to class.
3. As a group, come up with answers to the questions. No doubt, there will be some disagreements as to the appropriate answers, and this is okay because there is probably more than one answer that is possible. Be creative, be flexible, and most of all be willing to put your ideas out there so that others can react to them.

Appendix A

Field Notes: Biographical Study
Chapters 5 and 6

These interview notes represent just a few pages of a much longer interview and are intended to accompany the activities presented at the end of Chapters 5 and 6. The study topic was "The Biographical Impact of a Life-Threatening Cardiac Event."

This person went into the emergency room with chest pain that was radiating down her arm.

The event happened while she was outside pruning her roses.

R = Researcher

P = Participant

Researcher: J. C.

R: Now getting back, when you were undergoing this procedure [placement of a stent into two blocked blood vessels], at any time were you frightened of dying or having something go wrong, or did you just trust that the health care system would take care of it all?

P: When going through the procedures, I was afraid I was going to die on the table. I remember thinking that. I better not die here. But the thought that I was going to die has never really entered into it for some reason. I have to internalize that. I'm having nightmares and things like that. But it's very interesting. The denial is incredible. I won't accept the fact. It's like my sister. She doesn't really ever think she had a heart attack. She thinks she really had—she refers to it as—an event. She doesn't say she had a heart attack. And as I look at this thing that happened to me, it wasn't really a heart attack. It was just a little narrowing, and they opened it up before they [narrowed blood vessels] did anything.

Now, the fact of the matter is everybody dies. The only reason I went into the hospital [in] the first place was because I knew my mother had three silent MIs, my sister only had pain in her elbows, my aunt . . . everybody in the family has these and they don't even know they're having them. And so I thought, well, I don't want to be one of those that doesn't know. At least I want to know what's going on if there is some change coming about. So I knew that the threat was there, but it didn't feel like I was going to die. I keep internalizing that—internalizing and trying to make it click for me. Because if I don't make it click for me, I will die. That's it.

It's like Doctor X said. She said, well, if you don't change anything, the same thing will

happen again. It's as simple as that. And she's right. It will. I've got a bunch of other vessels that are waiting to close down, or one of them could drop off a piece of plaque. But [if] I would die early, I would be one of those in the family who died early. I'm trying to get hold of that, and even if it doesn't internalize, it doesn't seem that way. I know that I have to take steps to make my life different or I will die.

R: One of the interesting things about cardiac disease is that you can't see anything. And so it's very hard to incorporate that into your being. Nothing shows on the outside.

P: Nothing shows different. You know, it's interesting. Now, the nightmares. I'm thinking that—and I know what it is. I know there's this little stent in there, this little wire cage. And I don't know whether I was half-thinking it or half-dreaming that it came loose. They don't do that. But it came loose, or it went sideways and it blocked the artery and I woke up terrified that it would shut off the artery. It isn't something you can look at. You're right. It's the history. Even my complaints about the whole cardiac experience in the hospital are not that bad. When I came home, I was having, you know, you keep thinking what is this, what is this, is there something going on? And I think, maybe that's a pain, maybe that's it. And by the time I go to find my nitroglycerin, the pain is gone. And I got, and I thought, when I came home, I had trouble with asthma. Now I don't know whether that was asthma, as I look at it, or whether I was having some kind of an anxiety attack. Because I never had asthma. I was given albuterol for coughing. When I got home, I was coughing, and so I took some albuterol and was having premature ventricular contractions. Now that scared the bejeebies out of me. So I called the doctor, and they told me to stop the albuterol and they put me on Cardizem, which slows down the heart and takes the sensitivity away, so I did that then I went off that and went on Flovent, which is a cortisone type of medication. They didn't want me to take albuterol again. Finally, the funny stuff stopped. I took the Flovent for a week or so, and I didn't want to take it. I know, it's such a miniscule amount I was told to take. I mean it's topical. It doesn't get into your system at all. But somewhere in my head I was thinking you don't heal well when you're on cortisone preparations, and I wanted those stents to heal because I was only going to be on blood thinners for a month and I wanted to make sure the healing took place in that period of time.

So anyway, I tried to avoid it, but I had to take it. I couldn't breathe. I was coughing, coughing, coughing. I took it for about a week—two puffs a day—and the coughing stopped. I took the medication down to one puff a day; then I stopped it entirely. I've been off it ever since. But I don't know whether it was asthma or whether I was having an anxiety attack because the worst coughing attack I had was when I came home. I sat there and started coughing. I could hardly breathe, and I didn't know whether it was the cat or what it was. I noticed when I sat here for the whole week you think I would have spent most of my time in the garden. Usually, I'm out there fussing around in the garden in my

free time. But I didn't do it. I didn't finish pruning the roses on the fence because I was home alone and I was afraid. I was going to tell you I called the doctor to change the prescription to get the Flovent instead of the other medication. He asked if I had been having any chest pain. I said, I get this funny little twinge, but I'm not sure what it is. By the time I find the nitroglycerin... He said wait a minute. I don't care what you get. He was one of those guys and I thought, oh, all right. He was serious enough about it. He said no matter what it is to take a nitroglycerin and take myself over to the emergency room. So I thought maybe there is more here. Or maybe I'm not hearing what they say. Because I thought it was a done deal—you had the stents put in and that was the end of it.

So I didn't do much that week. Actually, it was like being on a retreat. I read my books, I looked out the window, and I fussed a little in the backyard. I just love to be alone. I could be a hermit very nicely. But I didn't do much of anything. Usually while my partner and son are gone, I do some huge project, paint this or do that, but this time I didn't. And shortly after they came back, we were supposed to go to Rio Vista, and of course I wasn't going to go. And what I'm finding is that I'm treating myself like I'm frail. I got the flu while I was there, and that was worse yet. Everybody was waiting on me, making my bed and bringing me ginger ale. And you know, I'm locking into this sick role. I'm thinking, why am I doing this? Usually I hate that. But I didn't go places. We usually go to the same places, but I didn't walk this time. I didn't go downhill, and I didn't walk along the ocean this time. I stayed on the top, and I watched them do it. So I'm thinking to myself, I've got to stop this crap because somewhere I'm incorporating frailty into this. And I don't know whether I'm scared because I'm listening to them or if it is something else.

I guess it's because everybody's watching. You see, that's it. I didn't want to get down the hill and not be able to get back. I signed up for cardiac rehab to get over this. I've got to make sure my insurance covers it. The doc wanted me to go to rehab. She said some people have good luck with it. I think it will be good because I haven't gotten on my bicycle yet either. I'm afraid to be out there without somebody to be with me, although I have my little telephone. I don't even know how far I can go. It's very interesting. I think part of my reaction is at an unconscious level.

Appendix B

Participant 1: Veteran's Study

Chapter 12

Face-to-Face Interview

R = Researcher

P = Participant 1

Researcher: A. S.

P: Basically, I come from a middle-class family—very patriotic, God fearing, and religious. We were a very loving family and continue to be. I have three brothers and one sister. May father is dead. My mother died in her 80s. We all [get] together for a family reunion at least one time a year.

I left home at 16. I worked a couple of years at menial jobs—well, not necessarily menial but low paying. I worked as an orderly in a hospital, and that's how I became exposed to the nursing profession and decided to pursue that. I was 21 years old when I was first licensed as a nurse. Now that I'm 50, I have a long history of nursing in there. This was back in the 1960s. I worked one year at a veteran's hospital in the city of X, where I was exposed for the first time to veterans, people who had been to wars. Primarily, there were elderly World War I people, some middle-aged World War II people, and a few Korean veterans thrown in. And I was pretty much interested in listening to them talk about their experiences and all that, so in 1966 when the government finally made a commitment to Vietnam, sending lots of men and women and materials, I volunteered to go. Well, kind of volunteered. I was one step ahead of the draft. So I volunteered to go. I did basic training at Fort Sam Houston in Texas, a six-week wonder. I came out as a second lieutenant and was immediately sent to Vietnam.

I . . . most of the time I was there I worked in transport and an evacuation hospital. We went out in helicopters and picked up people from aide stations, which were pretty much . . . it's hard to say because there were really no defined lines. The lines could change every day, two to three times a day, but the aide stations were in the areas of conflict. We would transport the most seriously wounded back to Saigon, which was about 75 miles away and the less seriously injured back to the evacuation hospital, which was about 25 to 30 miles away. Let's see . . . I was pretty young—21 years old—and very patriotic and gung ho, and thought that we had every right to be there and doing what we were doing.

I was very much anti-Vietnamese like most of the soldiers always feel about their enemies. I guess during the time I was there I started to become aware at little nips at my conscience —inconsistencies—but don't think that I paid much attention to them. There was too much going on to have really given a lot of thought to that. And I'm not sure that it's not some sort of unconscious mechanism that keeps you from looking at what you're doing and evaluating it. I don't know if it's because you don't want to or you choose not to. I'm not sure. It's pretty hard when you're in the middle of something to be evaluative while you're doing it. I actually can't say that my experience there was all that bad. I was young and kind of enjoyed that experience. I think it's the most maturing thing I've ever done in my life to be there and realize that people would want to kill me! As far as I know, I never killed anybody else even though we had to carry weapons at times. I never shot at anyone—not on purpose anyway. It was a strange time in my development.

A lot of things that I hold sacrosanct, such as the value of human life, I guess I saw that diminish. I was there from 1966 to 1967 during the Tet Offensive when the North Vietnamese fought back and really won a great victory. I can remember in this one village, the village was called "Cu Chi," after they had been routed, there were dead Vietnamese, these were South Vietnamese, killed by the Vietcong, and they were stacked along the road like racks of firewood, and I can remember not having any emotion about that. It was just like "Hey, this is war!" This is what kind of happens. So that kind of confused me because before that the thought of someone dying would send me into some sort of scurrying behavior. Working in a hospital, if someone is dying, you really get concerned and upset about that. And I just really didn't feel anything about that. Like this was all well and good —that's the way thing[s] should be in war. It was a strange feeling. And if I remember correctly, most of the people around me didn't show any emotion about that either. In fact, there was a lot of jocularity. "Well, that is one less 'gook' we have to worry about." That was a common name for the Vietnamese—"gooks"—so let's see. . . .

For a while then, I worked in an evacuation hospital. They kind of rotated you from job to job. The strange thing is these were Quonset huts set up like hospital units and there were . . . we would have three kinds of people in there at one time, which was strange. We would have wounded American soldiers, we would have wounded South Vietnamese soldiers, and we we'd have wounded Vietcong or North Vietnamese. So we kind of depersonalized those people. I remember when we would give a report to an oncoming shift we would talk about our soldiers, use their names and stuff like that. I remember when giving a report on a North Vietnamese or a South Vietnamese we would say Bed 12 or the "gook" in room such and such. It was a way of depersonalizing that person so you didn't have to feel for them. You couldn't communicate with them because you couldn't speak the language. You very seldom had a translator or interpreter around. What I do remember about these men was how stoic they were. I can't remember them asking for something to ease their pain, which as I think back they must have been in. At the same time,

unfortunately, I don't remember myself or any of the other nurses or doctors ever taking the initiative to find out if they were in discomfort.

The wounds of war can be terrible. I don't know. I never thought about that at the time. I don't remember ever giving a Vietnamese anything for pain. They were very stoic. I do remember one incident where I felt sorry for this Vietnamese person, and I don't remember if he was an enemy Vietnamese or a friendly Vietnamese. It's when he woke up after surgery and looked under the covers and saw that one of his legs was missing and he was crying. Being unable . . . I don't remember anyone, myself included, being able to comfort this person in any way. Hmm. . . . Then again, this would be abnormal behavior on the part of a medical person outside a war zone. We wouldn't let people suffer emotionally or physically the way we let these people suffer. At times there would be conflicts in the units because we would have these three groups of people. Some American soldiers or South Vietnamese would see that their enemy was in there—the North Vietnamese or Vietcong—and there would be conflict. We would always protect them from the other people. We would never allow our soldiers to physically abuse them, although I do remember a lot of verbal behaviors, threats, and all, but I never saw any physical violence.

There was never a question about who would get care or who would get supplies as they were needed. Always, the Americans or the Australians came first. There was an Australian division next to ours, and they would wind up in our hospital. Ah . . . they always got priority of care and supplies. Generally, there was enough to go around. So ah . . . I recall one incident where I didn't make the choice but a choice was made to take a North Vietnamese off a ventilator and use it for an American solider because it was the only one available. That is the only time I remember that kind of decision being made. Most of the time was more of a case of benign neglect of their needs, to see if they really did want or need something. Sometimes I can remember the South Vietnamese interrogation team came into the hospital to interrogate the Vietcong, and I can remember at times they took the people out of the hospital. I can only imagine what happened to them. They would take them out. They said they were going to take them to another hospital, but I'm sure they were taken and interrogated or even killed. But again, at the time, in all reality that didn't bother me. It was war, and they were just faceless people. They were just another North Vietnamese to me. [Pause]

Like I said, there were times when it would slip into my consciousness [that] I would think about the inconsistencies. It was not only the treatment of the Vietnamese that bothered me but there was a hierarchal system within the American army system. I was an officer, so I had a lot more privileges than did the basic soldier. They would have to work a 12- to 18-hour shift at a stretch whereas officers did not. They were the "grunts," but that's the military. That's consistent worldwide with military everywhere. I'm trying to think about my peers, to think back to see if we had any discussions about what was going on. I don't

recall any. I really don't know anything about how other people were feeling while they were there, if they were having any problems with what they were seeing or not. It amazes me how comfortable you can get in that situation. You get up and go to work, and it just doesn't seem to bother you a great deal. I guess that's part of the whole human adaptation that goes on. You just adapt to the surroundings. But life took on an almost normal feel at the time. You had parties. At times, the big concern was where are we going to get enough beer. Or can we trade some penicillin to another group for some whiskey or something like that. We never thought that maybe some other group needed that medicine.

R: Were you ever attacked? Did you ever feel in any danger when you were there?

P: Do you mean the compound or the hospital itself? The hospital itself came under fire very often and there were people killed in the encampment. When fire did come, we had to move patients out of their beds onto the floor on their mattresses. The buildings, the Quonset huts, were made out of tin, and when a shell would hit, there would be shrapnel flying around. But we never moved the North Vietnamese. They stayed in their beds. Americans went on the floor on their mattresses out of the line of fire. [Pause] Some of the other inconsistencies were that during the day we allowed Vietnamese to come into the encampment to work, clean up the place and that kind of thing. You don't know if at night they went out and put on their black pajamas and became Vietcong. It's like in the daytime you are okay. We can see you. We don't know who you are at night, that kind of thing.

I stayed there for a year. In retrospect, it was not a terrible year. It went very fast. It was very maturing for me. Um . . . it was in 1967 that I came back. That was when the peace movement was starting to be heard very vocally. I remember my first stop after Saigon was the San Francisco Airport. They made us take off our uniforms and change into civilian clothes because people in the airport were throwing things at the soldiers coming back from Vietnam and calling them murderers and things like that. That made me really mad. I thought I had gone over there and taken part in something all well and good, and how could they treat us like that? Over the years, my feelings about that have changed. It was senseless for us to have been there. It's hard to lose your patriotism. It's hard to give that up. What I think that the experience did to me is give me the motivation to do something. I was maybe 22 or 23 by then. I don't remember which, but by then I had formulated plans of what I wanted to do when I was discharged. I came back to X to finish my [military] time out there. I applied to the university and received a bachelor's and master's in nursing. I was very busy. I worked part-time and went to school. I was really too busy to think about that whole experience. I just put it on the back burner and went on with my life. I really, at this point can say that there weren't any major negative affects of the war on my life. It's hard to know over the years how my feelings about war and killing have changed. It's hard to say what caused the change—whether it's a maturation process or whether it was just becoming aware of all the inconsistencies and feeling the futility of war. I normally have

avoided situations where I would bring this stuff back into consciousness. I have never gone, never went to watch a movie about Vietnam. Those never had any appeal to me at all. I don't know why they don't appeal. I never tried to maintain any friendships with any of the people who I knew in Vietnam. I got out of the military. I knew I never wanted any more of that, so I got out. When I got out of the military, I severed that relationship completely. It's almost like that it was a part of me that I find almost difficult to recall. It's like that experience was part of me, it's over with, and it's gone. It's something that I seldom ever think about and less ever talk about.

When I think about the impact of the war on me, it was a positive one. It seems strange to say that war can have a positive impact. I met some people in Vietnam, motivated people, and it kind of motivated me to go on to school. [Pause] I would say if I had to put any kind of weight on it, it was probably more positive than negative. It was a maturational process. I probably would have matured anyway, but this was kind of instant maturity. I was still angry when I got out of the military. This was 1967, and the peace movement was big. I was in college, and I would get angry with the student marchers, groups, and stuff like that. There were still soldiers over there, and I know that it hurt them to watch that, to see the news and all of that. Now looking back, as I said before, I admire the marchers. At the time, I was seeing them from my viewpoint—a patriot—and they were seeing the war from their viewpoint—"this is all wrong." So looking back now, I admire those people who at the time had more insight into that situation than I did at the time. It was wrong.

R: Let's talk about that a little bit. There are two things I'm interested in. One is that war is a maturing experience, certainly understandable. Can you say more about that? Then I'd like to know more about the looking back and the change in perspective about war that has occurred with time.

P: I guess the maturity came from learning how to set priorities. Ah, being very self-reliant, learning to speak up for myself. [Pause] Along with a maturing experience, it was also a hardening experience. I think I learned during that situation not to be so sensitive about things, people suffering, the human condition, because if you allow yourself to be that way when you are in that kind of situation I don't think you could function very well. Maybe it did harden my sensitivity to people suffering, to pain, death, those kinds of things. Ah . . .

R: You went into the war, like other friends of mine, with a pro-military background and totally accepting of the American government. Okay, what happened to that in this?

P: If I follow your train of thought, I was able to separate myself being an American from the government imposition of war on the people. It changed me as an American. It now and was the beginning of a process. . . . Back then I felt that the government would do the right thing, that our leaders would always do what was best for our country, and at that time what was best for our country was supposedly good for the world. We were riding high then. I guess that I lost that naivety. . . . Well you should turn over all that personal power

to the government, that those people up there in Washington would always to the right thing. So that was part of the maturational process. My two older brothers were also in Vietnam. I was there at the same time as one of them. It is interesting that over the years that Vietnam has never been a topic of discussion. Ah . . . they've gotten on with their lives and have been successful. It is not something that we reminisce about at all. Again, I'm not sure what that means. I'm not sure if that means that it was something that we are not proud of or something that is history and not worth bringing up.

R: You got on with your life in one sense?

P: That's the phrase I like to use: "Just get on with life." It's one stepping-stone and you go on. It's really hard for me to say how it impacted my life. It's been almost 30 years. And things happen along that continuum of life that make me who I am now, and so it is hard for me to directly relate who I am now to that experience; I really can't.

R: Say more about that. I'm not trying to pin an impact of the war upon you. As you say, it is only one set of events. But as you look back now, where does it fit in to the additional steps that you took?

P: I think it was a stepping-stone for me, a motivator to maybe try to fulfill my life as well as I could. Maybe I saw the futility that life can lend. I'm not sure, but I think of that experience as a springboard.

R: Would you have sprung into the university otherwise?

P: You know, I doubt it.

R: Why?

P: I don't know. I was quite content with my level of education. I don't know if I would have stayed that way. I could have moved on. I think it was some of who I met in the military.

R: Nurses?

P: Yes, I admired them. I thought that they were very competent, the higher-ranking officers, the older people who had been in the Army Nurse Corps much longer than me. At the same time, I didn't want to emulate them. There was something about being a career officer that didn't appeal to me. There was something about the way they approached life, their attitudes about life that did not appeal to me.

R: And what was that?

P: I think that they gave over the decision making for their lives to someone else. I'd always hear them talking about, "I don't know where the army will send me next." And I thought I know where the army will not send me next because I will make the decisions about where I go and where I live. There was a certain hardness about them. That's not categorical. There were some really good people, but in general, the career people were more interested in

what this experience in Vietnam would do for their careers more than anything else. It was a great opportunity to get promoted. I went from second lieutenant to captain in two years, which in a time of peace would take ten years. Now it would probably take 15 years to get anywhere. And for many of the career officers who had been majors or colonels since the Korean War, this was an opportunity to get their long-awaited promotions. They did all kinds of things. I remember a couple of men, they were physicians, the men were all in the tents they slept in, and we were having a discussion one night. One man cut his foot somehow, and he was wondering if he could get a purple heart for this because everyone was out to get as many medals and accommodations as they could get, and I thought, I remember thinking there are people who are getting their legs blown off and their eyes blinded and who will get a purple heart, and you're thinking about a purple heart for a cut on your foot that you probably did out of carelessness. But again, they were looking at how the war would help out their careers.

R: Did that kind of thing shake you up in terms of the military?

P: Absolutely, absolutely. Hmm . . . a lot of wheeling and dealing went on, including a lot of black marketing, especially in medical supplies. That used to bother me. Like I said, they used to trade a case of antibiotics for something else, a case of beer or something like that.

R: So despite the good care they were giving, they were doing other things too.

P: Well, you say good care. That's relative also. I can remember times when the doctors and nurses would be so drunk that they didn't know what they were doing. However, that was the exception and not the rule.

R: So why did you stay in nursing when you got out?

P: I was a nurse already.

R: But you could have shifted into something else when you went back to school.

P: I could have. That part I didn't have any problem with. I thought that there was room in nursing for anything you wanted to do. That experience didn't shake that part of it. Again, because that was just one experience. Vietnam was one experience, one year of my life. It really didn't change my professional focus.

R: One of the things that J. spoke about with one of her students who studied Vietnam nurses was that people were upset in their professional hearts because they were saving people to go back to battle. The severely wounded, the very hurt were allowed to die, which is the reversal of the usual medical way of treating the worst off first.

P: Again, that is the military way. The goal of military medicine is to return people back to the position they came from, be it a foot soldier, a pilot, whatever. So there would be situations after a bad battle or attack where our hospital would be inundated with 150, 250, 300 people, and there was a definite triage that went on in that people were shunted to different

treatment areas. People were kept comfortable; they were given narcotics to ease their pain. I think there were six operating rooms, and there might be a backlog of 100 people. And those people who were severely injured never went into the operating room. They were allowed to die. I wasn't part of that triaging. I'm trying to think how I would have reacted. I think that I would have been okay with that. Again because it was the "military way."

R: Let's go on. After you were discharged, you say you took the next step with your education and went back for a nursing degree. Can you recapture some of the things that went on in the university around 1967, 1968, and 1969?

P: I was pretty busy most of the time. I went to school full-time, and I worked part-time. I never took part in any of those demonstrations, if that is what you mean. At the same time, I don't remember feeling.... After a time, I began to feel that they were really right. I never supported the demonstrations. At the same time, I was never negative about them.

R: Why did you think they were right?

P: Um.... In the late 1960s, early 1970s it became apparent not just to me but the whole nation that we had been caught up into something that was . . . unavailable and that was peace. We would have all these false stops and starts, treaties, stop firing and start up again. Then the political situation in Washington, we were committing billions of dollars, and yet our social system was breaking down here in the States. I think I thought more about it being wrong in those terms as opposed to the wrongness of people dying. I thought the war was causing social unrest and upheaval, an impact upon our country. And I think at the time to me that was more wrong than what we were doing to those people over there because I still kind of depersonalized them, the Vietnamese.

R: And what were the specifics of what you saw that made you feel that way?

P: I can't remember the specifics. I'm trying to think about what was going on here economically, but I think that it was more that needed social reform was not going on here. I remember that the age of students was going down and inflation was going up. I remember that I was starting to have a hard time living on the money I was earning. I can't think of anything specific. Mostly I led an insulated life. I was living my own little life and really wasn't aware of the whole big picture.

R: Why did you say the social order was breaking down?

P: That was the rioting. I remember the 1970s and Kent State because I was still in college at the time, and I remember a lot of demonstration[s] on our campus and thinking how could we turn that way on our own people and shoot them? I had some sympathy for those who were caught up in that situation. That may have been one of the turning points in my attitude about government. I'm not sure. I was losing more and more confidence in the government.

R: Did you have contact with other vets?

P: No, I really had no contact. I remember that there was a veteran's organization on campus, but I didn't have any desire or time to be part of that. It wasn't cool to be a vet at that time. I can remember in some of the classes, sociology classes, that the topic of Vietnam would come up, and I never volunteered and I never spoke up. Absolutely, I never would, I never wanted to be identified in any way as a Vietnam vet. I was a little older than most, and I was taking Soc. 101 with kids 18, and they were all worried about the draft and the unfairness of it all. I never opened up myself to any of that.

R: And yet your attitudes about the government were changing.

P: It was a gradual shift. I started losing confidence in the government. [Pause] Again, I can't see where any governmental policies were having any great effect on my life because I was really focused on what I was doing, and I was doing okay. But remember at the time that the Head Start program was disbanded because there wasn't enough money to fund it; everybody was talking about all the money going to pay for the war and that things were not being taken care of at home. I remember in one class that there seemed to be general disapproval of the government in the classroom. People were negative about the government. It was starting to get to me. I hadn't yet lost all my confidence. You might say it was slowly eroding. It's hard to say because where I lived was home to one of our major presidents, and it is hard to be negative when you respect these people. It's hard to let go of that respect.

R: The war went on and on, and you went on with life.

P: Yes, the war went on until 1975, but you can draw a curtain on a part of your life. I did not spend a lot of time thinking about it. I can remember how excited I would get at times when they said they had reached a truce and the fighting was going to stop. The next day it would start over again. I don't recall having any negative feelings about the Vietnamese per se though at this time because I was losing confidence in the government. I thought we were just as much the blame as they were. And then I started thinking that maybe we should get out.

R: Was this early or later?

P: It was later. One thing I can remember doing, they would publish the name in the paper of soldiers who had been killed. I always read the names to see if there was anyone on the list that I knew. [Pause] But as far as trying to keep up with the day-to-day happenings of what was going on with the war, I did not. As for the peace talks in Paris, I remember them going on, but I don't remember being that interested in them. I think that like most Americans I felt that we got out with our tails between our legs and I think that was when I really made the decision for myself that war is futile and nobody wins. And I think there was some anger toward the government because they never really committed themselves to

the war. And I remember how the government would never call it a war. It was the Vietnam Conflict. They would never come out and call it a war because Congress never declared war. And so it was a play on words: war versus conflict.

R: What about Cambodia?

P: That was going on all the way through because the place where I was stationed Cu Chi, was only 75 miles from the Cambodian border. It was not unusual to go into Cambodia because in those countries there is not a well-defined border. It was more like behind this tree is Cambodia, behind that one is . . . it was not news to us that they had been in Cambodia.

R: Tell me more about the time after leaving the military.

P: I graduated with a master's degree in the early 1970s and took a teaching position in a school of nursing. I taught for 20 years after that. That must have been pretty much the right decision at the time because the career lasted. I stayed at the university and went on and got my doctorate mostly because it was being required for teaching and tenure. By then, I was ready for a move and left the state I was teaching in and came here.

R: Have you been to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall? And did it have any impact on you?

P: The wall itself did. I went to Washington just to see it, and I remember becoming very overcome emotionally with the wall. I went specifically to look for someone's name, someone I had known who was killed, and when I found the name, I remember a real rush of emotion. At the same time, I think that it was probably for me a cleansing experience. After I had been there, seen it, and expressed my emotion, that was the end of it. I didn't have any lingering problems with it.

R: And so the whole wall experience, so to speak, centered around the person you were looking for?

P: It seemed to be that way. If I were to conceptualize that and say one incident that characterized that whole situation, that name would have been it. It was finding that name on the wall.

R: Describe that day for me.

P: I remember it was a cold day in Washington that morning. It had been raining earlier that morning. I was sloshing around that part of Arlington. I couldn't quite find the wall, and so I had to ask someone. I remember that the person I asked didn't have any idea where the wall was, and I remember thinking that is strange. Then when I finally found the wall it was completely deserted. I thought there would be hordes of people around, but there wasn't. I was the only person at the wall at that particular time. I remember looking at the

represent, which I forgot already, and I remember looking at it from different angles and just sitting there. There are some benches and a table with something like a history book. It kind of helps you find the name of the person you are looking for, what part of the wall their name is on. I remember flipping through that. I don't remember any special emotions at that moment. Then I found out where the name of the person was supposed to be. I went over to the wall, and when I got a little closer, there was evidence of people having been there. There were mementos and flowers. That was a little more encouraging because I think that I was disappointed that there weren't more people around, that there wasn't more an expression of grief because in a cemetery there are all sorts of monuments and stuff. To me, I thought it should be "the monument!" In retrospect, it was probably no more important than the monuments to the World War persons who died. But to my mind, it should have been outstanding. There should have been bands playing, people there, all that kind of stuff. But there wasn't. It was actually lonely. It was lonely. I don't remember any specific emotions after I left. It was one of those things that I wanted to do, and that was that.

R: What about all the attention Vietnam now is getting?

P: I find it very interesting that Vietnam is opening up a tourist trade. They want our people to come there. And people are going back to see where they were at. It's kind of like that if you can't fight them, join them kind of thing. To be quite honest, I would like to go back. I think mostly out of curiosity. I don't think that I am looking for anything specific or trying to solve any leftover problems. I think it is curiosity that drives me. I think it would give me a picture of how futile it all was because nothing has really changed. They are still there, and we are still here. Nothing much has changed. Um . . . I don't have any animosity toward the Vietnamese whatsoever. I think the war was something imposed on the people, and they had no choice in fighting. Of course, they had a history of occupation for many years. And their loyalties are to whoever is in power. That's how they adapt and survive. I have no problem with that.

R: How do you feel toward the Vietnamese living here?

P: Not a great deal. I've taught a great number of Vietnamese students. I did go to their Tet festival one year. What I found so interesting was that the Vietnamese children who were born here, the children of the immigrants were about six feet tall, and their parents about this tall. We always think about Vietnamese people being so small. They are small there for one reason, and it's the diet. I just found it funny to see all those tall Vietnamese kids walking around. I have a lot of admiration for the Vietnamese who have come here and made successes of their lives. They've gone on with their lives.

R: Did you even have a close friend that died in the war? And have you read any books or novels about this war or other wars?

P: No, I didn't. The person who died there died after I came back, and he was the brother of a friend. So that was the closest that I came to having someone who actually died. As for books, I've read a couple of funny, lighthearted ones. There are two books. One is called *The Tunnels of Cu Chi*. It was a story about how the Vietnamese dug tunnels. That's why we could never get them out. They lived in those tunnels. Since I was in Cu Chi, that was interesting to read. I read one that was almost a farce on Vietnam. It was called *The Book That Picks Up Bullets*. It was basically biographical. It's pretty funny, about the absurdities of war. I know there are many books out there, but I have no desire to read them. There are no heroes out of that war.

R: Did you carry any images with you when you went off to war?

P: I don't know if I did or not. My family did not have a military background—patriotic yes, but not military. And my brothers went after me, so I didn't have any preconceived ideas about military life.

R: What you are saying in summary then is that the war hit a boy in his early 20s and that it was a maturing experience. It made you grow up fast in certain ways. It doesn't seem to have crippled you because you've had a good career since. On the other hand, you've sealed off certain things.

P: I'd say that I sealed them off, yes. I don't think, personally, I don't think that the war has been a negative in my life.

R: I'd like to return for a moment to the life in the evacuation hospital. In your mind, or structurally, was there any distinction made between the North Vietnamese and the South Vietnamese in how they were treated?

P: They were treated differently. I remember that there would always be a contingent of the South Vietnamese Army that would come to the hospital and talk to their soldiers and bring them little gifts—things like that. Of course, there was no one to visit the Vietcong except the interrogators from the South Vietnamese. But we did give more attention to the South Vietnamese, the friendly Vietnamese as we called them. Again, we had difficulty being able to communicate with either group because we couldn't speak their language. So sometimes what looked liked neglect ...I think in my own mind it is just that we weren't able to do as much as we would have wanted to. But it was a hospital, and we gave care as best we could. There was not much of a military feel inside the place because there were no guns in there.

R: When you went to the wall, why did you look for that person?

P: Well, he was the brother of someone I was close to. I draw a corollary on that. As I told you before, I'm going to Washington in October because the AIDS quilt is going to be displayed there, and I see a lot of corollaries between the quilt and the monument. And I'm

going for the same reason. My lover died last year of AIDS, and he has a quilt panel we did, and I think a lot of it is the same type of cleansing experience that maybe I was looking for when I went to the wall.

R: During the war and your time in the hospital, did you begin to have a kind of distancing not only from the army but from what was going on, some doubt about what was going on? At age 21 or 22 to be able to differentiate yourself, how were you able to do that?

P: I think mostly in my spare time, my free time I started giving a lot of thought to things that I wanted to do when I left Vietnam like places that I wanted to visit, where I wanted to live, where I wanted to go to school—things like that. I think that this futuristic orientation kind of helps you separate from the reality of the situation that you're in. I thought more about the future than the present.

R: Is it also a reflection of maturation even if it is somewhat defensive?

P: I think so. I think anyone who did not deal with anything beyond that day . . . I just think that they would have more difficulty dealing with that. . . . I could see. . . . And probably by formulating my plans about the future also subconsciously did tell me that I had a future, that I was not going to die, that I was going to get out.

R: Were there any individuals that you would be willing to mention that played a role in the shift in your life, or was maturation all an internal process for you?

P: Well, there were individuals both on a personal and professional level. At the university, when I returned I certainly met some exciting people, teaching and those kinds of things. One of the things I had forgotten to mention, left out . . . I don't know if it is important.... When I was in Vietnam, I came to grips with the fact that I was gay. And I met someone when I was there, and so it is kind of interesting. It was an exciting time for me. I came to grips with who I was. This same person who was there in Vietnam with me, we ended up moving to X together and lived together for six years. So there is that both on a personal and professional level that helped mold me. I've often wondered why it happened there. Maybe it was the freedom there, and maybe it was there may not be a tomorrow. You better experience today. My lover was drafted into the army, whereas I joined. He stayed out until they drafted him. He was not there by choice. But he was more professionally oriented. I can remember he was more concerned about conditions in the hospital than I was—things that he saw that could be done better, how people behaved. I think he was somewhat of a role model for me.

R: Did he share the curtain?

P: Again, you'd think that two people who had been through that experience and lived together for six years would talk. But I don't remember us ever [having] a discussion [about] that part of our lives. We just kind of moved on, and that was it.

R: I have another question. Given AIDS and all that it has stirred up, do you see any relationship between this and the war, or are these separate events?

P: No, I think . . . I consider the fight against AIDS a war. The people who are most affected are mostly young men. So you can draw that kind of corollary between a war zone and the people who are dying around the world from this disease. Also, I think that what we've seen we have these dichotomies very severe, very distinct, and those people who are very pro as far as winning this war against disease. You have other people who don't really care. And the same thing [can be said] about the war. You have those people who want to get in there and do all the right things, and you had people who didn't care. Socially, I think that there are a lot of relationships and similarities between the two. And I don't have any more confidence in the government committing themselves this way than to their commitment to winning the Vietnam War. I've been so touched by AIDS that I can't separate that. I guess I'm more antigovernment because of AIDS than I've ever been.

R: A lot of veterans who came back from Vietnam eventually became converted by the demonstrations and are still angry and upset because their own efforts were discounted.

P: You know, I think that any soldier can say that about any war because it has not made that much difference—that about all the countless wars, all the people who died. Is the world any better because of their deaths? I think not. Look at what's going on now. I would like to think that everyone who died, who made the effort, who gave up something made a difference. I'm no longer able to say those kinds of things are worthwhile. I don't think that they have any lasting value for society. Apparently, we don't learn from them.

Appendix C

Participant 2

Chapter 13

The interviews in Appendices C and D were obtained with veterans by contacting a website on the Internet as explained in Chapter 13. These interviews represent answers to questions that arose during analysis of the interview in Chapter 12. The questions were posed as part of theoretical sampling. Only parts of the interviews were used in the Chapter 13. The entire interviews can be found here.

Part 1: Electronic Correspondence/Questionnaire

Dear Participant 2,

I was so happy to receive a reply from you, and I can see from the dates that you gave me that you were there in the thick of things.

If we were doing a face-to-face interview, I would ask you to tell me your story about Vietnam and sit back and listen. But since we are not face-to-face, I will give you some topic areas and you can take it from there, adding or deleting as you see fit. I may ask you after you respond (if you continue to choose to do so) some follow-up questions based on what you said for clarification.

First, it would be good to get a couple of lines of background information on you—when you went to Vietnam, such as your age, something about your family relationships, if you have siblings and if they served, and if they were patriotic and supportive.

Thanks,

J. C.

R = Researcher

P = Participant 2

Researcher: J. C.

P: I was 21 when I went to Vietnam. I came from an average southern family in X—my father being a schoolteacher, coach, and athletic director. My mother was a homemaker, and I had one sister 19 months younger than me. I wasn't married or engaged. My father was a World War II combat veteran flying 50 combat missions on a B24 out of Toretta, Italy. My family was supportive of my choices, not necessarily the war in Vietnam.

R: Did you volunteer, or were you drafted?

P: I was a volunteer as all marines were when I entered service in 1964. I did not serve with any draftees in Vietnam.

R: What was your role: combatant or noncombatant?

P: I was a combat marine rifleman also certified in 3.5-inch rocket launchers.

R: Describe something of what it was like for you to be there, to be engaged in battle (if you were), to be fighting, and how were the enemy. (This is really the heart of it.)

P: The Vietcong were a very well-trained and disciplined military force that gained footholds in local villages by terror, killing, and torture. Marines like myself were extensively trained to follow orders, no question why or the politics of the situation. I could and would kill without hesitation as that was my job and I was trained to do just that. It doesn't take long for one to get into the grove seeing his friends wounded and killed. The killing becomes a habit and self-defense as time goes on and you survive. Marines fight for other marines and the corps, not necessarily the cause.

R: Did you feel supported while you were there, and how did it feel to come home to all the antiwar movement?

P: I was always supported when I served. There were a few of us who did not want to be there, but no one wants to be in a life-or-death situation in combat if they have a choice. As far as the antiwar movement was concerned, that's one of the reasons GIs fight: the right of free speech, right to protest, and right to live free. However, when that movement attacks GIs due to their choice to serve, call them baby killers just to mention one name, and to have never served this country in any way with the exception of running their mouths about things they know not or never will know anything about, I detest to this day and to my grave. These groups will be the downfall of the United States as we know it. The antiwar movement did nothing but gain a dishonorable peace and disrespected 58,000 Americans who paid the ultimate price for the rights of its citizens. The GIs of the Vietnam War were treated like traitors to the student and activist antiwar movement of that era. That should never again happen to an American GI.

R: Would you describe the experience as a maturing experience, a bad experience?

P: Maturing? I considered it a surviving experience.

R: Did having been in the war impact the rest of your life in any way?

P: Every combat veteran, and some who were not, is affected for a lifetime by the killing, carnage, loss of friends and family. Some carry the burdens easier than others. Outwardly anyway.

R: Like I said, basically I want your story as you are looking back on it today.

P: In closing, I joined the U.S. Marine Corps by choice out of state university. At that time,

we only had advisors in Vietnam. Myself as well as my entire unit did not join the corps especially for the Vietnam cause. I joined as John Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country." I wanted to give something back to the country and people I so love. Myself and tens of thousands of others were in the same boat when the leaders of this country who were elected by the people took us into the Vietnam cause. I'm a true American patriot and believe that those who choose to serve or are required to serve should do just that in an honorable way. Those who choose to attack us for our service, those who ran to other countries are not the foundation this country was built on. These attitudes carry to this day with many and never should have been tolerated or excused by the American people. The difference with Vietnam compared to World War II or World War I [is that] we weren't attacked by a foreign force. The GIs of all those eras are no different in their service to the United States. Just the cause.

R: I thank you so much for taking the time to do this. If you wish, I can let you see what I am doing with these materials. Also, when the book is finally finished, I can send you a copy. As I said, it is a methodology book, but I do need materials in order to demonstrate to students how you work with qualitative data.

Part 2: Electronic Correspondence/Questionnaire Follow-Up

Dear Participant 2,

In the first interview, which by the way was done with a good friend of mine, several themes came out, and I wonder if you could respond to them. I think in some way you have but wonder if you might say more. One is about the "culture of war" and how that conflicts with standard behavior. Because of that conflict, at times my friend had "pangs of conscience" about what he was seeing and doing. But the only way to survive that was to push those thoughts aside, see the enemy as the "enemy"—one who would kill you if given the chance, call them "gooks" to distance oneself from them being human, and just not talk about it. In fact, he had never talked about the war with anyone during or after the war up until the time of the interview. He just blended into the college campus when he returned home, avoiding all antiwar activities and discussions on campus.

Thanks,

J. C.

R = Researcher

P = Participant 2

Researcher: J. C.

R: Did any of that haunt you then or afterward, and how did you deal with it?

P: It has haunted me every day of my life. Not a day passes that I don't remember something about that era. I never mentioned or talked about Vietnam to anyone, including my wife of

37 years, until the late 1990s.

R: I guess what I'm getting at is that you say that you thought of [the war] as a survival experience, but what were those strategies that enabled you to survive?

P: Surviving the war was a matter of pure luck. You happened not to be in the wrong place at the right time. That was merely luck. You could not survive the war by being careful, a coward, or trying to stay in the rear with the gear. I know guys who served an entire combat tour without even a briar scratch, and then I knew others who were there less than 30 days and [were] nearly blown in half.

R: How did you deal with the death that was happening all around you?

P: Death and mutilation is all around you in war, and it becomes a matter of acceptance and habit. You mentally try to remove yourself from all the carnage and put your mind in another place and another time. Your mind spends hours upon hours at home in a warm, dry, clean, safe bed with family and loved ones. It's my opinion that marines were better trained than some of the other services to deal with the carnage—not better GIs but just better trained and much closer to each other.

R: How do you turn that off?

P: I was able to mentally remove myself from the carnage. I always felt if I dwelled on it and allowed it to consume me, I would be the next one hit.

R: Then and now?

P: Since Nam and now, I put it completely out of my mind with friends, family, and loved ones. I avoided drinking completely, as booze would bring on the most vivid mental attacks of rage, anger, and depression. I would not be talking about it today unless a great friend of mine through boot camp and Nam found me after 40 years and all the memories flooded back into my mind. Talking with a brother you served with is easy but not the general public. This guy was a machine gunner in my weapons platoon, and now we see each other regularly, which allows us to dump all the memories on each other, which is like taking a drug. I've been so lucky to have a woman in my life who never pushed the issue, never asked questions, held me quietly when the nightmares came, and gave me her unyielding support.

R: Just the name of your website intrigues me: "n.g.a."

P: N.g.a., as you have guessed, has to do with the ghost of war and Vietnam. The name popped into my head in 1996, [which was] 31 years after my Nam tour. Several dozen Nam vets used to gather at a website put up by a lady and Vietnam vet supporter who was never associated with a veteran or Vietnam in any way. It became too much for her to deal with over the years, so I put up a chat room and website to honor my unit and maintain contact with many Vietnam veterans I've met over the years. [It's] mostly marine combat vets, but we have a few others from other services including the air force, army, and navy who join us

weekly. We're a very tight-knit group and stay to ourselves for the most part. During our gatherings online, we try to avoid the ghost of Vietnam—therefore the name, n.g.a.

R: Another theme has to do with "the enemy"—who they are, how one thinks of them. Did you ever have any direct contact with the enemy, such as prisoners, and if so, what was that like?

P: The contact I had with the enemy was with the dead and dying. I watched several last breaths and can see each one today as I did then. We had intimate contact with ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam—South Vietnamese Army), which in some cases I'm convinced were Vietcong, the enemy. There were no differences in the Vietnamese friend or foe as far as the people were concerned. They were of a different culture and religion but human. I never view friend or foe as nonhuman or villains.

R: My friend was a medic and so at times had to "treat" the enemy, and this was difficult because they supposedly were "the enemy." Also, there was the fact that during the day Vietnamese were allowed into the base to do work, and all the while, you knew that these same people probably put on pajamas at night and took shots at you. So there was always this internal conflict and sense of distrust when dealing with Vietnamese people—even those from the south.

P: Like your medic friend, I did not trust any of the Vietnamese, friend or foe. You never knew what they were from one day to the next. Under the right pressure of being killed or tortured, your friend on Monday was your foe on Tuesday. They were still human, just the enemy. You depended on your GIs who came from the same land as you.

R: Would you say that the war hardened you, made you more sensitive and feeling, disillusioned you about war?

P: Unfortunately, war has become a necessary evil of the world, as there are cultures who want to murder us, each and every one. I'm not against war under the right circumstances, and Vietnam for sure did not make me a pacifist. I viewed myself as hard nosed before Vietnam: owned my first gun when I was seven and hunted alone before I was nine—things that your parents would go to jail for today. Not then. Vietnam showed me how many Americans really are in their attitudes about God and country. I learned they are all about themselves and will kill Americans to have their own way or force their views on society. Whatever one wants to call these people need to give this old GI a wide berth in life. If you want to brand that hardened, yes, I'm hardened. It's my feeling the elected leaders of this country should put GIs in harm's way only as a last resort. World War II was a last resort. I'll have to say, I'm not sure about Vietnam, Korea, or Iraq. The average American does not have the information at hand, as our elected leaders have to make the determination of war. History will prove whether these other wars made a difference in the world or the well-being of the United States. I wish I would be here for those answers. I detest seeing humans abused,

tortured, and killed now and before Vietnam. I think we are blessed as a country as well as a people, which puts us in a mind-set to help others. Is this a justification of war? I'm just not sure and don't have all those answers.

R: Have you been to the war memorial, and how did that affect you?

P: Yes, I've been my one and only time. No way I can explain how seeing those 58,000 names —many being GIs I served with as well as friends from high school and college—affected me. I will say I never want that feeling again.

R: Thank you again. I do appreciate your willingness to share some of the experience with me.

P: Ms. Corbin, in closing I just want to warn you if you don't already know that asking these questions of some Vietnam vets will bring on aggressive responses and sometimes verbal attacks including guys who patronize my website. I would say most of them as matter of fact. I choose and never have edited the message board, and the guys know it. We offered our lives for freedom of speech as well as all other GIs who have served. Who am I to censor free speech? I've tried to accommodate teachers and students like yourself over the years with basic input to enable those who were not involved to see the views of many—especially the views of veterans in a feeble attempt to create an understanding of their views. Just don't take it personal if some tell you to take a hike.

Appendix D

Participant 3

Part 1: Electronic Correspondence

A couple of weeks after the interview reported in Appendix C, I received a response from another veteran. This veteran did not participate in the Vietnam War—rather, he was in Bosnia. I used his interview because of the insight it provided into how some veterans feel both during and after participation in combat.

Hey J. C.,

I read your post at N.G. I am a Panama, Saudi, Bosnia veteran. I served with the U.S. Marines. What can I do for you?

Dear Participant 3,

I thank you for your response. I am interested in your war experiences. My interest in this topic started as I was looking through materials that I had at home to demonstrate to students for a text on qualitative research (3rd edition, SAGE) that I'm writing, and I found an interview with a Vietnam War veteran. I had it but had never really read it. You know you read something but don't really read it. After reading it, I became very interested in the war experience from the perspective of those who have to serve in those wars, the frontline soldiers. The subject now goes beyond the book because I think it is a story that can't be told enough. I've read some of the memoirs from Vietnam and frankly am astounded at what soldiers face and how little we know or understand what it is that they go through. So basically, I am asking any marine who will tell me, to tell me your war story, things like your background, then why you enlisted, what you did in the service, did you see battle, what was it like, how you lived through it, and how you now live with those memories—anything that you want to tell me or want others to know. I always remove any identifying information from my database. If you are still interested, let me know.

Thank you,

J. C.

R = Researcher

P = Participant 3

Researcher: J. C.

Part 2: Electronic Correspondence and Journaling

P: To start, here is an excerpt from my personal writings. Therapeutic in nature, no plans for them. It was a way to start the healing process. I am still working on that. It's more like an evolution. I will write more and send it as I do. Do you have a deadline? Ask me anything

you would like, and I will answer them as emotionally honest as I can.

One perspective of mine that helps me is that if you take for granted the freedoms you have and demand more, we defended the freedom so well that you do not have to lose sleep over it, or have to constantly think about it as others do in their countries. That in itself is a nice payment. Ask me anything you want. Part of healing is having to remember these things and process them, as we didn't have time for it when we were there. Don't try to protect me, and don't treat me as a child. If I can stand a post with an M16, I can handle what you would like to know. I am on my third marriage, I am a firefighter/paramedic now, and I am starting to enjoy life a lot. Even with all my quirks and even when the neighbors think that I am losing it by digging up the front lawn to build a series of ponds and waterfalls. I look forward to this, as no one has ever asked to hear my story. Thank you for taking an interest. Please leave my name and other things out, as I do not want to have any unfounded attention. I am just one of millions of men who have done this. We all did it as a team, and we all deal with it in our own ways.

I wasn't really shot; rather, I was hit with a hand grenade—just one tiny sliver that went through my right armpit area and collapsed my lung. Yes, it did hurt; one of the surprising aspects is that it felt very hot. After I healed, I went home to my pregnant wife and started to drink. In March 1990, my wife was in a motor vehicle accident and we lost [our] son. In August 1990, I went to Saudi. I had been promoted, and this time I was playing Dad to my troops. *Seasoned* is a good word for it. I wasn't scared; now it was a job. I could pick out the bad guys without hesitating. Keep the morale up, and keep my guys together. You don't get used to it; you act—then later it all comes back and you wonder why anyone would want to do it. You understand the big picture but the one-on-one with a guy who is no different than yourself. Raising a family, paying bills. They have pictures of [their] family in their wallet like you do. You are amazed at the amount of lead that is in the air flying all over that more people aren't hit. Being wounded actually made me less vulnerable; as you experience things in life, the less strange they seem to you or scary. I hope that makes sense. It makes me realize that life goes by faster [than] I initially thought when I believed that I had 80 years. I think it motivated me to live more of it. However, I did lose about 10 years with drinking a lot—something that I am actually pretty ashamed of because deep down that wasn't me. I was aggressive and belligerent. Not really in my nature so to speak. Bosnia . . . I am still not sure why we were there at all. There was no really defined mission. I miss my buddies who didn't come home and even those who did. That is what NG is all about. Vets talking to vets. My memorial to them is the waterfalls, to my buddies who didn't come home, and 343 firefighters who didn't come home on 9/11. My spirit took a long time to come home. Physically I was home in 24 hours. Emotionally and spiritually most of me is here. That I owe to my wife. Great girl teaching me how to live again; that's harder [than] anything I have ever done. Dying is the easy part.

Part 3: Electronic Correspondence—Follow-Up

Dear Participant 3,

Why the alcohol? What did it do for you? What did you carry back with you that was so painful? Would you have used alcohol in that way if you had not been a marine and gone to war?

Thank you,

J. C.

P: Why the alcohol? It was socially [acceptable]. My platoon would get together for some "beers" to forget and unwind. Then you wanted to forget faster so you started drinking Jack Daniels. It was easy. In hindsight, it did nothing for me but make it worse. Behavior problems, nightmares, and you could never quite drink enough to forget, although you tried. Everything was painful, what you did and to whom, what you saw was burned into your brain. Your buddies who did not come back you missed. You were constantly grieving and [angry]—[extreme] anger. You hated the world and wanted to kill it. But since you couldn't, it created internal stress like a steam boiler just about to blow up. I wouldn't have drank if I had not seen what I did, nor would I have drank if it wasn't the only "socially [acceptable]" form of a theorized relief. I didn't drink in high school and never had an interest in it. At 21, I had been in two wars, divorced, had a son killed, and was hundreds of miles away from home. I was too young to have a support network of friends and family, and I didn't have any idea how to process this emotionally. Physically, I was on U.S. soil, but spiritually and emotionally I never came home. Even though my body was 21, mentally I was about 50 to 60 in regards to experience of life. Everyone around me only saw a 21-year-old. In this society, if you're just a kid you aren't trusted with anything. I didn't come home until 2002.

Part 4: Electronic Correspondence—Follow-Up

R: Tell me more.

P: What I have found to be true is that a veteran goes through a grieving process—denial, bargaining, anger, and acceptance. After the "imprint of horror," a video is embedded into the memory of a soldier. The video often replays continually until the coping skills are exercised and the imprint is reduced. Anger stays as the primary emotion because this is where everything is stuck—anger at loss of life, loss of innocence, loss of the "fun years," loss of power, loss of any number of things. The average age of a service man is 18 to 25. What do you remember of those years, and why do you remember it? College, spring break, friends, all-nighters, etc.—these are fond memories in contrast of war for the veteran. The secret is to get the veteran to enable them to use coping skills they don't know they have because they were never taught to use them as you were with "critical thinking" in college.

Emotionally, *until* the veteran uses coping skills, they can't advance in emotional or cognitive age. They are stuck with thoughts, hormone imbalance, etc. Some need not only counseling but medication also to help maintain psychological homeostasis. I learned how to use coping skills with meds, counseling, support network of other veterans, and my wife. That's why I am finally back in college going after what I wanted to be 15 years after the normal age of doing that. Regret is another hang-up. Have you ever done anything that you regret because you didn't think it was you really doing it? Regret turns into confusion emotionally, and it in turn creates anger. It's a cycle that continues until you break it.

Part 5: Electronic Correspondence—Follow-Up

R: Why so much anger?

P: The anger comes from several avenues. It starts in boot camp. They are training you to protect, defend, and to kill if it comes to that.

They frustrate you, intimidate you, and irritate you because any sane person would not make you do the things that they do. Then if you do go to war and experience it, our anger splits, like an atom does, and creates heat. Anger is volatile. You are sent someplace to defend your way of life, to protect your country, her women and children, and her divine right to exist. You get mad because you don't understand why the [enemy] hates you because you're an American. It builds and builds because everything you were told as a child you have to protect. You are afraid it will be taken away. This adds to the anger. You do your job. You win, and you get to go home and everyone has been protected. No one loses sleep while I'm protecting you.

You come home and no one cares that you fought for them. They didn't feel the pinch, the lead flying around, the bullets, smell the death, smell diesel fuel, the napalm, the gun powder, the smells that are burned into the soldier's brain. Because they didn't experience it, nor did they actually feel that their liberties were in jeopardy, they don't think that you did anything for them. So their freedom was never really challenged in their eyes, so quit overreacting. You didn't do anything for me. This reaction from an ungrateful person adds to the anger. It continually compounds. Now remember you are still young and you do not have the coping skills because so much happened to you so fast that the coping skills are short-circuited in the process.

Now you begin to think it was a waste and your buddies died for nothing and you got shot for what? More anger. *You're* like an atomic bomb with its atoms splitting. It is a continual reaction. Add alcohol to this already-explosive mixture. You are in hell. You don't understand. You did it right. You were a marine and defended America. You did what you were supposed to do. Why does life hurt so bad, and why do I not want to be here anymore? You can't think it through. There is no logical thought pattern that will help you

put this together. Now add the hormones, the dopamine, the epinephrine; because you were in a constant state of excitement and fear, your hormones that flow in the brain to maintain emotional stability are all screwed up and stuck high. You can't process it now if you wanted to.

The anger is actually a chain of events. Then it goes to a chemical reaction in the brain, then add the Jack Daniels to this, the anger does not go away until one of these chains are broken. That's why it takes years to "come home."

I hope this answers the question for you. Take this info and help more guys to be able to "come home." You will help me by bringing all of us home.

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Index

About the Author

Juliet Corbin received her B.Sc. in Nursing from Arizona State University, her M.Sc. in Nursing from San Jose State University, and her PhD from the University of California, San Francisco. After completing her doctorate, she was a postdoctoral research fellow in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at UCSF for two years. She worked as a research associate doing grounded theory research with Dr. Anselm Strauss for 15 years. She retired from formal teaching in 1999 but continues to work with students on an individual basis, offers workshops on grounded theory methodology, and gives selected presentations. Dr. Corbin was a family nurse practitioner, having graduated from the Nurse Practitioner Program at San Francisco State University, and held a lecturer position in Nursing at San Jose State University working part-time to maintain her nursing skills while also doing research with Dr. Strauss. She has presented keynote addressesand done workshops on grounded theory methodology in countries throughout the world. Research awards include Nurse Scholar of the Year Award from Thomas Jefferson University, Sigma Theta Tau, and Book of the Year Award from the American Journal of Nursing. She has published numerous articles many with Dr. Anselm Strauss. Among her books are *Unending Work and Care*, *Grounded Theory in Practice*, *Shaping a New Health Care System*, and *Basics of Grounded Theory*, first, second, third, and now fourth editions.

Anselm Strauss was born December 18, 1916, and died September 5, 1996. He was, at the time of his death, Professor Emeritus, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, University of California, San Francisco. His main research and teaching activities were in the sociology of health and illness and of work and professions. His approach to doing research was qualitative with the aim of theory building, and with Barney Glaser was co-founder of the method that has come to be known as grounded theory. Over the years, he was asked to be a visiting professor to the universities of Cambridge, Paris, Manchester, Constance, Hagen, and Adelaide. During his lifetime he wrote numerous papers and books, many of which have been translated into other languages. Among his books, written with various coworkers are *Awareness of Dying* (1965), *Mirrors and Masks* (1969), *Professions, Work and Careers* (1971), *Negotiations* (1978), *The Social Organization of Medical Work* (1985), *Unending Work and Care* (1988), and *Continual Permutations of Action* (1993). Though formally retired, he was still actively engaged in writing and research at the time of his death, on topics including work in hospitals and a sociological perspective on body.