

### Example 1: Initial analysis of interview data – by Andy Howes

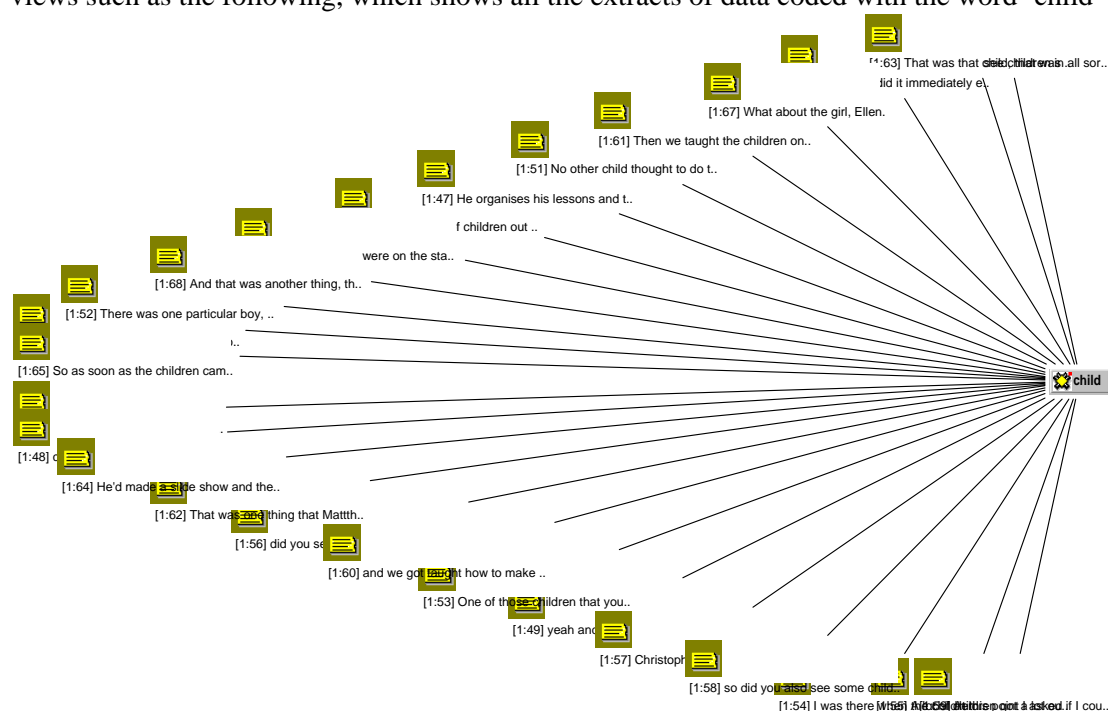
The context of the following extract of interview data is a study of the role of support staff in schools – staff who are not teachers but who play an important role in supporting learning and often also the logistics of classroom organisation. In the following extract, Jane is a learning support assistant in a primary school, and she is talking about her role during a particular week ('industry week') where the timetable of the school was suspended and each class became a manufacturing company.

<p>Interviewer: So then when you came to industry week. Incidentally, how did you come to the idea of it, were you in the staff meeting where they decided on it?</p> <p>Jane: I wasn't in the staff meeting. <b>I knew nothing about it, absolutely nothing</b> until this term. and then it's like all systems go. And the week before, these two classrooms (3 and 4) had done <b>nothing at all</b>. Miss Scammell's classroom (6) sorted, done, plans out, everything.</p> <p>Interviewer: do you support these two classes more than the others?</p> <p>Jane: that's just what I support, these two. I'm the librarian, I support in these two, <b>I'm the general dogsbody</b>. I do literacy support in each classroom. I take groups of children out of each literacy lesson to do ALS with them. I also do the DT / Art with them. I do speech and language support with a group of children in year 2. I also do the library. <b>Oh and story sacks as well</b>. That was because I volunteered and made them. That was when I was a welfare assistant, I put my name down for this course because there didn't seem to be much interest. <b>I thought</b> I can get something out of this for my children. It was me and Christine and another parent. We went on this course. Then we were <b>working night and day</b> making all these story sacks.</p> <p>Interviewer: so you see children in all sorts of different roles. And the industry week came as a bit of a shock.</p> <p>Jane: <b>to be fair to Sandria</b> she'd been busy with all these maths courses she'd been on and then she'd been ill. It was a training course with a lot of time out of school. And Ian is <b>not the most organised of people, which I can say quite openly, cos he'd tell you himself</b>. He organises his lessons and that, and the children never know because what they get is good. It's the swan effect, it's peaceful on the top but there's a lot of this [paddling with hands] underneath. So I got told we were doing Wacky Ties. On Monday we hadn't even cut the templates out. We were all there deciding on design. <b>Personally</b> I thought it should have been done the week before. It was a rush all week. When I was <b>up at 5.00 on Wednesday</b> putting designs on computer because it was still in my head, and emailed them to myself here to show Sandria in the morning...</p> <p>Interviewer: Oh my goodness.</p> <p>Jane: cos we'd done stuff in the IT suite with children, but its</p>	<p><b>What can we learn about Jane's role?</b></p> <p>Communication barrier.</p> <p>Repeat of 'nothing' - emphasising a norm here, a theme.</p> <p>Don't think I've got pretensions about my role, but....</p> <p>At the end of a long list, providing further emphasis.</p> <p>I'm giving you my real motive here - see how honest I am</p> <p>A measure of commitment</p> <p>Don't think I'm being unfair: I'm telling you how it really is. I'm not being personal. You can trust me.</p> <p>I'm giving my personal opinion here, not professional.</p> <p>Specific detail emphasises veracity. This is a story of personal implications for me.</p>
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<p>very</p> <p>hard, Sandria's very good with her hands and art and <b>stuff like that</b>, so what was <b>in her head is very hard to get the children to do</b>. I eventually left one saying <b>'is this what's in your head?'</b> Because trying to figure out what she wanted from them was hard work really.</p> <p>Interviewer: these were the placemats and coasters.</p> <p>Jane: yeah and <b>I knew</b> that the things that the children had done <b>weren't exactly what she wanted</b>. And I knew they weren't, but I thought <b>I'm</b> wasting time here. <b>We</b> need to get something done here or we'll have nothing to sell. Is this what you're thinking of?'. <b>'Yeah that's brilliant, yeah, print it off</b>. And basically that was the coaster edge.</p>	<p>I'm an interpreter, making sense of the mysterious demands of the professional.</p> <p>The interpreter's knowledge and responsibility.</p> <p>I -&gt; we: the job of the facilitator.</p> <p>Rescuer.</p>
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**What is the role of support staff in primary schools in the UK?** There is currently a lot of attention being paid to this, but little close up understanding of the roles they play. When I invite Jane to talk about her perspective on children, I also learn a lot about her role as she sees it.

Software such as Atlas-ti has many features which assist the process of analysis. One is the production of views such as the following, which shows all the extracts of data coded with the word 'child'



For many people, it seems, graphical views such as this are helpful in developing and testing categories and the relationships between them. Atlas-ti allows you to move the extracts around, grouping them together thematically, for example.



In terms of validity, one significant advantage of this type of diagram is that it demonstrates visibly that the thinking about the category needs to apply to all the data coded, not just to selected bits of it.