Interview Date: 07/06/2018

Interview Location: Bournemouth University, Talbot Campus.

(TIMECODE): 00:00:34:20

Interviewer: So, if there is anything you don’t want to talk about you can just say I’d rather not answer that. If at any stage you don’t want to answer anything like that you can opt out and if you have answered and you suddenly have a query later on and you say ‘you know what I said something about that I don’t want in’ you can always contact me by email and just let me know which part. Once I have it transcribed I can send you on a copy of the transcription (that would be great) so that will be sent on and even once you’ve read the transcription, you know yourself, you can still opt out at any stage and all data would be destroyed including the video recording and audio and everything else. (Okay)

Right I have a lot of questions, but I believe we could probably end up answering a lot of them through as we go along so I’ll skip through them anyway and well try and get through as quickly as possible. (Okay) and if you can explain as much as you can in detail… (yeah, I’ll try and get yeah) and again I think I everything is going to be casual enough, so I can’t see it being you know you being stumbled or anything like that. So firstly, can I ask you to explain your role here in the college.

Participant: In the university, (in the university my apologies) so is that specifically to do with the teaching of editing or is that in the boarder sense.

Interviewer: Ah I think in the broader sense and you can you can answer the editing part in as well. It’s not that doesn’t …

Participant: Okay, so officially I’m a senior lecturer in media theory and practice. I’m the framework leader of our postgraduate media production courses of which there are seven. I am the programme leader of MA post-production editing and on our undergraduate programmes I lead the multi-camera and live production unit or specialism in doing that so I’m generally teaching second year undergraduates post graduates, supervising some third year undergraduate TV production projects and dissertations so and doing my PhD.

(TIMECODE): 00:02:37:03

Interviewer: Quite busy, tell me and can you just explain, and you don’t have to go into too much detail but just a quick kind of a summary of how you get your journey to get to this position?

Participant: Okay, long journey, so I’m from Blackpool. I did A levels in mixed Arts and science. I was interested from being probably from just after seeing Star Wars in filmmaking. So, all my friends were buying the toys and I was buying magazines like in effects and things like that, that were kind of explaining how visual effects were done and that kind of thing. So visual effects was the king of thing I was most interested in. So, I did an art foundation course. There’s not that many of those around anymore. So that would have been in 1985 and between 86 and 89 I went up to what was then Newcastle Poly University of Northumbria now and studied a BA in media production up there. And you did two majors then and my two majors were animation and film production I think they called it, anyways so media you know media production animation for making independent animation and I kind of, I got on okay, I enjoyed the animation and then I really I lit an awful lot of my friends films and then end up cutting a lot of my friends films. And then it was a case of, so it’s 1989. I graduated. I come from, I suppose you describe it as maybe a comfortable working-class background. Kind of raised in Blackpool, born in St. Ann’s raised in Blackpool. Hard-working family and the imperative was to get a job so bear in mind this is 1989. And in the media guardian back in those days the jobs would be advertised, and the BBC advertised for training recording operators down at Television Centre. So, I remember speed reading books on video tape recording technology kind of on trains down to London. So, it was a two-interview setup, so I got through the first interview which was a nice kind of seemed informal chat who were kind of feeling people out I think and then so, this was kind of my first job interview. Which was five people I think it was like the head of post-production, a HR person, you know an editor or a couple of editors anyway on this panel asking me kind of what you do if the tape breaks, you know you are in a live transmission, what would you do if the tape breaks? If the tape breaks can you explain what this graph is, and they showed me something which was called a BH curve and it was to do with magnetic flux and signal and all of that kind of stuff, and I’d managed to retain enough of that stuff for them to offer me a traineeship. So, I did the BBC tech-op training at Evesham. So, it was a ten-week programme and was at the BBC for four years and that was at tape op, then assistant editor and then an editor. So, and that was working on everything you from sport through Doc’s through drama, cut my teeth. In terms of actually learning how to edit. With Chris Wadsworth who was cutting things like Keeping up Appearances and One Foot in the Grave and in those days, multi machine edit suites had a controller for each machine and the editor was there marking the ins and outs on the record machine and the assistant was sat next to them marking the ins on the playing machines so he was actually kind of actually involved in making edit decisions. So, learnt that craft in Telecine and those sorts of things and eventually got a gig as an assistant editor on a kid’s pop show called the O-Zone. So, working with the children’s presentation department so this was people like Andy Peters, Toby Anstis, you know Zoe Ball, Roy Forester all that kind of thing. So, edited that for a couple of years and then what kind of wanted to get out of the big company so there was a little indie called… which I won’t name actually… there was a little indie that was looking for an editor who wanted to direct and that was me. So, again, so that was again young people’s kind of pop programmes and you know directing interviews and that kind of stuff. Those talked about video games, pop music, movies, a little so pretty quick turnaround. Fairly low-budget, you know going out to the, going out to the regions. The company was making the rest of its money from overseas sales or the programmes and things like that. So, I did that for a few years. Got poached by the children’s channel because they developed a kind of particular style to be one of their studio directors. So, a patch doing studio directing then they made me a producer of that and then for one reason that one of which was actually kind of getting better income, went back into editing as a staff editor at channel 4, who at that time had a post facility called One Two Four facilities. So, I was there as a staff and then changed to freelanced and by this time, so, I’ve lasted about kind of ten years and then family intervened and this 16-hour day, not knowing where you’re getting home. Family was in Lincolnshire, I was in London, sofa surfing you know, launching all of that kind of stuff, I thought this, it wasn’t sustainable kind of anymore so by that time I’ll be 33 or something like that. I had a little daughter… dat, da, da, da, da… came out of the industry. Kept a bit of freelance going but you know that, that kind of tailed off. Trained as an art teacher. Thought, I’m getting away from all this technology and all this whiz-bangary, just going back to kind of roots but because of my background there was an inevitability to the kind of, taught five years in a secondary school in Hounslow and we built a media department through or at least a kind of a media production facility kind of within the art department. So, I ran that, did that for five years. Again, for personal reasons wanted to move out here and then job came up at Euroval College, so I was teaching kind of media B Text and graphics and you know really wide range of stuff across their courses and then we started foundation degrees over the University of the West of England. So, I was there for eight years which I find hard to believe. It’s just… so that was yeah that was an interesting time but that’s where I learned how H.E. (higher education) works. About how programmes were designed, our assessment, about exam boards, about all the admin side of it, about all of that hype, all of that kind of stuff. While I was there, I did my masters with Bournemouth. So, Richard (Berger) was one of my tutors, and that kind of built the connection with Bournemouth University. Started my PHD at University of the West of England. And not long after I had started that, Richard kind of gave me a nudge the media production year was looking for somebody so I applied for that and I was lucky enough that the lecturer who was teaching the editing programme and the multi-camera unit had decided after something like 26 years here, they kind of basically built the building around him, to take retirement and because I had multi-camera in my background and editing in my background they said would you like to do this. It wasn’t actually the job that I’d applied for and they said well we have given that to somebody else but how would you feel about this? And I said, I would feel great about this. So, I that started in September 2013, yeah.

(TIMECODE): 00:11:07:08

Interviewer: Did you feel comfortable of moving into Bournemouth you know, knowing that you were going back into editing, I know its academia just to be teaching the work again you now?

Participant: There’s a, there’s a discomfort about it because, you know, working as a professional editor it’s not all sunshine and roses, you know it’s hard work you’ve got the people you loved working with, and it was great. When I went back to Channel Four and guess who was there. It was all the ex-BBC crowd there was a lot of migration from the BBC to Channel 4 so that felt very much at home but there were also some clients that were quite difficult, and I thought do I like that… I remember a very kind of conscious decision. I was having a chat with one of the general… I was having a chat with one of the senior editors there, we loved the guy, whose name I forget and I was just thinking to myself and you know he was probably the age that I am now so I’m 51 now and very nice watch and good lifestyle or that kind of stuff, that lived his life in 16 or 20 hour bursts in darkened rooms with varied kind of creative input and you know it was sort of, do I want to be doing this for another 20 years, and then I thought about it, you know, what would I be in my heart, what would I really like to do you know, that’s were teaching is brilliant and its hard and its awful, its wonderful at times okay so it says so we know that, but I have a much greater sense of integrity and wholeness as a person in terms of saying this is, this is what I do and this is what I’m about. In terms of going back into editing now to an extent It felt like going back to the dark side. It felt like the past that I had made a conscious decision to leave behind had caught up with me. You know, it’s like I’m, like that film… it follows. You Know, somethings going to go this is this kind of thing constantly, And I feel quite pragmatic about that because again here I really like… its such a creative environment working with students. Developing their concepts, developing their understanding, developing their learning, you know, link of sharing that journey with them. That’s a real thing and I get a lot of satisfaction out of that and that’s really rewarding. So, it’s fine I think, but it’s really interesting I think that the very first job that I had at the BBC has kind of almost defined everything that I’ve done ever since it’s got it got great power to which I kind of don’t necessarily have control over.

(TIMECODE): 00:13:53:19

Interviewer: I’m going to bring up and topic now and again just your own interpretation would be great. Could you describe for me your interpretation of craft and craftsmanship?

Participant: ah, okay, so back in the nineties there was s you know at this time where with the editors who had grown up with 16mm and who were still working in 16mm and then there was my generation who’ve grown up with one-inch, you know, beta and all of that kind of stuff and the people, I was the first generation at the BBC to be called an operator rather than an engineer or a technician and that was a constant thing… ‘oh you’re very technical aren’t you?’ and I’m going, ‘well I see myself as being very creative’ you know, ‘ with this technology because oil paint is a technology, it’s all technology that we work with’ And so according to the film editors as VT (video tape) editors you know weren’t doing editing craft but it absolutely felt what we were doing to us because part of our job was to keep all that… you walk into 1990’s, three machine full machine edit suite and you’re basically on the bridge of the Enterprise, or you’re in Jean-Michel Jarre, kind of on stage buttons everywhere. People walk in and say how on earth do you know what you are doing? And part of our job was to make that side of it invisible so good and what we’re concentrating on is the cuts, concentrating on what the sound is doing, concentrating on how the story is going. That’s what we are doing. So, I think there are… crafts and craftsmanship, and I think in the traditional sense, is about forging a kind of familiarity and a sense of oneness and embodiment of the tools that you’re working with and that’s something I definitely felt in the suites I was regularly working in. Again, it was different than when I was freelance and going to work in an unfamiliar suite and that could be a nightmare at times. ‘What’s the logic behind this, how is this working?’ Okay but in the suites I was familiar with, I was one of the people who would get the call in bed at four-o-clock in the morning from a freelancer, ‘how do I do this?’ and I had this mental map, this mental memory of right ‘you ned to route that to that, switch this to this, select that to that!’ and kind of talking people through doing the edit. So, there’s a very high degree of familiarity with the tools and then to be able to use those in effective and whatever creative means, this difficult word in effective and efficient ways in making of a product. So, it’s not like being an artist, it is about craft. And particularly working in TV, is craft because often you’re doing, slightly different versions of the same thing, kind of over and over it you're working on a series and that kind of thing. So yeah its and familiarity with the toolset and the ability to effectively to make a product that works, to a partly kind of preordained brief. It’s got to be a certain duration. This is the style, this is how the structure is going to work, that kind of thing, okay.

(TIMECODE): 00:17:39:17

Interviewer: Obviously you have moved into academia now and you’re not editing outside in the industry, as you have stated before, but would you still consider yourself a craftsperson? Have you held onto it?

Participant: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah… I’m not an artist and I’m not a technician and I think the thing that sits between those two things I think a craftsperson is… when I think about when I’m teaching about editing, which I think is different to teaching editing, I do think they are different things and kind of other people talk about that and I’ll talk about that as well. So yeah… (pause) there are crafts within teaching as well, it’s about having… craft is about if its… (laughs) you know if you’re making a bowl out of wood it’s got to serve the function of a bowl, okay, so you’ve got the paradigm to work within and it’s about how you do that and there is an element of personality in there but it’s not all about personality. The bowl still has to be the bowl, so yeah.

(TIMECODE): 00:19:01:02

Interviewer: So, going on from that, would you consider craftsmanship, would you use craftsmanship in your lecturing? Would you consider it an important element? Does it, do you bring out a craft in the students?

Participant: (Long pause, arms folded) I think its implicit. I don’t think it’s not a term really that I use explicitly (okay) you know I might actually more frequently with the students use a term like ‘the art of editing’ okay. So, a bit of a background on that, that might help with it. My philosophy in terms of the programme leadership and what the course is about for my MA editors and what I tell them at the beginning is that I feel that editing sits on three pillars and those three pillars, in no particular order, are narrative, technology and collaboration. Okay those three things, if either of those three things isn’t attended to then it’s not going to work. Then you are not editing okay, you might be cutting something for yourself, but editing is a different thing. And I think it is the bringing together of those three elements that is the craft of editing. It’s being, as I have said before, it’s being able to effectively work with the tools with the technology. And it’s being able to work collaboratively, usually with a director to create the product that, there’s some sort of preordained design that is already there for. That you are working towards in some way.

(TIMECODE): 00:20:52:13

Interviewer: Obviously so, the students are probably unaware of the craftsmanship that you have in your background, I mean, if you are not using it explicitly you know or if you’re using it implicitly would you think they associate editing as craft, do you think? It’s a tough question I mean.

Participant: Yes, well in the first term with us, so there are three of us who teach on this program okay. So, it’s myself and there’s Mika and there is Rodger. In the first term, and I think this is largely because of my background, because I did have that technical training and that is there. So, I take the students through a series of lectures about video and audio technology and that includes some history. That goes right back to fundamentals. You know with video we start with what light is okay and then we work towards you know codecs and compression and that kind of thing. And a similar thing with what sound is and we work through that and convert it through different signal chains. And so, there’s a very practical part of that is so they understand in their project and export settings. What those terms mean. What 422 means, what UV means, you know how to choose their codec. And there’s a pragmatic side as well that’s about the fundamental kind of gut understanding and comfort with the technology because that’s the thing I said before, you’ve got to make invisible. You Know you can’t be there… you can’t be there… it’s kind of okay here when everybody’s learning, the director is learning, the cinematographers are learning, the editors are learning but when you are sat in that edit suite and somebody’s paying God knows how much an hour for you to cut it, if you're fiddling around saying ‘oh I’m not quite sure what that means?’ then your credibility you know, your credibility is shot really isn’t it. So, I do that stuff, I do that, I guess that’s the pillar I do. Rodger is our Avid Trainer, so we leave him to teach the students how to use the actual editing software, because again with that there’s a lot of finger memory involved and I don’t have the opportunity to edit frequently enough that you know that I actually feel confident that I’m teaching the students the best ways of actually working with the software. And then Mika, and she does shared session with the sound designers and they’re talking about narrative and talking about examples of dialogue scenes so in this kind of again kind of open way. What we avoid is, this is, saying, this is where you put the cup. This is the solution to this particular kind of scenario that you’ve got with your footage and what we encourage is shared exploration, okay and discussion and show-and-tells and all of that so when students are getting into the second term in my sessions, they’re going doing micro group research projects so they maybe more, is all theoretical. They’re doing practice they’re developing theory, it’s their own theory, you know, they might be reading books and might be reading Murch or Bowen or that kind of stuff to give them a starting point but they’re coming up with the solutions that work in the context that they’re working in, their particular kind of issues that they are working with. So, what was the question again?

Interviewer: no, I think you answered that well I mean as regards to we were saying about whether students interpret craft through your lectures.

(TIMECODE): 00:24:52:08

Participant: No, I think it’s more holistic thing. I think it comes between the three of us and then through their own experience and through their own you know experiments.

Interviewer: Am just going to talk about equipment and space (yeah) briefly could you describe the tools and spaces you currently work with you know with the students of editing.

Participant: Yeah, well the students, it’s a little bit controversial. The students are required to bring their own laptop and to get their own Media Composer subscriptions and that kind of thing.

Interviewer: Was there any particular reason for that?

Participant: Just was for me… the university policy and finance. It’s just the way it is, and we can’t change it. So, it’s, yea, out of my hands. Yea other courses get software provided and things like that. I think its maybe partly about this space (gestures around the lab) because it basically got a space which isn’t actually a post-production facility, you know, it’s kind of a seminar room and we have second screens that thy can plug into and things like that. So, they, you know, (pause) yeah… I don’t want to get into the kind of controversial, so the students bring their own laptop there and their own software. The university will lend them as many portable hard drives as they need because we’re dealing with quite big projects in some cases you know. Multiple hundreds of gigabytes so that people tend to generate nowadays. So, we haven’t got students that are typically working in broadcast HD so (so 1080p25) so yeah well 1080i50, so because anyway that’s what the early lessons of this so we introduce them, I introduce them to the UK broadcast standards so the DPP broadcast spec. So, they’re use to working within a specification and then through their own other enquiry they can find out about you know kind of more film-based workflows and things like that. And cinematographers will throw them footage in all kinds of formats. It’s sometimes intentionally, sometimes not intentionally as well. So, and then so we’ve got the base streams here so this kind of where, we don’t really have an online/offline workflow. Students attending, to just work the footage at 1080p and with the spec of the laptops though that seems to be working, that might change when we go to you know, you start working in UHD kind of formats. And then for finishing we don’t, we assess the editors on their picture lock, ok, so they’re not, they can do grading, but they can do that after the deadline at their leisure…

Interviewer: that’s not, you don’t grade the grade as it were no?

(TIMECODE): 00:27:55:24

Participant: No, no

Interviewer: So, it’s purely offline editing?

Participant: Yes, yeah, so what we’re interested in assessing is, can you put the story together and can you avoid me bumping me out of the film and they are assessed positively for because as you see the footage that they get is really variable in quality so they’re assessed as the editor, they’re assessed on the value that they’ve added to the material that they’ve been given. So, or criticised for the value that they haven’t captured yet that they really should have done because so yeah. SO, we’ve got kind of finishing suites over in the other building, bit of controlled lighting and so it’s not for long grading suites but a much better sense of what your picture is then working off the laptop.

(TIMECODE): 00:28:48:13

Interviewer: Do they, obviously with their own set up at their laptop, are there any limitations in the tools or spaces you have. Do they or you experience any limitations in what’s available?

Participant: Ah, not, the only one really is we’ve got an ISIS server over at the main site but there’s no high-speed connectivity between there and this building. There is to the finishing suites over there, so the thing that we haven’t been able to get them doing is kind of shared projects and that kind of thing but that is very definitely changing with when we get the new building opening in a couple of years’ time and so… will be a networked and also potentially kind of cloud-based solutions, kind of looking forward and potentially 4k workflows and online and offline workflows and those sorts of things.

(TIMECODE): 00:29:47:10

Interviewer: The students themselves, do they respond positively or negatively to that set up, to the current setup that they are using?

Participant: Yeah, they’re fine, they’re absolutely fine with it. I think you know it tends to be a, most of the students tend to kind of you know, finish their cuts on the laptop, you know get to the point of assessment anyway on the laptop and then they are free to do the other stuff so that shows a certain amount of self-determination in terms of the other things that the students want to get into with us. A bit more after-effects and compositing or a bit more in terms of grading, that kind of thing. They sometimes work with our visual effects students as well for all of that kind of happens after the point of assessment. So, they can play with and get it wrong and go whatever.

(TIMECODE): 00:30:35:05

Interviewer: Okay just kind of going back to yourself now again in regard to your teaching and so forth. Have you ever used elements of editing or post production to influence your lecturing?

Participant: (Long Pause)

What so me?

Interviewer: was there any procedure that you did when you were an editor that you’ve that you have adapted as a way of getting something across with you students?

Participant: (Long Pause)

I’m not sure really…

Interviewer: It’s a tough one

Participant: Yeah it is, um, I don’t think, I don’t think I have really, I mean there’s, so you mean in terms of me kind of editing something to make into a teaching resource outside, is that what you mean?

Interviewer: I think I mean, what I love about editing is the organisation of it and the discipline of that so to take that as an example you mean, have you ever used the discipline of the organisation of editing as a teaching tool for lecturing?

Participant: I can’t say that I have, I can’t say that I have. (okay) No in terms of the kind of teaching of yet okay the line that I always throw out to the editing students is ‘we’ve only been editing for a hundred years, it’s up for grabs, okay, so let’s explore, okay, and there is no… now I won’t want Rodger to hear me say this… when I’m saying there is no one correct way of doing something, yeah absolutely there are effective workflows and less effective workflows and bad workflows, you know, to be honest so that discipline in terms of how they, their project management in that sense yeah. It happens over there okay, there was somebody else and where I’m interested is in how you make those difficult decisions with sometimes that difficult other person called the director. How you manage that relationship; ‘what’s the story, are you telling the story, is there a better way of telling the story?’ we do a lot of work. Students come and will show their rough cuts or will at stuff we did. We do a lot of thinking about rhythm and about pace and about structure and about efficiency in the edit. I think there’s a fair bit, you know, because I was a TV editor, efficiency is, when you’re cutting a TV show it has to be that duration plus or minus a few seconds and so you can’t decide ‘oh well we’ll just, like with a feature film, it can be eight minutes longer, it can be eight minutes shorter. You don’t have that, so that kind of discipline and efficiency of telling the story in the most efficient way within there because of our films, certainly in the first two terms, do have saturations. Give or take they’re five minutes in term one and they’re ten minutes in term two and so you get to saying its eighteen minutes long so where have you, what have you done to make a cut which is eighteen minutes long when you are aiming for something that needs to be ten minutes. Why is your rough cut not thirteen minutes long to then bring down? Do you really need to see that person open the door, walk through the door, close the door behind them, walk across the room and sit down at the chair, pick up the pen and start writing? You Know can’t you just cut to the close up of the pen and start writing. Can’t you just cut to the closeup of the pen, of somebody writing. So, there is quite a lot of that level of stuff of just the real efficiency of it.

(TIMECODE): 00:34:52:09 INTERVIEW INTERUPTED BRIEFLY

(TIMECODE): 00:35:26:11

Interviewer: Okay, we are on the finishing straight now. I’ve been looking into a lot about the presentation of self, professional identity obviously in education and how sometimes when I do my reading, I’ve seen examples of how practitioners bring their professional life into academia a little in order to lecture, so with that in mind how do you present yourself to your students that you lecture?

Participant: Yeah, old and it’s been a long time since I was getting paid to do editing but that I’ve been teaching editing and its associated skills and approaches for a long time and we bring practicing professionals in and we bring alumni in to talk to the students. I think where that I think the best, the most useful advise I give students is about career development and those sorts of things and about how they need to present themselves so I think it’s, absolutely, I’m very open about the kind of distance between where I am now and kind of the last cuts I was doing at channel four and those sorts of things getting you know kind of back in the past. So, I, you know, I don’t see myself as an editor, I see myself as a teacher.

Interviewer: As a teacher, and that’s a true reflection, you’re not putting a front up to show off the industry or anything like that. I mean, no this is me.

(TIMECODE): 00:37:14:00

Participant: Yeah, no I want them, you know okay, so a great sense of pride watching one of my ex-student’s names go up the screen on as the trainee on The Last Jedi. So lovely, thank you very much. I was like you’re doing things that I would have liked to do and that’s what I’m here for. But its little odd things like what an editor’s show reel is. It’s a really interesting question and I think one that a lot of people haven’t yet kind of sorted out. So, we work on that, think about what do you want to say to these people, what do you want to show these people that you can do. It’s about kind making contact stuff about building their own kind of personal and professional emerging professional self-confidence. Because it’s not like quite a lot of our… I think there’s a split. It’s kind of a three-way spilt. I think or a four-way spilt, where there’s the students who complete and kind of and don’t take it any further. There’re the students who go and work in the world of what I might call content, you know, so maybe in the more corporate sector and those sorts of things. Those students who go the posthouse route and end up working on the TV shows and music videos and commercials and those sorts of things and then there’s the people who’ve managed to make it by hook or by crook down the long form drama and the film group. You know there is a fair number of each of those.

(TIMECODE): 00:38:42:01

Interviewer: So, how’s your identity… with that in mind… your identity has been fairly constant so with each cohort of students that have come through. You haven’t changed it or evolved it, does it remain the same?

Participant: No, it’s pretty steady.

Interviewer: And you're happy and contented in that?

Participant: Oh I’m very happy and contented in that so long as, you know we respond obviously like all teachers, we respond to student feedback and that’s our primary job is to make sure that they’re secure and they’re happy in their learning and we’re giving them the best outcomes that they can get for the investment that they put in because it is, it’s a considerable investment you know time and money, so it’s a very rounded thing. I wouldn’t… when I was teaching at college, that was a lot of teaching software and you can learn software by clicking everything in the menu you know and working through it and there’s online tutorials for that now and all of that kind of stuff and I’m absolutely, this is, I’m not bullshitting here I’m completely about the person. I’m a student-centred, I’m about their experience. I am here for their future success. If there is career development in that for me then super but you know that’s why I enjoy the job, so I’m honoured. I mean I’m a teacher, that’s where all these bullshit terms come out of kind of a mentor, or facilitator you know kind of a guide. You know it’s all of that stuff. So yeah, I wouldn’t want to go back to the client that you know… that’s interesting so to go back to, I’ll say what I was going to say, to go back to just being an editor (yeah). I’ve got a friend, who probably started at the BBC about two years before me. So he must have been there from about 88 and he is still cutting Holby City, and still cutting Eastenders, and don’t say this but he says ‘the bastards won’t pay me off’, you know and he would have liked to get into features but he’s been doing what he has been doing for so so long and I’m really glad I’m not doing it. He’s probably earning a shedload more money than I am but it of… yeah I’ve probably always been quite bad at earning money I think that’s been a first you know. Of course, there’s an idealism there that, I think.

(TIMECODE): 00:41:08:18

Interviewer: Going from your professional identity obviously to the student’s professional identity (yeah). Do you think the university has a role in shaping their professional identity based on the courses?

Participant: It’s not for the university to shape their professional identity but it is absolutely for the university to help them shape their professional identities. Because that’s got to be individual to them. Every student is different, you know, we’ve got students across the post-grad framework from more countries than there are letters in the alphabet and we know that because apart from X because nobody comes from Xanadu and… but we do that because you know he comes from a country beginning with a and so students come to us from very different cultural backgrounds. Very different backgrounds in terms of privilege. We’ve got to get the full scale of that from all of the world. From lots of different expectations and with very different levels of confidence and with different levels of previous experience and sense of self-identity. I think with the editing students, predominantly, they come to us relatively inexperienced and relatively lacking confidence. And in terms of the work that they put out there’s a confidence that they deserve that they don’t always recognize that although they’re reticent to kind of grant themselves that confidence and that’s part of our job, my job of when they’re doing really well to make sure we tell them that they are doing really well. I got a student recently and he’s just… when I hear back from him, but he’s just done a test at it for a sport company out in London. But he did such an amazing drama cut in his last term and I put it in his feedback, he could make a really good try, a reel feel for this, you could make a really good drama editor and I had a chat with him and he said ‘do you really think I could because I actually really like to be a drama editor so I just thought it’s just kind of impossible to get into’. So, you know it is possible.

(TIMECODE): 00:43:23:09

Interviewer: Its almost instilled a sense of reflection there in the students.

Participant: Reflection, yes yeah, really, yeah, it’s really important for them to because this is, … I hope they might think they’re just coming here to learn how to edit, whatever that is, but learning how to edit is about because it’s those three things, because it’s because it’s such a personal, I kind of stopped saying it but I kind of used to compare being an editor to being a hairdresser. Because you’re there, you know you got the cutting thing, you’re cutting something that is extremely valuable to your client or your collaborator. You’re keeping them distracted from the danger of what you’re doing by kind of you know chatting about their holidays or talking about films that you’ve seen, and all of this kind of stuff is such a massively kind of interpersonal job there’s so more…

Interviewer: I actually used the chef analogy (okay), you don’t actually see what the chef does but he gets all these ingredients and everything from so and so and puts them together in a certain way to give you the final dish and he is only as good as his last dish. I always used the chef as a good example because an editor is certainly very vulnerable from that point of view as well.

Participant: Yeah absolutely and… (Pause) we are lucky enough to have a decent reputation here, fairly or unfairly or whatever and it’s those, there’s a few things I think, say if you put up the phone to this person and tell them that you are on this course that will give you the extra ten seconds on the phone or it will give you that first meeting you know go and take that meeting, I’d noticed I got an independent that job… was it editing or assistant editing, doesn’t matter anyway, an independent feature by knowing who the producer, by finding out who the producer was because the producer had done a call out and then this editing student, young woman got in touch and hadn’t heard anything back, found herself in London outside this producer’s offices, bought two coffees, one with milk and one without milk, turned up at reception. So, can you call Dee here, tell her I’ve got a coffee for her and because she didn’t get back to my application. Got the meeting and got the job and it’s that. It isn’t about piles of undergraduate CVs you know piling up on people’s desks and thousands of people, it’s about being the person who makes that first impression that makes the other person thing it’ll be really nice to work with. And then having that all, having the knowledge, having the technical knowledge you know, having the understanding of the industry and a possible route through that and where they go to. So, it’s that rounded thing. It’s about getting the person in the right place so they can take advantage of those opportunities.

(TIMECODE): 00:46:37:05

Interviewer: With that in mind, going back to yourself and your two colleagues, do you think a lecturer in editing should have the vital skills knowledge and culture of the craft of editing? (Yeah) in order to do the job or can they just learn it from a book and away you go?

Participant: No, you can’t learn it from a book. No, you’ve got to have done it so you’ve got to have been there but that said, in terms of, because teaching across TV production and editing kind of crossover kind of more into that world of film as well. And working in the department that we work in, I’ve probably learned more about television production and post-production and film production and post-production in whatever, eighteen years or certainly in this last five years than I ever did actually working in industry because you’ve got opportunity to reflect and to compare and because you know I’m a member of the DPP. We’ve got colleagues who are, sit on the world television society like this, you know we’re very tidy and you know to what’s happening in industry. It is not uncommon at all for us to come across people with masses of industry background who just have no idea what teaching is or needs to be or who can do it. So, it’s not about that, it is a different thing, so the background in editing and about the understanding approaches to learning what editing is and how to do it. And it’s not just about how to do editing it’s about how to be an editor or an assistant or a junior or a trainee or a post-runner.

(TIMECODE): 00:48:37:04

Interviewer: Would you as a case example, I mean with your industry background throughout the years with the BBC and so forth and everything else, do you think the students, do they, do you think your students see that as capital, that it’s important that they know your background or actually what you say then has a little bit more gravity behind it.

Participant: Yes, yeah I think it’s important and I think, Roger has trained so many industry editors, you know take them through that process, Mika’s history, you know it’s that range, kinda of the principles of cutting the story maybe haven’t changed that much and we do encourage students to break with convention and try different things and all of that, the prints, technology has changed an awful lot but that is easy enough to keep up with. The process of collaboration between editor director hasn’t changed, from you know, there is something fairly rooted about that and…

(TIMECODE): 00:49:43:10

Interviewer: And That being a tradition, the director and the editor’s relationship and again I don’t think there is any TV or film project that doesn’t have that collaboration between those two-principle people, do you use traditional terms of editing and stuff like that, that may not be in use today. The older traditions, do you try and again I know you mentioned about the history of editing, but do you bring any of those traditional editing traits into you teaching or do you keep it modern and keep it up to date with the technology?

Participant: It’s different things so I do at one point at term one, why in this digital environment do we still have kind of ways of measuring signals and representing clips which are analogue, which are conduit, they basically are digital versions of the analogue equipment that we were using there. Why is a bin called a bin, you know that kind of thing? So, we do talk about that because and I think it’s important to understand that is the that change in technology is never just to switch over. There is always an overlap evolution because the people… it’s like kind of explaining why we have Y UV and RGB because when colour television was introduced it still needed to work on people’s black and white TV sets which were in majority and so on and how a waveform monitor used to work in the old days and why that’s still seen as a really good way of kind of understanding what’s going on in your video signals and so on. In terms of the craft of editing those things about parallel cutting and cross-cutting and pace and rhythm and L-cuts and leading and trailing audio and those sorts of things there or tightening things by a number of frames or loosening things by a number of frames, we use exactly the same language as what we were doing back then. There is no evidence of that being any different. We are still in a world where once if people leave here, if they are working in those film, broadcast and film environments they are inevitably learning their craft from people who are older than them and waiting for those people to retire or for other opportunities so there is you know the age thing. I think that’s really true in editing and I think it’s really true in cinematography and all the craft areas.

(TIMECODE): 00:52:40:03

Interviewer: Do you think that would help, that type of approach and how they learn about the past, do you think that might help form their identity, you know as the next generation of cutters?

Participant: Yeah, because I think kind of the you know I’d recount to the students the wonders of nonlinear editing, moving from a tape based environment and what we would have to do and bemoaned the fact that there is no room for a tea break anymore because everything just happens like that whereas if you had to just lay off 20 minutes of one-inch tape you just had to lay off 20, it would take 20 minutes, you know and what are you gonna do, go and make a cup of tea. I remember when I was editing at One Two Four and one of my Sunday morning jobs was cutting the Italian football highlight reel. Also, the goal highlights for them, the halftime highlights and all of this. And we had one of the first hard drive recorder and playouts and it would remarkably, this was amazing at the time. It would record from two different sources at the same time and playout to four different edit suites at the same time and that’s nothing now that’s nothing but explaining, and putting it in crude terms, the complete mind fuck that that was in terms of how you approach this. That actually you can start at it as soon as the presenter has started talking, you’d have to wait for him to finish and spin the tape back and lay it back in yeah. They start talking okay and it’s been recording about two seconds, jog that back, there’s your in point okay lay it in and that’s ready to go two seconds after the presenter has finished speaking and to be played into the program. In terms of that, in terms of the tightening, in terms of quick turn-around TV stuff and live cutting as people kind of strain to call up that. That was revolutionary and telling them that to it, to expect that the stuff that they’re working with now is going in five years’ time, this is what the next thing is going to be you know the next thing that’s going to make it faster or so at the moment we are looking at IMF, interoperable media formats. So, you know you finish a show and you version it okay, whether that is for different language versions or whatever. So, and then we’ll recently you’ll version it for the online version and a mobile version and for whatever and that kind of thing. That’s on its way out okay, so the interoperable media format is an object-based thing where these, so, basically an XML file, there’s a set of instructions saying there is the video content for this section and if it goes onto that device, do this with it at the point of reception. Same with captions aren’t built burnt in, they get added. So, dealing with different safe areas and aspect ratios and all that kind of stuff. So that versioning happens on the device that it’s been looking at. Netflix has been already doing this and the DPP you work with working with broadcasters and so on that’s kind of the next thing. Apparently, there is no timecode anymore… that’s like how can you not have timecode, it’s like how is that going to work. There are frame counts, there’s no time for this because it might be that you want to change opening title sequence, might be a completely separate piece of content that has many frames and then your actual main part of the program, part 1 of the program separate from the start sequence but have its own frame count there so basically on doing the online on the device. (Okay) and its time saving and its cost saving and its more future proof in terms of new devices coming in and all that kind of stuff, so that hasn’t been taught to this year’s students but actually students that’ll be the next big thing that we will introduce them to and we will be going, we don’t know, the industry doesn’t really know how this is going to work but you need to be across this and this is a key thing we tell the students is because when you go into that machine room or onto that project, you’ll be the person who this is normal to and for everybody else who has been there for more than two or three years it will be weird and if you are the person who it is normal to then you’re a great asset to that team and especially to the editor who won’t have a bloody clue what this crazy, what do you mean no timecode yeah. And if you’ve got a junior system there being there, this is just normal, and this is how it works.

(TIMECODE): 00:57:33:10

Interviewer: We’re done is there anything you would like to add that you might think on any of the areas we were talking about?

Participant: I don’t think so. I think it’s (Pause) no I don’t think there’s some interesting tensions there between an editor, being a teacher, not being an editor, you know what that means, what teaching is. My teaching style is very much, you know if we talk about post-graduates, that needs to be about independent inquiry. It needs to be about that student taking their own learning journey and to be frank, in a way makes my job easier because I don’t have to fill my head up with everything to tell them this is the answer. It’s about me helping them but it also means I need to be up-to-date with things and on my toes because they could go in any direction and ask any question so it’s kind of a two-edged sword kind of thing but I would rather be in that position than straight out of, and I remember being straight out of industry and its just personal this is how you do this thing and I can see fault with that now because it doesn’t move. It means it remains static. If I was still editing and teaching part time that’s probably the match made in heaven. So yeah.

Interviewer: Okay thank you very much.

Participant: Thanks it was interesting.