

## Grounded Theory Design Essentials

Well, thank you and thank you everybody for being here tonight.

And, um, how I have this designed is just, I, I hope this will be 20, 30 minutes to go through these slides and, and then there'll leave plenty of time for, uh, questions and that you may have, or examples that you wanna talk about, um, at the end as well.

You know, one of the things that you'll learn in qualitative research is about trustworthiness, about methods of verification.

And one of the things that, uh, Lincoln and Guba back in 1985 when they came up with these terminologies talked about was credibility and, and credibility.

Uh, one of the ways that they measure credibility was prolonged engagement in the field.

So why I bring that up is I, I've been chasing doctoral students now for 26 years.

Um, I've led, um, 96 doctoral students as chair to completion, and I've served as research methodologist for probably another two or 300.

I've taught probably a hundred sections of qualitative research.

All that to say, I've made a lot of mistakes and I've learned a lot along the way.

And what I'm gonna share with you tonight are the things I've learned about grounded theory, grounded theory design, and how to create a good grounded theory study.

So, with that, I just wanna talk about some of the base, um, uh, assumptions.

Now, Stella, you're gonna have to tell me if, if you can see my, did my screen change? Did it work? I was muted. I'm sorry. Yes, it did, it Did change. Okay, then we're good to go.

So the first thing I wanna talk about is some myths and some reality about gravity theory, um, theory.

Uh, I've heard this in many circles, um, that grounded theory is the most difficult qualitative design to develop.

Um, I think that is a myth.

I think in reality, grounded theory is a practical and easy to follow a research design.

Um, it is the, the processes that you'll be engaged with, with grounded theory are really easy to follow if you've done your reading.

Um, developing and discovering a theory beyond is beyond the skills of a novice researcher.

That's another myth. I, I, I've had, I've led many doctoral students or many doctoral students who are grounded theory, uh, design and, and to graduation.

And I think de developing and or discovering a theory is a natural process.

And it was, it's with easy reach of a novice researcher.

So don't, don't let this design scare you off.

Um, another myth is that the analytical schema of grounded theory is too difficult for most researchers.

I think that's just not the case.

I think what's great about grounded theory is how well developed these developmental analytic schemas are, and how well they're developed, and how they can help you lead through and analyze your data.

So I think, again, these, the, an I think the reality is that these analytical schemas and grounded theory is a practical and flows in an easy step-by-step process.

Again, I think this is like all designs, I think you're gonna have to do your work.

But in terms of understanding, uh, the, the design itself, but don't get caught up in the idea that grounded theory, just by its name itself, is somehow more difficult than narrative or ethnography, or phenomenology or case study.

It's just not some, just basic information about grounded theory.

Uh, the focus of it is developing a theory grounded in the data from from the field.

Um, it's, it originated in sociology, the two, uh, originators, um, and Samami Strau and Barney Glazer were both sociologists.

What was interesting about those two was one of them was a, a sociologist that was interested in more qualitative designs.

That's, and strau.

In fact, he originally wanted to call this symbolic actionism 'cause of the way that he was working through this.

And it was symbolic.

Actionism is really about constant comparative.

Uh, Barney Glazer, on the other hand, was a quantitative person.

And so this mix that they brought together really worked to create this idea of discovering grounded theory.

Um, data collection processes are usually in depth interviews.

Um, usually it's up to 20 to 30 individuals, um, to saturate categories.

Now, I will say something here that the more homogeneity that you have in your sample, then the more likelihood that you will, um, uh, end up with saturation at a quicker rate.

Um, the data analysis is, uh, specific coding sequences, and we'll talk more about that as we go through here.

And the narrative form is theory, theoretical models or theoretical position.

And I'll, I'll, I'll display some of that as we go through as well.

Just some basic background, um, some just foundational, um, material before we kind of go into some of the other processes that, um, this is a qualitative method that focuses on creating conceptual frameworks or theories by analyzing the data, neither in inductive and or an abductive, um, methods.

Um, or, or using that reasoning approach, either inductive or abductive.

So these, these analytical categories are then grounded in the data.

So we lift these theories from the data itself.

Um, the method here favors ANA analysis over description, fresh categories, over preconceived ideas.

Now, this is something I wanna pause on.

Sometimes people have a theory in mind, and they're already, they're already thinking about this, that I've seen something and I've already developed my own theory.

That's can get in the way.

And grounded theory design, you have to let that theory emerge from the data itself.

So if you have those preconceived notions, then it's best that you articulate those in your role of the researcher in terms of your experience.

So as the reader understands where you are coming from, as you begin to develop, uh, this theoretical construct, it's best if you just wash away those ideas, those preconceived notions, that idea that this is how the world is.

And let the data tell you, um, as you move forward.

Just to, uh, quick, um, uh, um, I think that might have skipped a slide.

Nope, it didn't. Um, I wanted to just talk about the different types, um, of reasoning.

Um, you know, abductive reasoning, and we'll talk about this in kind of theory a lot, is really, basically it's just looking for the best explanation.

Uh, there's, it's allows inferring a, as an explanation of B.

It's, it's a logical inference that goes from observation to theory and accounts for that observation.

And so it creates, it's, it just, it's what you've seen, how you put it together, and you're really looking for that, that best explanation.

Uh, inductive reasoning is allows inferring B from A where B does not follow necessarily from a, so, for example, you know, if we have a qualitative example, if, if all the swans that I've seen are white, I might infer that that all swans are white.

That's, that's a reasonable induction.

But if we continue with this, we might realize that some swans are indeed black.

And so it doesn't guarantee inductive reasoning doesn't guarantee those conclusions.

It just limits that conclusion to the population from what you're, from which it's derived.

And we'll be using abductive or inductive reasoning depending on which camp you find yourself in.

Grounded theory, um, designs, and I'll explain that a little bit more as we go through here.

And then here it's two camps.

Um, there's Kathy Sherma's camp, um, constructivist Grounded Theory, and then there's Barney Corbeau, or, or Barney Glazer's camp of, of Objectives Grounded Theory.

And they, they come at this differently.

And, and constructivist Grounded theory led by Kathy Shamma.

And by the way, I'll tell you, uh, Kathy was a student of Barney Glazer.

So, uh, there's some connection here.

But what she was looking at is developing the theory, and therefore, she was more interested in, in looking at this from an abductive approach, where the objectives theory led by Corbin and Straub.

And, and again, by Glazer, they were looking at this from more of a, um, a pragmatic perspective.

And, and therefore they were more interested in what's the, what's the most reasonable outcome that can come from here? So again, um, they tended to use more objective logic in terms of coming to this conclusion.

So that's one of the, one of the key differences between these two camps, between the constructivist and the objectivist, is the fact that the way that the reasoning that they used Sharma's model used a more inductive approach, like most qualitative research, where the objectives grounded theory was more interested in what works and why that more pragmatic element.

And so it was really grounded in pragmatism.

As we start this, I'm, I'm gonna think about this in terms of how a study is developed.

So, uh, we start off with a theoretical orientation, or we start off with where we are in, in the world sort.

And, and, and theoretical sensitivity was really a construct that was created by Barney Glaser.

And what he was trying to say was, you need to understand something about the phenomena that you're approaching.

Uh, otherwise you might be picking up nickels while you're stepping over \$5 bills.

So you have to ground yourself at least in the literature in some way that you know, that you have the capacity to understand what, what, what the data is telling you.

He also cautioned us about not going to in depth, like doing an, um, a complete, um, a saturation yourself in the literature itself, because he didn't want you to start again, start looking for preconceived ideas.

He wanted the data to talk to you, but at the same time, you had to be understand what the data was telling you.

So he called this theoretical sensitivity, and this is part of our theoretical orientation.

Now, the, the problem with this idea is that it creates both color and caution.

You know, as researchers, um, you know, we, we, we can look at the data as emerging.

It's coming through us as qualitative researchers.

And so we have to be able to understand this human phenomenon that we're under, that we're, that we're researching, and, and, and we're have, we're gonna have to make meaning out of it.

Uh, so at the same time, we see this and it's coming through us and our experiences, our knowledge, everything that we know is, is, is also integrating with that.

And we have to be able to step back and make sure that we're not leading the findings, that we're not leading the research to where we want it to go, that we already have a preconceived notion of where it is.

And so, theoretical sensitivity provides us that balance, that, that color that we need to understand this phenomena.

But it also tells us, be cautious here.

Make sure you're not, you're not following yourself down this line of thought where I'm just confirming what I already knew to be true is true.

And it's a, it's a, it's a, it requires discipline, folks.

And, and this is something that you as a, as a novice researcher or even experienced researcher, you're gonna have to really understand who are you within that, um, that, that research.

If you wanna know more about that, I wrote an article on post representation.

It's in the qualitative encyclopedia of sage.

And we can talk about what happens when you don't, um, pay attention to the, that we may begin to lead our research in ways that we weren't intended.

And it, it lends to not having the same credibility.

I wanna convert this now to what we were just talking about, this theoretical orientation into, uh, theoretical frameworks.

Um, in this, in the doctoral programs that you're studying, you'll, you'll see a lot about, uh, theoretical or conceptual frameworks.

You don't see much about philosophical frameworks.

And the reason why I want to bring this up is oftentimes grounded theory designs, um, have this philosophical element kind of built

into the soup.

And I'll talk more about that later.

Um, but there's a, but oftentimes, grounded theory is looking at sort of this value problem, uh, theoretical, uh, theoretical framework, um, you know, provides that theoretical foundation that might inform the study.

And in qualitative research, we don't typically see theoretical frameworks.

These are more orientated towards, um, quantitative designs, um, mostly because these are action problems.

Um, and again, I'll, I'll, I'll tell you a little bit more of that in a minute.

Um, and then some, and then, and grounded, or in, in qualitative research, we see a lot of conceptual frameworks and a conceptual framework will work for grounded theory as well.

Uh, one caution I will tell you is that in Corbit and rao's textbook, and I can't remember the page, they, they, they warn that using any kind of framework, theoretical or conceptual could interfere with the development of that theory itself.

Um, there's a lot of discussion about that.

Some people disagree, some people agree.

Um, in this program, it is required that you have a, a theoretical framework of, or a research framework of some kind, whether it's philosophical, theoretical, or conceptual.

So for grounded theory, it may be philosophical and it may be conceptual as you develop it.

And, and again, I'll, I think in future slides, I'll, I'll explain a little bit more about that.

To do that, you need to understand the types of problems that are out there.

And Lincoln and Guba define a problem as two or more factors in a mutual shaping relationship.

And, and, and, and here are the different types of problems, uh, one that might yield a perplexing or matic state.

That's a conceptual problem.

And that's where most qualitative researchers would look at having a conceptual problem, uh, conflict that renders a choice among alternative courses or action moot.

That's an action problem.

And that, right, if you look at that, that's why this sets up as a quantitative study.

So if you look at most hypothesis, you're looking at some predictor variable, uh, predict that predicts some particular outcome and that outcome variable.

And again, we're, we're looking, can we, can we achieve the, the no? Do we, do we accept the no or do we reject it? And, and right there we talk about looking at an action problem.

So this is one of the reasons why a theoretical framework just doesn't work well for most qualitative designs, or are we looking at some undesirable consequence of value problem? And the a value problem is often associated with the philosophical frameworks.

Um, the reason why I wanted to talk about philosophical frameworks for grounded theory is because whether we, whether you recognize it or not from the beginning, it's something that you need to understand in these designs.

Constructivism and pragmatism, philosophical frameworks are built into these designs.

Kathy Shema built her, her, her approach and construct Asda theory and constructivism really looking at how I develop a theory where, uh, Corbin and Strau and Barney Glazer, they built this on pragmatism, and pragmatism is truth, is truth is what works.

And now you begin to see why we use abduction for p for that pragmatic stance, and we begin to use induction for that constructivist approach because we're trying to develop something from the data versus trying to discover.

And so, again, if, if you're really diving into grounded theory, whether you're using construct, whether you're using the, the constructivist approach or the objectiveist approach, you need to understand those philosophical groundings that ground this, the ground, the opportunity to look at this from a, from a research perspective.

Now, can you add other elements in this theoretical orientation that would help support this? And the answer is yes, you can do this from a more transdisciplinary perspective.

So this comes into conceptual frameworks, and here we're looking at theoretical or theoretical, uh, theories or processes or constructs that are related to your study.

And again, these are often multiple theories or multiple constructs that we're looking at the intersection.

Uh, this notion of, uh, transdisciplinarity comes into place here when we're looking at grounded theory from using a conceptual framework.

So, for example, if we were studying leadership in a rural community, um, I might wanna create a, um, a conceptual framework that talks about, uh, transformational leadership theory or community development theory, or economic development theory.

And if I use those different theories together, then I'm, my study begins to end up in that intersection that, that the yellow, uh, pointer is pointing to.

Because my study is related to wall wolfs things.

And when we have that, then what we're doing is we're working, uh, within or between different disciplines.

And this be makes our study more transdisciplinarity, more, more transdiscipline as we move forward.

And this can be a very powerful conceptual framework for grounded theory designs.

So if you're, if you cannot just settle on a philosophical element of constructivism or pragmatism, you can begin to develop a pretty good, solid theoretical orientation by using conceptual frame frameworks to build that transdisciplinarity that will really help you in terms of where your theory belongs, and the theoretical literature as you move through this.

And by the way, transdisciplinary is something that we, I think is, um, undersold, um, in research design.

Um, uh, I, Patricia Levy, um, this is a quote from her that transdisciplinary research practices are issues or problem centered and prior towards the problem at the center of the research over discipline specific concerns, theories, or methods.

And to me, this makes a perfect match for, for somebody who's doing a practitioner and a practitioner doctoral program like here at, at the University of Phoenix.

It's, it's perfect for this.

And so if you understand the power of transdisciplinarity, of looking at your study at the intersection of disciplines, it's something that can be really magical, because what I have found in my experience is that new ideas, new theories, new processes are, are often born at the intersection of disciplines.

And if you're focusing this at the very beginning, you're setting yourself up for real opportunity for where you may publish or where you may engage, or where you may, um, interact in the, in your discipline or in your, uh, your career, in your career field because of that ability to cross over these boundaries.

Now, what I wanna do is just sort of shift gears here and just talk just generally about grounded theory across the research triad, the problem, the purpose, and the research question.

Um, I, I think many of you know, the, the, the problem statement is sort of your why.

You know, why am I doing this research? And I think the problem statement really is, is important in that regard.

Um, as we start to look at this from a grounded theory perspective, uh, we come back to Lincoln and Guba main points about the types of problems that are out there.

You know, a conceptual problem that, that most qualitative research would ask is, why is this situation the way, it's the action problem? Most qua, quantitative, um, frameworks would ask, which course of action would be moot and a value problem, ask what's desirable? And, and again, when you were starting to develop these, these problem statements, or really looking for the why behind your research from a qualitative design, and this is a typical, um, framework for a problem statement, is that the, the problem to progress by the study is blank, resulting in blank, and you're supporting it in the literature.

And I'll, I'll, I'll share one with you here.

So this is a problem outta my own work.

Um, and, uh, just for an example, uh, the problem to be addressed by this study is that individuals and leader roles have demanding and often exhausting managerial tasks resulting in a failure to establish



healthy practices, to cultivate healthy leadership and generativity, and I have some citations here.

So again, I, this is my why if I'm doing this study, this is the why.

This is the why behind this.

I'm trying to, I, I want to solve this problem.

Uh, the link here, and I think these slides will be shared with you, is to my blog at the research, uh, at the Center for Leadership Studies and Organizational, uh, research, um, uh, do one, uh, quarterly.

And this sort of, that's my citation for, for supporting, uh, this problem.

So again, this is just for example, so I'm gonna take this problem now and I'm gonna design this as a grounded theory study, and I'm gonna show you what that might look like.

So before I do, I'm getting to this purpose statement.

That's this next task I'm gonna do.

And, and pur purpose statements have the following elements.

They have the, the how, the who, the what, the where, and the why that, that we want those in there.

And, um, if we look at this, the how is the research design of the approach, the population, of course, is the, the pop or the who is the population under study, the what is the phenomena of interest, the where is the study site or location, and the why is the potential address to the previously stated problem.

So again, by doing this formula, I'm, I'm making that alignment happen.

I'm connecting my purpose statement back to my problem.

And, uh, and again, these components are sort of linked.

So let me show you what happens when we go to the create a purpose statement.

So the problem, my statement I have up above.

So here I'm gonna give, I'm gonna start with example of a constructivist grounded theory study.

So the purpose of this constructivist grounded theory is to develop the theory that explains the process surrounding how individuals in leader roles establish healthy practices that cultivate, um, healthy leadership and generativity in an organization.

If I knew the organization that could be more specific in order to maximize the effectiveness in meeting the demands of that leader, of the, their leadership role.

And if you look at this, what you'll see is that there's direct alignment with the problem statement that I've, I've started to make my, my, these two key constructs talk to each other.

So this, when we talk about alignment, this is what I'm trying to do here.

I'm trying to make this purpose statement work with that.

Now, one of the things that you'll see in the next slide is, I'm gonna give you an example of an objectivist approach to this, is that this constructivist looks to develop, remember, constructivism is what grounds this whole constructivist approach.

And so constructivism is really about developing, about building something.

And so here, what this, what this approach wants to do is to develop the theory.

It, it doesn't wanna discover it like an objectiveness.

It wants to develop this theory, and then it wants to, and it's often process oriented.

Again, we're trying to build something and we to explain the process that's surrounding how these individuals and leader roles establish these practices.

And if we look at this from a more objective standpoint, you'll see the words change just a little bit, just slightly, that we're wanting to discover the theory that explains, and that begins to show you why pragmatism is in play here, because we're looking for the, the reason most reasonable, or the most simplest or elegant explanation for this theory, that it might explain this process, that it might explain how these individuals and leader roles establish these practices.

Beyond that, there's not much difference between the two.

I'm gonna back up one slide.

You'll, you'll see here, again, trying to develop the theory that explains the process.

And here trying to discover the theory that explains and discover and develop are really the two key differences in the, in the purpose statement and grounded theory designs.

If you're following the Sharmas model, you're gonna be looking at trying to develop this theory.

If you're looking at the objectivist, you're looking at trying to discover, now why would I choose one over the other? If I'm, if I'm a, if I'm working in the field of education, or if I'm working in a healthcare or a health, uh, providing, uh, institution, for example, then I may be more, re more interested in constructivism in, in this constructivist approach.

But if I'm in business and industry where I have an immediate more local problem that I'm trying to address, I might be more interested in that objectiveness approach because I, I don't, I don't have time to to, to dig in deep.

I wanna find out what's gonna work.

Now I'm gonna take that pragmatic stance, and I want to wanna develop or discover that theory that will help me through this process.

And so, again, it depends upon what field of study that you're in.

If you're in business and industry, maybe the objectives approach is it's gonna be much better for you to, to really discover that theory that explains how to handle this problem.

Where if I'm in a education or in healthcare fields, I may be more interested in the constructivist approach.

Now, I wouldn't wanna live on the difference between these two designs, but they do have some subtle, and I think unique approaches between the two that if that you need to be a wise consumer on, you know, how, what do you want in terms of the end product? And that end product is what might advance your career or might advance you.

And, and the, and the organization that you're in, um, education in, for example, is often grounded in constructivist theory, not only in in design, but also in the way education educators work.

So having that construct approach might just be a better fit than the objectivist.

Again, just be a wise consumer and know that there is a subtle difference between the objectiveness approach and the constructiveness approach.

Um, uh, again, there's not a lot of difference, but there is a subtle difference.

Um, next, and then triad is the research question.

So again, I have the problem up here, and I'm for here, I'm just gonna use the objective as approach, um, for time.

And I might, I might come up with an overarching research question that says, what is the theory that explains how individuals in legal roles establish healthy practices that cultivate healthy leadership and generativity in organization in order to maximize their effectiveness and meet in the demands of their leadership role? And if you look at these three statements now, you'll see that all three of this, of what I call the research triad, the, the problem, the purpose of the research question, they all talk to each other.

They, they're in perfect alignment.

And if you can get that, if you can drive down these pillars into your proposal that all these things talk to each other, it's gonna pay dividends in chapter 2, 3, 4, and five.

And so, again, this is a critical element to try to make sure you have this kind of alignment as you go through and develop, uh, these key statements.

Now, you also probably know that there's an expectation that you have more than one research question.

So once I have this overarching research question, what other questions need I ask that might help me answer or address this problem within this, this purpose statement? And so what I might do is, here, here's some example.

Here's the, here's the overarching research question that I talked about, but then I have two more research questions, and I'll talk more about these in a minute.

The first sec, the first research question too is, what are the properties and processes that support the theory of how individuals and leader roles establish healthy practices that cultivate healthy leadership and generativity? Now I'm gonna tell you, I didn't just pull that question outta the air and, and I'll show you how, what, how I got it.

And the third question is, what are the strategies that emerge for understanding how individuals need a roles maximize their effectiveness? Again, I'm looking for strategies here.

I'm looking for the properties and processes here.

Well, I got these because I know, and you would know if you, again, do the reading and understanding how these analytical processes work done in theory.

I know that, that when I start looking at key terminologies and that related to this design, that the properties and processes are really something that comes out strong.

I also know that one of the things that's key in terms of understanding grounded theory is a strategy, is to understand the consequences of the emerge theory.

So what I did was I simply, because I understood what I'm looking for, and I understood the design that I'm looking at, I created these three research questions that are not only are in alignment with my problem and my purpose, but they're in alignment with my design.

Again, what are the properties and processes and what are the strategies? These are not just questions I pulled out of the air.

These are questions I know that, that this design is designed or this design is designed to handle, to do, create.

And if I know these things, then I can be an informed consumer and I can create the kind of research questions I need to be successful in answering my research questions and addressing this problem.

So it's, it's, again, the magic here is just being an informed consumer of understanding what the design does and how it, how it works.

And this is true for all qualitative designs.

For, for example, if I'm, if I'm looking at a case study, I, I would try to get questions that are looking at the different places where I might get my data, the different sources of evidence, uh, whether it's the people or, or, or observations or, or, or those kind of things.

So again, the kind of sub-questions or, or supporting questions that you might get after you have your, or your overarching question is can be really design specific, for example, um, in narrative, you know, where we start looking at temporality specialty, those things, those things are part of that design.

And if you know the design, then you know how to form your research questions that will support your problem and your pur and your purpose state statement.

Again, what I'm trying to emphasize here is the importance of once you choose a design, that you begin to understand how, how it, how it, how you can use it.

Um, what, I'm shifting gears here now, and I want to talk about, um, um, the coding camp, the coding within these various camps.

And they're similar, um, in the objectives.

Um, in the Corbin and RA Glazer approach, uh, we have open coding, axial coding, induc, um, selective coding con, the

conditional matrix, and then you generate the theory, um, in the Schema model and the constructivist approach.

She called the open coding.

She, she refers to it as initial coding, um, AIO coating.

Um, she wanted to do another step prior to that where she looks at her initial codes and she begins to focus those.

And what she's doing is sort of a dance.

And this open coding sequence of the objective is she's doing a, spending a lot more time.

And because she's trying to develop a theory, and so she's spending more time looking at these initial and focused codes, trying to come up with key constructs that might help her as she begins to move it forward.

Um, axial coating is, is, you know, open coating and initial coating.

And focus coating is really about tearing the data down.

Uh, hor horizontal, it, uh, just sort of sorting through the data.

And axial coating axial comes from this notion of a axle of a wheel.

And what it's trying to do is it's trying to connect these various constructs back together.

So, you know, in a, in a kind of a brief way, open coding breaks the data down into chunks, and axle coating begins to put it back together.

Um, you know, as in terms of these analytical sequences, we talk about 'em, open coding, and then we go to axial coding.

In reality, as you're coding out this data, you're, you're kind of doing this all at the same time.

You might be reading a transcript or analyzing a transcript, and while you might be breaking it down into these various codes, you're also beginning to see, uh, in a very naturalistic way how various chunks might fit together.

And again, that's that axial coding component.

Uh, selective coding is really be now beginning that process of really beginning to identify the key constructs of that, um, of that theory.

Um, uh, selective coding is an objectivist.

And what Sharma calls us, it is theoretical coding.

She's starting to, she's wants to, she wants to call it that because she's trying to develop this theory, and she wants to start seeing how these theoretical aspects start to happen.

And then we get to the conditional matrix, both, both designs talk about a conditional matrix, and then after that, we begin to then have this theory generation.

Now, there's a lot of skill that goes on within these coding aspects.

And if you're gonna do grounded theory design, this is the, this is, this is it.

This is where you really need to drop to dive in and really understand these, these very significant and I think, elegant coding sequences that are housed on both designs.

So if you're, if you're following the Shamma model, get that Shamma book.

If you're following the Corbin and Strau model, get that book, because they're gonna help you understand how these different coding sequences really come together to either help discover or to develop that theory.

And, and in the end, the final process, of course, is theory generation.

Um, just some quick, um, definitions that might help you as we kind of get to the end game.

Uh, selective coding is really identifying the theoretical underpinnings that are of the emerging theory.

It's kind of that storyline.

It's beginning to develop a reply to your grant tour or your overarching questions.

You're starting to answer those questions.

You start to think about, okay, I understand my problem now.

What are the consequences of this emerging theory? Is that there, am I having some surprises here? I'm, I'm getting to verify what's happening with this, 'cause I'm taking this from the data itself.

And then I can begin to talk about, this goes to chapter five, the meaning of this emerging theory.

What does this contribution make to the theoretical literature? And again, if we, we started off with theoretical sensitivity.

And so if you've done your homework there and this theory starts to emerge, then you can begin to see what this theory might mean in terms of its contribution to the literature to practice.

And I think this is a critical step.

And then finally, we get to the conditional matrix where we, we begin to just kind of spell it all out, and I'll share one with you in just a minute.

And then finally, we give our theory statement on what, what that means.

So let me, let me show you an example.

Um, this is a, this is a conditional matrix from a, from a study that I'm currently, um, writing an article on.

And this was really about, um, uh, the, the, it's called the theory of transformative movement in doctoral students, students and online doctoral program.

And this is sort of a picture of all those processes that we went through, that the four stages of an online doctoral program that was really came out to that kind of, that, and this is using the Sharma's model, I should tell you, but we really we're seeing how the, the, the

focus coding and the axial coding and that selective coding or that, um, focus, theoretical coding, began to kind of come together.

So that four stages was really that first process of, of looking at those initial codes, those focus codes, and then finally trying to use that axial coding kind of put together.

And from that, then for through theoretical coding, we kind of came up with this notion of these theoretical codes of this emerging, growing, managing, and learning and persisting.

So these are all components of this conditional matrix.

Um, and then we started looking at how we kind of put this all together.

And for, through all of this process, the, the theory just sort of emerged.

And from that then, uh, we came up with the, the naming, the theory itself, the theory of transfer transformation, transformative movement.

And again, this conditional matrix really helps you understand how all these pieces kind came together to form this theory itself.

And then the final step, of course, is to name the theory.

And here it's, and we, and we did it, we, we created this thing, and it said, the theory of transformative movement shows that online doctoral graduates are our successful academics, passionate research and scholarly writers and articulate communication communicators who are strategically managed themselves well and are persistent overcomers, therefore develop, therefore developing academically in an online program.

They have mastered self-management skills.

They use strategies to stay motivated and have a robust support system in place.

They are resilient individuals who can balance outside responsibilities and use excellent time management skills.

Does that sound like anybody in the room? Because this is what we, this, the data that we used here were from graduates, from programs just like this.

And so this was an example of what happens when we can create a, a theoretical statement or a theoretical position that comes from the data itself.

And I think with that, Stella, I'm gonna go to questions.

Fantastic. Thank you so much for that, that overview.

I learned, I was, um, I haven't heard it explained exactly like that.

So that was, that was amazing. How, how it all fit together.

Are there any questions? And you can bring your own study up if you're doing grounded theory, you've got particular questions you want to ask.

Um, all good questions.

Absolutely.

Or you can unmute yourself and ask your question if you'd like, oh, there's something here.

Can you, um, a question is, how do you know if the participants are a homogenous group? Ho homogeneity, homogeneity, homogeneity, you know, the more the, the more alike they are.

In other words, if you're gonna, um, if you're looking at, uh, let's say kindergarten teachers in Cheyenne, Wyoming, um, there's a very likelihood that, that they're gonna have a lot of the similarities where if I'm looking at kindergarten teachers across the United States, I'm gonna have a lot of more variation, uh, from that.

So the, the more, um, the more like they are, the more likelihood that you're gonna end up with saturation at a faster rate.

I, I have seen theoretical saturation hit, uh, with as few as six or seven participants when they have very, when they're very similar.

The more, the more variants that you have, the more likelihood that you're not gonna see those kind of, that kind of saturation without, until you hit larger numbers.

The numbers that like Creswell talks about with 20 or 30.

It's not uncommon to have that, that number in a grounded theory study.

Um, again, it, it, it just depends on your population.

Um, I hope that helps.

And there's an, I think this is a follow-up question to that, and then there's another question.

So could you then say that your rationale for nine to 12 participants is because the participants are similar? Yeah. You know, if you're, if you're defining your population, your Sam, your population as, uh, a very, in a very, um, um, limited way or very narrow way, um, again, um, I'm gonna use my, my kindergartner teachers from Cheyenne, Wyoming, uh, it's very likely that, that they grew up in Wyoming.

It's very likely that they went to the University of Wyoming.

It's very likely that they got their degree from there.

It's very likely they had the same professors.

It's very likely that they have the same sort of, uh, attitude, the same world beliefs.

And so the more similarity you have across those things, the more likely it's going to be that you're gonna hit that saturation point with fewer participants.

Again, if you end up, you know, diverging that, where you end up with looking at kindergarten teachers across this country, there's probably gonna be a huge difference between kindergarten teachers who were trained from the University of Indiana and their great educational department versus EDU in the University of Wyoming.

I'm not, I'm not trying to, I I, I'm a graduate of University of Wyoming.

I'm not trying to slight them.



I'm just saying, you know, talent is talent and University of Indiana is known for its educational prowess.

It's known for this. And so there may be a difference between those.

And there may be a difference in the worldview from kindergarten teachers in Alabama versus kindergarten teachers in New York, for example.

So again, the more diversity that you have, the more heterogeneity you have, the more likelihood you're gonna have to have larger numbers before you'll start seeing that those that saturation happen.

Fantastic. Another question, are there any bias, or how do you eliminate it or minimize it when you're doing That that requires discipline, folks? Um, I can give you an example.

Um, when I was doing my Grounded Theory study as a doctoral student some 30 years ago, um, and I will tell you that, that my chair was, uh, uh, John Creswell, and I remember him, um, uh, making me go through my data again simply because I had a preconceived notion that, and I was studying rural development.

And what I wanted to know was I, I had a, I because I was been doing this work for a long time, I was convinced that leadership development led to, uh, community development, which led to economic development.

And I was locked into that.

And, and he kept pushing me and pushing me and pushing me and telling me that I'm what he called, I'm, he's telling me I'm doing me search.

In other words, I'm trying to confirm what I already know to be true is true.

And when I finally shed that, when I finally let that go, and he kept pushing me on that, what happened was the theory of reciprocal transformational leadership emerged.

And it wasn't anything like what I thought it was.

These things worked together in a ways that I hadn't even imagined.

And so, when I let go of my biases, when I let go of, of, of what I thought should happen and let the data tell me, then the, then the theory really emerged and emerge quickly.

And I think that requires both experience and the willingness to let your ego go, that you don't know everything.

Let the data tell you, let the data talk to you, set aside what you think, and try to un and open yourself to learn.

And I think that's the key aspect, and probably any qualitative design.

But in grounded theory, it's really that openness to learn.

Um, if you've, you know, I've often told my, um, when I taught, uh, junior high school, I used to say, when you lock on, you lock out what's true here as well.

If you lock onto an idea, then you're locking out others.

And those other ideas might be the most important aspect.

Absolutely. Another question, how did you select your participants? Is it predetermined? Did you do a pilot study or survey? I'm sorry, pilot survey? No, um, in the study that you're talking about, um, we were listed, we were interested in online programs.

Uh, university of Phoenix was not part of this.

Um, it was, there were other institutions, I think it was, uh, Walden.

It was Walden, Capella, and I think Grand Canyon, um, that were, where the participants were drawn from the study that you were talking about.

Uh, what we were just simply interested in.

We, we wanted to have, um, uh, a rather, we wanted to have a, a really robust population looking at success in an online doctoral program.

And, um, we stayed away from, uh, Phoenix, only because Phoenix is very unique, um, in the way that they developed their doctoral program.

And I think it's unique in a great way, by the way.

And I think the things that we discovered in this study were, are, are, are, are relevant and echoed actually, um, in a very robust way at the, in the Phoenix way.

So that's how we identified it.

Um, after we, after we started into it, then we began to realize that there wasn't a lot of difference between the doctoral learners.

Actually, this turned out to be a very homogenous group.

No matter if we were sampling from, um, Walden, or whether we were sampling from Capella, or we were sampling from GaN Canyon, the, I, uh, the, the, these individuals were, were, we were stunned by how alike this population was.

And I think if we brought in this practitioner program at Phoenix, we would, we would echo that in terms of, of, of that.

So it was, um, we didn't think we would hit saturation as early as we did, quite frankly.

I, I was, I, I was, I was thinking we were gonna have to go to 30 to 50.

We were starting to see saturation between eight and nine participants, which was just floored me.

I didn't think that was possible.

Uh, so again, uh, it depends on your population.

Now, if we would've compared maybe all graduate students, for example, or maybe we would've brought in, uh, like some, uh, like University of Nebraska or, or different programs that, uh, from, uh, a different level, uh, maybe we would've, we've had a more divergent group.

But as it turned out, there wasn't much difference between the students, between these universities, which really surprised us.

That was a surprising finding.

So things, Ms.

German, I see a problem statement here, which I can read, but if you could unmute yourself and ask your question.

Yes. Um, are, are, are you just wanting feedback on this problem? No, actually I had a question about, um, the problem statement. So, oh, Okay. Do you want me to read this problem? You can talk for yourself. Go ahead.

Okay. So I actually, um, provided a, a problem statement.

It's in this, um, early form.

Um, but I was wondering, my, my concern and my challenge is, um, currently is that I'm not sure what type of, um, method, um, that is used that I could use in regards to, based on my problem statement I'm looking at, um, the problem being that, you know, um, we have children who have dealt with child, um, child, child adverse, I'm sorry, adverse childhood experiences, which is trauma.

And, um, as they go to school, they are experiencing some of those behaviors, um, as triggers and teachers are not equipped to, are ill prepared to support those students that are dealing with these trauma, um, triggers.

And so I was wondering, um, what route should I go? And I know I have been reading about quantitative and qualitative, um, methods, but I'm thinking that it has to be a mixture of both, because I do want to, um, have conversations with, um, with teachers as well as do some observational, um, studies with, um, the students, um, as they're interacting with their teachers.

And then I also wanna look at data, um, the behavior data and how does that, um, how does that look when it comes to putting trauma-informed practices in place to support? So I know it's a lot, and I apologize. No, I, I see your, I see your problem statement.

Okay, I'm looking at it in the text here.

But the problem is that teachers are insufficiently prepared to address behavior challenges related to trauma triggers resulting in a loss of instruction and poor learning outcomes in students.

It's a good problem statement.

It's, it's excellent actually.

And, um, you know, if you're, and I'm sure you have a citation to support that.

So the question you're asking is an, it's, it's fantastic.

It's, okay, here's my problem. How do I approach this? Do I, do I approach this quantitatively? Do I approach this qualitatively? Do I approach, approach this from a mixed approach? So, so since we're talking about qualitative studies in this, in this webinar, um, once you have that problem statement, then what you've gotta ask yourself is, what is the best tool that I have that, that to allow me to, uh, to, to address this problem? And qualitatively speaking, you know, I could go to work and I could start to form a, a way that you could attack this from just about, from most of the designs.

Um, I think I would exclude ethnography because it's more looking at a culture.

So, not that you couldn't look at this from a cultural perspective, but I think that's the hardest element.

Um, now you could approach this from a phenomenological approach.

In other words, looking at the essence of the lived experience that these these educators have with this, I think that's gonna be a clumsy approach.

Um, definitely you could look at this as a case study, that the purpose of this exploratory case study is to, um, explore how, uh, these educators describe this process in order to address, uh, in order to increase instruction and poor learning outcomes.

So you could definitely approach this from a case study perspective, from a grounded theory perspective.

If we're looking at this from a, and this looks like an educational, uh, um, uh, problem.

So I would, I would, if I was choosing a grounded theory approach, I would choose Sharma's approach the constructivism, because it's, it's really grounded in education.

So I might start look at this as what is the theory that explains how, you know, we can, that we can go after this, uh, how we can, and I'd have to spend more time looking at this.

Um, let me just think about this for a minute.

What is the theory that explains how to develop that process where we can address these behavior challenges that will increase, um, in the, uh, the efficacy of instruction and the poor learning outcomes of students? And then I, what I would do is I would choose my population.

I would probably look at teachers and I would, uh, I would look at a certain area and that, that I would, that would be my population, and I would go after this, and I would try to develop that theory that explains this process of addressing this problem.

Um, again, you know, every design has, its, it, its way, I mean, you could come at this from a narrative and just tell the stories of educators who have successfully navigated this in order to I improve instruction and poor learning outcomes because of this process.

So, um, it depends on how you wanna attack it.

And once you have this problem, then what you've gotta look at are the tools that are available to you and decide what's my, what's the best tool for this? Um, you know, I had an old plumber once tell me that, uh, you know, what you have to do is pick the right tool for the job, keep it clean and sharp, never use force.

And if you get stuck, ask for help.

And I think, could I, could I attack this problem from a grounded theory perspective? Absolutely. Are there other ways I could attack it? Yes, there are.

And I think, um, you know, in this short timeframe, I could see how you could create, could create a nice constructivist approach that would, would really go after this and create a nice theory that would help you explain the processes that would lead to addressing this problem.

I hope that helps, and I did it in short, such a short order.

Absolutely. If I had more time to soak with it, I would probably come up with some, uh, some, uh, more, um, uh, accurate ways for you to develop that purpose statement.

Thank you so much. Thank you.

Shall we have another way, Nicole? I'm sorry if you have a, my, I'm not hard to find, you know, you can, uh, my email's out there and if you have questions about this, um, uh, I, I almost never get bored with these kind of questions.

Okay. Uh, be sure to reach out. I promise.

So that's actually a great segue.

There's one more question which I will share, and then, um, do my little commercial.

So, um, the question is how I believe it's, is it, how important is coding to your findings? And I think you shared some of that in your presentation, but just kind of reiterating that, Yeah, coding is everything in grounded theory.

That's what makes grounded theory work.

It has very elegant coding sequences, and if you decide to do this design, um, I think that's a place where you really have to really understand how this works.

And it, and it, I think this is what scares people off because if there's some new language and some, some, you know, things that sound kind of weird, like conditional matrix and, and, um, axial coding, it sounds hard, but it's not, it sounds hard, but it's not, it's natural.

And when we talk about qualitative research, it's naturalistic inquiry, and these are things that we do anyway, we're, you know, you do probably do that.

You probably have created a hundred theories today just navigating today.

That's all you, I mean, we all are looking at our hunches, and we, we put, we took the information that we had and we put it together.

We came up with theory and we acted on it.

We do this in a natural way.

What, what grounded theory is, is taking in a very sophisticated way, looking at that process in order for us to come up with a way that we can develop a theory to explain or develop or to discover something that will help us understand a problem in the field.

And so you don't let the language chase you away.

Uh, you're all very intelligent people.

Everybody in this call is probably, uh, mid to level, uh, uh, is, is holding a mid to upper leadership position.

It's in or management position in some organization.

They're all accomplished.

And, and so in this, and so it's, it's not like you can't learn.

I know you can. And so if you choose this, then be good consumers.

Read the material, look at it, it, and it, you know, it may puzzle you a little bit, but step back, think, reflect, and then go on.

And, and I know you can do this.

Um, many, many people have done it before you and I know you can do it as well.

So don't let it scare you away.

If this is something that you really wanna do, then, then the processes are out there for you.

Thank You so much, Dr. McClain.

I put your email in the chat for folks so they can go there.

Yep, That's fine.

Um, so also in the chat, if you, um, could share your feedback about this webinar, there is a link to sharing your thoughts about it.

This is a research design webinar that's important because you have to select that in order to ensure that you get the correct questions.

I'm going to put that in the chat one more time.

Um, also the PowerPoint and the recording are going to be posted to the research methodology group teams site.

So in the chat I have a direct link to the teams site.

I also have my email address there.

So if you have problems getting on the team site, um, send me an email and I will try to troubleshoot that for you or help you with that.

Uh, the last thing that I put in the chat is the research hub events calendar.

So that has, um, events for, um, all areas that are coming out of the College of Doctoral studies.

Our next methodology webinar is Q Methodology, and I will be conducting that, uh, webinar.

It's next Tuesday, the same time, seven o'clock eastern.

Um, so thank you everyone for being here.