Crook: Well, this is a short introduction to a conversation that I had with Victoria Clarke. The conversation was about ideas arising from a 2006 paper that Victoria wrote with Virginia Braun on thematic analysis. That paper has enjoyed extraordinary success. I think it's one of the most cited papers in all of social science. Well, we talked about it for about 45 minutes, but unfortunately, the first few minutes of the conversation were lost. So one necessity of this introduction is just to bring you up to speed before we start the conversation proper. We did begin by talking about how the method of thematic analysis described in that paper had penetrated so widely in social science and Victoria confirmed, from a kind of helicopter view of the studies in this area, that she has, that it has indeed been thriving very much in educational studies. So it's a method very suitable to education research. The other thing we talked about briefly was the domains of applicability. Is it just something that's appropriate for talk interviews, focus groups and so on? Or can it be generalized for use with other kinds of materials, such as curricula or policy documents, press reporting, social media and so on? And Victoria believed that it was being used very much across the board in that sense, and even a method that might be applied to the analysis of visual images, say images to do with educational brochures, educational promotion and so on. So that's how we began the conversation. And what I'm going to do now is pass you over to the remainder of the conversation where we continue talking about this method in a little bit more detail.

Crook: Okay. So we've we've got this corpus of papers which really define themselves in terms of saying, 'Oh, there is a six stage framework that Clark and Brown have Brown and Clark have provided, and that's what we did'. Now that feels to me, it's a shortcut that might be a bit frustrating. So is that the way it strikes you?

Clarke: Yes, absolutely. And it's something that we have been kind of critical of in our more recent writing that we weren't imagining ourselves creating a recipe that we were asking people to follow. Exactly. We were imagining ourselves kind of giving them tools and tools that they would use in a reflexive way to analyze their data. So what we really hope to see when people are reporting qualitative research is not: 'We followed Brown and Clark or a listing of the kind of six steps just lifted straight out of our paper'. We were hoping to have some kind of personal, reflexive discussion about how people engaged in the process. Obviously in journal articles where the limits are tight and much more constrained than in dissertations and theses, there's more scope to have some really detailed discussion about how you engaged in the process and some really nice

kind of reflexive details about what you did. If you go on Twitter, for example, people often share really colorful images of all their Post-it Notes kind of laid out on a table, on a wall. And, you know, including those kind of images in the dissertation or thesis would be lovely to give a kind of sense of the process. So it's yeah, it's disappointing when it's just flat and it's treated like a recipe that you kind of followed rigidly. We want to see some kind of lively engagement and to share with the reader what you did and how you engage with the process.

Crook: Yeah, I would like to come back to how you achieve that. I mean, what I mean, some authors go a little bit further and say, Oh yes, we carefully read and reread the transcript. We applied codes to the entire transcript, we revisited codes for review and so on. But it feels to me like just another kind of list, really. And so good principles have been declared. But you know, good practice is not really rendered visible. So I mean, how can that be best done? How can you make that practice of analysis visible?

Clarke: Well, I think it really helps. Just having done a supervision earlier today and talked about research journals, I think keeping a research journal really helps because you then have the detail to draw on when you're kind of writing up. So if you keep notes about the process and what you're doing and how difficult things are and how challenging things are, or you know, your ideas and your inspiration that could inform a really kind of rich account of the process. And there's lots of different ways that you can engage with with your data. So in our book that's coming out soon, we've got it. Samples of students writing poetry when they're familiarizing themselves with the data to kind of capture their sort of emotional response to the data or doing doodles, you know, so you don't we don't mention doodles and poetry in the 2006 paper, but there's no reason why you can't kind of bring in those moments of kind of creativity and then share them with the reader to show how you engaged in this creative process. So it's this bringing it alive. It's making it feel lively and I think there's a tendency in reporting qualitative research to want it to look very seamless, neat. And I think we need to feel more confident in embracing the messiness and embracing the, you know, the paths that didn't kind of work out and changing ideas and different approaches that that kind of sharing our process, honestly sharing our process, I think, its what makes reports of research really compelling. And I can think of a few examples of papers where people kind of show the mechanics, kind of show the workings. There's a great paper about foreign domestic helpers that I can share the details of where the paper is just lecturing

the researcher, sharing how they got from this quite banal, descriptive analysis to something more insightful just by reading, thinking, wandering, making connections and so on. And then a lovely paper by Lisa Traynor kind of talking about how she engaged in the reflexive to process and sharing images, sharing her kind of colorful Post-it notes and so on. So they're all kind of inspirations for people to draw on to get a sense of how you can bring the process alive.

Crook: Yes. I mean, one of the things quantitative researchers are increasingly under pressure to do from both funders and editors, I think, is to publish their raw data sets. Now, you know, ethical issues will, I think, constrain what qualitative researchers can do by way of sharing transcripts and so on. But I mean, perhaps visibility of core material could be achieved for some sorts of data. I mean, you know, documents that are being studied or public records or social media posts. So should we be more open with the data sets themselves to offer readers, you know, an analytical window that's similar to the one the analyst is used?

Clarke: Yeah, I think it's tricky because I think the concerns of the different traditions are different and in qualitative research, well, most kinds of qualitative research would acknowledge that what we're doing is telling stories and offering an interpretation. So it's never going to be true or accurate in any sort of uncomplicated way that it's always going to be a take or a reading. And so. I wonder whether the kind of open science movement. Yes, as I heard someone put it, I think it was Ginnie, actually, it's kind of solving a problem that doesn't exist. It's so I do have some kind of reservations about qualitative research kind of jumping in to the idea of kind of sharing data without us thinking through carefully. Is this actually helping us or is this kind of orienting to a problem that doesn't really exist in the qualitative book? Because we do share data in our reports, we provide exemplars of data. So obviously we're editing and we're being selective and so on. But hopefully, we provide enough data to give the reader some confidence in our interpretations, at least in the interpretations of the extract presented. So I guess I'm not sure about whether we want to to share data. I'm just mindful as well. I'm a psychologist. I mainly supervise psychological practitioners. The data is so acutely sensitive and so identifying. I can't imagine ways that it could be shared that wouldn't be compromising for the participant. Hmm. Okay.

Crook: This relates to. The issue of reflexivity, I suppose, and I mean, I think you've come to refer to your approach as reflexive to, I mean, correct me if I'm wrong about that, but perhaps to distinguish it more clearly from other teow formats. Now this perhaps relates to what you were saying, when to go about poetry and so on. Reflexivity is likely to involve various kinds of diary type records or memo type records of the analytic process. So couldn't some of that be more effectively shared? I mean, it might not be part of a core part of the paper's text, but it could be made available, you know, as supplementary material. So does that seem a possibility?

Clarke: I'm going to think we need to be mindful that researchers don't have the same access to confidentiality as participants do, so I think we need to think. Carefully about exposing ourselves in that way and making ourselves vulnerable and whether we're comfortable to do that. And I think as well, you know, sometimes some disclosures can potentially be quite discrediting professionally. So I think we need to be careful about that. But I certainly like the idea of sharing the process, I said I reviewed the train of paper that I mentioned earlier, developing the craft, and one of my comments as a reviewer is that every researcher should have to write a paper like this. So you write your kind of analysis and then you write your companion piece about how you did it. I mean, obviously in practice, that's not going to happen. But I do think there is value, as you say, in those supplementary materials, in kind of sharing kind of aspects of your process while being mindful that. It's OK as a researcher to not want to disclose some things to the public gaze, and that's fine, I think. Yeah. I think sometimes students can feel under pressure to kind of make personal disclosures because it's seen as good practice. But I do think we need to be mindful that there are some things that you know we don't have to share.

Crook: Yeah, quick follow on from that because it allows me to ask you a different question. At the same time, I notice you do not very often - I may not have an encyclopedic knowledge of what you've written in this area - but I don't see much mention of using digital tools to support the analysis. And I ask that because it strikes me that if one was going to expand the corpus of reflective material, analytic reflection, then you know, doing it in that media, and maybe a supplementary to an article, would be one way of going now. Do you have a negative take on digital opportunities?

Clarke: We neither of us use quantitative data analysis software. We never have done so. Our background is in discourse analysis. We both our PhDs at Loughborough University, which now and at the time was a centre of excellence for kind of discourse analysis and conversation analysis. And that's very much a paper and pen approach to data analysis. So that kind of shaped our approach. We've both been addicted and tried software, but it didn't particularly appeal to us. And so it didn't kind of figure in our imaginings of kind of qualitative data analysis. I think our perspective over the years has changed. I developed MS a few years ago and I've lost kind of function in my right hand, so I can't do hard copy coding anymore because I'm right handed and with my right hand doesn't work. So we kind of reflected on our position and realized we were being somewhat able to kind of discount qualitative software because, for some people, it can be a really good, accessible option. I guess our reservation is having seen lots of Nvivo and other software type analysis presented at conferences is because it makes coding very easy. There can be a tendency to over-code and a tendency to get really enthusiastic about having lots of themes and theme levels. And so you end up with quite a fragmented analysis, and that's not really how we imagine reflexive, that works for approaches like framework analysis or template analysis, where hierarchical semantic structure is used to kind of capture complexity. But that's not how we imagine reflected TA. So I think the main point, I'd say, is have a good understanding of the process of what you're trying to achieve before you use the software, because I think there's potential for the software to kind of drag you towards fragmentation and over coding. But if you've got a good sense of the process, you can use the tool to support your process rather than the tool kind of shaping processes that make sense.

Crook: Yeah, I certainly take that point. So that's that's usually made, I think. Just one more thing about what I'm calling sort of issues of transparency. I think researchers in this area can be careless in making fully transparent, certain kind of baggage, you know that they bring to analysis now. Perhaps we're a bit more careful articulating this in relation to theory. So, you know, there is baggage that it's cultural or activity theory or psychoanalytic, and you can declare that in an introduction, not always as much as one would like, perhaps. But don't researchers bring something more personal to their analysis? I mean, to take an example, it would be common for education students - of the general kind of example anyway - I mean, suppose the student researcher is interviewing teachers about managing cultural diversity. Now, if the researcher is, for example, a white, middle class, middle aged male, then readers should know this. And

maybe there are other things that should be declared. But do you feel this sort of baggage is too concealed in much reporting in this area?

Clarke: I think a problem is having experienced it myself, word counts for journals in particular, are often rather constrained. And so the thing that goes is the reflectivity, is the kind of positioning of the researcher, which I think is a shame because I think, as you say in that example, it's really important we need to know the positioning of the researcher in relation to the topic and in relation to the other participants in a kind of a framework like thinking about whether you're an insider or an outsider researcher. So a member of the group or not a member of the group that you're studying, that's really useful. I think we're kind of starting to think about your positioning and to reflect on your positioning and how it shapes how you engage with participants. I might relate to you how you relate to them. You're kind of. You've put lots of inverted commas around it, blind spots, it's not an ideal phrase. So things that you overlook, things that you aren't visible to you because of your kind of positioning. Hopefully, a good, reflexive practice will kind of help you to notice what you're not noticing. And so ideally, I'd like to see that more woven into reporting not just a declaration of positioning, but a reflection on those positions and how it shaped the process and how it shaped how you engage with your data. And I think sometimes it needs - this is why collaboration can be helpful - sometimes it needs someone else to kind of hold a mirror up to you and help you to notice what you're not noticing because you've kind of invested in a common sense way of understanding of something like that.

Crook: Yes, Park that for a minute. I'd like to come back to it, but I guess my last general theme, which perhaps in some ways the biggest in my mind is is something that I feel when I discover that many students are apparently quite keen to do a qualitative project, but also very nervous about their ability to do so. Now I think novice researchers can feel very uneasy about the status of the claims and findings that they report. So now in your TA, it seems to me there is something that might be called kind of accuracy trap, namely a lack of confidence that one's findings are accurate and it's a trap because in TA codes and things cannot be correct, you know? Yet while this kind of, let's say, accuracy stress may often sound a kind of a misjudged ontology. Often, researchers may actually mean something a bit more innocent. I mean, perhaps they're worrying about their authority. I mean, education researchers are often anxious that their findings should 'make a difference'. It should contribute to practice or policy or

whatever. So how does reflexive car relate to these anxieties about the credibility of an outcome, if you like, relate to what qualitative researchers sometimes call achieving trust in their findings?

Clarke: Yeah, it's a tricky issue, and I think. It's partly about and it can be harder for some people than others, obviously learning to kind of accept and tolerate a degree of uncertainty that in qualitative research, there isn't a great deal of certainty. And I think it can be quite anxiety provoking to see you as the researcher at the center of the process, which you very much are in reflexive TA. I think there can be comfort in the idea that this kind of other things going on that are structuring and scaffolding things and but the idea that it's kind of all on you, I think, is obviously quite anxiety provoking. But I think. You need to kind of sink in and settle into a degree of degree of uncertainty and accept that things will feel overwhelming, that 'there's nothing in my data'. 'Oh my God, there's too much in my data'. This emotional kind of roller coaster is normal as part of the process, and allowing yourself time, I think, is really important as a dissertation module leader. My message to students is always to kind of get going early, to give yourself plenty of time for the process that you don't want to be doing things in the last minute panic. And I think time is really helpful to to allow that kind of emotional rollercoaster to unfold, to allow yourself time for doubt, for uncertainty, to put things down, to come back again. So I think it is an uncertain process and it requires a certain amount of bravery to just jump in and embrace the uncertainty and allow yourself to kind of sit with that uncertainty. But what you're doing is you're telling a story as you say, you're not aiming for accuracy because you can't accurately represent your data because you as a person are interpreting it and you were sort of the filter through which you make sense of it. So you're never going to see things in the same way as the participant does or another researcher does. And that's OK. What we're looking for is some reflexivity, some reflection on your positioning, on how you're making sense and to embrace the fact that you're telling a story and... what youre aiming for is a good story, a story that's compelling that captures a certain truth of the participants' experiences, but not the truth that engages people, and that hopefully - if you're wanting to kind of create change - kind of moves, people, changes things in some way. And hopefully if you can see yourself as a storyteller, that that gives you a bit of space to breathe around the idea of you being at the center of the process that you're not trying to create an absolute truth, that you're trying to tell a story, a story that feels authentic. A story that's compelling. A story that is perhaps moving. So that's not a very concrete

answer, I'm afraid, but there's not a lot this concrete and qualitative analysis and particularly reflexive.

Crook: Well, no, it's it's very helpful and I think many students would find that answer reassuring. And I think it's a good position to adopt as a supervisor or reviewer or editor or whatever. There are some other things that students are often inclined to do and some researchers would encourage. And I'm just wondering what your own position on this is, for example, member checking. I mean, you've carried out a conversation, maybe with someone you've reached some conclusion about meaning that exists within that business. Now why not bounce it back to the participant and kind of double hermeneutic here, I think, and get them to respond? What's your view on that as a possible method?

Clarke: I think that is often seen as a kind of really useful qualitative technique kind of across the board, but it sort of has a legacy in positivism that I don't always find helpful. There's a great deal that I can share about our medical education researcher around kind of some of the legacy of positivism in qualitative research isn't always helpful, and one of the things she talks about is member checking. I think it's worth kind of holding on to the fact that you're not necessarily in reflexive TA trying to tell a story of participants experiences that they would necessarily recognize. And you're also aggregating your story across all the different participants that you've spoken to. So again, it might resonate for some participants more than others, but it doesn't mean that it's not a meaningful and useful story to tell. So I think member checking can be useful if the purpose of your analysis is to represent participants experiences in ways that would make sense to them if you're perhaps concerned with kind of notions of accuracy. But I think if you're taking a more interpretive stance and a more kind of storytelling stance, then it becomes less useful because your interpretation of their experiences might be representing a certain truth. They might be useful, engaging, compelling or authentic, but the participants might not like it. It doesn't mean that it's not useful, it's not valid, it's not meaningful. So I think it's worth thinking about. What am I trying to do and how might my participants react to what I've done? And if you if you're trying to stay very close to their sense making, if you're trying to accurately represent what they're saying, then maybe it's a useful tool. But if you're taking a more interpretive approach, I have some reservations about it.

Crook: Yeah, I feel that I've heard students say in my space anyway, yes, OK, it's it's my story, but I'm less confident that it's legitimate, because I mean, for example, a student may go into a classroom and have a conversation with a primary school teacher, and at some point the teacher in such conversations may sometimes suggest, 'Well, hang on, I've been teaching in climbing classrooms for 20 years. What is your authority to tell a story about, about what I'm experiencing or what I'm feeling?' So I don't know how you address that kind of insecurity that particularly a young researcher is going to feel?

Clarke: Yeah, it's tricky. But in the book, can you imagine how awful it would be if they went back to the participant? No, this is rubbish. It's a terrible this doesn't really represent. This makes people really angry. Yeah, that wouldn't be a great outcome at all. I can imagine that that would be quite devastating. And I think those kind of these power dynamics in research are really, really hard. And I find I don't know if I quite like the terminology, but the kind of literature on interviewing elites is quite, it's quite useful looking at those kind of power dynamics in research. And a few years ago now, Ginnie did a study where she interviewed surgeons, and that was really interesting because surgeons are incredibly powerful people who are training to give their time to a lowly psychology researcher coming to talk to them about the work they did. And there were lots of because we were together when she was doing some of the interviews because they were kind of oversees the kind of dynamics of power and play around that were very interesting. So I think having a good understanding of how power plays out between researcher and participant in research is really useful, I think, and being able to think through those relationships and think about, well, what? What's my position as a researcher, what are my obligations? What am I aiming for? And yeah, often we think of the researcher as all powerful, but I think there are lots of contexts in which the participants can kind of exercise a kind of power and control over the process. And I think having a really careful think through that about how we're relating to people and what we're trying to achieve, I think can be really useful and helpful because the fact that the participants might think we have no right to tell their story in anything other than the way that they want us to is, yeah, it's troubling.

Crook: Yeah. I take your points there, I suppose there's another path you might go down sort of, just a final example really in this form of stress, which is: collaborative coding, now does reflexivity need to be a private matter? And why should we only have

a conversation with oneself, rather than the subjectivity being socially constructed? So what is the case against collaboratively coding?

Clarke: I don't think there is one. I think it's because a lot of people used to students doing student projects, they're kind of inherently kind of working by themselves. But Ginny and I have created data together, Starts with hard copies of transcripts and kind of discuss things, you know, when we're using, particularly when we're done things like work examples in books and book chapters. We've kind of analysed data together and argued about things and decided how to do an analysis, and I think that can be incredibly useful. Having someone else to kind of reflect back on the assumptions that you're making and how you're seeing things. So a really clear example for us when we were analyzing the kind of worked example data for our quality textbook quite a while ago now we've collected focus group data on the (inverted commas) obesity epidemic, and we were looking at how participants were talking about exercise. And participants were often talking about exercise as kind of boring and hard, and I was just like, Oh yeah, because that kind of resonated with my experience of exercise. And Ginny said, Well, hang on a minute. Let's know how I experience exercise. I love exercise. It's absolutely this is in New Zealand and New Zealanders and Australians. They all seem to have met ...everyone I've met is mad on exercise. They love it. And she said, I don't like you're not, you're not seeing this as a construction Victoria, as a way of making sense of exercise because it resonates with your common sense. Whereas my understanding of exercise is completely different, it leaps out to me. So that was a moment where a simple example, where that reflexivity, where that collaboration was really helpful because it helped me to notice what I wasn't noticing. And so I think collaborative coding and kind of that sharing of reflexivity can be really useful.

Crook: Yes, well, I'm encouraged, personally encouraged by the answer there because I think in reading around this area over the years, I felt there was too much of a focus on celebrating your story as if it was inevitably personal and privately owned. So you're not going down that route?

Clarke: No, I mean, I think I think where we come from is a position where. Qualitative analysis is only good if there are two or more coders working independently with a code book and then measuring coding agreement, and then we can say the coding is reliable and accurate. So while our emphasis on the lone coder has been a response to that, if

you like the idea that unless kind of coding broadly maps onto the scientific method, it's not trustworthy, it's not reliable. So are kind of celebrating or emphasising the fact that it's OK for one person to code data as a response, as a response to that. But in practice, one coder, several coders, I think, are all useful. All good.

Crook: Yeah, I feel thats the important point, maybe for students listening to us talking here is that although the language of reliability may conjure up inappropriate models of what one is doing, there is nevertheless an imperative for some degree of rigor, for some degree of trustworthiness in what one can tell and some degree of transparency in the way in which it's exposed. So we're OK on that. I take it. We're seeing that in a similar way.

Clarke: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. I mean, we use woolly words that aren't very helpful, like rigor and transparency and being systematic. But yeah, we kind of old fashioned scholarly values of being kind of systematic and rigorous in your process of documenting things of, you know, giving us plenty of time of pushing yourself to reflect on things. All those are part of kind of good practice. It might not look like a scientific approach where there's multiple coders, a fixed code, book reliability, some stats that come into play to show everything kind of working well and looking good. But it's yeah. Is this his own kind of kind of rigour, the rigour of the artist rather than the rigour of the scientist?

Crook: Okay, fine. Look one last. what you might call critical, observation of my own in relation to what we've been talking about. It seems to me there is a tendency for TA researchers to become slaves to their texts so that by that, I mean kind of resisting opportunities to add depth from elsewhere. Now, you know my example a moment ago, teachers talking about cultural diversity. Often I would expect all the heavy lifting of analysis will get done on recorded interviews. So why is there not more triangulation? What does the interviewer's classroom look like? What curriculum materials are in use there? What is the whole school philosophy? You know, in relation to this theme, so does adopting to maybe lead towards a two slavish anchoring of your analysis to discursive material?

Clarke: I don't think it has to. It's certainly not our sort of history and approach to qualitative research. You know, we developed it from a sort of a messy approach to

qualitative research using lots of different data sources to kind of look at the same phenomena. So both of our PhDs were loads of different types of data to kind of address the kind of central topic. So that's that's kind of our natural inclination for qualitative research, but I think. If you look at the vast majority of TA that's conducted, you've got a few interviews and you've got a you've got a TA and it can be... a bit dull, a bit boring. The scope for it to be more exciting, to bring in other kinds of data and observation, as you say, also to bring in theory, I think. It always disappoints us a little bit that so much TA is very closely tied to the data in a sort of inductive kind of sense and that there's a lack of engagement with theory to help kind of unpick and understand what's going on in the data. That's one thing we definitely like to see a bit more in the research. There are some really lovely examples of that, but unfortunately not too many. So, yes, I think there's a tendency to do in particular ways that are not what we had in mind when we first started writing about it.

Crook: Okay. I'm thinking aloud here, and I'll only do it briefly. But I do sometimes wonder if there shouldn't be a stage zero in your six stage model, because on stage zero would be what happened at the point of engaging with the ...usually the person...but it might, might be the document, I suppose. So it does - particularly, I think, when researchers are privileged to hire others to go and do interviews on their behalf and so on.... It does seem to me there's a dynamic at the point of conversation which can get missed again, if you then pass it over to someone else to work with the text. And I wonder if there should be some accounting of that dynamic and how it how it forms part of the analysis. Hmm.

Clarke: Yeah. I mean, it's it's, you know, it's envisaged that the method for people that are doing their own data collection, but obviously the further away you get from being a student, the less likely you are to be doing that. So yeah, I think I'm always struck by how that data fails when you don't when you haven't collected it yourself, because you don't have that lively sense of the encounter and you don't have that visual image of the participant, and if you're doing interviews in their home, their home setting and so on, you don't have that memory of your kind of emotional reactions in the interview. What you've got is a really flat transcript, and you might have the kind of audio recording as well. So I would always encourage researchers to kind of using the old fashioned sociological term to kind of keep field notes in your research channel to kind of keep a reflection on the interviewer encounter and what that felt like some will remain. I mean,

some I can think of two decades ago, I can still remember them. They're really vivid because of, you know, particular kind of characteristics of them or how I felt in them, but others just fade. So I think it's really useful to have that reflection. I think there's lots of interesting discussions about what constitutes the data. Yes, the encounter. Is it the audio recording? Is it the transcript? Yes. By the time you get to the transcript, you're kind of two steps removed from the kind of encounter and so on. And you're your. You know, if it's you as a researcher doing the interview you have. It's easier to reflect on how you shape the process, you know is it as an academic, it's it becomes harder because you don't want to be critical of the person that's doing the interviews for easy access to that kind of reflection. But nonetheless, you often have. You know, I have the reaction to I'm reading interviews when they said that or I would have, Oh, you've missed a golden opportunity. They're those kind of. Yeah.

Crook: Yeah. I mean, I think it's a pity people don't use audio more. Of course, the thing about transcribed conversation is that you can move within it so easily as an analyst. And, you know, even carve it up in a flexible way. But but on the other hand, it doesn't carry a lot of the linguistic and contextual information that was actually going on at the time of the engagement. So it's a pity we don't allow ourselves to be more versatile in maybe using those two things in parallel.

Clarke: And that's that's part of the discursive conversation analytic tradition that I kind of was trained in. In my opinion, that's how you work. You listen to data. You don't just the transcript as a sort of aide memoire with a reference point, but you listen to the tracks over and over and over. So you've got a kind of lively sense of it. So that's that was my kind of entry into qualitative analysis. So this kind of this flutter approach where you just agree, engage with the transcript and you don't necessarily have the audio recording with.

Crook: Yeah, yeah. I mean, you mentioned Loughborough earlier and I remember going to DARG meetings where conversation extracts were analyzed, and being slightly bemused by the enormous care that was invested in capturing the paralinguistic on the page. Why not listen to it? Why does the analysis have to be anchored to the text all the time? But probably we shouldn't go there? A final, a final point before because I'm conscious of time. But as I noted when we started this conversation, many researchers will encounter this work through the 2006 paper. Now I know - and indeed, it's one of

the strengths of what you've done I think - that you've evolved your thinking around that from that paper, and it would be a pity if novice researchers didn't find themselves sensitive to that. So just briefly, what would you identify as the focal points? The key points in your subsequent evolution of this to that really deserve attention?

Clarke: I would. Try and get some understanding of why we call it reflexive TA and we did that because we were increasingly conscious of there being lots of different types of TA that it isn't a singular approach, even though it's often treated that way and written about that way. You know, I've got lots of quotations along the lines of 'we followed the standard procedures with massive analysis', and then I have lots of question marks in the margin. What standard procedures - there aren't any. So I think a kind of image we find really useful is to think of it as a family of methods that it's a family of different approaches to analyzing qualitative data that have features in common. But there are some really important differences, both in terms of procedure and in terms of the kind of values that kind of shape the method. So it's understanding that when you read our approach, it is quite different from other approaches. And so you need to be cautious if you're combining different approaches. We see lots of examples of people citing our approach and Richard, I think he's an education researcher or great guest and colleagues applied thematic analysis. I think their public health researchers. All three approaches are very different. And so. I would struggle to see how you kind of combine them effectively. So we renamed our approach reflexive to to kind of acknowledge that there is a family of methods and ours is quite different and distinctive. And what we're centering in our approach is the subjectivity and reflexivity of the research and the researchers role as artists in crafting analysis. And that's quite different from most other kinds of TA. We've done lots of reflecting on our assumptions that we   made when we first articulated our approach. We thought everyone would understand that we're trying to develop an approach that reflected kind of qualitative research values in a fully qualitative approach to TA. But we didn't articulate that. We just kind of took that for granted. And so we tried to articulate that more carefully now. And we've thought about things like what we call the phases because. When we use the phrase searching for things, we didn't mean kind of going out there with your tools and equipment, looking for the things that are kind of buried in the dirt and digging around and uncovering the yeah, 'I found the thing'. That's not what we meant, but we realized that's how everyone interpreted it. So we think we thought carefully about the language we've used. We've updated the names of the phases to kind of reflect a more subjective interpretive and

reflexive approach. And We've really encouraged people to imagine themselves as the artist, as the sculpture, as the storyteller, as the quintessential metaphor for thinking about doing reflective TA. So they were kind of lots of reflection in the last few years. We've written quite a few papers where we're reflecting on kind of published work and identifying common problems and misunderstandings. And a lot of it comes down to not understanding the diversity of practice and the fact that we're offering a distinctive approach that reflects qualitative research values. And that centers the researcher in the process.

Crook: Ok, look for sure that that's very useful, thank you so much for giving out this chunk of time. I'm sure there will be students who will move forward with these ideas and there will be on the associated page. Some help in doing that. So keep up the good work and thanks very much for sharing it with us today.

Clarke: Thanks.