

*Zelmer*

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# 4th QHR

## **Qualitative Health Research Conference**



Sponsored by the  
School of Nursing  
University of British Columbia

\* C2.3 *Feminist Grounded Theory: Furthering the Dialogue*

Judith WUEST and Marilyn MERRITT-GRAY  
University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, Canada

Grounded theory and feminist theory have been put forward as congruent methodologies to combine as a qualitative research approach (Keddy, Sims, & Stern, 1996; Wuest, 1995a).

Because feminist research emphasizes respect for participants, avoidance of oppression, usefulness of findings, and reflexivity, the investigator becomes more attentive to these dimensions during the grounded theory research process. In addition, theoretical sensitivity is enhanced by feminist thought and the investigator is more responsive to issues of marginalization such as gender, class, race, and sexual orientation in the exploration of variation in the emerging concepts.

Despite these strengths, Wuest (1995a) highlighted points of tension between feminist theory and grounded theory and urged investigators using the approach to further the dialogue. There has been little discussion regarding the practical issues and dilemmas that arise in implementation of the method. The purpose of this paper is to voice the questions raised and the new understandings engendered by using feminist grounded theory in two research studies, one focusing on women's caring (Wuest, 1995b) and one exploring the process of leaving abusive conjugal relationships (Merritt-Gray & Wuest, 1995). While the discussion will not provide answers to the all questions raised, it will contribute to shifting the focus of the dialogue about feminist grounded theory from a theoretical to a practical level.

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C2.4 *Qualitative Research: Challenges for Postgraduate Students, their Supervisors and Examiners*

A. C. Lynn ZELMER and Amy E. ZELMER  
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Qualitative research methods have been in use for several decades and are becoming increasingly accepted in postgraduate research programs. However, there are still difficulties for students, their supervisors and examiners when qualitative methods are used. This paper will examine the context of postgraduate training in research methods, the selection of appropriate methods, and the mentoring of students in this milieu as well as specific issues with regard to the treatment of data, intellectual property and ethical concerns and the role of the thesis examiner. Reference will also be made to other factors (such as difficulties in explaining situations when one or more parties is not fully conversant with technique or context or the special problems when one of the parties uses English as a second language) which arise when the student is carrying out qualitative research at some distance from the supervisor(s).

This paper is based on the personal experience of the authors in all three roles in Canada and Australia as well as reference to published material on post-graduate supervision and examination. The presentation will use appropriate methods of delivery for qualitative data.

C2.5 *Ethnography for Health Policy Research*

Francis LEGAULT  
University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada

Questions about health policy can be answered at three broad levels of analysis. At the micro-level the researcher attempts to explain how decisions are made or how particular organizations operate. At the meso-level, the focus is on ways in which the health care system converts demands into policy. At the macro-level, the existing health care system is critiqued and interpreted within its economic, sociopolitical, and cultural context. Ethnographic research is well suited to answering diverse questions at all three levels of policy analysis. Health science ethnographies differ from traditional anthropological ethnographies in that they are time-limited exploratory studies within a fairly discrete community or organization.

The ethnographic research method will be described in relation to a study in progress. The purpose of the inquiry is to describe the contribution of home care nurses in the development and integration of palliative care services for diverse populations during the restructuring of the health care system. Analysis of the findings will highlight the valuable contribution of nurses in shaping health care policies through community and hospital partnerships and a shared vision of the goals of primary health care.

audience ~ 50  
~ half doing/did qual theses  
~ quarter have pre sup  
~ " " been examiners