**Transcription of Interview with Participant 4**

**Date: 20th March 2017 (11am)**

**Location: Video Studio, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick**

Key:

Q = Question from Interviewer

R = Response from Participant.

[00:00:00] [Interview begins]

Q: So Just starting off, obviously I have to do the housekeeping (R: yea) just to

remind you that as a participant you can pull out at any stage. (R: yea) you can also

request all the footage to be destroyed and everything else, (R: yea) if you're not

happy even post interview (R: yea) if you suddenly have an incline that 'actually

I don't what that' (R: yea) that’s no problem. You are also entitled to a full copy of

the the video and the transcription that comes following and the actual edited

artifact if you want that as well. (R: yes , yes) So at any stage you can request that or

request to opt out. Ahem. So you're happy enough with those...

R: Am happy enough with that yea.

Q: its all explained anyway in the participant information sheet. (R: yea, yes)

Q: Ok. so ah, firstly can you explain your role in here in Mary

Immaculate?

R: Ok, I've been lecturing in Mary Immaculate College

since 1998. Ah I teach the production end of the Media and Communications

departments modules, so I take groups of second years where we do three camera

setup live broadcasting ah students make their own live show included to...

including two short edited pieces; two and three minutes long. And then in fourth

year we make fifteen to eighteen minute documentary with the students breaking

then into groups of six and we also make two thirty second adverts which are

product of the students own invention.

Q: Ok, fairly intense. (laugh) with regards to equipment and space, specifically with

regards to post production obviously. What spaces do you have and what tools do

0you have for editing?

[00:01:34]

R: Well up until maybe four years ago we were averaging approximately forty five

students per year ahem now if you break them down into groups of six you can see

that it was ah approximately seven to eight groups depending on the year that was

in it. We at that stage we would have had four edit suites. the edit suites are ah kind

of small bedroom size, single bedroom size. We would have ah five ah macs with

final cut pro version seven and obviously we would end up with a situation with

four edit suites and two groups of students of six students per groups sharing an

edit suite each over the course of the module.

Q: Right. your own personal opinion would this equipment be your choice you

would prefer as an NLE for editing for teaching?

R: Personally I would have to say that ahem I mean I would have started in the

industry with Celluloid editing on Steenbecks. I would have worked my way up

through Avids through Lightworks through various other kinds of systems that the

college had been with at earlier stages. What I like about working with Final Cut

even though you know if you really want to go into this industry your going Avid,

but what I like about working with final cut is that at this stage of the game most

students have access to Final Cut. So I fine that its a tool that can work very very

well from the point of view that they can ahem ah you know work at home. Very

often I find that students availing of the edit suites obviously but they would come in

in the morning with titles done, or with end credits done that they have kind of

worked off their own laptops at home so for the purposes from an educational

standpoint ya I’m very happy with it.

[00:03:12]

Q: Fair enough, and space as well are you, you were telling about the bedroom sized

edit suites...

R: ..Space isn't great. You know but I think that is always an issue. Our main problem

as I said was that we average forty-five students per semester, we are now up to

approximately seventy two students per semester. Ah so group number have gone

up to about twelve groups per module. We have have managed to persuade the

college to give us two extra edit suites but they're kind of cobbled together rooms

with systems in them you know. Health and safety wise they are obviously fine or

we couldn't use them but you're conscious of state air or your conscious of I mean

we encourage the students, they can block book the edit suites into two hours

sessions, but they are not allowed to block book more than two two hour sessions in

a row, just purely from a health and safety point of view. They're not ideal. They're

enclosed spaces there’s no natural light in the spaces, only two... only one of them in

fact has an open window. So ah no they are not ideal.

[00:04:12]

Q: Ok, Speaking of which, I have noticed in other colleges that ah that they have a lab

situation of edit suites, you don't have anything like that??

R: We do. We have a mac lab in the campus which has eighteen state of the art macs

all of which have Final Cut Pro installed on them and the students are encouraged to

do down time work on that in terms of putting together their titles, putting together

their end titles, any little montage pieces but we encourage them to use the suites

here in terms of the group aspect, because what you will often get is an alpha male

who will want to go off and do all the edit when his or her own alpha male female.

Ahem so from that point of view they are encouraged, the group has to... the focus of

the groups work has to be the edit suite here. The RG5 Mac lab where these eighteen

systems are the problem is that obviously all the media students can access that

suite or that room I should say. So its one thing to be in there waiting to do a bit of

an edit but you're also going to find fifty or sixty other students trying to finish

essays and stuff like that cos the macs have everything. So its not ideal but it is a

bright airy room so the option is there yes, but I mean my primary concern is that

the bulk of the work is done on the editing suites that we have here in the studio

complex. And from that point of view yea there is definitely issue in terms of the size

of the rooms.

[00:05:30]

Q: And do yourself obviously lecturing do you use that mac lab you know to deliver

say the initial content..?.

R: No, what I actually do is in the studio I have here, which is a decent enough sized

studio, what I will do is for group lectures I will wheel a mac system in here, connect

it up to the projector and go through the basics with them. Its really only after three

initial two hour introductory lectures where we give them the basics that we then

move into the edit rooms and we continue the teaching with smaller groups in the

edit room.

[00:06:06]

Q: I get you, ahem, could you describe any challenges using this particular type of

equipment..?

R: Ah I think, its always a challenge. I think bottom line is looking at somebody doing

something is not going to teach you anything when you are trying to teach a

practical module. You know, ideally what you want is students you know in an ideal

world you would have each student on a mac system copying everything you do so

that they can see how it goes. I'm always very conscious teaching the students that

you know you could literally see them tuning out after about twenty minutes cos

there is literally nothing more boring than watching somebody do something than

apposed to doing it yourself. So what I try and do is try and do a mix between, I

mean I’m probably going off the point here, but I would have come up through the

celluloid editing, and with celluloid editing, ahem, it was all about the structure of

how you approach the project, Ok with celluloid editing it was so time consuming

you couldn't you know keep changing you mind and fiddling around and changing

your shots and sequences which the efficiency you can with Final Cut. Ahem so, the

bottom line is that there is a definite procedure, so i kind of structure my lectures

around that procedure. Final Cut itself would argue that there are five distinct

processes; the kind of capturing, the editing, the sound mixing, the compositing and

the output, and I take that as a raw structure but I teach it in a very ah logistical way

that I teach it as if they don’t have all the bells and whistles. As if they are still

working with razor blades and sticky tape on the Steenbeck. I focus on the structure

of the piece on the first draft, second draft, put down as much as you like on the first

cut and then you know start to whittle but don't try and fine tune, you know and I

take them to a very logical process on how the system works. You will always find

students who are overcome by what the effects pallet can do and ultimately for me

that’s not editing, that’s playing you know, so what i try and do is focus it very much

on on the pace and structure.

[00:07:56]

Q: You could say so that obviously ahem your mentor or whoever taught you your

trying to pass on that type of style would that be correct?

R: Very much, there is a guy called Paddy O'Connor, who I worked with, I was a

founding member of the Galway Film Centre, back in the eighties and I was taught

Steenbeck editing by an editor called Paddy O'Connor. Ahem and that would have

been Paddy's approach. The bottom line back then you know, because everything

was so time consuming, you didn't take chances. You didn't experiment. A lot of

work was done on paper, a lot of work was done on the pre planning and viewing.

And it took a while to actually to make a decision and to make a cut. Now its

interesting again off the point but I would have interviewed Tony Lawson, Neil

Jordan's editor, way back around the, when Jordan released In Dreams, Ahem and

Lawson had begun working with Jordan on Michael Collins. Jordan's editor had a

heart attack about a third of the way into Michael Collins and ah Jordan brought

Lawson in and Lawson had never worked with an Avid system before. He had

always worked celluloid. ahem but it was funny in the interview he actually said that

at the end of the given day ahem he still came out with the six minutes cut. You

know because with final Cut or with Avid I should say he was working with it. He

experimented so much that he wasted time, where as he found no difference with

the end result he was very kind of an old school editor nine to five, and he aimed for

six minutes every day. And whether he was working with celluloid or whether he

was working with computerized systems he still managed to come out with six

minutes a day blaming the computer's systems for the fact that he experimented too

much.

[00:09:32]

Q: Do you do a lot of editing yourself outside of..

R: I do. I would outside of the actual teaching I would constantly be bombarded with

requests from various other departments of the college to cover conferences to do

little promos for stuff going on in the city whether its kind of fund raisers for

organizations or men shed movements and stuff like that so yea I would I would find

myself doing a lot of my own stuff particularly in the summer months when the

pressure of the academic side of things would tier off but I would yea.

[00:10:02]

Q: And I mean would you consider, you are obviously doing it outside of work so I

mean would you have your own edit suite at home?

R: I have my own edit suite at home yea.

Q: Is it, could you describe that edit suite?

R: Its the same its a Final Cut Pro Seven setup, we are ah rolling out Final Cut Pro X

in the college but obviously finance is an issue and in terms of rolling that out

properly we need to update all of our machines, and you know where the budget is

fairly decent for our AV department here we actually have to take on-board cameras,

microphone, lighting gear, tracks and dollies and the whole lot so the budget is kind

of staggered during the year in terms of what we can get. and suddenly if we update,

we now have six edit rooms and suddenly if you update all six of them to Final Cut X

is going to take the guts of two years so what we'll do is roll it out gradually. I

obviously can't be teaching one group Final Cut X and one group Final Cut Seven. So

it’s just a question of getting the equipment in and getting to roll them all out.

Hopefully we will be looking at September 2018 before we do that. At which point I

will update my own system to Final Cut X

[00:10:59]

Q: Sure and your space at home, you have a dedicated room for it?

R: I have a dedicated room for it yea.

Q: Is that purpose choice cos you ...

R: because I’m lucky enough to have one child so there’s a spare room (laughs) no it

is its well its a study, you know what I mean, I mean obviously I'm working on my

PhD., at the moment as well so I need a space in house where I can kind of close the

door and get stuff done. And the Mac system that I have is a Final Cut,,

[00:11:24]

Q: Excellent, ahem, right do you feel, ok, getting back to your students, the editing

space and tools, do you thin your students positively or negatively to the equipment

and space and if so why?

R: Ahem, I would have to say there has been a massive c change over the last five

years maybe. If we go back to you know 2011 up to that point a lot of the students

were totally obvious to software editing packages like Final Cut. Some of them might

have been familiar with Adobe Premiere but if so it was kind of putting photographs

together. It was nothing kind of major. I have noticed a huge change now in the last

five years most of the students have come in are familiar, you know. Whether its the

success of the kind of social media kind of things where they have seen their

contemporaries putting up little videos and cutting together funny stuff and

whatever but most of them come in with a basic understanding of how these

systems work, which makes my life a lot easier. They don't understand the logical

foundations of how you edit but they understand the technology. From a room size

point of view, yes it is problematic, you know, you always have to always,

embarrassing as it is, you have to kick off every year with the personal hygiene

warning but invariably you get one student who doesn't wash his or her socks or

has been out on the beer the night before and you walk into an edit room and you

can see four of the students are green and one of them is kind of sitting there

oblivious ahem so yea its very obvious to you you know. I use to teach in GMIT. In

GMIT we were lucky enough in terms of the building that they bought they had a

chapel. And the chapel would have had confession booth. So what they did they

turned all the confession booths into edit rooms. So you had a main studio with edit

rooms on the side and you could leave the doors open so they had air and had nice

stained glass windows on all the edit rooms you know, can be a situation with that

(laugh) ..

Q: That’s really retro fitting ... (laugh) a space. Ahem, do you thing tools and space,

and again this is possibly the same question again, but do you think the tools and

space maybe hinders or enhances creatively within the students?

[00:13:41]

R: Very much so. Very much so, its very clear to me that ahem the students are far

more inclined as I say the students now will have the software on their laptops and

students are far more inclined to do more work outside of the edit space we have

here in the college and then bring it in on the stick and load it up and do the kind of

fine tuning in the edit space. But they're not, they're not rooms that encourage you

to go in, they are not like a production house where there is a couch in the room that

people can relax on and there is windows that you could open and stuff like that.

You now they are small dark cramped rooms...

Q: do you think your description of a couch based room edit suite like that you

would have in a professional edit suite, do you think that would encourage them

even more to...

R: I think so yea. I think so. Again I’m going from my own experience in the industry

in the kind of eighties and nineties. And when you ended up editing in a room where

you kind of walk away form the machines sit on the couch have a think about it get

back up you know makes a huge difference very definitely. You know I think any

sort of space like that, and I know the old thing of writing and the Garrett you know

but at the same time I think you know you're conscious of your surroundings. Now

you don't want distraction, you don't want kind of windows looking out on kind of

vistas of the Serengeti plains but at the same time its nice to have a bright airy room

ah that you can kind of walk around and scratch your head when it comes to making

decisions. So ya I can think that its of huge importance definitely.

[00:15:02]

Q: Obviously with the space and tools there is another tool, which is the content

itself, I mean I don't know how you feel about content but ah does certain film

programme content have an impact on how the student engages with the

equipment?

R: We are quite limited in relation to Mary Immaculate College in the sense of I get

two, twelve week semesters. With the second years an awful lot of that is basically

teaching them proper equipment handling and I teach bear in mind camera lighting

sound lighting editing production scripting the whole shebang, set design. So there

isn't a whole lot of room for editing things in second year they get kind of three

lectures and then they are left to their own devices with me standing over their

shoulder. With the forth years which I would focus on with this particular question,

they're making a fifteen to eighteen minute documentary. But at the same time they

still only have twelve weeks. Now where has we have had experimental groups in

the past do fly on the wall type stuff, they are very limited in what they can do in

twelve weeks so you tend to get the very structured talking head based style of

documentary making. Where there are two to three key interviews per

documentary, a load of B-roll, a load of cutaways and a on-screen narrator or an offscreen

narrated voice over. So the structures are all quiet similar within the pieces.

And they are limited by that. We are going, we are struggling to try and push

through a broad stream media degree. Which more or less means that in second

year when they have done their four subjects in first year students can come in and

specialise in media right the way through. And when and if we get that up and

running it simply means that we will have a twenty four week semester which will

make a huge difference cos we can focus on the kind of practical end in terms of up

scaling their skills for twelve weeks and then focus on the creative end for twelve

weeks. But right now we are quite limited with what we can do with them creatively.

I use the lecture space to show them sample documentaries that would encourage

them in particular directions cos I’m aware that when groups have tried the more

experimental cinema veritre style documentary, twelve weeks is too short for it.

[00:17:08]

Q: Obviously so with such a short semester time and you were just mentioning there

you only had enough time to do three lectures in editing, you know, in second year.

do you feel so the theory base that they are getting than the practical.

R: I have focused on the theory with them. I think ah, an American academic called

Jeffery Staunse, who many years ago wrote a paper called 'Tulip Theory' and his

notion of tulip theory was that if you gave a kind of an eighteen year old a six pack of

beer and and Final Cut Pro and locked him into the bedroom for the weekend, they'll

come out knowing the basics of the machine. you know what I mean there is a lot of

that stuff that students can do on their own if they are committed to it. And I see that

with my own students. If they have a genuine grawl for it they will live in the edit

suite and they will kind of learn their way around it. I feel very much that my role...

now you know its really only ten year I’ve been buried with Final Cut Pro with the

students, you know prior to that it was Fast Edit, prior to that it was Lightworks,

prior to that it was Avid, prior to that it was film editing… I taught all I use to teach

film as in celluloid editing in ah Film Base in Dublin. So I have kind of taught all the

way and way along and all the different machinery that’s been there. So I really feel

that the product itself, sorry not the product the ahem software itself is ultimately

secondary. What’s been true since kind of Blitzer 1903 is the process of editing, the

process of montage, how you tell a story how you move a story along how you pace

it. The analogy I use with my students as a kind of a starting point for approaching

editing is that to me its like a block of stone that a sculptor is working on. A statue is

in that stone and its up to them to chip away and find it. So that’s the approach that i

have given when I comes to cutting their documentary together. I also put a lot of

energy into the, and this is why we do the adverts in fourth year. Its making them

realise that ninety percent of the work is done pen and paper. That if you plan and

organise properly then you don't shoot too much you put intense pressure on your

editors to cut the exact materials that they need to work with and know more than

the max. They're amateurs but at the max twenty percent extra material. You know

the old adages that a professional crew will shoot with eight to one ratios so for

every eight minutes they shoot with you use one. We kind of work off a twenty to

one ration because they are amateurs to give them that sort of space. But I very

much formalise it. You know whether it to be honest it wouldn't matter to me

whether currently I was using Fast edit or I was using Lightworks or I was using

Avid. My approach to how i teach them editing would be exactly the same. And I find

with the current generation that most of them are aware of how these software

packages work because if they haven't worked with an editing one they've worked

with Q-Based or they shave worked with some sort of system. And that, they know

the methodology of how these software packages work.

[00:19:58]

Q: Just listening to you would you consider yourself a passionate editor or lecturer?

R: I would consider myself to be a passionate lecturer to be honest I did my stint, I

did twenty years in an edit room. Ahem,...

Q: Would you have been passionate as an editor back then.

R: I would have been very passionate but I very much think it’s a young mans game.

I think that the days of literally doing a sort of a you know, ten in the morning till

four in the morning in a small cramped room ahem, there are people with far more

energy than me who are capable of it and far more, far less responsibility than me in

term s of when you get older your responsibilities grow. I was certainly passionate

at the time and I really loved it. And if anything the one I really miss is the film

editing cos I found there was ah physical contact with film editing cos you were

constantly holding the celluloid and you were smelling it and the noise even of the

old Steenbeck machine there was something that to me seemed fair more artistic

working with the Steenbeck machine. Where as with any of the computer systems

the nonlinear computerised systems it is you know. You are sitting in front of a

computer ultimately. You know what I mean and we all spend too much time in

front of TV screens, or mobile phones or iPads, or you know what I mean. So that joy

is kind of gone.

[00:21:10]

Q: Just that joy, do you think that’s what maybe the students are missing?

R: I think very possibly yea. but what I do find at the same time you know, we have

to understand that you know certainly within the last decade I certainly feel that a

turning point was reached and the majority our students get know is media. New

media, television, but primarily new media form online sources. They're regularly

checking Facebook every morning or their twitter accounts or their vibe contacts

with friends or their Skype contacts with friends. that is their new medium. Its like

Mcluans, 'the medium is the message'. Ahem, and I do find that and I you know I've

got to be careful here cos in one sense when the students sign up to the degree they

may have no interest in this aspect of the thing. They may want to be journalists or

may want to be radio broadcasters so there is always a percentage of the class that

are that way inclined. And this is something that they just have to do to get their

degree. But the ones who are dedicated as I say will live in the edit suite. Ahem now

I pity them that they never got the experience of Film editing because I think that

they would, you know, you know, film editing to me is the difference between

designing a, drawing something in Photoshop and drawing something with oils on

canvas. You know that’s the best way I can describe it. And any artist will tell you

that drawing with oils on canvas and smelling the oils and mixing them you know,

taking your time deciding what brush stroke you do, is far more ... you know, I don't

know, gut level artistic creative than sitting down in front of Photoshop and filling

shapes to make your drawing, you know. I would see a similar thing going on with

the editing process.

[00:22:49]

Q: Finally, would you have any ideas or improvements that you think for

tools and spaces in the educational environment, the stuff that would help editing or

help..

R: That is a tough one, yes of course I would. In an ideal world I think particularly

with the generation we have now coming through ah, you now there is an aspiration

to that sort of Google work space, you now what I mean. A kind of an open plan kind

of work space, bright and kind of having your foosball table of over there to where

you go over and take you breaks with that sort of stuff. Obviously its a space issue,

Simon, you know what I mean. In an ideal world if the college had unlimited funds

and we could kind of design exactly what we wanted ah I think ahem, open plan

along the way of that I describe GMIT. You know where you have a central hub a

media hub off which we have the media edit suites. Perhaps with sliding doors that

allow the light in as well. So you are enclosed but you're in your own separate space.

Ahem, I don't think we are ever going to get back to that physically of film editing

but I also think that generations change, and what I loved in my generation that sort

of physically, who am I to say that they don't get the same amount of buzz working

with Avid or Final Cut or what ever. Ahem, and again numbers of machine, as i say i

would love to be in here sitting in front of the machine showing them how to do

something with you know whatever forty-five students here all with machine in

front of them copying it as I go. Ahem, I am the extern for Ballyfermot college in

Dublin, and ah, I really enjoy seeing in Ballyfermot in fact, now they have much

smaller number of students, but ah I have a good friend, a couple of good friends

who lecture there and I have sat in on lectures and that pretty much is the case there.

You know there is one lecturer with a machine and there are sixteen students all

with machines in front of them as he or she does whatever they copy. Ahem and i

think that really really helps. You know I’m very very conscious that we are very

limited space wise and we're limited in terms of the number of, the amount of

equipment we have and we can't do that. But i think that helps a great deal. Or

would help a great deal.

Q: Excellent, we're done thank you very much.

R: Alright, I hope that is of some use to you.

Q: It is.

[INTERVIEW ENDS]