



MCAST



BRIDGING DISCIPLINES: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ACROSS FIELDS

MCAST 4TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

10 to 12 November 2025

MCAST Resource Centre - Auditorium
Main Campus, Corradino Street, Paola

ABOUT

The 4th Qualitative Research Conference, themed "Bridging Disciplines: Qualitative Research Across Fields," invites researchers, practitioners, and students to explore the power and versatility of qualitative research across a range of disciplines.

Scheduled for 10th – 12th November 2025, the conference is hosted by the Malta College of Arts, Science, and Technology (MCAST) and serves as a vibrant platform for cross-disciplinary exchange of ideas, methodological innovation, and critical reflection.

This year's conference features four thematic tracks:

- Interdisciplinary Innovations in Qualitative Research
- Qualitative Research in Education, Social Sciences, and Policy
- Business, Media, Arts, and Cultural Perspectives in Qualitative Research
- Technology, Healthcare, and the Human Experience in Qualitative Research.

Join us as we explore diversity in qualitative research, foster interdisciplinary networks, and support research that creates impact.



PROF. ELAINE KEANE

Professor Elaine Keane, PhD, is Professor and Head of the Discipline of Education in the School of Education at the University of Galway, Ireland. Her research focuses on social class and education, teacher diversity, and constructivist grounded theory (CGT), and she has published widely and has led national and international projects in these areas, including as lead editor of *Diversifying the Teaching Profession: Dimensions, Dilemmas and Directions for the Future* (Routledge, 2023). She is Co-Editor of *Irish Educational Studies*, serves on the Editorial Board of *Teaching in Higher Education*, is Inaugural Chair of the National Initial Teacher Education Diversity Network and Convenor of the Educational Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI) Special Interest Group on Teacher Diversity Research.

On CGT, Elaine has collaborated and published with Professors Kathy Charmaz and Robert Thornberg and taught workshops in Ireland, the UK, Sweden, South Africa, and the USA, including with the Odum Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina and ResearchTalk Inc. She has taught CGT at the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry (ICQI) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA, since 2015. A member of the International Association of Grounded Theorists, Elaine is lead editor of the *Routledge International Handbook of Constructivist Grounded Theory in Educational Research* (2025). She has authored/co-authored chapters in many methodology texts, including the *APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology* (2023), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research Design* (2022), and *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (5th ed., 2018). She is (EU) Editor of the *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* (SAGE).

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DR. STEFAN RÄDIKER

Dr. Stefan Rädiker, Germany, is a consultant and trainer specialising in research methods and evaluation, with particular expertise in computer-assisted and AI-assisted qualitative data analysis.

He delivers research methods training to undergraduate and postgraduate students across various universities and graduate schools, whilst also providing consultancy to doctoral candidates, researchers, and organisations on analytical strategies in qualitative research.

Dr Rädiker has worked extensively with MAXQDA analysis software for over 20 years, also contributing to its ongoing development and specialising in AI applications within qualitative research over the past three years.

He has co-authored numerous textbooks, guides, and book chapters on qualitative research methods, including:

- Focused Analysis of Qualitative Interviews with MAXQDA, MAXQDA Press (2020)
- Qualitative Content Analysis, SAGE (2022)
- Doing Grounded Theory, MAXQDA Press (2023)
- The Practice of Qualitative Data Analysis: Research Examples Using MAXQDA, Volumes 1 and 2 (2020, 2023)
- Using Software for Mixed Methods Analysis, Routledge (2024)

His approach centres on delivering training that is experience-based, structured, and accessible to practitioners at all levels.

CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH: CONTEXTS, CONSIDERATIONS, AND CHALLENGES

Delivered by: Professor Elaine Keane, University of Galway

Grounded theory (GT), developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in the 1960s, aims to construct 'middle-range' theory from data. It is exploratory, iterative, inductive-abductive, comparative, and systematic. GT's exploratory nature is seen in its ground-up, open-ended approach through which the researcher is led by data. It is fundamentally iterative through the back-and-forth nature of data collection and analysis, both of which commence early in a study and are conducted in tandem. Both inductive and abductive logic are inherent in the GT process, with the researcher making tentative hypothetical statements through an inductive approach and investigating which hypothesis best explains an aspect of data through abduction. GT is founded upon Glaser's constant comparative method, with researchers continually engaged in a process of comparison of data with data, data with codes, codes with codes, and so on, throughout the research process. Finally, GT is systematic in that a set of flexible guidelines is offered to the researcher to guide their work. This keynote address commences by briefly exploring the history and development of GT and its variant 'schools', including Kathy Charmaz's Constructivist GT (CGT) school, before examining its core features (including coding, theoretical sampling, analytic memoing, and conceptualising), some of which differ depending on the GT 'school' under consideration. I emphasise constructivist adaptations to the GT process, particularly those relating to the timing and nature of the literature review, researcher positionalities and related reflexivity, as well as meaningful participant involvement which are underpinned by CGT's co-constructive principles. I note how Constructivist GT is especially well aligned with social justice-oriented research as they serve mutually complementary purposes. Drawing on our recently published Routledge Handbook (Keane & Thornberg, 2025), I then investigate how Constructivist GT has been conceived and implemented in educational research across different educational sectors and contexts, working with children and young people in schools, with teachers and parents, and in higher education. I highlight innovative uses of the methodology, key challenges facing Constructivist GT into the future, as well as the promise it holds in progressing critical qualitative inquiry.

AN INTRODUCTION TO CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY

Delivered by: Professor Elaine Keane, University of Galway

This workshop introduces Kathy Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory (CGT). Grounded theory (GT) methods consist of flexible guidelines to fit particular research problems, not to apply mechanically. With these guidelines, you expedite and systematize data collection and analysis. CGT and social justice issues serve mutually complementary purposes. GT methods can assist social justice researchers in making their work more analytic, precise, and compelling. A social justice focus can help grounded theorists to move their methods into macro analyses. In this workshop, following an exploration of the history and development of GT, we examine GT basic guidelines and major strategies, including initial line-by-line and focused coding, the use of gerunds, memoing, diagramming, theoretical sampling, and categorising. Throughout the session, there is an emphasis on CGT's epistemological foundation and resultant adaptations to the research process, including regarding the literature review, researcher positionality/ies, and participant involvement.

The workshop will include a number of hands-on exercises to exemplify, and give participants an opportunity to practice, the strategies being discussed. For the coding exercise, you may bring and use some of your own qualitative data, or if you do not have data yet, some will be supplied. Clear guidelines and support are provided to workshop participants with regard to all aspects of CGT.

The session will utilise CGT readings and resources from Kathy Charmaz, Robert Thornberg, Adele Clarke, and myself, and will draw on the scholarship of Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss. This workshop will be of interest to those doing full CGT studies but also to those who may be interested in learning about and potentially using some of the powerful GT strategies (such as coding) in studies with a different overall methodological approach.

AI-ASSISTED ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE DATA: LATEST INNOVATIONS IN MAXQDA

Delivered by: Dr Stefan Rädiker, *Methoden-Expertise.de*

This interactive workshop explores the latest AI developments in MAXQDA for qualitative data analysis in the year 2025. Through demonstrations and hands-on exercises, participants will explore various AI tools, including:

- Tools for developing a coding framework
- Tools for AI coding
- Chat features for dialogical approaches to analysis

We will discuss how to maintain analytical rigour whilst enhancing efficiency and how to integrate these tools into sound research processes. The session will conclude with an overview of MAXQDA Tailwind, a new AI-focused web application for qualitative analysis.

This workshop is suitable for both newcomers and experienced users.



KEYNOTE, WORKSHOPS & QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

MONDAY 10TH NOVEMBER:

09:30 – 10:30 – Keynote Address - Constructivist Grounded Theory in Educational Research: Contexts, Considerations, and Challenges (Prof Elaine Keane)

Session 1: 11:00 – 13:00 – Track 1 - Interdisciplinary Innovations in Qualitative Research & Track 4 - Technology, Healthcare, and the Human Experience in Qualitative Research

Session 2: 14:15 – 15:15 – Track 2 - Qualitative Research in Education, Social Sciences, and Policy

Session 3: 15:30 – 16:30 – Track 2 - Qualitative Research in Education, Social Sciences, and Policy (continuation)

TUESDAY 12TH NOVEMBER:

09:00 – 11:00 – Workshop - AI-Assisted Analysis of Qualitative Data: Latest Innovations in MAXQDA (Dr Stefan Rädiker)

Session 1: 11:30 - 13:00 – Track 2 - Qualitative Research in Education, Social Sciences, and Policy

Session 2: 14:30 – 16:00 – Track 2 - Qualitative Research in Education, Social Sciences, and Policy (continuation)

DOCTORAL DAY:

This is a closed event aimed at active and prospective candidates of the MCAST DRes doctoral programme. It shall include discussions, insights, queries, and the avoiding of pitfalls, for one to successfully navigate the doctoral programme.

Location: MRC Auditorium.

WEDNESDAY 13TH NOVEMBER:

Session 1: 09:00 – 10:30 – Track 3 - Business, Media, Arts and Cultural Perspectives in Qualitative Research

Session 2: 11:00 – 12:00 – Track 3 - Business, Media, Arts and Cultural Perspectives in Qualitative Research (continuation)

Session 3: 13:30 – 16:30 – Workshop - An Introduction to Constructivist Grounded Theory (Prof Elaine Keane)





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INFORMATION & CONTACT

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