

# Qualitative workplace learning research



# Outline

- Qualitative research
- A case story of qualitative workplace learning research
- Why I think we are in a mess

# Qualitative research approach

*Sullivan 2012*

## **Bureaucratic**

- Authority lies in rules and procedures
- Can be verified
- Procedures are systematic/exhaustive
- Value resides in the impersonal

## **Charismatic** (creative)

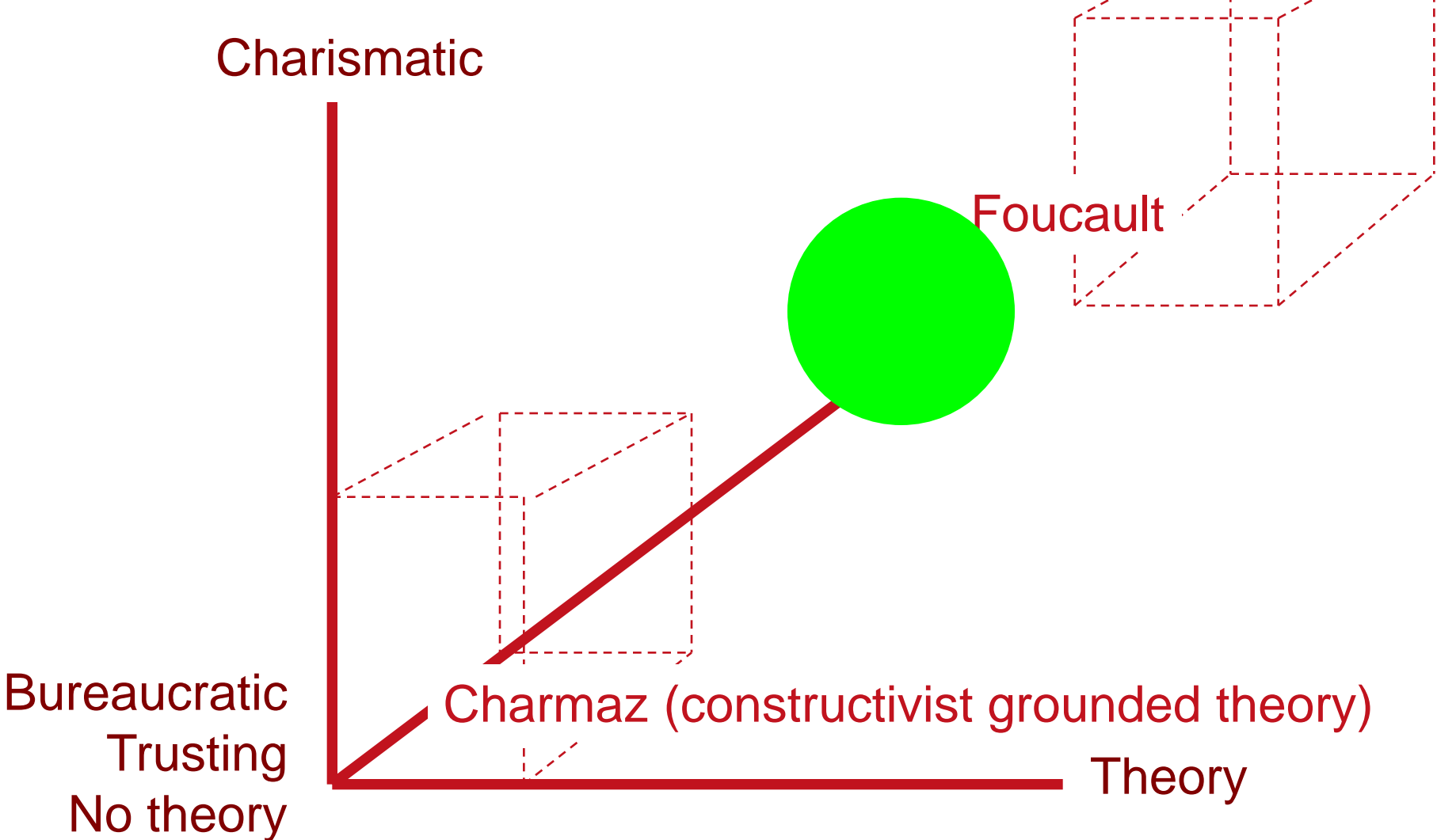
- Ungrounded but provocative interpretations
- Mixing data with theory
- Mixing analysis with personal musings
- Aesthetically pleasing writing



- Hermeneutics of:
  - **Trust:** Discerning lived experience from language
    - Phenomenology
    - Grounded theory
  - **Suspicion:** Interpreting signs to understand social structure, power, agency, and identity
    - Critical discourse analysis



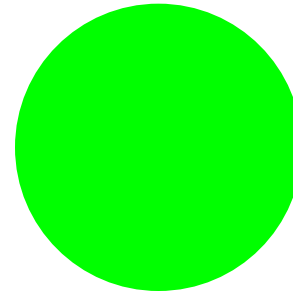
# Qualitative research



# Qualitative research: where could interest lie?



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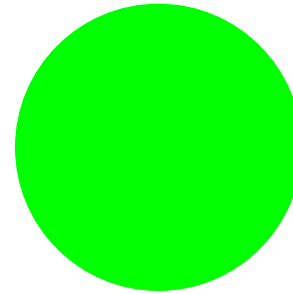
## Critical discourse analysis

- Explores agency (authoring)
- Supplies tools

# Qualitative research: where could interest lie?



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Usefulness

Qualitative research: where  
could interest lie?



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# **On Sociological Theories of the Middle Range [1949]**

Robert K. Merton



# Qualitative research: where could interest lie?



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## Middle range theories

- 'Theories that lie between the minor but necessary working hypotheses that evolve in abundance during day-to-day research and the all-inclusive systematic efforts to develop a unified theory that will explain all the observed uniformities of social behaviour, social organization and social change.' (Merton, 1967: 39)

## Realist research

- 'Interventions are theories' (Pawson, 2006)

## Design based research

- Progressive refinement of middle range theories

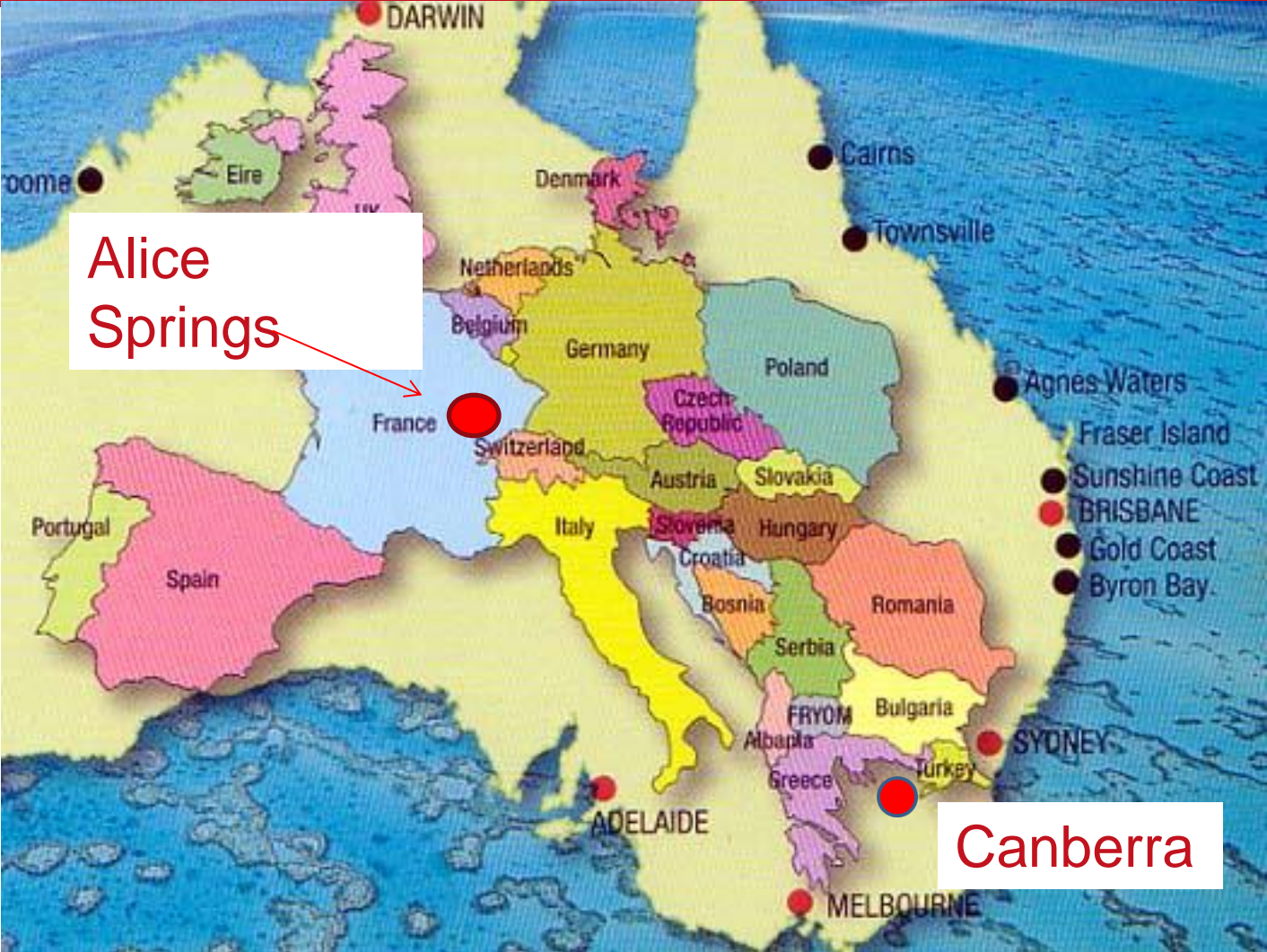
# Remote supervision of general practice residents



Susan Wearne



# Europe in Australia



# Remote Medical Practice





Photos: Prof

# Residents' learning

## Initial experience

- 20/21 passed examinations
- Training prepared well for practice
- Associated with staying in rural practice

# Insights from remote supervision

- Resident-supervisor relationship fundamental
- Residents learn from responsibility & continuity of care in a community
- Continuity of supervisor can create efficiency & depth of learning
- Need to agree systems for reactive & proactive supervision

# The questions

- **1<sup>0</sup> care researcher**
  - Selection process
- **1<sup>0</sup> care residency leader**
  - Workplace assess<sup>t</sup>
  - Multisource feedback
- ***1<sup>0</sup> care residency teacher***
  - IT support
- **Educational scientist**
  - Dropout

- **Psychologist and psychometrician**
  - EPAs
  - Mentoring vs supervision
- ***Educationalist and scientist***
  - Validity of a (pragmatic) recommendation



What is particular to a given historical period and how those particularities constitute the fate of those who live then *Frank 2013*

# The fate of our times

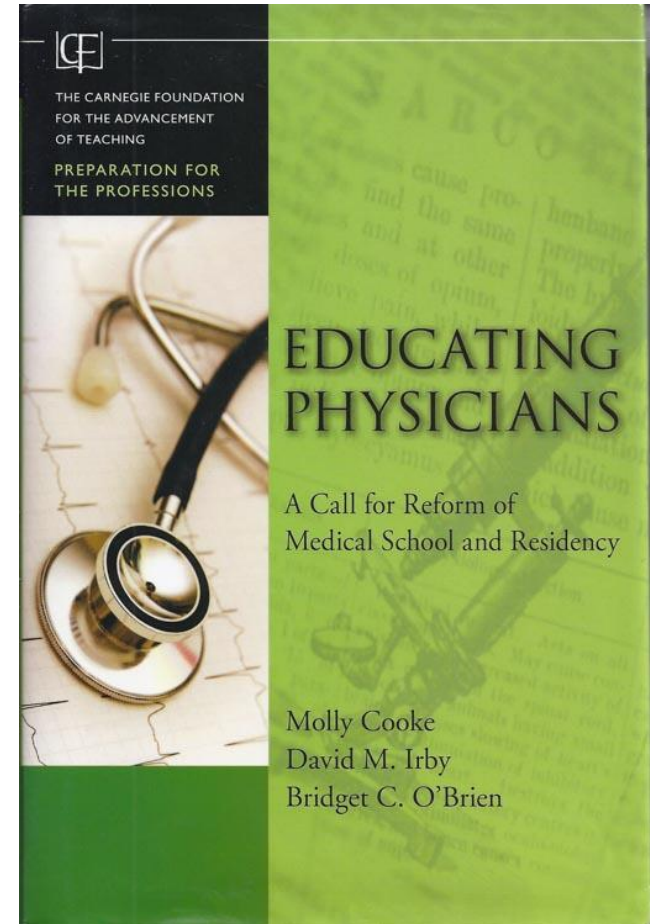
## Competency (outcome) based education

The Lancet Commissions



THE LANCET

Health professionals for a new century: transforming  
education to strengthen health systems in an  
interdependent world

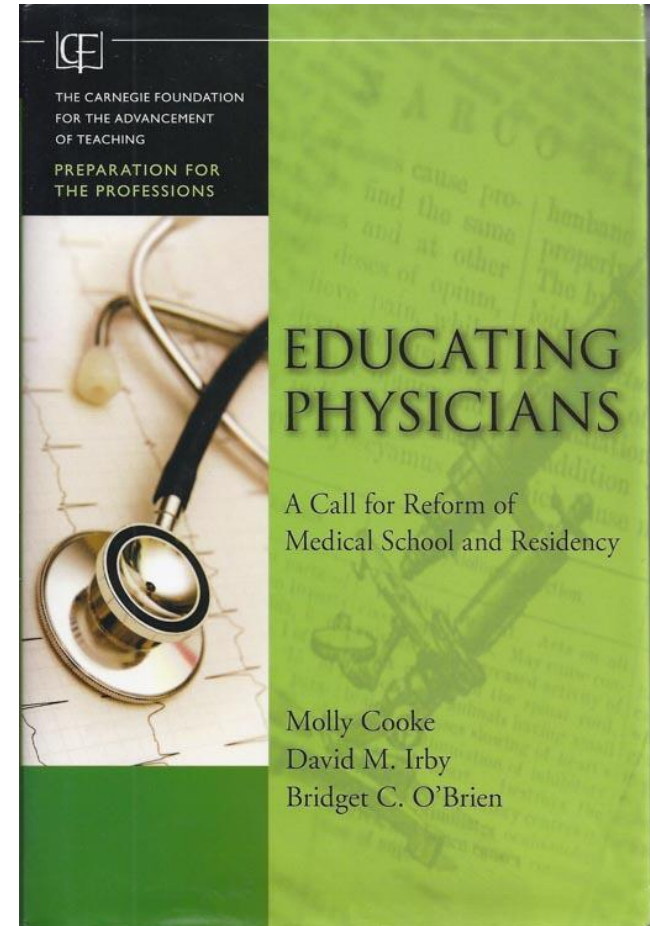


# Carnegie recommendations



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- Standardise learning outcomes and individualise processes
- Integrate knowledge, experience, roles, and responsibilities
- Develop habits of inquiry and improvement
- Explicitly address identity formation



- Informative to formative to transformative education (leadership and change)
- Interdependence of health and education sectors and systems
- Core competencies ... highly individualised learning rather than one-size-fits-all
- Interprofessional education
- Professionalism

The Lancet Commissions



THE LANCET

Health professionals for a new century: transforming  
education to strengthen health systems in an  
interdependent world



- Unbroken line of inheritance from behaviourism
- Relaunch of an unsuccessful experiment in USA, which followed launch of Sputnik
- Excludes more complex and humane elements of professional behaviour
- Lack of supportive empirical evidence

# Competency based education in action

*Renting et al 2015*



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- Workplace assessment of performance according to CANMEDS roles
- 591 feedback forms; 126 supervisors and 120 residents
- 'Meso-linguistic' critical discourse analysis
- Primary emphasis on speed/efficiency

# Competency based education in action

*Renting et al 2015*



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- Two discourses of collaborator
  1. Equality with other stakeholders
  2. Delegating; asserting; taking a firm stance
- Discourse of communicator
  - Speaking >> listening
- Patients
  - Rarely mentioned
  - **Objects** of communication

# The fate of our times

## Education practice:

- MMI/OSCE/prescribing exam
- Simulation and safety
- Emotional intelligence, professionalism, empathy
- Patients as pawns
- Revalidation and credit-earning CPD

## Research:

- Pragmatic

## Globalisation:

- Hegemonic

**Focused on individuals**

**Value system:**

Simplicity; reliability; conformity



- Political control of professional work
  - “Schooling” and assessment > learning
  - Regulation
  - Standardisation
  - Measurement
  - Playing down of messy things like:
    - Individuality
    - Emergence (collaboration)
    - Emotions
    - Power

# Where I would like to go

## Education practice:

- Scholarly practice-based learning
- Learning more than teaching
- Less emphasis on performance (centiles)
- Paying as much attention to middle ability as extremes

## Research:

- More strongly rooted in values

## Globalisation

- Emancipatory

Focused on networks of people

## Value system:

Complexity; validity; adaptability