

R: I was going to say, that's really interesting. Do you teach any vocational courses for Media at all at Level 3?

T: No. At the time when they made the curriculum reforms I looked a little bit at the Cambridge, is it the Cambridge?

R: Well there's the Cambridge, the CIE, or do you mean the CTEC? The equivalent of the BTEC, the CTEC the Cambridge one

T: I think so, yeah, I had a look at one because a colleague at my previous school was going in that direction but I did a lot of research with ex-students and found out whether or not they would have taken it and sort of realised it would have affected both my intake but also which types of students would take it I guess

R: Yeah, I taught it for the year last year and it was really IT based, it was very little media in it. Some of the stuff I had to do my own homework for, it was quite subject specific to IT and I was like, oh not really my thing – having been an English teacher coming into Media

T: I also felt as well, I kind of looked at some of the schemes, not schemes, what are they called? The specifications and I kind of thought, well if I was moving away from Media to make it more creative, because I wanted to do more creative stuff and less 'tick boxy' stuff – it even seemed even more 'tick boxy' from what I could see.

R: I mean the exam was like a multiple choice exam; 45 questions that were actually really hard and the pass rate was like, quite high. I think the first time the students took it we had about 40% pass rate which, you know, wasn't ideal for Level 2 – well it's a Level 2 course not Level 3 but it was, yeah, we binned it, we've gone back to BTEC so *laughs* yeah, probably a wise choice I would say

T: Have you got the A Level Media as well? You do that

R: Yeah, so I teach, I've taught EDUCAS and AQA, I'm a bit of a weird teacher, I do teach and I've been where I've been in my particular teaching role for like, 17 years in the same institution but I have actually taught in another school last year, just 1 day a week like a sabbatical, no not sabbatical – secondment. But I'm doing a doctorate at the same time, so I'm kind of, a bit of a mix and match approach at the minute, so I've had AQA and EDUCAS but not the OCR actually, funnily enough – although we did teach OCR for years on the old spec, we were OCR the whole time. It's interesting really. What's the entry requirements for you students to get onto A Level Media?

T: Level 4 in English or above

R: Ok, and how have..

T: Normally if they've done, usually we have quite a, our sixth form is both our school and then it takes from about 6 or 7 other schools in the local area so generally speaking if they've done media studies at GCSE then I'll tend to bend it. We've got quite a lot of autonomy when it comes to choosing our students really.

R: And do you find that they're coping with the written elements of the exams?

T: Errr, no. Yes in that they're getting there and I think probably that's down to me getting there as well in terms of what's required for, I think its kind of not what, I get the impression from them it's not what they thought they signed up for. Not in the sense that they don't, you know, we've got quite a lot of students that are very academically able. But its just the style of the questions, the sort of prominence of memory recall kind of, you know, type of questions really, and sort of, you know like a lot of the A Levels and GCSEs it's become about the breadth of content rather than depth really and I think its hard to know where that lies with Media at the moment.

R: Yeah, so I feel that brings us on nicely to your experiences in respect. Just as a starting point, what do you think about the new specifications? Have you got any reservations? Have you got any things you like? Anything you've got as an experience of the first cohort coming through and taking the A2 exams?

T: I think, I think there's loads of issues with it, but I'm also very familiar with the process they had to go through in order to get it passed. So I don't blame the subject specialists who came up with the course content for that. But there are loads of issues, I mean the issue of set text for a start I think in Media it just doesn't fit really. And at the moment I teach Stranger Things and Deutschland 83 as the sort of long form TV drama case studies. You know, you're looking at 4 series of Stranger Things and yet you're looking at the first episode and that's really hard to talk about sort of a lot of the things because you're having to say to students forget everything you know from the last 4 years and all these people who have become big stars, you know, we're focussed on the first episode. I think there is a plan with the specs that they change every 3 years in terms of the case studies. So broadly speaking, in terms of the exam content, I like the fact they're focussed on long form TV drama cause I think it would be remiss not to. There's a massive focus on newspapers which is just, that's proving so difficult because students don't read newspapers. They read news, but they don't read newspapers and I kind of feel that under the old OCR spec there was a unit called 'we media in democracy' and I thought that was brilliant in terms of really capturing what we have to analyse and interpret information and look at, kind of official/unofficial sources all that kind of stuff. But this one I find really, it really is almost having to kind of, almost feels like I'm teaching – I know newspapers did exist but I feel like I'm teaching history to get to the starting point of actually discussing the current bit. But that bit I think is quite problematic. And then really with a lot of the, I don't know if it's the same on every single other spec, but there's kind of these little bits, which I know that they were told you have to study and it just seems a bit pointless to me, I feel like, well you know – if were going to do gaming, lets do it properly, if we're going to do film trailers and posters, lets do it properly – rather than its kind of, you've got to know loads about it for a 5 mark or a 10 mark question. But so those bits I think are a big issue and the newspapers bit and then when its comes to the NEA or coursework or something the idea that, the massive issue was the banning of, or not the banning but the change from having being able to work in groups and being able to work by themselves. I always offered students the option that you can either work by yourself or in groups and a lot of them did chose to work by themselves because they wanted a bit more autonomy. But, I just think its not realistic to what how medias made.

R: Exactly, you know, its all talk about employability skills and everything and putting them in lessons – Ofsted are really big on that and actually what are we telling them is that you work in a vacuum basically

T: Hugely, and you know just from hearing from students that have gone to University to study Media production courses and one student told me about in the first couple of weeks

they whisked them all off of to a residential and basically went, 'right you're working with you, go away you've got this much budget' and that's the kind of task they're doing and they're having to learn to, and they shouldn't really be having to learn that at University. And previously I don't think that was the case, it was one of the things I liked about teaching the production side of media was that you, you know that you, that they had to learn to manage a group and, you know, work out roles and deal with people who weren't pulling their weight and all sorts of stuff like that.

R: That's interesting, so on one hand it's, like you're saying clearly that the skills that you need are not replicated by, in class. In terms of creativity, do you feel that, have you got any opinions about how much creativity the students are allowed?

T: Because again, because they're kind of, the briefs are very stringently set, and I think – like for the OCR ones for example we've always traditionally done the music video and music video website, and with that they've kind of set relatively broad genres like; dance music or pop music is the one this year. I think the intention from what I've been told by OCR quite often has been, and I should say as well that I moderate 'examine' whatever the word is, for the A Level. So I think the intention with that is to make them broad so that students have that freedom to try to interpret it a little bit. But I do find it quite restrictive, for example last year – during the moderation process, one bit that was in the spec which said that you, you had to have two different characters representing two different social groups, I must admit I lost count of the amount of times that it became this horrifically tokenistic stereotype one where literally they would get, you know, the one black kid who might be in their sixth form to be in their music video so they can tick that box, and that's just not – it kind of counters

R: Not what it's meant to be, I that's absolutely, yeah

T: So I kind of feel it was a spec overall that was, I wouldn't say cobbled together because that's unfair to the people that worked on it. But I think it was, they were placed in such rigid straight jackets that they had to find a way to fit all that and overall it's a regression, on a course that was actually really very good but needed a bit of updating.

R: Yeah, so just out of interest as well; why did you stick with OCR? Because a lot of people jumped ship to EDUCAS. I'm just really interested in the kind of, the dynamics of the cohorts of students that stayed with OCR as a lot of people who moved to EDUCAS as they were the first ones to be approved.

T: Well probably because I'm really unorganised when it comes to planning *laughs*. No, it's kind of part because I examined for OCR and I was kind of, I wouldn't say in the loop in terms of development but I knew where it was heading and what was happening and I kind of waited a little bit longer with that, I sort of set myself a bit of an artificial deadline about changing once, I didn't see anything in the others although a couple of friends have said to me about EDUCAS being, what they think is better or something, but I didn't see anything in there that was wildly different because I think a lot of them were operating within the same sort of framework, you know, and the same restrictions; 'you must have this much amount of theorists' and stuff like that, the theorist things a real issue actually, that's a huge issue. I put my students through, we call it 'Theory Week', but it became 'Theory Fortnight' and probably by the end of that fortnight we were all ready to just throw in the towel. It becomes such rote learning and what ends up happening, you end up with, ok you've got a super efficient understanding of 9 theorists, of 19 theorists, which in media seems completely pointless, you

know – why not have a really good understanding of 7 or something, but again, this was I know that was the kind of route that they were working within

R: It is tricky. I mean how involved were you like, obviously back in 2016 it was announced, because there was a bit of a grey cloud over whether Media was going to be reformed. What were your initial thoughts when;

a) Media was first announced that it was going to be up for reform and

b) There's a process that kicks in, the consultation process, how aware were you of all of that, sort of, jumble going on at the time?

T: Very aware actually and actually quite a lot of my ex-students were, kind of, I think there was, I don't know if there was a petition, there probably was or something and they were very involved in that and students that had left and gone to university who felt very strongly about it. I honestly thought it was for the chop, that's what I thought personally, I thought it just didn't fit in to what, kind of, the model of education is at the moment. I was obviously relieved that it survived and I kind of viewed it, I know it sounds obviously, 5 years down the line we could be talking about Media Studies no longer existing or something, hopefully not. You know I kind of felt that it was a bit of a stay of execution and a bit of a temporary, I almost saw the spec to be honest as a temporary 'can we get through this bit' and you know, live to fight another day. That's kind of how I felt. But to be honest without being too dramatic about it, I was devastated at the idea of that disappearing. Not just because I enjoy teaching it but just because I thought, you know, if we're not covering what's evolving in the media age and what's happening then we might as well give up in schools 'cause it's such a fundamental part of our students lives and increasingly so, you know.

R: Definitely, I mean that's why I asked you before as well about; do you think there's a particular reason because my, I've done quite a few interviews now and I did a pilot study last year on the EDUCAS group and my impression (and I'd like to be corrected if I'm wrong) is that people who have stayed with OCR, so far the people I've spoken to, feel much more, kind of, tied to Media as a sort of identity subject. Whereas, like you saying, you've got like a loyalty and more in the loop with them as well. And also a lot of people felt that EDUCAS board gave up a lot of, you know they sacrificed quite a lot to be approved early and so for teachers it was the easier one to shift to because they got approved early – so they could plan

T: That's right

R: And also; its my understanding of the consultation process that OCR, the subject specialists fought harder and longer to keep what they wanted as part of the specification than EDUCAS did. So that's just what...

T: That's my understanding as well and certainly from, kind of, at least I wouldn't say knowing them personally – but knowing them professionally a lot of people involved in the process, that was kind of what I got from it. I feel that probably a lot of people jumped ship to EDUCAS or AQA partly because they were approved earlier but I think also as well, the one thing I saw over and over again was that there's that need for, because mainly Media Studies as you know (I mean you've probably found from your researches) sort of took by an English teacher and it's the bolted on bit of the timetable and I think they were just desperate for it to have; 'right what resources can you give me that I can go in there and deliver it' which is not the approach I wanted to take really.

R: No, **passage leads to resistants** I suppose, and there's no judgement on anybody because we did it here, but it wasn't my call to be honest, by that point, you know I used to run the faculty but because I'm doing this I don't anymore, it wasn't my call to do it but I do strongly feel that actually people who moved to it, kind of, it was just a better fit option for people who didn't have enough time. With the new spec and because of people changing to Film Studies and all sorts of media, you know the BTEC was the new one as well and I think its quite a daunting prospect to start teaching three, different, new specifications at the same time and planning all that so

T: I think it also probably depends on the school that the teachers are working in because I never really felt under any pressure from my, either my head of faculty or the school in general to make a quick decision, I think, whereas some people were being; 'well what are you..', I said I would be offering Media Studies, so I kind of, I remember I did this sixth form open evening which I looked at the specs and just took the general things out of them and put them in there, rather than saying; 'this is the exam board we study'. But I think it all depends, you know sometimes, probably some people were told 'well I need to know by this date' as well so that might be another factor.

R: Yeah that is a big factor. What, in your school, how is Media perceived? Has it got a high status? Or do you feel that its one of those subjects that often kids are put into as a sort of filler? Or what?

T: Ooh, how's it perceived? Without blowing my own trumpet too much, I think I've raised the profile of it quite a lot in terms of how its viewed. But still, yeah there tends to be, you know there'll be some students who will quite often talk about how; 'its not a proper subject' or the usual kind of sort of stuff. I think certainly its different from a students point of view to an institutions point of view in terms of in the school I don't think theres a, theres not been any pressure on students to do/take other subjects over Media – theres not been that pressure placed on them. I think its more, it comes from either parents or students themselves.

R: Ok, that's interesting, thank you. In terms of your teaching, you've had quite a lot of reservations and doubts about the other [subjects], the specifications. Do you think you've had to change your teaching style, your pedagogical methods to adapt to the new course? You said about 'Theory Week'

T: Yeah not doing that again

Mumbled talking over

R: Is that something you, is it representative your style of teaching or is that {inaudible}

T: I must admit, I think because here we still do the Year 12, we do the AS, with the idea being that the students may, most of them will continue on to A Level but if not they've got something if they drop it at the end of Year 12 or they leave school. So what I've kind of done, in the Year 12 year I've sort of taken an approach, and as I've said I'm probably quite fortunate that with the blessing of my Head of Faculty, which is more that I see it as just a bit of a training year really and if they get good grades then great. So I've actually front loaded - compared to the old AS thinking about it, I've actually front loaded loads of production work in the first term because we've got students that have never used Premier Pro before, they've never done, you know they've never picked up a camera before or planned their own stuff - so I kind of try to embed those skills. I think Year 13's the problem I think its, it ends up

being very, a lot of rote learning and I think students are really struggling with some of the stuff. It was really interesting because there was one little bit which all of a sudden everything changed – which was when we did Minecraft, so its just a small little bit but the students straight away, they knew their stuff, they could tell me loads of stuff and that kind of, you know, how my experience of teaching Media in the past has been , its not been like teaching English where you're kind of sitting there going, you know explaining literary criticism to them and telling them stuff like that but you can kind of make Media much more real I think into students every day lives. So it has changed my pedagogical approaches, I must admit its much more teacher led which I don't really like doing.

R: No, again I think that is really typical of other interviews I've had as well

T: Equally I would say, I was speaking only today to someone who's taught Law here for many years and he said, you know even as a subject as different in terms of the style of Media as that, he said that that's exactly how it is in other subjects, so I think its probably not just linked to Media, I think it's a lot of other ones as well.

R: It's Gove's decision of ***ED Hershey's*** learning knowledge led, knowledge based curriculum isn't it. That's again really interesting, it think that's typical...

T: ***Laughs*** I wonder if you're just hearing the same stuff over and over again

R: Well its quite good because it's actually really, I can't disclose my personal opinions obviously but there is a reason why I'm doing this doctorate

EXTRACT

R: In terms of, we talked about changing your teaching style to fit the spec, was that resultant – obviously OCR were quite late to be accredited, but there wasn't any textbooks for OCR for ages was there?

T: No

R: Im not assuming anyone uses textbooks either but did you have to create all your own resources? Did you subscribe to other online sites for resources? What kind of materials or resources do you use in class?

T: I would say theyre probably about 98-99% self created.

R: Yeah

T: So, and also I kind of, I basically create them for the other two English teachers who do teach Media and they kind of prefer that because they don't feel very secure with the new specs so I've kind of designed them both for myself and other people to use. There is odd bits and pieces that I kind of picked up from things which I guess you're going to ask about; you know a couple of things like Facebook groups and some stuff on there. I haven't found the textbooks, well there is some useful stuff in them but in some ways I kind of felt, it's a bit overload with a lot of the stuff and I'm thinking if students need to know all of that for a 10 mark question, how am I possibly going to teach that? That's been the issue, I was using one today actually and I was kind of recommending to students but I said you know, it's a support rather than a replacement for what we're doing in class. [Pontificates] And I think it's

an issue across the board, I know like in English now they've got a three and a half hour long A Level exams which to me seems ridiculous but I kind of feel with ours its an awful lot to get in for two hours of writing on both exams, you know, the timings just don't really allow for much depth and the criteria is quite often to show knowledge and understanding and then apply academic ideas. It's a real tricky one I think with some of the questions and how to get students to answer them well without just repeating what I'm telling them.

R: I'm not actually as familiar with the OCR specs as [with the AQA as I've taught them but certainly] with the EDUCAS I would think that taking 3 exams and actually split the first one in two – look at Industries & Audiences separately from Media, Language & Representation. Not that I'm advocating more exams but ... I completely agree with you that the timings are counterproductive. Its like you're already putting stress on the students by trying to tell them that you've got to write all of this in this short amount of time and they're sort of having to pick what they're writing.

In terms of the Facebook group, were you a member of the Facebook group before the new specifications or did you join as a result of?

T: I think result of, I cant even remember how I found it to be honest, I dunno whether it was kind of something I saw on Twitter first and then went on Facebook and found it, I don't know, I cant remember. Yeah I think it was after the new spec came around.

Oh, I'll tell you what it was actually, I went to, it was an OCR new spec training session that happened in Manchester or something, a free thing that happened and then someone in there mentioned it, said 'oh teachers want to share resources etc etc'

R: And what do you mostly use the group for? Do you post more? Or do you comment more? Or do you just use the resources and just kind of follow it? How do you describe the way you use it?

T: It really varies, to be honest, I have used some of the resources that people have put up – I haven't used that many but do you know what, sometimes I've used it to sort of see whether or not people are taking the same approaches as me rather than, you know what its like sometimes with teaching Media and you're normally a department of 1 and knowing that you're, if you're doing the same thing. Equally you know, probably familiar to sort of me or the teachers you've spoken to, any budgets that we used to have for things like going to conferences or going to things like that, I really wanted to come down to the MEA one that was recently but there's no chance because you can't even – I mean the train tickets for a start were about £170 so its not going to happen. So kinda used it for that, I think I've uploaded a few of my resources on there – I know I've put my 'Radiohead, Burn the Witch' music video up, so I have contributed but its kind of been one of those things, I've gone 'oh if I've downloaded this I better contribute something'. But I've kind of used it really intermittently. Sometimes I'll, you know, sometimes I wont check it for a month or something and sometimes you know there might be loads of useful stuff within a week but looking at the posts I'm kind of guessing that the same for a lot of people really. You can kind of see there's, it kind of comes in fits and starts really.

R: Ok, what do you think is the most beneficial aspect of the group for you? In terms of your own teaching; I mean you've probably kind of half answered that question anyway but if you could pick out anything that's majorly impacted upon your kind of Media teaching.

T: Like I say, I think its more kind of checking that I'm on the right track with things. I must admit I'm probably a bit of a selfish group member in that I'll probably have a read and I'll

thank people if they've put something on there and I've used it. I don't, I know there's quite a lot of people and I sort of, and again you can see sometimes its people who have been kind of; right you're teaching Media next year and they've gone on there going; 'Please help with stuff like this'. And I must admit, I'm not one of the people who says; 'oh, what you need to do is this' – I don't help *Laughs* [Inaudible] Where does it end with teachers? You know most of my colleagues are going to these kind of, you know, faddy English teacher meets and I'm thinking, you know you're supposed to have a life and a family and stuff like that and I'm a bit old school with the thing that I kind of feel that maybe the education system should pay for my CPD, not I be like, you know

R: And yet you've offered to do a 40 minute interview with me, so

T: Yeah, true, true, true

R: Hopefully this will have some impact. Although its not going to published for another year at least so it might be out of date by that point *laughs*

Finally as well, its been really really useful, thank you and yes I am hearing the same things over and over again but you know what? That is exactly, like really its brilliant, its reporting that everyone is kind of feeling very similar about things. But I think what I've found really interesting is, and sort of my last question is; what do you think the future of the subject will be? Just, you know, predicting or just having a general think about it

T: What do I think the future of the subject will be? That's a difficult question, it's a good question but it's a difficult question. I remain optimistic that I think the case for Media can be made very very strongly and I think its going to be, obviously very much dictated to by government policy – so that doesn't give me much reason to be optimistic whatsoever. I kind of hope that we can continue to make the argument that, you know, and I've read a lot around what is Media literacy, what is digital literacy and if we can kind of move beyond treating technology and kids technological use like its just an issue and its something that we have to deal with or we just. Do you know what I mean? I'm just, I can kind of see actually Media as a subject continuing but I can actually foresee a situation where Media in some shape or form will be a bit more central to the curriculum. Now, I cant see it coming from government policy at the moment, I'm kind of hoping that educationally and, ill see, hopefully your research will help, I think we've got to be optimistic about it because at the end of the day – even though I've got no issue with an A Level in Ancient Greek, I kind of feel like if you're only going to have an A Level or GCSE in a world where kids have a digital footprint when they're still in their mothers womb then its kind of like what are schools for? Well its true isn't it? You know watching my little nephew who's like 5 or 6 years old, him sort of bossing Minecraft and kind of all the things with TikTok and all that, you know I think its kind of, its so rapidly developing – there's no other subject like it and that's why I think I kind of moved from English into Media, because I just thought it's the only subject I can think of; it's a bit of a pain because you have to keep changing your resources all the time, but it's the only subject I can think of that I'll kind of hear something or I'll read something and I'll think; 'Oh! Must get that into the lesson tomorrow'

R: Its so brilliant to hear you talk like this because its just, I think we all operate in a little bit of a vacuum sometimes, so I think the Facebook community's really bringing everyone together a bit more but its good to get these voices and, you know, I'd like to create another Facebook group at some point for people who just can talk about these issues, it'd be great but its obviously time and everything. But that's fantastic, what you're saying is brilliant and its going to be really useful to the research as well.

So yeah and thank you so much for, you know, giving up all this time to do this interview. I can't promise to have anything **urgently** so you can, in the immediate future I will be writing up my findings as from September and this is running until July – to the end of the academic year. [REDACTED]

I've just been knocked back today actually, funnily enough, by Nick Gibb – I did request an interview with him

T: *Laughs* Big surprise!

R: Yeah, im not giving up though

T: I presume you've read David Buckingham's blog on, it was David Buckingham and [REDACTED] log on it, which you know, and I heard – I think it was one of the OCR ... who they had and David Buckingham was talking about, spoke very candidly about the process they went through doing it, yeah its just – its an interesting one isn't it because like you say, the silence that comes from the DFE and the government on the issue, you know. You get kind of, I think there was [REDACTED] was involved in it, I think there was research put forward last year and there was just silence on it and just a one line statement which I think is

R: Absolutely, and they are, they're just like being really obstructive actually because I've asked several times now for names of the people involved in the process and come back with nothing – I'm actually putting a Freedom of Information request in to find out the names of people

T: Good luck, it's the government talking about getting rid of that bit, seriously I was reading something the other day saying that they've got plans to reform the Freedom of Information Bill; basically make it that you can't get it, I don't know

R: Im trying to slip it under the door just in case. Good old Boris – its going to be a dictatorship before we know it. Its crazy, but

T: But no, thank you, its been nice talking to you and yeah when you've got it done or whatever then id love to read a copy obviously.

R: Well I can always send you, I've done the pilot study which was on the EDUCAS group last year and basically what I'm doing at the minute seems to be a much more scaled up version of exactly the same findings as what I found in that. So if you're interested then I can wing that over to you.

T: Yeah, that'd be great

R: I think its about page 12 when the findings bit starts, everything else is just boring kind of methodology sort of stuff.

But yeah and you know, the MEA hopefully will do some campaigning – we're sort of struggling a bit because we're all just volunteers and having the time and the energy to actually make it meaningful is really hard. I've been **updating** the website and that just been really time consuming and I haven't been able to do it very well to be honest because I can't give enough time to it. Its all there

Researcher: Could you just briefly outline what kind of school you're at and how Media Studies is perceived and how many students take it? That kind of thing

Teacher: Ok, it's a boys grammar school with a mixed sixth form. Media Studies is very much a minority subject, there's only me who teaches it, so just one teacher and I have one Year 12 and one Year 13 group. Uptake of the subject is improving – I've got only 9 students in my Year 13 class but 22 in my Year 12 and its looking solid for maybe 25-ish for next year hopefully, next years Year 12. It is very much a minority subject, trying to get any kind of recognition is difficult. I've had arguments with careers advisors who I've heard actively telling students not to do Media Studies because its not worth anything and it's a pretend subject and all of those, kind of, you know the old nonsense. Despite, obviously media literacy being absolutely central to peoples lives these days, so yeah those arguments are ongoing but you know, so that's kind of where we're at as a school.

R: What's the entry requirement for A Level?

T: My, I always specify that I need students to have a Level 6 in English Lit and Lang as a minimum GCSE; plus the sort of standard entry, but the trouble is the school management will look at 'bums on seats' so I've got one student in my Year 12s who only got a Level 4 in their English Language so that's a struggle because at heart its an essay based subject.

R: Ok, brilliant, thank you. So in terms of the new specification; youre AQA aren't you?

T: AQA yeah

R: Brilliant and obviously when the reforms were announced in 2016, what were your initial kind of feelings about hearing:

- a. That Media was up finally for reform
- b. And also, what was your awareness of the consultation process that ensued?

T: I wasn't really aware of any consultation process as such. My feelings when I first saw the **from** structure of the A Level was that I was very, very disappointed with the reduction in coursework weighting – its, to me it sort of bridges the gap between an academic and a practical subject and it just seemed to me ridiculous to just sort of downgrade that side of things. Plus also I think with the old 50/50 split it gave students who maybe weren't absolutely the top academically a chance to do something really well; whereas the new structure really privileges those who are academically gifted and those who are, have a real eye for doing thing practically, I think it diminishes their, that side of things. Yeah I was sort of overall disappointed with the shape of the new A Level I think.

R: In terms of the set text and the theorists, what do you think about the installation of those?

T: I mean the theorists I personally I find very interesting but that's the kind of side of it that I really loved, the kind of deep analytical side, and I have no problem with the set theorists – I mean, its was a bit, some of the choices of theorists I think are a little bit odd. You know, having sort of **Baudrillard** so front and centre in the post-modernist stuff, I just found it a little bit, yeah just a little bit prescriptive. I think the whole thing is very prescriptive but a lot of

the theorists, you know your *Toderov*, everyone else you know your *Stuart Hall's* all of that is stuff that I've been teaching for ages anyway so it wasn't as if that was new – it was just having it, kind of, specified in black and white on the spec was the new bit to it really I guess. But the set text I have to say, I'm not keen on and that's been a real struggle to get students to engage with those because they're not Media forms that these students actually engage with at all. You know I think we've seen a, obviously the move to the Netflix and the YouTube kind of media consumption has really accelerated in the last couple of years. My current Year 12s, they don't watch scheduled TV at all, they don't, most of them don't play video games in the kind of way the videos games are presented on the spec – and also, I mean another thing, the video games that are chosen that are decades old, you know; Tomb Raider Anniversary 2007, these kids, they've never played the Tomb Raider game, they don't recognise Lara Croft as being an iconic figure and its having the set text and not being able to tailor my exemplars to the students I've got in front of me. Say 'ok right, what are these guys interested in? Ok, lets go with that' and sort of build the course around that. Its having text that, I can kind of see that rationale where it seems like a bunch of people have sat around in a room and gone 'right what are we going to make the set text?' and they pick things that, I think on paper look like they're giving a broad overview but actually they're really difficult to get the kids to engage with. Again, trying to get them to actually look at the newspapaers – they don't read papers, you know, these kids have never bought a newspaper in their lives, they come from houses that don't have newspapers in them regularly. Its just a weird, a weird range of texts and too many of them.

R: Bit like a Media history course rather than a...

T: Yeah I mean, I think, I suppose you could say that. There are some that the students enjoy, I mean with Year 13s we're *fragment* into Sims Freeplay, but that – and I'm, this is going to sound a bit kind of, stereotypical here, but my Year 13 group is entirely female and those kind of games are the sort of games that if they do play, that's the sort of thing they would look at; so they've sort of enjoyed getting into that. You know, other things leave them stone cold – I mean War of the Worlds radio, they look at me like I'm an idiot and I'm, for me personally absolutely love it, you know, being a SciFi nerd, and you know stuff like that's been part of my upbringing but trying to communicate that to students who have whatever they want to watch at or engage with at any given moment, entirely at their fingertips, it's a different media landscape, it seems like the course was designed for students ten years ago, rather than students now.

R: That's really interesting you say that

T: Its, why aren't we looking at Netflix? And exploring that as a platform and why aren't we doing a whole *recording drops out* why aren't we doing stuff like Fortnite? Or you know, what this sort of current, big things that are happening, why are we looking at stuff that fifteen years old. So yeah, so that's my kinda take on it – I'm not overly keen on the set text at all.

R: This is a very strong theme coming out on all three different boards, youre not by any means preaching in a vacuum here. Do you feel in that respect then you have changed your teaching style, your pedagogical approach to the lessons because of the set?

T: Yeah, absolutely, I'm teaching much more to the text, the test. Everything is predicated on how to answer that question, how to answer that question, what you need to write in what order, rather than actually it being teaching students to have a deep understanding of Media

concepts and Media language and then being able to apply that to everything. It is a kind of; 'right, this is what you need to know about, you know this is what you need to know about Mens Health; here's a bunch of facts, here's a bunch of ideas – write them in the right order, there you go, off you go' I don't feel its really teaching students to be thoughtful consumers of Media, its just teaching them to remember a bunch of facts and churn it out in an exam.

R: Yeah definitely. In terms of the resources that you use in your classroom, do you **develop** most of those yourself or do you use a mixture of textbooks or online?

T: I've got the set text textbooks that are produced with AQA, I've got the year 1 and year 2 ones – I don't tend to use them a lot, I find that the students find them quite difficult to get their heads around cause they're, they are really really quite academic in their style – they're actually full of way more stuff than the students would actually need to consider when it comes to the exam. I tend to mostly produce all my own stuff for, sort of PowerPoints and handouts and things like that. I have bought a few resources in, there's a guy who's, who, advertising on the, actually on the Facebook page a little while ago, a set of Powerpoint resources for the set text, yeah so I bought those although I haven't got them yet because we've just got a new finance system at school and it's a nightmare, so somehow the **ball** payments all gone wrong places. So I'm waiting to see on those and see if they turn out to be any good. But yeah mostly I do all my own stuff.

R: Yeah, ok, that again that seems to be a common theme, obviously. So I'm just interested also in the kind of commodification of the new specification just seeing if there's lots of people like Rob and other kind of online paid for subscriptions – just seeing how the new specs have generated that and also people writing textbooks and things like that so. I have to tread carefully on this one because my supervisor's Julian McDougall [audio is muffled]

T: Can I just pause there for a second and Ill be right back to you – wont be long

R: Ok, no worries

T: Right, no there we go, I'm back, I was just talking to my mate that's all

R: Oh sorry

T: No that's alright

R: Just out of interest, I know its really early days yet but where do you feel that students are going to go on to after their A Levels if they do Media?

T: Well I'm sort of pushing the university angle, I guess being in a grammar school, that kind of academic route is really the one we are there to, kind of, promote. So I've always got in my classroom, I've got prospectuses, or prospecti? No cant be, that doesn't sound right. From universities, just showing students what different onward journeys are available and all the different pathways into Media. Cause I think a lot of them kind of come into Media and they decide that they're going to be, you know 'I want to be a Director' or 'I wanna be a camera person' or 'I want to do editing' and they don't necessarily realise that all the other stuff that goes on, you know all the kind of behind the scenes stuff - so yeah just trying to get them to think about those different sorts of careers. But again I've had arguments with the careers advisor at school, you know students doing work experience and they're being told

by the careers advisor; 'don't bother even trying to get work experience in the Media, it's a waste of your time' and you know, battling that because the students come in and I say; 'Oh what are you going to do on your work experience? Who've you applied to?' 'Oh well ive been told not to bother'

So then I spend a bit of time going through, 'lets look at all the independent film companies there are in London. Lets, right here's some phone numbers, go and phone them see if you can get in' you know. But, yeah so I think trying to get students to progress their academic students in Media is what I'm, what I like to do really.

R: And do you feel like, sorry I didn't ask you how long you've worked in your current school for?

T: In my current school, two and a half years

R: Ok so, what I was going to ask was any perception as to whether the students progressing onto Media related courses had gone up, down or...

T: I don't know, I don't really have that info to hand and I've not, certainly not been sort of told about where our students actually end up. I know I've got, well one of my students from last year went to Ravensbourne so I know where he's gone and he's sort of, he's having a whale of a time and he keeps [muffled] saying can he come back into school to talk to the students about what he's done, so I'm trying to get that sorted at the moment. Cos he's, not only is he doing his degree but he's also freelancing and he also has a kind of part time job at some sort of production company doing stuff, so he's

R: And that's what we want isn't it

T: Yeah

R: In terms of your own, did you do a Media studies related qualification yourself?

T: Not really no, I'm a – like a lot of Media studies teachers I'm an English teacher at heart, I've been teaching twenty odd years now and I've always taught a bit of Media here and there – its only in this particular school where Media is my sort of prime thing. I still teach a bit of English as well to fill up the rest of my timetable but, yeah I've got, going way back, yeah going back to the eighties now, I've got an O Level Media Studies and I did a City & Guilds in TV and video production back in the mid – yeah a long time ago, back when there were things on, it wasn't even VHS we were using U-matic back then, and what else, but that's in terms of my specific Media training, I've not been trained as a Media teacher, I just sort of transferred.

R: I think that's a very common kind of

T: Yeah I think its very rare to do, to get a PGCE in, as a Media teacher and I think its nearly always English teachers that have converted or sometimes Art teachers, I know a few Art teachers who have taken it on as well, so.

R: Was Media like, you moving over to do Media was that your decision? Or was that just how timetables worked out or...

T: No, it was kind of my decision, you know in various schools there have been Media Studies departments as well as English departments and I've always said, you know when I've sort of moved to a new school that I'm really interested in teaching Media as well so I've taught GCSE Media, GCSE Film Studies as well a while back. So I've probably sort of, on and off, they've been a few years over the last twenty years where I haven't taught Media but mostly I've had some sort of Media, even if its only like a couple of lessons a week.

R: So, just sort of moving onto your usage of the Facebook group. When did you first join that, just out of interest?

T: Probably about a year and a half, two years ago I want to say

R: Ok, so after the specification

T: After the specification yeah, id sort of, taken a posting at my new school and that sort of coincided with the new specifications coming on stream, so I've taught this new specification since the beginning of it but I've had my Year 13s a couple of years ago were the last year on the old spec. So yes so probably about that long yeah, maybe a year, maybe a bit more, two years, I don't know I can't remember exactly.

R: I know its difficult when it all melts into one. So how do you think you primarily use the group? What are the benefits and things that you would ***highlight***?

T: I think, I just, I don't tend to look at it a huge amount. Mostly if I get a notification pops up that says somebodies posted something on there then I might have a quick check out and see what people are saying. Sometimes, you know, people have questions about things, so if I've got something to contribute I'll respond, answer or say what I'm doing or that kind of thing. Sometimes people post up resources that can be quite useful so it's, you know, download those and that sort of stuff – I haven't uploaded anything myself yet.

R: What would prompt you into uploading a resource?

T: I don't know, I think, if I thought that it was something that could be useful to people I'll do it. This is going to sound weird, but I like to have ownership of my resources, I'm not kind of, oh this sounds terrible, I was about to say I'm not very good at sharing. No it's just that I like to know, you know if I've spent a lot of time putting together like a sort of a 45, 50 page PowerPoint, I like to know that it stays like that – I know that's a bit weird and you know as soon as you give it over to other people they do terrible things to it. That sounds so terrible now that I'm saying it out loud.

R: ***Unsure of initial sentence*** It's like altering a book isn't it?

T: Yeah, it is yeah and I guess, and also when I download other people's resources I always look at them and go; 'Oh yeah that's good' and even if it's fantastic, I think something particularly like with a PowerPoint because it follows your train of thought and the way you want to present the, the order in which you want things to do, I always look at someone else's PowerPoint and go; 'Yeah this is all really great but I'm going to have to put everything in a different order because I wouldn't do it like that'

R: That's true, sometime it creates more work, it doesn't actually..

T: Yeah I mean a lot of the time I'll download a resource and I'll look at it and then I don't actually end up using it. I might kind of go; 'Oh right, yeah I like that particular bit of it' so I'll, I'll just nick that idea and stick it in my Powerpoint, you know

R: Do you ever pay for resources, I know we talked about the sort of quality of resources and stuff before but, I'm just trying to think, do you, would you go to a workshop or get consultants in or anything like that?

T: No I haven't done anything like that so far. I've subscribed to **Edusites** Media and I thought their resources were terrible. I didn't like them, it's just each, one they weren't Powerpoint so you had to look at them in a browser so you couldn't sort of change font sizes and zoom in, you know if you've got students with visual difficulties or need things in particular colours then you couldn't adjust it. And each one it was just an absolute wall of text and it wasn't really particularly designed well I don't think, so I only subscribed to that for a year and I didn't renew my subscription this year. But I haven't brought in any consultants or anything like that in, no. My budget for the whole of Media is less than £400 for the year so one set of textbooks wipes that out, you know.

R: Yeah, exactly. What sort of, I always quite like to end on this question; what do you think is the future for Media Studies?

T: Oh, that's so hard because there's what I think the future should be and then what I think its likely to be and they're not necessarily the same thing. So what I think, I mean I think Media Studies has to start being thought of more in a kind of a core subject thing and it needs to be, I think it needs to be brought in earlier in our students experience. At my school its only taught at A Level we don't offer it as a GCSE even though I keep arguing that we should. But I think when you look at the people who are in charge, if you look at the sort of political aspect of it – I think you've got a whole bunch of people who see Media Studies as a 'Mickey Mouse' subject as a kind of, just pretend thing, 'oh its just that', you know, it's not, it doesn't have any value for a lot of people who are in charge and society in general I think don't really understand it. So my fear is that its going to be squeezed out, you know, that's the way I'm worried about but I think it should be given a lot more value within the system, it think.

R: That's really interesting, thank you. Thank you so much for your time.

Transcription
Research pseudonym: Ellen
OCR

Researcher: So first of all, would you mind giving me a sort of outline of the kind of, I mean I know [REDACTED] actually but

Teacher: Oh do you? How do you know us?

R: Well I'm in [REDACTED] so I think your reputation precedes you

T: Oh god, I don't know how much longer that's gonna last but ok

R: I think we've got similar students

T: Well yes, so you know, we're the sixth form bit of a big FE institution and we're now a part of a massive group of colleges called the [REDACTED] So we've merged with [REDACTED].

R: Right, ok

T: Which is very painful

R: Yeah, I can imagine, its been a bit of a turbulent time I think, going through the mergers and **academy accredits and everything**
So, how has that affected you Media department have you merged?

T: No, we haven't, were lucky in that [REDACTED] don't do A levels, [REDACTED] do do A levels but they're tiny and they haven't merged us, behind **difficult to decipher** behind the scenes we still run A levels, they still run A levels, so apart from nothing working properly, the merger hasn't had an impact on numbers or anything like that

Laughter

R: Kind of familiar story

T: Yeah

R: So how many teachers are in your department then?

T: There are 5 teachers who teach, they teach Media and Film, some teach just Media, some teach Media and Film

R: Ok

T: There's five in total. Actually that's a total lie, there's six - I'm sorry I can't count, six.

R: And are you a subject specialist? I mean is your background..

T: Yes

R: ...in Media

T: Yeah, so I did, ive got a Masters in Film, TV and Media. My Batchelors wasn't but I, when I did a Masters and then I did a Masters in Media Education as well later on, so sort of specialised.

R: [REDACTED]

T: No, no, it was the [REDACTED] and it was, it was run from the, it was the [REDACTED] [REDACTED], god it was about twelve or thirteen years ago now, long time ago

R: Right, ok, yeah [REDACTED]

T: OK, yeah

R: So I just wondered what preceded that

T: Yeah and I've been here for eighteen years...too long

R: *Laughs* I feel exactly, I've been in [REDACTED] for like the past seventeen, eighteen years

T: Oh gosh, [REDACTED] do you?

R: I do, yes!

T: So I know him because he used to work here

R: Yes I know, I remember, cause he, thanks for passing on

Laughter

T: And then he came back here, and then he retired

R: [REDACTED]

T: [REDACTED]

R: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

T: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

R: Yeah so how many students would you, in total have you got in the department? Are they, are they all doing A level or the BTEC vocational?

T: We don't do, so [REDACTED] has got five different constituent colleges or federation colleges. The bit I'm in only does A Level and there's, so I've got about 240 A level Media kids

R: That's a lot

T: Yeah its apparently, the subject woman was telling me that we're the biggest OCR centre in the country now, we didn't use to be but we are now, so. But my numbers are kind of holding out but we have got, there's a different part of City **inaudible** called the Centre for Business, Art and Technology that does do Media BTEC but we have nothing to do with that

R: Right, ok, yeah – I think I've heard someone talking about that as well, ok

T: Yeah

R: That is a big big centre

T: Yeah we've got about a hundred and fifty Film kids as well, doing A level Film

R: And how many of those do you reckon are doing both Media and Film A level?

T: Actually, since the spec has changed, more of them. We've got, I'd probably say maybe sort of ten, fifteen percent of them do both. So before you'd get one or two but now they don't really cross over anymore, lots of students do take them both.

R: And what do you feel about that? Do you think that's a good thing?

T: I think for students who are very clear about wanting to do that for their career in some form or go to university, we encourage it because what it's done is bolster our numbers, quite useful so it's, we, I mean I'm not going to shy away from the fact that it's, it's good for us as well if students do do it – we don't actively promote it but if students ask us then we talk to them about what they want to do and providing we don't think its going to narrow down their choices later on then we let them do it.

R: Ok, that's really good. And what are your entry requirements for getting onto the A level?

T: To do A levels in the college there's a kind of general entry requirement which you've gotta have, well lets get it right now it's changed; you've gotta have five 9-4 passes but actually you can't do a great deal here unless you've got a 5 in English language and a 6 in a written subject. So we actually end up with students having way more than just five, so having to, we did have some incredibly weak students who were sneaked onto Media but on the whole

R: **Laughs** Yeah I know that one as well

T: I have my arm twisted every year

R: Yeah, every year, sob stories

General agreeing noises

T: Yeah, like; 'Oh my god they've got three GCSEs, what are we doing here?' oh god

R: 'But he loves the subject' Ok!

General agreeing noises

R: And is that the same for Film as well?

T: Film students tend to, it's the same entry requirements but they tend to be, the students who really really want to do Film tend to have better GCSE results, so we get a lot of students that do things like; Literature, Philosophy, Film because they tend to, I hate to use the word 'academic' because I don't think it's a useful word but they tend to be slightly more academic and they like writing and they're less about the practical and more about the theoretical – even though the entry requirements the same.

R: Sure, so if we can talk about, a little bit, your experience of the new specification. Actually OCR is the one I'm least familiar with – I teach the current EDUCAS and I've taught a bit of AQA as well at different [REDACTED] but yeah. So what are your views about the specifications in general?

T: Well, I should just say that I, because I'm the [REDACTED] I am slightly, well because I was involved in the development of the A level and GCSE and I am slightly biased towards OCR because I like the people who work there. I like, I think the Subject Officer's excellent and so I held on until the last minute – I was always going to go with OCR because, but I picked up very quickly that they had, they'd sort of seen what EDUCAS and AQA had done, well particularly EDUCAS and then made their specification different and I knew that their specification was going to work better for my students because of the way the theory is dealt with, it's so much more straightforward for our sort of students. Because it's just, it's only in three of the set products and the rest of the other six don't touch theory and for the kind of students, a lot of the students that I've got are, they do struggle with writing and ideas and concepts – it's more accessible for them. So that's why I chose OCR.

R: Yeah, there's also, there was also a perception, because I've done a few of these interviews not with predominantly OCR people actually and there seems to be a kind of little, pattern emerging that people who have stuck with OCR have a kind of stronger allegiance to OCR over the years. So, like even though it was the last one to be approved that actually it was OCR that held out the longest for things that, you know, was wanted on the specification. Whereas some people feel that EDUCAS kind of, sacrificed a little bit too much too early.

T: Yes, they definitely did, they definitely did I think because having looked at all three, because I was involved in the very very very original stakeholder meetings for the Department for Education with the British Film Institute and David Buckingham was definitely

there, I don't think [REDACTED] was. It was one of, in fact David was definitely there because we were on the same table, it was one of the weirdest experiences of my life, when there were people lobbying the DfE really to, you know, don't take away research, keep the coursework and all this kind of business. But I met the Subject Officer from [REDACTED] there and I could I, the way that her mind worked and the way that she, I could see even at that early stage that she would basically do anything to get that spec through and I think when you look at them now, I think that one makes such little sense. But you know, that's just from, I've spoken to several Teachers who have moved over from EDUCAS to OCR; and then I did a presentation at the [REDACTED] Summer 2018 about my experiences of doing the very first year and there were some teachers there who were jumping across at that point because they just couldn't cope with the complexities of the EDUCAS. So I am loyal to OCR but I also could see what was going on with EDUCAS. And then AQA was so quiet that I really paid little attention to that one if I'm honest.

R: I mean it is interesting because, I mean I gave up my Head of Faculty role to do the doctorate so I had no say in any of the specifications – that was about the time that I wasn't around to make decisions and it was really interesting soon as it all came back. We had gone for **WJC** for a while before that, so primarily for the Film studies actually but it, yeah I did, I think the lack of approval was definitely a worry and it had an impact on the numbers. I mean I know EDUCAS were really struggling to get examiners, not examiners sorry, moderators well examiners as well actually last year because the numbers were up.

T: Yes

R: So in terms of like the, like because of the changes to that – the introduction of set text and the introduction of theorists and the introduction of practical work; what are your feelings in general about that?

T: I don't mind the theory, I think that, we always used to teach, on the **Legacy** spec – do you know the OCR old spec? Yeah? The 27, so basically the 2735, the Collective Identity unit – we did loads of theory on that and we really had good, you know, it was, the way that we could mould it ourselves, we probably looked at maybe fifteen or sixteen theorists across the 1A, 1B, the Collective Identity bit. So the handling of the theory was never a problem – I think the choice of some of the theorists are a little bit leftfield and some, you can see the problems that when I'm trying to pick people that go under the different areas of theoretical framework, so the choice of some of them I would question. I mean obviously I know David was never going to write himself into it but I miss David Buckingham theory quite a lot.

Laughter

T: Well obviously he's, he would never do such a nice man, he would never write himself into it but so I really don't mind the theory I think that, and the more I teach it, the more I can see it makes sense to have it there. I think the reduction in coursework is a travesty and you can quote me on that, and the individual nature of it now is just enor-, its just a load of old what-you-call-it really because you'd never go into the industry and work entirely on your own in something so it doesn't model industry practices – it's ridiculous.

And the set texts I think are not, are utter nonsense for some of the units, it's the set, the level of set texts with the adverts, that's my big bug bear is that there are three specific adverts they have to look at and then they might not come up in the exam. That to me is just ridiculous and I, I don't blame OCR for it, I blame, I absolutely firmly blame the Department for Education and **OFQUAL** for that. I think it works for long form drama because theres a

choice on it and I don't mind the kind of Minecraft side of things and I think The Jungle Book was brilliant because it really, you can really look at the film industry holistically from that. But my bug bear is the advertising, I think that has been completely straight jacketed by it on the OCR spec.

I think if teachers were able to choose a set text from a much wider range and therefore the questions were looking at it, sort of, from a macro level and then you use your current knowledge of your set text to answer the question – I think that would be fine but I just, I just think its absolutely ridiculous that teachers are now told specifically what the set texts are for some of them.

R: Do you think this kind of points to a wider thing that's going on in education in terms of like the educational philosophy that's coming from a higher fool?

T: I, for Media Studies I don't, I think it was a way of trying to kill the subject.

R: Mm-hm, ok

T: We're using this whole idea that 'well they have set texts in English' as a reason to try and you know, completely reduce Media Studies down and control it in a way that doesn't let students think beyond the parameters of set text – little do they know what goes on in a classroom though. With the English, I mean the choice in the literature, yes there are set texts but there's an enormous range that they get to choose from and obviously we don't have that on the Media.

So, I mean, I think, I don't know whether it's a kind of wider thing that, I do think that education has changed as a result of this curriculum reform. There's so much more knowledge and understanding and memory recall and it's utterly ridiculous but I think with Media because obviously we know how close it was to not being accredited, we know about that advert that they were going to take out in the newspaper for, all of that business, I know about that so they've definitely **annoyed** – there was something else as well going on with it and I think its specific to Media Studies.

R: Yeah. So, in terms of your teaching of the course, do you think your teaching style has changed?

T: Yes

R: I mean you mentioned; little do they know what goes on in the classroom, I mean its, is there some things that you kind of slip back in that have been taken out?

T: I mean I think all of our teaching could change as a result of it because now you've got six essay, six questions on paper one and five questions on paper two – we have to, we've got no choice but to teach them how to do it, you're teaching for the test more so I suppose the way that we teach has changed as a result of that. The comment that I made about 'little do they know what goes on in the classroom' is that I will take any opportunity I have to introduce other ideas to them that are not part of the assessment but that are going to widen their understanding of the Media world in a way that I would have done on the **Legacy** spec. So I want, you know, and I suppose that's probably because I've got years of experience I know I can do that and still bring it round to what they're being examined on. But yeah, I think the way that I teach has had to change because the way they're being assessed has changed, so had to respond to it in that way.

R: In terms of your department, I know you obviously can't speak for everybody but in terms of other teachers on the A level; do you feel that they're doing it in a similar way?

T: We tend to use shared schemes of work so we, and we do share a lot of ideas so I think yes, the answer to that would probably be yes most people do.

R: Yeah, ok. And what about your students experience of the course? I mean have you noticed their feelings about it have changed?

T: Well I suppose they don't know anything other than what they're being taught at the time, so I wouldn't, I wouldn't know how to answer that really. So we, 'cause we, obviously the students on the Legacy spec experienced the Legacy spec and the students on this spec are experiencing this spec so

R: But in terms of your perception of their enjoyment and engagement, do you feel that they're getting **as much out of you** putting that extra effort in? Or do you think that they like the spec or not?

T: I think they like it, I think they like the variety of it because they reckon, I mean I suppose if you think about the Legacy spec they looked at, sort of, we did Film for 273, god I've forgotten what it was called now, was it 2732? So we did Film in the first year and then obviously they made the opening of a film so it was quite narrow in terms of their experience of Media forms and then in second year we looked at Film, TV, News and, but again through the Collective Identity. They get a much broader understanding of the Media and I think they are aware that they're getting a broad understanding, so I, you know, I haven't noticed the difference in retention or anything like – that hasn't gone down so

R: Ok, that's really good. I think a lot of centres have actually so, had it gone down. In terms of where they go on to, have you noticed any changes in terms of more students going on to do Media related courses in HE or less? Or about the same?

T: Well we've only had one lot through obviously. So the lot that just left in the Summer was the first lot to do the new A level and I don't know, we haven't had our destination report so I don't have the actual statistics. We get a lot of students who go on and do Film or Media related courses and sometimes that 'inaudible' academic, sometimes the practical side, I haven't noticed a drop in students applying for those sorts of courses, I think it's just, we've bucked the trend I'd say.

R: Ok, brilliant. Just sort of moving on to thinking about the Facebook group because you're, are you the original admin on that?

T: No, no I'm not, that was [REDACTED]

R: [REDACTED] ok

T: So I've probably been an admin on it for maybe the last, when did it, it started in Summer 2017, I've probably been an admin on it for the last eighteen months, two years, something like that.

R: And what are your general feelings about the group? I mean how is it, **what are the exceptions** of how its benefitted teachers of the subject?

T: I think it, teachers who are on their own in a department, of which I understand there must be lots of them, I think its really helpful because they have no one to, they've got no one to talk to, no one to share ideas with and then, you know these sort of desperate – you've probably seen from looking that you get these sort of desperate late night pleas from people; 'Oh my god, has anybody got anything that I can do with my class in the morning?' And then five or six people will say; 'Look, try this, try this'. So I think from that it's, I think its really useful for new teachers and teachers who are the only teacher of that subject in their department.

R: And for you **as an extra link**, do you find it useful? I mean is it, what aspects of it do you feel it's most beneficial to you?

T: For me its probably not actually, when it's, when I first started teaching this particular spec I did look in the drive and put lots of my stuff in there and I did use some stuff that was there but I actually don't use it myself, if you know what I mean, I'm more there to try to help other people, so

R: Yeah yeah, so I think again something that's coming out quite strongly is that there is a definite split between the advisor and the advisee, do you know what I mean, on there

T: Yeah

R: In terms of help and support. Do you mostly create your own resources for your own lessons or

T: Yes

R: Yeah, again I think that's, I suppose the nature of how the course has been designed with new text as well that

T: Yeah, and also I'm not the kind of teacher who can just pick up someone else's work and teach from it. I can't do it *laughs* I spend hours; someone will say 'here's a spread', like I was teaching Jungle Book this morning and somebody said 'Look I've done this powerpoint for it' and then I looked last night and thought, I understand everything that's in there's useful but it's not in the, I can't teach it in this order. So I spent about four hours last night redoing it – so I'm that kind of teacher.

R: I know and it's so counter productive that you take somebody else's work and you end up spending longer changing somebody else's when you could have done it yourself

General agreement back and forth

R: Do you use any other online communities for your teaching?

T: Nope, not communities no. I have discovered a website quite recently which, there's a, The Essential Revision Guide, Mark Dixon's Theory for A level

R: It's brilliant

T: That book I've got and used it a lot and then I, so I've used the website that goes with that. I was doing some work with a student and she was really struggling with Post-

Modernism and so I used the worksheets that he's produced, today to help her understand it and, sorry on Wednesday, and that was useful. Haven't used them in class, I've used the book to help make my own resources and then the worksheets I've used with students in workshops.

R: Yeah, I think that books my standout, for me the best one that

T: Yeah, that's great and then the other book that's been really useful has been Louise's component one textbook for OCR and then Mike's revision guide.

R: Ok, yeah, as I said I don't teach so I don't know those particular texts but I'm going to be having a look at them as well, just to sort of see what's out there, but it's really interesting. And sort of generally speaking, do you use any other kind of page resources, also things like

T: No, no. We will not, I won't pay for anything – we haven't got the money to.

Laughs I actually have a real kind of moral thing about paying for resources – I just don't think it should be, I don't think it's right that teachers should have to pay for resources and I think we should be in a collaborative world where we all share with each other for free

R: I suppose that's the essence of the Facebook group as well, I think that

T: Yeah

R: You know the essence, the raison d'être for that group is free, free learning

T: Yeah, yeah it always has been. I shared everything I did off the old spec. We had a big website blog with all the materials we ever produced and I, whenever I went anywhere I, if anybody wanted it I would just give it to them because I figured at some point it would come back round and help me. Hasn't yet, I'm still waiting.

Laughs

R: Well, one day, good karma. And sort of, I quite like to end on this question really because I, its, I've had lots of different answers from different people about it; What do you think is going to be the future of Media Studies?

T: Hmm, I don't really, I don't really know. I really don't know, I mean I, there was a point three years ago when I thought it would just die but I think the numbers, our numbers haven't gone down, they haven't been affected at all; and in fact I had a look at some retention statistics the week before last and it involved me going back over our numbers over the last sort of four years. And in fact our numbers have gotten higher since the curriculum reform – we were always a bit worried that we were the fourth choice for students who do four A levels and then drop one and do three A2s and one AS, sort of thing. And there was a worry that when students could only pick three that Media would be the one that would go, but that hasn't been borne out. So it's still a really popular subject and our applications for next year are really high. So, but I, but I do recognise that probably that's a bit unusual, I don't know what it's like in other places.

R: I'd just be interested to see, you know, whether there's going to be kind of like a revitalisation of subject, you know that we've obviously been through quite turbulent times recently and whether there's a galvanisation of people who teach Media who, particularly

those who are more experienced like yourself, and you know, whether there's going to be some kind of energy coming back into the subject and fighting for what we actually really want out of it

T: Yeah. And the next thing now will be, because we have to review the specs every, well its, the spec is supposed to be reviewed after 3 years. I don't, OCR I don't think are planning, they're not planning on to make any changes to the text, so they can say to OFQUAL; 'we've reviewed it and at this point we don't feel we need to' I, I understand that EDUCAS suddenly decided they were going to change some spec, some texts, which I think is one of the, that's one of the reasons that some people jumped ship at that point because they thought; 'this is too complicated anyway and if you're going to change the text I might as well switch over to OCR or AQA'. They're not planning it but I guess that would be the next time when, maybe because it wouldn't be so rushed it could be a little bit more considered that that could breathe a bit more life into it.

R: I know the DfE or OFQUAL, maybe OFQUAL actually, yeah OFQUAL are doing some consultations at the minute, they had some academics come, I think David was going to go but didn't and I think

T: Yeah I was supposed to have gone but I was ill, it was before Christmas and I was invited up to OFQUAL in Coventry to, a friend, actually it was one of my colleagues went to the one they did for Maths and I'm, I'm actually quite glad I didn't go because I think there was a tendency, so what happened was that everyone got in the room and just moaned about A level Maths in front of OFQUAL and what would have worried me would've been that there would have been loads of Media teachers in a room all moaning about how awful Media was and if we do that in front of OFQUAL then you're opening the door to them saying; 'well actually is there a reason why we should keep it going?' And I think that's a dangerous route.

R: Yeah, you're absolutely right. There was one a couple of weeks ago that ***unsure (someones name, Steve?)*** from the **MEA** went on, which was the academic one so it had all the, you know the university

T: Yes. How did that go?

R: [REDACTED]

T: OK, yeah

R: [REDACTED]

T: Yeah, yeah

R: So [REDACTED], well for the MEA but also like, to talk to me about as well because of how its really interesting stuff going on and also some really good contacts as well, who've been really receptive to the change, cause I think obviously the HE perspective was slightly different, you know the students that they're seeing coming through have a different skill set to the ones that they're used to seeing

T: Was it a better skill set?

Inaudible

R: Wouldn't that be a bit weird wouldn't it?

Laughter

R: No, absolutely not and I think all the things that you've been saying have been borne out in what HE, well obviously it's early stages but what they're..

T: Yeah

R:..with the students coming through and, yeah its really interesting that the interviews that I've done so far are like pretty much identical to what you've said. It's like, it's a really strong case coming through that the, the same opinions are being repeated over and over again and I think it's, its just a really interesting time and hopefully, I mean I'm not going to be able to write it up immediately until ive finished the research, but you know, if there is any kind of avenue for reform, like further changes or reform then, that we've got a body of literature and interviews and people who they are in there to give evidence that there is, you know, everyone saying the same thing

T: Yeah

R: That cant, that can't be discounted you know, you have

T: No, 'you better listen to us'

R: If people are passionate about it they might, like I've **inaudible** conflict and resistance and I've, you know I've always felt for Media Studies that its like, we've always had to fight whether it be against public perception, now its like against the government and then and actually but we've always resisted and had, you know, this kind of reaction, you know i.e the Facebook groups and thing like that, you know just in and the media, what's it called? My brains gone completely blank – the manifesto, Media education manifesto

T: Yes, yeah, mm

R: And David's new book as well. So I just, like the difficulty *is there's a new teach blocks of teachers and non-subject specialists*

T: I know, that worries me too

R: That's it as well. And because there's no, there's hardly any PGCEs with Media these days

T: No. We have a student here at the moment actually, she's on the [REDACTED] PGCE, in fact two of the people in the team are off that course, so they did the course last year and the year before. But I think that's the only one, so

R: Yeah, it's interesting.

T: Yeah

R: Well thank you so much for your time

Transcription
David Buckingham

Researcher: If that's alright?

DB: Yeah sure

R: So

DB: So, so just thinking about, sort of about the timescale, about the process yeah? Because I think the first I heard about this was when the BFI convened a meeting, so there was a meeting at the Southbank and it was GCSE and A Level together; Film Studies and Media Studies together and I think it was, I don't think, I'm not sure if I was specifically invited or whether there was some kind of, just sort of generic invitation going round to whoever is interested kind of thing. I'm trying to think when that was, it was, all I can tell you is it was in the Summer and thinking about it, it was probably Summer of 2015?

R: Yeah so the reforms were first announced on April 9th 2015 and then in September '15 that was when it was approved for reform

DB: Ok so it must have been after that, yeah, so you had a whole process where they did a whole load of other subjects first and Media Studies came in the 3rd round, yeah, and there was all this anxiety about were they just not going to do Media Studies at all and there were all these campaigns around Art History was the, I think the most successful campaign.

Muffled raised voices from background

DB: So yeah, so it must have been after that that they had this, this consultation meeting and I remember there were about, about 20 people probably; a mix of some academics, some teachers but not very many

R: Do you know why that was? Was that just because teachers weren't in the loop at that point?

DB: I don't know, I don't know – I mean I think there was a certain thing about, I think this was sort of stakeholder representation rather than teachers consultation, if you see what I mean

R: Right, ok

DB: So thinking about who was there; there was SkillSet, there were a slightly kind of motley collection of academics, there were exam board people or people who were like █████ who was the examiner for one or other of them, AQA maybe?

R: Yeah, that rings a bell, we never did AQA but I think I

DB: I'm not sure if █████ was there but there was a certain, a certain kind of exam board, but I'm just trying to think who else – the BFI convened it, I'm not sure if there was anybody from, anybody else from the industry, I think Skillset's job was representing the industry. So I think it was more sort of, if you can think about it in this way, kind of 'end user' stakeholders. So if you'd, you know it was a concern for academics as to what was going on

at A level because those were the students who they were getting as undergraduates, you know and the same for Skillset you know, for training. So I think that was more the rationale but there were certainly some teachers there.

R: Do you know any particular, specific teachers? Was [REDACTED] there? I mean

DB: I don't think [REDACTED] was there, I can't remember and I doubt if I could ever find the information again,

R: No no that's fine, it's just I wondered if there was anybody that sort of stands out that I know already, you know that...

DB: I mean there were people I think more - I wonder if you should ask that guy [REDACTED] [REDACTED] because I'm not sure if he wasn't there

R: So I interviewed him last year for my pilot

DB: Ok, ok

R: Now he talked kind of rather generically about the consultation period and I need to unpick, I need to go back to him I think and find out exactly which bit of the consultation he was part of because I know he was definitely quite vocal. Because he was talking to me about how there was a lot of wrangling between the exam boards about the removal of the critical research element of the specifications and that there was a bit of tension between two of the exam boards because one felt the other was giving up too much too early.

DB: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah

R: But I don't, see I got the impression that was a bit later on

DB: I think it was, yeah, I think that was because the exam boards, although there were people there as examiners, if you like, they were not, they were not the focus – the focus was really the stakeholders at that point.

R: And so, who was actually leading those meetings? Was that the BFI? Or was that, like, the DfE, OFQUAL kind of people or

DB: I really, I'm not sure I can – I, I have a feeling it was the exam boards actually

R: Right, ok

DB: I mean there was that guy who was, who was at OCR, whose name I cannot remember but he's the guy who transitioned and is now female

R: Oh right, ok, I don't know his name

DB: Whose name I can't remember but I could dig, I could find that out certainly

R: Yeah that would be interesting

DB: Because he was quite involved, quite a sort of, rather sort of you know, slightly nerdy bureaucratic-y kind of person

R: Right ok, yeah yeah

DB: And I think [REDACTED] was there, from OCR as well. I don't think [REDACTED] was there but I think as, I mean I got involved, I you know, I had, I retired 'allegedly' - you can't capture these inverted commas on your phone. But in, you know a year before that so actually, [REDACTED] encouraging me all along to get involved in this actually. And he was saying, you know, I think I was probably in principle there representing the MEA actually and he was saying that, you know; "you need to be doing this" and then further down the line we were talking about it at MEA meetings. So there was a point in the process where, I mean further on where we were asked to endorse the draft that the exam boards had prepared and we basically sat around at the meeting and said; "we cannot endorse this". Yeah, and then when I went to the meeting with the DfE, I was definitely there as an MEA, as the MEA representative. So [REDACTED] was kind of pushing me forward and I think it was partly because he was very involved with OCR, so he couldn't actually do it. He was seen to have a kind of interest, whereas the MEA, MEXA and other and academics as well were sort of interested parties but without a particular kind of axe to grind in the competition among the exam boards basically.

R: What was it about the original documentation to do with the curriculum that you didn't, couldn't endorse? Can you remember anything specific?

DB: Well, it went through so many stages you see because the first stage, where we were at with that meeting which must have been September or October, you know, after Media Studies had been kind of, identified; there was first of all the subject content document, yeah?

R: Yes

DB: Which was quite a short doc, well intended to be quite a short document, so you had that first of all and that was like the sort of overview, you know, for the whole thing and then the exam boards came on board. So what happened was, the DfE arrived at a point where this subject content document was as they wanted – this was like the blueprint to which the exam boards should then write the specs. So you had the subject content document and then, which, and then you had the exam boards writing the specs, yeah?

R: So how many, was there draft versions of the subject content that you saw before it became 'the' DfE official

DB: Yes and I think, I think thinking about that meeting – I think there must have been, there must have been some kind of document that we were looking at, at that point, right? I mean we weren't just, it wasn't just a kind of talking shop it was kind of, so I'm not sure what that, yeah I mean I'm afraid that I, it's it was a long term process and quite confusing in the various stages of it really, so

R: I'm just wondering if any of those original documents still exist. I know, I know the DfE subject content is on their website, the gov.uk website, but I'm just wondering if any

DB: But what preceded that would be interesting to know

R: Yeah, would anybody have copies of that still do you think?

DB: Well my suggestion was contact [REDACTED] because I

R: Yeah, I'm definitely going to do that

DB: I think he, but I would also think the exam boards must have something like that

R: So that, this is my next phase

DB: I mean the problem is a lot of those people have moved on, so [REDACTED] is gone, the guy who became a woman has gone, who's name [REDACTED] [REDACTED] you know who I mean and I can't remember

R: I wonder if any of those people would be, I know [REDACTED], I'm sure [REDACTED] would be but

DB: I mean [REDACTED] you imagine must have some kind of digital or real filing cabinet in which a lot of that stuff is kept. I mean I just don't, well I can have a look at home but I tend to just chuck stuff out, you know.

R: Oh well it is what it is

DB: But I mean that was the process so there was quite a process of, so they devised a draft of the subject content document which then went out to consultation

R: And that's what you got involved with

DB: So I think yeah, so I think there was a, there was a; No, what we got most involved with was when they'd got that subject content document and then the next stage – so that was like, kind of phase 1, you know; consult with stakeholders, devise subject content document, draft content document goes out to consultation, final version is then, is then published, yeah? And then that was like stage 1 and then stage 2 is then a consortium of all the exam boards then basically draft – and they weren't specs at that point, so what the hell were they?

R: I'm just trying to work out, at what point did it get from being a kind of generic subject content document, to being, including theorist a, b and c? You know, the

DB: Yes, I, that was at a later point where it was the exam boards who were doing it

R: So it obviously changed again then?

DB: So there was a kind of stage, oh it changed at a lot of points along the way, yeah? So there was a point where the exam boards were involved and that's when, lead by WJC and I mean

R: Is that [REDACTED] people like that?

DB: I mean, [REDACTED] I would say, and you can quote me on this if you like; I would say, well she was the person who was willing to give up to 30% coursework. As far as I'm concerned I just, I just thought she was just incompetent and she just didn't understand what it was all about right? And so they were drafting these documents, what was happening was – I don't think I was kind of directly involved but [REDACTED] was in conversation with the OCR people and so [REDACTED] and I and [REDACTED] actually were having, I remember once we met in a pub in *inaudible location* and we were having these meetings where [REDACTED] was saying; "look, what do you think of this" you know "this is the draft" and I remember seeing, well at least 2 drafts because we saw one draft. I mean the only question that's in my head is 'what was it a draft of?' and that, I'm not, I think it must have been a, it was a second level thing which gave much more specific guidance to the, to the awarding bodies basically. So he was saying 'what do you think of this', we looked at a first one and were pretty depressed by it, gave him feedback sort of indirectly through the back door, so this wasn't any formal process or consultation – this was us talking to [REDACTED] who was talking to [REDACTED] and

R: Delicate brokerage

DB: Yeah, and then they came back with another one that was even worse actually, it was really, I mean apart from anything else it was just badly written

R: Right

DB: You know? It was like really incoherent and it seemed to, it seemed that the more, and they were obviously going through these hoops at that point where they, they the exam boards would propose something to OFQUAL and OFQUAL would say; 'no that's not good enough, Nick Gibb won't like this' or 'Nick Gibb doesn't like this' you know? Ludicrous and those, those things in that piece, they're quotes, I mean they came – again, through the back door via Pete to me, yeah, and so, sorry I lost where I was then.

So we were then kind of giving this kind of indirect feedback and the WJC and the other exam boards were kind of acting on behalf of Media, Media teachers.

R: They were taking the lions share of the..

DB: And the thing that we could not endorse was then I think what was supposedly a kind of final version that they'd negotiated through this kind of back and forth process with OFQUAL and this was going to then be, I think maybe it still was the subject content document, I'm not sure because it was not, it was not a spec definitely and I mean the specs were much much further down the line

R: They were really late compared to the

DB: So it must have been some kind of subject content document and then various things got changed in that process yeah? So and what happened was, we the MEA I think must have been asked formally whether we as an organisation, as a stakeholder organisation could endorse this and we said 'No', and at that point we then proposed or again it must have gone through the back door or [REDACTED]; wouldn't it be possible for the MEA and MEXA, as the subject associations, in the persons of me and Natalie Fenton

R: Yes

DB: To go and meet with the DfE. So we went to this meeting in the DfE, where OFQUAL were there and various people from the subject associations were there, sorry from the awarding bodies were there, where we came out of the meeting and then this was Natalie Fenton – actually she's a serious tough cookie, and she, I think partly because she's been a union rep and she was, she was most impressive I thought. And we came out of that meeting basically saying; 'look, we are going to re, we're going to do our own draft' and initially it was; 'you can, we will give you this draft and you've got the exam boards draft' and I mean there's no question in my mind that if they put ours next to the exam boards they would at least have realised that ours was coherent, you know. And so we went away and I mean it was basically me that did that

R: Right

DB: Right, so I basically took, well it was stuff from my, my book Media Education, so it was that structure, of key concepts and then, yeah so I think I let Natalie Fenton and [REDACTED] and we knocked it about a bit but we had a very short timescale and we basically submitted that and initially the exam boards were saying; 'well yes, we'll submit this alongside our version and we'll give this to the' and I just thought that was just, well we just thought that was just pathetic actually and in the end they agreed that they would, they would present our version as 'the' version.

R: Yep

DB: And they accepted that. However, there was then a whole series of further changes that went on, yeah, and that thing about the theorists was one example

R: Yeah

DB: So we were told, 'oh you know it has to have theory, it has to be, you know, it has to be knowledge' and I mean on one level you know I'm completely fine with that, you know, there, there is theory

Laughter I don't know how this is going to come out on your tape but anyway

R: *Laughs* It's quite sweet – Finsbury Park on a school day

DB: So that was an example of how things often got changed in really quite subtle sorts of ways but there it was. Ok you need theory, you know the **minister needs**

R: It's almost lost in translation

DB: What was lost in translation was that we said; ok well you know actually it's not a problem to identify theory, I think probably an A Level student needs to have some understanding of Structuralism for example, **Semiotics** or Political Economy of Media, you know that's there. Its often in the past not been made very explicit in A level teaching but its always been there and if you look at A level Sociology, you know you look at A level Sociology textbook, it says there is Functionalism and **Talcott Parsons** wrote of this and that and the other about Functionalism. So you kind of think ok, well that's fine; so my argument is not an aversion to teaching theory – its how you teach it and why you teach it and what it is you're doing. So we said; ok you know, Media Language – well Media Language includes Semiotics, for example **Roland Barthes**. For example got changed to the word 'including' and

from there we have a cannon of theorists and we now have the exam boards published their spec and it says; Roland Barthes – here are 3 things to remember about Roland Barthes. We have somebody writing a textbook about A level theory, you know the key theorists and I mean, I almost feel I wouldn't mind so much if it was Roland Barthes and **Stuart Hall** and whoever, but actually you know its people who have just been put in, you know what's **George Gerbner** doing there, or you know who was the Bobo doll experiment?

R: Oh Bandura

DB: Bandura yeah what is that doing

R: Yeah it's so ancient as well

DB: And what the fuck is **David Gauntlet** doing there, you know and **Clay Shirky** – these people who are not, they're not theorists. But again what I think about David Gauntlet, that's not the point, the point is what is theory doing here and the point is that's all what you got and it is a move as you've also seen with set texts, which I've written about

R: Yeah yeah

DB: You know a move to absolutely prescribe what the curriculum will be. To remove any kind of autonomy or choice that teachers have – particularly in a context where it's just massively overloaded with content, so we've got to get through; this this this this and this, these set texts, these theorists, you know students have got to... And so the whole thing becomes massively prescriptive to the point where, you know, it's actually, it's just about the recall of facts basically

R: And sucking the lifeblood out of the subject at the same time, you know

DB: Yeah

R: Cynically maybe that's what the intention

DB: Maybe that was the point and I mean I think, I don't doubt – I don't know if you saw there was a little email that came round from [REDACTED] because he went to interestingly they had this further meeting where they basically seemed to have gone back to the stakeholders

R: I wanted to go, my school wouldn't let me go

DB: And said; 'what do you think now' kind of thing, well there will be notes from that

R: Yeah so I'm gonna meet, [REDACTED]?

DB: Oh ok, ok well that's going to be

R: So he's going to update me, yeah

DB: What I thought was most interesting about what he said was basically to confirm the fact that Media Studies was singled out in this process and I'm not a paranoid person, you know but it was very clear to me that in the bit of it that I was involved with, Film Studies was being

treated differently from Media Studies. I mean Film Studies is in a way more amenable to this idea of having a canon and you know a certain kind of traditional version of the subject would fit pretty well with what the DfE think of as knowledge. Media Studies I think, yeah much more challenging in a way but nevertheless, you know we were treated differently there – they were just throwing, and all this process of the drafting and the re-drafting and the re-drafting, this endless cycling round with these more and more stupid stipulations being placed just to make life difficult basically, often with no coherent sense of ‘what is the agenda’ really it was actually very hard to work out what the agenda was, you know, because it wasn’t consistent it was just being difficult for the, part of it was being difficult for the hell of it, I thought. And then you look at what’s happened in other subjects and, you know, much more light touch; you look at the equivalent documents for Sciences – I mean the subject content document is a, you know its 2 or 3 pages and it’s all very general. Whereas the ones for Media Studies are much much more specific

R: Well I think talking to the teachers, the numbers are significantly down and whether...

DB: Yeah, I mean to be fair, don’t forget numbers were going down anyway, yeah. But, and that was quite a striking thing for me re-reading that paper and thinking; ‘shit actually the numbers peaked 2008, 2009’ you know, anyway, sorry

R: No I think it’s, there’s a number of avenues to explore in terms of, you know, I think I’m pretty sure it was you that said that the popularity of the subject saved it

Tune plays

DB: That’s my phone, sorry, I’ll be quick...

Restart 24:30

R: I think in terms of that, one of the avenues to explore is the fact that its economic success in schools, it was bums on seats kind of subject but it suited so many purposes for so many different things but actually there was a number of reasons why it did survive and I think that was one of them

DB: Yeah, oh no that absolutely was and I think that’s part of, I think one thing that’s important for you in doing your, *inaudible* but one thing that’s really important is to see this in a bigger context, right? You can track a line in a way from what, you know why did it survive at all? Well, partly yes because the exam boards needed it to survive because the exam boards effectively operate like businesses

R: Exactly

DB: And we’re in a kind of situation where the education system is been, not privatised but marketized, right. By which I mean restructured in a way that makes it operate like a market with customers, buyers and sellers and

R: And look exactly what happened to EDUCAS, the first ones through it, they gave up their soul – in a way, gave up what they thought was, you know, going to get them the most amount of people, and they did loads and loads of people scared of the ramifications of not being approved, they went with them. We did, I mean I wasn’t in charge....

DB: They went to market first basically

R: Exactly, yeah exactly and its only now – the levelling period when people are starting to get dissatisfied and move but you know, it is what it, but also that's another angle of what I'm looking at is the qualification of it, is not just the exam boards but also the textbooks and the renewed interest...

DB: And I mean, you know, that has always been around and I mean that has been a longer term shift, you know, I mean back in the 'in the day you know when I was a lad' – but in the 80s there weren't, you were just beginning to see textbooks, that was beginning to happen but now it's a totally different level of operation. And I mean I think the interesting, I was thinking about this – the blog I did about Michael Gove and the argument I made there – which I actually got it, I think I got from [REDACTED] which is, which kind of who at least he's a really good guy on mainstream education, he really kind of, has a really, you know, really clarified things and he talks about neoconservatism and neoliberalism as things - which are both there in things that the Tories have done and actually really in what Tony Blair was doing to an extent, I mean, with Tony Blair I think the neoliberalism was stronger than the neoconservatism. So what you've had is these 2 kind of forces which seem on the face of it to be quite contradictory but actually they work in concert in certain context and Media Studies is one. So from a neoliberal point of view you've had this kind of marketisation of the education system which in, on one level ensured the survival, as we've said – but on another level of course, that is the thing that is saying; well you know, we need to compete in a global economy and that is **in privileging** STEM subjects so actually Media Studies is suffering but all humanities, social sciences, arts subjects – that whole area of the curriculum is being squeezed and crushed and that is the neoliberal impetus. I mean strangely they don't seem to realise that actually it's a lot of those things that are a key part of ***inaudible*** brand **GB plc** and its role in the global economy but no, what we need is is STEM subjects so Media Studies gets screwed from that point of view but also obviously it gets screwed from the neoconservative point of view because it's not 'real knowledge'. You know it's this kind of new-fangled thing and it's you know, so we're screwed from both sides really, whereas a lot of other areas, get screwed from one side but not from another, you know

R: You can offset it from a different angle, yeah absolutely, and I think as well, I mean, what I'm looking at

[REDACTED]

R: I just wonder at some point whether the pendulum will swing back the other way and thinking whether actually there's suddenly a realisation that the diet, the curriculum diet is very dry and suddenly there's not enough drama, expressive arts, Media and whether that will suddenly kick off a resurgence in interest in the more creative aspects.

DB: Well we hope of course but I mean I think you know, one thing that is really indicative and in a way it's a bigger issue than the fate of Media Studies is the fate of English and you look at what has happened to English, where English because it's been reframed as Literacy along the same lines of that sort of neoliberal argument, you know, that what we need is certain kinds of technical proficiency and that's what Literacy is all about

R: Know what ***inaudible something-verbial*** is

DB: Yes, you know, I've got an English degree from Cambridge, I couldn't tell you what the fuck that is. (Sorry transcriber)

R: *Laughs* I don't think she'll mind

DB: But you know, so English has been re, and to the point where actually, you know, and I studied English, English was my top subject at school and I think you'd say that for a lot of Media teachers actually

R: Yeah

DB: But now English is a lot of kids least favourite subject because it's been redefined in this kind of, completely instrumental way

R: There's a lot of parallels isn't there with how Media's been prescriptive

DB: Yeah you know English numbers at A level are in decline and so on and so, and I guess then, I don't know but there probably is then a knock on effect in terms of university courses you know and so on. Yeah where that leaves you as a nation is very difficult and you would hope that it, we've got to come back from that place but how long will it take? And I, and how much, I mean you know, the bigger picture in a way that concerns me is that so much of the education system – I mean higher education as well as schools has been so terminally damaged by all of this, you know in terms of; what it means to be a teacher, what it means for the teaching profession, what it means for what the school is as an institution, what it means to be a student, you know these really fundamental things have absolutely kind of shifted in their meaning over a longer period of time. And how do we ever get back from there? It's very hard to see how that would happen

R: Well it's because it's actually becoming embedded though isn't it, if you think about part of a wider narrative in education particularly; you know you've got the academisation, you've got this commodification of education and you've got, you know, all of these things which are kind of saying a wider message saying to people; 'this is, you're' – Teach First for example, you know this idea of getting paid, you don't have to be qualified you don't have to train to be a teacher, apart from just getting in there and doing a job

DB: And I mean the interesting thing I think is not is, there are those structural things really which are about things like teacher training and so on, it's also bizarre, the most bizarre end of it is the kind of symbolic thing so I don't know if you saw this thing just recently, this thing about silent corridors, you know and you think what is going on?

R: They hold up a traffic light system as well or something, did you read that same article?

DB: I didn't see about that, no

R: Oh it was an article in [Schools Week or TS](#) this week or something about how a headteacher holds up traffic lights so if you see a green you can talk quietly, if you see a red you have to stop and you have to be silent and it's, it's just crazy

DB: And you know, and school uniform and you know the kind of corporate branding of education – all of these things that are just, they're utterly symbolic, nobody can make an argument that you know, kids will learn better if they walk silently in corridors, right? I mean

its utterly playing into a certain kind of narrative which is basically about, it's about the history of Britain over 50 years, I mean I think these are the bigger issues that I'm saying that are in the background of what we're talking about because the story is, you know everything started going wrong in the 60s and particularly the 70s and we need to, we need to come back from there. So all of these things, I mean like school uniform

R: It's this weird nostalgia for the Empire and all this kind of rubbish

DB: Well it's a weird nostalgia for something that never really existed in the first place, you know it might have existed in Eton, maybe and probably still exists in Eton although actually loads of the students at Eton are actually not even British in the first place but you know, it's a kind of imagined idea of the past which never applied to the majority of the population.

R: And that's it, and its filtering through

DB: But yes, how you get back from that and that, all those things have enormous power for parents, you know, if you were to do; 'who are the customers?' in this. So if you were to do a survey of parents and ask them how many of them approve of, you know, school uniforms or silent corridors or whatever it may be, I think you'd, you know most of them would say; 'Yes, that's exactly the kind of schools that we want'.

R: I think as well it's again feeding into that narrative about parents don't feel like they've got control on society because their kids don't have, like you know the whole panic about Media and screens and this that, and that so they'd rather just hand over that discipline to another **force** and think that those doing their job for them and you know, they don't have to have that dialogue with their children as well

DB: No that's true, so there's a good, there's a lot of things that they feel are kind of out of control that they cant handle

R: And you can see it completely from a parent, I mean I see it on **WhatsApp** group you know, the fear and panic about all this going on and its like, you know just rein it in, I mean you just need to talk to your kids about this

DB: Oh yeah, yeah, but you know you're not, because you know all of these things touch nerves that's the point and the big nerve is, is always around for parents which is about, you know, about competence basically, you know. I've just, I've just become a Grandfather

R: Have you? Oh congratulations, boy or girl?

DB: I have a boy and he's exceptionally large actually which is quite bizarre

R: *Laughs*

DB: But that thing which is always an easy thing to press with parents which is about competence so I look at my son and his partner and its like, you know they're in a state of panic about you know, we've got this thing and what do we do with it? And that just continues you know, plus which we've got the sort of general level of kind of competitiveness which is, and again I hesitate to use the word neoliberal loosely but it, you know that is a characteristic of the world we're in, the world of social media etc, so we're in a world where actually parenting at the stakes attached to parenting have been intensified, you know. So

that anxiety about your own competence has always been around I think but now the stakes are higher

R: Well you can see its more visible its more transparent as well

DB: And if you fail or if your child fails then they're just terminally, they're wasted you know, that's the end of it and so – and all of the stuff about Media kind of plays into that really

R: Yeah and it just seems really ironic that at a time when kids could just do with so much information, I mean we talked about this so much in the MEA but you know, its, I think you know it's a turning point

DB: It's a bizarre irony isn't it? There was a funny thing, I don't know if you saw this in the Guardian a few weeks ago – they published an article which was about in Finland, where of course they get everything right, in Finland you know they have this way of teaching about fake news and this was a full page feature and then there was a little letter that somebody wrote in and said; 'Well yeah you know interesting that they do this in Finland and we used to do this in the UK as well, we used to have a school subject called Media Studies until the government tried to destroy it'

R: Oh brilliant

DB: And this was from a, little letter from a retired teacher and you think absolutely

R: I'll have to look that up actually

DB: And I mean part of me thinks whatever happens with any of this, the need for Media Studies is not going to go away – it may resurface in a different form and whatever but its not going to go away because this is the modern world

R: I sometimes think though, that if we just gave it a different name and just taught the same things then it would be, it would slip under the

DB: But I mean that was part of the whole old debate about Media Studies and Media Education, right? I think Media Studies; capital M, capital S, school subject, examinations, GCSE, A level. Media Education; kind of broader, it's when you teach about Media in English, that's when its Media education, actually the term 'Media Education' was also an attempt to kind of slightly sabotage the whole idea and the opposition when Media Studies was seen to be a bad brand and I'm thinking back to the 19, the early 1980s – there was this report; 'Popular Television and School Children'

R: Yes

DB: You know, 1983 – my god I'm talking about 37 years ago and that really started, that was about Media Education and I mean it was partly Media Education because it was across the curriculum and, but it was also because Media Studies was seen to be this dangerously political thing. So you were already in a point then of kind of the counter revolution against what had gone on in the 70s and this term Media Education was kind of part of that so you could rebrand it but I mean, my feeling is that what you need, and I, you know this is a personal cliché that comes out on my blog every 5 minutes, but you know what we need actually is to think; well how do we teach about culture? How do we teach about

communication? You know and actually what you need is something that is maybe just called 'Culture & Communication' and it combines English and Media Education and various other things under that umbrella

R: Because if you look at the subjects that were cut in the reform – you've got Critical Thinking, Citizenship and World Development and you know, if you kind of find a commonality between all of those and put it into a subject with culture and communication, you know and also all the other subjects that have that element of Media across disciplinary elements to it – if you could find something that would be the acceptable face of

DB: Well and I mean I think you know, I think that's not just about branding for me

R: No no no, exactly

DB: That's actually about saying; look, you know there is no logic for teaching in one way about books over here and teaching in a completely different way about television or whatever, or the internet over here. Actually these things are, they're all part of culture and communication and you need to have a coherent approach to, to teaching them – why would you not have that? In the modern world. But that's a very long way away and I did, I've done a few blogs recently about **Raymond Williams** and it's really funny to go back to **Raymond Williams** and see, this is 1960, right? So this is 60 years ago and this is what he's saying, you know, we need to have this coherent approach to how we teach about culture and its like, it was a hard argument to make, we're actually even further away from that now than people were then in 1960.

Anyway, should we, do you need to ask me more about the process?

R: Not really, I mean you've sort of filled in

DB: There's a lot I can't remember and I'm really sorry.

R: So I'm thinking, in terms of, when the first specifications were approved; so EDUCAS were approved 1st, then it was AQA, then it was literally OCR I think the week that we went back to work in the September time. What were your initial thoughts on those specifications when they were, did you have a look at them when they were first approved?

DB: I was slightly let – I mean I have to say, my involvement in this was slightly more meta rather than digging down into the detail but I was also part, again through [REDACTED]; I was involved in looking at the OCR spec and didn't and actually I remember a couple of times [REDACTED] and I met with [REDACTED] because [REDACTED] was basically taking the lead for devising the OCR spec. And all that stuff that I put in the piece I wrote about sort of jumping through hoops, it was ludicrous, just ludicrous; 'oh we can do a bit of this over here, oh perhaps we'll satisfy them on that if we do this here' and 'oh we can hit, kill two birds with one stone if we do this'. All sorts of kind of bizarre juggling act and my analogy was Twister; so you've got to have a hand on a triangle and a foot on a square and you know and you were contorting yourself basically to fulfil these requirements.

I mean I guess I would say that I have always thought I, well with the what I suppose we now have to call; the Legacy qualification, that OCR was always the one that I thought was much better. Partly because I think there was a real coherence about the theory and practice aspect of it actually and also because I think it allowed a lot of autonomy for teachers, I mean more I think than the other specs did. And I guess I also thought I had more faith in them as an organisation.

R: Well what's come back really strongly from, so I've been interviewing people who do all 3 specs and are actually quite experienced and so what I've noticed, a pattern, which has only just really come about sort of this week, is that people who were with OCR, maybe they've changed maybe they haven't – particularly those who have stuck with OCR, even though they took a risk on staying with them even though the specification wasn't approved; seem to be a lot more wedded to the subject, much more invested in the subject and almost, I wouldn't say political as such but like just a bit more 'on it' and understanding of the different nuances. Whereas people who have gone to EDUCAS, perhaps are more of the ex-English teachers who were coerced into doing, or feel that they want an easy ride. I can certainly say from, without betraying my department, it wasn't my choice to go to EDUCAS at the time but I know the reasons behind it because we had 3 Media specialists and 2 non-specialists who, you know it was just easier to do that.

DB: And I mean, you know, I know we've been having this discussion with MEA and I don't know where we'll go with that really but I think the thing that is really quite striking is the increasingly high prominence of the exam boards, not just as validating qualifications but as providing training and endorsing, publishing, you know all the materials that you need to teach this and so on. And again I mean that did not use to be the case – so right through the 80s it was, well it was SEFT originally and we were trying to run, that was another whole other story but nevertheless, that was about teachers organising training and there was a subject association and the subject association did the training and therefore the training was not so closely tied to specifications. Whereas now, what you have is teachers come on training, it's harder for them to get on training, what they want is absolutely hand to mouth

R: It's like the students as well you know, education is very similar, it's like spoon feeding

DB: Sure, and that is the case across the board, that was in a way because right through my career in a way I was doing teacher education and I was teaching post-graduates and then the last few years after I got out of the hell hole that was *something* of education and I went to Loughborough, I was teaching undergraduates for the first time and I was really quite struck – although not surprised by the really instrumental attitude that they had, which was basically; 'look we're paying 9 grand a year, you need to tell us how to get a First'. You know because actually given that there's been this grade inflation, given that there are so many more people in higher education, if we don't get a First then this is, you know, then it's a problem and in a way its your job to tell us what to do here. So I think that and I'm sure, you know its not, there's not such a direct financial issue with A level but nevertheless it is that ramping up of competition that has gone on in so many areas of social life.

R: But the power dynamics have shifted as well, I mean like looking at the teacher boards, the academic boards were so much more autonomous in the old specs and now its top down isn't it, there's no

DB: Yeah, no, absolutely, my problem in a way is that its top down from people who by and large, what the hell do they know about any of this? And I mean, ok I have been uncomplimentary about [REDACTED] but who are they? Who are those, the people who are subject officers? How is it that? I mean certainly, you know thinking about Natalie Fenton and myself, we did that and we put in these names so it was; Semiotics eg Roland Barthes, Political Economy of the Media e.g James Curran but we certainly didn't put in *expletive* David Gauntlet, right? We certainly did not put in Judith Butler, right? I mean some just crazy names put in there by people either for sort of fashionable reasons, I mean I hate to be

cynical and politically incorrect but why is Bell Hooks in there? If not that she's a Black woman?

R: Well what you get is really fractious statements about like students shoe horning things that any Media text with non-white people in tends to be Gilroy and Bell Hooks gets wheeled out and you know

DB: You know and these are not people that A level students are going to read at first hand, they are often not central to the field at all and yet a lot of obvious names are not there. I mean if you're really into theory there's a lot more obvious stuff that should be there and I think if you'd said to most academics; 'oh you know we're doing the major Media Studies theorist David Gauntlet' they would just laugh you out of the room so why has that happened? Why has that happened? Is it because Jo Johnson once read a book about Media Studies? Or something? Or has she got academic, I can't imagine an academic advisor

R: I don't know her background. So she's agreed to be interviewed by me, so a couple of years ago now but she did agree to it, so I do want to follow up on that because I think that will be really interesting

DB: I just don't know how much those people know about the subject

R: Well she revealed to me that the actual consultant that OFQUAL were working with was

DB: Yeah, no [REDACTED] told me about this and there are some slightly, cause that article that I wrote I originally wrote [REDACTED] then I had to, when it all happened I had to kind of

R: Yeah, yeah, [REDACTED] told me

DB: [REDACTED]

R: Right, ok

DB: But actually there are some comments in there that refer to him and that's kind of [REDACTED] saying you know, who the hell is this person and what do they know? And he clearly was not a Media specialist – not a Media academic

R: So this is in 'Strangulation'

DB: But also not somebody who'd ever taught Media Studies, right? So he had no expertise either in pedagogy or in academic study and what is that person doing, being the consultant to OFQUAL – who is telling OFQUAL you know, what needs to go in the content? I mean

R: It just seems a real mish mash of like, again lost in translation but also wilful lost in translation as well

DB: It's kind of ignorance, incompetence, yeah you know it's a central dictate of an ill informed kind. You know you put all of that together and it's probably not a surprise that it comes out as something that is, well is fairly unteachable, really, isn't it? And I, you know,

talking to you as I did, what about 6 months ago we talked about, you know and I have to say, I just felt that everything I'd kind of predicted or we..

R: Is coming true

DB: I mean [REDACTED] and I predicted was going to happen, absolutely has happened.

R: And then also from the pilot I did last year using, so the other thing I'm looking at is the rise of the Facebook groups as a kind of professional community of practice. So that's how I started doing the pilot last year – I did the EDUCAS group because that was the largest membership, it was like, I remember, so the whole little seed of idea for doing the Doctorate was, I joined the EDUCAS Facebook group within about 3 or 4 days of the new specification being approved – or maybe before that? I don't even know, I can't remember. And within, I noticed within about 3 weeks the membership went from 80 people to over 1000. And I remember going; 'something is really like' and I was thinking 'why is this?' I think I'd just come back off maternity leave or maybe the year before that, I can't remember and I was like; 'what has happened to my subject?' I had taught OCR up to that point and came back, the specification we were doing was going to be changed and I just thought; 'what?' you know, it was – and also, because I had been an English teacher as well and I took charge of the Media faculty, so I didn't teach English anymore which I kind of rue, a little bit now. And then suddenly English was, didn't have Media in it anymore and it just all kind of changed really quite suddenly. It, to me it seemed kind of overnight – I'd gone away for a few months and come back and the whole picture had completely changed.

DB: But you know, you've got something, I mean like I say, that I think is borderline unteachable – in that there's way too much content, specified content. Some of the material that they've specified is so ridiculous and I would say that about the theorists, I would also say that about the texts; you know The Archers or whatever. I'm not saying that every text you do needs to be absolutely the latest and you need to be down with the kids and whatever, but The Archers??

R: But again, you know, this whole – going back to this idea of like, the democratic nature of the subject – which you've written about in bucket loads and talked about how celebrating popular culture, the creativity and actually giving access to kids who wouldn't normally have access to something a bit, you know the whole – and Julian's obviously written about it a lot as well and

DB: And I mean that, you know, that is clearly that absolutely comes flat up against that neoconservative agenda...

R: And so on a political level its, the ideologies...

DB: There's no way you're going to have that, you know it's not, it will not be permitted because it's not real knowledge.

R: Exactly. And so we're up against so many different factors. So my thesis title at the moment still is; A Site of Conflict and Resistance. And my, obviously Media has been plagued with conflict and resistance but I'm trying to see if there's a case for sort of saying that teachers are, in spite of everything, making the best of a bad job

DB: Well you would hope they would be, I think you know, the key issue in all of that is: training.

R: Yeah

DB: So you know, what training do teachers actually have? And you know, when I moved from school to work at the university to work at the institute I was teaching PGCE and I mean, looking back on that now, that just seems like another world really. We had, I mean I had 2 days a week with my PGCE group, you know, they had, and they were a mix of some were Media graduates but some weren't. I had a lot of time with them, they went into specialist Media departments, they had me coming round a lot, yeah? Whereas now, you get much less time because all the training is happening in schools, the tutors have a much more marginal role in it all. So the idea that really you could do very much in the way of subject content or, in initial teacher training – it is so much harder. I mean, I think you know, I respect what Pete and Jenny did on that Goldsmiths course but the kind of training you get in initial training is much reduced from what it was and the kind of ongoing professional development you get is so completely, like I say, hand to mouth

R: Really interesting because I'm going to interview [REDACTED] at some point soon, I know [REDACTED] anyway but interestingly I interviewed somebody a couple of days ago who was on [REDACTED] course 3 years ago who's now teaching and he's like, just the kind of pleasure that he kind of has from knowing that he was on a very subject content focussed PGCE – now I don't know if in the grand context of things that is compared to what you were talking about but you know, you think about **Central St Martins** used, sorry **Central School of Speech and Drama** used to have PGCE, that's gone

DB: That's gone

R: You know, a couple of others have disappeared as well. So literally Goldsmiths is the only one in London as far as I'm, you can do it

DB: I think it's the only one in the UK, I think actually

R: I think Brighton do, Sussex – [REDACTED]

DB: Oh [REDACTED] yeah ok ok

R: I don't know [REDACTED] but I know

DB: Oh he's a good guy, he is a good guy and he absolutely gets it

R: Do you think he'd be worth talking to?

DB: Yes! Yeah, but I mean I think the issue always is – well ok, you have people who get it, who understand what it's about and these are the people who will do something that is coherent and challenging for students and engaging and all the things that you want – despite the nature of the specs. But what about the new teachers who are coming through who don't have that kind of grounding, you know. I mean the interesting thing with the Goldsmiths students is that they are by and large Media graduates

R: Yes

DB: Which is quite different from when, well when I first started doing it, so we're talking a long time ago..

laughs

DB: You know [REDACTED] was one of my first students, right?

R: Was he? I didn't know that

DB: 1984. So I did it for 10/11, 11 years something like that and by the end of that time I was getting more Media graduates than I had at the beginning. [REDACTED] I think did Film Studies at Warwick and there were other students along with him and coming through, you know there was a kind of generation of people some of whom are still around, you know. But they were exceptional in a way, most I would say more of them were English graduates who'd kind of thought; 'what's this Media thing?', whereas by the end of it they were more Media graduates.

R: It's the same with me, I mean I did English

DB: But equally, what does it, being a Media graduate is quite diverse actually and I was struck a bit by this when I was, because I was the external examiner for, for the course when [REDACTED], when [REDACTED] did it and when Jenny was doing it and it struck me that you had some students who'd been Media professionals – so didn't necessarily have a Media degree but had industry experience. You also had students who had Media degrees but what a Media degree meant feels quite different, so you know if you've got a practically based Media degree like at, like from Bournemouth,

R: Yes

DB: That's a very different thing from if you've got a Media degree from, well, Loughborough to use the other kind of extreme where there's no production work. And that means that their grasp of subject content is quite variable.

R: It will be interesting to see what happens with the *T* levels coming through as well actually in terms of the

DB: Yeah well if that actually gets off the ground

Table cleared chat

DB: Well yeah, although that seems to be taking its time, I think its

R: Yeah, well it needs to be got right, doesn't it. But again that binary split now as well, you know you don't have the applied Media anymore do you, you don't have that practical, theoretical you know, blending, you've got them split

DB: No and for me that was absolutely crucial to it. And I remember right from

R: One of my favourite course of all time was Applied Communications, Media Communications

DB: I mean right from the beginning, you know when I did, when I went to the institute, I set up a Media teachers research group – I don't know if you've seen that book; *Watching Media Learning*.

R: Yeah, yeah, yeah

DB: That was the outcome of that bit

R: I've done loads of reading David, I think I've got all your books on my shelf

DB: Probably quite an uneven book if I was to go back to it now. You know that was basically a group of teachers who met on Saturday mornings and shared bits of data and that issue of *Theory in Practice* was absolutely crucial, you know because we really wanted to hold onto practice unlike, **len Masterman** who, you know the previous generation who were, you know and for me as a teacher in school, that was the stuff that was really interesting. I did basic semiotics teaching but actually it was when you got kids making stuff that really funny and bizarre and interesting things went on actually and I'm sure that was the stuff that was most memorable for the kids as well.

R: Yeah, definitely

DB: And that dynamic, that relation between the theory and the practice was absolutely crucial and was quite a challenging aspect of the subject; a pedagogical, challenging and innovative aspect of the subject because you didn't get it in Art or most creative arts subjects didn't really have that, they have practice. And so, yeah but that's gone, that's gone and one of the fights we had with the specs as I remember, when Pete was involved in this kind of re-drafting was; were they going to be able to have the, because the crucial place for that was the reflective account of the production work. So you do your production project and then you write a kind of, a log – I never thought the log was a very good way of referring to it because it, it kind of made it seem like you should be writing a diary which was not what it was about and should be a reflective essay where the theory came to bear on the practice. And we were trying to shoehorn that in in various places and we got to a point where we were trying to shoehorn that into the written exam – so the written exam would have a question like; 'What would Judith Butler think about representation in a **straight** with examples from your production project' or something like that. And that was ruled out I think, as I recall, so any attempt in whatever context. So what you now have is the practice over here, and the theory over here and no way of building bridges between them and I think that, that impoverishes the practice but actually because then you need that reflection to think critically about it but actually it also impoverishes the theory because what it means, it reinforces that tendency to think of theory in terms of **gobbets** of facts – Judith Butler says this, David Gauntlet says that, you know.

R: You're going to have swathes of Media students being able to reel off 21 names of theorists but not have any, I mean you know

DB: And not being able to use that theory

R: Although I think the benefit that has come out is that students are now engaging with theory, they might not be ideal because they can't do it in the depth that we'd necessarily want them to do it but at least they have a sort of starting point I suppose.

DB: Well yeah but I think good Media teaching was doing that before. You know, it wasn't necessarily saying; 'Oh there was or there is this person called so-and-so' but I think in certain situations that's exactly what you would do actually. I think there's just way too much specification. I don't, it's not a problem with theory, it's a problem with specification.

R: Hey ho. Thank you very much

DB: That's alright, I could probably – I was wondering when I agreed to meet you, would I have anything to say about this anymore but actually

R: I knew you would

DB: It's, well reading it again this morning and just talking about it, its just

R: But it has come to pass that what you said is very accurate

DB: I'm afraid so and I'm really sorry, I don't like, I know I probably tend to be overly pessimistic about things but actually that is what's happened.

R: But I think that, you know, it does feed into a wider thing and I think there's a lot

DB: I think that's really crucial

R: But what I kind of get is that everything is getting taken away from, teachers are being de-professionalised and if there's, I always see things in kind of phases and I have optimistic hope that things will swing back somehow – whether that is through teachers doing it or whether its just natural kind of, the way things go, I don't know but I'm just looking for

DB: I think you're right and I think if you were to look at the history of educational reform you would see that coming and going actually. There's quite an interesting book, the guy who writes about this is Larry Cuban, who has done actually some really good stuff about schools using technology, really kind of critical stuff and he did a book called; Tinkering Toward Utopia – I think that's right. Larry Cuban and, Tyack and Cuban – it's a really short book and he's a great writer because I think he was at a certain point, he's American and I think at a certain point he was a school, he was a teacher and then a school superintendent, like a headteacher before moving into university. And it's a history of educational reform and you absolutely see this kind of process of coming and going and I mean it's an American history obviously but, and I mean I'm doing historical stuff now and you can see you know the shift. I was doing, I wrote a piece about Sesame Street recently and how Sesame Street fits in the history of kind of educational thinking and disadvantage in the 1960s, you know, and race and racism but also thinking about – and you already see at that point a reaction against progressive education going on. So really there are ebbs and flows, you know and also teachers often for very good reasons are resistant to change or carry on doing what they want to do despite attempts to change them actually. And that has positives and negatives to it but a lot of it is positive because teachers actually want to hold onto a sense of, you know; why are we doing what we're doing? Why is this important? What do I want my kids to learn? It's those sorts of questions that you know, that's what fuels the sense of doing something despite all the constraints that are imposed upon you

R: Absolutely

DB: I want to do something better for the sake of my kids and my kids understanding despite all the bullshit

R: I think that comes out really strongly in the teacher interviews again and professional identity's really strong as a theme and thinking about a wider picture again, you know, why teachers are leaving the profession in droves? And this is what we've been talking about

DB: No that is profound, that is the bit of this that is profoundly depressing really

R: Because that's not changing, I mean I talk to new members of staff where I work and they're like, yeah – they don't see it as a job beyond 5 years

DB: No, no

R: They don't see it as a vocation, you know and

DB: It's really depressing – a friend of my son [REDACTED] – maybe he's been doing it for more like 5 years, I don't know but, and that is really depressing. You know what does it mean for those people personally, you know they've invested money and time and, but also what does that mean for the profession? Who's left teaching kids?

R: I mean that's kind of the stage I got to, I ran the faculty for 10 years and I left to have kids and came and it just wasn't, you know, it wasn't compatible with new, you know the lifestyle I had and I thought; 'well what's now? I don't want to leave teaching, so how do I' you know and I had obviously renewed interest in academia again and it you know, but it was kind of driven from a place of like, this is not sustainable anymore, I can't, you know, it's too difficult

DB: No, and I think you know it manifests itself in things like workload and whatever and those are real issues but my feeling is always that the key issue is professional autonomy and you know, when you are stressed it is very often because you're having to do things to a set of constraints and requirements over which you do not have control. So we can all work hard and working hard is, you know

R: Par for the course isn't it

DB: That can be very fulfilling but it's when you're working hard in a situation where you don't have any control that is really stressful and demoralising, you know.

R: My place have just been asked to produce curriculum maps, a 6 page like tabular document of stuff, which like takes you about half an hour to work out what they actually want

DB: What the document should look like

R: Exactly, god. Well thank you very much, I won't keep you.

Researcher: So just a few sort of general questions first, if you don't mind, just to get a picture of your background. What type of school do you teach in at the moment?

Teacher: So the school's a **converter academy**. It's quite big, it's got about 1500 students and growing.

R: Ok

T: And I've been teaching for about 7 years now, my seventh year of teaching.

R: Ok cool and do you have a big department in Media?

T: Ah no ***interference on audio*** teach full time Media but we've got a bit of graphic design on our timetable somehow

R: Right ok, yeah ok. And approximately how many students would you have in the department?

T: Oh, good question. 120 ***Year 9 alone***, lets count them up – I should know this off the top of my head ***mumbles numbers*** and then 22 in Year 10, that's a big difference!

R: Ok, yeah, absolutely, and onto the A level, what is the entry requirement? For students to get on to do that?

T: So you need to have 5 GCSEs, grades 4-9 and a 4 minimum in English.

R: Right, yeah, that seems fairly standard actually, I think most people I've spoken to have said the same. And in terms of like perception in your school, how is Media kind of perceived by, say the management or other teachers?

T: Not very well. So the type of ***inaudible*** my school it's largely Asian and Somali sort of background and I think we get a lot of resistance from parents initially.

R: Yep

T: And then sort of students have that perception of the subject as well because of what they've learnt about it and then also from, we do from other teachers as well, they don't really understand what we do, depending on the type of department that they're from. So obviously other creative departments get, very much understand what we do and why we do it and then we've got a good relationship with those departments. But then some of the certainly core ***recording cuts out*** who actually do ***recording cuts out*** which is quite frustrating

R: Yeah

T: **Inaudible** I'd say senior leadership there's been a big shift in the last few years about doing the creative subjects and they say it's not because of the EBAC but it very much feels like it is

R: Right

T: Because there's been a decline in numbers since I've started there and, because the first couple of years it was great and then we just saw quite a big drop in numbers

R: So what do you think, I mean do you think the subject has a stable future at your place? Or do you see more change on the horizon in the next few years?

T: To be fair, to be honest the last sort of year or 2 **inaudible** how much of a job is there, at our school. Especially our A level numbers have dropped quite a lot and then when, we teach year 9 as well – we get a really good uptake then but then as soon as it gets to teach them for year 10 there's a drop again because we don't do a 3 year as such, it's a 1 year with a view that they can carry it on or not

R: That's interesting. So for the Year 9s, do you actually start teaching the actual specification for GCSE or

T: No

R: No, it's just a, it's a – that's interesting that its valued as a kind of Year 9 subject though, that's good.

T: I think, I'd like to think it's good and I do think the students mainly enjoy it but I also think it could be because of, due to timetabling and how many teachers we had and it plugged a gap in our timetable – so I don't know if its more of a money thing, over value.

R: In terms of, are you a subject specialist? Did you do Media at university?

T: I did Film and I did GCSE Media and A level Media, so yeah and then I did my **inaudible Central?** teaching Drama so did the PGCE course there

R: Yep and that no longer operates now does it?

T: No it doesn't **inaudible** was it at Goldsmiths and that was PGCE Media as well

R: Yeah, yeah, and so are people in your department, are they generally subject specialists? Or are they

T: Yep so we're both subject specialists

R: Yeah, ok, because normally what you find is like a lot of English teachers that are kind of co-opted in

T: Sorry you're cutting out, I couldn't hear you

R: Sorry, was saying a lot of English teachers are often co-opted into teaching Media and, you know, certainly over the last few months the teachers that I've spoken to, majority are English teachers

T: I think its because its so hard to recruit because there's not enough PGCEs doing it, its just 1 at the moment that's a proper PGCE, so where do you get them from?

R: Yeah, it's not an embarrassment of riches really is it

T: No

R: So in terms of the new curriculum, what – if you can think back to those days when the reform was first announced. What were your initial thoughts about the reform of Media Studies as an A level?

T: So I was quite in touch with the Media and English Centre and also with the MEA

R: Yep

T: So I was like, I kept quite on top of what was going on and I think initially from some talks with people from and different teachers it was like, well if we want our subject to survive we've got no choice, **inaudible** like you want the changes but **muffled** the exam boards have no choice and it was just you either teach Media or they get rid of it

R: Yeah

T: So from that point of view it's like well, they've done the best they could, like all the exam boards. But just the type of things we have to teach now is quite different but there's some interesting parts of it and I think it's just too content heavy

R: Yeah

T: You've just got way too many mediums to teach and its, you kind of feel like you just have to get through every single lesson and there's not enough time to actually delve into topics in any depth

R: Sure, yeah

T: It doesn't feel like there's value to it as much as you could

R: What about the reduction of the practical? Do you feel that has had a bearing as well on students engagement with the subject? Or your own enjoyment of teaching it? Or things like that?

T: A bit of both I think because when you could teach more practical it was really easy to apply everything they sort of learnt about the conventions. We still try and do that but like I said because its so content heavy you feel like that goes on the back burner because as soon as you've missed a lesson for like a drop down day or something, those are the lessons that get shelved – just because there isn't enough time to finish everything. In terms of students I do, we're honest with them and when we're recruiting of how much written work there is but I think they do feel disappointed that we don't get to do as much practical as they

thought they should be able to do. And also in Year 9 we try and embed quite a bit of practical for that reason.

R: And do you feel that they're going on, I know its really early days with the new specification but do you feel like you've got students that are applying to university to do Media at all?

T: On the whole we've, the students we normally get for A level normally do like a Level 3 BTEC in ICT

R: Right, ok

T: So they normally end up going down the ICT route of some sort but we have, with the new specification yeah none of the students last year actually went on to Media specific courses, yeah because they were the first A level through weren't they so yeah, none of them were Media specific although they had, I got an email from a student just a couple of weeks ago saying how he's been using sort of Adobe software and how thankful he was that he got to learn some of it with us

R: Yeah

T: So yeah I'm not, I think it's just the demographic of our school, they normally pick it maybe as their extra something to keep it a bit open or not because they particularly want to go into the Media

R: Sure. And is, do you think that's, I mean obviously you're a subject teacher and you're passionate about it but do you, are they, do they get quite a bit of steering from other members of the school? Like from senior leadership group or, you know if terms of like pathways and is there a sort of perception that students should do a certain clutch of qualifications together? Like you said you know the ICT BTEC

T: Yeah so that's what we normally end up getting grouped of, 'Oh you're doing a Level 3 BTEC, oh what should your other option be, oh why don't you do Media?' and not that all Level 3 BTEC students are lower ability because obviously they still have to get the 5 GCSEs but they're, they tend to be at the lower end compared to other students who maybe do sort of like your sciences. Science and Maths would be the main sort of two subjects in our school that do well.

R: Right, yeah

T: Again because of the demographic of our school and they normally get the students who are more able

R: Right

T: So then their grades look better than ours but its like well actually our students do meet their top minimum but it might not look like we get all their sort of As and Bs because we get lower attaining students in the first place

R: I think, I think where I work it sounds very similar to yours. Its really interesting about how perceptions really do impact on the groups of students that choose the subjects and how

T: But I think that's stemming from straight from GCSE because students are told; 'this is your sort of pathway and you should do a Humanity, you should do a Language' and then they start to get restricted straight away

R: Yeah

T: And then yeah at A level I do feel like they just say 'well they've not got something extra, oh why don't you do maybe one of these creative things' and they just don't get how much, how rigorous the course actually is now. It always has been I think because if you're good at something then you do well at it and if you like it you'll do well but yeah so I think its just that perception and how, I don't know how to really change it at my school at the moment

R: Yeah, I mean in terms of like your teaching approach to the subject, do you feel like you've had to change the way you teach? In terms of the specifications from the previous one?

T: Yeah so I think before you could do, there was so much more group work and a lot more student led. And its not that we don't do it now, again just because of the type of amount of content sometimes you feel like, well actually if you let the students get on with some a project or an activity, if its not done well enough, that you've lost sort of teaching time to plug in those gaps

R: Yeah, yeah

T: Because we do a lot of, sort of like, we do a lot of group work its just, I think what, students have gotten used to now is looking up things online and then they'll find the first sort of Powerpoint and then I think because of all these set products, there are things available online and they do find them and then they sound like they know what they're talking about

R: Yeah

T: And then they do an unseen product they like have no idea

Laughs

R: That's quite an interesting point and I suppose like, that as the specification moves on there'll be even more and more resources online but in a way it's, because set texts are supposed to reduce the variability in the course but actually if you think about it, the number of set texts that are on there – people are just producing the same resources over and over again and so it kind of produces very homogenised responses I would have thought over time

T: Yeah I mean once all the example answers are up online, where's the difference going to be in the students response?

R: And you can see from, certainly like the EDUCAS advice that, to teachers on the training that I went on a couple of years ago, its like you can work out what questions are going to come up, you just look at the framework and you just replace some of the words with command words and things like that – you can pretty much guess, I mean theres a lot on

there but you can pretty much guess what's going to come up and there's only a certain amount of exciting responses, you can you know get them to think about. Yeah it's a really interesting issue and one which I think will be carrying on to see what set texts get changed and how that, I know that some changed already but

T: I spoke to the exam board and said, because what I noticed my A level students doing, they were finding the fact sheets and then **regurgitating** – I said to the exam board, is there any way you could just put that on a teacher only access, and they were like; 'well no because everyone should have access to it'. I'm like, but the teachers will if you just put it on their access page – just because I've found it very difficult to teach set products once students get hold of these.

R: Yeah and I think as well like with some other teachers I've spoken to, even very experienced teachers still are finding it difficult to get through the content so will literally teach to the very sort of limited range of things to make sure they're not wasting time on things that don't, are not needed.

T: Yeah so that, with my GCSE I know I'm not going, I'm going through the first round, I didn't teach it in the first wave. I probably won't finish teaching just after, til after Easter maybe a week or two so that'll leave me what, a week before their main exam starts which is quite a scary prospect knowing you haven't done enough revision in class. That you just literally work to the end. With A level it's not been as bad, we should finish by Easter so giving them that 6 weeks sort of revision time but again this, expecting students to remember 17 things off by heart is, I can't do it and I only teach half of them.

R: Yeah its, yeah and I think you've got to have that balance between going through all the content and actually the skills they're going to need to be able to answer the exam questions as well which, and also kind of cultivating those critical thinking skills to enable them to actually make, to get some of the benefit out of the course too.

So do you think, have you done any like student voice, have you got any sort of ideas about how the students think about the courses? You know any sort of other formal or informal feedback?

T: So I think they do enjoy some units and sort of set products more than others naturally. Surprisingly always quite enjoy sort of the News unit depending on the year group. I think this year it was, I taught it just as the elections were running up to it – that made it so much more interesting for them as well because it was around them all the time, whereas when I taught it last year they had no idea and hated it. So its quite, depends what the topic is, what the set product is and things. I dunno I think with the Media Language and Representation one it doesn't really matter so much what product **inaudible** using, I think it's more in the Industry & Audiences one I think they haven't picked, I think, interesting products.

R: Yeah, I think that's right

T: At the same time, I think well actually they need to know that there's other audiences out there apart from their age group

R: Yeah, and I think that they've don't that in a slightly strange way though and actually giving them, you know the MEA target audience group to make a product for without actually having it kind of embedded in the actual other, you know exam units is just quite an interesting way round it. And I think, well my students have struggled you know trying to

make products for like the older age range without really having any full understanding of that because they haven't really covered much of that in the exam unit.

T: Yeah I think with, apart from Womens Hour – I think that's the only product but again, yeah I think last year my students did much better in the MEA, just because it was a bit more straightforward and simple, like making something mainstream, lifestyle, everyone understood that. Whereas this year we're doing magazines and its independent, and yes I think they're trying to link it to where we've done independent with the Big Issue but its not the same type of thing.

R: Yeah, yeah

T: The products they're making are not as good

R: It's quite disjointed I think the approach to some of it, its trying to put a lot of everything into it but never quite making it make the connections between all the different things and you know, it'll be really interesting to see how the set texts change over the next few years I reckon, so

T: But I think with some of them, it's like with newspapers they don't need a set text – it should just be; learn news values and then you'll get an unseen newspaper.

R: Yep

T: Because at least it's something more recent and then the exam board can actually put a newspaper that was within in the last year. Because now we're doing stuff, like Brexit and, or with Theresa May and it's like, well she's not the Prime minister anymore – it's confusing for the students.

R: Yeah, yeah and therein lies the argument isn't it, to have contemporary products, to have autonomy over the set texts that we choose because it keeps it more alive for the students as well, like your saying about your News unit and you know things that are happening outside in the context, it keeps it interesting and engaging.

T: But that's what we had with the old exam board, wasn't it? Because I taught the old OCR and its like within the last 5 years and then you pick something within the last 5 years.

R: Yep *laughs*

T: I think because as adults we think 5 years ago wasn't that long, like 15 years ago isn't that long to us but in the world of a student who's 16/17 years old, they were only just starting secondary school – of course they're not going to remember.

R: I mean exactly and the choice of Zoella and so on, you know none of my students listen or like Zoella you know, not that you necessarily want them to like and you know watch her and everything but they're, it just doesn't speak to them and they don't see the point of it.

T: Well yeah, its like with Fortnite, I'm going to start teaching that soon and my kids are like; 'we don't play that anymore in our year group, that's for like Year 8s and 9s' and you're like, well..where did, I think the exam boards never going to win because these set products as we know in Media just change very quickly

R: Exactly. I wonder whether it will switch back to having a bit more choice over the set texts. I mean they've already said, like with Women's Hour, you can choose any now, so, which makes it's a little bit easier.

T: But then I think a lot of teachers, because everyone's sharing resources, a lot of people will do very similar things

R: Well that actually leads me on really nicely to questions about the Facebook group. So what do you feel about that kind of community in terms of, well start of with the resource sharing; so you saying teachers sharing resources having kind of similar things available to them, do you use many of the resources on there?

T: I always have a look so I'm more like a voyeur *laughs* seeing what's there, but then I just find its good just to have as a starting point and then adapting it to your style of teaching. If I ever look at a Powerpoint I'm like; well that's not how – it's the right content its just not maybe the way I would deliver it myself and we all know Powerpoint's a starting point, its not the discussions themselves

R: Exactly

T: So for that it does save time, in creating your own resources because you can just use it as a basic structure but then also just, I'm always just cross referencing and stuff checking the specs because we're all human and we can make mistakes. You find things and you go; I didn't know, and you're questioning yourself, so it would be nice if there was a way to write comments on the resources, like constructively so people could – I don't know with technology how you could do that, I'm sure you could.

So they're great but I think it becomes sort of over reliant on a few people, I'm sure you see yourself there's the same sort of people coming up and its just how quickly people put their resources up because once its up then you make some for yourself, you're like well mines maybe like an amalgamation of a couple of things, if you asked me putting something up

R: Yeah

T: And then you don't and you're like well you feel like you're not contributing

R: Yeah I think that's actually been a recurring theme of people I've spoken to as well, like quite a few people have said they like looking at stuff but they don't actually put things up because a) they feel quite protective over their resources and the way they teach them and they wouldn't want it being misconstrued by somebody else, but also you know that it, a couple of them said that they don't want to put things up because they don't want to be judged in terms of their lessons because everyone has different ways of teaching and things like that

T: Yeah I mean that's not very much my concern, I think that it's good that people are willing to share and do it for free rather than having things like *inaudible* you end up getting a duplicate of a lot of things and then once you've got so many because it, obviously the admins they've got a full time job as well, so keeping on top of that, you just see so many of the same thing and then its actually going to make it harder for teachers to find anything.

R: Yeah, absolutely

T: So I just feel like, well if I'm uploading something which is quite similar to something else, is it adding any value?

R: Yeah. When did you actually join the Facebook group? Were you there from quite early days?

T: Possibly, I can't remember when I first joined but it was definitely when I first started teaching the A level, for the first wave, yeah. I think what its better for rather than maybe all the resources as such, is people posting up links to like things that are within the Media because I find that more helpful because you can't, again, access everything yourself so seeing people post something that's relevant or link something in some way to any of the set products is quite helpful

R: Yeah, do you post on there much?

T: So my posts would be more like if I've read something, then I'll put a link to it rather than, yeah but I don't really, and say someone needs help with maybe technical stuff – recommendations and things like that. So I think its just, you find what is your own skillset and what can you give value to rather than just posting for the sake of posting.

R: Yeah absolutely. So do you think the main function of the group really is to provide a sort of positive kind of community for Media teachers? Rather than a *inaudible* started out as a resource, free resource sharing site but I think it sort of evolved hasn't it from then

T: So I think its great and it is good for dialogue, I just think people need to be sort of wary of falling down the trap of, sort of moaning.

R: Ok, yeah

T: And sort of ignoring that, and obviously everyone's entitled to a moan but then, I don't know how it just sort of filters from person to another because like when people are say moaning about certain set products its like, well yes we can have an opinion on it but it is what it is, lets just get on with doing the best we can with what we've got - and then moaning to the exam board than to each other because we all kind of, well most people agree to a certain extent but on the whole it think its great to be able to talk to such a wide community of Media teachers because most schools do have such small departments and then obviously its great for those non-specialists as well

R: Yeah, I mean obviously there quite a lot of challenges with the new specification so it is I suppose good to have that kind of groundwork to some people in the same boat as you and as you say dialogue is really important you know its provided a huge amount of support, even just talking about it I think

T: Yeah and also just knowing that you're not alone, so when some schools – like say with mine, we've got our numbers dropping and when you see its happening across other schools as well, you don't feel as bad

R: Yeah, I suppose that idea for context and seeing how other people are dealing with issues and you know, I think some of the clear differentials is budget as well – what schools are having issues with getting equipment and technical things like that compared to others and yeah I think

T: It's shocking how little some schools have, and I'm like I wouldn't teach there if I didn't have any of the things that I do have now.

R: Exactly and I suppose if you're a new teacher as well, you don't know that, you don't know what's acceptable and what's not and you don't necessarily have the choice or you don't think you have the choice. So I think it, what I've kind of seen is there's been a sort of a split between more experienced teachers offering advice and new teachers wanting support and I think that's, you know, it's kind of like the apprentice you know idea that you've got 2 sets of, 2 groups of teachers who are communicating in that way which I think is really interesting.

T: Again, I don't know if it's possible but it would be nice to know if Facebook had that sort of way of showing who is more experienced and who isn't

R: Yeah exactly

T: So maybe you could sort of buddy up or, I don't know

R: Yeah, I know, I think it is on, one of admins, because I did a pilot study on the EDUCAS group last year as well and I think one of the admins I spoke to, she said that they were trying to get this kind of mentoring scheme running and that was one of her sort of development ideas for the group, so I haven't revisited that yet and I think I need to speak to her and see if that's happening. But I did notice there was something on there a year ago saying that if you wanted to belong to this kind of mentoring **inaudible** scheme then that was going to happen but

T: Because its, as experienced teachers its always in our best interests to make sure other teachers are delivering it well because it sort of represents Media as a whole.

R: Exactly, you know the collaborative sharing aspect of things, it's not a competition

T: And I think that's what people need to understand when you like share a resource, it isn't a competition because the students you teach aren't going to be the ones that I teach

Brief break due to boiler being repaired

R: Yeah it's just this sort of idea of like peer mentoring and its not a competition and this idea that it's a collaborative kind of sharing, positive space, you know and I think obviously Facebook offers that quite well it sort of, function as well you can be a member of the group and see other people but that, I mean that's one of things I'm asking people who I'm interviewing is; how long have they been in their role, you know are they new, are they subject specialists, do they consider themselves experienced teachers or things like that so

T: I think one of my main reasons for joining initially was because it was the new spec, because I think there's a general Media teachers group and I think I saw the EDUCAS one linked there at some point, so that's how I found out about the EDUCAS group.

R: Do you belong to any other **social media** sites; do you go on Twitter or anything like that?

T: Yeah so I'm on Twitter and then I follow lots of other Media teachers on there and then also in our borough we've got like the, a collegiate and they set up a sort of group for Media teachers. So its run by another teacher and we just go to their school and its just touching base like 3 times a year at the moment.

R: That's interesting and how do you find that?

T: So weve only done 2 sessions, the first one was great because there were quite a few of us and obviously it was still early on, it was like October-ish time – we were all still relatively fresh and then we had one and I think there was about 8 people went, and its nice having that face to face. And then we had one just a couple of, like 2 weeks ago (Jan/Feb) and there was only 2 of us who turned up including the host school and me because everyone was busy and everyone's got their mock exams at different times and so timetables don't match up even if you try and do that in advance. So it'll be interesting to see what the next ones like because that's going to be sort of April and the idea is help each other moderate coursework, but then people might be busy so in theory the idea's great and it started off really positive but then if people cant make it then

R: And people are tired as well and you know

T: And its after school, so it's like you know, you're doing things in your own time on top of whatever you've got so

R: If you don't mind me asking, which borough is, is that London borough?

T: Yeah so I'm in Brent but there, it's the Harrow collegiate.

R: Oh ok, that's interesting, I'm in Hammersmith so

T: Not too far

R: Not too far no, no, just down the road, probably swap over some students at some point as well. Yeah that's really interesting, it's the good old meeting face to face community is, you know, you don't really sort of hear about as much because most of it happens online but that's really really good that that's happening.

T: I mean EDUCAS have their own sort of centre map don't they and then people do try and create like sort of sharing, meeting up in person on there, but its got its uses but its just again everyone's on different timetables and

R: Yeah exactly in terms of meeting up. Do you use any other resources, like textbooks or online subscription sites? That kind of thing

T: So we got the textbooks, the EDUCAS ones when they came out. And it was difficult at first because id never used textbooks in Media Studies, so feeling sort of, kind of restricted to what was in there but, so I never use it with the students in class, like I never said; 'look turn to page whatever and do this activity'. It was more; 'take it away, this is at home – sometimes I might get you to read some of the pages either before or after a lesson' and sort of knew a bit more of the stretch things for them at home. And again the text, some of the things in there will be so dated very quickly – it felt like, it feels like quite a waste of money,

£25 a book. So obviously you can always use the set products as an example, an unseen text

R: Yeah

T: So yeah, I mean they're fine for what they are I guess, for what a text book is.

R: But you tend to create all your own resources anyway?

T: Yes I pretty much create PowerPoints and a lot of my lessons tend to be more discussion based anyway, especially at A level. So sometimes you might end up putting 1 slide on and talking for a whole lesson

R: Yeah *laughs* and therein lies the issue isn't it, with the kind of sharing resources online because if you put like a 3 or 4 slide PowerPoint up and its not much kind of writing on, people don't really know what we fill in the gaps for more inexperienced teachers. You know it's a skill isn't it to be able to kind of

T: When I make a PowerPoint, if it is 20 slides long that might be more for me to have as prompts in my head to make sure I cover content, so again I might show 4 of the slides but some of that's just for me to remember what I wanted to make sure I covered.

R: Exactly

T: Yeah so when you share that someone might go; 'that looks really text heavy', not knowing that's a slide I won't show.

R: Yeah, absolutely. Just one question I always like to end on really because I think it's, I've had a huge range of different responses about it but; what do you think the future for Media Studies is long term? As a result of these specifications?

T: I...I feel like students as they sort of catch on and speak to each other in different year groups are like well actually its quite content heavy, you don't get to do much practical – like already my school's said; 'well have you not thought about doing Level 3 BTECs' and things like that. Which id love to teach but then it's the uptake, I've already spoken to my Year 11s who have expressed interest in doing A level next year and I just asked them, if I change it to a Level 3 BTEC, would you want it and they're like; 'well no because I want to do an A level'

R: Yeah

T: So again its that perception of the terms A level and BTEC and they don't equate the same things.

R: Yeah, no absolutely

T: So I can see the numbers dropping again and then for me that's like; well are there going to be enough jobs left?

R: Yeah, there's always that instability and insecurity there isn't there. Ok, well thank you so much, is there anything else that you, you think that I haven't covered that you think that's

really important, that you know – I'd need to know about what you think about the new specifications or the Facebook group or anything?

T: I mean I suppose the good thing about the specs is, well obviously the sharing of resources but then, you've got set product, you've got more parity between the different schools – everyone is getting taught the same thing. I suppose you would get that in other subjects, wouldn't you?

R: Yeah

T: And then you make sure, because what if 1 teachers better at (if it's all choosing your own text) what if one teachers better at doing it than another? And then is that fair on students to have different teaching in that sense?

R: Yeah

T: But again, I, sort of the set theory is a bit probably, feels shoehorned in when it doesn't feel like you'd naturally analyse in a certain way.

R: Yeah, so if you were to keep something from the current specification; what would you keep and what would you get rid of?

T: Do you know, I actually like Context way more than I thought I would

Both laugh

R: Ok, yeah

T: Just because I think you get to teach students quite a wide range of things and I think its important then for them to understand why its sort of like, say with why womens, representation of women has changed or stayed the same. So I think all the Contexts work quite well and I supposed with Ofsteds drive and with all the cultural capita and all that, do you know all that stuff links in and we can say as a subject we do that all the time.

R: Yeah

T: Whereas I don't think, because when we had to fill out something for the school of how we do all these things; it was really easy and straightforward to do.

R: Yeah that's a really good point

T: Whereas other subjects found it really difficult. So I do actually enjoy teaching the Contexts. I think if we were going to get rid of something its just reduce the mediums or give schools the choice out of the sort of 10 set products or the 5 different mediums to teach 3 of them but more depth.

R: Yeah, yeah, and then obviously more choice as well over text seems to be coming out as well quite strongly

T: Maybe that will happen in the next couple of years because once they've got **unsure** they can find another historical and go or you can teach it from **audio cuts out** I don't know

I guess as, I suppose as exam markers become more familiar with what they're looking for then it'll be easier to open up. I get I suppose from one sense of why things have happened, its just how do they use that information going forward and how much do they listen to people.

R: Well hopefully, hopefully we'll get some more people listening. I know there's, I know OFQUAL have been asking teachers and university academics as well more recently about their thoughts about the whole thing, so hopefully that will be taken on board. I know it's the one with the teachers that, you weren't there were you for the OFQUAL consultation with the teachers?

T: I put my name down and I got through and then the school said no because it wasn't like helping the school and I was like, how does it not help the school, it helps the subject? So I was really frustrated not to be able to go because the school said 'well it doesn't help us in any way', I was like, well – again and that shows you, if that was for a core subject would that have been the same thing? Or would they have said; 'great, you're taking an interest in your subject'

R: Yeah, its CPD as well isn't it essentially.

T: That's what I put it down as! I was like, you know, I get to speak to other people – I wrote it all exactly why it was a good thing and they were like; 'well we don't see how its going to benefit us'

Yeah I think that tells you a bit of the context of the school I'm in and sort of how they think about it. And then sometimes you think well maybe I should go to a school that values it more but then what about these kids?

R: Well, that's it

T: What if they get a non-specialist teaching them, then it'll put, then it'll make the school leaders go, well actually this isn't a good subject

R: And that's really important to think about. I get from feedback from, I wasn't at that meeting either but I get from the feedback it was quite negative, that it was a lot of teachers talking about what they didn't like about it – whereas I think the university one, the lecturers, academics one that was 3 weeks ago was a lot more positive and there was a lot of things taken on board from the Christmas meeting going forward to the one that's just been, so hopefully fingers crossed they will start to think about what changes they can make but

T: I think that's what people just have to do, is be a bit more hopeful and think about what positives are in the subject because there are many, I think its just frustrating when you're thinking you have to teach certain amount of things and you run out of time – I think that's when people are getting annoyed about teaching the specs but actually its not, I mean I don't know enough about the OCR and AQA one, and that's interesting because pretty much everyone is doing EDUCAS, and that's only, is that only because that was the only one that was approved by the end of July?

talking at the same time

R: A lot of people jumped ship, a few people have gone back to the board, say if they were with OCR before they've gone back to OCR but yeah I mean you know part of my research

is looking at, you know why there was such an exponential jump in numbers, well there was obviously reasons for that, and it was the specification, I remember like being an early member of the EDUCAS group and I think it when there was 75 members and within a month period I looked at it again and there's like a thousand plus members and it was obviously, you know a change provokes quite a lot of insecurity and discomfort in teachers obviously and having a kind of support network is really important.

T: Will be interesting to see if in the next few years, if people start looking elsewhere because at the moment I have thought actually I could go back to OCR but then I've just spent all these years like 2 years planning all these resources

R: Exactly

T: And do I want to start again? So I think in my head I'm like; do you know what? Just keep going for another maybe year or 2 and then when you've taught the GCSE and A level all the way through a couple of times, then you can swap 1. If needed.

R: And I suppose you can kind of, if there is more, if there's a move back to being autonomous over texts then actually, you know, that planning won't have gone to waste – you've still got the basic framework there, its just the texts will change, you know I mean I've taught a bit of AQA briefly last year at a different school just (I wont go into the reasons why) but it was just, it was really interesting just I could apply a lot of the framework to the other texts on that particular course as well. So that was quite interesting.

T: Yeah. So when the new specs came out I wasn't too worried about that because I know how to teach the main, sort of key concepts, like you have that language, you understand how it should be done, so you, you know that you could come across any text and analyse it

R: Yeah, yeah

T: Well for the Media Language and Representation anywhere, I think its more just the industry and having to learn all that – that was, and again sometimes some of that was quite familiar; so when you're teaching BBC that's pretty straightforward, until now when its all changing again. That's the other thing with the set products; its always changing like 1 paper will buy out another paper and it's like, do I teach to what the fact sheet says? Or do I teach what's really happening?

R: Yeah exactly. Oh sorry my dog's just *something* at me. Yeah no, absolutely and its difficult isn't it, I mean the examiners have got to be quite flexible and agile in terms of what they're expecting you know students to have as well, is their kind of body of knowledge. I mean there was obviously you know students who were taught that **Trinity Mirror** was the owner of the **Mirror** and now its **Reach Plc** and if they haven't been taught that again in a sort of revisional or amended kind of way then they're going to, you know, how is that going to be marked essentially? You can't penalise because if they've taught it correctly the first time round then its going to be

T: Yeah

R: That kind of thing

T: I suppose that's the good thing about the group because then someone hopefully will be on top of the changes that are happening but then you do worry that some teachers, they might just come and get the resource and then go off and decide not to change it for a couple of years because they think they've got it

R: Yeah

T: What's happening to those students?

R: Or they're passing resources onto people who are less, less aware – that kind of thing as well. So many things! But thank you so much for your time and I'm sorry I've kept you much longer than I anticipated.

Transcription

Research pseudonym: Alan
OCR

Researcher: If we could just start with; what kind of school, if you don't mind me asking, are you teaching in at the minute?

Teacher: So I'm teaching at a secondary/college Catholic school and so the Media Studies programme is just at the college side of things, so it's a relatively small college – there's about between 350 to 400 students, of which there's just the Media Studies A level that's going on there

R: Ok, so no vocational

T: Beg pardon, sorry?

R: No vocational, no BTEC or anything?

T: No, we used to but as it's such a small department, we decided just to focus on the new A level with all the reforms and all that

R: Yep, ok and how long have you been there as well?

T: This is my 5th academic year that I've been there and I'm the Head of Department there

R: Ok and how many do you have in the department overall?

T: It's, at the moment its just myself but in the past we've had, just like usually 1 other member of staff there as well

R: Ok so

T: Very small

R: Yes small. And how long, if you don't mind me asking, how long have you been teaching in total?

T: I've been teaching for 10 years now

R: Have you, ok and a similar kind of institution or...

T: Mostly 6th form or FE, so my PGCE year was a proper FE vocational college, so I did that – that was the 2009/2010 academic year and then I've worked at more sort of colleges since then but purely 16+, so this is the first place I've worked at which has been any sort of secondary, you know, facilities whatsoever.

R: Ok, yeah and have you got facilities, sort of dedicated facilities for Media or is it a piecemeal attempt that some schools are finding in terms of equipment and things like that?

T: No I have some dedicated equipment, so we've got a computer room with 19 PCs with the Adobe Creative suite 2019 on there. We've got a little dedicated studio which has got the

white, grey and green backdrops on it with, you know, full lighting and we've got some video recorders and some digital cameras and sound recording equipment. So, you know, we don't have a lot – like I know that's quite a list that I've listed there but that's, you know we've just about enough for what we need to do but at least we do have the things that we need and they are ostensibly just for the use of the Media students.

R: Ok, sure and how many students have you got in total?

T: Let me see, I've got 25 in the second year at the moment and I've got 18 in their first year at the moment

R: And are they in, are they spread over 2 classes or is there 25 of them in 1

T: The first years are all in 1 group, so that's a relatively large group for the college at least what we are on average but then we've got a class of 12 and 13 then for the 2nd years.

R: And what's the entry requirement to get onto [the A level]?

T: Now its just the 5 GCSEs of C and I then ask for 1 of those to be English. Ideally I would rather 1 of those, of English to be a B or equivalent to a B – I've still not quite got my head around the GCSE system really because I don't have to teach that level *laughs* but you know, equivalent to that just because of the essay based nature of the course otherwise I end up teaching very basic English to anyone below that and its, just don't have the time to do that.

R: No I think that's quite standard isn't it. In terms of perception within the kind of range of the courses that your *close* offered, how do you feel Media sits within that?

T: I think because its one of the very few subjects that doesn't have a Key Stage 4, you know, or lower provision at our school, it tends to be forgotten a little bit – or at least that's how I feel and you know, I'm sure if I was to ask higher up they'd say; 'oh no we're not forgetting it' but you know, there's little things here and there where you just kind of go; 'oh, that has been not included in the conversation' or I've not been included in that bit there or you know, whatever. But I understand that where I'm working is essentially, its focus is on the secondary school and the college has that extra provision if the students then want to continue on internally. But there's only really Media and like some of the Sociology subjects for example like; obviously Sociology, Psychology and sort of Health & Social Care, you know those are some of the very few subjects that are only at Key Stage 5 only. So I just think institutionally its sort of not seen that way but certainly where I've worked in colleges and FE colleges and things like Media is very well respected – even if, even if it's a little bit of an underdog, of a bit of a like a; 'oh that's actually really good' sort of a way, you know – never downplayed or never forgotten, just; 'that's actually really good' sort of mentality. So, and I think that's probably more how its seen nationally I would imagine; somewhat a little bit misunderstood but when it is then shown to shine it, you know its actually, you know it is shown to be really positive. I just think, as I say, it's a symptom of where I'm at I guess

R: Yeah, no sure, sure. So sort of moving onto the new specifications; when did you become aware of, well obviously you know the educational reform took place in 2014, but when did you become aware of the changes that were happening to Media specifically?

T: Oh very early on, I've had my finger on the pulse all the way through that and you know, I see my appointment where I am, so I started in the September 2015 – I very much see it as; I've been here to kind of see this, you know, subject through for transition over that period. So, no I was very aware of it because we used to have the vocational provision so we used to do the BTEC in Digital Media and then I, when I was pursuing that – which of course came before the A levels, I was pursuing you know BTEC options, I was pursuing Cambridge technical options which we ultimately went with. I was kind of naturally in that circle of people talking about the A levels fairly early on because there were very similar sort of minds on it I guess but then I went to the very early OCR and EDUCAS days where they were sort of talking about what their plans were and how the Ofqual conversations were going and all that sort of stuff. So, no I've been pretty in there since I could be really.

R: So were you part of that whole consultation process where teachers were invited to go and discuss

T: Oh yeah, no I, yeah I went to those yeah definitely did. I went to a couple of OCR ones actually and you know I had, who was it who was there? SO I had a talk from David Buckingham and I heard him talking about you know, why it needs to be updated but also kind of kept, you know, how to keep the vision of what the subject was originally about as well which he wasn't sure was actually happening, so no I've been very much in part of all those conversations and the surveys and everything

R: And what were your feelings in that kind of run up to the first specifications being approved, what were your feelings about the process?

T: I, I mean my understanding of what happened then, obviously I wasn't on the board or anything like that, but my understanding of what happened was; there was an initial period of quite a lot of support from Ofqual and ergo from the government on it and that was because someone – again I don't know names, I don't know specifics, but my understanding is that there was someone on that board who was basically the bridge between the exam boards and the government, I, probably from Ofqual saying; actually I used to do Media Studies and that this was, this was something of value and that it does have, it needs some support, it needs some re-jigging but it should work.

My understanding is after those initial talks that person was no longer involved for whatever reason and it kind of became this; well we've kind of got to justify why the subject even exists at all. Now, you and I loving the subject is, as much as we do is, its sort of easier to do that but its much harder and that was my understanding of where that went.

I mean in terms of concerns over it, I think one of things I used to find and I still find to an extent a little frustrating when I go to some of these, you know, training days is I feel like I'm sort of surrounded by people who, you know, really are not teachers of the subject – they might have come from another subject or elsewhere and that's fine but I, you know I'm a film nerd, I'm a video game nerd, I'm all this sort of stuff, always have been and I live and breathe this stuff – even if I decided to not teach I'd still be reading up on this stuff and so I think that the new reforms are trying to make sure that there is consistency across the board. So theory needs to be in there which is great, that's good that we've got some solid theory that the students can focus on but I do miss having the autonomy to bring in my own examples that they can then use in an exam.

R: Yeah

T: I think having the very specific examples, again is good for some of the weaker students maybe and for maybe, dare I say, some of the less confident teachers but actually for me I, you know I look at some of the stuff on some of the specs and I just kind of go; 'why on earth is that even on there? How is that supposedly the 'best example' of, I don't know, that film or that industry or whatever it is – of all the ones that you could ever pick'. And so that's what I kind of find a little bit, I don't know what the word is, I'm not as keen on that direction, but I do understand where it has gone certainly.

R: So in essence you sort of value the nature of making it more rigorous and more standard

T: Yes

R: That's really interesting. So in terms of like any specific things that you really like about the new specification – I know it sounds quite simplistic but is there anything that stands out **inaudible** you would have chosen that, you enjoy teaching it, the students enjoy learning it but, yeah anything that stands out for you?

T: **pauses** trying to think, do you mean sort of specific units or..

R: Any specific theories or any of the parts of the conceptual framework or any texts?

T: Sure, I mean I've gone with the OCR spec, mainly because I looked at the other specs and I just thought, I just cannot get interested in these and so for me I like teaching, I mean I love The Jungle Book so its absolutely no chore for me whatsoever, every single year watching both of those, talking about how they were made and you know, going through all that sort of stuff and, you know that, so that's really, and I've tried to turn it into something a little bit more broad in its curriculum as well – so sort of actually going through the history of computer graphics and how animation works and you know, so I think where I'm naturally interested like sort of comes back to what I was saying just now about, you know that autonomy being taken away; I've actually tried to build that back in to try and get the broader curriculum in there so as a result of that, and as I say, the film industry stuff, the video game stuff and actually I've found that I really enjoyed doing the sort of like, the long form TV drama section. So I teach, I mean as much as I love Stranger Things, I didn't go with it – I went with Mr Robot and Deutschland 83 which actually, when they're 17 or 18 they actually really like the slightly more conspiracy theorist kind of, oh this is kind of what maybe is going on under the surface and actually they really liked the News section as well because I teach that in the second year once they, kind of the last section actually. So by the time that they've learned all the theories, they've learned all the terminology, they can actually pull it apart and actually start to really consider if something is genuinely biased or not. So I've actually ended up really enjoying doing that and I think tying all that together, like I say, even though all the, pretty much all the theories I used to teach before the reform anyway – I think actually having that structure in place is very very helpful because then you can go, well at least you know, I've got to talk about Postmodernism and classically I remember one of my lecturers at uni sort of saying, you know we do Postmodernism for a term and at the very end of the term she then said; "but after all that I don't actually have the definition for you", oh great now I've got to teach 18 year olds this idea, but actually just having one particular focus on it and almost not having to worry about the rest of it is very useful. So specific content areas I suppose because I've gotten used to the areas now and I can build in some of my own personality and a bit more of my own interests to make it more engaging and, but then actually just having that structure I think really really helps as well.

R: That's really interesting, I'd like to come, pick up on that in a second actually but just before I do, just thinking about the reduction of the practical content of the course – what were your feelings about that?

T: I thought it was a shame, honestly, I mean I liked the 50/50 nature mainly because, I mean I used to teach Film Studies as well, I don't unfortunately have the provision to do it where I am just because of student numbers. But I firmly believe that the slight, and this might be a very big generalisation – but it's my opinion so there you go, I think that Film Studies generally speaking in my experience takes on the slightly more academically capable students between that and Media Studies. Whereas people who come into Media can be really into it and can be really academic, no question but there can also be those people of; 'oh I quite like TV', you know and it's a very passing thing, it might be their final option or whatever and they end up loving it but you know, that's kind of where you're starting from. And I think that having that 50/50 coursework really helped some of those students who maybe weren't quite so academically able

R: Yeah

T: Just to give them a little bit more grounding for the exam. Having said that though, I can understand why there's that, again that push for slightly more rigorous sort of nature, I understand that and honestly I think that some of the old exam specs were drastically in need of updating and making more, making more relevant. I mean I was with the old **WJC** award before the reform as opposed to OCR which I couldn't understand why, in the old OCR spec, they would spend a load of their time doing coursework in Year 2, reflecting on the coursework in the coursework in Year 2 and then they had 2 questions reflecting on their reflections on their reflections of coursework. What on earth are you doing? And these kids didn't know who Rupert Murdoch was, how, what was the point in doing all that?

Laughs So, I can understand, I can understand that change but to combat that drastic cutting I actually build into my scheme of work 2 mini coursework practice tasks – just to kind of teach them the skills of practical work rather than just like; 'ok it's coursework time, go and be perfect', you know it's just completely unreasonable to do that. I was a little concerned but I think actually having now done it a couple of times and I think if you prepare them and practice them for it it's not as bad as I thought it would be.

R: Ok, that's interesting, yeah that's – going back to what you were previously saying, and it segues quite nicely into my next question; I was going to ask (and you've answered this in a large part anyway) but the change in your pedagogical approach to lessons, has the new specification, do you feel like, you know you've said you put your practical, little mini practical sessions in there and things like that. Do you feel like you have changed your pedagogical approach to teaching, you know the subject?

T: *Pauses* I don't think so, honestly I think probably the biggest change has actually come into the preparation for it, as in I remember when I was first starting out you know the definition of contemporary being 5 years, for me kind of really being pushed on me quite hard and sort of, if your thing is past 5 years you must absolutely update that example and so that was always a; 'ok do I need to update that example this year, if so I've got to research that and prepare that' and you know, I don't have that anymore. So I suppose that allows for me to do refinement and just update it year on year but I would be lying in saying that therefore my engagement has stayed the same or stayed as high as it was. I think keeping it the same examples year on year I think is going to become harder for me to be as engaged as before, I think I'll be putting more effort into, so we have something at our place

called 'directed study' for the 6th form students. So basically what it means is, an hour every fortnight for every subject they will spend some time without computers, without mobiles, without music, without anything – just in the hall, just with some paper to do some sort of task and that's where I try to broaden their curriculum just a little bit with some independent reading and some essay writing and I have a feeling I'll be doing more of that sort of stuff, if nothing else to just keep my own curiosity going, at least in terms of the teaching. So I think that's probably the biggest thing, otherwise I teach very much the same sort of way, I mean obviously I had to restructure the entire course but that goes without saying but yeah that's kind of the main way I would say.

R: Do you feel that you create the majority of your own resources?

T: Oh totally, I've definitely done that. But I've always done that since day 1. Mainly because I just, I don't feel anywhere near as confident singing from someone else's hymn sheet as it were. You know I create all my own stuff, I make my own presentations, I've you know having used all my own resources from my first go through for the A level, I've now compiled that into a 200+ course booklet that the students can basically have as a side textbook. Yeah and I just feel, I know what I've written and that's you know, far more useful for me so, and you know being in such a either totally independent or incredibly small department, you know its just you've got no one else to rely on so it'll be myself.

R: Yeah and you create all your own but do you use any other kind of resources that other people have created just to kind of turn them into your resources if you see what I mean?

T: Occasionally, yes and I'm sure this might be part of your Facebook question maybe when it comes. I remember last year I think it was, when I was trying to get my then second years through their exam period, you know through the mocks and actually starting to just focus on structuring exam questions specifically and of course, you know no one knew what we were doing, you know there was nothing in the way of support from the exam board except for something that looked like it was written by an examiner under no timed conditions whatsoever and you kind of go; 'well I've got to get a 17 year old to write like this? You know, you've got to be joking really', but I do remember there were some resources that were posted on there about, you know; here are some suggestions to get you started, and I then used that as a base to turn into something else. Yes so I've done that but I've never taken something else that someone else has done and just simply go, 'here you are' to the students, it just doesn't sit with me.

R: Sure, sure. In terms of progression I know obviously its really hard to tell, its really early days theres only 1 cohort gone through but have you got any feelings about progress to Higher Education from Media Studies A level? Have your students opted to go into Media related courses at all? Or

T: Yeah, a few of them have, again I mean I would have had, how many did I have last year? I think I had 21 students last year for second year

R: Wow

T: Yeah so, and I think, I mean I'm trying to remember off the top of my head – it was between sort of 5 and 8 of them I think went onto something that was Media related of some kind. I've had a couple of them get back in touch and you know, just sort of saying; 'thanks for all you did' and I had a Christmas card from 1 of them – it was this lovely long sort of

letterary kind of message inside, it was really sweet. So yeah I do think a lot of them are going onto do that and, but I don't know really what sort of thing do you, sort of mean – do you mean just like numbers, or

R: I was just, I've sort of heard from other interviews that I've done that a lot of students are not going on to do Media at university because of their experiences with the new specification, that they've, or they don't feel, or they have gone on to maybe choose slightly more practical courses but don't feel quite as prepared as well to do them. So I was just interested in getting a sort of larger perspective on whether that's the case more generally or if that's just a particular symptom of the people I've been speaking to, so

T: Yes, yes, I mean my impression of the sorts of courses most of them are going on to study is that they do have more of a practical focus, if they are Media related and I know that even some of my students who I've got at the moment, you know who have applied to university and had their offers back, a lot of them are going for more of the practical courses. Which I suppose, I suppose is actually kind of interesting given the reduction to 30% that so many of them are wanting to pursue more of the practical line. I guess if I was to think about who those students are, I think most of them are just thinking; 'I just want to have more of a chance of getting a job at the end of it'

R: Sure

T: You know with the increase in tuition fees and they want to go somewhere accredited, so I know that you're going through Bournemouth for your research – I think a lot of them are targeting places like Bournemouth for exactly that credibility, just so that they can then try and get as much of a return on their investment I guess. I don't think its, I think I've got as many students going to university as I would have done pre-reform, if anything I think they're coming out with more rigorous A level results I would say, at least they have more knowledge than the ones might have done before. But yeah I think it's part of a bigger picture rather than just; 'oh the reform has potentially soured my interest in Media' I think those people who wanted to go, would have gone anyway, is my feeling on it.

R: Ok, no again that's a really interesting perspective as well, I think you know, its obviously far too early to tell really what the impact is, I know that a recent consultation with some of the university lecturers to see how they feel about students coming through from the A level to see what their opinions are of it so, it will be interesting to see what comes out of that. I think that those findings are being shared at some point, so yeah it'll be interesting to find, I mean it is very difficult because we've only had sort of the first full cohort come through really.

T: Yes, no it'll be interesting.

R: In terms of teacher **inaudible** at your school, do you feel its fairly stable, you know I've heard from a lot of people that they're not sure, you know they've changed their provision, they've mixed and matched with **inaudible** vocational and things like that and they're not sure where they're going to end up in terms of numbers next year and courses and things like that so do you feel like Media at your school is or your college is quite stable?

T: **Pauses** If you'd asked me last year I would have said yes. I think the, because each of the years that I've been there excluding this year, even despite the reforms and despite having the vocational provision as well, the numbers, the numbers I think weirdly (because I

kind of mean that) weirdly kept increasing and other subjects, like I was sat next to on enrolment day I was sat next to the Head of Theatre Studies and they had 2 students show up and I had like, you know 22 or something sharp – I felt, you know so and that had never happened before. But this year, yeah I mean with my, I mean I nearly, I always have 2 classes per year group and this is the first one where I've had just the 1 group. So it's a bit of an anomaly really for me to then, a bit like we were saying like with the HE progression, a little bit difficult for me to sort of say really, I don't really know. But I think due to the size of it again like I said right at the beginning, it doesn't fill me with a tonne of confidence – you know I know that my budget provision is lower than other subjects as well and that could just be because there's just me and I don't know, for some of the time. But yeah I definitely don't feel like it's invested in as much as it could be and so then that doesn't fill you with a tonne of confidence. I suspect they'll keep it going because it produces decent results and you know, the qualitative feedback that I get as a practitioner is always excellent and there will be, kind of like I said before, you know those little conversations just like; 'you know what they were surprisingly very complimentary about it all' its like; 'well yeah what did you expect?' you know. Thanks?! So yeah, it's a kind of an odd position really but I would be lying if I didn't say that, you know every year I'm looking at those numbers going; 'well just how many classes am I going to have?' you know.

R: Yeah. It seems in many ways again some of the people that I've spoken to that it's a sort of self-sustaining subject, people, it sort of exists in spite of many things rather than **inaudible** and you know a lot of the teachers that I've spoken to say that their students you know, like have a lot of passion for the subject and obviously the teachers do as well and so I seems like there is a kind of a critical mass of energy that comes from within the subject, in that its not that well understood from other teachers and other sort of management you know, so its quite an interesting thing that might form part of my analysis of this. Just sort of moving onto the Facebook group, obviously you're a member of the OCR group; did you join from the very early days of that group existing?

T: Did I what sorry? Slightly fuzzled there sorry

R: Sorry, were you a member from, of the OCR group from the early days when it first started?

T: I joined probably only a couple of years ago actually, so I don't know where that fits in the chronology of the OCR group **muffled semi-laughing dialogue** But no I joined I think it was on the back of one of the OCR training days I think, just because a former colleague of mine who I caught up again with at that event just said; 'yeah its really really useful' so, and its just useful even if I don't actively engage with every conversation, its always interesting sort of reading other peoples opinions, you know even to just from a slightly more tertiary position.

R: Yeah, do you post much on there? You said you don't engage very much but do you, I mean if you do post what things do you post?

T: Occasionally, I mean its more, I mean like I said, I think for the most part I know what I'm doing and I see a lot of posts being put up on there sort of sharing resources and things like that. And I've done that occasionally, I've maybe like if I've seen an article or a story or something like that and I think that tends to be where I am. I think the thing that I find mostly with just sort of social media in general is it can be very easy to just open yourself up just to criticism and I have seen, I cant think of any names or anything like that but I, but there have been just a number of conversations on there and on other places as well where I've just

seen, you know this has just turned sort of a little bit into just; 'this is all dreadful, this is all unbearable', it's like; well I don't think it is you know, ok you may not like it but just step back and think about it for a second and maybe, you know just come back to it tomorrow and I'm sure it'll be ok. And then I just, I don't like to engage with that sort of thing, it's just, it isn't helpful. But yeah no, I'll post occasional articles and I'll comment if I've seen something that I think is quite useful – like I said with those resources on structuring an exam question and when I think people wrote some of their practice mock papers last year I would just say; 'yeah thank you that's really useful, thank you'. So I'll just try and engage in that sort of way instead.

R: So do you think then it functions as a kind of support, like a positive support network for people – rather than actually for like yourself, experienced teachers who don't necessarily need the, those kind of resources? Do you think its just a useful thing to be part of just to kind of feel like you're part of a network?

T: Yeah I totally feel that. I mean I work closely with some of our sister schools, we're actually part of a fairly substantial Catholic educational trust which has about 12 different schools of different age groups and stuff so I'm really keen to, you know connect with other teachers and if nothing else just kind of go; 'yeah I feel vindicated in what I thought' or my marking or my moderation or just seeing what else is going on, I think that's really important to do. So yeah, its more just as a, look I am seeing what else is going on out there and even just to – this isn't my primary reason, but even just with my conversations with senior leadership, just kind of go; 'look I know that what I'm doing is on line with what other people are doing', if anything I'm more aware of the bigger picture than maybe some people that I'm seeing commenting on stuff so its, yeah I see it more as that sort of a way really.

R: Ok, thank you. Do you have any other memberships of other online communities? Like are you on Twitter or other social media groups that might exist?

T: Not for the exam stuff, no, I mean I am on you know Facebook and Twitter and Instagram and stuff like that but I, I tend to just use the Facebook groups in particular, just because that's the one that I'm – I mean they say that I'm too old now but, you know, but *imitates older person* 'that's the one that I know, so I'm going to stick with it' you know. So yeah, no, I mean probably like yourself I barely have time to breathe with teaching, let alone to really get invested in other social media platforms so I tend to just stick with that

R: Ok, that's great. Yeah no, I think also Facebook actually just functions better as, for those kind of things anyway – with the community, having a group is really just easy, isn't it, you can have members *inaudible*

And so just finally, I always just quite like to end on this because it gets so many amazingly different answers for it but; what do you think the future or Media Studies in general is going to be over the next few years? Medium to long term as well?

T: *Pauses for a very long time*

I suspect what will happen is that another 3 years and the examples will get updated, something will get tweaked but I suspect the subject will keep going and I think that will come from the input from this but I don't necessarily see it getting any bigger. I think even though, you know, I could harp on until the cows come home about why its up there with some of the most important subjects that students need to do to be familiar with, even just the transferable skills, I don't think that that perception of the subject is going to change it any time soon.

So, I'm not sure, I'm really not sure about where its going to go but I suspect that with these reforms having been so much work that its going to be tweaks now or probably over the next decade rather than anything too substantial, just some little updates here and there but that will probably be it I suspect.

R: Ok, that's really interesting, thank you. Well that's my final question so thank you so much for your opinions and your answers are absolutely really valuable for the research and its really interesting because there's so many things that are being said time and time again about the specifications, particularly. But also the kind of, I don't know but as a sort of teacher identity as well, you know it seems to still be very much, you know, like the teachers feel ownership over the subject its more than just a qualification so that's really interesting.

T: One thing to say just quickly that didn't necessarily fit into one of your questions but when I was basically training my other colleague at the time about you know, these are the potential reforms that are coming, I mean this was an assistant head teacher which was a slightly odd dynamic I have to say, it was like you're kind of superior to me but I'm kind of superior to you in this situation, but anyway. But anyway he looked at them and just went; 'oh but they're killing our subject' and, you know I can imagine that a lot of people probably still have that opinion of just, this is the olden days but certainly that was his interpretation and he certainly felt that way when he was teaching it, you know last year so it's a, I can imagine that opinion has maybe come out again but

R: It has **muffled** and I've done, I think this is my 9th interview now in the last few weeks and that certainly that's been mentioned a number of times and generally you know its people who are very positive as well, I think they're, perhaps they don't feel it now but I think when the consultation first started they thought it was quite a cynical attempt to get rid of the subject, they were going to make it so difficult and so dry for students to study that it was going to kind of rocket from the inside if you like and that hasn't borne out, that hasn't you know, I mean that's the kind of focus: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

T: 'I think this, what do you think'

Laughter

R: Yeah exactly, but my title is; A site of conflict and resistance. And looking at the impact of that and I've almost seen a sort of pattern of, particularly for Media Studies, that teachers have a very strong identity about their subject and Media's suffered a lot over the, since it very first started as a new subject it suffered from stigma and from both within education and outside of it, you know

T: Yes yes

R: And there's been sort of phases over that last few years, in 2011 there was the Media manifesto that a number of academics, mostly academics rather than teachers, they – I don't know if you saw that website

T: Yeah I contributed to it, was that the, was that the, where they just did the national callout for anyone to give their opinion? Yeah, yeah, yeah so I contributed a bit on that I think, as did hundreds of people I'm sure so

R: So there was probably about I don't know, 50 odd things on the site itself but I think there was a wider campaign, that's really interesting. And I think, you know, I just was wondering whether this sort of, that kind of feeling would be generated again by these specifications and then when I noticed the Facebook groups, like I teach EDUCAS because that was the first one to be approved and I, it wasn't my decision to do that – I mean we've always been OCR actually but I went off to do a sabbatical and when I came back it had been decided and it just sort of felt like, I dunno – I think EDUCAS were kind of the easier option in a way because it was

T: Yeah

R: But also the springing up of all the Facebook, you know the EDUCAS group I think the membership, I was an early member of it – I think there was about 70 members and within 3 months there was 1000+, it just was quite interesting to see and obviously loads went with EDUCAS because they were the first to be approved but interestingly I think people who, particularly the teachers I've talked to who go with OCR or stayed with OCR tend to have much stronger subject identity for some reason, it think OCR fought longer and harder on the specification that's why it took longer to get sorted as well

T: Well I know that they had constant trouble trying to get it approved, I mean they talked extensively at these days about the level of, I mean, utterly professional but utterly frustrated as well you know, at the same time. I just remember looking at the EDUCAS, you know so I did have the say over which spec I was going to go with and I just looked at the EDUCAS one and I just, I cannot get interested in this. I mean I looked at it and just kind of go; so ok, so the 1 video game you're going to do is Assassins Creed 3: Liberation which was on the PS Vita which barely anyone played, that's your game? Of all games that you want to put out there? You know and I looked down the, and I just, you know and as I said I'm a complete nerd and I just go; 'I don't even recognise half of these things'. How am I, where is the, where is this came from? And then I, looking at what the proposed OCR one was, ok so Jungle Book, fine ok great, you know Minecraft, ok fantastic great. What else have we got; Daily Mail, Guardian right I can talk about those for hours, fine, ok and I just remember, I don't really understand why there was this need (and I do really, its rhetorical) but why, you know there was this need to kind of go; 'well we're definitely going to do EDUCAS, that's fine, we must get that out of the way' ok. How much did that really affect your first half term to a term really, my mentality was; I'm going to teach them terminology, I'm going to teach them analysis techniques, I'm going to teach them some theory and just the very basics, I'm not going to start touching the case studies until maybe November time anyway – by that point if OCR is not accredited then you know then they're out of the water anyway so

R: Yep

T: But maybe, maybe you know that's a you know, wanting to get something sorted which I can understand, maybe that's a lack of confidence in the subject, I don't know it could be a whole load of reasons but I just looked at it and just thought practically to my mind and just went; 'well that's not going to affect me anyway'. The exam, you know the head of the exams at our place doesn't really need to know what the course is that we're studying until probably just before Christmas I think she said, so you know what's really the harm in holding back for something that, in the long term you think you can teach better. Some colleagues that I do know from elsewhere in the country started with EDUCAS, changed to OCR in the 1st term for exactly that reason anyway, you just think well *Inaudible agreeing* I like to think I made the right decision, you know, so you know there you go

R: It sounds like you did!

T: For me anyway

R: Its always a learning curve regardless with new specifications but

T: It is yes

R: Yeah I think sometimes you've got to hold your nerve a little bit

T: Yeah

R: But no, that's really interesting. So I'll be doing my data collection, my interviews and everything until July, then I'll be writing it up but obviously you know, I will give you a copy of my final dissertation when you are, perhaps if you're interested

T: Oh thank you, yes of course

R: It's one of these things I always feel like research comes out far too late to have any kind of impact

T: *Laughs* You know that thing we talked about 2 years ago – well I've written about it

R: *Laughs* Its like films isn't it, I can always, I always feel like, its like stars are being, actors are being interviewed on television about a film that they made 2 years ago *laughter* its very strange but I'm not in anyway aligning myself with actors and Hollywood or

T: That's ok

Laughter

R: I just feel like sometimes it needs to come out now but yeah I did a pilot this time last year actually on the EDUCAS group, so that was, actually a lot of what's coming out from these interviews is exactly what came out on the pilot anyway so, just a year on its interesting as well. But anyway thank you so much

Transcription
[REDACTED] Research pseudonym: Will
OCR/CIE (Independent)

Researcher: Ok brilliant, so that is now recording. So you're at [REDACTED]

Teacher: I am, yes

R: That's down in, what [REDACTED] isn't it?

T: Well its near [REDACTED], well I suppose nearest place is [REDACTED] probably

R: Alright, yeah. So that's independent isn't it?

T: It is, yes

R: Ok, and in general, sort of how many years have you been a teacher of Media?

T: This is my 12th year. So and I have, well I've taught OCR for the entire 12 years – until now.

R: Yeah, ok, I'm sure we'll get onto that. So you're a subject specialist, is that your background, Media Studies?

T: Yes, yes, I – well I mean, a long long time ago I used to sing in a band and then I did a Media degree and then I did my Media PGCE and now I've done my Masters at the Institute of Education. Id like to do a doctorate but can't afford to, so

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Conversation between R & T regarding PhD

Continue at: 7:25

R: So, how many teachers are, I mean you say you're not teaching Media anymore, so is that

T: No, I'm still teaching Media but we moved, well coming back here I, we've moved to the CIE – the Cambridge International Course

R: Oh right yeah, of course you're independent, you can do what you like, that's good

T: Yeah it's a great advantage I have to say

R: And that's, that's [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

T: Oh, really? No I don't

R: So he's one of the, I think he devised or he wrote the specification for it I think. I remember when I was talking to him last year, he was in the process of doing something new on it

T: Ah, so maybe hes written the new spec because pretty much the current spec that finishes this summer is the old **G322 and 325 of OCR**

R: Yeah I think it's the new one that's hes worked on, yeah. But yeah, no I mean it sounds brilliant, he was talking to me about what you know, was on it and I was like; 'that sounds amazing', but obviously being in the state sector its, we don't have that freedom unfortunately

T: No I mean it was one of the mitigating factors in my move really and the **durability** to teach, I suppose what was effectively the old OCR course and now moving into this new one I just thought it offered more freedom than the constraints of the other exam boards.

R: Yeah absolutely and I think there's lots and lots of people finding exactly the same thing and a lot of people really wanting to have the same kind of freedom as well. So is it just the CIE that you actually do or do you do BTEC as well?

T: No, currently I just do, I just teach the CIE here – last year I was at a different role I was teaching, when I was Head of Media and Film in North London and there we ran, well I ran the OCR Media A level, the Level 3 BTEC and WJC, well not WJC anymore is it – EDUCAS Film Studies.

R: Right, ok that's interesting – whereabouts in North London were you?

T: Near [REDACTED] – had to remember for a second.

R: Yeah, I'm in [REDACTED] so I just wondered

T: Oh

R: I tend to have a good handle on the schools around us

T: [REDACTED] it was in North London, it's a very large 6th Form

R: Yeah I have heard of it because I'm 6th Form in [REDACTED] so yeah its funny that, pass students around quite a lot. Just out of interest, what are the entry requirements for your course, the CIE

T: The CIE here, there are no entry requirements

R: Right, with it being a different type of institution, yeah I suppose.

T: Its, I mean I know at some private schools its, you may need a certain level to get in, here it's very much done on a very different basis. Being able to afford to do the course is one of them but its also whether they like the students and give them ***inaudible*** to the school, whether they feel they can work with them so there are real, really no entry requirements. Last year, I mean I suppose I should really talk about where I was teaching the OCR and EDUCAS, there we had Level 5 was pretty much the main requirement but when it really

came to it – it was always about numbers and as always about money. So you'd end up accepting anyone really.

R: Yeah, I think same at my place actually as well. Ok, that's really interesting. Your schools got a reputation for creative subjects and output – so presumably the college students you attract anyway are going to have probably a greater interest in Media and all the things that go around that

T: Yeah, I mean often, well most of them have never done Media Studies before, I mean there might be, I mean I've got – I'm very lucky to only have

has to speak to someone away from the phone

T: 34 students in 3 classes here this year. I think maybe 1 of them had done Media Studies before entering the school but they had come for the Film – most of them have come from more creative subjects

R: Yeah, so they've all got to have that basic level of

T: Yeah

R: Yeah ok. So if we could just talk a little bit about your views about the role of Media Studies in the school curriculum and education, you know just sort of thinking about how it fits in with other subjects and what you think it can offer students

T: I know there's that massive push that's been going, well it was certainly going at JFS before I left, for that cultural capital and those cross curricular links which I mean I always felt that we were embedded within Media Studies anyway – there's always links to, *inaudible* blogs in the old days, G324, 321 is looking at psychology of Film so – sociological aspects of you know, subcultures and so forth but I mean now you have to, it has to be embedded within the curriculum in state schools. My feelings of it, I felt that we always did it, its just a tick box now for Ofsted to say that we did it

R: Yep, yep

T: But I think that 1 of the, another 1 of the factors in that *inaudible* state schools that too much, well the O word – you know that desire to please Ofsted and second guess what they were thinking

R: And do you find that that is, like there was a big differential between kind of what was expected in terms of results versus the kind of students – this is obviously in your old school, the students that you were being able to get on the course? That you weren't able to make that, bridge that gap with the new specification?

T: With the new, no, yes and no – certainly with the old specification you could definitely do it, I found that there was always a way into Media Studies for every student, every student could find something that they enjoyed in that course and thrive. And I think the results consistently demonstrated that, certainly for me, I think that just having a look, national average was 41% I think A*-A and we were ending up with 100%, in my 1st year 100% A*-A

R: Flipping heck

T: I mean I was lucky, I was blessed with an excellent cohort that year. But now I don't think that was necessarily the case where I was, I think it, it was I suppose in some ways it was twofold; I had proved over a number of years that my students could get very good results, so they were given to me because I always demonstrated that Media Studies was a subject that they were going to achieve well in

R: Yeah, yep

T: I don't think there was necessarily an expectation that they were going to achieve well; 'oh right you've got this Level 3 student, they're going to come out with an A or a B in Media' but I think the results kind of proved that I could work with those students and push them towards those grades.

R: Yeah, no definitely. So what are your views really about the sort of change in curriculum content that, you know things like the introduction of set text and theorists

T: Its awful *laughs* in a nutshell. I mean I remember, what's his name, that Julian McDougalls written about it and talked about it, David Buckingham's talked about it in great detail, Pete Fraser used to talk about it – that sort of being forced to, to have texts that you know, I mean A in some specs, I'm sure you've, I don't know what spec you're currently teaching but I was just looking at some of them on, AQA for example; I mean they just don't really talk to the students, they don't seem to – I mean they have been chosen with a great deal of thought obviously but they don't really, I don't think they appeal to the students, it was a case of trying to shoehorn in the best available texts that I suppose Nick Gibb would allow them to pass.

R: Well that's it I think, you know that's the key issue, aspect of it. I've taught EDUCAS and AQA since the new specs have come in and

T: So you've been teaching Woman's Hour, I mean I, you know its great that they should listen to it and broaden their horizons but I'm not sure how engaging the students would find it. I would certainly think that I'd struggle teaching it to my class last year which was, yeah would have very little interest in it.

R: I had to teach in 10 minute chunks, they couldn't sustain listening to it for more than that length of time in one go. So, yeah

T: I mean mine struggled to engage with Radio 1, they didn't like Radio 1 much so Woman's Hour would have been a whole new ball game for them

R: It was, it was like pulling teeth – I'm about to teach it after Easter actually, so I'll be looking forward to that again! But at least now they've back tracked on, EDUCAS backtracked on, you don't have to have the same episode now, you can use a different episode and there's some better ones now that you can use, like there's Emma Barnett who's done quite a few decent ones so I'm going to, sort of select ones that I think my students *inaudible* with the old spec you could choose new texts that you thought would be able to fulfil the criteria and you know, I think the worst one I find is Zoella, you know

T: Yeah I have been reading that and a lot of people struggled with that and certainly linking it to the theories as well – it didn't seem to lend itself entirely to, although it should in theory

to paper, you know Clay Shirkey would be a obvious example but the reality is that no one had done the research enough into where she was moving towards

R: That's right and she's, I suppose the students now are seeing her now as really passé and they're not seeing her as, I suspect that she was put on thinking that the students would be engaged by that and actually its completely opposite and we're sort of now looking at her as an almost a historical case – you know they're sort of looking completely divorced from their own consumption of Media, they know that, they're all into the contemporary You Tubers, most of which I'm still learning about now every day there's a new one that appears on my list of, I'm like; 'yeah ok'. You know I get cries of 'you're so, you know, you're so old' but its interesting. Yeah I think there's, as you say there has been a huge amount of thought gone into you know, weaving some really interesting texts together but it's just, you know its almost like shoehorned to a person – not out of any kind of educational base really, there's no sort of argument for it to be any use

T: Yeah I mean I remember the whole sort of conference where it was decreed for the, Nick Gibb that there had to be 19 theorists – simply because he liked the number 19 really, there was no real thought beyond that I think sadly

R: It's a bit like BuzzFeed isn't it, '19 Theorists that you will know about'

T: And I mean I think even what's his name, David Gauntlet was shocked that he was being used for a theory that he considered outdated.

R: Yeah I went to something that David Gauntlet was at actually a few, a couple, well 3 years ago now and I said to him; 'how do you feel about being a theorist', he's like; 'they could have used my better theories' he said 'the one that they've used is rubbish'. I was like; 'ok'. So yeah and also Professor Lunt as well, he was like; 'why am I on this course?' you know as regulation, it's like I can understand people wanting to study regulation but you don't study it in a vacuum, you study it with other people talking about it and

T: *Inaudible* **David Hesmondhalgh** I mean I noticed he's actually now created his own video explaining what he was talking about because he didn't feel that he could be summarised in a sentence, in a nutshell.

R: Yeah and that's it isn't it, I think, you know I had Julian complaining because obviously he's still marking, moderating and marking exams last summer and he was complaining that students were just reducing the theorists to a paragraph but actually its not the students fault, its not the teachers fault, it's the fact that the – even exam questions are structured that you cant, you don't have enough time to answer in depth

T: No, I mean look – when I first started teaching the new spec, what that's 2018 obviously, I think OCRs being passed September the 1st, I started teaching it September the 4th

R: Yep

T: And there was no exams officer I think until the March

R: Oh gosh, was that what it, I didn't realise there was no exam officer thats

T: Yes so there was nothing, there was no information at all available really beyond the spec and I know the, the Facebook page was with [REDACTED] I think her name was

R: Yep

T: Was a godsend because uploading the resources and sharing them on there was excellent but really we're in a situation where I think that, what's the name, Albert Goldman's mantra came to mind; no body knows anything (22:40)

R: Yes and I think that

T: And I did

R: Yeah exactly and a lot of people jumped ship to EDUCAS because there was a lot of support put in there quite early on.

T: Yeah I mean I think they got in first didn't they – they were passed first therefore they had time to organise better but certainly with OCR I mean I spent a lot of time in the first term and certainly second term going through Big Issue's and students really engaging well with that, textually analysing the covers, some excellent covers – great ones of Trump as a zombie was perched at the top of an eagle and they loved it. And they were writing really good essays, really good analysis but when it came to the exam they had 15 minutes – you just cant

R: No and I think that

T: You know it's a paragraph, I think they were a bit distraught afterwards, I mean I had prepared them and told them well actually, when it comes you have only got 15 minutes for this and I realised that they can't, they cant go into any detail

R: No and I think that's it isn't it, it just skims the top of what they really need to know. If you can cast your mind back to when the reforms were first announced – what were your initial thoughts about the sort of, your thoughts and feelings about the curriculum when it was first up for reform?

T: Well my first thoughts were, when I was actually at Hurtwood at the time, was it was more about organisational factors: how on earth are most schools going to be able to facilitate coursework which was made entirely independent? Most, I mean I knew that we were in a lucky situation here of at least being, having the facilities *inaudible* but most schools would not be able to, not be able to influence it – they didn't have the resources. Which I thought was kind of the beginning of the end for Media Studies because I thought, I thought it was a way of them sort of, without getting rid of the subject, making it too hard for schools to actually offer it.

R: Yeah, yeah

T: I thought if they can't actually get rid of it because there's, was it 90,000 students studying at the time, then what they can do is make it really hard to, for schools to offer and students not want to take it up and it's not quite worked that way but it has to a some degree.

R: Yeah, I think that's probably the argument for keeping it, wasn't it, its economically a really strong subject, you know, so for schools and you know, I think the numbers, the popularity of it saved it in essence.

T: But they are, I mean they are dwindling

R: Oh exactly, yeah – I mean a lot of schools it think, from my research so far, a lot of schools have just do film studies now, they staved off Media and just kept Film.

T: Well because of the problems with OCR and I had decided that I was going to stick with OCR from an early stage, mainly because I was marking and examining and I just, I don't know I suppose you build up a bond with exam boards established really. So I was going to stick with OCR but when it wasn't passed and there was no exams officer, I made, well you know a parents evening comes along in December and students are changing their subjects and I switched to Film Studies. So I only, last year was the first year of Film Studies that we ran, so I was another school that made that switch.

R: That's really interesting

T: Partly, also I suppose, decided by the fact that I'd also been forced into implementing the BTEC

R: Yeah, it's a lot

T: Which I think a lot of schools have done as well

R: Yeah I mean that seems a very common kind of thread as well, that the provision has changed, the structure of the curriculum has changed

T: And I suppose also I can see it entirely how it works from an economic perspective its, you need numbers, you need bums on seats and you want the Level 3 and Level 4 students, you feel the new A level's too hard – lets just offer a variant on it.

R: Yeah, absolutely. You've obviously said quite a lot what you don't like about the specification, now you've left. Was there anything on there at all that you liked? Or thought was actually valuable and was worth keeping?

T: With OCR yes. News, maybe not newspapers but News I think was valuable still to keep because I think students should know about news and I think they should learn about the news industry and how it operates. I think that underpins so much of what we study in Media and also Sociology as well, that they should have a more detailed understanding of the way the news industry works so that was 1 area that I, well yeah, would I say that they enjoyed it? Possibly not but I enjoyed teaching it.

R: Yeah but its sometimes, they enjoy it more once they get through it, you know, you have that barrier to push through to begin with and actually I found when I taught News before – like on the old course that once we'd pushed through some of the kind of resistance to it, they actually started coming to lessons with examples that they'd found in their own time and they were starting to see things in a bit of a different light, I thought it was really interesting. So yeah, I totally agree with you on that one.

T: Yeah I think it was the same, they were starting to, yeah I suppose engage more with news articles that weren't only the Mail Online, which is positive as well.

R: *Laughs* Yes exactly. Do you think that the, when you were teaching the OCR curriculum, or specification – do you think that changed your teaching in any way? Your kind of pedagogical approach to the subject?

T: I was thinking of that question and I think I tried in the 1st year to put more emphasis on their research and try and get them to be more actively researching things; researching the institutions, researching the industries, than I had become, maybe because I'd become a little stale if I'm honest teaching the old, the old spec. Probably after a number of years I was so familiar with it that you know, I didn't try, I suppose maybe every 3 years I might change the sort of case studies but

R: Yeah

T: That change sort of forced, well it was forced upon me, I got them to do a lot more of the research because it was also it was material that I was unfamiliar with.

R: That's interesting, yeah. And did that work? Did you find that that was quite effective and students liked doing that? Did you get the results that you wanted to?

T: Yes, to begin with it was certainly in the 1st year it did, they were much more engaged with it and I suppose maybe it's because that first year were also Year 12 and we didn't offer it at GCSE so they were new to the course. So they were by and large, more motivated and they had the threat of UCAS hanging over them

R: *laugh* Yeah

T: I think, then by the time the 2nd year came around, I left (which in retrospect I wouldn't do if I had the chance to do it again) I left the longer essays of OCR to the 2nd year. So I focused upon News in the 1st term and along with TV drama, long form TV drama.

R: Yeah, yep

T: Which I thought that the long form TV drama would be the most engaging of all the topics for them. Actually it's the one that they like the least.

R: Oh really? That's interesting

T: Yeah, they didn't want to research it, they didn't want to engage with it – they weren't really too interested in the dramas and I think I went out on a limb and chose Mr Robot rather than Stranger Things

R: Ok, yeah

T: I thought it gave them more to textually analyse but then once the resources were coming in on the Facebook page I realised, well maybe that was an error on my part and if I did it again I would probably have done, I would do Stranger Things and Deutschland 8; Stranger Things and Deutschland 83 work perfectly. But they, yeah they didn't really engage so well

with Mr Robot or Deutschland 83 my class that last year. As a consequence it was yeah, it was pulling teeth.

R: Yeah, that's interesting. No that is interesting because again I think as well that the long form – I don't teach the long form drama in my teaching pair so its, my teaching pair does it but I always think oh maybe that she's got the better deal, but I don't, yeah that's a really interesting point. Its sometimes, I think the unpredictability of students, you don't quite know necessarily how they're going to engage with something.

T: Yeah, yeah I mean I was shocked that they so were with something like the Big Issue and some of the music videos I've felt that they're not something they're really interested in but they really liked, they liked learning about the music industry, they liked analysing representations – they engaged really well with the things I didn't think they would engage so well with. But I think there, perhaps if I have to reflect on my own practice, I would definitely do things differently with the TV drama. It could have been my mistake, I sort of taught the drama, taught textual analysis then applied the theory to it afterwards and by that point they were just fed up with another theorist, another one!

R: Yeah, how many more have we got to do? Yeah exactly

T: And some of them I thought was *mumbles* I was thinking how am I going to apply Clay Shirkey to Mr Robot? There's not much written about him and 'end of audience' isn't really applicable and it felt like a, shoehorning in something that wasn't entirely relevant

R: I think this is the basic flaw of the specification, it's the shoehorning, it's making things apply where it doesn't happily apply and its not valuable, its not worthy to do that

T: No and I think they got that! That they could see that I wasn't seeing the relevance of it, why should they see the relevance of it?

R: Exactly. In terms of like the resources that you use; do you generally create your own kind of resources or are you using a mixture of your own and other sort of textbooks or the Facebook group resources or

T: For the Film Studies I used a lot of the textbook for the films that were, well that were in the textbook; Bonnie & Clyde, I think LaLaLand was in there – was another film that I chose which was very well resourced in the textbook. I thought the textbook was excellent for EDUCAS

R: Yep

T: And sadly for Media Studies, there was no textbook until right at the end of the 2nd year. There were no resources until the 2nd year at all. So it was very much reliant on the Facebook page and creating the resources myself.

R: Yeah

T: And putting them on the Facebook page and taking stuff off and that reciprocal nature was excellent.

R: Did you, I mean obviously that's more time consuming choosing your own resources but was that something that kind of detracted from your wellbeing and your kind of general work life balance at the time? Was that a major factor in *leaving the school*

T: Yes, to some degree, I mean not resources I think that's part and parcel of teaching, *inaudible* I found it quite enjoyable, you know planning lessons and creating resources, I don't mind that. What was difficult for 1 year was doing 3 new courses which I wasn't, which I hadn't done in a long time.

R: Yeah, yeah, just the kind of concentration of that

T: Of everything, everything being you at once. That was hard and I really, I really feel for teachers that are teaching Media, Film and maybe teaching English in lower school or teaching Sociology as well, that's a, that would be really hard.

R: Yeah. I remember in the 1st year we had Film Studies, Media Studies and the new BTEC and the new Level 2 course *wry laughter* just constantly a *inaudible* position it was hard, it was really hard going the first, I'm just really interested in seeing, I like you I really enjoyed creating resources but I like to be able to have the time to be able to do it properly, rather than just having to kind of bash out things for the next day you know

T: Well yeah I mean there is that and I mean I was also department of one and a half, one and a quarter probably. So it was mainly down to me, there wasn't really any person to bounce ideas off, to see if they could offer an alternative opinion or you know, take resources from. So that doesn't really help your, your wellbeing to some degree really, it made me feel quite isolated which again meant the Facebook page was excellent because you could find other people that either felt the same or could cheer you up.

R: Absolutely, that's a really good, that's one of the main reasons that I'm, one part of my research is actually the role of the Facebook groups. Not just OCR but the EDUCAS and the AQA ones as well and the kind of professional practice of teachers following the new specification

T: Well what I, it'd been a long time since I think that I had been on the TDF to look for resources and when I got there, I suppose at the beginning of 2018 to find that most of them were being charged for. I don't have a problem with that but I do think that goes against the sort of ethos of teaching to some degree. Where's the collaboration in charging for it?

R: Yeah

T: But I also see that that's the way education is going – monetise everything. So the Facebook page in that respect was a complete opposite. You know it was free, it was about sharing, collaboration, having a mate – well a one to one conversation, it was, it was everything I suppose teaching should be.

R: Yeah, that's again lots of people have said the same thing and you know, if you, with your use of the Facebook group, do you think you post a lot on there or do you mostly follow it and use the resources or you know, what's your kind of use of the group?

T: Now I don't use them at all. I mean I still see people talking on there but and may occasionally sort of post something, a response or but I don't really have any need for the

resources because I'm on the CIE course. Before, I wasn't a frequent poster, I would occasionally respond to people when I felt that I could help. I may have uploaded a few resources, I probably took more than I uploaded if I'm honest.

R: Yep

T: And I think a lot of the time I just, the main thing was actually in a way, to look at what people were doing, it wasn't to take it was to sort of see; 'oh ok, I'm on the right track' – a sense of reassurance that I would gain from being able to see; 'oh actually someone else is doing the same, that makes me feel like I'm not alone and isolated in the world'

R: Yeah that's really interesting and like, in terms of the quality of the resources, what was, you know, did you find them useful? Did you, would you use them wholesale or did you use, like tweak them? Or you know, what kind of ways in which

T: I think I always would tweak them if I was going to use somebody else's because I don't think anyone's got the same style of teaching exactly so and we don't have the same students so it always needs to be adapted and then sort of adapt it, I think I could see that was happening a lot on the OCR site, there were a lot of people that, there would be variants of the same

R: Yeah, yeah

T: Say, I'll say Radio 1 for example, you could see that someone had taken someone else's and they'd adapted it, maybe made it better in their way or changed something and someone else would do the same – so maybe collaboratively building something that was perfect. Well, near enough

R: Is there a CIE equivalent?

T: There is, there is a CIE equivalent – obviously it's not the same because there's most of the schools I think are not in Europe.

R: Yeah, ok

T: I see a lot of people in the Middle East that post on there and I'm conscious they're doing different things – I mean we look at, so for example the old G322: Audiences and Institutions

R: Yeah

T: We look at one of the film companies run by an ex-student here

R: Ok, that's interesting

T: So we can't really, can't really share resources that he's given because, he's given them to the school

R: But presumably the CIE because it's such a diverse range of teachers and schools, that do the CIE that there's no real need? Or how has it been for the kind of same support network of perhaps more British specifications?

T: *Pauses* I think there's probably still a need and I think there will be a need next year when the spec changes. I think they've left the requirement at the moment for people to upload PowerPoints, lesson plans – it's more a way of, I just saw today someone's posted a *B2B* article on the British Film Industry being in decline. Its more about sharing articles; 'have you seen that? Oh that would be good for this'. But there's less emphasis on sharing material – PowerPoints material isn't it.

R: Ok, so that might be interesting to see actually next year

T: I think over the next year that will probably change

R: Yeah so maybe there's that correlation between a new specification and the kind of like revival of a group

T: Yep, yeah that would be an interesting I suppose area of research

R: Yeah

T: Will the same thing apply for CIE which is on an international level as on a more localised level in the UK

R: Maybe that's my new paper. *Laughs* See how it goes with this one before I get onto that. No that's brilliant. In terms of your own professional development, subject specific professional development what kind of things do you tend to do – if anything at all because obviously, you know some people get more time than others in their schools to be able to do CPD

T: Now not a lot, at all. Last year at JFS, did I get to do, I don't think I got to do anything there. I was going to examine for CIE this summer, hopefully

R: Right so, yeah ok

T: And I used to do that for 3 years for OCR as well. That was about it really, if I was lucky, if I was really lucky I might go on 1 course a year. But by the end, by 2018 there was, there wasn't the money there for it

R: No, I think again that's the state of education isn't it as well

T: The OCR course that was meant to be done £185, it was, that was 3 years budget for photocopying

R: Yeah it is crazy

T: You know when I started there we had pretty much unlimited photocopying and then it got slashed to £50 a year

R: So the budget cuts also have an impact

T: Yeah the budget cuts had a massive impact actually on some of my teaching methods because I was having to get students to research much more because I couldn't photocopy things for them to read.

R: Yeah. Do you think that kind of free CPD in a way, because I suppose you could class the Facebook groups as CPD because you're having professional conversations and things like that. Do you think that it fills a gap that maybe has been created by the budgets or do you think that would be there anyway?

T: I think that sense of community would be there anyway. Does it fill a gap? I think it does because I think we all wanted reassurance and we weren't getting any with OCR in 2018/2019, not because they didn't want to but because they had nobody there to do it. So I think that definitely filled that void but I think it would have existed regardless, I think. Would you, well I suppose I shouldn't ask really – the person who set it up would be an excellent person to speak to if you could, I'm sure she'd probably want to. Yeah and she'd be probably better placed to answer that question

Talking over each other

R: Yeah I've got quite a few written on my list, my hit list

T: I'd like to think that community spirit would have been there anyway but its

R: Yeah I would hope so. Sorry just finally as well like, in terms of the future of the subject; do you think, what do you think's going to happen? I mean I know it's impossible to predict but do you think Media Studies will survive or thrive or change? What's your perception of where this might go? In terms of the subject

T: I still think it's at a worrying stage. I think it, what is thriving, I think it's thriving anyway I don't have any statistics to back it up but is the BTEC course. I think that's, the numbers have gone through the roof with that. So as a form of Media Studies I think BTEC is thriving, I think as an A level subject I think it's still at a crossroads where it could go either way.

R: Yeah

T: I think most schools want it to stay

R: Yeah. What do you hope will happen to the specification? And would you consider doing them again if it changed?

T: What I would dearly hope would happen to the specification is that they would return to some form of group work for the NEAs eventually. I can't see it ever happening, well not for a, well ever happening, I can't see it happening for many years. I would, I found the independent work was quite stifling creatively. You know some students, life is often about group work and to suddenly make it this insular independent thing, I don't think its reflective of what students are going to be doing after they leave school. Certainly maybe not university, if they go there. I also wish they'd never got rid of the AS levels but you know that's another conversation entirely.

R: Yep, there's so much that, yeah there's a whole host of things that could be changed.

T: I think as a subject it will survive but I certainly don't think its going to prosper in the short term and the numbers [are] the test.

R: Definitely. In terms of, again it's still early days but in terms of where your students go to after they do their A level or Level 3 course, you know CIE, A Levels or whatever, is your perception that there are the same kind of numbers going on to do Media related courses? Or worse/more?

T: I mean [REDACTED] a unique place and so yes the numbers are definitely the same going to university and going to Media related courses. In fact the numbers doing Media Studies have gone up since the specs have changed. Perhaps the parents that could afford it more have decided to leave state schools perhaps and come to private schools? Or students have come here because they're offering the international A level.

R: Yeah, yeah

T: So our numbers have, we've got over 100 in the year group. When I left 5 years ago before I, 6 years ago before returning last summer there was about 68, so we've gone up about 30%

R: But obviously you know, you are, as you say quite unique so

T: In the state school, in [REDACTED] my, in 2017 I had 6 classes doing AS and A2, or A1 and A2. In my final year there I had 4 classes doing 3 subjects. So in effect I had more Film Studies in the 1st, in Year 12, 2 BTEC and 1 Media Studies

R: Yeah, yeah

T: So there had been a bit of a shift, I had 11 students doing Media A Level

R: Yeah ok that's interesting the numbers have gone down, ok. And I think that that's around the country as well, the numbers that were doing A Level last year went down

T: I mean I wasn't required to mark last year because they didn't have, they didn't need me.

R: Yeah that is another thing isn't it – I've heard people just saying; 'yeah we're out of a job' essentially by the end of the summer because there was no marking to do. I think AQA, I spoke to somebody from there and they said the same thing, so

T: I mean I could be wrong but I heard that something ridiculous like 1100 students doing AQA, round the country

R: Wow, that is

T: And there's about 2 or 3000 doing OCR. I mean I think EDUCAS has, was the biggest by a long, a long shot, something like 9000 doing EDUCAS

R: I was going to say, I think 9000 sounds about right, I think that's where I got the figure from somewhere

T: So that's a massive drop of overall if there's only about 1200 students doing it when there used to be about 19

R: Yeah, I wonder if there's going to be a kind of settling period where people move board again because, you know I think EDUCAS, my colleague is an examiner for EDUCAS and she said she was overwhelmed and that they were struggling to cope with the numbers and well 2 boards are down on numbers so I wonder if there's going to be a settling period where people are swapping over, I don't know.

T: I think there is some of that, I noticed on the Facebook page I think there was, was it EDUCAS that changed texts last summer or was that AQA?

R: Yes, well I think AQA and EDUCAS have, I mean not, EDUCAS changed to Black Panther from Straight Outta Compton and there's minor changes on other, just some tweaks, just but nothing radical. But I think, yeah AQA were changing from, well one of the texts that they, was The Surgery, Radio 1's Surgery which no longer exists, it's the Life Hacks now so halfway through the course the actual text they were studying disappeared so that was interesting. And so they were forced and I think they, there was pressure for them to take Michael Jackson's Billie Jean off, I don't know if that's come off, I don't teach AQA anymore but I don't know if that's actually come off now

T: I think it has, yeah I think they definitely changed that. There's another historical music video text

R: Right, interesting yeah.

T: I can't remember what it is but I think they've almost, they've definitely changed that

R: Yeah, so we shall see! But you know, fingers crossed that it will thrive at some point and I was hoping a change in government might have made a difference but you know, that's not going to happen.

T: No

R: But we can only live in hope. But thank you so much for your time, I've realised I've kept for an hour now so I'm sorry

T: Oh gosh, I didn't realise

Researcher: So just to start off, I hope you don't mind, if you wouldn't mind telling me a bit about your background as a teacher, how long you've been teaching, if you're a subject specialist

Teacher: Yeah ok, just to say you're sort of phasing in and out – I can hear what you're saying ok but you become sort of quiet and then loud again so, don't don't be, if I don't sort of hear what you're saying ask you to repeat it, I don't know if there's anything that's going on your end you can do about that but its,

R: Ok, let me just see if I can...is that better?

T: That's certainly good at the moment, yeah

R: Ok, right, hopefully, im going to stay put – theres dead spots in my house so, ok im going to try and stay here

T: So just a bit, kind of, bit of my background, is that?

R: Yes please, yeah

T: Yeah so I did a Film and Media degree, I did my degree in Journalism, Film and Broadcasting, I did that between '93-'96 and then I did a couple of things for a couple of years before I worked out what I wanted to do and then I did a PGCE '98-'99 and then I started teaching in September 1999 at a 6th Form in Croydon. I was teaching Media Studies A level there and I moved from there to * [REDACTED] College and I taught Media Studies A level again there and also Film Studies A level

R: Yep

T: And then from there I moved to [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] and again I taught Media A level, Film A level and I've essentially been there until last November

R: Right

T: Initially full time, I became, I was Head of Media for a few years; from 2004 to 2007. Then we had a management restructure, my Head of Media job got put under Head of English job which in fact I didn't fancy so I actually left and I became Head of Media at [REDACTED] for a year and again I was teaching A level, mostly Film A level there I think, no and a bit of Media A level. But then that didn't suit me for various reasons, I went back to [REDACTED] part time and I was teaching there for 3 days a week and I was doing sort of, freelance filmmaking in the other 2 days – which were mostly kind of educational focused as well

R: Yeah

T: And then about, so I was teaching part time at [REDACTED] but then there was a kind of, I was offered teaching a bit of A level Communication and Culture for a time and I don't suppose when you, other people you've spoken to but that got abolished in the A level

reforms, so that didn't exist anymore and that was a really big course for us. So by that point I think there was only 2 of us in the department by then, so Media Studies had just shrunk and shrunk and shrunk over the years. So when I first started at [REDACTED] I think we had 4 groups of AS Media Studies

R: Right

T: By the time I left last year, there was only 1 group in the first year and 1 group in the second year and they were quite small groups too

R: Right

T: So when Communication and Culture got abolished, that kind of was most of my colleagues job and we went head to head for the full time job that was left and I got it so, I had, I went back full time for a couple of years before I eventually left last year.

R: Right

T: So, its mostly been teaching A Level Media, I've done some, Level 2 BTEC and some other sort of, we had a City and Guilds course at [REDACTED] for a time but mostly my careers' been teaching A level Film Studies and A Level Media Studies

R: And where you are currently, what are kind of like the entry requirements for students and how many students do you teach?

T: Where I am now?

R: Yeah

T: So I've now left and this time at [REDACTED] and we don't teach A level at all – it's all vocational

R: Oh right, ok

T: I'm not teaching A level at all anymore, so I don't know if that would affect, whether you want to, whether you still want that question answered? But the entry requirements are about the same its sort of 5 Grade 4/5 at GCSE so it's pretty standard sort of Level 3 LE requirements.

R: And so, in terms of, obviously you've got the contrast now so you're no longer teaching the A level but, so how has that changed your experiences this year compared to last year?

T: I think yeah, because I was still teaching A level up to half term last year but both of the courses; A level Media Studies and A Level Film Studies got cut at [REDACTED] So they didn't recruit enough for it to have a new first year group of either course – so all I was teaching was the existing second years.

R: Right

T: And so, and that wasn't enough for a full time contract so I was doing some learning support in GCSE Maths just to fill, just for them to give me something to do really

R: Right, ok

T: So it'd got much easier in that respect but certainly after the summer before, it's like I think last year was probably about the most stressful I remember in my career, maybe bar 1 other particularly bad year. So the difference now between what I'm doing, what I'm teaching it's a UAL – University of Arts London course, it's a diploma, I don't know if you know the course at all.

R: I don't teach it but I do, I do know of it, yeah

talking over

T: Its just so different, its its setting up of a, like you give them a project to do, so we were just in making music videos for example, we'll look at a few music videos in class and we'll talk to them but its only, I'm setting them a project, they're sort of self directed in their learning, this is our idea, ok this is how you're going to do that and its, yeah I'm sort of helping them do the work. The amount of preparation, the amount of mark I have to do has just gone through the floor, it's like I can sit and watch tele in the evening without feeling guilty or anxious about what I'm doing the next – so I feel like a completely different person you know and in a good way.

R: Yeah, no that is really, that's really interesting and important as well, yeah. I think, *laughs* you can start to watch long form tv drama without having to teach it anymore which is good

T: Yeah *laughs* very true

R: Yeah you've got to enjoy it. So the impact of the course had a much wider reaching effect on your professional life, it wasn't just about you know, I think from seeing people on the Facebook groups obviously, people are stressed about their students and actually you know, slightly the minutiae of things, everyday life as a teacher but what you're pointing to is its, and this is very similar to a couple of other interviews I've had as well where people are pointing towards the fact that these courses, changes in specification, the reforms have had a much wider impact on their roles as teachers and their professional kind of perceptions and identities as well. So that's obviously an area of interest for me as well because its not just about what we like teaching or what we think Media should be about, its actually a bit more serious than that as well.

So in terms of, if you sort of think back to when the reforms first were announced; what were your initial feelings about those kind of early consultations and the kind of period of time, the sort of twilight period before things were approved?

T: I don't necessarily have hugely strong memories of it, I remember being, you know sort of fairly anxious about how the course was going to turn out and looking at, you know the sort of drafts we'd seen, I think weren't particularly encouraging. I mean in, you're specifically interested in the Media Studies, rather than the Film Studies aren't you?

R: Yes, Media Studies. I mean obviously Film sort of intersects with it all as well so but yeah, specifically Media Studies.

T: Yeah because, certainly in Film Studies there was a really good research project that they used to have to do which got kind of abandoned, you know so that's one. But I think, thinking about it this would pretty much link in with Media Studies as well where they had to research, like they could pick a particular topic in Media and research it so they could find, explore something of their own interest, develop a research essay about that and then they would have to go on and make a Media product of some kind from that. So it was really, they really had a chance to sort of explore their own interests and yeah, be enthused by it and so to try to get them to do a coursework project is much easier if they kind of enjoy or buy into what they're studying. Whereas now its just these set briefs that you have to do and you know I had, can't quite, I don't know if it was in the Autumn this year or in the Summer but I had a student come to me and say; 'oh I've got this really idea for a music video, this is the song I want to do' and it's a great, I don't remember what the idea was but it was really good sort of they were really excited about doing it and I said to them; 'I'm really sorry, you cant do this, it doesn't fit with the brief, this is the wrong target audience – it's not going to get you that demographic, so you cant do it'. That's terrible to be saying that. So anyway, going back to when the reforms came out, I do remember specifically being at the Media Studies conference in London and there was, you know it, that was coinciding with the with the sort of, too and froing that people at the exam boards were having with the government and the sort of, I can remember the sort of almost a kind of sort of an intake breath kind of going through the room

R: Yeah

T: When people were hearing that Media Studies maybe wasn't even going to make it, maybe it was going to be completely quashed

R: Yeah, yep

T: I think there was a, quite a significant time where you thought; 'well Media Studies isn't even going to exist anymore'. So I think when it got through there was an almost, kind of a bit of a sense of relief that; 'alright this isn't maybe what we wanted it to be but at least it still exists'

R: Yeah

T: I think that sort of coloured my reaction to it quite a bit. As I recall it had been really, I don't think you really, you don't really fully understand the implications of what it involves until you actually start teaching it. I think you think; 'well ok this isn't so bad, well maybe the idea of set text is ok, I can cope with that' and its only really when you get, actually start doing it the reality of what it involves really starts to, starts to hit you I think.

R: Yeah, yeah

T: But also, I was kind of really – the way we divided there were still 2 of us in the department then; my colleague was, she sort of took on the Media Studies thing she went for the inset about that and was learning about what the new Media Studies syllabus was going to be and she taught it when it came in and I was doing the same for the Film studies so for some time I wasn't really sort of fully up to speed, the proposals for it when it was being proposed because we'd kind of split the work like that way and I was doing sort of preparation for the new Film Studies spec

R: Yeah and I suppose its still that period of, kind of working out how to do things and you know that preparation and logistics of putting all the pieces of puzzle together to kind of get it started. When you started teaching it, did, like at what point did you start to kind of think; this isn't what it, I want it to be? This isn't actually working or you know, this isn't the right thing for students to be doing or maybe not, I don't know. You know, when did the kind of feelings of that start to evolve?

T: I think it, for me maybe that's a little bit different side of it because the first year it came in I didn't teach it at all.

R: Right, yeah

T: But I was, I was still part time then and I was just teaching Film Studies and my, so when the new Media syllabus came in my colleague taught that group in the first year and she was teaching the second year group that were going up the old syllabus and I was teaching Film. So like I said, when there was this, because of the whole thing with Communication and Culture, she then got made redundant in the Summer and I went back full time so I took on, not only did I take on the new first year group but I also had to pick up the second year group. So I was, my that was my first teaching of it, so it wasn't just like; 'I am teaching the first year I can kind of work through this, I've got 2 years to kind of get my head round it and get these through'. I was teaching it for the first time with the first year group but also I had the group that were already halfway through and had studied, you know, half of the set text by this point but I hadn't taught them it so I wasn't really familiar with them

R: Yeah

T: So I was kind of having to get up to speed with those which was kind of helped by the fact that I was teaching them all for the first years but none of them were doing particularly well, they had done very badly in the mock exam in the summer and I was having to run revision sessions on these texts that I hadn't taught them in the first place. So that was incredibly stressful.

R: Yeah, I can imagine

T: Because in the old if id picked that up, obviously ok its all unseen text, it's like right we're going to do revision but I'm going to use my examples that I'm familiar with, we're going to revise these concepts – here is some new text, you can tell me about what you studied, I'm going to use these examples. But you know obviously there's none of that, you've got to do the set text, that's what they're going to answer on so it, they weren't like, you don't like to say it do you, you love the kids but you know they were a particularly weak group

R: Yeah

T: That second year group, so yeah it was a baptism of fire

R: Yeah I was going to say, that's exactly the phrase I was about to use, yeah total baptism of fire, yeah

T: So I'm not sure if I could put my finger on exactly when, when I realised but as I, perhaps I think because that, that Facebook group that is fabulous, yeah there's people putting all sorts of kind of resources on there and stuff and there was plenty of times when I was sitting

online at half past 10 at night thinking; 'I haven't got a clue what I'm doing tomorrow' and you're on there, like; 'ok in the Google drive tight there's this, right this PowerPoint here I'm going to do this tomorrow and then that will have to do, I'm going to bed'.

R: Yeah

T: And I think, as you, I mean there's the **Tide** ad you have to do, you know the one with the women hugging

R: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah

T: And I just haven't seen a classroom like with this PowerPoint, just going through, just over and over, just looking at the same advert from a different perspective sort of thing, is there really that much to say about this? Its like lets think of, lets apply Van Zoonen to it and now lets apply Todorov to it and now lets apply this to it and its like; I am absolutely bored out of my mind, think about how, how are the kids going coping with this?

R: Yeah exactly

T: Yeah and its, it was doing that **Tide** advert I think that's what I started with, with the first years so it probably within the first month or so, I thought this is, this is really really dull

R: Yeah and did you, did you find like teaching, changing your pedagogical style a little bit as well to suit or adapt to the kind of content that was in the course?

T: Yeah oh, yeah definitely [its now much] harder; ok let's watch a thing, I'm going to give you a bit of paper, you're going to, here's something to think about, you're going to talk about it, we're going to feedback, we're going to analyse it together, you tell me what you think. You know and then the students will kind of lead the analysis of it and you'll end up uncovering things in the text that you know, you didn't know were there or but you sort of think, that doesn't happen, that's not happening anymore. You think, well ok you're going to be asked some very specific, to apply some very specific theories around this, you're going to be asked; what does Beatrice, is it Beatrice Van Zoonen? No its not is it, Liesbet. You're going to be asked; 'what does Liesbet Van Zoonen say about this' and its like, here are 3 bullet points, you need to remember these and regurgitate them in the exam. It kind of feels like that and you think, well you can do some analysis and get them to come up with things of their own, you know take on the text but at the end of the day it's like, well you've got to – if you cant filter it through Stuart Hall's model then, you know, what's the point? You know its what you're going to be asked about, so it, yeah definitely the way I've taught things has very much changed. Its more me standing at the front saying; 'write this down, this is what you need to know' rather than that kind of collective instigation

R: And that has an impact as well on kind of professional enjoyment as well and like how you...

T: Oh totally

R: ...see yourself as a teacher because if you don't feel like you're teaching in the way that you would naturally want to teach then that has, that has a kind of implicit tension there and puts pressure on, kind of, yeah not just that particular lesson but how you feel about your own identity as a teacher, that yeah

T: Lots of other things, I can't, there was something the other day and now I can't remember what it was but I saw something on the tv, one thing that I thought; 'this is a really great case study' like 3 years ago I would have used this movie as a case study. No I was, what was I reading, there was an article in Empire magazine about some new film, I think it's called; Rocks – it's about young girls growing up in South London, it comes out in April

R: Oh yeah, yeah

T: I thought this is great, this is about young people its got sort of representation themes on it, its about women, its an independent production – this would be a perfect case study for the old sort of, I don't know what, you know industry unit on the second year of the WJC syllabus

R: I saw that film coming out soon of the guy, I can't remember the name, the name of the guy now but he grew up as a Black, adopted boy in Essex and

T: Ok, I don't think I've heard of that

R: Its, I saw him talk about it as well, it was at the BFI Media conference 2 years ago – he was brilliant, really good, *inaudible* it and I just thought that would be fantastic. You know it's got, it's about youth, it's about ethnicity, its about culture you know all different, and class systems and things like that, you know you just can't use that really, it doesn't – Film has been completely, you know, eviscerated from

T: Yeah, I can remember the one year I was doing Film topic in that and I said to the guys well look you pick one, I've got 2 here I think are good, you pick 1 and we did *unsure **The Inbetweeners Movie/The Inbetween V***, because that's what they were interested in and its brilliant, there was loads of really good stuff there to talk about but you can do, you might say well this was really interesting but you haven't got time to fit it in because you're just so worried about piling through all the content you've got to do

R: And that's it, Media Studies had always been about ownership over you know, the popular culture at the time and if teachers can't have ownership, the students are not going to have ownership and that, you know

T: Totally

R: That's really really not in the spirit of the subject, I don't think

T: No, I agree

R: You know this whole kind of debate from, you know I think 2000-2010 was probably the golden period of Media wasn't it? In terms of the, having that choice and being able to teach that.

So in terms of like resources, I just want to pick up on something you said about the Facebook group and the resource site, you know you said, oh you could pick up a PowerPoint at sort of half 9 at night and it was adequate enough to teach with the next day. So in terms of the Facebook function; how would you say that you've used the resource site specifically? Aside from just sort of having that kind of bolster just to kind of pick something up for the next days lessons.

T: I think to some, I mean obviously I don't use it anymore because I'm not on a teaching angle but I'm, I think mainly I had to use it for that to be honest. I think I was kind of a side, a lurker on it, I'd read it quite a bit without like, but I don't really remember – to my shame I didn't feel I contributed a great deal, I think I put up resources on the drive but obviously there are some standout people on there that are putting tonnes and tonnes of really amazing stuff on there

R: Yeah, yeah

T: So I was, you know, I would you know take that, that's really kind of what I was using it for to be honest its kind of just getting me, and to some extent as well – I think there is some really good stuff on there but I think a lot of it didn't really suit me as a teacher, I could kind of see these are, these are resources put in by people that are under a lot of stress and are doing it in a hurry and I'm not sure that, you know I don't – I feel terribly disloyal saying it, having said that they weren't all particularly that great on there but it was very much a case of; this will do and it will get me through a lesson

R: Yeah

T: Rather than; I think this is a really great resource and we're really going to have a top lesson off the back of it

R: Yeah, I remember thinking the same, that sometimes it needs just to be good enough not good

T: Yeah and I think I come for my professional standards just kind of dragged right down my arguments but you know obviously I used to spend a lot of time preparing things and being like, if I tweak this out its going to go, rethink it and you just haven't got time for that anymore, you say; 'this will do', this will get me, this will fill a Media hour and a half, it will cover some things, they will have some notes at the end and that's going to have to be, that's going to be it

R: In terms of the actual Facebook group, did you find when you were using it, for the kind of community there of help, was that another function that you appreciated?

T: I'd, I think perhaps it was, the most help probably was just to kind of remind you that you weren't alone and that everyone else was really struggling as much as you were really. I don't know that it necessarily, it didn't, yeah it was kind of reassurance I think, because I am absolutely stressed out of my mind, I am struggling here and waking up at 3 o'clock in the morning worrying about what's going, how I'm going to get this group through. And it didn't take that away but it did at least help reassure me that there were probably other people in the same position

R: Yeah

T: And that's reassuring to an extent

R: Yeah. So just sort of thinking forwards, so you're not teaching the A level anymore, you're in a different institution with a different course; what do you think the future of the subject will be? Not necessarily A level Media Studies but in terms of Media Studies in general – where do you think its going to go over the next sort of medium to long term future?

T: I really don't know, to be honest. I guess it could, you know the hope is that it will kind of swing back again and I think you know these things will come in cycles – like when I first started teaching it was still the 2 year linear A level, that got done away with, oh we're going curriculum 2000, we're going to go AS, we're going to de-couple it from the A2, its going to be, its going to be modular and now its gone right back the other way to where I was when I started. So I think, you know it will come round again, I think its not going to be like this forever, there will be kind of a look at it and people will wrestle control and put it back the way it is and the government will say; 'oh yeah we're going to give freedom to teachers and its going to be more ..' and it will be touted as a great new idea

R: Yeah

Talking over

T: So you know, I'm sure that that will happen. I mean the course I'm teaching now is specifically designed to be sort of a practical course kind of training people to do things and I don't really know much about the **T levels** that are coming in but that's, it seems to be very much like what are the skills people are needed and I worry that that's going to go in that direction as well because at the moment its very free and open what I'm teaching at the moment. Its like one of the units, they almost have titles like; Make a Media Product and that's kind of it, its like well we can do whatever we want, so they've made music videos but if I wanted to they could be making TV news programmes, you could, what do the kids want to do? what are they interested in? Their final, their final the last unit they do is a final major project which can be literally anything they want

R: Wow

T: And I think when **T levels** come in this, it'll get defunded and it'll just be two, if you're going to do a vocational course its got to be **T levels** and then this UAL course I'm doing will get defunded so the college will have to junk it. And I imagine the **T levels** are going to be much more like the A [level], very prescript, here is a set of skills, you know and you need to demonstrate evidence that you've done this particular skill and tick that box and it'll become much more like the A level coursework is now with the like big list of bullet points like; you must have 10 photos and you must have a voiceover and you must have 10 seconds of music and you must have this and you must have this.

R: Yeah, I mean that is kind of like where the BTEC is at the minute actually, the new BTEC, that one as well and, it, the essence of the course is good but actually the prescriptive nature of it is definitely a lot more so than it used to be and I mean I used to teach on the Applied Media course years ago, which I loved – you could do whatever you wanted on that pretty much.

So just interested in where you might see yourself as well because obviously you've moved away from A levels, you're on this course now and do you think you want to stay in that place where you are now? Or you know, how do you see yourself as a Media teacher in a few years?

T: I think in, the way I see myself now is that I think this is ok for the next couple of years and I think when the **T Levels** come in I will just go and do something else, I wont be a teacher anymore.

R: Right

T: I, I, I haven't got it in me to learn a new syllabus, particularly if its going to be like its something more prescriptive like the way the A levels are.

R: Yeah

T: I think you know, there's no immediate prospect of A level Media going back to the way it was. I feel like I'm done now with teaching, if I'm perfectly honest.

R: Right, yeah

T: I think this is, this is, what I'm doing now is fine there's, there are various, nothings perfect is it but you know its better than where I was before but you know, I don't feel like this is now what I really want to be doing anymore

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T: You know it was 3 days and it was fine and I never would have gone back full time if there hadn't been the whole redundancy situation and I look back on that and I think I regret that, I kind of thought well maybe I should have gone found something else rather than just let myself get sucked back in full time but you know, I don't know what else I could have done

really. But yeah, I – in 5 years time I see myself not being a teacher anymore to be honest, that's where I

R: Its interesting, quite a few people have said that as well and I think that's not necessarily all to do with the specs but *inaudible* its got a big factor in there to consider that you know, education has gone in a slightly different direction than potentially. And I suppose in a way, because we've got the benefit of hindsight, you know we can see you know, what Media Studies was and its really hard to offset that with what it is now and you know, in a way if you're coming into teaching now its probably alright you know

T: Yeah, you would think this is just how it is you know

Talking over

R: Educations a whole different beast anyway.
Well you know, just thank you so much for contributing to this and its really, the teachers voices really are the most important part of this and I think you're my, you're my, I don't want to say unlucky 13th now but

Laughter

R: And so its been fascinating to talk, its been a really good process talking to so many professionals and

T: Oh good, yeah. Well thank you very much, I've enjoyed the opportunity to offload *laughs*

R: Yes, no and it's a shame you know, obviously you've got a huge amount of experience and are passionate about it but you know obviously its, our health is far more important overall and we need to make sure we're parenting the next generation too *laughs*

T: Yeah, absolutely

R: Yeah so I'm finishing my data collection in July, doing interviews, so you're my first phase if you like of, I'm going to try and smoke some teachers out who are not as experienced, who are not as wedded to the subject as perhaps the people in the first phase have been. And then I'm obviously doing a few more interviews with people who've been in the consultation process and then the write up in September so nothing will be imminent but I will definitely send on my findings and thesis if you're still interested in that

T: Yeah, yeah, I'm sure I will be, yeah, yeah, it'll be good to see it

R: So yeah my intention is hopefully is this will inform any further reform and just try and get that voice back into the consultation process but

T: Yeah well great, fingers crossed you have some impact

R: Hopefully, fingers crossed. But yeah thank you so much, I won't take up your evening any further, its really generous of you to spend that time with me so have a good evening and I'll probably see you online – I'll wave at you

T: Yeah, cheers, have a good evening yourself

R: Thank you very much [REDACTED], take care

T: You too

R: Bye

Pseudonym: Christine

Transcript: Part 1 (00:00 – 05:00)

[00:00 - 00:10]

Interviewer: So, just to start off with then, can you tell me a bit about your teaching background and your current role?

[00:10 - 00:29]

Teacher: Um, yeah, so I've been teaching media for—oh—fifteen years now, um, started off in a sixth form college, um, and then moved to a secondary school that had a sixth form, and now I'm at a sixth form college again.

[00:29 - 00:58]

Teacher: Um, I teach A-Level Media Studies and also some Film Studies. I'm the subject lead for media, so I'm responsible for the curriculum and the delivery, assessment, all of that kind of thing. Um, I've also done a little bit of examining in the past, although not recently.

[00:58 - 01:28]

Interviewer: Great, thank you. So, thinking about the changes to the A-Level Media Studies specification, particularly around 2016 to 2018—how would you describe the experience of implementing that new specification?

Teacher: Um, it was quite a significant shift. I remember when we first looked at the draft spec, and it just felt really, um, academic, I suppose? Much more theoretical, a lot more focused on set texts and, um, kind of high-level theory.

[01:28 - 01:57]

Teacher: And I think for us, the biggest change was moving away from the more flexible coursework and towards that quite prescriptive NEA. And the exam felt, yeah, more intense—like students needed to learn very specific things, in a certain way, and there wasn't as much room for creativity.

[01:57 - 02:13]

Interviewer: Yeah, that's interesting. So did you feel like the subject identity changed with that?

Teacher: Definitely. It felt more like English Literature, in a way, than Media Studies, sometimes.

[02:13 - 02:43]

Teacher: The way the essays were structured, and the types of questions they were being asked, and, um, the level of terminology—it just didn't always feel very media-y, if that makes sense? I think it lost some of the essence of what the subject was.

[02:43 - 03:09]

Interviewer: And how did your students respond to those changes? Did they notice that shift, or was it something more subtle?

Teacher: I think at first they didn't really notice, because we were kind of shaping how we presented it, but over time they did pick up on the fact that it was more rigid. A lot of them missed the freedom they had with the old coursework tasks.

[03:09 - 03:40]

Teacher: Like before, they could do a music video, a short film, a magazine—you know, it was quite open. But now, because it's tightly linked to the set briefs, there's not much room for choice. And some students find that limiting, especially the creative ones.

[03:40 - 04:12]

Interviewer: That's a really helpful point. In terms of preparing to deliver the new spec, did you feel supported professionally? Were there networks or training that helped?

Teacher: Um, it was a bit hit and miss, to be honest. There were some standardisation materials and the exam board put on some training sessions, but they filled up really quickly. We ended up relying a lot on other teachers in the Eduqas community—Twitter, forums, that kind of thing.

[04:12 - 04:55]

Teacher: There's actually a brilliant Facebook group where people share resources and ideas. That was a lifesaver, especially early on. I also went to a couple of Media Magazine conferences which helped me feel a bit more connected and reassured, actually

Transcript: Part 2 (05:00 – 10:00)

[05:00 - 05:28]

Interviewer: That's great. And how did your department manage the changeover period? Did you run the old spec alongside the new one for a bit?

Teacher: Yeah, we had a crossover year where we were running both—the old spec for Year 13 and the new one for Year 12. That was quite full-on, to be honest. Two completely different sets of resources, assessment criteria, everything.

[05:28 - 05:57]

Teacher: And I think what made it trickier was that we didn't really have any exemplars. Like, we didn't know what a good NEA looked like under the new spec. So we were kind of guessing, a bit, and hoping we were pitching it right.

[05:57 - 06:26]

Interviewer: That must've been challenging. Did you find that your approach to teaching theory shifted with the new specification?

Teacher: Oh definitely. The named theorists list changed everything. Suddenly we had to make sure students were confident applying Barthes or Judith Butler or whoever. It wasn't just "know some theory," it was "use these exact theorists" in specific contexts.

[06:26 - 06:56]

Teacher: Which is fine in some ways—it gives a clear framework—but it's also limiting. And for students who struggle a bit academically, it made media feel more daunting. You know, it became more of a memory test than a creative or analytical subject.

[06:56 - 07:18]

Interviewer: Did that have an impact on the kind of students who chose media?

Teacher: Possibly, yeah. I think we saw a bit of a shift. Some of the more practically inclined students maybe opted for other subjects, or they struggled more once they were in the course.

[07:18 - 07:50]

Teacher: But we've worked hard to try and keep it engaging. We use lots of examples, we try to make the theory feel relevant. But you do get that sense that it's harder to hook certain learners now, compared to the older spec.

[07:50 - 08:15]

Interviewer: Yeah, that makes sense. How about the NEA specifically—how did you find delivering that?

Teacher: The biggest issue is the brief. Every year it's a new brief, and they're quite narrow. So we spend a lot of time just interpreting what students are *allowed* to do. There's not a lot of flexibility.

[08:15 - 08:46]

Teacher: I mean, students can be creative *within* the brief, but it's not like before, where they could really pick their own path. And sometimes the briefs feel a bit... forced? Like they're trying to tick boxes, rather than being something a student might actually want to make.

[08:46 - 09:22]

Interviewer: That's interesting. Have you had any particularly successful NEA projects under the new spec?

Teacher: Yeah, a few. Some students have really risen to the challenge—especially those who already have a strong interest in media production. But it does tend to favour students with access to tech, or previous experience, and that raises equity issues.

[09:22 - 10:00]

Teacher: Like, if a student doesn't have editing software at home, or can't afford a decent camera, they're immediately at a disadvantage. We try to compensate for that in college, but it's not always easy. And I think it affects outcomes.

Transcript: Part 3 (10:00 – 15:00)

[10:00 - 10:26]

Interviewer: That's a really important point. Has the specification made any allowances for that kind of inequality, or is it just assumed that everyone can access the same resources?

Teacher: Not really. I mean, there's a line about using what's available to students, but in practice the assessment criteria still kind of assumes a polished outcome. It's tricky.

[10:26 - 10:58]

Teacher: We've had to build up our college equipment quite a bit—buy more cameras, offer lunchtime editing sessions—but that takes time and money. And it depends on how supportive your senior leadership team is, really.

[10:58 - 11:25]

Interviewer: And do you think the changes to the assessment objectives have influenced your teaching style?

Teacher: Yeah, I do. I spend a lot more time teaching students how to write essays now. It's like teaching for English or Sociology. Before, it was more about discussion, creativity, interpretation. Now I'm training them to hit the mark scheme, basically.

[11:25 - 11:56]

Teacher: And again, that's fine for some learners, but it's harder for others. We've had to bring in lots of scaffolding—sentence starters, structure strips, that sort of thing—to help them cope with the analytical writing side of things.

[11:56 - 12:24]

Interviewer: That's a big shift. How about the set texts—how did you find the process of adapting to teaching those?

Teacher: That was a whole new challenge. Some of them are really interesting, but others feel quite obscure. And because students are being examined on them, there's pressure to cover every detail.

[12:24 - 12:53]

Teacher: So sometimes I feel like I'm over-teaching—like I'm forcing meaning onto a text just because I know they might get asked something specific. It's not always about what the students find engaging anymore.

[12:53 - 13:22]

Interviewer: Did you have any input into the selection of the set texts?

Teacher: No, none. It was all decided by the exam board. And some of the choices feel a bit... strange. Like, I get what they were aiming for in terms of representation and diversity, but some texts just don't land with students.

[13:22 - 13:50]

Teacher: We've had to work hard to make them relatable. Bring in lots of context, modern examples, things like that. But it takes time, and again, you're always second-guessing the exam questions.

[13:50 - 14:26]

Interviewer: How do you balance that exam preparation with maintaining students' enthusiasm for the subject?

Teacher: It's hard. Sometimes it feels like we're doing a sales job—like we're trying to convince them that media is still exciting, still creative, even though we're spending half our time drilling theory or past papers.

[14:26 - 15:00]

Teacher: I do little things—like themed lessons, visual aids, practical tasks—to keep it lively. But there’s no denying it’s more exam-heavy now. And some students just don’t respond to that as well.

Transcript: Part 4 (15:00 – 20:00)

[15:00 - 15:29]

Interviewer: Do you feel like there’s still space in the new spec for practical skills, or has that been squeezed out?

Teacher: It’s definitely still there, but it feels like an add-on now, rather than central. In the old spec, production was the heart of it. Now it’s a component, but it’s quite constrained by the brief and the assessment criteria.

[15:29 - 15:59]

Teacher: We still teach camera work, editing, layout, all of that—but mostly as a way to tick the boxes for the NEA. There’s less opportunity for experimentation or play.

[15:59 - 16:25]

Interviewer: Have you noticed any effects on student confidence or engagement because of that?

Teacher: Yeah, especially for the students who are more practically minded. They get excited when they’re filming or designing, but then they see the brief and start worrying about mark schemes and genre conventions. It puts them off a bit.

[16:25 - 16:56]

Teacher: And the higher ability students tend to be fine—they navigate it and make it work. But some of the middle and lower ability students struggle to translate their ideas into what the spec wants.

[16:56 - 17:26]

Interviewer: What about professional development—has Eduqas or any other body provided much in the way of training or CPD for teachers?

Teacher: Not really, no. There were some early training days when the spec first came out, but after that it's mostly been teacher-led. The Facebook groups and networking have been more useful than anything official.

[17:26 - 17:59]

Teacher: We share a lot informally—resources, interpretations of the spec, sample answers. It's very much a community of teachers trying to help each other out.

[17:59 - 18:26]

Interviewer: And do you think that kind of grassroots support has made a difference?

Teacher: Oh definitely. Without it, I don't think we'd have coped. Especially in the first couple of years when everything was new and vague. Some of the interpretations of the mark schemes were confusing, and there wasn't much guidance.

[18:26 - 18:58]

Teacher: Having that online teacher community has been a lifeline. You can post a question and get ten replies within an hour. It's reassuring, especially when you feel like you're second-guessing everything.

[18:58 - 19:30]

Interviewer: Have there been any particular challenges with the exam board in terms of communication or feedback?

Teacher: Yeah, I'd say the feedback can be vague. Like, you'll get back a comment that says "more developed analysis needed," but it's not always clear what that means. And sometimes the exemplars don't match the level descriptors.

[19:30 - 20:00]

Teacher: So you're left trying to reverse-engineer what they want. I've had times where a piece I thought was a solid B got a low C, and it's hard to explain that to students when the criteria are so broad

Transcript: Part 5 (20:00 – 25:00)

[20:00 - 20:33]

Interviewer: That sounds really frustrating. Has that affected your confidence as a teacher?

Teacher: Yeah, at times. Especially when you're trying to prepare students for high-stakes exams. You want to be sure of what you're doing, and when things feel unclear, it knocks your confidence a bit.

[20:33 - 21:01]

Teacher: I know colleagues who've second-guessed their grades, or sent stuff for remarking, just because they weren't sure. And that's not a good place to be in as a teacher.

[21:01 - 21:29]

Interviewer: What's been the most positive aspect of the new spec, in your view?

Teacher: Hmm... I think the focus on representation and identity has been good. Some of the texts open up really interesting discussions. Students respond well to that—when they see themselves or their experiences reflected.

[21:29 - 21:58]

Teacher: We've had brilliant debates in class about gender, race, politics—so in that sense, the spec does push them to think critically. And that's valuable. Even if the texts themselves can be a bit hit-and-miss.

[21:58 - 22:24]

Interviewer: That's great. Do you think the spec encourages political awareness or media literacy?

Teacher: Yeah, definitely. The sections on online media and news especially. Students start to question what they see in the media and why things are represented in certain ways. That's one of the best parts.

[22:24 - 22:54]

Teacher: I've had students come back after they've left and say they still think about things we discussed in media, so that's really rewarding. It makes you feel like you've had an impact beyond the grade.

[22:54 - 23:21]

Interviewer: That's really nice to hear. If you could make one change to the current spec, what would it be?

Teacher: Just one? [laughs] I think I'd make the NEA more flexible again. Give students more choice. Let them play a bit, take creative risks. I think we'd see better outcomes—and more enjoyment.

[23:21 - 23:49]

Teacher: And maybe rethink some of the set texts too. Include more current or popular examples. Stuff that students already engage with, rather than trying to make everything educational or worthy.

[23:49 - 24:18]

Interviewer: And do you think the changes to the spec were political?

Teacher: Hmm, yeah, I do. It felt like a move to make media more academic, to justify its place as a “serious” subject. Like they were trying to prove something to Ofqual or the DfE.

[24:18 - 25:00]

Teacher: But in doing that, I think they lost some of what made media unique. It used to be this brilliant mix of analysis and production. Now it feels more like English with cameras.

Transcript: Part 6 (25:00 – 30:00)

[25:00 - 25:31]

Interviewer: That's a really powerful metaphor. Do you think that shift has impacted how students perceive the subject?

Teacher: Yeah, I do. Some still love it, but others see it as more academic now, more like hard work. I mean, that's not a bad thing in itself, but it's definitely changed the vibe.

[25:31 - 26:01]

Teacher: Before, we'd get a mix of students—some who loved the theory, some who were into film or games or music videos. Now it's a bit more selective. You almost have to *sell* it differently at open evenings.

[26:01 - 26:32]

Interviewer: That's really interesting. So how do you "sell" it now?

Teacher: We talk about transferable skills a lot—analysis, essay writing, understanding media industries. We show off examples of NEA work, we highlight university links. But I do miss saying, "You can make something amazing here."

[26:32 - 26:59]

Teacher: I mean, they *can* still make great stuff, but there are more boundaries now. It's less about the student's voice and more about what the spec expects. And that does limit who signs up, I think.

[26:59 - 27:34]

Interviewer: So in terms of outcomes—grades, progression, things like that—have you noticed any differences since the reforms?

Teacher: Our results have stayed broadly similar, but we've had to work harder to get them. More intervention, more tracking, more support. It's not just "teach and let them fly" anymore. You have to scaffold everything.

[27:34 - 28:03]

Teacher: And in terms of progression, we still get students going on to media-related degrees, but fewer are going into production routes. It's more theory-based courses now—communications, journalism, that sort of thing.

[28:03 - 28:33]

Interviewer: That's a fascinating shift. Do you think the changes reflect a wider trend in education?

Teacher: Absolutely. There's a move towards standardisation, measurability, accountability. Everything's about data and outcomes. And creative subjects like media get squeezed by that, because they're harder to quantify.

[28:33 - 29:00]

Teacher: I think there's a real tension there—between what education should be and what it's becoming. And media studies kind of sits at the heart of that. It's meant to be about questioning systems, but it's being boxed in by the system itself.

[29:00 - 29:40]

Interviewer: That's a really powerful observation. Do you feel optimistic about the future of media education?

Teacher: Mixed. I think the teachers are amazing—passionate, resilient, creative. But the policy environment is tough. And unless there's a shift at that level, I worry we'll keep losing what makes media studies special.

[29:40 - 30:00]

Teacher: But I'm not giving up. I still believe in the subject, and in what it can do for students. So I keep pushing, keep adapting, and just hope that the pendulum swings back at some point.

Transcript: Part 7 (30:00 – 35:00)

[30:00 - 30:34]

Interviewer: That's really inspiring to hear. Can I ask how you keep yourself motivated—what keeps you going?

Teacher: Honestly? The students. When they get it—when they connect something in class to something they've seen on TikTok or the news—it's brilliant. You feel like you're helping them make sense of the world.

[30:34 - 31:01]

Teacher: And I love the subject. I still get excited about lessons. I'll be watching a film or reading an article and suddenly I'm like, "That would make a great lesson." So yeah, that keeps me going.

[31:01 - 31:29]

Interviewer: Do you get much space to experiment with your teaching, or is it quite tightly structured?

Teacher: We try to keep some freedom. I've got a great team, and we trust each other, so we do share schemes of work but adapt them as needed. I still do some off-spec stuff too—just to keep things interesting.

[31:29 - 31:58]

Teacher: Like if something big happens in the media, I'll build a lesson around it. Even if it's not on the spec, it's relevant, and the students really engage. I think that's important—to keep it real.

[31:58 - 32:31]

Interviewer: And do your students seem to value that?

Teacher: Yeah, they do. They like it when we connect theory to stuff they actually care about. It makes it feel less abstract. We've had some great conversations that way—about influencers, representation, politics, all sorts.

[32:31 - 33:03]

Interviewer: Do you ever feel pressure to justify media studies as a subject?

Teacher: Oh yes, all the time. Parents, sometimes even other teachers. You get that question: "Is it a real subject?" or "What can they do with media?" And it's frustrating because it *is* real—it's all around us.

[33:03 - 33:30]

Teacher: We spend hours online, watching, creating, scrolling—and media studies gives you the tools to make sense of that. To be critical, not passive. That's more important than ever.

[33:30 - 34:00]

Interviewer: Definitely. Has the pandemic had a lasting effect on how you teach media?

Teacher: Yeah, I think so. We got more confident using digital tools—Teams, Padlet, all of that. And students are more used to blended learning now, so we use more online materials than we did before.

[34:00 - 34:29]

Teacher: But it also highlighted inequalities again—some students didn't have Wi-Fi or devices at home, so we had to be really mindful of that. It's made me more aware of access issues, for sure.

[34:29 - 35:00]

Interviewer: Thank you—that's so thoughtful. Just a couple more questions if that's okay?

Teacher: Yeah of course, no problem.

Transcript: Part 8 (35:00 – 40:00)

[35:00 - 35:33]

Interviewer: So, if you were advising a new teacher starting to teach the Eduqas spec, what would you say?

Teacher: I'd say: find your network. Join the Facebook groups, go to conferences, talk to other teachers. Don't try and do it alone because the spec can feel overwhelming at first.

[35:33 - 36:03]

Teacher: And don't be afraid to question things. Just because it's in the spec doesn't mean it's the only way to teach it. Find your own style, trust your instincts. The students will respond to your passion.

[36:03 - 36:36]

Interviewer: That's really helpful. And how do you keep up with changes in the media landscape when the spec is quite fixed?

Teacher: That's the tricky bit. We do what we can—update our examples, build in current events, keep reading Media Magazine and following key voices online. But the set texts don't change much, which is frustrating.

[36:36 - 37:01]

Teacher: We try to teach students to apply concepts flexibly. So if they learn about bell hooks through Beyoncé, we can then apply it to a set text, even if it's not a perfect fit. That keeps things fresh.

[37:01 - 37:30]

Interviewer: Have you ever considered leaving media teaching because of the reforms?

Teacher: I've thought about it, yeah. There have been times when it's felt like death by paperwork or that creativity has been squeezed out. But then a student says something insightful, and it reminds me why I stay.

[37:30 - 37:56]

Teacher: I've come close to burnout a few times, especially around NEA deadlines or when the exam results don't reflect what we expected. But it always comes back to the classroom—it's still where the magic happens.

[37:56 - 38:25]

Interviewer: That's lovely. You've spoken a lot about teacher networks—do you think that kind of community has become more important in recent years?

Teacher: Definitely. Especially after the reforms and then the pandemic. We've had to rely on each other. There's a generosity in the media teacher community that I don't think you find everywhere.

[38:25 - 38:55]

Teacher: People share schemes, resources, even just moral support. You'll post a rant and five people will say, "Yeah, same here." It keeps you going. It's solidarity, really.

[38:55 - 39:25]

Interviewer: Do you feel like Eduqas engages with that teacher community enough?

Teacher: Hmm... not always. They could do more. I think they listen sometimes, but it feels like they make changes slowly. And when feedback goes into a void, it's disheartening.

[39:25 - 40:00]

Teacher: There's also a lack of consistency. Some of the exemplar materials are brilliant, others are confusing. Some CPD sessions are helpful, others feel like box-ticking. So it's a mixed picture.

Transcript: Part 9 (40:00 – 45:00)

[40:00 - 40:28]

Interviewer: Thanks, that's really useful. Do you feel like your views as a teacher are reflected in the way the qualification is developed?

Teacher: Not really, no. It feels like decisions are made far away from the classroom. Like they're designed by people who haven't taught the subject in years—if at all.

[40:28 - 40:56]

Teacher: And sometimes it feels like we're firefighting—just reacting to changes rather than shaping them. I'd love to see more teacher consultation, proper dialogue. Not just surveys after the fact.

[40:56 - 41:25]

Interviewer: Do your students ever express views about how media is assessed?

Teacher: Oh yeah, all the time. They don't always say it in those words, but they notice. They ask why they have to write about something they don't like, or why they have to include a certain theorist even if it doesn't fit.

[41:25 - 41:55]

Teacher: I think they sense the disconnect too—between the media they consume and what we're teaching. It's like, they're fluent in TikTok but we're teaching them about The Times front page. There's a gap.

[41:55 - 42:26]

Interviewer: How do you manage that gap in the classroom?

Teacher: I try to bridge it by bringing their world into the classroom—social media examples, YouTube creators, whatever they're into. Then we layer the theory on top. It's not perfect, but it helps.

[42:26 - 42:54]

Teacher: And I encourage them to critique the spec too. Like, if they think a text is outdated, we talk about why that might be. It becomes part of the learning—being critical of the curriculum itself.

[42:54 - 43:24]

Interviewer: That's such a thoughtful approach. Final couple of questions now—how would you describe the identity of media studies as a subject in 2024?

Teacher: That's a big one! I'd say it's still evolving. It's pulled in different directions—academic, vocational, critical, creative. And that can be confusing, but it's also what makes it rich.

[43:24 - 43:58]

Teacher: It's a subject that responds to the world—it changes as the world changes. That's powerful. But it also means it's vulnerable to trends and political pressure. It's always negotiating its place.

[43:58 - 44:28]

Interviewer: Do you see yourself staying in media education long-term?

Teacher: I hope so. I love it. But I also think it depends on how things evolve. If it becomes too rigid or too removed from real media, I'd struggle. But for now, I still feel like it matters.

[44:28 - 45:00]

Teacher: The students make it worthwhile. They challenge me, surprise me, teach me things. And as long as I'm still learning with them, I think I'll stick around.

Transcript: Part 10 (45:00 – 50:00)

[45:00 - 45:32]

Interviewer: That's really lovely. Final question then—if you could sum up your experience of teaching the reformed A-Level Media spec in three words, what would they be?

Teacher: Oh wow... um... [laughs] Challenging, limiting, enlightening.

[45:32 - 45:57]

Interviewer: That's an interesting combination—can you say a bit more?

Teacher: Yeah, it's been challenging because of all the changes, the lack of clarity, and the pressure to deliver results in a tighter framework.

[45:57 - 46:26]

Teacher: Limiting, because I think we've lost some freedom and creativity—both for teachers and students. The spec is more prescriptive, and that restricts the subject's potential sometimes.

[46:26 - 46:56]

Teacher: But enlightening because I've learned a lot. About myself, about pedagogy, about media. It's made me reflect more deeply on what I'm teaching and why. So there's growth, even in the frustration.

[46:56 - 47:29]

Interviewer: That's a really generous answer. Thank you so much for your time and for being so open.

Teacher: No problem at all—thank you for the opportunity. It's been good to talk it all through, actually. Makes you think.

[47:29 - 48:00]

Interviewer: I really appreciate it. I'll send you the transcript when it's ready, and if you're happy with it, we'll go from there.

Teacher: Sounds good. Just let me know if you need anything else from me.

[48:00 - 48:26]

Interviewer: Will do. Thanks again, Isabel. Take care.

Teacher: You too. Bye!

[50:00 - 50:40]

(Sound of microphone movement, background noise)

Teacher (off mic): Let me just grab my things...

[50:40 - 51:30]

(Background chatter fades, room noise)

Interviewer (off mic): All good. I'll drop you an email in the next couple of days. Thanks again!

Teacher: No worries. Honestly, I really enjoyed it. It was nice to reflect for once. We don't usually get to do that**[51:30 - 52:15]**

Interviewer: Yeah, absolutely. It's been so valuable. Hope the rest of your week goes okay.

Teacher: You too! Good luck with your project.

Researcher: So if you wouldn't mind just telling me a bit about yourself as a Media teacher, you know like the kind of school that you work in or college and the kind of students that you have and things like that

Teacher: Yeah sure. I've been teaching Media Studies in my current school for 12 years. Prior to that I was a Media teacher in an inner city Birmingham school, so I've taught it across different schools *inaudible* but I taught it and now I'm head of subject. I've been here for 12 years, I'm at a lovely school, it's a high achieving school in an affluent area, not to say we don't have our problems but not very comprehensive but it's a lovely school. The evolution of Media has been interesting, I taught WJC A level Media here for the first 10 years and I loved it but if I'm totally honest, I didn't feel it was as academic as it should have been. I felt that the 50% coursework was excessive and I didn't feel like it prepared them for going into the industry – it didn't tell them much about the industry and I did feel it was easier than other A level subjects.

R: Ok, yep

T: I was happy when the reform came through, then I was part of all the Ofqual meetings asked; 'what's this subject going to look like' and just like everybody else I became very concerned when it was starting to look like there wasn't going to be a Media because I think its a very, very important subject to teach, I think its incredibly relevant, its jam packed with transferable skills and all, it affects everybody whatever career they go into, I think its essential that its taught. We don't offer it at GCSE here and that's a decision, I didn't want it to become something that students did instead of English, for the students that perhaps cant do the 2 subjects or and then that translates up to A level.

R: Yep

T: So, and I was really very concerned to start off with and I had a group of very practical students coming up to A level, so I made the decision to move to the CTEC in the first year – I don't know if this covers the technical, digital Media?

R: Yeah

T: I did the CTEC and I did it from, I wrote the course from scratch, it taught me absolutely loads

R: Right

T: I don't think I'd be as good at teaching the A level now if I hadn't done it. It was brilliant, the students loved it, fantastic – however, I did have a lot of concerns with parents wanting assurances that universities would accept it.

R: Right, yeah, yeah

T: And very academic students worrying that it would be difficult enough at the beginning. Obviously I only had 1 cohort go through. Because we're a school who doesn't have much

pupil premium funding, our funding has been progressively worse over the last few years and it got to the point where we couldn't offer the course anymore, we didn't have the facilities to be able to offer it.

R: Right

T: So I then had to go to the A level. I initially obviously looked at all the specifications and thought; 'hmm, don't love any of them', so I had to, my hand was forced, it was either that or no Media and there was no way I was going to let that happen.

R: Yep

R: So I had to make sure I was recruiting the right students, in the end I went with OCR, which I think is the **second most popular option, its EDUCAS being the first and nobody teaches AQA. Its almost like they *inaudible* specifications they do *inaudible* would choose. But I went with OCR because I thought it would suit our students better and my experiences of, I'd done *inaudible*** And I was reluctant to teach Media in a really academic way, the idea of the subject hinging around 18 theorists, 9 Media forms and a theoretical framework, I felt took the joy out of learning the subject and I thought; 'I'm going to have to teach this in a really formulaic way'. I was concerned about the volume of knowledge when essentially I'd been teaching a skills based subject and now it's a knowledge based subject and I wasn't going to be delivering an A level that would prepare them for working in the industry, so I was going to have to change that and make it very clear that it was an academic A level. I've now finished my first [**cohort/full course**] through, so I've got quite a lot of Year 13s, I've got 2 classes of Year 13s going through and obviously I'm delivering it to Year 12 and I've got to say, after the full ***inaudible*** I've enjoyed teaching it, I've enjoyed planning it, I've enjoyed using my brain.

R: Yeah

T: I have learnt over the many years of being on that Facebook group and talking to people that, not to over-teach. Not to teach more than they need to know in a depth that they don't need to know.

R: Yep

T: I have adjusted to teaching a knowledge based curriculum, luckily its at the same time as the new trending for quizzing and knowledge organisers and **cahoots** and all of that and I was lucky that all the training was coming through at the right time, just as I was writing my course. And I like how quantifiable their knowledge is.

R: Yeah

T: Do I wish that I was still teaching a subject that was a little more practical? Yeah, I do but it's not

R: No

T: I worry that some of the theories are out of date and I worry that there's glaring omissions.

R: What do you think is particularly missing from the course, if you don't mind me asking?

T: Oh, **Mulvey**? Quite a few industry theories that are cropping up because its not as theories, Media is evolving so quickly, its not 'a theory' that is then published, its just peoples ideas on things.

R: Yeah

T: But we're still looking at things, I mean Mulvey's 1973 for goodness sake *laughs* its pre-digital revolution. I mean it's, I think its important that we stay current with the industry – I know that they're trying to make it a difficult subject and they succeeded, it is. And I know they wanted to make it distinct from Film, they've succeeded.

R: Yep

T: The biggest problem for me was set text.

R: Right ok, yeah

T: I'm an English teacher too, I'm familiar with set text, do I love that there's a textbook and that everybody's studying the same thing? Yes, if you're being lazy. But no because how can you create set text in Media that is going to be suitable for every student, in every class, in every city? Its just not realistic plus they're out of date, I mean the Radio 1 Breakfast Show was out of date within minutes.

R: Yeah, yeah

T: And what's going on in the world of course evolves so quickly. I like the menu of options in the coursework – I'm somebody who offers 3 of the 4 options to my students, I like to make it as bespoke as possible.

R: Yep

T: It, it, yeah *laughs*

R: Ok, so obviously its really hard to tell because you know, the students that you've got now have no knowledge of what went before but in terms of your perceptions of students engagement with the course spec, compared to what your ex-students might have engaged with; how, have you got any observations that you can talk about for that?

T: I think academically they make more progress on this course but I'm going to get a lot less students going on to do it at university.

R: Right, ok

T: I still try to get outside speakers in from the industry but making it relevant to the course now, is a lot more difficult

R: Yeah, yeah

T: And, no engagement was far greater on the CTEC and the WJC because it was more independent, now that may, might just have suited my teaching style but it did mean that they could really engage and it was more realistic but now its an academic A level and for

what it is, its ok, I'm not, I think I'm going to get very bored of the set text if they keep them for too long.

R: So if you had to make some improvements, say you were given the task of advising the exam boards, Ofqual; what if that was given to you, the power, what would you actually change and what would you keep?

T: I'd give a wider range of set text that you can choose music videos off a list, choose magazines off a list or, I mean the list can be up to 10, you know like it is in English. Give us more choice

R: Yeah

T: I mean to teach The Big Issue to very white, middle class, Conservative students – although I'm here to open their minds, they're never going to, I'd perhaps choose other things

R: Yeah

T: Same with Film, perhaps wouldn't have chosen Jungle Book because they, they can't understand the cultural influences. And News, News is too big. News and Online is too big and too political for students who are essentially fresh out of school uniform and don't even know the difference between Labour and Conservative – I am having to teach GCSE Politics and create mindmaps of what left and right wing means before I can even begin to get them to look at the representation of people on newspaper front covers and its just too much because they don't, they don't have the cultural capital to access that at the moment.

R: I think that's a key phrase isn't it; 'cultural capital' because a lot of different people interpret it in different ways and its just interesting in the context of Media Studies, what that actually means. Have you got any thoughts about what that means in terms of Media as a subject? You know, you mentioned it as they don't have enough cultural capital sort of, bringing in ideas of politics, so is there anything else you can think of that that might relate to? I'm just wondering if any of the set texts might, will necessitate that as well?

T: Yeah I mean, this is quite funny to say, I've just had Year 12 parents evening tonight and half of the parents are going; 'what can we do to support?' which is great, but and I've given them a list and the lists are things like; Buy a copy of the Big Issue, buy a copy of Men's Health, Buy a copy of The Guardian, read them. Because I think now we've got personal divide between, we live in our own little sort of bubbles and we only come into contact with people who have got the same views and likes and dislikes as us. I cannot assume that they've seen an episode of The Simpsons, I can't assume they've seen a Marvel film or that they've watched Killing Eve, that they know what a copy of The Times looks like. Because some of them have never picked up a newspaper or a magazine, they don't know what they look like because they're just not viewing them anymore.

R: Yeah, is it do you think, is there any kind of merit in considering those kind of texts as almost like historical texts?

T: I think that's the way they see it unfortunately. I mean all of the work experience and things they're getting is in digital marketing, its all digital marketing.

R: Yeah

T: And it does seem a little bit out of date when we're picking up real copies of newspapers because they, the newspaper isn't read like that, its read on iPads and I know we're looking at the websites now and that's good but I feel like its behind

R: Yeah, yeah and so I think in the breadth of, and you know is prioritised over the depth. Do the students in their study of those subjects, do you feel that they are, is it benefitting them in terms of the depth that they're going into? I mean have you had to change your style of teaching?

T: I do, I do wish I could go to some things in more depth and look at alternative text, for example but there just isn't the time in the curriculum to do it. I feel, I mean alright I'm new to the course so I'm playing it very safe at the moment – I haven't really learnt the real intricacies of the specification yet and when I do I'll be able to sort of bend it a little bit but at the moment I'm having to play it very much by the book. And I'm finding that there just isn't the time to teach the depth, I mean I just feel like I cannot let a Media student out of my grip, before I've done more stuff on Audience and how Audience is involved I just can't do it. But its lacking, even though its an element of the theoretical framework, how audiences have evolved isn't relevant – it's not in there.

So yeah it is getting through the content which is a little bit soul destroying when you come from choosing our own texts to engage our own students, I mean, you know when you teach *Blippy/Glippy/Ghibli* and stuff I want to show them how it evolved, how the technology's evolved but a lot of its not necessary and I don't want to over-teach – I'm learning that at the moment as we go through.

R: Sure, and have you changed your pedagogical style? I mean are you teaching the way you prefer to teach, I mean you said that you want to go into more depth about things

T: Oh my goodness no, I'm used to presentations, research, group work – almost like university seminar style, grouped discussion, feedback. Especially in a subject like Media where you're not the font of all knowledge, they are going to have different experience of Media than I do – its lecture, its lecture style, its; right here's the resources, I deliver it, its hypodermic needle and then they go home and they put it in their heads and then I test to see if they've put it there

R: Yeah

T: *Sighs* and on we go

R: So in terms of the resources that you've used

T: Sorry, you broke up a little bit

R: Sorry, did you not hear me then?

T: I can hear you now

R: Ok, sorry. In terms of resources, do you use, do you create your own resources? Or do you kind of

T: Yes, I'm a bit of a control freak

Laughter

R: And what impact has that had on you in terms of, because obviously for a new course, if you were creating everything from scratch, has that had an impact on your kind of experience of teaching it as well? And your own kind of professional life?

T: Yes phenomenally. Its been all consuming for, I mean considering I then wrote the CTEC from scratch, now I'm writing the A level from scratch

R: Yeah

T: I'm lucky in that I'm a year behind everybody who did it for the first time, so I always kept a close eye on that and I could ask the Facebook group for advice but its going to sound awfully arrogant, I'm also acutely aware that I'm a lot more experienced than a lot of the people there so I tend to view it all very critically

R: Yeah, yeah

T: And I used bits and bobs and certainly experience in order to, but had, oh yeah it's been phenomenal. I've spent, in terms of hours at work I have spent, but I like to plan – planning is the nice bit of the job, plus if you do it well its done for the following year isn't it? And then, so I'll be doing it properly and then obviously its need tweaking because you find out what things don't work and what things do. But yeah, I've written a lot and its hard going, it is.

R: Yeah, have you used any, I mean I know you said you create all your own resources but have you used any other sort of textbooks for reference or any of the

T: Well I bought the textbooks

R: Yeah

T: And to start with, naively I recommended them to the students but I find the format awful. I find that I, in fact in terms of time consuming tasks, things like getting together the context information – because I love a table and a grid and the students do to and it has taken me hours. I mean when I've compiled all of their work together, all of their notes together to give them I've sort of done the work first because I've got to understand it before they do and I've used the textbooks and I've used the internet and I've used the resources that OCR provide and I've used my own knowledge but I haven't, because the subjects so different, I haven't been able to recycle anything from previous courses. Anything. Perhaps 1 slide on Representation but that's it you know, its just, it just bears no resemblance. So yeah, I have used the textbooks, particularly for the bits of the course that I am not as confident with – like News.

R: Yeah, yeah

T: But I find it repetitive, the OCR book the Hodder one, they're all over the place, the information isn't in a, and you've got a student book that reads like a teacher book and a teacher book that reads like a student book and they're totally – not conflicting but different information in both of them.

R: Ok

T: Which is very confusing so I've stopped recommending them to the students now and I've just made booklets

R: Yeah, yeah I think that's what seems to be quite a lot of

T: But the OCR online resources like for my questions *inaudible* brilliant – out of date but brilliant

R: Yeah, yeah, so I think that's the challenge going forward isn't it; I mean that sort of brings me on nicely to the use of the Facebook groups really. So did you join from quite early on?

T: I think so, yeah, I mean its always been ticking along in the background but then they sort of separated it out into CTEC and A levels, so I was watching it even when I wasn't teaching it, thinking; 'oh goodness I'm glad I'm not part of that' *laughs*

R: *Laughs* Yeah, and then you were

T: I've met a few of the people who are on it as well at sort of Heads of Department meet up events and one of them, some of them are examiners for different units, I'm probably going to do that next year but I just want to get 1 year under my belt first. So some of the **people on there are sort of respected but again just like students surfing the internet, I'm like; well if they were really known as *halls* everyone would look at a slide share**. I've certainly, whenever I've been able to use somebody else's resource, I don't think I've ever taken one and used it, I've always tweaked it

R: Yeah, yeah

T: Or added a bit or, yeah but have I put any of my own resources on? No *laughs*

R: *Laughs* It's quite a common theme

T: Is there?

R: Yeah

T: No because I've put my stuff on **TES**

R: Right

T: I've put all my CTEC stuff on **TES** because we're desperate for money and I like to use it to buy things for the department.

R: Yeah

T: But also because of the amount of work that went into it, I mean it is my plan in down time to, one of the things I was going to do, select some resources that I genuinely have written from scratch and put them up because I have had help from other people and I will put it, I will give it back. But some of it, you know when you've sort of borrowed an idea from somebody and improved it – I don't want to then put that up because they'll go; 'oh that's

mine but they've changed it and claiming its their own' – I'm not, I'm just putting an updated version on for somebody else to then go and alter. I worry that people are going to say; you've pinched their stuff and things which, aren't we all?

R: So do you think there's an element of professional pride and professional sort of protection as well

T: Yeah definitely, I mean they'd have to, oh god the word escapes me but when the place you work for owns your intellectual copyright

R: Yes, yeah

T: So technically the documents, I mean legally as well the documents that I wrote belong to my school

R: Yeah

T: So am I, can I put that up there with my name on it and you have to be a little bit careful in this day and age don't you.

R: It's a really interesting idea as well, a really interesting issue that may crop up at, who knows

T: Yes it may, it may so if I do put resources up I will be taking off, because I tend to put a little footer on my documents so that I know when they were updated, so when I updated them but that would have to come off, so would any school branding, so would any names out of PowerPoints and things like that, yeah. But there's also the issue of course, I don't know if you've been keeping an eye on it this week but actually it was hacked by a student – people have been giving students the logon and that's just

R: Not on is it

T: Not great, plus it's a mess isn't it, I mean if you're looking for something on Radio 1 you've got 2 hours trawling

R: Yeah, exactly

T: And that's a bit of a nightmare its not, we could with like a shared Google drive

R: Yeah, yeah, yeah

T: I mean its great that we're all helping each other out but are we? Are we?

Laughter

R: Well is it just more work? If people aren't, and it seems to be the theme that people are creating their own resources and they are getting quite protective about putting them back on again *inaudible*

T: Fear of criticism

R: Yeah and if the stuff that stays on there is actually just a kind of starter if you like, if people aren't actually curating that then are we just kind of creating a body of resources that isn't actually that useful or that good? Or just too time consuming to kind of work through

T: Yeah, yeah I mean you know look teachers *inaudible* we're not supposed to take somebody else's work and just use it but there's **TeachIt** and things for English – why haven't we got one for Media where, it's a little bit more regulated I suppose and somebodies organising it and putting it into files and even selling a subscription to it.

R: Yeah maybe quality assurance

T: Yeah so somebody who's going; oh that's a good one, it fits in with that, you know somebody monitoring it, you know I've had paid subscriptions online like that and *inaudible* myself

R: Yeah, or even a quid pro quo thing where you upload something yourself, it gets accepted and you have access to the site

T: Yeah, oh yeah I think that's a really good idea

R: Yeah that could, yeah it's a really interesting issue that I'm exploring in terms of how, it's a slightly different side of my research is looking at how the course enabled other people to commodify it. You know there's a big movement to, to write textbooks, I mean textbooks earn them money, online subscription sites I mean there's about 3 or 4 that I know of that people subscribe to and

T: I do Media Magazine, Media Magazine's great. ***Edusites*** I really don't like

R: [REDACTED]

Laughter

T: It's so not user friendly at all but I'm, do you know I've been tempted so many times and I think well, I'm a grown up, I'm an expert, I could write on that. You know why don't they get the people who know what they're talking about to write bits for textbooks.

R: I think there's, certainly for experienced teachers who know their stuff or can research an element for the course and can write something that's useful for students. I mean I wrote something for Media Magazine a couple of years ago

T: Oh did you?

R: On I, Daniel Blake and I wrote it because it was about

T: Oh was that you? Yeah I remember that!

R: Stuff that I'd taught to my students and actually I wrote it as a kind of thing that was a revision thing for them and [REDACTED] the editor of the magazine and she said we'll just put it up as an article. So you know it's, that was a really good kind of

T: Yeah but I mean, how many of us could do that?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

T: Yeah

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

R: And they've been really good at quality assurance of that and it's a, you know you pay good money for it but you also get good quality hopefully at the end of the day

T: Yeah, I love Media Magazine, yeah

R: It's, and It's thought provoking it's not just shackled to the specifications I mean it has to...

T: No it's not, it's not

R: It's sort of become more bespoke to some of the texts that are now on the spec but actually it

T: But yeah the magazine isn't a textbook either, no yeah I like to use it, I like it for a good old homework comprehension, what do you think?

R: Yeah, exactly

T: As well, yeah

R: So just sort of thinking forward; what do you think the future for Media Studies is? Both for you and your institution but also long term and in a general kind of way?

T: *Sighs* I wish I knew. I'd like some middle ground. I'm enjoying that its seen now as an academic subject a little bit more I'm enjoying the credibility, I'm enjoying students going round going; 'Everybody says Media's really hard' I am enjoying the credibility that comes with that.

R: Yeah

T: And I'm enjoying using my own brain a little bit more. But I would like it just a little bit more industry relevant, I'd like them to be able to translate the decoding of a text into making one a little bit clearer like they used to. I mean yes the research is there and the target audience is there but the real nitty gritty of it, they're still going off really and making the brief fit their own agenda – whereas the real world is; you are not creating text for yourself, it's not self indulgent, you are employed to meet a brief and I'd like to be able to get a little bit more industry in.

I want to encourage them to go on and study it, I want more students going to Bournemouth and to Falmouth and places like that but it, yeah I think that we're going to see a little bit of a drop in that with the current A level.

R: Yeah and you said that you don't, correct me if I'm wrong but I think you said earlier on that you didn't have as many students going off to university to do Media as used to?

T: No, we don't, yep. No we don't, we don't at the moment its just not enthusing them, we're getting a lot more English/Journalist type courses

R: Right

T: But less production

R: Yeah, yeah

T: Of course 'Marketing' Business claim them as their own and then Journalist, English claims, there's no sort of specific digital means of production anymore. I mean I've got a couple at Film school but that's just because their parents have got the money rather than

R: Right, that's really interesting, yeah

T: Yeah, I mean I might be proved wrong, it might be the opposite – it might be, we'll see what happens but at the moment my instinct it is, I mean a week ago, I always joke there should be a Facebook group; 'I should have done Media' because there's more students at this school every year who have sort of come to me and gone; I should have done Media, than that students who actually study it

R: Yeah

T: So its still a very popular subject

R: Yep, and do you think *talking over* go on

T: No, no I was just going to say because there are fun elements, you do get to go out with cameras, you do get to you know, be silly

R: Do you have the expectation, do you think they're, what they end up thinking about the course was what they expect it to be when they first started out?

T: Now? Yes, but that's because I've totally shifted the way I pitch it, I started by apologising for it, you know; 'I'm sorry this is really boring' but of course they don't know any different.

R: Yeah, yeah

T: They're coming out of a very structured, linear GCSEs into a very structured, linear A level – they don't know any different and I need to stop apologising for that because I'm still getting to teach the subject and there was a time when I thought that there wasn't going to be one.

R: Yeah

T: So I'm just conscious of two things; grateful that I've been able to broaden my own teaching and grateful that students don't hate it, they don't hate it.

R: Yeah, that's good.

T: But I am very clear what they're opting for now, I don't have to, I used to sell the subject; it's all, we get to do this and we get to do this. Now I don't need to sell the subject, it does itself but I'm, I'm more going; don't take this subject if you think it's coursework, don't take it if you think that it's going to be easier than other A levels, or if you think you're not going to have to write extensively

R: Yeah

T: Because it's an academic A level – I'm finding myself saying that now. And my numbers aren't dropping

R: No it sounds like you've got very healthy numbers, you've got 2

T: They're not dropping

R: Yeah, so that's an interesting thing, you know because I think that was a real serious fear wasn't it

T: Yeah, I've got different students, I'm not having nearly as much fun, I'm really not – but is it about fun? You know, well that's a different question isn't it.

R: Well we'll, we shall just have to see with the new curriculum, I mean I know Ofqual have been gathering reviews and opinions of teachers and also academics, the most recent meeting was, I didn't go to it, I couldn't but one of my – in fact my external supervisor went to it, he's at Bedfordshire university and he was invited to go and feedback. So actually weirdly, ironically I met him before he went to feedback what I'd, because I did a pilot study last year, to feedback my findings on that which has, seems to be that's being repeated now in terms of some of, many of the interviews that I'm doing at the moment for the full study. And so he took that and his experience of students at university, first year university students who had done Media to be very similar, they weren't, they were coming with a sort of, a wide – wider but shallower knowledge of the

T: Yes, is what I'm saying the same or similar to other Heads of the Department?

R: Yeah, yeah

T: Because we don't really talk that much do we? So I just wondered if people were saying roughly the same thing

R: Yeah, I think, you know, I went to something last week – it was a training course on methodology and the software that I've been training in and the guy who was really knowledgeable, he's been doing it for 30 years, and he said you know; if you reach – there's no point in saying you want to do 50 interviews if by interview 25 every interviews saying the same thing because that's your findings. So its really interesting, so I'm thinking like now, I think you are probably my 10th interview and I'm finding very very similar views expressed, regardless of the institution that the teachers are teaching in, regardless of the level of experience – sometimes the newer teachers are, you know have a slightly different perspective on the course but very experienced teachers like yourself, the views are being replicated time and time again and its really interesting. So I am going to do, probably at least another 10 or 15 interviews but I'm expecting now, having done a significant amount really, and with the pilot study last year,

T: Well at least Ofqual are interested in our responses to it

R: Yes exactly, they are and I think they're more receptive to it now that we're sort of in the 3rd year of it because

T: Yeah

R: You know I think the teachers one from anecdotal kind of feedback from people that went there, was not very productive because I think the teachers, a lot of them just went to moan about it and to complain and the

T: Yeah that's the trouble isn't it, it's probably best doing it the way that you're doing it. I was, yeah because I think that negativity really affected when I went to all the initial, this is the new spec, this is what we think, very negative and I was just overwhelmed. But actually when you dig into it, its ok

R: Yeah

T: It is what it is, you just make the best of it

R: I think what I'm finding and my title is; A Site of Conflict and Resistance because you know, initially you know the new changes and specs were met with a lot of resistance

T: Because it was so different, I mean I've seen many different changes in national curriculum and specifications but never one where I couldn't use anything

R: No exactly

T: I'm teaching a different subject, I'm now teaching Communication and Politics as opposed to, I don't know, the regular version of English really. It's not a skill anymore, it's knowledge and it's a huge shift for teachers who have been teaching a long time, you're not only having to change your lessons, your content, your assessment and feedback – everything has changed. And I like bits about it and I don't like others.

R: Yeah and I think Ofqual are probably open to it changing, I mean there's already been modifications of each specification anyway based on feedback. So I mean, I think they're realising now that there's enough body of people talking and writing about it that actually they mistranslated some of the – did I say, I'm interviewing David Buckingham again on Friday actually

T: Oh wow

R: [REDACTED] I've spoken to him about it before anyway, and he's very clear particularly, he's obviously – I don't know if you've seen the things he's written about it on his blog and, called The Strangulation of Media Studies. And he says, you know that actually he was, when he was involved in the consultation for it, he and Natalie Fenton from Goldsmiths went and they took a long list of things that they thought they should have in the course, but actually what happened was, David assumed that they would almost, not cherry pick from that but they would be flexible and they would say; rather than Curran & Seaton, Livingstone & Lunt and Hesmondhalgh – he thought they would say 'Industry theorists such as', you know rather than

T: And that's what we thought to begin with wasn't it. That there would be just a little bit of flexibility but it is so prescriptive, I mean they've even told you which theory applies to which text haven't they and how.

R: Exactly and you have to shoehorn some of the things in to make it fit and you think, well that's not how it should be, there should be *links* and natural connections and I think I find myself saying; well no you can't do that because that's an Audience theorist and you can't talk about

T: Yeah I know yeah and I'm finding it harder to differentiate, in other words; my more able students whereas normally I'd give them, instead of a summary of a theorist I'd give them the original document and enthuse them like that and go, 'oh if you like that read a little bit more about that' but I can't do that because they only need to know what's in the specification. And those that can't get it, there's no middle ground

R: Yes definitely and also if they are interested they've got like 21 different theorists rather than 3 *inaudible*

T: Yeah, you find yourself doing reductive revision things like; 'match the theorist up with the theoretical framework' and 'match the theory up to the theorist' and it's reductive

R: Yeah it is

T: And many of the theorists would sort of go; 'well actually no you've paraphrased it so much that meaning has been lost there'

R: Yeah, yeah, no absolutely. So we shall have to just see, hopefully Ofqual will take on board the recent meetings and you know, I'm obviously trying to get my research out as soon as possible because I think, you know the momentum will be lost if it takes too long to get out there but hopefully this will be, will have some bearing or impact or at least inform any further consultations

T: Yeah I'm looking forward to seeing what you come up with

R: Well I'll send it to you yeah, I'm doing my research data collection is from now until the end of this academic year and then I'm going to be writing up from September time so hopefully this time next year it should be out but I mean obviously I'll send you anything that

T: Yeah I mean if you, if I can be any further help with it, if anything evolves then yeah I'd been happy to be involved

R: You've been brilliant so far anyway so thank you very much for that and it's really good, you know

T: Yeah it was good to talk to somebody that knows what they're talking about because sometimes when you teach Media you, it can be a little bit [isolated] because it's just you so to be able to talk to somebody else about it's been great actually

R: That's it, I'm lucky enough to have a department that, there's 4 of us in the department, all sort of similar kind of, similar teaching it's good to have that but you know I talk to some teachers who are literally *inaudible* in the whole school and

T: Yeah I've got 1 other, I've got 1 other and I wouldn't be without her really because it's so important to bounce ideas off each other

R: Exactly, [and given the] content of the course as well you need that, you need somebody and also just reassurance, I think that's why the Facebook group as well is, has actually been so important to people – not just as a resource bank but also as a support network and just bouncing off

T: Yeah I'd argue that sometimes I use it for reassurance and yeah, I probably should communicate more

R: We all would, in an ideal world we'd have more time to do all of this wouldn't we, so you know. But it's really interesting me, the fact, I mean I actually teach EDUCAS – I do know OCR and AQA just because of what I'm doing but that decision wasn't taken by me, I was Head of Faculty for 10 years but I stepped down to do my doctorate and so I'm just a teacher now – well not just, nobody's just a teacher but you know, I don't mean that, so that decision was taken away from me and that's been really interesting to see other people who have done, like different, made different decisions like OCR and AQA, why they've done that

T: Yeah

R *muffled* with OCR as well you know thinking about how *inaudible* written paper, why because OCR didn't get approved until the September

T: That was the main reason, that was the main reason, I mean yeah there's not a lot in it between the two really it's just your choice of set text and yeah but it didn't get approved fast enough and people wanted to play it safe

R: Just out of interest, *inaudible* OCR earlier on but I just wondered why you chose OCR over the others, you said EDUCAS was one of your, you know it was up there with

T: Yeah I could quite easily have done that one. I'm really sorry but I must go, I'm on detention duty

R: Ok, no thank you so much

Laughter

T: No you're very welcome it's been lovely talking to you

R: Yeah thank you

T: Bye bye

Researcher: So just to kind of start off really, I was just interested in kind of your brand as a Media teacher, the kind of school you work at, the kind of students you teach, maybe how long you've been teaching, that kind of thing

Teacher: Yeah ok, well I have been teaching for, well its probably 10 years now and I've been teaching in mainly colleges, so 6th form colleges. So 16-19 is the age category that we generally teach and it is, well I did begin teaching Creative Media – so it was BTEC courses just to begin with over in a college in Manchester but now I've moved to, back to Liverpool and I'm teaching over the water in a 6th form college and again it's Media A level that I teach now

R: Yep

T: It's a bit more, like I say, in terms of academia; theoretical courses now

R: Yeah, yeah

T: But yes I'm, obviously I enjoy it, I really do I think **success something** has changed though as of, well it was 2016 that they started kind of rewriting the specification for it, just it came, the second years last year were the first ones to fit the kind of final linear spec so, yeah and I found that, it's hard, it was difficult to adjust to to begin with because obviously the exam board do select the case studies that we have to teach and deliver. Where we had a bit more freedom to do that previously on the *old MS course, MS2* examinations.

R: Yep

T: Yes it's been quite difficult to adjust to the new changes from the old legacy to the new spec

R: Yeah and how many students do you teach at the moment? Have you got more than 1 class? Or

T: So it does vary every class, so I mean overall I've got 5 classes

R: Right, ok

T: Each class is just under, what, just under 20 students in each class, so they're not huge classes. I have taught bigger classes in the past but I do think there was less, numbers were down as of last year for the creative courses in our college so

R: Yeah and what's the kind of perception of Media within your particular place of work? Has it got a good perception or you know

T: I mean, are you thinking about the staff that are generally, I mean the college itself?

R: Yeah how valued is the subject?

T: Well yeah that's a good question actually because I don't know if it is to be honest, I do, obviously the core subjects like Science and English and Maths are generally way up there in terms of the value level. But and I think the creative courses like Drama, Media even Psychology now is becoming a lot popular and again seems to get again a lot of value off the Heads, senior management and that. I do think Media and Film Studies is generally overlooked a lot of the time, its almost like a, and even though they are pushing it at open evenings, open events try and you know, increase recruitment for the following, next year in September. I do feel like sometimes we don't, we aren't really considered as a department as up there against you know, Psychology definitely and Science, the other Sciences basically.

R: Do you have certain types of students pushed towards you?

T: So we have in the past definitely, so we've had students who have been of a low G score that are generally, yeah generally been pushed in our direction in the past. I don't know about now, now that the new specifications for EDUCAS have come in place, it's like I say it's a bit more difficult really, I think the A level now for certain students of a certain G score and I know that can change – you can turn that around with a course that's 2 years but I, yeah in the past we definitely have had, during the recruitment process we get the

R: What's the entry, sorry

T: Entry level?

R: Yeah

T: I think the students need 5 Cs I think at GCSE to get on the course, I don't know about, so yeah and I don't know – previously they had to, they have to have passed their English and Maths now but previously they were allowed on

R: Right ok, that's interesting, do you think that's kind of changed the sort of dynamics of the class that you teach? Or has that made it easier? Made it harder? Is there any sort of, observations about that?

T: In regards to having not let, not let students who are of a certain G score on it, on our course?

R: Yep

T: Not really, I feel like, I think with certain students who generally shouldn't be there in general, I don't think it even is a subject specific thing. I think across the board, across their other courses in the college like, they're generally performing to a poor standard. So I think the way that students are trying, we're trying to keep the retention up, that student shouldn't really be there. I think it can be problematic but I don't think that's just our Media, I honestly think its other courses as well that get the hit off those students

R: Yeah

T: But in the past, like what you were saying previously about, you know like some students, you know what I mean, Creative, Media Studies and Film Studies have had the bad name in the past of Mickey Mouse courses, haven't they

R: Yeah

T: That's from, from senior management who don't really know anything about the course and haven't really bothered to look at the specification as well, what it entails. But I think now that we've, I mean we have as a department collectively got together and said; right we are going to stand, we are going to make sure we're counted for this year

R: Yeah

T: Because I do think a lot of the time we do get forgotten about. I know that in the last, previous years, well it was like the last 5 years or 6 years that we were moved from a main or core parts of the building to an upstairs area where it's really hot and come summertime the classrooms get really really hot and we, we still were getting the numbers back then as well. And again I think they were allowing more students who generally got low G scores on the course back then – that was probably at the beginning of my time at my, at the new college that I'm at now.

R: So it's kind of stuck as a bit of a low priority or lesser priority than some of the other subjects and do you think the new specifications have in any way changed anyone's perceptions of that since? I mean is there any signs of that kind of moving forward or away from that Mickey Mouse

T: Yeah that stigma that is generally attached. Well yeah do you know what, I do think it has, yeah I think they, they understood that this, it was becoming more difficult and I think because generally the other subject areas as well went from, back to the old A level isn't it – its legacy right? Am I saying this right? Yeah linear legacy isn't it, the old legacy spec

R: Yeah

T: To yeah linear so over the 2 years, so the 2 year A level because we scrapped the AS's, we don't do AS in our college. So yeah I think they have become, they have become more understanding of it now and they do understand that it is more difficult and students have inevitably not performing to the best of their ability because, because they shouldn't really be on the course, you know it's one of them – so I think they have recognised that but it's probably taken a couple of years to, yeah to filter you know those, those students out really if that makes, yeah not try and push them out

R: Yeah, no and also what was your kind of, if you can think back to when you first heard about the curriculum reforms, what was your kind of initial gut feeling about Media and the teaching of the subject?

T: Honestly I thought, because there were rumours coming around that they were going to scrap with the Media A level course and actually having gone to a training session I think it was at EDUCAS, they did actually confirm that. Obviously they had to make changes in order to, you know be accredited for – I think it was Michael Gove wasn't it?

R: Yes it was, yes

T: Yeah so I, I knew, I had a feeling that it was going to, it was basically the case studies and things like that were going to be something designed by the board, so you know we would have to deliver because I mean even when it concerns the marking some of the, again the

exam paper at the end of the year, I think with the teachers kind of in effect, you know when they're picking case studies, I think in certain case studies they haven't obviously they're not actually, some of the examiners marking them with expertise in that particular tv show or whatever – we were using for analysis in class, therefore I think it was, it was always going to go that way.

R: Yeah

T: Which obviously, inevitably makes it an easier job for the exam board I guess but maybe a bit more difficult for the teachers who have to deliver the content. Yeah because it could be a case study you don't particularly like but, do you know what I mean? But you can't show them can you like that you don't like it *laughs* you have to deliver it so again, but yeah I think – I did think it was going to go like that but I do, go on

R: I was saying what do you think about the very sort of significant changes with set text and reduction of practical and the set theorists and all of the kind of framework that's come in – which is a pretty strong departure from what it was like before

T: I do think it's taken the fun out of it a little bit. I know I used to love choosing case studies and looking at theories that could potentially be applied to analysis of certain case studies as well and picking my own content – I used to love that. And I used to put a lot more heart and soul into it as well, like the planning so if I took a, for example if I was teaching and delivering a theorist like Bell Hooks for example, I would choose a text that would generally fit in with I don't know; Representation or Audience or Positioning or whatever and I used to love being able to find those case, you know those extracts or that case study myself and think yeah, this is. I think I really used to enjoy that and I think that liberation has been kind of taken away a little bit.

R: Do you think its de-professionalising teachers?

T: A little bit, I do. Do you know what, looking at the new specification as well, what I found having obviously delivered Media Studies with the old spec for many many years, obviously choosing our own case studies and generally kind of covering the content that we, that was required of the theoretical framework but. I've also found that its, in a way its, a lot of the kind of the theorists that we're using or we're looking at for like Year 2 of A level Media – they have implemented into their new specification anyway so its almost as if they've got ideas off the various different centres that were, you know exam papers and I think

R: Yeah

T: They've looked at theorists that we have used previously and thought; well do you know what, that was a good case study there, we're going to use that for this one. Because I know that Beyoncé 'Formation' was something we always used to teach, when I say 'always' it was 2016, just before the new changes were put in place, I we found that as a case study and thought; 'this is brilliant for Representation of ethnicity' and all of a sudden it appeared on the new specification. So you know when you're thinking; I know it's a great text anyway, its got a lot of context and historical and again social, political or whatever, but I, you know these are things that we had – I loved the research element of it, finding a good case study a strong case study that the students could discuss the many different areas really.

R: So the level of choice has been taken out and the

T: Yeah a little bit really, yeah and I understand that there has to be some sort of, kind of the case studies have to reflect different target audiences as well and just with things like you know, BBC Radio 4 that we have to deliver for Industry and Audience and it was like Woman's Hour wasn't it to begin with but now it's adapted to we can choose our own now – even things like that it'd good to maybe pick our own, you know a radio station that we do actually listen to

R: Yeah

T: Because I know for definite that I would have chosen Radio 1, Greg James Breakfast in the morning and they would probably be a bit more you know, be a bit engaged more really with that

R: Or even a contrast, even if it makes you know, like a kind of

T: That's what I've been doing yeah, that's because it obviously there are two parts to it in the exam question aren't there – so like again you choose for the industry as a whole so you could use that as a contrast text but I think again it would, yeah I don't know if, but yeah

R: What about the, yeah no, its yeah it's a very strong opinion and one that I think we share with many teachers and I couldn't possible say my own position but as a Media teacher myself I've got very strong opinions about it too.

T: Yeah

R: In terms of the spec, the content that needs to be covered, how do you feel about it...

T: Yeah it's a lot, it's a lot of content particularly when again so many case studies could be redundant in the exam. Obviously I think it was last year I think only 4 case studies, oh I think it was only 3 case studies, it's the unseen element isn't it of component one really as well, where you know I know that kind of fits into the Industry that you've covered and I suppose if you've taught Tide, Kiss of the Vampire or WaterAid or whatever then its, you know you should, they should be able to transfer their skills to a different case study which is maybe a charity campaign or a poster or an advertisement but, again you spend so much time, there's so much to the historical context particularly with the 1960s and like adverts or 1950s adverts – they need to know a lot really, a lot needs to be delivered for that not to be used or not to come up on the exam is quite frustrating

R: Yeah I think that's an important point and in terms of reduction in practical content as well. Has that had an impact on any student engagement?

T: Yeah, so the coursework, yeah sorry is that what you mean sorry?

R: Yes the practical

T: The practical yeah, yes definitely because I mean now I feel like the briefs that have been set or obviously you have to, there's so many different kind of – we've put a checklist together now to make sure that the students are adhering to everything that the brief stipulates in terms of the class Media product. So previously obviously we didn't really have to do all of that in, I know they do the research into like certain genres; music video or television or movies or whatnot but it just feels like a lot more work for a lot less mark.

R: Yeah, definitely. Do you think you've changed your teaching style to adapt to the new course?

T: I feel that yeah, I feel like I'm talking at them a lot rather than letting them be slightly more kind of autonomous in their learning. I am really wary of time and how much content we have to cover in the time that we have in the school term. So I feel like the lessons for them are not as, they can be very lecture like, delivered, teacher centred which they probably had a bit more, again autonomy in their learning with the old specification.

R: Yeah

T: So its difficult because I do feel like I'm talking at them every lesson. I do try and bring in additional things that they can look at which are similar to the set text but its, like I say I do enjoy the unseen element because we can choose things for them to look at ourselves then can't we.

R: Yeah, yeah. What about student engagement as well? Do you think that, I mean obviously they haven't, they don't know anything from before so they can't compare it to anything but in terms of your perception of teaching on this course and the new, sorry the old specification – do you notice any kind of differences in engagement or enthusiasm?

T: *Sighs* Yeah, I definitely, I think obviously that's not just, its not just Media I think its been all courses have obviously its got slightly more difficult hasn't it in all other courses really. Particularly the very exam led ones. But yeah for Media, yeah I do think probably its, its almost become less enjoyable – not only for the, but I think that's also filtered down from the teacher as well. As much as I do try and remain enthusiastic about certain case studies that I'm told that I need to deliver, its very hard to be passionate about something that you're basically being told to deliver. So its, yeah sometimes that maybe comes from me as well, like the lack of engagement at times, I don't know. Its not necessarily all the time, like today I had a great lesson with my first years we taught, well we looked at Marketing and Distribution for I, Daniel Blake and it was, you know, I think there was some really interesting and innovative campaigns that were, sorry strategies that were launched really for that one. So I was into it because I was and again they were as well because obviously because I was but yeah there are certain things where it think; oh god, this is mundane, so yeah definitely

R: Yeah and so you said before that like planning for the course, your heart and soul was not quite into it like you used to be for some of the ones where you had more investment because you were choosing the text – do you still create your own resources do you think or do you use a mixture of other peoples or textbooks or what?

T: I always like to use, I always like to create my own resources but I do obviously go, use the, because its so new and I don't want to, you know I want to make sure that I'm covering everything that's on the exam, it is all about summative assessment really isn't it. I tend to try to not go off topic too much either as well with things like contrast with your set text because again, I'm wary of time so it is a time thing really for, so try not to get too lost in comparing, contrasting or engaged in even an unseen text because it might not, well obviously something very different could come up in the exam.

Talking over/agreeing

R: In terms of like any paid resources, have you bought the textbook? Have you

T: Yeah, everything. So I bought the initial textbook from, I think its Illumative Press?

R: Illuminate

T: Illuminate sorry, trying to think of the name. I was going to say Illuminati then but that's not the right one!

R: That's a Freudian slip isn't it!

Laughter

T: Yeah I bought that, yeah I bought both but I think, obviously I bought that just recently, when I say recently it was last year and it was around 20 something pounds but I bought it when it first came out, the Year 2 text and now the case studies have changed again haven't they? So I'm like; Oh my god, its going to have to go on, its going to have to be sold again – I'll have to buy the new one with the new case studies in it.

R: Do you subscribe to any kind of Media related resources? Not necessarily thinking like lesson resources but any kind of websites or sort of specialist Media theory kind of focused resources?

T: Do you know I, I mean I used, the Facebook group obviously which you were obviously on as well. Yeah I find that really helpful because obviously other teachers are in the same boat aren't they, so I think its good for resource sharing there, on there on the One Drive and on the Facebook page, yeah. So that one would probably be my go to but I tend not to, no – like I say I still try and put my own spin on it really because I think that's the only way I can kind of engage in it myself really. Its good I mean I did enjoy teaching Tide and Kiss of the Vampire but because there was an historical element to it, so I liked looking into things like that

R: And what would you say the Facebook group, what role would you say its primarily played in your kind of teaching? Is it more about the resource sharing, is it more about the actual kind of network and community that is created?

T: Yeah its definitely the community and also reassurance, I know I was, last year I was the only teacher delivering the new spec in our department for Media. So it was, I had 3 classes going through the A level and I was a bit like, and our Head of Department wasn't necessarily a specialist – even though she was supporting me, I just felt like; oh god, I'm on my own here. So that really helped, for that purpose – so I didn't feel like I was on my own because there were other teachers obviously that were the only or sole Media teacher in their department so it helped that, you know that support network really. But yeah that was kind of my go to there, I think really during the last, the latter weeks before they sat their final exam, so it helped a lot.

R: Yeah, did you join from quite early on?

T: I joined after a, it was after a training day at, in Manchester where, yeah it was after that last year. So I, obviously people were telling me about it and said; 'oh this is good' and then I joined pretty much straight away after that.

R: Ok and as a sort of direct result of the new specifications?

T: Yes definitely, sorry yeah because I think obviously everyone is on the same page because we're all delivering the same content aren't we?

R: Exactly

T: I think it would be difficult to be part of that spec community if we were teaching different case studies

R: Yeah

T: I think I mean it would still be useful but I don't think, yeah it's a bit more of a support of what is expected in the exam or what **sticked?!** and yeah so

R: And do you think that you use it quite regularly? Are you on there sort of once, twice..

T: Not all the time no, not all the time no, just I think now that we've had a year of obviously with it being in place

R: Yeah

T: You feel a bit more confident then don't you and of course I've got my resources from last year which I just need to update and, but yeah so I do I go on it every so often not all the time, no.

R: Its just kind of a reassuring group for you to use and for

T: Yeah especially nearer the exam

R: Yeah

T: Again when people predict; like what do you think's going to come up on this paper and I like that because its, I remember doing a panic revision session with my students last year and it was a prediction from one of the teachers in another centre who said; right I think this going to come up in Section A, Media Language questions going to be on advertising and then Representation is going to be a music video and do you know, I kind of went by that and I thought; oh it's not going to come up is it. So I did some last minute revision based on a prediction and it didn't come up! **Laughs**

R: **Laughs** Well its better than nothing I suppose!

T: That's it, I know and I thought do you know **laughs**

R: The hive mind

T: Exactly, it was transferable anyway, it was transferable what I did **laughs**

R: Yeah exactly, exactly and just, I sort of just like to end on this because it, everyone answers slightly differently but what do you think the future of Media Studies is going to be in the sort of medium to long term, as a result of these specs?

T: I don't know if they're going to retain the numbers, I just don't know. I don't think they will. I've got a horrible dread, this is a dread because I do actually love delivering Media and Film Studies as well, I don't teach Film this year though but I do really really enjoy it but I've got a horrible feeling that the, again courses may be collapsed – especially with Film, we really got the hit with Film last year, there was again the numbers dropped from I think it was 90 in the previous year to only 36 this year.

R: Right ok

T: So it was quite worrying really and we were really trying to do things on our open evenings and things like that to try and recruit new students for that course but Media as well it, I just think I've got a feeling that there might be some plans maybe in future to feed Media in with the English department or something like that.

R: Right, yeah

T: I've got yeah, I don't know how, how you know in terms of shelf life on the new specification, I don't know if its definitely going to *inaudible*

R: Do you get, I mean you might not know the answer but do you think that's the same across where you work as well for other subjects? Have numbers dropped overall or is that just

T: It just seems to be the sort of creative subjects really

R: Right

T: Maybe it's just, I don't know maybe something at a lower level that's just being fed in to the students or maybe they've got rid of like, I don't know GCSE Media in certain places and maybe that, they're all going towards – well Psychology seems to be really popular at the moment

R: Yes, the subjects go in phases of popularity don't they?

T: Yeah, its like a trend isn't it

R: Yeah, what's going on outside to influence that, I mean STEM has been a big thing but you know, whether I suppose its all the forensic dramas I think that have been on, maybe – people wanting to become forensic psychologists, I don't know but

T: Exactly, yeah I think it is, its that Netflix effect

Laughter

R: Yeah exactly, Media is like you can watch it and then learn about it as well

T: Yeah that's it, I don't really, because I thought like Media for younger learners is surely a fun subject, or a subject which is engaging

R: Yep

T: For a lot of students, they all use media, all on social media constantly so I don't know, maybe it does have more of a shelf life but I've got, I don't know I mean last year when we were looking at, again basically when we began term and I was looking at the Facebook group and so many people were posting to say that; oh we didn't get the numbers this year and we've had to, you know make some redundancies even – I just thought, oh my god its going mad, like what's happened this year? Like this is the first year that I've actually feared that all of us may not be kept on a full time role, do you know what I mean? For the first time

R: I don't think you're alone in that, I think there's a lot of that being replicated elsewhere as well. Its really interesting because like, you know I've done quite a few of these interviews now and its really the same things coming out all of, pretty much every interview so I think

T: Yeah

R: There's a really strong picture building up of like how the subject is developing in, with these new specs and how people are experiencing it so. There's positive elements to it but also quite, obviously teachers are still really passionate about their subject but also its sort of almost in spite of everything that's happening. But yeah I think that its something to be seen over the next few years and whether the specifications will actually change. I mean hopefully, I know Ofqual at the minute are getting feedback, they had a meeting before Christmas with some teachers and the most recent one was with university lecturers, education university lecturers, to sort of get feedback on students coming up from having done A levels, to see if their education had been changed in any way. So I know they're listening to feedback about it, hopefully this study will – if I can get it out in time to make any difference, you know will

T: Yeah, I think it does, it definitely doesn't it hearing from other people in the classroom actually delivering the content than the ones who have generally designed it, I think, because at first I was thinking 'this is impossible, how am I going to deliver all of this in the time that we were given with the students?' Especially if there's absences here and there an you know they're missing kind of relevant content there, there's not just a day where I can say; right go on the computers and do a research task. They, there's no time for that anymore, they have to

R: Yeah exactly.

T: It's a lot of delivery like and yeah

R: And I get this overall that teachers are feeling pressured all the time and actually that's going to have longer term impact on, of teachers you know professional work balance, work life balance and all that because it's a pretty stressful situation to be in for a whole year, 2 years of feeling like you constantly, you know need to be getting forward and you know, I know my teaching **has suffered** like we haven't got time for this, lets just do

T: Absolutely, I bought a fake news game, it had been recommended by one of the teachers in another centre and I thought; do you know what, that might lighten the mood a little bit and you know, make, take less pressure off them give them a little bit more exciting to do with fake news stories that are generally circulating. We literally had like, what 10 minutes at the end which we had to rush through it and I just thought, you know this is, its not fair is it. I don't know, I just feel like even dropping a couple of case studies from that component 1

paper that, like there's 3 case studies for advertising there – is it necessarily, is it important to look at 3? I don't know

R: Exactly

T: Yeah like 2 music videos you know what I mean? I just think like surely they should look at a music video, look at conventions in music videos in general but why does there have to be 2 set products there for

R: Exactly

T: Maybe think about that for them in future because that will give us more freedom to select things that we generally enjoy teaching as well

R: That's it and the whole of component A, component 1 could just be, or A could be unseen, and they could say you're going to get either: film posters, advertising, print & TV and music video and then you know that something like that's going to come up, you don't know what but you'll have studied something and analyse it and then B could just be you know, very generic kind of Audience and Industry questions and you apply your case studies

T: Yeah exactly

R: You don't have to, like the old OCR, I don't know if you ever taught OCR but the old OCR

T: Oh yes I did, hang on, it sorry, no I didn't teach OCR, I'm lying to you its Cambridge Technical, is that OCR? It is, yeah hang on, Cambridge Technical, no

R: Same awarding body, yeah

T: Yeah that wasn't exam though, not exam based, it was *inaudible* really and coursework

R: This was like an hour and a half exam I think and you had to answer question, you basically you were given a whole load of things you had to cover like; vertical integration, horizontal integration all that kind of stuff, all the usual bits and bobs and then things to do with Audiences and then you had to apply, you had to study a few case studies and in the exam you'd get a very generic kind of question about; 'how does technology drive audiences or blah blah blah blah' and then using, you would be able to apply your examples to, you know so like you could do video games or you could do the film industry or you could do anything

T: Yeah, amazing

R: So you didn't have any, any kind of restrictions on the form that you did and, you know that would be great if that could come back. I mean even if they said that you had to do it for film industry and video games, then at least that's you know the freedom to choose and to

T: Yes, exactly – I think that's what kept on coming up with the old, the MS4 wasn't it, the reports where they were saying some centres are only teaching, I don't know like not all areas of the theoretical framework for a case study, they're just focusing on Representation for 1 and like, you know what I mean? So for TV and then I think that, like now it just seems like we can't, I mean there's no cutting corners is there with this new specification

R: No, the [autonomy/freedom] has been taken away hasn't it, this idea that on one hand before it was kind of too loose, too kind of loosely applied and then now its very, very stringent and you've got no halfway in between and maybe the pendulum will start swinging back a little bit, I don't know but you can only hope that it will go in the right direction.

T: Yeah hopefully, again just by removing a couple of those case studies I think, set products maybe, you take the pressure off them and also us but we'll see

R: Well we can have our fingers crossed

T: I know

R: I will send you my write up, it won't be for a little while but I'm

T: Don't worry, of course yeah

R: For another few months and then I'm going to be writing up in September so but yeah, thank you ever so much for contributing, its really really useful and you know, hopefully you know the study will have some impact. You know I'll, I'm going to try and take it out and make it travel to different places so people can see

T: Yeah, good, that would be amazing

R: But I think its really important, you know I suppose now we've had the interview I can sort of say that the reason why I'm doing it in the first place is because I feel really strongly about the specifications and

T: Yeah of course

R: And this sort of feeling that, from the early consultation phases would also carry on feeling very strongly about it and you know, I had a hope that it would be really positive but you know, there are some elements of positivity that are coming out of it but also I think, well particularly you know the strength of the Facebook groups, the community and also the fact that, well my thesis title is; Media Studies: A site of resistance and conflict

T: Yeah

R: Not just that we're resistant against some of the, the slightly more stringent aspects of the course but also like as a professional body of teachers we're quite, we share a resistance to changes and actually actively make it better for the students

T: Yeah and that's really as well, they give us everything and I just, I don't know, again its all about your professional judgement and things like that isn't it, but like I personally think I prefer to be challenged in the way, you know in kind of researching into my own content, I like to do it myself rather than have someone say, right ok you're going to deliver this. I know some teachers love it and they prefer it – particularly those who don't, maybe their subject specialism isn't Media, its English and they've incorporated a bit of Media but for me personally its zapped the fun out of it a bit for me

R: I'm going to try to get to talk to some people who actually potentially having been teaching Media very long and perhaps don't want to be teaching Media because I think everybody I've

spoken to has kind of offered themselves because they obviously feel very strongly about their subject like yourself

T: Yeah

R: And have a lot to say about it that's really interesting and really really good but I actually want to make sure that I'm not just getting people like you because I want to see if there's, if it's the people who are kind of less engaged with Media as a subject, whether they have similar opinions or similar

T: Yeah, it'd be interesting to get the opinion off somebody who maybe has just started delivering the content maybe, who didn't really know any – are you looking for people who have been delivering it for a few years like previously?

R: I think naturally when I put that shout out on the Facebook groups, I did it on all 3 Facebook groups. Naturally the people that kind of said; yeah I'll do it, like you you know were people who care about the subject and want to have their voice heard

T: Yeah, yeah and we want it to continue, I really don't want to see Media you know being cancelled in years to come because we can't get the recruits

R: That's it, I think I might try and approach people like informally

T: Who are new to it, yeah

R: Yeah I think that's the next step for me because I think, you know I don't want to get these kind of quite skewed results that are really useful and really rich and really interesting but it, whether that is the complexion for the whole country, I don't know.

T: Yeah, exactly and it would be interesting as well because some teachers that have been teaching for a long time, that are slightly maybe older as well – not to kind of stereotype but they could be potentially stuck in their ways so to change, a new spec coming in and again being, well most, not insulted in a way but like; 'you need to deliver this and this is them and you need to, this is semiotics' and things like that, I think some older Media teachers could probably have potentially taken that new spec and thought; well hang on a minute, I know my stuff, so yeah why can't we

R: When you don't know what went before, you have no real opinion, you don't know how good or bad it was before and

T: Exactly

R: When I first started teaching when the very first AS Levels came, you know the curriculum 2000 came in and it was the first time that it moved from the linear back to the modular and I didn't know any different and every, but to be fair I think everyone really like it

T: Yeah, yeah

R: It's been a bit of a shock to the system the last couple of years where it's gone back to the 2 year A level so

T: Yeah, yeah, yeah, it has hasn't it!

R: I'm an old long in the tooth Media teacher now but I don't feel like I am but

T: No, no, no, never never

Talking over

R: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] need to do love honestly

R: Alright, thank you so much, have a good evening

Transcription

OCR

Researcher: So if you wouldn't mind just telling me a little bit about your background as a Media teacher. Like how long you've been teaching, where – well not necessarily the name of the school but the kind of place that you teach at and the kind of students that you have, so that would be really good background context

Teacher: Yeah sure, I mean this is my 2nd year out of NQT so my 3rd year teaching. I'm a course leader

R: Right

T: I was, from my NQT year I sort of got stuck in a bit of circumstances where I was acting Head from my NQT – this year I'm a course leader across 2 schools

R: Ok

T: It's a bit of a burden as you can imagine

R: Yeah, I can imagine yeah

T: Yeah. Where I am North London, [REDACTED] obviously I won't state the school. So we deal with, though it's technically Outer London, we are very much dealing with Inner London kids. Very high numbers of pupil premium, majority Turkish students, we've got a very high number of EAL as well

R: Right

T: And when they come to us already from Primary, they're already at quite a disadvantage in comparison to more sort of Inner London region

R: Yeah

T: This is, so I, when I started I was, I started my NQT during the transition year of the 2 specs, of the spec going from the old spec to the new spec. I stuck with OCR at Key Stage 5 Level and at Key Stage 4 Level I teach the Level 1/2 tech award in Creative Media and yeah, this year we also started the EDUCAS Film Studies as well

R: Ok and how is Media perceived as a subject within your institution or across the 2 schools? Is it got a certain type of status? Or do you get a certain of type of student? Or

T: Well I suppose it won't be no surprise to you but obviously we don't get much priority in the school

R: Yeah

T: I mean that seems to be quite a national issue anyway but we sort of, you know if our requirements are 5 in Language and Lit, we still get students with 4s. Sometimes we do get overlooked in our decision or I'd say before I joined they had a very bad situation where they

went through a series of teachers, no teachers, so the reputation was really, really bad. Over the sort of 2 and a half years that I've been here I've managed to sort of lift the reputation a little bit more like; it's a subject, it's a heavily academic subject, there's a lot of writing especially at A level and so you can't just chuck at kids who are doing resit Maths or resit English or lower levels of English because it just doesn't work like that. There is the assumption that obviously Media Studies is a practical subject

R: Yeah

T: I know if we get revision days, drop down days it's very hard for me to get priority over other subjects like History, Psychology

R: I feel your pain, yeah and like approximately how many students do you have? You know how many classes of Media do you have?

T: So; in my Year 13 I've got a class of 12, in my Year 12 I've got a class of 12, in my Year 12 Film I've got a class of 12 and in my Year 10 Media I've got a class of 25. I don't currently have a Year 11 because the year they were recruited for options they didn't have a teacher, so they were scared if it was going to continue or not.

R: And how does that compare to other subjects in your institution? Is it sort of typical or is that lower? Higher?

T: It's quite a, yeah I'd say it's quite an average number. What does tend to happen is I could probably get higher numbers, options that are more high ability but often they get swayed or pushed to other subjects or we're blocked against subjects that have a bit more of a, what's the word I'm looking for? Subjects that have a better **unsure** or the students are more interested in.

R: Right

T: So that's more or less an average number. At Year 10 at lower level because it's a BTEC I get, you know, I have some really high ability students and I've got a good range of low ability students and strong EAL students as well

R: Yeah

T: Because obviously; 1. It's a BTEC and 2. It's Media Studies

R: Yeah, sure and just sort of thinking about the specification, it's quite interesting that you, I mean obviously you had experience of the legacy spec for a year, so I suppose there's some contrast there but it's interesting because a lot of teachers that I've been speaking to have been teaching for a long time and have, you know were quite wedded to the old specs.

T: Yeah

R: So I'm interested in your perception of this being sort of relatively new to kind of teaching in that sort of context. What do you think about the kind of way it's structured and the kind of content of it?

T: I think, I know the new spec gets a lot of stick and rightfully so in some aspects but I do think there are many positive aspects of this new spec.

R: Yeah

T: I think, I mean I think were we really given a valuable exchange for what Media Studies is to our students previously a lot of it was; you'd watch a clip, analyse the clip and that's Media for them. But obviously as Media specialists we know that that is not even a fraction of what Media Studies is

R: Yes, yeah

T: I think the range of content that's covered in the new spec gives you a wide perspective of Media Studies, it's a lot more wholesome. I think when the specs first were, first came about and even up until now there is a lack of resources and support, that's definitely one thing. And the reduction of coursework is a little bit saddening.

R: Yeah

T: But like in terms of, it is very, I think in terms of content it is very content heavy and I think sometimes people in the specifications are not realistically thinking how these students can learn it and sort of provide it in the exam – the amount of content that is required per each question

R: Yeah, sure. Is there anything particularly about the OCR; you said you're OCR aren't you? Yeah

T: Yeah, yeah

R: That you teach that you like? That the students are maybe engaged with or you particularly like teaching? Or something you think works particularly well in that course?

T: So, I like, from my perspective because I've, a lot of my Media Studies – my dissertation was on newspapers, I like the Newspaper section.

R: Yeah, yeah

T: But that's because I engage with it and obviously I think it's very useful for transferable skills and such like that. However I do think we're asking a lot of these students in some of these questions. Like I think knowing about newspapers and the contexts surrounding it absolutely **critical**. The way the questions are structured, is it the best way for our A level students, that's something I question. For example when we are applying the theory, again there's a lack of sort of clarity from the board, like could it be in question 1? Is it a Rep theorist? Could it be in question 2? A lot of it is a little bit of guesswork sometimes.

R: Yeah

T: I think in terms of Radio – I think that's, is that something, you know if we were looking to reduce the content and still give them a valuable subject in return, is Radio something perhaps we could have skipped out? Considering, you know the direction that our students are going towards. I find, because I line manage the other school and they do EDUCAS I

prefer OCR to EDUCAS in the sense that there's a little bit more direction in terms of everything's sectioned off.

R: Ok, yeah yeah

T: Slightly so at least you know what's coming in section B and section A and such like that. Again in terms of like what, with all the content, wow where was I, I've gone on a trip there

R: No it's good, its good

T: The long form TV drama, its again, yeah I like that they can incorporate Media [language], like I think what I've noticed is that a lot of it they've tried to treat the subject a little bit like it's a facts based subject

R: Yeah, yeah

T: Like; I need to remember this, I need to remember that and incorporate, incorporate. Whereas I think they've reduced a lot on the analysis, there is an aspect of analysis but like a very context heavy, its very sort of, you know 'this is the correct answer' heavy and that's not what Media is about

R: Yeah

T: And the way they've put each section and its question on certain timings like a 10 marker should be 17 marks [minutes] and that, the students are constantly asking; how many paragraphs is it or what do it need to write because they learn so much, like its about picking the right content, as you know, for that 17 minutes and I think that sometimes it's a little bit too wide for them.

R: Yeah, no absolutely and what do you feel about the kind of nature of the specifications having set texts?

T: When I first, when I first started teaching and when we were getting trained by Goldsmiths, a lot of that was like, oh the set texts makes it very restrictive and such like that, and I think again that's got its pros and its cons because when it comes to set texts, if you know what the set text is you know you're planning for the subject and everything else is always around that set text

R: Yeah, yeah

T: Right? So I suppose if you're not as much of a confident Media teacher or if it's a non-specialist teaching its easier to teach. But if we're applying the same set texts for every student in the United Kingdom – we're not adapting to, catering to our students

R: Yeah, yeah

T: And Media should be taught by a specialist. So someone like, someone from a Media background, it should be expected that they can provide set text that can cater to that student, they know what will engage the students, what will appeal to their needs and such like that. I don't know if that really answers your question, I've sort of given a pro and con for it!

R: *Laughs* I think one of the key things that has come up in this is the sort of the top down approach that the specifications and Ofqual have taken, that is its kind of de-professionalised teachers and not left anything to the professional judgement of teachers and the freedom of choice I think is one of the main things

T: Yeah

R: And so its just really interesting talking to people because I think there's kind of a recurrent theme of people saying, you know like what you just said is that teachers who are subject specialists should be allowed to exercise their subject specialism and choose texts that they think are best fitted to their students. Because as we know your, I mean I teach in Inner London as well, I know that when I taught in a different place in the country that, you know a completely different texts that I would have chosen

T: Of course

R: So yeah I think that's a really, really key theme. Do you think then, have you changed your kind of teaching style or, sorry well I suppose – do you think you teach in a different way to how you'd prefer to teach because to adapt to the demands of the course?

T: I mean in terms of changing teaching style obviously its hard to tell because I only taught sort of Year 13 of the old spec and Year 11 of the old spec

R: Yeah

T: But in terms of what, like teaching towards the set text in a certain way, yes I would say but that turned out to be a bit of a benefit for me because when I was an NQT, you know I was, I didn't have a Head of Department – he walked out probably after a couple of days and I was left without a Head of Department so it helped me to sort of structure my teaching and teaching ... towards a core set text

R: Right, yeah

T: And what I've noticed which seems to be happening a lot, I don't know if you've noticed this but teachers, schools are really struggling to recruit Media teachers so its very, it's become very common that as an NQT you go into a school and you don't have a Head of Department that can say; this is the advice that I would give you for it, for a set text so this is the advice I would give to you to do it. So I think to an extent, though it is restrictive, if you're given extra, extra obstacles which in education we're getting more and more it does give away some of the extra thinking like; oh what set, what text can I provide or what not can I provide

R: And do you tend to create your own resources? Or do you tend to use other kind of found resources like textbooks or resources online? Or any other kind of resources

T: I'd say it's a big mixture, so textbooks – I don't use it to teach, I give it to them for them to revise

R: Yeah

T: I am a big believer in; if something's not broken, don't change it. So it's a mixture of, I will create something or I will see something online and adapt it or mix and match it but unlike the old spec, it's a lot harder finding things online.

R: Yeah

T: And when there are things online I'm finding that people are charging for it as well.

R: Yes, yeah

T: Because obviously the demand is there at the moment.

R: Yeah

T: And going back to that last question, as well what I find when I was teaching, especially last year with my first set of exam groups with the new spec; I found that I was less creative in my teaching and I was teaching very much to the exam, to the set text, to the contexts.

R: Yeah I think that's inevitable with the level of content as well that people have got to get through, you know you've got to kind of be almost like a designer trying to work out what's going to be the most useful on the, you know for the exam. I suppose as professionals we're all accountable for our results at the end of the day

T: Of course yeah

R: There's that tension too. So I mean I suppose that brings us nicely onto the idea of the Facebook group because obviously that's how I found you. My research also is looking at the Facebook groups because there's obviously EDUCAS and AQA ones as well and they kind of sprang up around the time of the change in the spec so I think I found that a really interesting kind of phenomenon really. Not entirely unexpected but it's been really interesting how those groups have evolved over the last sort of 2, 3 years and I just wanted to kind of get your feelings about how you use the groups, what it offers you, you know just general experiences and how it's worked.

T: Well I mean that *laughs* that has been a big saviour of my teaching career so far for definite. Again you know, coming into NQT and you don't have a Head of Department to refer to and such like that and then the spec got released 2 weeks before the Year 12s started at A level, you know there was such minimal resources, I had no one to go to, obviously other schools didn't really have anything. So the Facebook group was like, you know you had teachers that have been teaching for so many years that you could just pose a question to; can you help me with this? Can you help me with that? And then you had the drive that was there as well and especially in the 1st year it gave me a really good base to sort of teach and what I've sort of basically done since that first year to this, I've grown in confidence and say; ok that's my core this is how I evolve it, this is how I evolve it. Because obviously when you're sceptical about a new specification, you're a new teacher, a new year group – you don't want to be creative, you don't want to try and incorporate new ideas especially because it's so content heavy, you want to use something that's tried and tested that someone may have been teaching for over 20 years, has that confidence.

R: Yeah

T: So that's definitely been a good help in that sense, even just asking questions, just simple questions like; here anyone know about this or that, blah blah blah. Making contacts in terms of who like, moderation anyone want to moderate and whenever the school ask me if I want to do a CPD session or a advice session to a new NQT, that is one of the first tips I would say; go on Facebook, find out what groups there are.

R: Yeah, yeah, I think it's a really good kind of resource as a network, not just as a kind of resource site, it there's, the community is a really good professional community of practice I think

T: Yeah

R: Do you feel that you're quite active on there or, you know do you check in regularly? Or do you dip in and out?

T: So what I do, I regular just I browse and I, on my Facebook I have like 'saved lists' you know you can make a collection *laughs* so as sad as it sounds I have saved A level Media, saved A level Film, saved BTEC, saved General Studies, saved Reading Materials – so I'll see it; oh that looks good, save it, A level save it save it.

R: Yeah, yeah

T: If there's, I tend not to comment as much on people asking for advice because sometimes I feel like I am still relatively new, though I have 3 years experience I'm a little bit more experienced than that given the circumstances that I've been caught in and blah blah blah – I try not to, I think I'd rather someone whose been teaching for longer than me to give the answer. If I'm quite confident in the answer I might give a little suggestion and if I've got a question then yeah I'll pose a question without hesitation

R: Yeah, yeah absolutely and do you post, like some people post interesting things that might be in the Media like articles and you know just general sort of things that they've come across that might be relevant to the course. Do you tend to do that as well? *muffled*

T: I'd love to say I do, I just never have the time or remember to do so. I think I did mention, like every once in a blue moon I might say something like when Xbox made the announcement to go completely digital I think I put up a post something saying; Xbox have gone digital that might be something we will have to incorporate in Minecraft

R: Yeah, yeah

T: But I've, I'm quite a, I don't post extra resources as much as I should. I mean I said once a while back to one of the admins, I said I would post some coursework examples of our last cohort – I never got round to doing it unfortunately.

Laughter

R: I think that's entirely understandable though considering the pressures that people are under. I'm sure there's a lot of resources out there that could be put on that people aren't doing so but just everyone's in the same boat aren't they so

T: Yeah

R: Yeah and just thinking like, I kind of tend to end with this because it gets a different answer every time pretty much. But what do you think the future of Media Studies as an A level is and maybe also the subject going forward in the sort of medium to long term future?

T: A lot of it depends on management I think. It worrying because when I, when I, the year before I applied for my PGCE there was talk that Media was going to get scrapped at a national level and that really scared me at the time and I was

R: Yeah

T: You know, I really want to go into teaching and Media's my passion, like damn where do I go? And then obviously they did a reform and there was a big hoo-har that the reform was damaging for the subject and whatnot

R: Yeah

T: I think as long, well I would like to say as long as we get results management are happy to keep it but I saw a post recently in the Media page and a few people commented on it that it happened the same with them, the results have been good for the last few years and management took the decision to scrap it.

R: Yeah, yeah

T: I do think that like Media doesn't get the respect it deserves because it's not seen as academic and there's this whole – I don't know about your school or 6th form but my 6th form has a big drive on **Russell Group, now Russell Groups** don't tend to do Media Studies because Media Studies is not that much of an old subject like Film Studies was. My argument is moving forward, most of the careers some careers that are not even created yet are all Media related. I think its something like 70% of jobs are to be included in 2023 I think and they're going to be revolving around Media

R: Yeah

T: And I think further in the future, if Media stayed as a subject as an A level subject, I think its something that possibly might get asked ***to recruit*** universities incorporated more because its so pivotal, its even if the subject is not, even if a career path is not related to Media, now because of how central it is to everything, you know it can only get stronger in that sense.

R: Yeah

T: But I think a lot of it that will be dependent on management, whether they want to keep it or, you know we've got loads of budget cuts everyone, all of us in this profession know this, with the budget cuts when they're looking to scrap certain subjects, Media's one of the first ones to go.

R: Yeah. I'm really interested actually because I know the Goldsmith's ***recording breaks up*** ██████████ was your tutor at the time?

T: Sorry you broke up

R: The Goldsmith's course, was it [REDACTED] tutor on that?

T: Yeah, yeah, yeah

R: Ok, yeah so I know, well I knew [REDACTED] as well

T: Yes, yeah

R: I just, sort of thinking back to that time really, that was quite a pivotal moment in terms of like for Media Studies, the reform and people being fearful that it wasn't actually going to go forward. Do you think, I mean you said you were fearful as well, did people on your course have concern about that? As in because Media PGCEs have been massively reduced, I mean there used to be 3 or 4 big providers in London for Media PGCE and I think Goldsmith's now is pretty much the only 1 in London.

T: Yeah we, it definitely took a hit. The thing is what is tended to happen, not just schools are struggling to recruit Media teachers but it seems like people are not training to be Media teachers anymore

R: Yes

T: On our course I think we had something like 18 students and 2 dropped out and if you compared it to the English course, they probably had in the 30s

R: Yeah, yeah

T: And what I've noticed now as well, people with Media degrees that want to go into teaching would rather go into English because of the stability, there's more stability around it which works kind of in our favour for those of us that are trained in Media because then it means that we, we're a bit like gold dust

R: Yes

T: But then equally then schools are just thinking well we can't recruit Media teachers so we'll just scrap Media out and hope

R: Yes

T: It's definitely had an effect which is a big shame.

R: Yes so I think it'll be really interesting over the next few years to see what happens, I mean fingers crossed it will get strengthened and maybe even some kind of reform again in a positive way. But no that's really interesting, thank you so much for your input

T: That's fine

R: That's really good and really useful. I'll be doing data collection and more interviews until sort of July time and then I'll be writing up in September so I will send you over all the findings when they are done. It's, nothing is going to happen immediately but you know hopefully with the sort of collective groundswell of people feeling the same way, Ofqual

might sort of start to take note and to start to listen. Even if the specs don't discernibly change at least they will take the voice of the teacher a bit more seriously because I think that was certainly what was very absent from the consultation last summer

T: Yes

R: I think that's the bigger concern in teaching, not just in Media, I think the fact is that you know we've always had a bit of autonomy in many ways – certainly from within the subject we've had autonomy, how it works and that has kind of shifted in the last sort of 5/6 years so

T: Yeah

R: I think its important to get the subject teachers voice back into the subject

T: I wonder sometimes if these set texts are as a result of the lack of Media teachers, that they feel; ok so if we want to run the subject we can just give this to an English teacher or a Drama teacher and they can cover it.

R: That's a really interesting perspective, yeah its, because of the standardisation of everything it does speak to that kind of idea doesn't it

T: But the irony is people, non-specialists I know who have taught Media previously do not want to come, go anywhere near the new specs

R: Really? Yeah I can imagine. It's, yeah because I mean there's a huge amount of English teachers out there who've been kind of coerced or cajoled into teaching Media who may not feel the same way anymore so

T: Yeah, I would say like 2 other big negatives of the new spec is the big reduction of coursework, I was really sad to see that happen – it had its positives, like because obviously mines not coursework from a teaching perspective, you don't realise actually how much of a headache it is until you're an actual teacher *laughs*

R: *Laughs* Yeah

T: I was like; 'oh my gosh', but I, you know I think that was quite sad because you know, you don't want to just teach them the serious side – though I believe the serious sides important, the practical side is a really good skill and because its so content heavy, I don't know about yourself but I only ever do Print, because I don't feel

R: Yeah we do a mixture but like, we do feel it and we're quite well resourced and we've got a curriculum assistant who helps out with all that kind of practical stuff so a lot of the logistics are already kind of taken care of in a way

T: Yes, yes makes sense

R: So it is, but I think, I have taught in other places where the resources aren't as good and yeah you do default to Print because its more manageable and you know, and actually sometimes the students like it better. They might pay lip service to wanting to go out and use a camera and stuff but actually when it comes down to it they haven't got the time or the energy or the motivation or the creativity to kind of

T: Exactly, or even the friends.

R: Yes exactly, exactly. Yeah Print is very much more manageable isn't it because you can actually stand over them and see what they're doing whereas with, when they go out with a camera its like you know they're walking each other round you don't know where its going to fire off so

T: No *laughs*

R: Or you only see when its happened and that's when the murders been committed so you know its, it's a much different beast you have to be confident and have students who know their stuff so yeah

T: I feel like you could spend less time on coursework on print rather than moving image, so then this way you can focus more of the two years on the exam question

R: And I think as well you know like the training that's required for them to get to know

T: Yeah

R: I don't know what you use if you were using videos, we use Premier Pro but its

T: Yeah we use Final Cut, yeah

R: Yeah and like you know, it is industry standard stuff and you know, I know editors that have been working in the industry for like 20/30 years and they disappear into the toilets with a manual just to kind of pretend that they know what they're doing and to find out

T: *Laughs*

R: They still do that, you know and its like you're expecting these kids to know it straight away within like 2 weeks of a minimal induction. So yeah I think some of its slightly unrealistic

T: Yeah

R: In terms of course content. Essentially if you rolled out A level to 3 years then it probably is more manageable but that's

T: Yeah exactly

R: But there you go. Alright, well that's really brilliant, thank you so much and as I say I'll be in touch, I'll probably see you on the Facebook groups at some point as well

T: Yeah, yeah I'll be like; **Help/Hello!**

R: I'll sort of, virtually wave but yeah it's great and you are contributing to what I think, I mean I know I'm biased, it's my study but you know I'm doing it because I think its really important and nobody else is doing it at the minute so I think its important as part of the subject evolution to kind of have it recorded and hopefully make it better.

T: No of course I believe that, I should have, that's why as soon as I saw your post I was like; yep, because we're looking at the good of Media Studies and the subject of Media, I'm all on board with that

R: That's brilliant and I think you know, its really interesting, what I'm trying to do next is – so I'm, you're still in kind of in my first phase and I sort of predicted that there would be about 20 or so teachers would come forward and say; 'yeah I really want to do this' because they're really passionate and really keen, like yourself and you know like whatever level of experience, that its because they care about the subject

T: Yeah

R: What I need for the next phase is some people who perhaps are like a bit more ambivalent *laughs* I know that sounds a bit weird but I want to get a really full picture because I bet there are teachers out there who like are English teachers who have just been coerced in to teaching it and don't know what they're doing. They're not necessarily going to have a massively strong opinion that they want to talk about it, but I want to try and smoke them out somehow and just get a bit more of a perspective of people who maybe follow the textbooks a bit more or maybe follow the resources a bit

T: Oh right, yeah

R: You know just to kind of see if that is the case you know

T: Yeah absolutely. I think after a few more years of it we'll get more of a full picture because my results last year, surprisingly were actually pretty good – where we lost marks was the coursework though, they really, OCR really messed up on the coursework grades because they said 'Fashion' and when you looked at case studies and you research fashion magazines they gave, you know its very similar to Lifestyle and we got marked down on some aspects because it covered too much of Lifestyle.

R: Oh right, ok

T: So that was 1 thing and I think you know, our exam performances were amazing it was the coursework that dragged us down so on the whole we had quite good results given the context of everything that had happened before me and such and so when I look at the group chats sometimes I do think, like on the group I do think there's a lot of, a little bit of a *unsure* going on because 1 or 2 people might not understand something and everyone's like; oh my gosh, oh my gosh, but before I speak, like before I speak too soon I want to see obviously the next set of results in a couple of years and obviously see, are we just over panicking or is it quite, more simple than we are thinking or are we, you know given how we are teaching it and stuff. It will be interesting to see the next few years and if the grade boundaries go up as well.

R: Yes! I mean that is something to always, you know I always seem to find that, our results were quite mixed last year but actually I think they were mixed but they were fair – I think they actually reflect, I wouldn't have thought, you know I always, I tend to do this and I've not really been proven wrong too much yet but at the start of the year within the space of 2/3 weeks I do a little kind of, it's a self prediction I don't – its not formalised anywhere but I'll write down what I think those students are going to get at the end of the 2 years

T: Oh yeah

R: Just after those 2 or 3 weeks initial perception and I'd say about 75% of the time I'm not that far off

T: Yeah

R: You know I'm pretty accurate at the end of the 2 years you know and its interesting and like no matter what the course is, no matter what you teach them, how you teach them whatever – they still seem to end up with what you think they're going to get

T: Yeah *laughs*

R: *Laughs* unfortunately some of its not always that positive but its, yeah, its just a little stupid quirk that I've got about things

T: *Laughs* Always thinking ahead

R: Yeah, exactly. But yeah so yeah the next few years are going to be really, really important and I just hope there's enough of a kind of critical mass of teachers who care enough about the subject to kind of keep driving it forward which I think, you know there's certainly a lot of evidence of that on the Facebook groups and it's just, you know hope people don't get too disillusioned with anything from, in the next year so

T: Yeah

R: But yeah, well thank you so much

T: No worries

R: Good luck with the rest of the year and I'll see you on the Facebook group

Researcher: So if you don't mind me asking I'd like to know a little bit about your background as a Media teacher.

Teacher: No worries, yep

R: So would you mind just describing the kind of school that you work at? How long you've been a teacher? That kind of thing

T: Yeah no worries. So I've got your questions here so I've jotted down some answers

R: Oh brilliant

T: Ok, so my role is primarily as a lecturer, although I am a, also like a pastoral personal tutor but my main role is a Media Studies lecturer

R: Ok

T: Specialising in Media and Film Theory. Where I work is an FE college, [REDACTED], so it's post 16 education. I've been teaching for 22 years, 2 years of that was in London just after I graduated and then for the last 20 years since I've been living in this part of the world, I've been at the college so it's 20 years in May I think it is. So I'm due for early release soon I think

Laughter

T: How did I or when did I become a Media teacher would have been 1998, so that was the year that I graduated and I was at the [REDACTED] in the sort of [REDACTED] area as a mature student and developed a real love for the theory side even though I originally went in to do practical for my degree. I sort of ended up really sort of loving the theory and discovered I had an aptitude for teaching so I thought; ok I'll explore it from that point of view, and then I was taken on as an associate lecturer by the university once I'd graduated. So I was there for 2 years and then moved down to [REDACTED] and dropped down a level from degree level to FE level but that's absolutely fine and I've been here for 20 years so I'm quite happy doing what I'm doing

R: Yeah

T: Am I a subject specialist? Yeah well as I say, probably, Film and Media theory is my specialist area – although I do do some stuff on Media employment and progression; so it's looking ahead after what's happening on the course. Although I wouldn't say I'm an expert in that area

R: Right

T: But you know, I've developed the knowledge. Do I have a Media Studies degree? Yes I do in Creative Media production as I said, that was back in 1997 when I graduated, that was a BA honours.

How many teachers in my department? There's 7 because we are primarily the national diploma sort of level of teaching, I'm the only one, well there's myself and a colleague that does the A level. I do the theory side and my colleague covers the practical side

R: Right, yeah

T: But there's 7 in total in the team and we teach across a variety of different disciplines

R: Yeah

T: How many take the A level course? We do it across 2 years, so we do the AS and then we do the A level, although that's possibly going to change in a year or 2s time, I'm not sure. I would say we have approximately 20 across the 2 years so that'll be about a dozen for Year 1 and about 8 that carry it on in Year 2, so I'd say its probably about 20 that I have at the moment.

R: Ok

T: Do I have any other, yes we do offer other courses, mainly national diplomas; Levels 2 and 3. We do HND, we do degree, we do Access courses as well so we you know, we are a massive provider for post-16 education.

R: Yeah, yeah

T: Entry requirements for A level; I believe its Grade 5 and above, the A level not surprisingly comes out of our 6th form college, so I don't actually work for them – I'm part of Creative Media but I believe that it is Grade 5, especially in English and I think they need about 6 or 7 qualifications at that grade.

R: Ok, just out of interest, going back to your point about you doing the AS and the A level separately

T: Yeah

R: Who's decision was that? Was that yours? Or

T: No that's been sort of historically done from the college since, well certainly since I've been here and probably before and the main reasoning behind that is that the college would have a fair degree of international students that would come over for 1 year to improve their language skills and then obviously be offered a, courses which they could complete within a year. And also obviously to cater for the wider community that some students just drop out after a year and move onto something else but I've got a feeling that the amount of A levels that are now going to be going over to purely linear is going to affect that decision and that wont be mine, that will be you know, somebody way above my pay grade that will make that decision. I think its, its been overdue I think, I'm amazed we've been, not getting away with it but we've been allowed to do the AS for so long so I think that will change.

R: And how have you coped with the sort of content level thats required with both AS

T: Yeah that was tough in the very first year its, it was such a text heavy, I mean I suppose you're aware of the specification and how much is in it

R: Yes

T: That first year was really, really tough and I was only operating on one 90 minute session for the theory and one 90 minute session for the practical in a week, I could only see them once a week and you know that nearly killed me that first year. So I was really teaching by rote and it wasn't really very engaging for the students but they come up with fantastic results but it wasn't really what, how I'd like to teach. But because we have to fit so much in I'd you know, the second time I'd started teaching it I knew how I could develop it and change things around. So I think there's a question that you had about how its changed my way of teaching?

R: Yeah

T: It definitely, yeah it definitely, I had to completely throw out everything that I'd or how I taught before and reassemble it in a way that would work better for the students and for me as well so

R: So for the students on the second year, the A level, full A level; how did they feel about the sort of doubling up of content as it were I suppose?

T: Again, last year was the first year that we had that sort of doubling up and I, I'll be honest the group I had last year was one of the best groups I've ever, ever taught

R: Right

T: They just went with everything that I had to do. This years second years' slightly weaker academically and I think its, its really just trying to get across all the, what I call; 'second year texts' first of all, get those done and understood and then go back to the stuff that we did last year. Now again I'm, fingers crossed that they will have enough knowledge retention because I'm certainly not going to have enough time to go back over the same texts in the same amount of detail so its, that's going to be a tough one I think. But I did lots and lots of revision booklets that I produced myself and lots of resources so I'm hoping that

Talking over

T: Sorry

R: I've seen them, they're great *laughs*

T: *Laughs* Oh ok, thank you, thank you. Yeah I mean its doing things like that which I never, which I really wouldn't have done for, certainly for my national diploma students

R: Yeah

T: But I think A levels need that, that way of being taught, I think they've come to, on the national diplomas they come and primarily just do practical work there's not a great deal on the theory. Whereas on the A levels it's the other way round so I think, you know they need that kind of old fashioned way of doing it with booklets and paper and you know things like that.

R: Do you think then there is something more to be said about independent learning? That if they're having to go and do a lot off their own back, do you think that is giving them a different set of skills? Or one that you perhaps wouldn't desire?

T: To give them the opportunity for independent learning? I personally at this stage I wouldn't advocate it. *Pauses* I think, that again is a case of how much do I produce for them to use for independent learning? How much do they generate themselves? And when you know students as I do, over the 20 years, some of them are loathed to do much off their own back, so it may well then end up being more me producing materials for them to use independently. So I mostly just do it in the classroom.

R: Yeah, yeah sure

T: I mean it would be great if I could say; yeah go off *inaudible* for the next 2 weeks being completely independent students and once the sun hits they'll be independent students down the beach I think, so I don't think that's going to be a go-er at the moment.

R: No ok, fair enough. So obviously you've said your institution's like massive

T: Yeah

R: You've talked about the 6th form being separate to where you're employed but how do you perceive the role of A level Media Studies across your institution? Where does it kind of fit in in the jigsaw puzzle of curriculum there?

T: Yeah I mean I've written down a few notes here that it, and I mean it always has done, its always complimented other A levels that are taught. So at the start of the year I get an idea from the students what else they've picked as part of their A level curriculum and more often than not they go to things like Psychology, Sociology English, maybe Politics you know, all those things are so interwoven with Media so I think they, you know the subject itself is seen as quite a useful one to have – now that's from a specification point of view. The actual material within the A level is something I do have an issue with but I think that the, the way that Media Studies is offered is an attractive one for schools or colleges.

R: Yeah

T: But as I said, the content now is another matter. So I'd say that it's seen in a positive way definitely

R: And would you say that the students are primarily on A level only courses, they're not mix and match with vocational?

T: No they, we used to be able to run our Film Studies and Photography A levels when we taught those and we offered them both to 6th form students and to our own Level 3 students

R: Yes

T: But now due to the lack of funding and hours that are being taken up by other things, we just haven't got that capacity to offer that now. So it's purely run through the 6th form and we are limited to teaching either Media or Photography and Photography's going at the end of this year anyway.

R: Ok, wow that's interesting and who's decision was that?

T: Again, that Photography is going over to linear as of next year and this is where we're in a little bit of a grey area because the college have – as far as I know, have not made a commitment yet to carrying on all A levels across a linear way of doing it.

R: Ok

T: So I'm not 100% sure that in 2 years time there'll be any A levels running through the college due to that decision. As I said that's not my, that won't be my decision to make but I think they will be, it will just be a complete change around of how they're taught.

R: Right, ok. Interesting so an interesting future for that then

T: Yes, yes, yes well again that's all part of the change in curriculum from what, 2/3/4 years ago whenever it was and I think the effects of it have really now only being felt now rather than straight away as normally happens.

R: Yeah, I mean again that's what I'm researching really, is looking at the short and medium and potentially long term impacts of that

T: Yeah, yeah

R: So if we can sort of think about the actual specific curriculum content of the new specifications; what are your opinions about the big radical changes you know of set texts and theorists, reduction of practical etc?

T: Initially when we, when I went along to one or a couple of the sessions that were put on by EDUCAS, you know to promote the new spec - it was like; yeah ok this is something new, this is something fresh, something different and I think that was the case for a lot of people that were there they felt a bit more energised because it was something new. So initially I think yeah it was seen as useful because you didn't have to be scrambling around to provide your own resources and find your own texts and things like that. Which I never would have a problem with but I know some lecturers felt, you know especially if they're new to the subject that they felt a bit under pressure to provide all the stuff themselves. So I think that was seen as a positive very much so at the beginning but from my conversations or just observing what people were saying on the Facebook group – which has been an absolute godsend I must, you know I must get across, you know it does seem that some of these texts were chosen for very unusual reasons. Maybe only to satisfy Ofqual, I really have no idea

R: Yeah, yeah and the reduction of practical production as well, do you think that could have impacted student engagement? Or

T: I think its been the other way round for us, I think the students that have come to do this are not the most practically minded initially because they've chosen an academic route through A levels, whereas on our Level 2 and 3 provision they can't purely because of the practical elements. So I think what they actually see Media as being is something different, as a different subject it's the only thing that they will actually make something practical on and I think just having the reduction of it from my point of view actually doesn't affect us at all – it gives me certainly more time for the theory and for the, preparing them for the exams. So from my point of view I don't see a major issue with reducing the coursework.

R: Ok

T: It's actually probably made it more academically accepted outside of, outside of you know teaching. I think maybe once people stopped seeing it as the classic soft subject and other, well I don't know if that will ever happen but I think you know by having it much more academically rooted I think has been a good thing.

R: Ok, that's really interesting, I think there's been quite a binary split between the opinions of teachers on that so some are really feverishly pro wanting more coursework and that practical study and many who are not so there's been very little middle ground and that's quite interesting

T: Yeah I think so but I mean from my point of view, from our point of view here, I mean as I said we are this sort of huge provider for – certainly for Media, so our facilities are pretty exceptional. You know the computers we have, the amount of camera equipment we have, all that you know we are really, really lucky, I'm really grateful that we've got it. And then when I see what some people are saying on the Facebook group about the lack of equipment that they have and thinking; god, I mean I have no idea how you're actually providing this over just a short space of time let alone having to do more of it if the specification demanded it. So there's potentially that to argue against as well, its about the facilities that are available.

R: No absolutely. I think as well obviously there's, the wider the provision the easier it is to cater for every single student that comes across, comes through your door as well

T: True, yeah.

R: So I think, you know it think some institutions are really struggling because they have to cater for, you know they've got quite a small range to offer and they have to cater for a large range of students

T: Absolutely, you know as I said I have total empathy when I read some of these you know quite sort of heart-breaking comments you know; well I have 1 camera shared between, I don't know 20 students or something. You know I think; god my lot don't realise how lucky they are.

R: Well exactly, exactly. I mean you covered quite a bit actually of the next few questions, I don't know if there's anything else you'd want to add. I mean you said when you said learning the curriculum you were like; this is quite a positive thing, this could be interesting, there was some kind of thoughts about how it might you know be beneficial to the subject

T: Yeah

R: Is that fair to say that was your initial reaction?

T: Initial definitely and to some extent it still is. I mean the next question I think was; had my views changed since teaching it? And I'd have to say yes, not necessarily in the positive. I think some of the texts that were chosen are now quite outdated, very very quickly. I mean I can give you some examples but I don't know if you want those or not?

R: Yes, yeah go for it

T: Ok, well the Assassins Creed 3 text; I can understand why that was chosen for various reasons but I think we, you know it can be moved on now, you know there's other things happening in that industry which could easily be studied and have more relevance. It's the 1 text out of the whole specification I instantly dread teaching and it's got to the point where it's like; I'll give you a revision booklet and all the information is in there because there's not really much that I can teach you other than read this stuff and that's not the way that I'd like to teach.

Zoella I think again, I can understand again why that was chosen at the time 4/ 5 years ago she was very, very relevant. Now probably very irrelevant – in the whole scheme of social media and vlogging. I mean I use that now as an historical text even though its only what, 3 or 4 years old. And yeah its like ok we have to come from somewhere, so lets start with her and we normally see a few embarrassed looks from some of the girls who think, oh god I used to follow this and now I've grown up. And then we sort of see how vlogging and so and the whole sort of online thing has developed so that one has had a few teething problems but now I can see how it can be taught in a more relevant way.

R: Yes, just out of interest the, you mentioned Assassins Creed is the standout text for you that's lost its relevance; is that partly because, are you interested in video games? Is that something that

T: I wouldn't, I'm not the biggest gaming fan in the world, I can barely turn on a Wii but I can understand that you know it's something which is very popular amongst the age group that we teach. Ironically, this year when I've sort of like put it out there as; oh we're going to be teaching this text and its about the gaming industry, I've got as I said a dozen kids in my AS class and probably 1 of them said; oh actually I do play games, most of them don't and that kind of surprised me. So potentially I could see well alright there's a way that I can use this text to educate or to sort of bring up their knowledge but I think the text itself is not, is not the most interesting from a non-gamers point of view definitely

R: The reason why I was asking is because often people pick a text that they really don't like because actually its one of their things that they're actually really passionate about or have as a sort of specialism. I just wondered if that was the case.

T: Oh no, like I say my gaming knowledge is pretty poor to say the least. But again I can understand why it was picked you know because of the technology that was being used to promote it and the fact its got a female protagonist but its does feel like its almost kind of like; lets put another Representation of feminism in there

R: Yeah

T: It seems a bit sort of clunky and a bit; oh right well we've got to do something, lets pick something which is that way off the scale and so. I think the Newspapers as well, I mean I appreciate its really difficult to remain contemporary and up to date all the time because of resources that have to be produced but you know the new, the Daily Mirror and The Times products now – that have been just introduced, you know they're already a year old, you know you're talking about Theresa May and we're already onto Boris Johnson and we've left. You know so that is, that's going to be a hard one to pitch when I do it with my second years next year.

R: Yeah, I mean I've just bought all the newspapers from Brexit day and its quite useful to compare because I was quite worried because I think you know their cultural capital of politics is not that brilliant and

T: No but I'll tell you what though Michelle, it was really handy to have that election right at the time in December (even though the result from my point of view wasn't what I wanted) but it actually was great timing to actually bring in that text and go; right there is an election, none of you in my AS class could vote because they were too young but I did a mock general election and it, that was quite an interesting one to do.

R: Oh that's good, yeah

T: Because they had to get the whole left and right ideology thing. So I think maybe once they start to see how something like Brexit or how the governments going to affect them in the next 6 months lets say, I think they may start to look at it in a bit more of a practical way – that they can now start seeing things that are happening in the country and they have some sort of, like you say; cultural capital to relate to it. But yeah you're right I mean it's how you or how we can deliver the set text but also bring in other texts to support that. But then it's the time factor as well, you know you could do a whole month just on looking at the media, the way that the media reported the general election, you could do so much on that but when you've got so many other texts to fit in you know time is such a factor.

R: Yeah

T: I think that would be what my number 1 criticism; is the amount of texts, the amount of theories and the amount of theorists that the kids are expected to learn and for us to be able to deliver and then half of them are not going to be coming up in the exam.

R: Yeah I mean I just wish they would take out that whole set text thing and just give us the framework to work with and say however you want to teach it, that's what

T: Yeah, I mean if it was; ok we'll give you 3 set texts and then have 3 that you want to do independently you know that could work and that's one of the reasons why I think it has, I've lost my enthusiasm a little bit for it because it's almost feeling I've just got to ram this stuff down their throats and half of it probably wont ever be used.

R: Yeah absolutely. So I mean you've obviously created loads of revision booklets and resources and things like that – do you generally make your own resources?

T: I do tend to, yeah I mean, I'll tell you the Facebook group has been an absolute godsend as I said for so many and especially on texts that I was really unsure about like; Attitude, I had absolutely no idea how I was going to deliver that and I was sort of getting quite stressed about it for about 2 or 3 weeks thinking; I know I've got to teach it, I know I've got to teach it, I've got no, I just couldn't find the 'in' to it. And then somebody put up a resource on the Facebook group and it's like; 'oh! Ok so that's how you do it' and the penny drops, its like ok now I know how I can do it. So I do sort of generally use my own resources but then sort of do that with a little bit of what people do put up, you know I'm obviously grateful for that stuff as well but yeah I do try and tend to use my own like its what I feel comfortable with but I'm certainly up for plagiarising others *laughs* I'm not proud at all. You know people make the resources available for that purpose so its like ok well you know fair play, you know if

anyone wants to use my stuff – use it as a starting off point and adapt it if you want, it's you know

R: And do you use any of the textbooks or the

T: I do, yeah we've got the AS and the A2 Illuminate textbook, so we're just waiting on the AS revision book I think that's being printed soon, or it may have been printed I'm not sure already. So that, yeah those were very helpful but again they go into so many different sort of alternative texts that they talk about and it's like well that's great if you've got a year to teach 1 Industry or 1 **factor**. So yeah I think, maybe you've caught me on a bad day I don't know.

R: To be fair I think you're replicating a lot of the views of other people that I've spoken to so far

T: Ok, I had a fear that might be the case, yeah

R: Yeah

T: But actually to be fair the textbooks that they've published are probably the best that I've ever used in terms of the quality, the information, the you know the things that can sort of like spark off – you know lesson plans. So I've got absolutely no complaints at all about the textbooks themselves, as I said really high quality stuff. But the fact that we're trying to cover too many texts and too many theories in too short space of time – that's the frustration I think.

R: Do you pay for any online subscription sites like **Edusites** or anything

T: *Laughs* No the way our funding is at the moment, you know we daren't spend anything on anything which is considered non-essential. So again that's something which other members of the group have kindly sort of forwarded on to me if they've got stuff from Zigzag I think it is?

R: Yep

T: You know I mean that as I say I've got no idea if that stuff is useful until you actually buy it and it aint cheap. You know you're talking £150 a pack or something and I know we are very well sort of, catered for at the college but you know we haven't got a bottomless pit of money so I don't think that's going to be a go-er somehow.

R: And just thinking about like where your students progress to after they leave you, so most of them are doing, well they're all doing A level programme but are they tending to go onto Media related courses?

T: They, yeah they historically they tend to, I don't know whether its because they've got a love for the subject or the way its been taught or they've just sort of like grown to sort of enjoy it more. I would say probably a good quarter if not half do tend to then go on to do Media based degrees rather than something in Psychology or Sociology or whatever else they're learning. But something which does happen at least once with one, once or twice a year with some students is that they will start with me on the first year on the AS and then come over to us to do the Level 3 Diploma in the following year. So they drop A levels

completely and move into a full time Media course and that happens as I say, at least 2 students a year will do that.

R: Ok that's really interesting. Obviously its really hard to tell and obviously our students at the minute you don't have the benefit of knowing what the previous A level was like but perception wise in terms of engagement, enjoyment, has there been any discernible difference between the 2 classes?

T: No I don't think so, I don't, I hope not I think they enjoy coming where I am so we're in Poole and where the main A levels are is in Bournemouth so they have to physically travel to a different site. So I think they see us as being something different from the 6th form – we're a lot more shiny and bright and you know all the technology so I think they actually enjoy the subject because it is something so different to what else they're doing so even if they hadn't done the new specification before they wouldn't know any different, they just see Media as being this really fun engaging subject. So from a student point of view, no I don't think there's much difference but from a teaching point of view obviously there is a little bit, yeah

R: Ok. Just moving on to talking, I'm just aware of time and that I'm keeping you

T: No that's ok, no no worries

R: Just thinking about the Facebook group

T: Yeah, yeah

R: You're obviously an active member of that, I've seen you posting and things like that so, and you talked about how its been really useful and positive. Did you initially join it when it first started up, I think it was in about April time in 2017?

T: No I didn't start til 2018 and that was mainly down to somebody that I met at one of the teaching conferences, the EDUCAS teaching conferences and just sort of like kept her email and you know we sort of engaged a few ideas and she said; oh you do realise there's a Facebook group as well – I was like, no *laughs* ok, I'll have a look at that and it was like right ok I have to join that because like I'd seen what some people had been putting up as resources, it was like; oh my god this is exactly what is needed

R: Yeah

T: And as I say, I don't think, certainly personally for myself and I may be talking for others; I don't think I'd be anywhere near as good a teacher as what I'm teaching at the moment without having had that Facebook group to fall back on, absolute godsend.

R: And what are the kind of main ways in which you use it? I mean you've talked about using resources and putting resources on there but in terms of like the actual community and the posts and things, do you, is there something you feel especially kind of involved with? Or

T: Yeah, yeah I mean the resources aspect is a major part and a big part but I think its just a place to vent and just to have a little bit of a laugh sometimes and you know, just chill as well and I think everyone is very kind of appreciative of what everyone else is going through – especially at the time of like the exams when they're coming around or getting the work off to the external boards and things like that. I think that's, its just a really great, supportive

environment and so, everything's positive I've never seen 1 negative aspect to that group at all - I'm sure there are but I haven't seen them

R: Yeah I agree with you I think, actually I sort of have to declare that when I did my pilot study last year on the EDUCAS group – one of the questions that I coded some of the posts as were humorous or funny and I think yours came up a lot of times

T: *Laughs* God, oh no! Ok well at least I made someone laugh!

R: *Laughs* But it was contributed to one of the sort of categories of posts that you know, the posts on there and that was definitely one thing that came out quite strongly and I think its, you know it was evident that there's quite a strong community and it's not just about, you know the specification specific, its also about creating a network or professional community

T: Oh absolutely, yeah absolutely and you know through that group I've made sort of Facebook friends if you like with a couple of the other teachers, purely through having mutual interests in other things you know and that so. The other thing that I think is going to be really, really helpful – although it can also have a bit of a negative is Ofsted inspections

R: Right

T: Because we've got one due, oh god knows when that, the next couple of weeks or it'll certainly be this year and I think it helps to understand if others have been through that process

R: Yes, definitely

T: But it can also then have the opposite effect, its like; oh god, you know Ofsted are going to go into that level of detail or, so it can have the opposite effect as well I suppose - you it can encourage and empower but it could also have a bit of a panic situation maybe

R: That's it, it's a bit like exams isn't it, like do you talk to someone

T: Yeah

R: Or .. til afterwards because you don't quite know what the situation is with those teachers

T: Oh absolutely, yeah I try to avoid that because it's like when the questions come up and it's like, well ok there's nothing you can do about it now and you know there is that tendency to say; oh my students did really, really well, it's like oh Christ I don't know if mine did – so you can never tell

R: Yeah it's a little bit of positioning isn't it of teachers

T: Yeah, yeah

R: I think trying to portray a kind of professional veneer and sometimes that may or may not be truthful, I don't know

T: I agree, I know where you're coming from, yes yeah. I mean if my students do well I'll be more than happy obviously for them, if they don't then there's something which has, either

I've lacked or they've lacked or it's just been one of those papers and you just have to, you know pick yourself up and crack on the following year.

R: Yeah, no I think you're absolutely right. In terms of the future development of the group, how do you think or how would you like it to develop?

T: That was probably the only question I've written down where I've put the words; Not sure. I don't know, I think as it is it works perfectly, I'm not sure how much more it can develop – you know its not an official site you know there's certain restrictions obviously that EDUCAS you know place on the group so I think what is done or what the moderators and the members do I think is probably for me it would probably be the limit to where it can go at this stage. So I'm just so grateful for what's out there in the first place, if the mods want to sort of see a different way forward for it then obviously that would be their decision but I don't think there's anything that really needs to change dramatically.

R: Yeah and do you use any other form of social media to connect with other online professionals?

T: No I mean I'm, just the Facebook group, I mean I'm old school I'm 58 so I don't do Twitter

Laughter

T: Barely use it as is so no that is the way that I think it does work best, it's the best platform for it definitely, you know you can track back on posts if you've missed them or whatever and I think as I say, I cant imagine teaching this subject and not having that as a daily kind of back up if you like. But no, other than that I'm not aware of any other online communities, I'm sure there are out there but I'm quite happy sticking with what I've got at the moment.

R: Yeah I mean there's a hashtag on Twitter, that's Team Media and things like that but its not anywhere near as active as, or specialist

T: Oh ok, ok yep. As I say I'm a Facebook boy so I'll stick with that I think

R: The target market

T: Absolutely, yeah and I mean the students now see Facebook as this sort of like dinosaur of social media and it's like; yeah that's because people put up things to debate and discuss, they don't just put up pictures of their food

Laughter

T: I'm getting, my colleagues here, he's raising his eyebrows because he knows that's what I do on Instagram *laughs* but you know what I mean, its more sort of like, you know something it's the platform to engage and debate with whereas some of the others can, are a bit too focused on the imagery rather than, whereas Facebook is perfect for you know the discussion and debate and things like that

R: I was going to say, the actual functional qualities of that Facebook group works really well because it links to the resource site and it allows posting and, like you're saying all of those things that in one place. Whereas I think

T: Yeah absolutely

R: Yeah definitely, definitely. Are you a member of the MEA? Do you have any sort of subject association kind of affiliation? Or

T: No, no I'll just plod on. No, is it worth it?

R: Well, exactly. So it's interesting to see, you know I'm interested in professional identity and to see you know teachers are obviously really passionate about their subjects and that's certainly what I've found but actually the wider kind of subject identity seems to be quite inconsistent at the minute. Like thinking about whether teachers think of themselves as part of a wider body of professionals

T: Right

R: If there's like campaigns for Media or you know something that takes them outside of the classroom because obviously you've mentioned the stigma that Media has had over the years as being a 'soft subject' and obviously you know a lot of people I've spoken to have felt quite cynical about the governments intentions towards the subject when they changed the specification

T: Oh absolutely, yeah

R: And whether that has kind of, I'm just trying to basically kind of garner a feeling whether that's triggered anything in teachers as professionals wanting to fight for their subject or

T: Ok ok, yeah. I think it probably has I think it's, you know we are quite sort of territorial when it comes to this subject by nature I think we've always had a bit of a bad press, ironically from the Media itself and I think it does harden us to say; no, we are going to present this as a serious subject. Yeah I mean I can't think of an area of life at the moment which is more needed than Media Studies in schools. But the way that the specification runs at the moment, you know we, it's such an opportunity that's being missed Michelle, it really is

R: Yeah

T: But I don't think the government would wear it, that you know, that we would have a subject that looks at them and looks at the way the media is run – it would just be opening up such a can of worms for them, does that make sense?

R: Yeah, absolutely, no it absolutely makes sense. To sort of, to end on a question really; what do you think the future of Media Studies is in the medium to long term?

T: It has to keep pace with the technology changes, as I said going back to some of the texts that are picked, I think that could well, that could either kill it off completely if the exam boards – and not just EDUCAS but OCR and AQA and BTEC; if they're not on top of the changing in the subject, in the textbook, more so in the students themselves – if they don't know what the next big thing is which needs to be looked at academically then it could, it could die off and that would be a great shame. You know we've got a subject which deals with daily, if not hourly changes and we're still rooted in texts that were 4 or 5 years old and they seemed to be contemporary then but you know, like I said with Zoella its almost an historical text now compared to what else is out there.

So long term I think it has to adapt quicker you know, to survive. I mean, as I said I'm 58 I've probably got another 4/5 years in me before I call it a day and I think I deserve the rest but I will still keep an eye on it even though, even when I'm not teaching it just seeing where its going. You know potentially it's the most exciting subject to teach actually

R: Absolutely, exactly and I'm hoping that the BBC doesn't have its license fee taken away

T: Yeah, yeah, yeah – as I said it's you know it's such a ripe area at the moment for looking at not just at television texts or radio or newspapers but the role of the Media in the wider scope of how we are as a society and certainly for the teenagers that are learning this sort of stuff – you know the 1 thing that all of them are talking about at the moment in our college over anything else is Corona virus, they're absolutely petrified of this thing and that is, that could be you know I'm not a doctor or anything (I'm married to a nurse) but you know she said; yes it is a serious thing. It's like ok, but is it the media that is making it even more serious? And that's the sort of thing that we could be looking at rather than some of the other things that we have to consider.

R: Yeah I mean there should be a contemporary debate news type module I think as well

T: Yeah, yeah absolutely but as I said I think they had to sort of clamber over so many barrels to get this specification through with Ofqual, I think the *sighs* I can't speak for them personally but they're loathed to try something which is going to sort of throw the spotlight on them again

R: Yeah, yeah. Well thank you so much you've given me

T: You're more than welcome, you're welcome

R: It's been really good and yeah its really good talking to you and actually you know I've been teaching sort of 20 years and its good to talk to a, someone who's been

T: A fellow veteran

R: Yeah

T: But I mean you've seen how things have changed as well then, you know if you've been teaching that long you've, I mean the specification I loved and I wish I could go back to it was an old AQA specification where I had a whole year of teaching nothing but Genre and I did the whole of Genre from the 1920s to present day and it was the best thing I've ever taught and the students, some of my ex-students who I'm still in contact with still sort of come online and say; I loved that lesson that we did 15 years ago, it's like; really? I'd forgotten it completely but they hadn't, you know and I don't know whether I'll have that same thing with any ex-students in the future

R: Same for me, I don't know if its rose-tinted nostalgia glasses or not but

T: It probably is

R: I've got, I've taught OCR and curriculum 2000 and that was my first year of teaching

T: Oh curriculum 2000, those were the days

R: Yeah and I taught OCR and that was, it was I loved it, the Media analysis and you know American cinema and social class and it, oh it was brilliant – and you could choose your own text so it was

T: Absolutely, I think as I said and particularly with a lot of new teachers that are coming on the Facebook group, I feel really sorry for them but quite protective as well thinking; my god you've just been landed this, you're not even a Media specialist you might be teaching something else and now you're expected to be teaching something that maybe the likes of you and I who have been around a little bit, you know we've, we're struggling. So god knows how it is for some who have just literally you know dropped from the sky and its landed in their lap so.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

R: Lovely, thank you so much and see you on the Facebook group

T: Absolutely, oh have a good rest of the day

R: Yeah you take care, thanks ever so much

T: Thanks Michelle, cheers, bye bye

Transcription

Transcription begins at: 41:50

██████████ You know, we could have brokered some kind of conversation between the awarding bodies that allowed us each to take certain different approaches around a sort of core of you know, relevant types of text

Researcher: Yeah, yeah

██████████ Which they could then each, you know, which in a sense would allow for a so much more interesting range of, I don't know these kind of things really

R: Yeah

██████████ I don't know whether that makes sense?

R: No it absolutely does, I think you know, there was certainly, the set text thing was so rigid that actually they could, if they really needed to have the set text, ok if they really weren't willing to compromise on that, they could have actually had a whole range of different options

██████████ Absolutely

R: And saying teachers could identify, well like you do in BTEC for example

██████████: Yeah

R: You know you write a brief – you either take their brief or you could write your own

██████████ *in unison* Write your own, yeah

R: and have that approved by

██████████ I mean why, why, in the end it was impossible to carry on struggling for those sorts of solutions. I mean that's what I blame EDUCAS for really in a way

R: Yeah

██████████ Because they caved in and they were determined they were going to get, be first off the mark and they were going to get their numbers in and therefore they closed down those sorts of options. That's what I now think in retrospect and at the time I thought that as well but, you know I've been thinking about a lot through this period as well, you know instead of going through all this tortuous stuff about consultations on NEA/MEA and this that and the other. And of course it's not possible, I understand that institutionally but if only the boards could have sat down together during this period and say; why don't we talk to OFQUAL and try and put some kind of joint syllabus together – which would have had differentiation between it for each of the different boards but would actually allow us to really *unsure* so you can get to somewhere that was right, you know.

R: Yeah, yeah. What do you think prevented that though? Was there anything particular that, was it the rivalry that you know you were talking about before? Or was it just something that just wasn't considered?

■ Oh well I don't think it was on the table to be fair. I mean I don't think they'd ever be in a situation, on the table where the exam board, well certainly not in the last however many years have been able to sit down together and operate as a kind of body as a group

R: Yeah

■ Other than during that, during that initial OFQUAL consultation thing. It's just not been done and *sighs* I mean there were times where, I'm just thinking back many, many, many, many, many millions of years, in the late 80's and early 90s and stuff when it was possible to get all the awarding bodies in one room, all the exam boards and there were many more of them then, you know, so there were 5 or 6

R: Yeah

■: And then they all amalgamated and AQA cleaned up and you know, so on and so forth

R: Right

■ I don't, I mean that hasn't been on the table for a very, very long time and it's a much, much bigger systemic issue and it, you know, I don't know whether David will have said this – I expect he has but it is all about the capitalisation, capitalised, do I mean capitalisation? No, something like that

R: Commodification

■: Of education, you know that it is now, its commodified, it is utterly commodified

R: Yeah he did talk about that actually and actually so have lots of other people and what's really interesting, that certainly came out in my pilot study more strongly than more recent interviews because I obviously haven't done the full data analysis but obviously its quite fresh in my mind anyway – is that on a much smaller scale, teachers are, the reason why, so part of my research is looking at the Facebook groups as you know, the conversations that are going on there

■ Yeah, yeah

R: And one of the sort of *raison d'etres* to that is to actually have a free resource sharing network, right?

■ Yeah

R: Which the teachers love. And so a lot of teachers I've spoken to, who are also members of the Facebook group, have said you know that is really strong that, for them as a reason to belong to that group and actually their kind of philosophy as a teacher, as well their identity as a teacher is they really value the democratising nature of

■ Oh absolutely!

R: You know and one

■ Oh absolutely the, go on

R: And one particular teacher was really angry about TES having a platform for teachers to sell their resources and you think, you know, that its shocking that actually this is happening.

■ Yes, yes

R: And not

■ Well I feel the same about people like ■ and some of those other people and I know that the work they do is good and it's very, you know its very, its great there are people out there that actually by putting themselves *inaudible* in a sense undervaluing the work that people are doing, you know together

R: Absolutely and also you know, again it feeds in to this bigger narrative of deprofessionalisation of teachers, you know the fact is that you don't have to be a subject specialist anymore because you can just find stuff off of the peg and teach it in front of a class. What's happened to the kind of beauty and artistry of being a teacher? This idea that you craft your resources, to suit the classes that you teach and you know everyone knows that you teach 1 lesson to 1 class and its not the same as you teach it to another class but actually

■ Exactly, exactly and I mean you know I've seen such a lot of that in terms of, the one year that I did PGCE teaching and did a lot of visits, I mean I've done lots of visits since then as well but what you do see is you know, these incredibly, these incredibly detailed massive massive massive **PowerPoints of 72 slides** that a head of department will produce for the department, hand over to the teachers; ok do this, and students will just come in and they'll believe that they've got to work their way through all of that and there's a lot of **closure** in that in a way and its amazing that kind of, I don't know, that kind of spontaneity and that kind of, as you say that craft and the beauty of it

R: Yeah

■ The other thing that I do find, I mean the one thing that I do find problematic about the Facebook groups is that because they are fulfilling such an important need in terms of supporting teachers that haven't had the training and got the skills that are new to the subject who are suddenly having it dumped on them and they've suddenly got to, the focus on the outcomes

R: Yeah

■: Is so huge and I got very, very disheartened at one point with absolutely everything was about you know, this is how you answer Paper 2, Question B, Part C. Do you know what I mean? Where it's all absolutely lead from the model answer and to me that's kind of working backwards and that's wrong, it just feels not right

R: And you can kind of see little microcosms of what's going on in wider social media, I think what [REDACTED] does for example is really useful and really good on a kind of basic level – have you seen her YouTube?

[REDACTED] Yes

R: And I think she's brilliant and obviously she's really committed and she's a great teacher but what you see is this kind of 'Edu-celeb' thing coming through and people worship

[REDACTED] Exactly, the teacher is the fount of knowledge, the teacher as the fount – its not kind of exploratory, its not discussion based, its; this is what you need to know. And so in terms of a revision guide, yeah its bloody great and I, you know I've learned a lot from her but I do sometimes feel very pissed off when I see her stuff because great though it is, and you know lively and she's a nice person, you know she's got a lovely warm personality and she's very, very committed obviously. But somehow its like, you know is this what teaching has come back down to?

R: Yeah exactly and I saw hers the other day and again, you know I really have no bones about her at all, I think she's brilliant and I have a link to her YouTube thing on my revision page but I don't teach from it you know

[REDACTED]: No, no

R: But what I found really interesting the other day, is she posted on the group, I don't know if you saw it asking; 'what other social media should I get onto? TikTok or Snapchat?' and I'm like, oh really?

[REDACTED] Why? Why?

R: Why? And it's really popular, this kind of idea of like you know, lets do, and I get it you have to have an awareness of what the kids are using and

[REDACTED] Yeah

R: But actually [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] you know there are probably privacy settings on there but, but I'm thinking by the time you're getting to 18/19 I don't know if

[REDACTED] Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, I mean that for me is the perfect example for Media education in the Primary curriculum and in the Key Stage 3 curriculum

R: Yes

[REDACTED] That's why I bang on about the Key Stage 3 curriculum all the time and how it, you know English teachers have absolutely lost the plot by you know getting rid of Media in their curriculum. I know I'm like an old cranky machine about this but when I, its particularly around things like Snapchat and TikTok – I mean yes they're things that are here now, they will go but while they're here they need to be addressed but they don't need to be addressed by 18 year olds in, doing an A Level curriculum they need to be addressed by kids at Year 5, Year 6 and you know, that's really important and without those forms of address at that level,

you know. I mean I think Media Studies is going to die a kind of horrible specialist, well I don't know whether it's actually going to die but you know, to me it's, it's not right.

R: Yeah but it needs to be, there's sort of almost 2 strands to it in that, this idea that everyone needs to have **Media** education and it needs to be a much more specialist when you get to the sort of higher level – so you've already got the foundations, the understanding

█ Exactly, exactly

R: And then you have the people who, hopefully and that's how I think the subject will survive and thrive if this happens

█: Exactly

R: If you have it from, you know I think John was saying on the email thread, was it yesterday or the day before? In response to the event that's going to hopefully take place in January about the Primary curriculum

█ Yes

R: I'm like, Primary the word Media only appears once on the Primary curriculum and that's in the context of Maths, you know it's, its shocking you know and

█ And **that's once more than in most other** Secondary subjects, you know. I mean I still, I can't live with English at the moment, I you know there may be all the most wonderful debates going on about; what English ought to be, what English should be and my colleague blah blah blah and she's done some work in that area but she's got a footnote about Media; I'm not going to talk about Media in English because my colleagues █ are doing it brilliantly and I don't know anything about it. Well that's not acceptable to me.

R: No

█ You know to omit it from the massive debates that have been going on around English is absolutely murderous

R: Yeah and its also

Talking over

█: █ and I produced that Primary Media Literacy thing and you know, it got absolutely no, no coverage anywhere and nobody, you know we could, til we were blue in the face we could kind of promote it but nobody wanted to address it

R: No, actually I think, I think sort of operation – I'm a governor at my kids school and what ***unsure*** me as a governor I can see where the issues are and why there's no space to teach, to do that

█ Oh absolutely, yeah

R: And then its a replication of what happens in Secondary too, you know there's no time and no bagginess, there's no kind of – not sure bagginess is the right word but you know what I mean, there's no

■ No space really

R: No space for it. I mean my twos **schools excellent** and they're doing a lot more and they do brilliant stuff, they had, in the summer term they do like a whole school topic, so everything is basically project based learning

■ Yep

Talking over

R: And a couple of years ago they did a Media one, they did a 'Lights, Camera, Action' one which was fantastic and they had, they did film making and animation and

■ And that's what should be happening, absolutely what could be happening and nobody has been able to sort of somehow make that happen other than a very few, very committed schools where there is a really committed, well **trained** staff, you know

R: I know I think, again I was talking to ■ about this the other day on that meeting and saying actually, well ■ put this forward as a comment but, that his experience is that Primary schools often do Media Studies better than Secondary schools

■ Oh yes

R: So the ones that do it well do it absolutely brilliantly because I guess there's that kind of choice of freedom to be able to do it in the way that they want to do it. Whereas when you go to Secondary there's the limitations are there, you know

■ Yeah

R: And it shouldn't just be left to, you know, I saw the presentation by, who was it, oh god, can't remember now, sorry my brain has gone today. But it was a presentation last year by one of the politicians saying that, might have been Matt Hancock actually, talking about how Media should be in PSHE lessons and things like that

■ But they say it's already there; we do Media in PSHE

R: You know it's almost like, well that's that box ticked isn't it. You know that's it, fake news

■ Oh that reminds me, one of, one of our consultants that works with the English and Media Centre a day or so a week went for promotion in her school with the English department, well I think it was a kind of *inaudible* her task was to deliver a 60 minute lesson on fake news

R: Right

■ And nobody apart from her and whoever she talked to about it kind of problematised that and thought well you know can you actually deliver a meaningful debate as a part of an interview around, is it that simple? Is it that, you know, I don't know, its very very very *inaudible* really

R: I was asked to do the same so, you know there was a school that I was doing a little bit of work with last year for, they'd lost their Media teacher and they asked me to help out and just fill in for a bit. And then before I left they said; can you write us a scheme of work on fake news? Which I was very happy to do in terms of like, because it was actually a set but I wasn't going to teach it, you know it was for somebody else to deliver it. I mean I was involved in that thing, you know the Bournemouth fake news *talking over* stuff so there was lots of kind of resources to pull from but to then

■ To actually

R: Its really problematic this idea that you can

■ You can dump it, hand it over packaged up, handed over you know, couple of weeks of a lessons there

R: Yeah, exactly you can't possibly teach, actually our job, I'd rather (and I said to them right before I left), I said actually what you really need to do is a whole module on Critical Thinking, you know this is where it's going to come from because, its like you cant, fake news is part of a much wider set of skills

■ Yeah exactly, exactly

R: But of course *unsure* now that the AS Levels been ditched hasn't it so you can't even do that so

■ Yeah exactly. Its absolutely crazy really

R: I know. So what, I mean you said you weren't particularly hopeful for the future of Media. What do you think will happen over the next sort of

■ Well I'm, I am not particularly hopeful in terms of the overview of how this government, and possibly governments to come, the work they're going to have to undo to make anything good, anything right. It's just going to take a hell of a long bloody time I suppose is what that feeling is. And until we have a government or a Department of Education that can look at things in a much more holistic, much more, I don't know much more cross curricular way

R: Yes

■ That there's going to be always this kind of *inaudible* specific skills, I mean Media Studies I'm sure will survive it'll just become, I mean it already is not the Media Studies that we really want to teach.

R: Yeah, yeah. So, I mean I think I probably already know the answer to this but; what would you change about the curriculum if you had a free hand?

■ The whole curriculum!

Laughter

■ Oh gosh, oh my god. Well I mean just rethink the whole bloody thing really, rethink – certainly rethink the Primary curriculum from the word go and certainly you know just have another look at the way in which our curriculum has become so, the Secondary curriculum has become so compartmentalised, so outcome driven, so and I don't think that's going to change unfortunately

R: Yeah

■ So much about, its still about the equivalent of league tables and the equivalent of all of that stuff and that digital, that huge gap between the statutory and the opportunities at independent schools and all that. I mean I think getting rid of the bloody independent school system would be one way towards it but I know, but all of the things that I can think of are actually things that are not going to happen in the foreseeable future. Which is why as a very old person, you know I feel rather despondent but on the other hand you know I'm not prepared to stop fighting.

R: No exactly and I think that's the key thing isn't it? I mean again, going back to the sort of angle of my thesis is that people are, people who are wedded to the subject, involved in the subject you know and that are passionate about the subject are not going to stop fighting and that comes with the resistance that the subject needs in order to keep it alive and have the spirit that its always had

■ We have very short term memories, so like what always stops **people, going back to when I went before we went into lockdown and we could do things face to face**, you know the number of teachers who came on English and Media Studies courses or were involved in things like conference and stuff like that – people who didn't ever know because they were born in the age of the literary strategy and this that and the other. Who didn't actually know that there was ever a time when Media was absolutely invited into all other areas of the curriculum and where it was acknowledged that it was a really important thing to address. So you know, teachers; oh you mean once upon a time people used to have to do GCSE work in English about the Media, woah! *Inaudible* it was always lacking in lots and lots of ways but, but it was during the 90s and very early 00s there was a lot of really interesting, really great work happening in all sorts of curriculum areas

R: Yeah, yeah

■ Which now has actually been totally forgotten about. You know and all those things like the Media Arts Academies and things like that and all of that work has gone. I cant tell you, I mean there were I can think 3 or 4 projects that I did that you know might never have existed, might as well have never existed in terms of what people remember and what really transferred into proper ***perspective*** you know

R: Yeah absolutely and you know, gone are the times when you would have, you know I remember centres where they made it compulsory for students do English and Media Studies as 2 GCSEs together, you didn't have an option and that was brilliant and there was obviously a bit of overlap for the

■■■ A lot of my work in the, is suppose late 80s, mid 90s in particular was about going to local authorities and actually you know working with local authorities on thinking about Media and none of that, none of that has lasted.

R: I just wonder if its ever going to re-emerge in some ways. I mean I think we probably needed a change of society and government before things

■■■ Well yeah but the trouble is that a change of government its going to take 20 years to undo some of the bad practice, well not – I mean there's some very good practice I know but its, you know its going to take a very, very long time to undo this sort of culture of accountability, outcome driven stuff, you know led by testing and all of that stuff really.

R: Yeah, yeah

■■■ So there are some real reservations about how, whether, you know I think probably in my lifetime I won't see all that stuff come back but you know, maybe it will in good time but I think it will take a lot more than just a change of government. It's a whole change of ethos really.

R: Yeah

■■■ About what education is, what education should be and all of that, so sometimes I do feel very gloomy about it and other times I think; well you know, if you don't teach flying the flag and just babbling away quietly and *inaudible* you know that there's no chance – do you know what I mean

R: But its, you know again like, the I mean ■■■ was saying that there's and I don't know I haven't spoken to the person since the application have been in but she was, Keith was saying there's a 40% take up, rise in PGCE applications *talked over* it would be interesting to see what happens with the new generation of Media teachers

■■■ Yep. One of the things that's very interesting is that our PGCE at the English and Media Studies Centre is very very very diverse. So you know there are very, very few kind of white middle class teachers applying for the PGCE courses – it tends to be diverse teachers from different communities that are very interested and they've got their own kind of issues that they *inaudible* so I've seen a lot of PGCE applications from the LGBTQ community where they see their role as very much about changing perceptions and about addressing the issues that have not been addressed well because they've always been addressed by the wrong people in the wrong ways. So it will be interesting to see whether that makes a difference. I was watch, you know there's been stuff on the news recently about you know the **draft feeling** for Black teachers and so on and so forth and I think in principal that could change quite dramatically but whether or not those teachers who are going into the system can resist the pressures that get put on them by their schools who limit their offering to play by the, you know the exam outcomes and teach to the, teach very directly to the specs in ways that aren't necessarily helpful. It will be interesting to see how that goes really

R: Yeah absolutely and you know the fact that there is a tranche of teachers coming through that is non-traditional if you like *talking over* I wonder how that will because I supposed that is kind, are they going to stay in the kind of London area? I mean that's the interesting thing if there will be a geographical split that happens

█ Yeah well that's going to be very interesting to look at as well yeah, absolutely. I mean I don't know how, I haven't spoken to █ for a while now, I don't know what's happening with his course and stuff?

R: With █

JG: Yeah

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█
█

JG: Yeah I bet

R: Yeah but he's, I think he was quite pleased at the bigger uptake this year

JG: But then at the same time our last year, our last cohort that just graduated or not graduated as the case has been, there have been fewer jobs for them to apply for actually

R: Yeah, yeah I think

JG: And whether or not that is a direct outcome of all of this stuff is, its very hard to tell but

R: Well I mean there does seem, like having spoken to the teachers I've spoken to, there does, and it's a massive range, ranges all the way up to the North West, down to Cornwall the teachers that I've spoken to so it's been fairly representative in terms of geography anyway and also there's academies and grammars and you know all the different range of types of schools. There's only been a couple of schools that have said that they are not running Media

█ Oh that's good

R: There have been a couple, in my pilot there was a couple of teachers that said that they had swapped from Media to Film but I think they had been back

█ Yeah we found quite a lot of that actually and that was absolutely directly about the fact that it is easier to teach or appears easier to teach and is easier for non-specialists to teach and is closer to the skills that they know from Literature and from other, you know more academic subjects and so on. Yeah

R: I think as well you know, Film has got more choice hasn't it? You know in terms of the spec and also Steve made an interesting point because when he was in the Ofqual meeting he said that Sociology don't appear to have had the same issues as Media in terms of *talked over* their framework was much more, or sort of much less restrictive and they could *inaudible* if they wanted as long as it conformed to the public area and so that's quite interesting. Whether there's room for manoeuvre in any future discussions that if you're going to compare with a similar kind of framework then you have, then you know but

JG: Yeah, yeah

R: Well we shall have to keep fighting the good fight and

█ Yeah

R: But sorry I've made you talk on for about an hour and 10 minutes now so

█ That's fine it's just, you know I fear that I am not necessarily the most uplifting and constructive of people to talk to that's all because I've, you know I am very conscious that I've, I have a slightly depressed view of where we're going and I don't want to communicate that. I mean I really, I really don't want to feel of this to go down the tube

R: But it's, its puts it, you know what you're saying is putting dialogue into everything else that teachers are saying so you know, things that I don't know – I interviewed a couple of PGCE students that you know, █ PGCE students a few weeks ago and its interesting you know, like they might not articulate it in the same way as you but it's a similar sort of concerns and issues and so it's all part of the rich tapestry of what I've found so

Laughter and agreeing

JG: Blimey, you've got a big job. I'd love to read anything you've done if you want to, you know if there's anything you want to send me or any outcomes of anything that you want to have, want me to have a look at, I'd be really interested because you have had the, the time – well not the time but the kind of commitment to embark on something that is very, very important and useful so you know, do

R: My pilot study from last year which is, to be fair was just a mini version of what I'm doing now and actually my preliminary kind of analysis has been very much like well actually what I'm finding is just a scaled up version of what I did for the pilot so that, I'd really appreciate that. If I sent you that and

█ Oh I'd be happy to have a look at it that would be good for me, it would be good for my brain which I worry at the moment is atrophying slowly while I'm kind of still floating around in this kind of nether world of not quite knowing what's going on and where we all are. So yeah do I'd be very happy to have a look at it, I'd be really interested

R: And any feedback, constructive you know criticism and feedback would be fantastic because

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█ Yeah, yeah, I mean there, people don't have the bloody time and they don't have the space and they don't have the headspace really because they're juggling so much other stuff

and that has probably always been the case but at. And you know looking back when I think about in the 80s for example and the early 90s before the, you know before the whole thing of sort of taking hold the whole national curriculum infrastructure and that. There was so much more exploratory stuff going on than there can be at this moment in time and that's sort of sad, you know because it used to be so understandable

R: Absolutely, absolutely. I mean I'm hoping, I just haven't had time but I really wanted to submit my pilot findings to a, as a paper which was the Media Education Research Practice Journal

■ Yeah I think that would be very good

R: I just haven't, you know it just, and its already done its kind of there I need to edit it and put it forward but

■ Just put it in the right form

R: Yeah, I want to get it out there because I think its, like I said to you at the start of the conversation, it's like I want it to be relevant now and not just kind of disappear off, we might miss a chance really to have

■ I mean one of the things that occurs to me, I taught for many many years the Masters module at the Institute of Education when it was still the Institute of Education with ■■■■■ and ■■■■■ and those people and part of that diploma, well it became an MA module in the end but it started off as a diploma, year long diploma and I suppose I taught it for 20 years. During which time I had anything from sort of 30 teachers down to about 12

R: Right

■ But part of that process was doing action research and there were some fantastic projects that people did, some really really interesting work but because it was only a little small piece of an MA module – they just kind of disappeared without trace really. The dissertation, **the band** of stuff just wasn't there you know, I mean it just went away – people did it, it got filed, it got marked, it got assessed and then it's just gone now and that seemed a tremendous shame

R: Yeah, we almost need like a kind of Media archive don't we, of work

■ Yes well I have been saying this for many, many, many, many years but you know

R: Well I mean I remember you coming to Bournemouth and showing all the work that you had from when you know, you first started teaching Media and that was fascinating

■ Yeah

R: You know its just so interesting to kind of see how, it's almost like a, you need a history of Media Studies module

█ Yes well you do! Yeah you kind of do, I do think you do – to have that somewhere where people can actually you know, look at what things could, were like, what they could have been like, what they could now be like

R: And like you say, people have short memories, actually if you had something like that then short memories are fine but actually you could just refer back to this **Media** archive and you know its, yeah

█ Yeah, yeah

R: I wonder how we do that?

█ Well you know I think it's a big, big, big project – it's one that I talk about with David every now and again and we kind of look at each other and say; yeah somebodies got to do this, but who

Laughter

R: Needs money, time and people – none of those *talking over* at the minute. Yeah, no that would be fascinating, they would be brilliant and I guess that's the kind of, sort of a symbol of something that shows its importance and can be referred to as a sort of

█ Yeah, yeah, there was a plan – the BFI, what used to be hugely important in developing Media Studies and Media education more broadly, really important and all those people now are kind of no longer around and that's a terrible shame but you know when I had to clear out my office at the end of last term – sorry at the end of last year, there was so much stuff that I looked at and I thought; god that was interesting why, you know but you know I ended up chucking a lot, a lot stuff out simply because I couldn't see any way in which it could come back and be made relevant. But fortunately there is still a bit of stuff around but it does need to be there, it really does

R: Yeah it definitely, definitely. Well maybe we could, once we've got Ofqual things out the way maybe we could try for a grant or something, see what happens

█ Yeah, yeah it would be worth a try

█ [Redacted]

█ Very interesting

R: So she's [Redacted]

█ [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

R: Yeah it would be good. Lovely, well thank you so much Jenny it's been really

JG: Well my pleasure Michelle, I don't feel I've been able to add anything very much

R: Yeah you have, you have and its just really good to talk about it and because you've got such a long history and you're sort of steeped in it, I think its part of your DNA now so

JG: It is, well it totally is and you know what, I just got past the point where I think well, I'm still thinking; ooh that would be a nice thing to teach, or how could I incorporate – I still do that after all these years.

R: Exactly, exactly and there's somethings that don't change and you know

JG: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

█ Absolutely, absolutely

R: In future as well.

█ Absolutely

R: But there we go. Lovely, alright well thank you so much and

█ Pleasure, do send me the pilot study if you

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Starts at: 2:44

Researcher: If you could just sort of start off by sort of saying a little bit about you know, how long you've been a teacher, what's your background as a teacher and the kind of students that you teach etc

Teacher: Right ok. So I've been teaching for about 12/13 years, I think so. I'm in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] hich is a, well it is the best school in [REDACTED] really for value added and stuff like that. It's a lovely school with a pretty small catchment area, very middle class in fairness it's got very small over the years. It's still really ethnically diverse because Haringey is really ethnically diverse but the, but I'm lucky. So I have a department that, we take in 2 or 3 groups in Year 10 and take them all the way through and then, we're well resourced, we've got gear kicking out of our ears sort of thing, we've got 2 Mac suites, we've got all the technical gear that we need to get kids to make stuff, moving image – god rest its soul. And still image, we've moved a lot more towards still image stuff so we've got a photography studio and yeah get the, last year we had the best results in the school in the best school in Haringey so

R: Fabulous, have you got a job?

T: I've got a job, they won't be getting rid of me any time soon

R: There you go, yeah

T: Well I nearly, I nearly had a job, I nearly had a job but the guy that was leaving – now with all this Covid-19 stuff, he's staying and so yeah suddenly I don't have a job

R: Yeah, there you go

Laughter

R: So what's your entry requirements to get onto the Media A Level then?

T: We ask them to have 5s at GCSE and they don't need to have it of course at A level, sorry at GCSE but bloody helps unless you're a smart kid, if you are a middle of the road kid that sort of got dragged through GCSEs, it is hard work to go and pick it up at A level – especially when you've got theory.

R: Yes, absolutely, yeah

T: So the barrier for entry is higher now with the new specification

R: Yeah, yeah, I think you're absolutely right. Do you teach Film as well?

T: No we don't teach Film, just we come from a mixed *experience* background and we've only got a, well sort of a, there's me and 2 other guys that teach it but teach it sort of half the time. Ones an SLT and ones an English guy, we haven't got, we're not a large department

R: No, no and presumably no BTEC either?

T: No, no

R: No, so that's just, you're the purebreed

T: We are kind of purebreeds, yeah

R: *Laughs* Purists, sorry that was probably, purists

T: That's alright

R: So in terms of the actual specifications; what were your initial thoughts when you first heard of the education reforms being announced for the A levels and Media wasn't in the first 2 rounds?

T: There was a bit of trepidation about whether it was going to be in there at all which would be fucking insane given the amount of Media that people consume.

R: Yeah, yeah

T: We're all sitting, like we're all sitting there at all times, its crazy but we sort of knew it was bubbling it was coming and there was a fight at the top you know with Jenny Grahame and Pete Fraser all doing their thing to make sure like, you know talking to the, what's it called; the Department for Education and stuff

R: Yeah

T: And so we sort of knew it was coming and then it came late in the day and obviously there was the thing about the set texts and the theorists that came out and the theorists were bullshit because it was just like so every theorist against everything, fuck off

R: Yeah

T: And you know, and that was disheartening but the thing was of course we knew that the coursework was going to go down from 50 to 30 and the single biggest change – I almost say the single biggest change in my practice is the lack of Film work now because it's individual

R: Yeah

T: It's a team game, its like how, I just can't imagine the way I can have an, like how can you just make teenagers go out individually at GCSE and ask them to make it on their own? Like it's crazy, its just not how its done and terrible teaching practice

R: So what, were you in any of those early consultation meetings? By any chance

T: Did I go to consultation? No, I did a consultation form

R: Yep

T: I think I did a consultation form but I didn't think there were any consultation meetings as such, or if there were I didn't know about them or I sort of missed

R: Yeah, no I had same sort of, yeah it was the MEA that sent out the forms didn't they and then there was, there was apparently a meeting at the BFI in the Autumn time before the, I think 2016. Where apparently loads of people went along to and met, I was just trying to sort of work out who was actually there – I know a couple of people. Do you know [REDACTED] [REDACTED]?

T: What's that?

R: Do you know [REDACTED] at all?

T: No, sorry

R: He's [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], between the subject officers and the, well DFE and everybody else that were there as well

T: Yeah

R: Yeah because the MEA didn't endorse the first framework quite

T: Yeah

R: And so what, you were with OCR before is that right? You were **unsure**

T: No we were with AQA for purebred Media Studies before and it just, we looked at the specs that were coming through, you know the sort of trial ones coming through and we just went, we looked at AQA and that became a load of short answer questions and that was just, it just felt just, there was no analysis anymore – it was just like; remember stuff.

R: Yeah

T: And also with the range of question styles like from very low tariff to very high tariff, then you're like; well try teaching that as a way of writing.

R: Yeah

T: You know you want kids to be sort of like, you know ones that have got, you don't want them to be thinking about; right 'how' am I going to be able to write this, you just want them to write you know largely. So that kind of informed it and also whatever Pete, because Pete was a, Pete Fraser was like a head guy at OCR

R: Yeah, yeah, yeah

T: We were like; well whatever he's managed to, whatever else he's managed to hammer out for OCR, then that's the best they could possibly offer

R: Yeah

T: And so we just yeah, so we went with OCR for question format and for sort of trusting Pete.

R: When did you make that decision? Because I think it was quite late on in the day wasn't it? I mean EDUCAS had got ratified first and I think then it was OCR and then it was AQA?

T: Yeah and then we, and we held off because we needed, so we just needed to see another variant of what was turning up. EDUCAS you know it was all very well supported and stuff like that but at the same time it was that kind of question format thing we were really interested in because we always teach our kids to write, you know that's the most important thing you can do

R: Yeah

T: So, so then we saw that one and we were like; yep ok, that's fine, we can deal with that because they're pretty steady in terms of the question format and set texts that we managed to see and all the like yeah, alright fine we'll go with OCR and AQA fell out of bed hard because they came in late to the party with

R: Yeah, yeah

T: With a real sort of scattergram approach to the examinations and then the, it was just like that decision had already been made.

R: Yeah, exactly. So, I mean obviously you know you've already said that you don't like the new specification in terms of its structure and everything but is there anything, **except from the thermoists** but is there anything like specific to the OCR specification that you think really doesn't work? Or that it does work but perhaps is not structured in a way that it makes it easier for it to be taught in a way that you prefer?

T: No I don't think there's anything specific about OCR, I think there's just so much content for kids to get in. I think that the AS for all of the, for all of the A level qualifications now is basically redundant – we just teach the A level over 2 years and don't do the AS at all because its, its your messing with peoples questions formats slightly and what you need is this kind of cyclical approach to the amount of topic that they've got to cover. Well we certainly don't, we don't teach the same thing twice in each year but certainly we need the fullness of our – what do we get? *thinks* 9 half terms or whatever it is, to sort of go round and cover our, our set texts from a range of angles to make sure they're dealt with. And there's also that kind of, sort of psychological, sort of you know building of neurones over 2 years that you need to do. So it works for us, again you know we, we've only got 1 exam series that have actually gone you know the distance now because we won't have 1 this year but we smashed it last year. But I just felt that whatever we did we got, you know we were closest to the pin before anyone else, so that's not to say we won't be

R: What do you, sorry, what do you think was, when you say 'whatever that was' but you must have a sort of inkling about how you approached it differently to others potentially?

T: I dunno, I just see a lot of stuff on OCR forums sort of, it sounds, its sort of reductive but it's just like, I try to bring in stuff round the edges but really its just about focusing on the set

texts, like its time and effort on set texts and how to answer it against those set texts and as much as I'd like kids to go away and research and like; oh bring this in and research that – its like; no, there's no time and there's always going to be that kid that's like a B grade kid that's just going to go and talk about the wrong bloody text and fall off the mark scheme in the exam.

So we were very focussed on the *assessment* objectives and how to write about them, we absolutely beasted the coursework but we're lucky because we've got the 'dough' – so we've got the photography studio and stuff so you know we are able to get you know studio photography and then suddenly if everyone's being forced into Print because Film is massively high risk, or any students grades then we can, we'll make sure they've got decent shots and then once they've got decent shots, they're in control.

R: Yeah, yeah. So has it, I mean it sounds like it has made a massive impact on the way that you teach – would you say that you've had to change your pedagogical style quite considerably since the start of the new specs?

T: It used to be much more fun to shoot the shit about random cool stuff and now *laughs* and get them to come up with ideas and de de de de and now its much more didactic because it's like; you need to know this thing. You know and its nice to get them to bring some, you know you get them to do a bit of analysis and they'll bring something back to you, maybe you know so group analysis and you'll deal with the lexis and the font but you'll deal with the image and they'll come and feed back to the class but at some point you end up dragging them through it

R: Yeah

T: You know what I mean? and sort of being like; this is where I was going kids, you know what I mean? So it is didactic especially when you get to the sort of Industrial stuff and sort of piecing that altogether – there are lessons where you sit there and you talk to them because it's not something, it's something really hard to find. It's not in a book – even if you say, even if you look at the book, the resources that we've got in terms of say the Hodder stuff, it's actually, the most interesting stuff is the stuff that; oh this has happened now, did you know this has happened? Oh Geordie Grieg's now the editor, not Paul Dacre and it's like *unsure* movement. You know what I mean its like, if they follow those things that the book, you know we never had textbooks in the old spec because they were out of date as soon as they were printed.

R: Yeah, yeah. I mean, what about the resources that you create? You say you've got the out of date textbooks but it, do you generally create your own resources? I mean is it a mixture of that and other peoples stuff? Or other...

T: Well I tend to, I make all my own, we make our own resources because we're always looking at what's happening at the bleeding edge and what's the pattern now and you know if you look at like, say consolidation of newspaper ownership and stuff like that, obviously then those kind of things like, this happened; the Independent got bought by DMGT, like they don't even care that they're not – they care about money, they do not care about political influence, you know what I mean, they're like; 'yeah lets have a left wing one, that one I think can make us money' and it's that kind of thing where if you're making you're own contemporary resources then the truth is interesting and engaging for students. But its even visible for students

R: Yeah

T: You know what I mean? It's like, its not yeah, its kind of those things where you need to do, you need to keep it interesting, for the to form almost the narrative of the, the initial teaching; this happened de de de de de. So create a lot of our stuff but then we still ask all the kids to go and get the main Hodder book

R: Right, yeah

T: Because its like, to them it's the answers, you know

R: Yeah, yeah, yeah

T: That is them

R: That's the psychology of the exam board as well I think

T: Yeah and it's, but I would say to them, I always look at the models in the GCSE and the A level and they are horse shit. Like, you know like there's one in the GCSE book which is like; oh here's 10 minutes, write 27 lines. Its like, what? You know, yeah so, yeah so the having that textbook as a backbone and then making sure that we're on top of bleeding edge stuff is really important and it makes it much more interesting, ties into their own experience. I've, the stuff that we get from the OCR sort of forums on Facebook, it's nice we all try to post up interesting stuff or comment on other peoples stuff but I, people are taking whole, I would never take anyone's scheme of work wholesale because I just, its interesting to see where people go and if there's sort of a trick that one might have missed in sort of dealing with it. But its nice to have that kind of visibility in what other people are doing but we make our own stuff because we know that our own stuff is – we're lucky we've got certainly 2 of us are, have been doing it for so long and have this, such a practical industry background at some level, that we know what to look for that's like; oh, that's why they've got that Media language and representation in it, that industrial reason. You know

R: Yeah definitely

T: So

R: So I know it's difficult to judge because obviously the students you've got now have no knowledge of what went before in terms of the old spec. But do you notice any difference in terms of engagement at all? I mean it sounds like what you're doing is really interesting and everything but your sort of own opinions about whether they potentially are less engaged with the new spec compared to the old ones?

T: Arguably. I mean I think its hard to say – I think there's less engagement, intrinsic motivation to kind of 'do this' and 'this will be funny' and the chats that you have in class – we try and make it as fun as possible or even if its not fun, make it funny, you know what I mean like because, you know. But the, I think there's that, we aren't able to develop kids own interest in the practical side in a way that we could before because we gave them the skills

R: Yeah

T: And we made filmmakers for example. I think in lesson time, like you can get some really good, interesting questions and you can have a chat and you can still do it but its, it was easier before. But what worries me is you haven't got that intrinsic kind of motivation to create because they don't have the skills to create anymore

R: Yeah, yeah. I think that's really, yeah absolutely and its, its definitely much more binary in terms of Media now; you've either got the BTEC practical, you've got the Media academic side of things, its really hard

T: Well yeah I mean we've kind of, the reason that we went with straight up A level was, with Media was we've done it before but also we thought about doing the BTEC but then its almost like a social service isn't it? To sort of like educate a political citizen about the Media, you know what I mean and that's what we're here to do, kind of first of all. And then, yeah it would be I mean the, the text of it is the, I always – I'll give you an example, right? So did you hear about, do you remember the old BFI Silver Arts award?

R: Yes! Yeah, yeah

T: Right, it's like I would send 3 kids a year on that and now I send no kids a year on that

R: Yeah

T: Because they didn't have a, they haven't got a Year 11 product and you know, but its and some of the Year 13 products we used to get would be awesome because they'd made something at GCSE and made mistakes, they'd made something at AS and made mistakes and then they had a Year 13 product that was like, you only learn by your mistakes in film making

R: Yeah, absolutely, absolutely. It's really interesting, we don't have any kids anymore for Silver Arts either, we've had a few over the years but definitely none anymore, yeah. So in terms of like your professional identity as a Media teacher, has that changed? Like in terms of your feelings about the subject since the new specs have come in?

T: Yeah I teach my subject despite the specification. Like and I make sure that they know that and then like we're all in it and I'm like; so then you have to go and link this to your, we say try to take it, you know frame it in terms of; well the government says that this is culturally relevant, so culturally well this is the fucking **unsure** But the idea is to bring it out to their own experience. There are things that are important that might not of got taught before so like Newspapers and you know that's become, I think with like Brexit and stuff like that, that's become actually the right kind of subject to teach at the right time.

R: Yeah, yeah

T: But that's more of a happy accident. But the, but generally speaking it doesn't affect my particular my role as such because its still the coolest subject that's going to deal with all the things the kids are really interested in

R: Yeah

T: Its just a shame that we can't bring in more of what they, you know, more of them to the party which used to be, that's how we learn about anything isn't it, you know and so I think

they learn more factual stuff but they understand less of what they're consuming themselves. Like we for example, we have not, there used to be a unit where we'd deal much more with the online world in an holistic way, I don't know if you remember teaching – did you teach the old AQA?

R: I have, no I never taught the old AQA – I taught the old OCR and yeah, OCR

T: There was an independent study in the A level right?

R: Yeah there was yeah. Yeah it was yeah

T: That thing that was like; pick a question, you go and research it to the hilt, you bring in relevant theory and then make a product off the back of it

R: Yes definitely

T: Like and that was, that's awesome – you know what I mean? That's the pinnacle of what kids should be doing wouldn't you say

R: And that what a lot of the academics were fighting for in terms of the consultation meetings and because that's what you know the DfE wanted to take out – is that, they said that wouldn't be part of the course and that's what a lot of the wrangling apparently was, was to keep that critical research, that kind of investigative that independent investigation still in there because the universities wanted those skills and they said that's what kids need to come to university with and its going to be much harder for them to progress onto HE without those things. But you know that's what was lost and you know here we are but

T: Yeah

R: Its, I think that's quite a key theme that's emerged from, from all these interviews is that people really do or did like the, that part of the course and that's what was lost not just the practical reduction but also things that have completely gone entirely. So I think that's really interesting.

In terms of your use of the Facebook group; how have you kind of used it? Is it more of a resource kind of go to or is it more of a community network of teachers or what? I mean how do you sort of see yourself within that professional community?

T: It's more that I can, I don't know, normally to sort of vent frustrations but

Laughter

T: And yeah I'm kind of normally like, yeah I'm kind of sweariest *laughs* you'll notice, you might – next time you see a post from me on there you'll be like; oh spoke to Steve. I mean, right so and its, so the idea is its something that I can, yeah use personally but also you know you can get visibility on what other people are, good little snippets like bleeding edge resources and stuff that can be really good, I often sort of just send themselves to my email and then sort of, maybe like put the link somewhere or copy the article or something like that. But the visibility on schemes of work earlier on it was a godsend to have that, it was really useful to have that in the early part of the development. Now I haven't got time to start messing with stuff now because I'm sort of **winding/tightening** up stuff, I'm you know, I'm sort of going back and I'm probably going to lose someone next year now so I'd imagine that I

need to, you know have schemes of work that someone else can keep to as opposed to just me

R: Yeah

T: So yeah but it was good for that visibility because it was GCSE and A level at the same time and it was basically all on me and so then I was, so I was just like; right well they're doing that, they're doing that, right – so between my gut and them I'd sort of know what lessons to produce. So that was good and then I tried to steer it early on as the main way of contacting OCR's Media Studies Subject leader guy, what's his name again? John Paul?

R: John Hibbert is it?

T: John Paul something or other.

R: Oh right ok, I've got the contact as John Hibbert – I don't teach OCR so

T: Yeah, is it John Paul Hibbert?

R: So yeah, I know its J Hibbert anyway so

T: Right, right ok so that was ideal. So there was a thing initially about emailing them, it's like; dude the action is on Facebook. And so we basically got it to the point where we tried to drag him towards Facebook

R: Right, right

T: For answering queries because we're all going to want the same thing answered in a public forum and there's, you know and there's nothing that he would want to say privately that he wouldn't want to say publicly because he's just a professional role/rah

R: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I think I'm speaking him later on this week actually so it'll be interesting to hear his perception of how that Facebook group operates and his kind of professional life too because I know, I know for the EDUCAS – the **field** subject officers actually runs the group, whereas on the Media one they don't, they have no presence really on there at all so its quite, its quite interesting how the different subject officers kind of treat it. But you're absolutely right it is, it's the most streamlined place, most efficient place for it to happen

T: Yeah I mean it's the right demographic and it's the right, what's the word; level of civility I think as well and

R: Yeah

T: And so yeah I think its, it's the pulse of where we're all at in terms of OCR Media Studies at the minute, be there, there isn't anywhere else to be

R: I guess I suppose the only issue with that would be if people don't want to be on Facebook

T: Yeah if people don't, but I think people would have a professional attachment to Facebook but rather than, but look if we think about our peer group you know, of Media teachers –

most of them understand the problems with Facebook well enough to know, well enough to know what you can and can't do on Facebook. So they'll be engaged with it, might be a small minority that might be like, you know; 'screw Facebook', but that's going to be a vast minority compared to the engaged people that are going to be using it.

R: It's also, we're all Media teachers as well so it's a bit counterintuitive to say that anyway but yeah

T: Exactly, exactly

R: Yeah exactly. So just thinking about the future of the subject; what do you think medium to long term the future of Media Studies is going to be?

T: *Exhales* I don't know. I just think you need to hang out for like another 5-7 years, wait for a Labour government, get a load of curriculum reforms to swing the pendulum back the other way and then see what you get. You know because at the moment its, it's a, its restrictive to the creative industries in this country, literally someone turned the tap off film making and movie and film making in this country.

R: Yeah

T: And that's a problem and I think it makes it also kind of somewhat inaccessible to those sort of middle, I mean I know that I culled *unsure* at the end of our Year 12, the Year 12 exams and the kids that don't get a D we get rid of

R: Yeah

T: Yeah, right and you know that's not to say that we, I just know that there are kids that would have made it – maybe not all the kids of course but there are kids that would have made it through and got themselves an A level or at least an AS that don't get anything for the first year of their study now. So its getting those people that are useful but not necessarily highly academic and very good at writing and just sort of cut them adrift or wasting their time.

R: Yeah, yeah, is that a school policy throughout or is that sort of *unsure/do that as a* department

T: No it's something where we've, they loo at their grades across the subjects they've taken in the first year and you want Ds to carry on – so it's not something departmental, so its school wide. Because it is, its literally if you can't rock a D then it's going to be a waste of your time

R: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, absolutely

T: Obviously you get those horror stories about you know, oh you haven't got a B – you know those schools but that's just, that's just mental

R: No that, absolutely and I think, I suppose the difficulty is nowadays you don't have the, the end of the AS, you know the fact that its been decoupled – you don't have that grade and that's what, that's where we are now isn't it. You know we cant, the Year 13s, we're

having to scramble to put them in rank order because there's not really any formal coursework grading etc that we can actually legitimately use

T: Yeah I mean I can, I think I'd be quite comfortable to use my gut – only because I've got however many years of experience

R: Yeah, yeah, yeah, absolutely

T: You know but that's about it

R: I do a little thing at the start of every year, after about the first half term I do just – I keep it in secret, I do just a rank order of all the students that I think

T: *Laughing over*

R: And compare it to what they actually get at the end of the year and I'm pretty much spot on most

T: Yeah no that's, I seriously feel that like its, we are, we get kids in and we shepherd them through 2 years and then no ones, I mean maybe yeah 1 or 2 kids might have like a, they might bump up but it's literally 1 or 2 kids in a cohort of 25.

R: Yeah, yeah

T: That bump up and sort of have that developmental bump, you know what I mean? You often feel it's got nothing to do with you at all, its just to do with I don't know, growth – its growth

R: Exactly, you know in 2 years their brain grows massively and all sorts of things happen and you know, I get kids who start off really, really well and then dip in the second year and then come back up right at the last minute or kids that are real slow burners that bumble along under the radar for probably Cs and Ds for like the whole 2 years and then suddenly the lightbulb switches on and they've actually for the first time spent 2 weeks doing some revision and they suddenly get it and its, you don't see that in class because you've finished teaching them by that point but they do [it in the] exams and you know you get emails from them going; 'oh I've just realised I've done this and I've got it' and I was like; brilliant! You know. And of course we're missing all that now aren't we because it's, all those kids that that would have happened to we're missing for the

T: You don't see the growth, yeah you don't get the chance for the slow burners as much

R: Exactly, exactly. But hopefully I mean, my research that I'm doing, I going to be writing it up from September and hopefully its going to be of some use to the Media Education community and there's consultation periods going forwards with Ofqual – I know they've had a couple of meetings already with teachers and academics

T: Oh I went, yeah

Laughter

R: Oh you went? Oh tell me, I couldn't go to that one

T: Yeah, oh it was great I was like; well you're going to invite me to come and tell you what I think? **Its like on the phone to you/just like you I think** like people need to know what a fuck up this has been so **laughs** like yeah any opportunity really with me

R: Yeah, yeah no definitely. That's it and that's what that sort of moment is kind of like a critical, I mean I can sort of say now because we've had a chat but you know the whole reason of doing this doctoral research is because I felt exactly like you did at the start and you know its political, its really it's a part of the wider context and I felt like the subject was being kind of eviscerated from the top down and its an important snapshot in Media Education history basically. You know we've always fought against something whether it be public perceptions that its a Mickey Mouse subject or whatever but its, now its actually we've had the autonomy taken away from us which we still have always had up until this point. You know that, that the DfE Ofqual frameworks, they took away any professional judgement – in fact you know the Ofqual person, you know the consultant guy was an English teacher so

T: Yeah, that annoyed me when I found that one out, I was like; really? Then they were like; 'yeah but he's really experienced' and I was like; nah **laughs**

R: Exactly

T: You know you need to spend some time behind the camera and then link that, I mean *that kind of *seemed to panic over it* as well*

R: Absolutely, absolutely. So you know I do really hope that, you know to be fair pretty much everybody I've spoken to has said exactly the same thing as you and it's pretty hard to argue when you've got a really strong critical mass of teachers saying exactly the same thing – who care about their subject and you know, they're professionals. It's got, someone's got to listen to it at some point

T: At some point

R: At some point, so yeah

T: I mean the single biggest thing is the film making for me, that's – not because I'm particularly like super keen on film making, I'm just like; but we live in a world of moving not still images. That's the thing that just seems to me just really critically distilling

R: Absolutely, absolutely

T: A decade of kids if it continues the way that it is

R: Yeah absolutely and it's the fact of growing industry in our country as well. We're going to have a massive deficit you know and

T: Oh but there will always be enough kind of, what's the word? I don't know – white, middle class kids with iPhones and Daddy can buy him a tripod and you know what I mean, its like and then keep them for 2 years running for *buttons* you know there's going to be those kids with those hook ups but its just that kind of, but there's more, there's a diversity of voices out there that just will not get involved in it

R: Exactly and the fact that the popular culture *audio breaks up* directors, the different kind of culture capital here at play isn't it, you know its not the culture capital that necessarily is going to let our kids succeed and who designs what that culture capital is anyway? Well we know who designs it so, you know

T: Yeah

R: Anyway, we could go on

T: Be here all day

R: Yeah all day but no thank you so much, what you're saying is really, really valuable and its just strengthened the research more so, my thesis title is; A Site of Conflict and Resistance, and you know so what you're saying is – like what you said before about, you teach in spite of the specification, its – I think that kind of sums it up really well. But yeah but thank you, if you don't mind I'll send you the form to sign to say that you agree to have your, you know, words put into the – quoted in my

T: Yeah sure

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Researcher: So are you currently teaching? Or are you training this year?

Teacher: I'm training this year

R: Ok, so how's that been then? That must be really strange, like having it cut short really?

T: It was really strange, yeah it was just something like I was told the morning and then I had to like explain it to my school that I'm done. Weird, they don't really understand as well

R: Absolutely, no really really strange and I think obviously speaking to [REDACTED] last week that its, you know she's obviously been furloughed and its been quite difficult I think you know just to kind of get your head round all of that as well. You know you suddenly have all this responsibility and then suddenly its all kind of disappeared

T: I know, its weird

R: But I'm glad you're alright anyway. So what are the plans then now, are you all finished and do you just have to hand in assignments? Or how's it going to all finish up?

T: Yeah so they've sent us things such as like an induction year profile because our placement was cut off we have to like explain things that we think we'll need help with for our QTS year

R: Right ok

Talking over

R: And have you got a job to go to in September?

T: No not yet, still looking

R: Not yet. So this is the thing isn't it? Normally this time of year its fine and of course like everything's just kind of halted hasn't it, so there might be a real flurry in September with lots of other roles coming up – so you know, fingers crossed. Have you got an idea of where you want to be?

T: Yeah I would want somewhere in London, although I live outside of it but I'm used to more travelling inside to London

R: Right, yeah, I think that's, I think there will be some movement, I'm pretty sure because like as I say, you know everything's just been paused hasn't it

T: Yeah

R: You know things hopefully will start moving again and there will be lots of places that will, kind of be caught short I think so you know I think there will be flexible roles available later on.

But yeah, thank you very much for talking to me today. I don't know how much you know about my research or what ██████ said to you about it but basically I'm, I've been teaching Media for 20 years now – I teach in West London and was Head of Faculty for 10 years and then I took, then I've gone part time doing doctoral research at Bournemouth. My research is basically on the curriculum policy reforms for the A level and obviously the new specification that was introduced in 2017. So I'm kind of looking at what the impact of that is because like for the first time in the whole time that I've been teaching – I've been teaching since 2000, I started teaching when it was, it had just moved to the modular, you know the old split system

T: Yeah

R: So I've known nothing else. You know I did the old, old A levels which was what we've gone back to now myself as a student *laughs* but I've only taught on the modular one and I'm just really interested in the processes around that and looking at what impact that's going to have on us as teachers for the subject, in terms of identity and also longer term; whether there's going to be changes and what kind of characterising of the Media profession that's going to have. So I've been speaking to, I've done about 20 interviews already with kind of quite experienced teachers and you know, you tend to get quite a lot of people who are quite vocal about things and their views about – so they kind of crawl out of the woodwork if you like, if you ask people to do that.

T: Yeah

R: So that's been great and it's been brilliant, I've had some really, really good participants already but it became really apparent quite early on that newer teachers; trainee teachers or people who have only been in the profession since 2017, weren't talking to me – I don't know for what reason, whether they don't feel confident enough or whether they didn't have enough experience or what but and I sort of said to ██████; look I really would love to speak to some teachers who haven't taught, they might have studied on the old A level but they haven't taught it and I'd like to get some sort of fresh perspective on that. So really that's what I'd like to talk to you about, so if you're happy to just you know, give me anything that you think about in terms of your experiences so far that'd be brilliant. And also, did you say you'd studied the old A level?

T: Yeah I did, I studied it a couple of years ago, yeah

R: So that's quite, that's quite good to kind of think about in comparison

T: Oh wait, did you say the old one? The old A level?

R: Yeah, yeah

T: Yeah the old one, sorry yeah, I studied that

R: The one, the old modular one where you could do the AS and then the A2, yeah on the old specifications. So it's just really, I mean what are your kind of perceptions about the differences of the old A level as a student and the kind of, the new specifications as a teacher?

T: Well from what I remember being a student; it was, I feel like it was more skills based

R: Right, yeah

T: In terms of my exams because I did AQA and when I was doing, doing my teacher training it was for OCR so I'm unsure in terms of like the differences in that aspect but I feel like when I was doing it at, for A levels, we were still learning things like theorists, its was still more or less going over things if you were being analytical. So we would go over things, it was more based on like; ok, the different camera shots, camera angles, going over *missed on scene* - there was a lot more emphasis I feel like on Media Language

R: Right, yeah, yeah

T: And Media Representation for example, we didn't have to learn about Industry at all

R: Yeah

T: That wasn't the main focus

R: Yeah

T: And then again because it was 50% coursework, a lot more time was spent, there was a lot of like independent time where we'd have lessons where we would be on the computers – it was a lot more research, I don't know if it was necessary because it was AQA? But I remember that there was a research project where we had to, I think it was a like a 3000 word essay we had to do

R: Yep

T: On any topic to do with Media, so again as a student it gave us a lot of experience in terms of being independent. Like we could choose any topic related to Media

R: Yeah

T: So yeah, so that was good in terms of preparation I think for university because by the time I got to university the next year, I'd had an experience of writing like an academic essay

R: Right, yeah, yeah

T: Which my other subjects didn't really give me the experience of doing

R: Ok, that's interesting, yeah

T: And for the exam I remember I'm sure we saw an unseen text, like I remember seeing an advert – so again it was more or less just using the, the skills we'd learnt in terms of being able to analyse any Media product, whether it be an advertisement, a print, a film clip, a poster. It was more preparing us to do that as opposed to; we have to know specific knowledge on set texts, like I don't think set texts was ever a 'thing'

R: Right, yeah, yeah. Well it wasn't, yeah I mean it's the first year that it came through really, I mean there was, obviously Film Studies had suggested texts and things like that but Media Studies, you had a lot of freedom to do whatever you wanted. You might have areas of things to cover but it wasn't specific to a particular text.

So do you feel like you as a Media student are better equipped in terms of skills and understanding, you had like a broader knowledge, than the students that are coming through now on the new specification?

T: Yeah I think so. *Pauses* I don't know, like I think it's, I think it's quite difficult, it can be because it's so specific to, for example a certain text – because from teacher training I've been doing OCR, like they specifically have to know about the Lucozade advert for example

R: Yeah, yeah

T: I just, I think that can be quite difficult because you're used to analysing 1 text as opposed to; you're learning new skills to be able to analyse multiple Media, rather than just one

R: Yeah

T: Yeah

R: So what would you say the kind of key challenges are for the current students on the Media course? Compared to how you experienced it?

T: I think one challenge is their perception of the idea of Media being a very creative subject

R: Yeah

T: I've been told some of them felt, the students like at parents – not parents evening sorry, at open evenings this whole idea of; oh you'll be able to you know, film a music video

R: Yeah

T: Yeah, you'll be doing creative practical work, it's not necessarily the main focus of Media. So when they have to have lessons where it seems more like a history lesson because I did Media, sorry I did History at A level as well

R: Right, yeah

T: I did kind of, I did feel like I was teaching them more History, it felt like it

R: Yeah

T: Because I know obviously now its more of a fact based subject

R: Yeah, yeah

T: There's more emphasis on that. I think that's been one of the obstacles, possibly them feeling like, because I know some students they were really looking forward to when they actually get to do music video but the placement that I was at, they will only ever do that in Year 13 – so for the whole of Year 12 it was just them learning different, the different set texts that they had to obviously learn for their exam

R: Yeah and in terms of practical skills, do you think students are coming out with – I mean I know its hard for you to say because you've only been there a short time, but like do you

think they'll be coming out with the same kind of skills that you came out with? In terms of like, even though its more limited in terms of coursework content, do you think they're learning the same sort of technical skills and practical, creative overall?

T: Yeah *pauses* I personally don't think so because I feel like just the experience that I've had and seen specifically, I don't know [if] it's just the schools that I've been at but they don't really get to engage with, for example: Photoshop, Media Pro, like all those softwares. They only get to engage with specifically let say, Photoshop when they're doing their coursework – whereas before, I feel like because of the, how Media was before there was so much leeway and space for us to engage with creative aspects

R: Yeah, yeah

T: Like if we wanted to learn about camera angles, our teachers would give us a camera and be like; ok, we'll learn about this, take some different shots, you know go around the classroom – it was, yeah I think because of time as well because there's so much content to go through, I don't think teachers are able to have these practical sessions where students can engage with multiple different softwares and platforms

R: Yeah, do you feel, sorry go on

T: Yeah I feel like there's more emphasis on that when they actually are doing the coursework as opposed to their learning it throughout but again I understand that, I don't think most teachers have time to plan for that

R: Yeah and do you feel like you haven't been able to sort of, practice and experiment with different teaching styles as much as you would have liked to because of the course and its constraints? Or do you feel, like has the school encouraged you to try stuff out or do different things?

T: Yeah my school, one of my schools hasn't encouraged that because of the time constraint and the whole idea of; we need to get through this content for the exam – and then I can try experimenting. But then I've had the experience of GCSE, I think because, I don't know why GCSEs, I've had, I was able to plan like more practical tasks but I probably with specifically A levels – no. There was a big emphasis on; we don't have time to do that, and there was a lot of stress on teachers too as well to get through content

R: Yes I think that's sort of quite keenly felt across the board actually. I suppose, you know you're, with you training its important to try things out and be able to be supported in doing that so it's a kind of difficult situation isn't it because you've got the pressures of the school but also the pressures of you know, you as a new teacher wanting to kind of learn how the best way to teach is and so I appreciate that it's a challenge.

In terms of your other sort of trainees (sorry I'm just running away from the kids – they came upstairs and I was like; shush, I'm just running upstairs) In terms of your other sort of friends on the course, have they found similar experiences do you think?

T: To be honest I haven't really spoken to them about their experience, I know that some of them, in terms of the time constraints, they do feel like a pressure to follow, because a lot of schools they have, they've really planned out how each week for Media will work out in terms of; ok this week we'll be doing this/this scheme. I just feel like a lot, a lot from their experience of them like, they have to start within that

R: Yeah

T: But that's been a whole thing of, ok they may want to experiment but they can't because its like, that's not according to the schedule and then it's like, there won't be time to make up for it

R: Yeah and in terms of resources and planning and things like that, you sort of mentioned quite a lot has been done already so how did you find your kind of, opportunities for planning and creating resources and things like that? Did you find, did you find it, you said that you know quite a lot of it was historical – did you have to do a lot of research yourself? Particularly on the kind of background and context and theories? Or was that sort of fairly provided for by the school?

T: Some of the schools had, like they had books, so specifically for OCR I had a book that I could use – that was useful and then another placement I was at, they didn't really have much so a lot of it was me just trying to find information out on my own, which has been quite difficult because I don't know whether, maybe because its quite a fairly new course – in terms of the changes, I don't feel like there's much resources. Like at one of my placements I was just told, well here's a book

R: Yeah, ok

T: I've struggled with that

R: Yeah and I mean we've talked about the fact that its very content heavy, you know so was that another challenge in terms of trying to get through the content as well as kind of plan and get it all into what you need to do to be sort of experimenting with your teaching and learning how to be in a classroom? How did that all kind of balance out?

T: That was really, yeah that was really hard. I think because I wasn't, I don't know like I knew there had been changes but until, its only once I started teaching it I was fully aware of like how much emphasis was on the students having to like know these facts and figures. I just struggled with trying to teach it in an engaging way where it didn't just feel like; ok you need to make sure you have this written down, I feel like a lot of the time with me trying to like emphasise to the children that they need to know this information like as opposed to just looking at me telling them, for example facts on Minecraft and what year it came out, it's like; ok you need to know this. I think that's been the biggest struggle, trying to make it engaging when learning information.

R: Yeah, how, just out of interest, how do you think you would have fared if you'd been doing that course now as a student; how do you think you would have fared in terms of experience and kind of progress? Compared to how you did on the old course?

T: Oh, I feel like I would have felt less creative a lot. I don't think I would have found Media as fun to be honest – I feel like because it was one of those subjects where; I did find it fun being analytical, I did find it fun analysing for example our teachers would be like; ok bring an interesting print you see or an interesting tv show, analyse a scene from that. There was a lot of independent, like it **really properly used to be** independent and I don't necessarily think the students are being able to do that. So I probably would've seen Media as like any other subject.

R: And do you think you would have gone on to do what you're doing now if you had studied A level, the current A level?

T: In terms of my degree, what I studied at university?

R: Yeah

T: *Pauses* I'm actually, that's a good question, I'm actually not sure because I went on to study Film

R: Right, ok

T: I know specifically now for Media they learn about the Industry of Film but they don't actually analyse it, well they – the specification that I was doing

R: Yeah, yeah

T: I'm actually not sure because I did more of the creative side of it as opposed to learning about like what year Disney was created, how much money they made off Jungle Book, those sort of things. I'm not sure.

R: Yeah, so potentially it might, you know maybe it would have made you reconsider some of the choices that you made beyond A level. I mean you did History, what was the other A level you did if you don't mind me asking?

T: That's fine, I did English Language as well but again, English Language it was kind of similar to Media because you would, for your exam you would be given like; you could be given a newspaper article and you'd have to analyse the sort of, the language used. So it was kind of similar, you know you're going to be seeing unseen texts and you have to analyse them – its more based on the skills and you knowing these specific techniques, so they're kind of similar in a sense. I don't necessarily know about now and I don't know how English is at A level but yeah they were kind of similar in that sense.

R: Sure, sure, yeah that's really interesting and you know it's, well is there anything on the new specifications that you've been teaching this year that you actually have really enjoyed? Or that you like or think should be there and should stay?

T: That I think should stay, that's an interesting question *laughs* I'm sure there has been something *pauses for thought* I think it's interesting that students now, they have to know specifically like 9 Media platforms

R: Right, yeah

T: I think because when I was doing it there was, what was it? We had to learn, it was; Print, E-Media and Broadcast – those were the only 3 types of Media that we engaged with. So I think it's interesting that students get to know more because in my class specifically, I have students that, like they were gamers

R: Right, yeah

T: So they knew quite a bit about video games – so that was useful, I feel like that engaged them to an extent

R: Yeah

T: I think the variety of Media is a good option, I think that's really good actually, that's one aspect

R: Yeah. What about the theory? Because obviously you know alongside the set texts, the installation of set theorists was the new thing as well. You know, that I mean I don't know because obviously you would probably have studied theories in the older course as well in some respect but was that quite a big change for you? Or was that something that was just, you welcomed? Or what

T: Some of the theorists I did know about so that was, I felt more comfortable with them. Some of the other theorists like for example; the Industry theorists, I found were quite difficult. Yeah that was, it was quite difficult actually in terms of, because for example for OCR; you only do the theorists for Newspapers – those are the only ones that its relevant, whereas in, when I was teaching [learning?] it with, for A level, the theorists they could be applied to all of the set texts and I know that a lot of teachers, like they OCR because the students only had to engage with theorists when it came to Newspapers and Print.

R: So it's a bit more streamlined in terms of the content, yeah

T: It was difficult and I think from the feedback, students struggled with that and I don't know if this is across the board but a lot of students, they don't like learning about newspapers

R: Yeah, I think that's fairly standard *laughs* there's a lot of teachers who like teaching about Newspapers because they think its important but they don't actually 'like' the experience of teaching it because of the experience that students have. I think a lot of people I've spoken to and I'd class myself as one of them as well, find that the kind of political context of Newspapers quite hard for students to engage with and understand because it's not something they've necessarily been exposed to beforehand and so you have to kind of quickly catch them up on a lot of, kind of basic understanding of global issues and politics and you know, social issues and things like that. So I think that's, that's probably one of the themes that's come out so far that teachers think its important that they, well News I mean not necessarily Newspapers but News, News Values and things like that. So but yeah, that students generally don't like Newspapers. What about the blending of sort of contemporary Media text versus the more historical ones; what are your perceptions? Do you think that's a good thing or a bad thing? Or you've got no opinion on it, or it's just a thing because its set texts? Or what?

T: I think its useful. I wasn't able to teach necessarily all of the curriculum but like when I taught Music Videos, again the music, the set texts they had, a lot of them had never heard of it

R: Right, yeah

T: So that, that was quite difficult for them because I had to like explain quite a bit but that's to be expected. Yeah I think it is useful to have a, like a balance of it, yeah I think its useful. But again I feel like I had to introduce them to more relevant examples – like to almost hook

them in and get them engaged and then be like; 'ok so this is the actual text that you need to know for your exam' and again, had to make sure there's a lot of emphasis on; 'this is for your exam, you need to know this information'. So yeah, that was *sighs*

R: What in terms of your future as well as a Media teacher do you, you know how do you feel about spending the majority of the next part of your career teaching on these specifications? What are your kind of, I know it sounds rather grand but what are your hopes and fears for you as a Media Studies teacher?

T: One fear I think would be having to constantly remind students that they need to write the information down and trying to motivate them – that's been one issue that I've seen. Because I don't know like, I feel like, I wish that they were more motivated to do work because I don't know whether it's a case of because for me specifically, when I was a student I wanted to do well and I just don't feel like I see, I don't know I just don't, when you see students not necessarily doing work or just wandering around it does make you think; well is it the course? Are they just not as motivated as I'm used to seeing students? Its just, its weird, I don't know whether it's the subject or its just, again I don't know whether its because the tasks that I'm doing aren't as engaging, or they're just not interested or its been a, its 9am in the morning, I don't know what it is?

R: Yeah absolutely. Anything in terms of like because you've obviously, you've chosen to be a Media and Film teacher; so what is, what are the kind of motivators that drive you? What are your hopes that the profession will allow you to do in terms of, and also the subject as well, what are your kind of – do you think that will sustain you as a teacher? The subject that you teach?

T: Yeah I think it will. I still enjoy teaching it. I love Media and I love engaging with it and I still think that it's a really good subject in terms of students being able to learn about you know, different academic ideas – specifically on, for example platforms that they engage with every day.

R: Yeah

T: Like you know you have students, for example like I was saying, they are video gamers, they do like gaming but its never been a case of where, oh they actually get to like get graded on it and they actually get to study it so I think that's a really, that's a really good option for Media and I do still enjoy that. I always loved, I think because again for A levels I was able to do this, I loved the whole Media Language aspect of it. Like I love analysing texts, I love looking at *missed on scene* like what camera angle was used, what camera shot. Representation; so I more gravitate towards, which I didn't get to teach much but I liked more of the Advertising

R: Yeah, yeah

T: That was one aspect that I really enjoyed teaching, I didn't get to teach it as much but I like that. Also Music Videos again, specifically looking out for props, costumes, lighting, those sort of things – like I really enjoy that aspect and I think that will keep me going because there's still, although students don't do it as much, they still are able to be analytical with Media and get specific examples and use their own interpretations.

R: Sure, sure. What would you change? You know, if we had a magic wand and like next September you could influence Ofqual and DfE to change the kind of framework; what would be the kind of 3 things that you would change about the spec or the, not necessarily the spec but the framework?

T: I think there should be more variety; for example I think its quite difficult, maybe because I've only taught 2 specs, so I don't necessarily know how for example EDUCAS's, I haven't taught that so I don't know how it is. But 1 I think would be, like if you're going to teach specifically Video Games; I feel like there should be a variety to choose from as opposed to it just being, ok for example OCR you have to teach Minecraft. I feel like teachers, it should go back to the aspect of teachers do have a say in what Media set texts that their students will be learning.

R: Sure, sure

T: *Pauses for thought* One more aspect, I think it would be, again I think maybe if it wasn't, there wasn't so much content to go through. It would be nice to have practical, to allow students to be more practical in their lessons – so if there was more leeway. If students are learning about advertisements, Advertising for them to you know have a lesson where they can actually create their own advertisement that maybe goes against a stereotype, that goes against the representation that they see for their set text

R: Sure, yeah

T: Just to make it more memorable for them

R: Yeah, yeah, definitely. Are you a member of any of the Facebook groups? For sort of, you said you'd been teaching AQA and OCR – have you been on, are you a member of any of those groups on Facebook for the Media teachers?

T: Yeah I'm a member of the OCR one, yeah

R: And what are your thoughts about it? Have you used it much? Has it been beneficial to your teaching?

T: Yeah my second placement they actually told me about it because I had no idea about it.

R: Right

T: It's very useful actually, like they have a lot of resources. I think it's a nice community because a lot of teachers they'll share their resources, a lot of people go on there for advice, I know specifically since we've been in lockdown – like a lot of schools are putting the pressure on teachers to like fix and change the curriculum.

R: Yeah, yeah

T: Specifically like; ok you've got to do different tasks. I think its really good in that sense.

R: Yeah, so it has offered a sort of a, a resource sharing and in terms of like, the sort of posting and network ,support network; have you found that you've engaged with people like

with comments and with posting things on there as well? Or is it just mainly the use of the shared resources?

T: Yeah I've only used it for resources because I was told by my placement that's a good place. Again maybe because at my placement it was easy for me to just like, if I had, if I was struggling with planning a lesson I could just email or I could just speak to my colleagues and they were really well informed as well. So yeah it was mostly for resources for me but in general just from seeing the comments, a lot of people do go on there for help and like everyone's always welcoming

R: Yeah, yeah, that's it, I think there's a good sort of community of practice for teachers definitely. Well that's brilliant and do you use any other kind of social media at all, like Twitter or anything for kind of professional purposes?

T: No I don't, I don't really have much social media

R: No, no that's fine, its just, I was just, because obviously it, that's an angle for one of my research as well that I'm looking at, because at the same time as the specifications – the new ones were announced, the membership of those Facebook groups like massively leapt up. They, you know I'd been a member of one of them for quite a while before that and then I sort of noticed, in fact its why I'm doing the doctoral research really because I noticed within the space of like 2 weeks, the membership of one of the groups went from 80 to like over 2000 so it's. You know it's another kind of separate strand to my research looking at teacher professional engagement online and things like that and seeing, particularly really interesting what you were saying about, you know since everybody's been in lockdown that the reliance on technology and social kind of ways of learning and online ways of learning, have become completely relied upon and important. So it's just another kind of area of research that I'm interested in, just looking at how teachers use online and social media to kind of support their teaching but also how they shape their identity as well because obviously, you know you will have seen from the posts on OCR that certain people have certain opinions about things and that includes other people in how we might see ourselves as professionals. So that might be an interesting thing going forward to see how we come out of lockdown and what impact that's going to have. But I think the supportive network is really, really good for the profession and having that, I mean its created by teachers not by official sources and I think we all like that so yeah.

Is there anything else that like you think strongly, you feel strongly about? Or you think that I haven't covered that you would want to sort of add that might be useful for what I'm doing? Researching on?

T: I don't, have you spoken to students about their experience of learning Media? Is that something that you're planning on doing possibly?

R: Yeah so, I mean I've got my own classes and I've got to look, I was trying to get all the teachers and I'm talking to the academics and people involved in the process at the moment and then **kind of move it out** to students later on. Obviously it, I was going to do it now but obviously it's a bit difficult because all my students disappeared so but yeah I think you know getting your experience of being a recent student on the old specification was really good as a comparison, yeah. Well I mean, have you done, it's difficult I suppose if you've been training but have you had any kind of, sort of informal feedback from students about what they feel about the course?

T: No, I've just heard comments from them when they're talking to other students, no not necessarily no. I feel like maybe the other, maybe my other colleagues have heard, maybe have heard comments near the beginning, I'm not too sure because I know some of them have said like they're going to do for example, Newspapers like near the end of the spec – those sort of comments, maybe because they've had experiences where they didn't want to maybe engage students near the beginning? In terms of like how they are planning the scheme of work, I feel like that has been due to the feedback they got from the previous year

R: Ok, so yeah that's interesting and obviously students have opinions about what they engage and what they don't engage with. Yeah that's definitely something to consider and I think you know, I think that informal feedback as well **unsure** about is really, really useful. But yeah that's definitely something that's going to be part of my research and its going to be difficult to get kind of parity of every student – I think I'll probably do it via survey rather than talking to individual students. Just sort of get a sense of what people feel about the different, you know platforms and the way, the structure of the course and the exams but obviously we're in a bit of a difficult situation at the minute with lockdown and you know, losing my A2s two months ago was a, a bit of a blow really but there you go. But thank you so much for talking to me, it's really, really valuable to my research and you know I will obviously keep you in the loop of when its, its not going to come out in the immediate future – I've got a year of writing up after this so. But hopefully it will go some way to be you know, relevant to the research community and I know Ofqual are aware of what I'm doing and hopefully that the gathering and capturing of a snapshot of what's going on at the moment will have some impact on what, you know goes on with the subject in the future. So your input is really much appreciated. So yeah, good luck with the rest of your, what's left of your training year and jobs wise and if I hear of anything I'll let you know.

T: Oh thank you, thank you for having me its been really useful, like it's nice talking about these sort of things rather than

R: It is yeah

T: I'm glad I was able to help

R: You absolutely are and I mean I had a really long chat with [REDACTED] last week actually and I've known [REDACTED] quite a few years now *and its, I really sort of said wow its like,* particularly you know having been separate from our colleagues in just a chatting capacity, its really good to kind of talk about something that we do every day as a job but we don't really have the opportunity to talk about and kind of reflect on that often and particularly for [REDACTED] as she doesn't really have you know, a team of colleagues around her that she can talk to about it as well so, its really interesting to kind of get her perspective on it so we were sort of putting the world to rights really.

Laughter

R: But yeah, no absolutely, it's a good professional network so hopefully I will see you – I am a member of the OCR, I don't actually teach OCR at the minute but I do kind of lurk on the group on a regular basis so I will say hello if I see you

Laughter

R: But thank you ever so much and as I say, I'll let you know in future the, any sort of outcomes of this and how your input is being used but that's brilliant.

T: Ok, thank you

R: Lovely, thank you so much, cheers, thanks a lot

T: Bye

R: Bye

Starts: 14:46

Researcher: Thank you for talking to me, actually your comment on my Facebook post was brilliant and you know, I've been trying to get the, all sense of view points, I mean I've interviewed about 22/23 teachers now of varying degrees of experience. And I've spoken to [REDACTED] as well and people like that so it's really good to get all the different kind of perspectives and I've got a few more lined up. But I really, yeah just when you said that, I was just like, you are exactly the person I need to speak to because what I'm missing, you are the sort of missing jigsaw piece of someone whose actually teaching the students that are now transitioning from A level to Undergraduate and have that kind of perspective of the course and

Teacher: I think a lot of university lecturers don't know the spec and can't see those parallels from one to the other. So I left FE just as, just before the new spec was coming in so during the consultation and stuff and the specs had come out just as I left, I think.

R: Yeah

T: So I was kind of engaging in those consultations and kind of the uproar with everyone *muffled as laughing (one of my favourite things about it??)*

R: Yeah

T: But yeah it's an interesting workplace because I mostly teach foundation degree, I run our Media, Film and Media pathway **foundation/validation**, so I particularly teach the students who failed or struggled or didn't get the grade basically at A level.

R: Right, yeah

T: And they're the group that particularly I see these kind of, what's the word? Kind of surface level references to the fears/theorists about the ability to kind of get through that, that wall.

R: Yeah I think that's a theme that's coming out recurrently with all the interviews is that; teachers feel that they are not able to teach the theorists in as much depth as they need to and also speaking to the examiners, I've spoken to a couple of examiners as well and saying that when they're seeing the student scripts coming through, that it's just paying lip service to 3 points about Stuart Hall or 3 points about

T: And a lot of theorists disagree with how they've been used in the syllabus, so misrepresented research, so David Gauntlet is very big on that. I tried to create a website where I was going to get those theorists who are alive still to write contributions about what their research is for the A level spec and very few of them even responded. David Gauntlet responded in a way of like; this isn't what my research is and here's the link to the video on his website. And some of us tried to create, it became something that was quite kind of un-wielding to do because there was just lack of interest from those academics in how their work was being used

R: That's really interesting, yeah, that's really interesting. Yeah I spoke to David Gauntlet very briefly, it was when he was still at Westminster before he went to Canada and he, I said you know, it was I think was it – it must have been in 2016/17 or whenever the, yeah '16 when the framework had just been kind of announced and all the exam boards were getting approved, or not as the case may be. And he was like; I don't know why they picked that particular theory because you know, he felt slightly aggrieved that his later stuff – you know the 'making' theories hadn't been picked up on

T: Which is up to date about new, he's talking there about the new Media ways of thinking like the Media Studies 2.0 whereas as *Merrin's* kind of framework David Gauntlet and Jenkins stuff kind of speak to that but he was like why is that not in there? I think Sonia Livingstone was another one; but I don't understand how that relates to my research and, so that's quite interesting

R: I'm, Peter Lunt has agreed to be interviewed, I haven't got a date to interview him yet but he's agreed to be interviewed as well because he's got some interesting views apparently. Because I, Steve – do you know Steve Connelly?

T: No

R: No so he's at university, he's my external supervisor – I've got Julian as my *inaudible* and Steve as my second. But Steve was at the most recent Ofqual consultation with HE staff which was, I think it was about 4 months ago, 4/5 months ago and ██████████ was there and ██████████ was there as well and yeah and I think it was just really interesting some of the perspectives that came out of that because you know, what people hoped it would be – you know a lot of people wanted theory to be in there and particularly ██████████ I think he was saying you know, the proponent of theory and having a, a canon as such. But actually everything's been kind of lost in translation and you know, when David Buckingham and Natalie Fenton drafted that first DfE framework, all the content, suggested content for the framework – you know he's said that he'd put 'e.g' in for the theorists not you know, and I think they feel quite aggrieved that it has been so mistranslated and misinterpreted from what the original intentions were. And it's kind of you know, it's had to fit a kind of standardised structure hasn't it?

T: I think that reminds me of teaching BTEC Media and I remember in my last few years of it teaching a module that was about, it's a really boring module about cables and connectors and technology and the students were like; what's a scart lead? Well it's completely irrelevant for you to know what a scart lead is – I mean it's interesting as Media history but as what a module claiming to be at least pre-vocational, knowing what a Scart lead is is relatively useless for most of these students because its not including HDMI, it didn't include kind of – oh are you doing a lot of analogue to digital transfer, we had to go find some of this tech in our old cupboards or at home to bring in to show our students, who didn't even know what a VHS player was and I was like; well it's kind of irrelevant and they didn't have all the stuff they actually need to know. I mean come on and I know that this stuff is constantly changing but it really wasn't a digital module because it was frozen in specifics at a particular time and cant legally be changed. And I think that is the problem with the Media specs in that I think some of the teachers, it's that same with the comments, you can't respond to say; Black Lives Matter, you can't use that as a case study which is important and develops all kind of critical learning *unsure* curriculum in ways you know but also understands the flow of Media – that this is a constantly changing, digital environment that we, we live in and live with

R: Yeah, yes

T: And yeah if we're talking about stuff, I mean I know people are on about Zoella's website – she's kind of gone now, she's not significant in the way

R: She's a historical text now, you know we talk about social, historical context

T: You know and I mean Radio instead of Podcasts, you know these kind of very specific things where if you had 'Audio Media' then you have a choice to look at different things. You might be in a place where lots of people are involved with things like hospital radios or amateur radio and then you can do that there, so the island communities, the Isle of Wight, Sark etc or you might be thinking about, yeah podcasting maybe somewhere like Brighton – that's the cool edgy thing like, and TikTok

R: Yeah

T: As a video production space. Yeah

R: And that's it, I think there's a celebration of what kind of Media is about in terms of popular culture and actually valuing the knowledge that students have as well has been lost to a large degree. This idea of imposition of a, sort of hierarchy of knowledge from, you know what the new specs are, you know trying to fit this kind of standardised mould is

T: And I think it becomes, its **comic** in a sense not just the theorists but obviously in terms of what, what Media is valued – it gives a kind of hierarchy, old school high culture, high art idea that something like The Archers on Radio or a particular computer game or Zoella; these are the model examples of this Media

R: Yeah

T: And that we're going to have a whole generation of kids that just say; Oh The Archers is this and Zoella was important – and you go; actually, were they? Like what about the other things that were on, or is it Woman's Hour that I know they all, all complain about regularly

R: Yeah *laughs*

Well actually, interestingly since they've loosened the, because I teach EDUCAS, you know it's not necessarily my preferred choice of exam board now but it was, you know it was a collective decision in the department at the time so. But the, they've loosened the thing now that initially it was one set episode of **Home** which was just like ***unsure*** you listen to it, I mean I didn't find it particularly interesting let alone, and I'm their target market you know. But since they've loosened the kind of parameters to include your own, whichever ones you want to look at its been better for the students. There's one that's quite interesting on like the, the spat between James Charles and Tati Westbrook and the sort of YouTuber kind of older woman vs the younger man debate that was quite interesting but that was, they were discussing it from the, from the perspective of a 40-something mother, you know there were like, I think it was Sally Hughes and Miranda Sawyer and people like and ***breaks up*** on it as the show host but. And I think students found that much better to engage with because they could understand – they understood it as a kind of because of the cultural context but they could also appreciate how it was being discussed in a different way to how they might discuss it

T: Yep

R: So the women were discussing it from a kind of maternal point of view rather than one that was kind of what students might talk about it as, you know sort of slightly more sensationalised or dramatic kind of point of view. So that was quite interesting, so that I mean, its small gains I guess but its, you know and that's the thing its, what became really apparent out of the Ofqual meeting which I wasn't able to go to because my school didn't let me go – but that's another matter entirely again. But ██████ was there and he was saying that it became really apparent that Sociology, the subject association for Sociology were basically able to write the framework and they had a much easier ride and because they could put anything they pretty much they liked in and it was approved. Whereas Media obviously had you know, significant interference from Nick Gibb, you know kind of unprecedented interference even though he wasn't a subject specialist or you know and I guess, I don't know if you think about that but I think it sort of points to, that they were either cynically trying to kill the subject or b. that they found it such a subversive course that they were worried about what the students were going to learn on it

T: I think there's 2 fundamental problems with, not just the Conservative problem but often many of the neo-liberal governments perspective on Media Studies – I mean Michael Gove I think quite famously said at an education conference somewhere that his aim was to bring down Media Studies. It's about being Media literate, it's about being able to read their political messages and read between the lines and I think you know for, as we look at the, I mean the Covid – I call them the daily propaganda sessions, on TV

R: *Laughs* Yes

T: So it's; we're going to stand here and lie about things but we've said them and therefore you have to accept that we've already done them when we haven't. And actually having the ability to read across various Media sources, across academic sources, listening to what the members of SAGE and the alternative SAGE were saying and also, you know all in collaboration with interviews with those, what do you call them, MPs and then actually those kind of things – it's a much richer text and I think actually that's one of the things that bugs me slightly about the, or quite offends me about the syllabus is that its talking about texts like we, we're kind of beyond the idea of 'Text' as a singular entity really. There are lots of other, the kind of Media Studies 2.0 stuff is about hypercon activity and emergence and flow – and the idea that you can just read a text for what's represented is, I think in many ways been kind of devalued as a, as a way of reading something when you know you can read it. I mean Black Lives Matter is a really good example thinking about the use of the hashtag (#) on BlackoutTuesday and how that was actually interrupting activists use of the # and yet was, it was kind of criticised, as kind of white people invading an online Black space and

R: Yeah

T: It was a really complicated thing; what's the 'Text' of Black Lives Matter? Is it the #? Is it the statues? Is it the gatherings? Yeah I think that relationship between kind of digital Media and closed texts as such; TV programmes or whatever and the culture outside is really missing from the Media syllabus and I think that is one of the things that then makes you struggle when they come to degree is that they cant think about the fact that Media's anything but 'Text' or just about a singular institution – it's much more complicated than that

R: And so you must have to do quite a lot of unlearning for them when they first come in? I mean you said in that comment that you made on Facebook group that you and your colleagues spend a lot of time basically debunking what they've learned in their A levels and start working like a tabula rasa almost

T: Yeah and I think, the problem is actually a lot of my colleagues don't do that because they're not aware that they're there – they don't see these problems until they crop up in essays and they don't really appear until essays and it's only from seeing it in some essays that I've noticed it as a thing that's going to come up

R: Yeah

T: And so the first time I see it in essays and I know the names it's like, you know, this and it will simply say something like; 'this relates to David Gauntlet's theory on Audiences, or Identity or Stuart Hall's idea of Active Audiences' and you're like – that doesn't say anything and actually why is that in this piece about Ethics in Journalism? For example. And they throw these in as if they're kind of things that get rewards – it's almost **gamification** of the essay writing process, it's like; 'if I write this, I know that gets me points, that's, those are the sentences that got me points at A levels'. And they remind me of the way some students would write who struggled with A levels, they'll be like; 'oh by the way I'm just making a point about this theorist here in case you didn't notice me doing it'

R: Yeah

T: And I, so I start the term by saying; 'Chuck these theorists in the bin'. Most of them are not coming up on the whole of the degree. Stuart Hall, Bell Hooks – if they do a particular line through the degree, I don't think any of the others come up at all in our Media degree.

R: Right

T: So I'm having to tell them to throw them in the bin because the way that you've talked about them at A levels is problematic; **Laura Mulvey** comes up extensively in the, you know, she was writing about a very specific point in history, for a specific kind of film and her piece was a polemic it wasn't actually an academic piece of writing and she's re-evaluated it in later work and nuanced it and talked about female spectators and where she hadn't in the original piece and they try to apply them to like a magazine or a newspaper and I'm, like; but its irrelevant if she wasn't talking about those things and it's not the same context so it doesn't make sense to talk about it here. And of the male gaze at womens magazines, well it's a female gaze, it's a female audience so why, well there's a completely much more interesting complex thing going on there that isn't **Laura Mulvey** and other people have written about in post-feminism. So yeah I kind of just say to them like; bin all these theorists – I get them to name them sometimes in the class and go; write them down, get that piece of paper, throw it in the bin

R: *Laughs*

T: And if I hear them mentioned, I'm like; where does that one go? In the bin. And I hate that I have to do that but it's been the easiest and quickest way – we only have 50 minute seminars

R: Right

T: And we have classes of 30 now, 25-30 and particularly foundation degree, we've got a whole bunch of students that have come from a varying different array of backgrounds who struggle with academic kind of writing and critical thinking and you're trying to prepare them for the undergraduate degree – so you can't spend a lot of time unpacking stuff that a lot of the students in each classroom have never come across before because you would just confuse them more

R: Yeah, yeah

T: So I kind of do feel like you have to wipe the slate clean and I generally find students who haven't studied Media before, both in the first year, I used to look after our main first year module, I was **unsure** of that for a year and they did better – often unless they were very bright students, if they haven't done Media before because they're from a clean slate and in fact Philosophy and History students tend to be some of our best the students who have studied that kind of other humanities. So if they're critical about the stuff that they read and have learnt those kind of high levels of critical thought, tend to be better I find at undergraduate Media

32:16

R: Gosh, that is incredibly damning of the course isn't it? That is the biggest statement I think I've heard anyone make about the fact that actually its not only, doesn't serve, its not fit for purpose for Media students but actually is harmful for their future progress in many ways. That is really, really interesting.

Just out of interest, what theorists or what kind of, what are the main things that you would teach in your foundation year?

T: So, I have to remember, my foundation course is Media, Music and Film in one model

R: Yeah

T: So if I do the Media and Film stuff what do I teach, lets remember this – it's been a while. We look at, the first term is about kind of doing analysis and its particularly focussed around journalism. So we think about; what is journalism? And the questions about that – what sits in journalism? And the kind of collapse of the institutional idea of journalism or this kind of blending of the 2. And the issues of journalism ethics and News values and some of that has come up in Media before but actually the questions of, questioning *Gauntlet and Rouge* and there's been other models since that are talking much more about shareability and visual images as significant news values in the digital realm

R: Yep

T: So that's kind of the first few weeks and we think about how to do content analysis and textual analysis in order to try and draw attention to ways of evidencing some of these ideas and claims.

R: Yeah

T: The second term the Media element is – in fact all 3; Music, Media and Film look at globalisation theories, flows, Media spheres – Media, what's it called? Media, can't remember, my brains not working

Laughter

T: **Appadurai's** models of globalisation basically and what globalisation means. And then we look as these are kind of all interrelated – we look at identity as performativity so there is a **real** element about them in there actually. And the idea that constructing our personas online is no different from the idea of constructing, constantly creating and performing identities offline basically and it's something we struggle with.

And then we look at, those 2 are connected with Digital and we're kind of critiquing the idea that 'New Media' isn't new and the extent to which the kind of, behind the surface of what, Netflix looks like television a bit but there's actually much more complicated things going on with algorithms. Sussex has a long, kind of established history in Digital cultures so a lot of our work is expanding more towards the idea of algorithms and code – software studies in Media Studies and I think that's an area that is happening increasingly, not just thinking about you know, getting students – like coding in primary schools is actually Media Studies.

R: Yeah, yeah

T: And thinking about what coding is and the implications of, you know like the inherent racism built into many algorithmic facial recognition systems, is a matter of Media Studies.

R: Yeah

T: Surveillance culture and CCTV is a matter for Media Studies and those are, surveillance is a big theme throughout our undergrad and MA as well. And at the, you know it's a blending of Cultural Studies a lot so we look at a lot of **Bordieu cased field theory** – that's more kind of undergraduate and above though

R: Yeah

35:45

T: But yeah that's kind of our concerns really. It's very much about flows and technologies. We don't expect a huge amount of textual analysis although some students do go on to do that for their dissertations.

R: Right, that's really interesting, that's a complete, it's a completely, well it's a much more open approach to – you know you think about how the A level boxes Media into you know little categories of theorists and concepts and you know that, I can imagine that's pretty radical for a student that's done Media A level to come and have that..

T: Yeah, I suppose I would add a caveat that Sussex sells itself as radical.

R: Yeah

T: And so you know, we have the Sussex Humanities Lab in our Media, Film and Music department - just so you know that no longer exists, we're becoming a big Humanities school soon. But our kind of, our I suppose our unique selling point is our radical way of thinking

about the fluidity of identities in digital cultures. So we have a lot of research about *gay/day/date* cultures online

R: Right

T: You know, cyborg feminism *laughs* alternate zine culture in the feminist sphere and I work with **Hammer/Hammond & Moore museum** who use technology to preserve objects and survivors and explore concentration camps, so we're all kind of working in areas that are, and there's lots of work around that. We do a lot of work about humanitarianism and questioning the idea that humanitarian Media is actually **pro/reductive**

R: Yeah

T: Or fair trade, the problems of fair trade as part of a neoliberal environment. So there's quite a lot of politics I suppose, this kind of neoliberal, post-feminism, de-colonating – we trouble those terms a lot

R: Yeah, yeah – nothing that Gove would particularly like then *laughs* or want the skills to have, yeah.

So I'm just interested as well in you students kind of, I mean obviously you can't speak for them but your perceptions of how the students feel when you say, you know; "put them in the bin" or this is what Media is or this is how we're going to look at things. Do you sort of see a sort of visible change in them once that's happened?

T: I do both struggle and I think it, you know these issues are particularly prevalent in the foundation degree – they do come up in the first year as well but, and I've had members of **the co** say to me; I don't know why students keep mentioning these random theorists? There's this kind of cognitive dissonance between both, which I'm fine speaking to because I am aware of why they're doing it – I [they] tend to feel a little bit, I suppose dispossessed you know; why was I made to learn all that stuff? What am I doing? What was the point? But also struggle to let go of it in some cases and then when I used to teach Media A level I used to kind of have a list of banned words around my board – to get students to think critically, so they go; oh this is interesting – I'm like; we don't say it's interesting, we talk about why it's interesting, come on tell me what you saw, and they would go, without using that word; oh it's unique or it stands out, you know eye-catching all these kind of things that kind of are meaningless

Laughter

T: So it's kind of, I'm using the same kind of techniques just with theorists names really and yeah and in that way it's kind of like, if they mention it they get; right, what – and there is an extent of not completely banning it but actually being able to say like; why is that relevant here as well? Is there space for that in this class? And they try to unpack and they start to realise themselves why it's not relevant. Or I mention is, David Gauntlet's a really good example; Gauntlet's updated that work in thinking about it in a digital era – what do you think about his later work? And they're like; oh I haven't studied that, and I go; ok right so maybe that identity theory there isn't relevant in a digital context?

R: Yeah

T: And I see most of all that what the Media texts the Media A level suggests is that these people have only written one thing.

R: Yeah, there's no equity between, you know and actually if you think about it there are some theorists on there who have written books and books and books and then there are others who are kind of, like Clay Shirkey for example you know, just kind of famous for one thing if you like and

T: I think a lot of people found Clay Shirkey quite an interesting one because he's not really recognised as a, as a Media scholar by a lot of people. I think he's a more kind of a popular writer, I don't know his work very well – I've only ever seen him mentioned in **Andrew Hoskins**, who tends to like to think across popular writing about the digital and, and Media theory.

R: Yes

T: I've, yeah I know some people mentioned that they weren't sure why he was on there because they don't really see him as a, as a scholar which is interesting.

R: And that's it, you kind of think if Shirkey's on there then you would expect certainly **Gilmore or Merrin** at least to be in there

T: Yeah absolutely, I think Merrin would be, but then I think Merrin actually challenges what the, what the spec is

Laughter

T: I think that's great, I mean I was going to BFI conferences and Media conferences years ago where we were talking about Media Studies 2.0 at the buzzword, you know that we were going to change, it was going to be radical and we seem to have gone back to a very, very text based approach or like thinking if industries here, audience here, representation here and text there. I think even Stuart Hall was questioning this stuff with his work.

R: Absolutely, well I guess you know, even just down to basic coding and decoding you kind of, that can be really nuanced and you know reading up on loads of other things about how different audiences need different texts and in a huge amount of different ways and that you carry the coding to a number of different contexts and situations and

T: I think what's particularly interesting with the use of Stuart Hall and I know I think we're guilty of this with our **freshers/focus?** because we also use the **Readings** piece as well in coding and decoding. Is that; focussing on that text eradicates the racial dimensions of his work.

R: Yeah, yeah

T: He wrote extensively from being, it was a kind of immigrant perspective and his work was highly embedded in what it meant, in the kind of 'third eye' that **Rony** and others and **Fanon** had talked about – what it means to be a Black man in a predominantly white culture, making predominantly white Media, who feels he is British and yet also has a heritage elsewhere. How is he positioned? And I think he writes extensively about race and kind of putting him into audiences and not in relation to people like **Gilroy**.

R: Yeah

T: It seems quite detached I think

R: Yeah. But again it, that you know, in a way because its, I had this discussion with one of my colleagues actually the other day following on the Black Lives Matter kind of response from our college and I just thought it was really poorly done and it just highlighted, you know she said; oh well Media's quite well represented because we've got Hall and Gilroy and Bell Hooks and I was like; well that, surely that kind of speaks to this whole problem again of just having – if somebody's visibly Black it doesn't mean to say that actually, you know particularly with the theorists on the course you know, you don't go any deeper than your sort of first 3 bullet points often. You know students don't write about it in any way deeper than that often because there isn't time to. But just saying that; oh there's a Black person on the specification doesn't make it

T: Yeah I think we really need to get away from the tokenistic, you know; have we included women – I mean I find it offensive as a woman that, or someone, I have a disability and I find it offensive that it's just stick something with disability in there for the sake of it. It's like we, we need to radically rethink how we do education. I'm actually working on a piece of **scholarship** with this next term, that says that Media Studies should be leading the way in rethinking digital pedagogy; with digital university, with digital college

R: Yeah

T: But also just using that text should dismantle the very system – you know the idea of fixed assessments, the idea of the way that we, you know that university's structured in deeply problematic racist and patriarchal ways

R: Yeah

T: And I think you know this, on one hand this is going to sound, something paradoxical, on one hand eradicating the racial dimension of Stuart Hall's work is problematic because you could study Stuart Hall and not know about his racial campaigning and his race and his identity as part of scholarship. On the other hand, only picking Black scholars who talk about race is also problematic and I find, as in advertisements for jobs which I feel that say we want someone who talks to feminism studies or critical race studies and then afterwards say you know, we particularly want female and people of colour who are underrepresented, it's like you've, you're basically saying; you only want those people in jobs where they talk about their own identity as if women aren't capable of talking about men's studies or disability or genocide or anything else – technology!

R: That's just it, it's another form of marginalisation isn't it because its only, yeah you're right, you're only useful if you can do 'this' and its, you know you see the number of female Black academics recently on social media come out and say things like; you know it's great that this conversation started, it's great that all of it's happening but wouldn't it be great if you wanted me for anything other than anti-racist education, wouldn't it be great if you wanted me to talk about, I don't know – like you say, disability or identity or something that's more

T: I mean a lot of places have very quickly said; oh we need a BAME representative in, you know to start fighting this cause or we need a, we have a Director of Race in our department who is the only woman of colour in our school – the other one left, trying to leave out

controversial stuff in here in the write up *laughs* I mean this is epidemic everywhere; you know Black Lives Matter, we need Black representation on our board, oh you're Black you come and join us and we're the same with women; oh we need to solve the, our sexist problem, our misogynistic problem – grab a woman, make her do the extra labour to solve the problem. We had a whole bunch of women dedicated to the, have you seen the Swan thing which is about women in academia?

R: Yeah

T: And so there wasn't a single man, oh there was one man – it was a trans man, was the only man involved in that process and I thought that was incredibly telling. That should have been a combination of genders and gender identities because the labour went on the minorities; on trans people and women.

R: Yeah

T: And that, that I find deeply problematic, that on top of all the extra labour they're already doing and they tend to do more of the administrative roles, instead of their own research time was diverted from their research that already got them promotion, to focus on what university's problem was with women.

R: Yeah it's, it's so deep *fettered/unsure* that you know

T: I think that's a really good, interesting question for Media Studies going forward; how to properly decolonise the A level spec and what does that mean?

R: Yeah

T: Without it being cliché, without it yeah being a tokenistic gesture and I think actually, having a canon, the concept of canon is deeply colonial

R: Yeah

T: And that as a, to teach the idea of canon is to teach the idea of certain people being more powerful. Certainly with it being the normative way of thinking and I think actually dismantling the idea of canon is one of the ways that the Media spec can be much more open. And you know I've had some, we have quite open questions and I've had students talk about Afrobeats – of which I know nothing about *laughs* I'm not cool enough to know like some music, I was like a metalhead, I don't know anything about pop music either. And Afrofuturism and jazz music and the kind of financial – the kind of way that jazz music has shifted between Black and white culture in terms of how its been placed as high or low culture at certain times and the racial permeations of that. And that's stuff that comes from the students interests and experiences and lots of stuff on Drill music this year, where students have gone and actually interviewed their friends who are in bands or are acts. And I think, you know Drill music particularly is rooted in a very working class environment of where the social issues are attached to it and actually getting these people to write about that culture and to have that culture validated in an academic space

R: Yes

T: Is far more useful than saying; oh we stuck Paul Gilroy on there, an old guy liked them

Laughter

R: Yeah

T: Another old guy

R: That's it, it's old and, yeah exactly. And it's just so reductive I think you know and it's like the tick box kind of tokenism of these things in whatever specialism you're applying it to, whether that be, you know; a balance of gender or a balance of ethnicity, whatever it's still reductive and *sighs* its, yeah I mean I don't know what the answer is but. In an ideal world, if you had the opportunity to kind of influence a change in the Media Studies A level; what would you do? What would you take out? What would you add in?

T: I would certainly dismantle the idea of canon. I would in some ways go back to the flexibility of the old spec but without – I wouldn't either keep the text or the industry triangle with is now very old and I would be thinking about Media cultures.

R: Ok, yeah

T: I think that would be the dimensions now, whatever those cultures might be, it could be you know, music cultures and that could be; linking music videos to the algorithms of Spotify to Top of the Pops and the history of the music video – what happens when that goes media, all the sharing - I've had quite a lot of students write about K-Pop and the influence they've had on the Trump event recently

R: Yeah

T: You know these kind of things – the way that music intersects with politics and globalisation then and identities through you know, just K-Pop as an example; you start merging between kind of history of music videos, the manufacturing of boy bands, Korean culture, globalisation, YouTube, TikTok, Trump. Who are K-Pop fans? The identities, the construction of, and all the language and the hashtags and the images they circulate online and the kind of spaces they circulate them in, that there's dedicated forums for this and you know that rich case study approach that can be done – that is culture based not text based.

R: Absolutely

T: I think is really, really useful because that identifies the idea of hyperconnectivity and flow which I think are, and emergence I think are some of the most important ideas at the moment. And also you can start teaching in ways that identify – that do those things in pedagogy; so you can get students to be going to find it as an example so one of them is dedicated to say TikTok, another ones dedicated to forums, another ones looking at this and they start collecting stuff themselves as a group and emerging case studies over the period of the time.

R: Yes

T: I would go back to 2 year A levels, we kind of have that now anyway right, to do that I think like let these case studies emerge over the period so that its not about kind of teaching them in a week each

R: Yeah, yeah

T: I would have less, far less case studies like a series of maybe 4 or 5 cultures that you explore in a huge amount of depth through the, through the academic lenses that are appropriate. Now issues around power, agency, identity, construction of performativity, technologies would all be coming to play in that but the idea of prescriptive, you know representation as well, the idea of prescriptive theorists I think needs to go

R: Yeah

T: Because you force them on and that's exactly the thing that I think stops critical thinking. If you can have an introduction to Media Studies in the first like half term of the module and then, yeah and have practice projects that come out of what they're doing. I remember back in the very very old old specs, making like a, I got to make a magazine cover related to what I was interested in

R: Yeah, yeah

T: And I did really well because of that. So if they're studying, I don't know, music cultures – students can do something based on their own choice of music culture and that's where the critical thinking happens. It goes; we studied K-Pop, we're not allowed to do K-Pop for our example, so I'm forced to take all the things I learnt about K-Pop and think about those ideas and how they apply to a different context

R: Yes

T: That I've chosen, that I know well, that I'm the expert in – I think that raises, yeah sense of self confidence, it increases engagement and I think it also encourages students to have to think critically, have to bridge from one context to another. Yeah and I think those ideas of kind of collating stuff around a particular case study over a long period of time, also speaks to things like connectivism and collective intelligence which are, you know new forms of pedagogy that come about with the digital.

R: Yes

T: And are important areas that we need to be expanding more but I think we kind of, I don't think they're that well known, that well talked about as actual theories of teaching and they are *laughs*

R: Yeah it's really interesting what you just said, particularly I was on a, have you heard Tortoise the new Newsroom?

T: No?

R: Ok so Tortoise, had their education from it yesterday which I've, there's an online webinar thing and they're a new type of newsroom so basically its like an online platform newsroom and they call, basically they're called Tortoise because it's like slow Media. And they're getting away from this whole culture of like breaking news and sensationism and so its, its been cofounded by James Harding who used to be the Head of News at BBC and Matthew *unsure* [Barzun in an article I saw] and I mean there's some interesting names here I'm not, you know I'm still piecing together my

T: It sounds really, I'm going to check it out but it sounds interesting. I think like the, again like the culture of you know, of news production or news production and circulation like, **unsure** create the conversation which was obviously created as a kind of a force against what was looking, not just like fake news but also the *sensationalism* in news to have measured academic responses now its not, don't necessarily agree with that or how they work but like those are, and then sits in journalism as part of that complex though as well. I mean it sounds great

R: Yeah no, it was brilliant, so this education from them yesterday was absolutely fantastic, I mean I'm I'm, you know I've, I think CPD over the years has been you know, very questionable – you know most of the Media type of CPD has been brilliant but generally CPD tends to be quite pedestrian. But this was amazing and they had, what I loved first of all was that they had like students giving each, students who they selected and were given an equal speaking platform to people like; Tim Brighouse and Bob Kerslake and George the Poet was the keynote speaker at the end and there was Natasha Devon, you know the wellbeing expert and it was just a really diverse – like genuinely diverse, not talking about tokenistic but genuinely diverse kind of range of people from people who have peerages down to an 11 year old boy who had run this campaign, you know this educational campaign. And it was brilliant and what you were just saying before about celebrating and acknowledging what people are interested in, what students are interested in, what George the Poet was saying yesterday in his keynote – he was saying that he went to a selective, well he went to grammar school in North London and saying he had a horrible time there really because he was one of the only Black kids in the school and he just felt that none of his own kind of personal interests or things that he did in his own life were reflected in what he was studying, you know. And I just thought it was really interesting and a lot of, so the other interesting thing about this, this webinar was that obviously there were videos that the speakers were going on but there was a big chat down the right hand side of all the attendees. So there was about 2000 people and they called it the 'Think In', **unsure** called it the Think In and so what you have is this fascinating kind of like narrative that's running down one side of the screen while you're actually listening to somebody else talk about the thing and it was just brilliant to see

T: There's a lot of *voting/debating* on online distance learning about back channels and like the usefulness of back channels and that's kind, its sort of like a public back channel that, we have a, I'm one of the union execs at work and we have Whatsapp back channels during meetings

R: Yes, oh yes!

T: So we're in meetings with university management and we're talking to each other on Whatsapp about like who's going to say what.

Laughter

T: You can't do that in person, it's great!

R: Yes

T: But like the idea of celebrating and encouraging back channels as forms of education where you as a, I think some of the key things is that yeah it's not just about recognising

those experiences as important but its also recognising that young people are experts in using Media

R: Yeah

T: And they're more expert in some of these areas than we are. And we have expertise in the theory and how to teach and how to get them to think creatively and theres a partnership in learning and I think, you know going back to the, I can't remember his surname now, *unsure* during the holocaust as ways of doing education, it is a partnership for young people and I think we forget that and we need to move away from didactic forms of power enforcement and I think it will help safeguarding in the long term

R: Yeah

T: You know it helps build a culture of trust and respect, it helps with behavioural management. If you get students doing something that they care passionately about and that allows them to express their identity and makes them feel that they have self-worth and self confidence and that they're knowledgeable

R: Exactly

T: Then you can bring students out of a shell and you can save students from really incredibly violent contexts. I used to work in Tottenham, you know if you can keep those, some of those kids, if you can keep them in college you save them from being stabbed or you save them from prison

R: Yeah, yeah

T: And the power of listening to them. No one listens to them. And giving them the power of control, they never have any control or power or agency – it can change peoples lives. And I think that you know, we should be thinking about that in so many ways and that doesn't mean giving students the choice or over what the case study is that we look at but even you know, sitting down with students in Year 9, I know a lot of people do elements of, in the taster sessions sorry for going into Year 12 you know when the Year 11 students come and see, we often used to have prospective students come for a day – they make that lesson, sit down with the students and say; right this is the syllabus, we have to cover 6 cultures, what should we look at?

R: Yeah, yeah

T: Let's co-design the syllabus because you've then, I mean the old spec you could do that if you wanted to and I think that's really important again for this idea of collective intelligence, these ideas of connectivism which are digital ways of thinking about teaching and they're Media ways of thinking about teaching and I think we as Media scholars, teachers we should be leading the way in that really.

R: And it's fascinating, one of my, one of my colleagues on the EdD – [REDACTED] and he, his is on co-creations. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

T: Oh fab

R: Sorry say that again?

T: Sorry I said fabulous

R: Oh I thought you said; who's that, yeah. Yeah and then he's, it's just really interesting that, that idea of like how they're both learning in different ways alongside each other and I think, I think Julian actually – Julian McDougall wrote recently about the pedagogy of using experts, you know this idea of whose conferring knowledge on who, whom

T: And I think it's really important at the moment in the context of like you know, not trusting experts because like with the stuff I do with the holocaust museums – you tell students that this, and I see this is even worse in the holocaust studies than it is in Media Studies, people tell people; what the holocaust is and how to study it and anything else is wrong

R: Yeah

T: And then they go on YouTube and until recently they could easily find holocaust **and art?/denier?** videos on the first page and they're like, and they see lots of them and they go; hang on, that teacher told me I wasn't allowed to think or ask questions in the classroom and that what they said is right but I've got like 6 things on YouTube here that say something different. And they, the idea that 'you are right' and they can't question anything and then 4 weeks later an academic paper comes out and says; well actually this thing we thought about the holocaust is actually not 100% everything whereas it's much more complicated – and the students are, they're then confused they've like been told; this is the thing you need to pass the exam but actually it's wrong

R: Yes

T: I saw this with the citizenship test – I had an ex-boyfriend who was applying for citizenship and he said, I was questioning him and he said; what's the, you know how long do you have to stay in education in the UK? And I said; well it's sort of a complicated answer because it's kind of 18 now but it doesn't have to be in education only and he goes; It says 16 here. Well that's kind of wrong.

R: Yeah!

Laughter

T: And you know if you wrote a different answer you, to what was needed for the exam, you'd be wrong and I think when we dictate that these are the ways of thinking and these, again this idea of canon to be stopped, we stop those critical questions. Like when we do, I used to do outreach on holocaust stuff and I'd ask specifically, ask stupid questions, go and get them out because the teachers don't want to hear them – they're like, you know; did Hitler only have 1 ball? Was he a vegetarian? Because no one lets them ask those stupid questions

R: Yeah, absolutely

T: And you can, you can engage with them and they're like, you know; so why would is that question relevant? Why do you think, you know what's the usefulness of it? You know is it demasculinising him to make it, to laugh at him? And they're like; oh yeah, I hadn't thought about that. And then they actually really appreciate that you've listened to them and come from the things they know outside of the subject or the things they've heard outside the classroom. And I think that given that, yeah anything we teach them, they will find 10 million things on the internet about, written by people with no academic interest in the subject or experience – it's important to allow those spaces for discovery and discussing the things they do find and analysing the things they do find.

R: Absolutely and I guess that also makes the case for teaching critical thinking and getting that back into the curriculum and teaching not unique in this case, I mean it should be there anyway but

T: Yeah

R: But explicit acknowledgement that that needs to be a thing and also, you know fake news, it doesn't – going back to your sort of ideal curriculum for Media with you know; cultures and globalisation and you know looking at fake news and how you know, globalisation, social media and technologies has all, all the things you were saying about algorithms, how that has you know generated so much content out there that is not verifiable, well nobody to verify it but

T: Yes

R: Navigating that, students are not, we're talking about fake news and they go; oh I know what fake news is, I'm not stupid. And I'm like; no I'm not saying that you're stupid but

T: But most people don't know what fake news is. Fake news is nothing to do with news, it was a bunch of teenagers in Belarus

R: Yeah

T: Creating, working out how they can make loads of money out of playing with algorithms

R: Yeah

T: And so it was not about news at all and a lot that sits in journalism now gets tagged as fake news or Trump calls everything out as fake news because he disagrees with it so the term 'fake news' is constantly misused

R: Yeah

T: So I think, and also fake news isn't new. I did some teaching a while ago with like tracing fake news back to like, I've got an article I give students on 'what is news' and it's written in 1905 and it's complaining about the amount of shit that's in newspapers

Laughter

T: Basically saying it's not what news should be and it's sensationalist and gossip

R: Yeah

T: And you're like well isn't that kind of what, what some people refer to as fake news today and there's examples like the girl who took the pictures of the fairies in her garden

R: Yes, exactly

T: You know that's fake news its construction, or is it or isn't it? And I think you know, yeah the idea of fake news and you can link that to citizenship, you can link it to ethics in journalism, you can link it to institutional news and the politics of news. It opens up you know, ideas the idea also that there is no clear definition for these words, when we teach globalisation we give students 10 different definitions and ask, where do you stand? Or what is documentary? Where do you stand on these definitions? What is fake news? Where do you stand on these definitions? That their voice, their critical voice is valuable and important and that there isn't a prescriptive answer that you can give, it think is something that students certainly struggle with when they come to university. They're like; what's the right answer?

R: Yeah

T: You're like; but no one agrees on this topic and that's good

R: But I think it points to something more structural in their schooling though as well because they, they have literally been indoctrinated – it's not, its not even the teach, even the schools fault either

T: Oh no

R: Its some that kind of, and I see it with my own kids – you know I've got a 10 and an 8 year old and you know, I'm constantly, they don't understand me half the time because they know I'm a teacher but yet I'm quite rebellious about what I'll let them do in terms of like, my son didn't do his SATS because of lockdown but you know, he would have done them but I don't, I talk about why those things are wrong, why you know not wrong but why there's problems with them and why you know, studying a language for like **unsure – something verbal** as the beauty of you know, having using vocabulary in powerful ways you know its just

T: And I think the indoctrination happens just not in, not only in the classroom and again I actually agree with you – I don't think it's teachers fault, I think it's a systemic thing. It's also to do with behavioural management in schools and I went into a school to do some outreach stuff a few years ago and I had bright red hair, I have purple and blue hair now, I teach with my hair like this, I go talk, I talk to government officials with crazy hair, I'm like; if you've got a problem with it, you've got a problem not me **laughs** and this kid was like; you can't have red hair in school. I'm like; I can do what the fuck I like, so you should be able to. And they were, they kind of, I didn't quite swear to them but they were really taken aback, I said; how does this red hair affect my intelligence?

R: Yeah, exactly

T: And I saw a young Black boy being bollocked for his uniform and as soon as you start bollocking people for like not tucking their shirt in or the timer thing, our times used to be measured at school and you know or not having the right shoes and my Mum was really

poor and she couldn't afford to get me this, I had a pair of shoes and she went; you're just going to have to wear them and I constantly got in trouble for my shoes

R: Yeah

T: Now I was a bit of a swot and liked studying but a lot of kids would just go; yeah why am I always being fucking hassled? You know why is everything I do always wrong?

R: Exactly

T: And then you fall into you know, misbehaving because you're disconnected from and it leads to dispossessed, you get told that you do not belong here, you do not have any significance here, you do not have any agency here and everything in you are wrong and present yourself. And that tends to affect the people from working class backgrounds more than anyone else and in some places like, you know Tottenham where I worked, that is majoratively people of colour in those environments and I think, you know there's so many, and people with disabilities often get particularly persecuted or girls because they're a teenager they want to be you know, experiment with how they look, they're worried about not having colourful hair, not having earrings or not wearing make up – so they often get bollocked because of those kind of things and I think we need to, yeah systematically change. Yeah it's not just a, I think that's really important to say – it's not just a problem with the Media spec, which does have it's kind of specific problems but this is a problem that is about not recognising the problems of our wider school system really

R: Yeah and that's coming out more and more strongly each time you know I talk to people and its, its you know, may not be explicit when I'm talking to individuals, it might not be explicit in what they've, but what it's saying is you know that often the complaints that teachers have about the students that they get, is not the fault of the student it not even the fault of the school that they've come from or how they've been taught – it's just a much wider issue and, and I think you know I don't know if you saw, I think it was a couple of days ago in the news about somewhere in Manchester saying that they, there's a big controversy because some of the schools there have decided to ditch uniform for September because the, the inequality that they've faced in certain communities in Manchester has meant that you know, that parents haven't got as much money and they can't afford to buy the

T: I mean there's long term issues with the idea of having uniforms and like the idea, the arguments for it actually are very much unsubstantiated you know as soon as kids have a mufti day you know whether they're poor or not

R: Yeah

T: You tell by their school bag, by their hair, by the fact they have free school lunches, you know there's so many markers about poverty even if you're in school uniform. Maybe you don't have the full school uniform so and that's often the key argument, the key argument often made is about, about some reason people apparently work better when they're in uniform – we've all been working from home you know in our pants if we can be bothered to put them in, on

Laughter

T: You know or in our pyjamas you know for the last 3 or 4 months as adults – why can't you know our kids, you know and some kids will say; I work better in a shirt and tie and I want to wear that and others will say; oh god it's so stuffy, I can't concentrate in it, I don't like it I want to wear my jeans, and we should again it's about understanding the diversity of learning experiences not just in a kind of, you know that there used to be a, what did we talk about like a **aural/oral** or like linguistic learner – I mean there are so many problems with that kind of approach with kids pigeon [hole] themselves as a ***unsure*** learner but you know the complexities of how you learn, like some students love having music on – let them have their headphones on if they're working on their own and you can come up and interrupt, you can have a sign that you tap on the table when they have to take their headphones off and you can talk. I had a kid who could not concentrate around noise because he had 9 brothers and sisters in his house

R: Yep

T: And he, in the classroom he always wore headphones when he had to work so he could focus

R: Yeah, yeah absolutely. And it's, I really like what my kids school has done actually; they do have a uniform but it is very kind of soft touch so they all have to have the same thing, even down to the water bottles, they're not even allowed to bring in, you know all this stuff and you see the kids that would have, you know the water bottle from Smiggle that was £20 versus the

T: Yeah

R: And it cost 50p from the corner shop or whatever and you know it was really obvious. So they, you have your water bottle in the house colours and every kid has to have the same water bottle and its, so what they do in order to kind of push a little bit of identity back in a bit, they're allowed to, so their school bag is the same and they have a panel in their school bag which they're allowed to decorate something to go into. So they each have their own little bit of identity which I think is brilliant and so it kind of, it hits both sides – you know I'm not fully you know convinced on either side to be fair you know, but I think its they've done it in a way that is, as best they can for as many children as they are able to. So I think that's quite an interesting kind of concept and that's their culture anyway in school, they're very much like that – you know it's very egalitarian and but with a level of conformity that's not punitive, do you know what I mean?

T: Yeah I do, **I'm not so specific on conformity theory**, I've always been a non-conformist that's why I work at [REDACTED] *laughs* but maybe, I think again its like it becomes a programming, particularly for lower middle class/working class kids that you're going to be a uniform

R: Yeah

T: This is a life of uniform and that you have to learn to kind of be subservient to the bind of the uniforms. I mean I, I remember being at school, I don't know if this is the same anymore and we were told; oh how you act outside of school in your uniform is important. You could get detention for like, I don't know throwing stones in your uniform outside of school

R: Yeah exactly and I think, you know there's a really strong argument to say it's preparing a workforce for subservience, compliance

T: Yeah

R: You know exploitation

T: And, yeah and kind of brand identity – trained to the brand I think

R: And capitalism in a way in sort of a corporate way, yeah. Yeah and it is, it is

T: I think that's what makes the Media classroom a confusing place right? Because we want students to be critical of a lot of these things – we question, we encourage them to question capitalism and particularly late capitalism and neo-liberalism and the Media that circulates in this environment and yet we're then kind of, I mean its particularly at university and then we're asking them to submit work on a specific date and there's no way of, you know really they can have like a 7 day allowance for that, it has to be in an essay form and they're like; you used to talk to us about the importance of not **unsure -ality** and now you're telling us to write an essay, and I'm like; yeah I know, it's weird thinking that. I should be thinking that as a teacher. I know you can submit a video essay if you want but also I think there's even more useful things they could do like what if they could make a viral video? And make it go viral as their assessment? And their assessment is an accumulation of the product that they made, the video, the discussions you know the comments, how they interacted with other people in the comments and you know then you get this idea of an actual fluid sense of something, rather than you know getting them to produce a text when we critique the concept of text as a closed thing

Laughter

T: Yeah so I think, yeah Media Studies in itself is somewhat contradictory in the environments that it's placed in, which is good because it challenges stuff but

R: Definitely, definitely

T: It would be good if we could make that overspill into how we actually do assessment and how we, how we teach it and the wider institutions as well

R: So just as a sort of a final question really

T: Yep

R: A lot of people I've spoken to about this have used the word; pendulum, swinging back or the pendulum, the moment that we're in, so my research is about catching a moment in time – the pendulum swung one way. Do you think there will be, do you think it will swing back? Do you think there will, you know how do you think Media sort of, at a post 16 level will change?

T: I think I fear that if it carries on as it is it will, either merge into English because it's kind of structured in an English way, you have the you know Thomas Hardy and you do this book or whatever or pre-Shakespeare plays and you do this. Or it will kind of disappear altogether. And I think I see a lot of teachers talking about wanting to do Film Studies rather than Media

Studies and that the Film Studies spec works because you know I think that all specifications need changes but it has a list of films and you can pick from any of these films to look at this kind of culture basically like you know. And I've tutored some new spec in the Film and Media and the Film is really easy to tutor and a kid went from an E to a B from just having space to talk and think about these films and analyse them and **consider** them and I think it will end up I think, by schools dropping it

R: Right

T: Moving to Film on one side or merging into English – although I also think there's bigger economic issues here; that Media production as it's currently kind of modelled, there's a kind of push for wanting to have cool edit suites right? It helps in bringing students in, you have the jazzy studio and the edit suite and they think; ooh yeah everyone wants to go study Media there. Then it turns out they're just for the BTEC kids and you get like 1 week in them in your A level

Laughter

T: I think, again like **spaces/studies** are going to become more economically challenging to provide and update, increasingly so and actually what these students learn from using what is currently industry standard which constantly changes – it was Adobe for a while, now it's ***unsure Fineart? Acrobat?*** Pro, it will change and keep changing and it will keep changing as the industry. You know our students aren't all going to go work in Hollywood, I think we need to get away from people; what's industry standard in the big gamers? We need to be looking at small, independent studios and things and the way people work and its all the free stuff

R: Yeah, yeah

T: Open Access and Open Source so they can edit it and send feedback back in and improve things and I think developing a culture where the tech isn't important in that way and you know its not about – I lost my train of thought actually sorry but the economic problem's there, I could do with this idea of flashy tech being an essential to, and I often see people saying; oh lets go start Media, what equipment do we need? But what if you just don't need any?

R: Yeah

T: What if the kids could, like I say make like Instagram photo things or give them their phones

R: Yeah

T: An increasing number of films are being made on phones. I have a friend of mine who's made a whole feature film on a phone and Tangerine was made on mobile phones. And I think, yeah letting go of that idea of it, of the economic side of it which endangers Media Studies because they will close down Media departments if they can't afford to run them. The kind of **wind blowing??** between Media and English that's always been there and English teachers often end up teaching Media studies still in quite a lot of schools although that's kind of decreasing to some extent. And this kind of popularity of Film Studies, I think that Media Studies is at threat. It's interesting, at degree level I think Film Studies is at threat.

R: That's really interesting

T: It is in many places, its disappearing or it's on the risk list because it's not Screen Studies – it's too fixed in the idea of Film as a singular medium.

R: Yeah

T: Screen studies will incorporate computer games, animation – I tried to propose an animation model at my work for Film Studies and was kicked back; well that's not Film Studies. I was like; it really is, I mean Disney like

R: Pixar

Laughter

T: So there's a kind of, Film Studies exists in academia in a purist sense

R: Yeah

T: And I was very much one of those purists, I was a Film Studies specialist for a long time and I've realised that it's just silly, it's a dead end game to go down there and increasingly internationally its called Screen Studies, or Media and Screen Studies and I think there's going to be a disconnect then that I think that more people will be coming from Film rather than Media Studies is into universities where there's a decreasing significance of Film Studies and an increase in Media Studies and I think Media Studies actually has more employability. You know whether we want to celebrate that or not, I always think learning for learnings sake is a great thing but I think Media Studies as hopefully it continues to evolve, will offer students a kind of way of thinking about you know these incredibly growing industries. You know digital technology is fundamental to our world, digital Media increasingly so in every way – from the way we make payments to the way we talk to our relatives, the way we're currently doing everything so I think Media Studies will need to be there, and it needs to be and I actually think it needs to be essential from the beginning; from coding, and digital literacy, from a very young age, to understanding how you make things, you know to

R: Yeah that's absolutely the key isn't it because you know the Media, the word 'media' is mentioned once in the primary curriculum and that's in the context of Maths – I mean, you know

T: Wow

R: There is no embedding there at all, you know it's, you look at it in it's kind of bare reality and you

T: But this kind of push for Raspberry Pi's to be in primary schools is Media Studies

R: Yeah

T: It could be Media Studies, it's like; what is this weird little thing in my hand and how is this related to me using, I don't know, playing Fortnite?

R: Yeah

T: Or what do kids do *laughs* I don't have any young kids. You know what is the connection between these 2 things?

R: *unsure* an 8 year old who plays a lot of Fortnite

Laughter

T: Yeah and I think, or Minecraft or something and these are really significant things in young peoples cultures and understanding their usefulness and one of the things, again just going back to my kind of research context; a lot of kids make Lego animations about the holocaust on YouTube and obviously holocaust scholars and historians hate this

R: Ah ok

T: It's profane, it's not sacred, it's awful and you're like; but actually this is how, if that kid who's a star at making Lego animations had used poetry or watercolour because that was what they're good at, you would have loved it.

R: Exactly

T: But because it's Lego or Minecraft (there's lots of holocaust on Minecraft as well) you don't like it and you don't like the conventions of the use of play in that medium. And I think, you know we need to destroy all of these misconceptions about Media kids engage with and flatten this high/low culture thing that we thought we'd flattened back in the 60's to be honest with you

Laughter

T: Seems to be recurring back again. Yeah so I think, I think Media Studies as it is at A level is at risk of, of actually destroying Media Studies completely out of the curriculum. And I think it is in competition with Film Studies at the moment and I think that competition needs to be studied and explored. And I think we need to look at Media Studies as a long game, not just at A level

R: And again, I guess this split that happened between Media and Film at A level is going to have an impact as well on those that go on to do a, choose to go on and do a course at university because they, you know having not had any, unless they've done Media and Film at A level which not many schools or colleges offer anymore

T: And a lot of people aren't allowed to do that, it was banned at my old place and I fought when I was a student to do both and I think its telling that you know, Film has been removed mostly from the Media, you can only do it in a kind of cross-media study can't you?

R: Yeah

T: It's not there as a Media and like, you know how then do you talk about Netflix? Or Amazon Prime? Or YouTube? You know by taking Film out and isolating it you're actually

lying about what digital cultures and Media cultures are – Film is an art, Film should be in the Art curriculum as much as it is in the Media curriculum

R: Yes

T: And I think, yeah I think that's really important to, to be looking at but I think we do need to be looking beyond representation I think, it's been going on since the 90's in Media scholarship, the significance of code and algorithm and software, you know artificial intelligence, machine learning, block chain – these are all Media subjects

R: Yeah

T: And should be looked at, not, through that critical Media lens

R: Yeah, you're absolutely right.
Well thank you very much

Talking over

T: ..conversation it's quite nice

R: Exactly, it's funny I was talking to, do you know [REDACTED]?

T: Not sure

R: She runs [REDACTED] she runs the

T: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah

R: Yeah, I spoke to her a few weeks ago and we had about a 2.5 hour conversation, she was like; oh well you know, I hadn't expected that but it's been, I haven't talked to anybody about Media Studies for like, the way that we talked for a very long time

T: Yeah I feel like 13 years of frustration has been released since I became a Media Studies teacher all those years ago

R: Lot of people have said it can be a form of therapy as well

T: I like that idea of research as therapy. No I mean it would be great to stay in touch because next term I'm, my leave is for scholarship leave and I'm looking at this idea of, what I'm calling as; a hyperconnective pedagogy – that we need to be thinking not just in how we teach, what we teach about in Media Studies but actually how we teach and how that should unravel kind of the bigger, or how it raises questions for the bigger kind of idea of what education is really

R: Yeah

T: And it would be great to stay in contact

R: No definitely and I think you know like Covid has been a, a hugely amazing experience – amazing in kind of the loosest sense of the word, experience like for pedagogy online you

know, understanding Media, it's a whole kind of its like a perfect storm in a way of all sorts of things have been happening and you know that would be interesting

T: I think we need to, we need to actively collate, anyone who's invested in Media Studies needs to actively capture this moment and publish and talk and campaign based on it. Otherwise it, it goes under the carpet and I know a lot of stuff is happening around universities in the same way about university teaching more broadly, that we cannot go back to what we had before.

R: No

T: But this is a moment of revolution and the only way the revolution happens is if we keep fighting for it and yeah I'm, I'm a big advocate for doing something radical – we're Media Studies

R: Exactly and I think you know, that it's so bloody ironic that you know Gove gets rid of the, he decoupled, sorry Gove removed the AS's and decoupled them and then suddenly we need to be in a position where we're trying to find grades for students and

Wry laughter

R: Coursework and teacher assessment was in courses and its like oh, it's just like the perfect irony isn't it? you know

T: Yeah, absolutely

12:26

Conversation continues...

Researcher: Ok so I've just basically got sort of 3 sections of questions; first of all just a bit about context, you know about you, your school, the kind of your background in Media and how many kids and that kind of thing you've got doing Media. And then a section about the experience of the new specifications; how you've found them, what your thoughts about that is and then also the use of the Facebook group as well – I'm just kind of interested in the communities of practice that has sprung up at the same time as the new specifications changed. So yeah, if you wouldn't mind just sort of giving me a bit of background about the sort of, type of Media, how long you've been teaching, the kind of school that you're at and the number of students that you teach in Media etc

Teacher: Ok, so in total I've been teaching for 18 years now – the first 3 years of which were in an FE college and the previous, no the subsequent 15 years I've been working in a secondary school.

R: Yep

T: During the space of time that I've been there, in terms of time wise it's probably been more or less evenly split between a kind of dominant focus on A level in the first half of my time there to a more dominant focus on GCSE

R: Right

T: Over the kind of last 5 or 6 years. In terms, do you want to follow up on anything there?

R: Yeah I mean, how many students do you currently have in terms of A level students doing Media?

T: *Sighs* Not very many. For A level now, so I don't do A level Media at all now and obviously I think we'll probably come onto that in some of your later questions. I do A level Film and I only have 6 students now which is a long way down from where things used to be, where we used to have 2 sets of A Level Media classes and probably 40-50 students between those 2

R: Yeah, so definitely a decline in numbers and what do you think has contributed to that?

T: Well with the school that I'm at there's obviously the current, the wider national picture but there's also a local context

R: Right

T: To start with how I see the national picture – so rewinding a few years ago to Michael Gove being in charge and you've got your kind of, how I see it anyway, this kind of reorientation as such of what A levels were for in terms of like the Russel Group, calling it the **ladder** saying these A levels are good and these are not so good

R: Yep

T: And obviously falling outside of that ringfencing. So that's probably the start of the problem as such in terms of a decline in recruitment numbers. Further to that, there's been the curriculum reform processes which again mucked us around and not just on the kind of curriculum side but also the money side basically which has been extremely bad at the local end so it hacked and slashed away at various parts of the school and I am and have been dealt some of the force of that in terms of cutting classes, cutting things out of 6th form options those kind of things.

R: Yeah, yeah

T: So that kind of what leads us to, or leads me to where things are now, in the personal job context

R: Yeah and like you're obviously still doing Film – what was the kind of background to keeping Film in terms of you know, part of an A level programme?

T: Ok so once the, I mean once you get to the point where, we're at the, with kind of the switch over point for Media A level so 2/3 years ago and we gave out. And looking at what you could then access at the time and that, this is obviously limited in terms of what specifications were thought to be about at that point because it wasn't concrete at the time obviously and I've got to be shopping and making decisions. My feeling was, I thought I did not like the way the winds blowing with this at all and I made the initial decision that I was going to switch to Cambridge Tech

R: Right

T: And did that for a cycle for a 2 year period as such but then the school said; no we want just to offer this as A level Film because that's what I'd convinced them to do at GCSE so they wanted like a more natural pathway as they saw it. So it's been, in terms of ending up with A level Film so it's been a two step process and that's how it happened.

R: Yeah and I guess there's been kind of a big split between vocational and more academic courses you know, what's the kind of perception of vocational where you are?

T: I think in terms of management perspective of vocational courses, they're quite happy with it as long as it doesn't go too, I suppose too widespread with such a, let it take over the entirety of the 6th form

R: Yeah

T: A the feeling I get, that's all I could say, right here's a document that says x, y, z but that's just the perception.

R: Ok. What's, if you don't mind me asking, what's the entry requirements to get onto A level Film?

T: Oh just your current, normal standard ones really, so 4 GCSEs at a 4 or 5 or above I think at our school its 4 GCSEs

R: Right, ok, I've actually been finding some people I've spoken to, they've raised the GCSE score to like 6 or 7s to do Film and Media. So I was just interested because it, you know the

place I teach at it's 4 and 5 as well, so it's just interesting seeing what different institutions are kind of doing in terms of that.

So just moving onto like the changed specifications; can you think back to the time when you first heard about the education reform and the reform of the A levels, what your thoughts were at the time?

T: Ooh *laughs*

R: It's a big question

T: Yeah, well to be fairly polite about it, I thought what a big bloody mess this is. It was just, I couldn't understand the logic, the rationale for half the things that were going on and it was, I just thought you know, it just didn't make any sense compared to the *unsure* which I was used to.

R: Yeah

T: Just really, I thought *I didn't see the (unsure) in any of this so* I had no desire to be trying to do any of it from a teaching perspective so, yeah as that process was unfolding I just felt it horribly deflating and demotivating

R: Yeah the, I mean obviously Media wasn't approved for reform until the 3rd round

T: Yeah

R: Did you get involved in any kind of consultations at that point? There was a questionnaire that came around from the MEA I think and there were some meetings that went on in London which obviously you're not in London but I'm just wondering, I'm just trying to piece together the kind of reactions to teachers and what they did and thought round about that time.

T: Yeah, I know I can distinctly remember the, sort of answering the DfEs consultation

R: Yeah

T: That I can remember filling in bits and pieces of that but I'm not sure if I did the MEA's one or not, I might have but I've got no memory of that one.

R: Right

T: And I suppose in terms of well maybe anything with my name on it, so like working on the, the new developments as such of Film Studies with OCR and kind of collectively feeding into what, I mean the people at OCR I think were made crystal clear what I thought on, of the *unsure* so

R: Yeah

T: So I remember having a chat *unsure* in terms of a corporate response but that's yeah, that's how I made my views known

R: So did you have an opportunity to, you know had you just made the decision not to carry on doing Media at A level having seen the specifications? Or did it, at what point did it happen that that decision was made?

T: Yeah it was my decision. I just, the way things were emerging in terms of obviously, **in terms of staying with OCR they were very very late**, their spec was accredited, obviously we got the draft version. I remember looking at the, the **Welsh board**, the EDUCAS, looking at the OCR spec, looking at the AQA spec thinking; nope, nope, nope, I just don't like any of this, this is just and obviously it's a very tightly framed ***unsure*** in terms of like the subject criteria

R: Yeah

T: So its no shock that there's huge overlap in terms of how the 3 boards approach it all. I just, no I just felt this isn't the way things should be, this is just nonsense really, you know.

R: Yeah, yeah, yeah and do you have any, sort of colleagues from other schools that you've spoken to regarding them teaching Media A level still? Any sort of feelings about other peoples experiences of those courses?

T: I'm struggling to think if I know of anyone whose still teaching Media A level now. I can think of certainly colleagues in a range of different places who have had to ***move between two unsure*** thinking; oh this is terrible. I can't concretely say but I personally know of anyone who has actually, come to think of it, who teaches Media A level

R: Ok, so what would, what would have to change in order for you to want to start implementing the A level Media again?

T: ***Pauses*** They'd have to loosen the straps a bit really. The whole, the whole idea for, the whole idea of like say sets, you know set texts; I just find really, really choking really. And it kind of pushes, it pushes and pulls around and I think it gives a distorted effect of, to how young people particularly use the Media, I mean how – this year, this has been a new thing but this year I've been teaching Year 8, teaching Year 8 Media and we ask them what they do with Media and they don't watch TV, they don't watch Films – it's like, wow! I mean there's this massive disconnect now between what the syllabuses absolutely, fundamentally require and what, kind of like the consumer practices as such. I mean in times gone by when you had more optionality and you know, I would make choices; ok well we won't do that because there's no way in hell that these kids are going to get into this, they're not really interested in it, so you know you could, you could kind of loosen things up that way but that route of manoeuvre obviously no longer exists. So we get that room for a bit of agency in it all, then it's ***sighs*** I might be interested. Just as a short comparison to Film Studies; I mean Film Studies has suffered the same thing in terms of here's your set list of films and again they're like Moses ten commandments

R: Yes ***laughs***

T: It's just, it's just a little bit less clunky I think, you know so it's just a bit more liveable with, you know.

R: I think that seems to be kind of the general consensus, the people who I've spoken to pretty much everyone without exception has said that those of them teaching Film and

Media absolutely prefer Film because it, of what you exactly what you've just said. What about the, your feelings about the split between Media and Film – you know the fact that Film analysis was taken out of the Media Studies course and that basically there is a massive bifurcation between Media and Film now. What are your feelings about the kind of ideological thoughts behind that?

T: Oh mixed emotions to be honest with you and mixed emotions because I see it from 2 very different perspectives and so from the perspective of someone who used to, I suppose, teach Media; it felt like a WTF moment, why on earth would you want to do that, it's just like sort of like ripping off one of your limbs

R: Yeah

T: But from, as a [Film Studies] perspective, if I almost feel that if that hadn't happened – there would be no Film Studies at all.

R: Yeah

T: So I know that's one of the things that DfE were going; ok so what is this Media and Film business all about, don't these 2 subjects effectively doing the same thing. And I think that was part of the horrible but necessary compromise that Media had to be de-filmed in order to keep the other subject alive.

R: 'De-filmed' *laughs*

T: So in terms of like, my assessment work and all the rest of it, which to be honest is a fair percentage – not massive but a fair percentage of my own, my annual income, you know it's, it's I can't afford to have that thrown away and so that a *audio becomes muffled*
So yeah, it's made Media kind of like that bit more *samiest* but yeah

R: Did you, do you think there's a kind of like cultural elitism that is sort of predicated on you know, on this – the idea that you know, lots of Russell Group unis have Film Studies but they don't have Media and that that kind of attitude has filtered down to Secondary schools, this idea that Media is not Film. Film has got this kind of history of being a little bit more academic and has more status.

T: Yeah I think that's totally true. I'm not quite sure exactly why it's, that idea has taken hold, I'm not quite sure it's if there's any kind of reality to it or a series of perceptions but yeah I think Film as a subject has that kind of like, a bit more academic street cred in the sense of like people can kind of see, see it as being more or less a visual equivalent to English Lit and it, and in terms of me marketing it to parents, that's very much the angle I take

R: Yeah

T: And that wins a lot of people, they go; ok right, ok yeah – because then they think it's something serious you know? Which people don't necessarily buy with Media and this isn't really related to your question but there's just something else which, in terms of Media which is something I've always found funny, I mean I don't know about your experience of this and there's always a question of those taking Media is; what job am I going to get out of it at the end of that? People asking you about GCSE or A level and my honest answer in my head which I can never reveal to a parent is; it's a GCSE, it's not going to get you any kind of job.

But I always kind of, and as my tempers **waning** over time I always make these equivalencies; you could do History GCSE it doesn't make you a historian.

R: Yeah

T: But I think there's that kind of, going back to that kind of cultural elitism as such which is part of your question; there's this kind of like almost cultural inferiority, almost a kind of like academic vocational script in terms of how to position *coughs* Media Studies whether its GCSE or A level or whatever and people think; oh it belongs in the vocational box even though it's still a GCSE or A level etc, you know so

R: Yeah

T: Yeah

R: So like in terms of you know, that was going to be my next question anyway, in terms of like students career progression into the Media industry, those of those students that want to go and work at some point in the Media industry; what impact do you think that the current situation with the A level Film and Media will have on that long term?

T: *Pauses* I think, I think that its likely to have a pretty detrimental effect on their practical skills, their practical readiness

R: Yeah

T: For entering into any occupation like that

R: Yeah

T: And largely down to the, the value of practical work that has been massively de-scaled in the Media/Film qualification – whether at A level or GSCE or both really. And because it's been de-valued obviously, in terms of its academic, sorry in terms of it's assessment weighting

R: Yeah

T: Why from a teachers perspective would you want to put too much time on this when actually you know you've got to get them through these exams which are worth way much more now than it used to be.

R: Yeah

T: So they may know some stuff, some facts, some figures – I'm not quite sure that knowing those facts and figures is necessarily going to be readily transferable to the kind of jobs which I've seen some of the people who I've taught over time graduate on into over an extended period of time

R: Yeah

T: But there we are. I mean, I think actually just not where we are but like kind of like in an old world sense before this came along, in terms of doing A levels like this where if you

wanted to get into these kind of industries it very much depends on your kind of range of contacts and having the right network – I wouldn't say that these A levels have totally levelled the field don't be silly, **but if you need to get them access for people who wouldn't have had** those access points before I think it's just a question of raising up the drawbridge again

R: Ok, that's interesting, yeah that is interesting and I notice obviously, obviously I found you on Facebook as well and you're still on the group. What's your kind of, what's your kind of reason for being on the group? Why did you get involved and you know, how involved still are you with the Facebook group?

T: I'm in a range of various teacher groups on Facebook for Media and Film basically because with the old specs I never had much of a trouble in terms of thinking; ok this is the right thing to do, or this is not the right way to do it

R: Yeah

T: I have not had the same confidence in **times since** so it's been, its been to reach out and grab some helping hands and just look and see what other people are doing

R: Yeah

T: a better approach, that's a better way of doing things because there's things which have just; wow how on earth do you go about trying to do this? So in the main part that's why I'm in these groups, its to kind of like look out for best practice really over anything else

R: Do you use resources that are shared on there? Or do you mostly create your own?

T: I look at a lot of different types of resources which **you can ask for** in these groups – I don't necessarily use them all, you know that's my quality control filter kicking in. What I do do sometimes, with some of them, is take them and twist them and sort of use it as a basis to, it gives me an idea or platform to work on

R: Yeah

T: All the times when nobodies actually, I think what I've already got is better than this and just carry on my own way kind of thing

R: Yeah, yeah

T: With, with the OCR Media Facebook groups I just, I'm kind of like a lurker as such and I just keep a, like a ***unsure*** profile there because I never want to say anything which has got my name on it because like I'm not ***certified*** by any stretch of the imagination but there will be some people be able to stitch together my name to examiner stuff here and there and

R: Right

T: And you know, so I never want to be quoted as saying; well this person has done this, and its probably best I don't say anything, you know

R: Yeah, you put your head above the parapet and get shot down don't you

T: Yeah

R: Yeah. Actually that's an interesting point because I know you've written resources before and texts and things but what do you think about this kind of whole new resourcing of the Media A levels and Film A levels – you know you've got the textbooks, you've got like online subscription sites kind of emerging and all sorts of different paid for resources. What are your opinions about all that kind of side of you know, the new specifications?

T: My opinions in terms of the quality of the stuff? Or the range

R: Well yeah, anything; quality and the, I suppose like with any change to a specification there's going to be a whole like new range of different things emerging, opportunities for people and you know there's, obviously there's a couple of consultants that run workshops and things like that. I just, I'm just interested in the transactional nature of, sort of commercialised nature I suppose of these courses and you mentioned quality control as well about resources and just sort of your general thoughts about you know, how these courses are kind of resourced and opportunities for people to make money out of it I suppose?

T: Ok. I think it's a slightly different experience if its Media or Film and also I think it's a slightly different experience depending on what board you're with. It seems to me in terms of official board sanctioned textbooks much more that EDUCAS is pretty well resourced so their books available to support their courses seem to, yeah follow the structure of the course pretty well and give you pretty decent fundamental on, which they do whether that's Film Studies or Media

R: Yeah

T: I don't know anything about AQA, I've never really had to do anything AQA-wise and so I couldn't say anything about that whatsoever

R: Yeah

T: I think generally with OCR the, the range of resources is criminally low and in terms of Film Studies I have said internal to OCR; you need to resource this better and I'll admit that I've said this for like years now and by years I mean all the way back in 2012. But they make it, the rationale for not supporting it better from an OCR perspective in terms of getting their mates at Hodder to do a supporting book

R: Yeah

T: Is that there's not enough numbers and I said this **unsure** isn't it you see, you build it and they will come – if there's no supporting materials there, no ones going to come to it. You know which, it's a *grey* top down thing, so yeah, the range of resources there is not good enough. In terms of the quality of some of them, like the quality of materials, thinking about what I've seen for Film Studies and for Media well, you know like with any of these different board resources have got different people doing different things so the quality dips up and down sometimes

R: Yeah

T: I think like what am I supposed to do with this? And other things you can sit there and go; ok, ok fair one, we can some of this we can do some of that and so on

R: And I guess as well with the sort of changing nature of texts, I mean I suppose its, the new specs are designed to change less than anything was before – it was pretty much trying to shoot fish in a barrel I suppose writing textbooks for Media before that anyway, we never used textbooks anyway but now I suppose you've got your set texts and people, I just wondered if there was a kind of feeling that because there are, you know very specific resources to write on, whether there was lots of people kind of seeing that as an opportunity to kind of make money out of creating resources for that. Because you know **there's first year** teachers putting paid resources onto the TES as well when there's lots of stuff for free on Facebook but it's just opened up – for me anyway, a whole new range of opportunities for people to kind of make money in different ways, the sort of commodifying of the courses but it's interesting what you say about OCR not really having any resources because that, you know they're not going to generate any kind of further centres wanting to do the course if it's not adequately resourced.

T: No, no I mean, its going to be a financial peril for OCR, just I'll give you one number which you may or may not already know about like, last year for OCRs A level Media they had about 2000 people going through as the Year 13 cohort

R: Yeah

T: And in the not too long distance past I can remember when that 2000 number was 10,000, 12,000, 15,000

R: Yeah, yeah, yeah

T: 2000's like woah! Red light moment there so

R: Yeah well we used to do OCR too, yeah absolutely by sheer, where I currently teach we teach EDUCAS – it wasn't my decision, I was on maternity leave when that moved and by sheer fluke I also taught AQA at a different school, I was seconded to a different school for part time last year as well and taught the full A level in, the full 2 year A level in 1 year. It was a, I went go into the details of why that was but

T: Sounds like a very dramatic challenge

R: Yeah it was, luckily it was quite a small class and they were very hard working and it worked out ok but I know from just having dealings with the exams officers – I think the 2000 OCR, I'll see that and raise it, **don't worry down** I think AQA was about 1000-something. It was shocking, the numbers were so low, yeah it was I can't remember exactly what the number was, I should find that out. I'm actually talking to the exams officers from AQA and OCR this week and so I'll try and get some numbers from them. But it's you know, yeah exactly compared to what it used to be – I mean the heyday was, what 20,000 plus wasn't it? And

T: Yeah, for all syllabuses yeah

R: Yeah, crazy. That just leads me on to my final question; what do you think is the future for Media Studies? Long term, or medium to long term?

T: *Pauses* To be honest with you, long term I don't think there is one in all honesty

R: Yeah

T: And this is a complete like, from where I started, when I started my teaching career this is a complete *unsure* for me, I mean I can remember saying to, to [REDACTED] years and years ago when we physically worked together

R: Yeah

T: You know; we'll be here forever, like this is the new Shakespeare kind of thing, like there's going to be centuries of cultural value come out of this and Julian to his credit was somewhat more sceptical than me

R: Right ok

T: And like I say and now here we stand like the best part of 2 decades after that claim as such and to say in all honesty, in the long term I don't think there is a future for the subject.

R: Right

T: I think you know if you look at the reform process like, kind of like 4/5/6 years ago by the time **it went through** and some of the things, it was on a knife edge whether the subject, maybe would get to the other side in terms of redevelopment or not and obviously once it did there did seem to be **like loads you know**, get 5000 cuts just strangle the life of it

R: Yeah, happy times

T: Yeah

R: Yeah true

T: So that's, of course, I mean part of it, part of my view is you know very much coloured by my local context, what I've seen happen and where I work but also from talking to colleagues you know, when I got to various meetings, who work in different parts of the country and I keep hearing the same story. I always kind of find that personally reassuring, I think; it's not just me also it sounds to me, the national picture is one of just slip, slip, slip, you know so

R: Yeah, yeah, yeah

T: I don't, I don't see a good end to it, there's been a loss of, a loss of, there will be some kind of tweaking reformat at some point in the future no doubt but, good news for Media? I don't know but

R: Yeah

T: I've been *unsure* and I don't see a good end to it...

R: Ok, yeah

T: ...very disappointing time

R: Yeah, I think it's, it's yeah, it's I think people are very split on this, some people I've spoken to have thought that you know, there will be some kind of resurgence, that it goes in like a trend and it almost that it will come back in and some people have thought a change of government will make a difference and it will be valued again if that happens and then other people are very despondent, like yourself you know, they don't see it ever recovering to the point that it was in the 2000s, early 2000s. So yeah it's an interesting point. I mean, you know keep fingers crossed I suppose that there is a change of government and also a completely new way of thinking about the subject. I mean my overall sort of thesis title is looking at Media Studies as a site of conflict and resistance

T: Yeah

R: And you know, up until this point, up until the education reform; Media Studies was kind of characterised by conflict, you know from outside forces but also internally as well I suppose in terms of what it actually was. But at least we had the autonomy as teachers to have quite a large say over what the content was and I think the specification change this time around was a completely different ball game because it meant that our autonomy as professionals was completely **whipped/ripped** from under us and it, for the first time I think in the history of Media Studies the, the decisions were being made from people who didn't even teach the subject, you know on the political level you know, completely removed from the kind of chalk face of the subject and I'm just interested in seeing how, how that might play out long term – whether people, whether there will be a critical mass of teachers, Media teachers who will kind of fight to take back that. You know like you said, [REDACTED] was quite cynical about it back in the 2000s and I think he's still quite cynical about it now. But you know I think there was the Media manifesto, I mean David Buckingham's recent book but also you know, the website with the Media manifestos and was it 2011/2012? I was just interested to see if something like that would you know, make a comeback in a way. So I suppose we'll just have to see

T: Yeah

R: But I think there's a lot of despondency out there about the future for the subject. Is there anything else that I haven't covered or asked that you feel that is important to get off your chest on the subject?

T: Get off my chest? No

Laughter

T: Just to kind of like, hopefully I'll add something to this, come back to that cultural value from a while back. I mean I really don't like the idea of you know, of I used that expression of like Moses and the 10 commandments that are just kind of like just handed down to you. And this kind of notion of quality so like they take say Film Studies where a Film can only make it onto anyone's set list if its won X amount of awards – and there's nothing wrong with winning Oscars and doing well at the ***unsure*** There's no problem with any of that whatsoever

R: Yeah

T: What I think is really kind of **stuntifying??** about it you think just **purely?** in time because it just makes the subject - and this will hurt Media a bit more than it hurts, than it will hurt Film Studies but it will hurt Film Studies as well, but they just make everything old very quickly. You know I mean you think that when specifications are being redeveloped, like cutting edge stuff or new stuff, probably new stuff was 2015 and now it's 5 years on and for example like; a little while back, a few years back I was doing The Dark Knight Rises, which is from 2012 and for me, as an old man basically, that feels like yesterday but like when I'm talking to 16 year olds about it, a film which came out 8 years ago, it's like; oh yeah, yeah, I kind of remember this and it came out as

R: Yeah

T: Everything's got really horribly dated and its, its, this probably wasn't as intended as such because this kind of puts too much kind of cunning in the hands of the people who designed it but maybe this is just another spanner in the works as such and if you've seen how you **cull** the subject, by basically making it irrelevant for people and

R: Yeah

T: I mean I share your aspiration I guess that political change would make it better. I mean I'm a member of the Labour Party so you know, I want a Labour government but I'll be honest, I'm cynical that simply a change at the top in terms of critical direction would refloat the boat as such you know. I think it's going to take way more than that you know, but

R: Well yeah, I think it's, there's a lot more to the, kind of plough through before education reform happens again isn't there? So

T: Yeah

R: Yeah there's a huge amount of other stuff that needs to be changed first I think. I suppose it's just a kind of filter effect isn't it that peoples attitudes change and yeah, nothings going to change imminently anyway even if there was a change of government, you know

T: Yeah, absolutely. One ***thing??*** though which isn't really kind of Media specific but obviously like with the situation that we're all in now, like in education wise because very clearly there wasn't a national disaster recovery plan for what happened if the exam season can't happen because obviously we're making up the system as we go. And I was thinking just yesterday you know, did this really prove the case for a modular system of assessment? Because if everybody had the opportunity to put units under their belt whether at GCSE or at A Level, by this point in time then you wouldn't have so much risk going on the system of just; ok so, what's teacher predictions, what's **running up *unsure*** and algorithms and what's the ***unsure/precept*** of that cohort but I mean again

R: I know, it's just crazy absolutely crazy. I mean you know I remember, I have written a post about it, **whether it says** something, if they hadn't de-coupled the bloody A levels, they would have had an AS grade to go on at least, you know

T: Yes, yeah

R: Plus all the units and also this weird approach of like you know, 19 theorists being kind of assessed across different texts and it's the complicated matrix of things you have to cover –

you can't adequately have a discreet unit. If you had like, like critical research investigation still or whatever else you could have like discreet units, you would know where students were, a greater practical element would of given you, you know a really good indication of things and its, yeah – you're absolutely right, it's completely shocking that you know and they just, they've stabbed themselves in the foot haven't they? By taking away any you know sort of formative measures of, of progress over the 2 years. I mean this kind of terminal assessment, this obsession with terminal assessment is just *trails off* Anyway, as far as that I'm fully on board with that opinion completely, its one of those things but anyway. I just want, you know thank you so much, your views and opinions are really, really valuable to this and I think what I'm finding is, I think you're about my 18th interview now and pretty much everybody without exception – there's a sort of a spectrum of hatred of the subject but I think pretty much everybody is starting at least on the Richter scale of 6, you know

Laughter

R: You know and heading up to quite a few, a think we're average like 8.5 generally on the hatred scale at the minute and it's just kind of really fascinating to see the kind of different nuanced reasons why that is and there's such a big body of evidence already to suggest that you know, there needs to be a massive change. Whether or not there will be is another, is another matter but we can only but hope and you know, they are consulting, Ofqual are consulting - they've had 2 meetings; 1 with teachers and 1 with academics and apparently, I didn't, I couldn't make the teachers one but the, my school wouldn't let me out you know, they didn't think it

T: Yeah, I had the same problem

R: Yeah it's, it doesn't matter entirely, but they didn't think it was good enough CPD, anyway! But apparently people who did go said it was a bit of a melee, it was just you know a bit of a **fright/fight** fest but apparently the academic one was more positive that they actually got the impression Ofqual were willing to listen and they were going to kind of hopefully implement some changes. And I can but hope that my research, if I can get it out sooner rather than later, will maybe add to that mix as well, that there is evidence there from a, I did a pilot study last year and you know, this full study now that there will be a body of evidence you know, there to say that this is, these are the issues that are with the course and these are the changes that people need and want and it's not just about what teachers want, it's about the long term wellbeing of students and you know, going into the Media and sort of jobs and you know, long term.

T: Yeah absolutely

R: So, yeah well good luck with the write up – how many months have you got left now?

T: Well before 'all this' as such, I was probably looking at about another 12-14 months but I didn't think it was going to come to an end next April but I'm hoping to radically shorten that to sometime later this year so

R: Oh that's good

T: Hopefuuly, hopefully yeah

R: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

R: Yeah

T: But I like, I literally haven't thought about it whether I'm *unsure* real life again

Talking over

R: Yeah, too much too soon I suppose but yeah, but hopefully. Alright well thank you so much [REDACTED] and you know, good luck

T: No problem

R: With the rest of the quarantine situation and

T: Yeah and you

R: Alright, cheers, take care

T: Ok, alright

R: Bye, bye

Researcher: Ok, I think we're connected. Thank you so much for offering to participate, I don't know how much you know about my research but I'm really looking at the impact of the new specifications on Media Studies and particularly you know, how teachers are experiencing the curriculum and also the use of the Facebook group as well, just as a kind of, what I noticed sort of 3 years ago emerged very quickly out of the new specifications – that the Facebook groups grew very very quickly. So I'm looking also at how professional communities of practice operate and in light of the specification changes.

So I've sort of got 3 sections of questions; first of all just a bit of context about you, your school, your students. Second section really about your experiences of the new specifications, what you think about it etc and then third really about the Facebook group; your use of it and what you think about it and how its sort of used in your practice. So just sort of to get started; would you mind just telling me a little bit about you as a teacher, like how long you've been teaching Media, are you a subject specialist? That kind of thing

Teacher: Yeah. I am a subject specialist; I've got a Media and Communications degree

R: Right

T: From back in the day when there weren't very many Media degrees around in the country.

R: *laughs* Yeah

T: I've, god I suppose, I don't know, 25 years I've been teaching Media I suppose.

R: Right, yeah

T: In a variety of schools. I've been Head of Media in a couple of schools. I'm teaching the Film A level now as well and it's been really interesting comparing that, I didn't teach the old spec for Film, I taught the GCSE old spec for Film and we deliver the GCSE spec – which I don't teach, for Film but I do the A level Film and comparing the Film and the Media has been really, really interesting actually. I **will probably be an examiner**. I've taught, I'm currently teaching EDUCAS obviously, I've taught, well ***Welsh Board unsure*** I've also taught a bit of BTEC Media years ago and I've marked for AQA, I did A level Media marking for probably about 10 years on and off.

R: Ok

T: So I suppose I've probably got quite a lot of experience. Oh the school that I'm – do you want me to carry on about the school?

R: Yes please, yeah yeah, so are you in a 11-18s school?

T: Yeah – I can't hear you actually

R: Oh sorry, can you hear me now?

T: Yeah that's better, yeah. Yep 11-18s school, actually it's a *joint/drew* school but yeah 11-18, I'm in the secondary area 11-18. It's a massive school, we've got over 2000 pupils. We were Outstanding according to Ofsted quite a few years ago

R: Yep

T: I've been there for 16 years – I came as Head of Media department and then I've been Head of Year and then I'm kind of in charge of FDMH and Wellbeing I do lots of that sort of thing. Part of the reason I've stayed there actually is because I can teach Media and now teach Film because I've looked at moving schools for a variety of reasons – it's great where I am but you know sometimes you see things and think I'm up for a bit of a challenge, that would be interesting, and then I think; 'yeah but I'd have to teach English' and that's stopped me a lot of the time. I teach a little bit of Key Stage 3 English but it's not really my passion and invariably when I teach English it always ends up turning into Media if I'm honest.

R: Yeah *laughs*

T: Yeah so we've got a big A level, a big 6th Form rather – we've got about 500 in the 6th Form. It's a, the school is actually quite deceptive because it looks, its in quite a sort of pleasantly *twee* area but it actually is massively comprehensive. We take from one of the sort of biggest areas of social deprivation in Europe I think actually it was.

R: Right

T: So we have a very mixed cohort, we're about 6% BME and we have about 20 different languages. So it's a huge kind of melting pot really and I've kind of said, I live in the catchment and I've sort of talked to people over the years when their children have been about to start school, I've sort of said; 'look, it doesn't matter what your child is like or what they're into, they will find their tribe when they come to the school'.

R: Yeah

T: We've got a complete gamut. I mean I really like working there, I've been there for 16 years, the staff are brilliant, the kids are actually really brilliant and despite there being a huge difference in sort of socioeconomic backgrounds and things, everybody's kind of respectful of everybody else

R: Yeah

T: You know the kids who go away on ski trips don't come back bragging about it and they kind of appreciate what they've got more because they're sitting next to somebody who you know, would never be able to do something like that in a million years. So its quite an interesting place to work.

R: Yeah, no it sounds relatively similar to where I work actually as well – a large proportion of BME students and a huge mixture of backgrounds and socioeconomic status, I think it produces quite a lot of challenges. How is Media as a subject perceived within the kind of institution? Is it got quite a high status or

T: It did have. I think and I'm sure its not just our school but there seems to have been a swing probably in the last couple of years towards Maths and Sciences

R: Yes

T: And we're a school that, I mean when schools didn't have to teach languages we kept our languages and things and said; 'we want to offer a broad curriculum' and the schools committed to things like Music and Art and those kind of things which some other places I know are getting rid of. I mean partly that's helped by having a massive 6th Form, we attract 6th formers from all over the city so we need to offer a broad curriculum to get them.

R: Is there parity in terms of entry requirements to get onto the A level Media to other subjects?

T: Yeah, I think, I think we ask for 4 or a 5 in English – I'm trying to remember which, or if they've done Media before then obviously a 5 but yeah there is parity. Its some of the, some of the parents, it's interesting when we have those kind of evenings and the kids come along and you know, look at the subjects and think about what they want to do and I've always had some parents sort of say; 'no don't bother with that one its not a proper subject' kind of thing. And equally I've had parents who go; 'Oh my god this sounds amazing, I wish I could come and do it as well'.

R: Yeah

T: What I actually did for, I think I did it for Film actually, was that I looked at all the Russell Group universities that offered it and did a big display about that, you know and I think it's Cambridge has got a Masters in Film or something like that so I put all that up on this board and I thought; 'yeah, shut up'

Laughter

T: It is a proper subject. So there is a bit of you know, I'd say parents directing kids away from it – I suppose its been seen as a bit of a Mickey Mouse subject and its sort of the brunt of jokes; 'oh yeah you're doing a Film, a Media degree, that's going to be useful' kind of thing, you know? *inaudible* in the Media actually, our numbers have gone down certainly over the last 4 or 5 years, I mean a few years ago we had like 5 GCSE groups

R: Yeah

T: And then that's kind of gone down so now we've got; 2 GCSE Film groups, er Media groups and 1 Film group and then at A level we've got 1 A level Film group and 1, sorry a group in Year 12 and a group in Year 13 for Film and the same for Media.

R: Right, yeah that is quite a big drop isn't it from previous kind of numbers I think.

T: Yes

R: And is that down to what you were saying about parents perhaps seeing there's a stigma attached to the subject, not seeing it as a thing? Or is it because things have filtered through in terms of like, what Media is now? Or what's your views about that?

T: I think, I think some of the, it's partly got to do with the way in which – I'm trying to be very tactful here – it's marketed perhaps in school by some of the departments

R: Ok

T: And, yeah I think, I don't think it's parents changing, I think the kids are thinking, you know maybe they're thinking; 'oh my god if I'm going to be paying 9 grand a year, I need to go into something where I'm guaranteed a better income'

R: Yeah, yeah

T: 'Than doing something that maybe I care about and I'm passionate about and I'm really interested in but not knowing what kind of job I'm going to get at the end of it'

R: Yeah, sure, sure. And what are your views about the way in which the curriculum has changed – when it was brought in in 2017, what did you, what were your initial thoughts about you know the changes to things like the set texts, the theorists and the reduction of practical?

T: I hated it. I think there's so little room for teachers kind of pursuing their own sort of, interest or finding interest in texts and for the pupils as well. Because its so prescriptive and there's so much – it's the volume, the worst thing about it is the volume of stuff you've got to get through and it just becomes a little kind of exam machine really. I think it thrashed a lot of the interest and excitement out of the subject and I appreciate that the government wanted it to be more rigorous and I appreciate that the exam board said well, they argued didn't they to try and have at least 30% coursework

R: Yeah

T: And the fact that they've got 2 exams instead of 1 all that was to try and make it nicer and easier for the kids

R: Yeah

T: I mean, who needs 19 theorists? My sons actually in Year 6 and you know, the sort of, it puts me in mind of all the sort of language stuff that they have to do, you know you go into an A level language group and say; 'right can you talk to me about you know, this that and the other' and they wouldn't know what you're talking about – and **you think these kids that haven't had to jump through hoops are having to jump through hoops in a way**

R: Yeah

T: And I feel like its like that with the theorists and I absolutely think that yes, you know there is a place for theory and its really interesting and its useful, you know and I kind of explain it to the kids and sort of say its like picking up a torch and shining it on a text and you've got different torches for different theories and you're looking at things from different angles and different perspectives and that kind of thing – you don't need 19 of them. You know?

Laughter

T: Yes, have an understanding of Industry and yes have an understanding of Representation and Feminism and all those concepts – you don't need 19 of them, it's just overkill

R: Yeah, yeah

T: And you, I don't know, I just feel a bit soulless actually doing it

R: Yeah and do you think its changed the way that you actually teach your subject? The way that you approach lesson resources and planning

T: Yeah, yeah I mean it has to be very, very kind of; right learn this now know this, and I've kind of said to the kids you know, particularly at Year 11 I've sort of said; right this ones a bit like GCSE History – learn facts, learn the dates. You know we're doing, like when we were doing, god I can't remember – Pokemon GO and stuff it was like; right learn the names of these companies, learn how it developed, blah, blah, blah – there you've learnt it, 3 week block, apply **unsure/immersion** theory, right bang onto the next one. And it's just a conveyor belt of; learn this now do this, learn this now do this, learn this now do this.

R: Yeah and do you think it's changed like obviously really hard to tell because the students doing it now haven't had the experience of what it used to be like but in your perception, do you think that students are engaged with the course any less than they perhaps used to be? Because of this?

T: I wonder whether its got something to do with there being a bit fewer of them doing it

R: Right

T: Because we do tend to get families doing subjects, you know you end up with the next one comes along through school and does Media and that sort of thing. I mean I still try and teach it with the same kind of passion and all that kind of thing but it's

R: Yeah

T: It's very different and you feel, I mean I suppose I've been through it a couple of years now so I kind of know the pace at which you have to go but certainly when I was first teaching the new spec I just thought; I cant even pause and go 'wow, look at this interesting thing that was in the news' or 'have you read the article about blah blah' you know, you just kind of like quickly go; hey everybody, here's a quick starter, think about this, right bang that on to the next thing. So you cant kind of, I'd say take time to think about things and can we go off piste a little bit and relate it to other stuff and get them to kind of make all those kind of links between the different subjects or you know between other things that they've seen, they've read or watched or whatever, it's just all **sighs**

R: So it's a definite ramification of the changes isn't it. I mean, in terms of resources what, do you generally create your own resources? Or do you use a mixture of other found resources from like textbooks or websites that kind of

T: Yeah just a mixture of things. Stuff that we've got, stuff we've used before that we can adapt – I mean we've got loads of stuff like for example; on Audience and all that kind of thing so you can just tweak that kind of thing

R: Yeah

T: Or, yeah I use, we use textbooks and the Facebook group

R: Yep, so I mean, that segues nicely into the questions about Facebook. What kind of role has that played in your own sort of professional practice?

T: For teaching the A level Film because I was kind of completely new to it, it's been invaluable, it's been absolutely invaluable and just for kind of watching conversations and looking at the kind of resources people put on. And somebody might put something on for Film that I'm not teaching and I'll go right, I can see the sort of thing that they're doing, I'll do similar for our Film.

R: Yeah

T: Because again with the textbooks, they don't necessarily, I mean we've chosen films that we thought would work well, that we were interested in, a couple of them we've got resources for, you know like Trainspotting I've used before so that guided our thinking about what to choose.

R: Yeah

T: Rather than just sticking with what's in the textbook. We've had to find and make lots and lots of our own resources and I'd say a lot of them, the first place I'll go is look on the Facebook page, site, and see what other people are saying, what other people are doing and that kind of thing.

R: So you said you sort of follow the conversations; if you're likely to post, what kind of things would you generally post about?

T: There's been quite a few conversations about people thinking of changing from Media A level to Film so I've contributed to that.

R: Right

T: People talking about you know, which texts to use and you know some people who are completely new to Media saying; 'I'm going to teach this, what sort of things should I cover?' somebody was talking about The Archers and wondering whether 'lockdown' is a good time to do The Archers so I kind of jumped on and said; 'actually yes' because it's really weird sitting in a room with kids and nobody looking at anything and all just listening and kind of looking at each other

Laughter

R: I'm just about to start teaching late night Woman's Hour actually

T: Yeah late night Woman's Hour as well, yeah. Yeah so stuff that I've taught I'll kind of go on, I don't share resources because a lot of their resources are better than, you know I'm taking resources but I can offer a bit of ***canned*** experience and knowledge and that sort of thing.

R: Yeah. So what's, so obviously resources is one thing but you said you talked about you know that kind of community of teachers and professional experience. Do you feel it's kind of offered you like a sort of support network as well? I mean do you feel you've engaged with

other people on there that you see kind of regularly and you feel like there's a kind of community of teachers?

T: Yeah a bit, I think as well because we're a very small, I mean there's only 3 of us in the department and we don't do, I mean I'm not sure to what extent there are still sort of groups of teachers meeting in the area and that sort of thing – I'm not aware of it.

R: Yeah

T: But I'm sort of, recently as I've been kind of, with being Head of Year and doing mental health and stuff I've you know got, having another role – it's not my sole focus. I mean you do feel quite kind of isolated I suppose and that helped me sort of share ideas with people and see what people were talking about and thinking about, yeah.

Talking over

T: Sorry, go on

R: Sorry. Do you use any other kind of online communities? Like do you go on Twitter for example or is there anything else that you might use?

T: Yeah I'm on Twitter. I tend to follow sort of mental health type things and education led generally

R: Yeah

T: Rather than anything subject specific on there

R: And do you see it as a kind of integral part of your continuing professional development as a teacher? Or is it just something that you would just do because it's what you're interested in and you think it's useful in that respect?

T: Twitter?

R: Yeah and that Facebook as well, yeah

T: At the moment it's really essential. I get all sorts of good things from both of them really.

R: Yeah so that's, you'd say it's an integral part, good. What other resources might you use for your teaching? Do you subscribe to any kind of online sites you know like Edusites? Or anything like that?

T: We used to get Media Magazine and you could access their resources. We've got Curriculum Press. I think that's about it.

R: Yeah, so you

T: We used to get the Zigzag exam resources – for the old spec

R: Right and do you, and is your department quite ok for kind of like budget for those kind of paid resources? Or do you have to

T: Yes from what I can gather on Facebook, we are quite, I mean I know the school is well resourced so yes, we do alright, yeah.

R: Oh good. So I mean its quite an interesting question to sort of end on really but what do you think the future of Media Studies is going to be long term? Or medium to long term? Can you see it sort of staying as it is? Declining? Growing? You know, any thoughts on that?

T: I think like most things, I think it'll come back into vogue. I mean it might be interesting with the sort of current crisis that we've got

R: Yeah

T: You know looking at people's reliance on the Media, you know some politicians manipulation and use of the Media – I'm thinking particularly over the Atlantic there's lots of interesting things going on. You know and I would, I would yeah, I can't imagine it will disappear at all. Yeah I mean I would like to think, to say that things go in fads and phases don't they and you know people will do sort of Maths and Science for a while and then you know maybe kind of come back around too. I think because of there being all of that STEM push as well and getting women into engineering and things, which is great and it has been very effective so I think maybe the Media community need to start a bit of self promotion really.

R: Yeah I think that's really interesting because I think you know those, there was certainly a bit of kick back when you know the Media specifications were finally announced for reform wasn't there? But I just wonder whether that like what you say, there'll be sort of more of a, a kind of active push for Media to be seen as a, you know an essential subject. You know certainly it fits into the political context so people might be thinking very differently about the world now aren't they.

T: Yeah, yeah

R: So I wonder whether that will, will have some bearing on peoples perceptions of what is important and what isn't important because you know, we spend our days pretty much on Media now at the moment

T: Yeah

R: and if we didn't have Media then it's, it would be, you know the, nothing our lives would be a lot more bare I think without that, so I think that's really interesting. So in terms of your own school, do you see the numbers remaining stable? You know there's no worry or anything over the

T: No, we've changed the way that we do things with Year 9 because, I mean a lot, we used to do like a sort of opt-in Media lesson that they could come along and have a try of before they did their options. And what we've changed to just this year is that we've now got a carousel in place where they do like; DT subjects and computing and Media and a few other things and they pick 6 out of a choice of, can't remember I think it was about 10 or 11

R: Ok

T: Subjects and they do a kind of a block, an 8 week block I think, a 6 or 8 week block of that subject. I think they do it once or twice, I don't teach it obviously at the moment so they do it once or twice a week. So they do a little unit of work, so they've got a really good idea of what they're then committing themselves to.

R: That's really good, yeah I think, I think that kind of promotion as well works really well for the subject long term.

T: Yeah, so even if they, even if they choose not to do it, they're doing it from a kind of knowledgeable position really. So I don't know what our numbers are like for September for Year 10 but we'll certainly have a Film and a Media group but I don't know whether it will go to 2. But that would be good if we could get a couple of groups going and then sort of group it a bit more into the 6th Form.

R: How have the changes, I mean I know you said you don't like the way that the subject has gone in terms of the change in specifications – how has that impacted on your kind of own professional life? I mean you said you spend a lot of time making Film resources, things like that

T: Yeah well I'm really glad that I teach Film to be honest because its kind of my sanity. I mean I suppose I'm getting used to the Media

R: Right, yeah

T: But the Film is much more relaxed in comparison because it's one industry essentially because they get their head around one industry and then they've got set texts within that. Whereas the Media just feels like a really hard slog and I do like teaching it but you know, if somebody said; right you're not teaching A level Media next year, I don't think I'd lose sleep about it whereas previously I would have done. Because it is, its just not how I would want to teach really I suppose ultimately.

R: So say you were given a free reign in a hypothetical universe. If you were given free reign; how would you change the course? You know, what would you put back in? What would you take away?

T: I'd maybe make some of it optional – you know you either do, I don't know, Computer Games or Music videos, you know something like that

R: Yeah

T: And just allow the thing to slow down. I'd also take out, you know maybe have again, have you know like have 8 key theorists and then, you know keep 2 from the others or something like that that work for your texts and your students, you know

R: Yeah a bit more choice, more freedom

T: A little bit more choice, a little bit more freedom. I mean I get that it cant be sort of 50% coursework again and that's ok, that works alright actually but I think just, just giving it a little bit more choice and freedom. Because you end up sort of teaching things for the sake of it not because you see value in it or its interesting anymore – its just; 'right we've got to get through this, we've got 3 weeks to get through this'

R: I think that's key isn't it, they're seeing value in what they're doing, yeah. And how do you think our current situation – this very strange time that we're in where we're having to all teach online; how do you think that's going to impact on our subject sort of going forward? Or do you think it will impact – do you think we'll just go back to normal very quickly?

T: *Pauses* I mean we've just re-ordered the order in which we're teaching the course because obviously we're at the start of the coursework Year 12 and while we want them to do research and planning, we're going to have to move the actual doing the coursework until they come back in September.

R: Yeah

T: So we've jiggled things a bit around but its just, I mean I don't really know how other subjects – I mean I'd imagine things like Science is possibly harder to, I don't know really. I mean it seems to be ok, it's adapting reasonably well because we've got so many resources on YouTube and you know you can email things and all that kind of stuff so, so far it seems to have been ok

R: Good, good. Well I mean lets hope, lets hope we go back to normal very quickly and this will all be over

T: Yeah

R; You know I think I just feel sorry for the students having to, the Year 12 students who are having to kind of go through all this and still you know, sit their exams next year as well you know. But you know, we shall see – are your students coping alright with it do you think? Have they been in contact?

T: Yeah, yeah a lot of them, a lot of them seem to be absolutely fine, yeah

R: Good

T: I'm one of the designated safeguarding leads as well so we've got quite a few kids that we're worried about them – aren't replying to emails and that sort of thing. But no the Film and Media kids are doing pretty well actually. I mean a lot, one of the good things about school is there's a very strong kind of work ethic so the kids are engaged – you know the vast majority, like I've got a Year 8 English group, 2 thirds have gone and done some of the work I've set you know before. Whereas I've got friends who teach in different sorts of schools, you know one of them got like 3 exam groups and there's only like 6 kids out of 3 exam groups that have actually logged on to anything, you know in the fortnight before we broke up for Easter.

R: Yeah *laughs*

T: So we're in quite a fortunate position really

R: Ok that's really good, I mean I suppose we wont be able to really tell the true impact of this on, until well into next year when it's all, well hopefully when it's all finished. You know when you're in the middle of it its kind of, you kind of you're just getting through it

T: Yes, yeah

R: But this is not, its not an equal experience for everybody though is it? You know this idea of

T: No

R: Just siting at home with different home lives and scenarios and you know, different contexts that we're all in

T: The gap gets bigger doesn't it because I mean we've been delivering computers to kids who don't have a computer at home and we've been delivering, you know actually paper resources and work packs and things

R: Yeah that's it and you know you've got families with resources that, who perhaps have somebody who is a key worker or a parent that's not very confident and kids that share resources and you know that creates a source of tension and arguments I guess for many families. And people who don't really want to be at home either, I think its got a big long reaching impact. Well fingers crossed that it will all be over

T: Yes

R: But thank you so much for your time Susan, it's really kind of you and

T: Oh no problem

R: It's really useful, I think you're about my 15th interview now so I think, what I'm finding is very much everyone's saying pretty much the same thing

T: I was going to say, is there an agreement about the new spec being a nightmare

R: Yeah, yeah, I think we've had 1 sort of positive-ish **unsure**

T: Right

R: But everybody has said pretty much identically what you have said and I mean, you know obviously I wouldn't declare it at the start of the interview but this is why I'm doing the whole doctoral research in the first place is because I felt very strongly when this consultation period was out that it was handled very badly and that teachers were not given ownership over, for the first time actually in a change of specification we weren't given ownership over or autonomy in how the curriculum went.

T: Yes

R: It was very much led by Ofqual and DfE

T: Yes, yeah

R: And a lot of it was lost in translation, people who were asked to advise were wilfully misinterpreted I think and there was a political agenda at play. So I think, I think long term you know, you're right, I think Media will not disappear, I don't think it will thrive and it might be, it might come back into fashion, who knows – you know we can only hope.

T: Yeah

R: But I think this could, what I'm doing is kind of capture a snapshot in time of Media education in, well it's history and you know because I think it, it will change. I mean for the first time we are faced with something which we have very little control of and I think it speaks to a wider, a wider kind of political and social narrative about

T: Which is, yeah it just feels like our professionalism isn't trusted and you know, we can't be trusted to choose appropriate texts that offer sufficient challenge

R: That's it and you know, I mean there are, you know to be fair to Ofqual they have held, I don't know if you – you might have been part of them I don't know, but they held some teacher meetings and some academic meetings as well over the last 6 months and have been getting people's feedback. I was at neither of them unfortunately as I couldn't attend them but

T: Yeah

R: I know people who were there and they are listening and I think a lot of

T: Good

R: **I kind of get** the feelings that you've expressed and the other teachers have expressed are getting through and nothing's going to change instantly by a long stretch but I'm hoping that it will and I'm hoping that this research when it comes, when it comes out next year if I can get it written up

T: Yeah

R: That it will inform how our profession works and how it thinks about the subject and actually what, what our identity is as a subject and professionals and

T: Yes

R: And that it's worth fighting for and I think we've always been characterised by quite, you know active, you know

T: Yeah

R: We're quite activist I think in a lot of our ways anyway and you know hopefully this, this will be something that will keep the subject alive and thriving. So but yeah it's brilliant and I'm getting really, really good input from teachers and experiences. I've, I'm nearly at the end of the teachers interviews so I'm interviewing the Subject Officers from the different exam boards this week and I've already interviewed some of the academics involved in the advisory process. None of the politicians want to speak to me, funny enough

Laughs

R: Mr Gibb refused and he will not entertain any more further contact but you know, that's to be expected I guess – that was before all of this lockdown happened. But yeah, so it's a really interesting, I mean I think, you know the sort of communities of practice on Facebook

are really interesting just to look how teaching is moving to that sort of way of supporting each other in the time where we don't have that much physical contact.

T: Yeah, yeah, yeah and I think it's great as well that you know, with the exam boards changing texts as well that people are going; 'right you know, don't worry everybody, I've got this, I've prepared this for this and I've done Black Panther and I've got this and I've got that' It's just brilliant.

R: Yeah absolutely and I think, I think these kind of grassroots groups are really important, I think its another example of like teachers kind of resisting in a way to what has been forced on us, it's our own sort of way of taking back a little bit of control and professional autonomy.

T: Yes, yeah

R: With the **unsure** that we're given so hopefully it will garner a bit more power over time but we shall have to wait and see

T: Yeah

R: Thank you so much and I wont keep you any longer but if you don't mind I'll send you some agreement forms so if you wouldn't mind just typing your name in it, it doesn't need to be you know handsigned, it's just

T: Yeah fine

R: Just my ethics approval and obviously I'll send you a copy of the final thing when it's done

T: That would be great, yeah I'd be really interested to see it

R: I'll look forward to seeing you online

T: Yes

R: Thank you very much, take care, bye

T: Right bye, bye

R: Bye

Starts: 4:31

Researcher: Alright, I think we are connected, that's brilliant, ok lovely. So I don't know how much you know about my research but I'm actually looking at the impact of the 2017 spec change on Media Studies and the future of that but also particularly interested in the emergence of the Facebook groups really as a result of that and how teachers are professionally responding to that as well as against the political backdrop of what those changes were and how that's kind of enacted in the classroom. So I've just got kind of 3 sections of questions really; ones sort of quite general just about your background and your experience in teaching as Media etc and the kind of context of the schools you work in. Another section just about your direct experience of teaching the new specs and then a third section really just about your kind of use of the Facebook groups. So if it's alright just to start, could you give me a little bit of background as to yourself as like you know, as a teacher – how long have you been teaching, what kind of institute do you teach in, that kind of thing

Teacher: Yeah, so I did my PGCE in 2004, before that I had worked in a Media industry – I worked at what was Granada Television

R: Ok, yep

T: So I became a teacher because I didn't really know what else I wanted to do at that time, there wasn't as many opportunities in Manchester as there is now. So and I did my PGCE at the place that I still teach at now – so I teach at a reasonably, I don't really know, we are at that point when I first started there was about four and a half thousand kids doing various courses, it's a big FE college

R: Right, ok

T: We don't have those kind of numbers now, it's much lower now. So I've taught Media on 3 different specifications, this will be my third – always with what was WJC and now with EDUCAS so I have no experience of other boards. So I've taught, I've also taught second year Media as a PGCE student even which was quite terrifying and first year and then I've taught Film since 2008/2009 as well, so originally in a department of 8 people and I am now a department of me.

R: Ok

Wry laughter

T: We've had a massive, massive drop in numbers. So trying to put it into context, probably it was, it hit home not this, obviously not this summer but last summer when I had my AS – because we did the AS and the linear for the last couple of years. This is the first year that I'm, no this is the first year I've gone linear, the previous years on the new changes we did the AS entry. So to put it into context; 5 years ago we had 120 kids doing AS Media and I've now, I had 15 last summer for the AS Media exam.

R: And what was the, what do you think has kind of, made the change to that?

T: For, as a wider thing at college we don't have as many kids anymore because they've opened a couple more 6th Form centres in the area that I live in – so obviously 6th Forms always sound a little bit better than FE colleges anyway don't they. And I think when people think of FE they generally think of vocational programmes rather than A levels – I think that's had an impact.

R: Ok, yeah

T: I think the push for STEM at schools has been, has impacted on Media phenomenally

R: Yeah

T: The amount of kids that I, because we interview our kind of Year 11s, so we do like interview night – they'll come in and they'll say; I'm doing Media because it's easy. That's been a massive impact and in the last 18 months we introduced at college, on the A level programme vocational - well like BTEC Criminology which is the equivalent of an A level and those traditionally weaker kids that I think I would have picked up in Media, are now doing Criminology because they all think CSI is real

Laughter

R: I know, I was just going to say the Media's got a lot to answer for!

T: The Media has destroyed the Media Studies definitely

R: **Maybe that's what I need as a title** – that's a good point

T: Yeah and I think to be honest, asking a couple of people I've been out at EDUCAS both Film and Media conferences this year, you know like the teacher training stuff and kind of talking to people about numbers there and for both Film and Media, Criminology has been the subject that a lot; 'we introduced Criminology and I lost my numbers' because traditionally and again with the spec changes Media used to be often a 4th subject that actually the kids did well at and then would carry it on when they dropped from 4 to 3 – now they don't have that option, I think that's been the impact as well. Media is, as you say obviously you're not interested in Film but Film would be the same as well – traditionally a 4th subject. My kids do particularly well, they have always done well. We've got, for Media, if the kids would have sat this summer, we would have had 100% pass rates since the year 2000.

R: Yeah, wow

T: So and that's the way I try and sell it is; you do Media, you will pass and you'll get a decent ***unsure*** if you want to go a be a doctor then fair enough but for them kids that just ultimately want 3 A levels to go to uni

R: Yes

T: It doesn't really matter what its in and you're better to get a C or a B in a decent, in a subject as opposed to struggling for 2 years and coming out with an E. And it's hard to market it that way definitely

R: Yeah. So do you think, do you think then the course was easier, like you know, it has such a kind of stigma of being the easy option whether or not it has been but is your perception is that it is easier for the students to achieve?

T: Mm, yeah – but that could be my perspective because I know how to teach it – which at the risk of sounding like a real big headed big head because I've worked with, I've worked with WJC. My old boss, [REDACTED] used to be, she was one of the principle examiners on the old spec, she still works on the new spec now – so we had a lot of input that way. We would know, we knew what we were after. Yeah so, I don't think Media's easy – I think the new specification is mind boggling to get your head round. I kind of get it now, I wouldn't want to be an NQT or a new person being slung in to teach it, definitely not.

R: Yeah, yeah exactly. I think that's really interesting what you say about the fact that its, I don't think you're being big headed at all, I think you've absolutely hit the nail on the head and its, students achieve because teachers know how to teach it

T: Yes

R: And I think, you know it, I'm just sort of thinking about the accessibility of the subject as well – the fact that it feels in popular culture that there's already a kind of portal for kids to kind of go through, they're already part way through the doors because it, its something

T: Arghh *Uncomfortable noise* I might have to agree to disagree with you there

R: Ok

T: Particularly I think on the new spec – the new spec relies on cultural capital, which 18 months ago I didn't even know what that meant and it is mind boggling the things that they don't know at all. So on the new specification, one of the first texts, the text that I start with is – I'm assuming you, do you teach on the new spec?

R: I do, yeah yeah yeah

T: Yes, so do you, I start with WaterAid so

R: Yep

T: And it's things like, I was trying to explain to them what Band Aid 'Do They Know its Christmas' is

Laughter

T: No idea, I put the song on; 'I've never heard this in my life' and they were all like

R:*Laughs* Yeah

T: I did Dizzee Rascal a few weeks ago and I showed them a little montage of music videos and most of them had never seen – Michael Jackson: Thriller

R: Oh god, yeah

T: *Laughing* For god's sake.

Laughter continues

R: Yeah. I think the point I was getting at before actually was that, yeah I actually, I think we agree – I think because on the old spec because it, it celebrated popular culture more, it allowed more bespoke choices for students and I think, you know that's an achievement in the past. Allow students to kind of have their teachers tailor some of the texts

T: Definitely

R: To make it more accessible. I completely agree with what you're saying now, you know my experience is exactly the same and you know, who designates what cultural capital is?

T: Yeah

R: Well we know who's designating that. Yeah it's, it is really interesting. Yeah so I suppose just moving on to your kind of experiences of the course and teaching it. What are your, I think I can probably pre-empt what you're going to say but; what are your views really about the changes to the specification, the reduction of practical, the theories and the introduction of set texts?

T: The practical I will always struggle with because I have no technical ability at all

R: Right

T: And always relied on other people, so this has been the first year that I've had to teach, with my second years, the practical completely on my own. So, but remember they've done the AS and the person who taught them on the AS, had taught them how to use Photoshop. So I did both years – I did the DVD cover brief because for me it was easier. So and I have quite a few students that do Photography so could use Wix and so they were kind of, unfortunately kind of teaching themselves. So although I'm quite good at being critical and that critical friend and telling, you know offering guidance and support and yelling at them 'read the damn brief', I don't have any, and I have no equipment either, I don't have – I don't even own one camera, I have zip

R: What do the, what do the students use then? Have they got their own

T: Phones

R: Phones, yep

T: They use phones. A couple of them do have cameras and I have been incredibly lucky at the risk of sounding like I'm very #soblessed, the fact that there was only a small group of them, they all got on so well, so they were very good at; you can borrow my camera, I'll come and do some pictures with you for a bit. So we had a lot of that going on

R: Yeah

T: Again, that's the joy of having a small, one small class that have been together for 2 years, that they did, well I was very very lucky that they did all get on, they never fell out and I think that's very rare for any classes

R: Yeah, yeah

T: And they did, so a couple of them had got nice cameras and stuff like that, so they would say; you can borrow this for a couple of hours. And it was really good. So the practical for me is neither here nor there. I personally prefer it because, I'm guessing you also taught on the old spec?

R: Yes

T: Because nothing used to send me more over the edge than them bloody essays on **unsure/industry/?**

Laughter

T: But yeah, so I, I moderated them for 4 years for EDUCAS and before for WJC, I don't know what's wrong with me because I hated it, I hated them essays so much

Laughter

T: It's like; mine are all done now, I'll have a look at 1500 others

R: Yes

T: So and randomly last week we were, I was having a chat with somebody on Facebook about this and somebody chipped in and said; oh I miss those essays – I'm like; you're on your own there mate!

Laughter

T: God

R: Brilliant

T: But I do think for all the fact I hated those research investigations, I think the loss of them does have an impact because it taught them study skills and it taught them – the amount of kids that would like, would email, you know you sometimes get a random email 2 or 3 years down the line and it'll say; so glad you taught me how to Harvard reference, so glad you taught me how to use a textbook because nobody shows us how to do that at uni

R: Yeah

T: So I think the research investigation was, even though it drove you mad – it was brilliant for that

R: Yeah

T: And it allowed the creativity which kind of goes on to my next point really about the specification – which is blatantly written by; white, middle class people and has, there are, I don't think I have as many issues with the text choices that I've seen other people have

R: Right

T: And again it could possibly be a slightly shifting demographic of kids that I teach because maybe 5 or 6 years ago I probably taught a lot of non-white kids so we had kind of a lot of kids from Pakistan, Pakistani kids and India and a lot of Black kids as well, we used to get quite a lot coming in from the centre of Manchester, that we don't now.

R: Yeah

T: When we used to then be able to tailor on MS2, MS1 so we used to do – in terms of Ethnicity that's what we would use, so we would use kind of ad campaigns for Incredible India and stuff like that which obviously isn't the option there now

R: Yeah, yeah, yeah

T: It's very white, it's very middle class

R: Yeah

T: It's like **Dizzee and Claudia** are slung in there as a nice token. I have less of an issue with the feminist stance on the text, possibly because I'm female and quite ranty about feminist issues. But I know that a lot of people have raised that as an issue, I don't quite understand why there's nothing on there about Representation of men bar kind of waffling on about hegemony and Conceptual Roadmap

R: Yeah

T: Because I think that's a loss really because it think there's some quite interesting stuff you can do with men and it feels very female focussed.
What was the other thing?

R: The, so there's the theories and the set texts you've covered and the practical really, yeah

T: See I don't have an issue with the theories as such – there's a couple that I feel have been shoehorned in to fit with certain texts; Livingstone and Lunt for example you do have to cram in to some text. But the theory is the theory, I think again that's one of those things that maybe as somebody who's taught for years, it's quicker to pick where it needs to be as opposed to if you're new – I think that would be phenomenally overwhelming to it

R: Yeah – I think the word shoehorning is right, I think that they're, they've picked a kind of matrix of theories and everything has to fit into that kind of you know, neatly and it just doesn't and you get students – I mean I don't know about your students but you get students saying; oh well that, you know that theorist would go well with that and it, you kind of like the connections in some respects but then you think; well why are they trying to find, if they're not naturally you know thinking about those issues, why are they trying to – they're sort of almost bypassing the point of it

T: Yeah, definitely. I think sometimes it does, it is really crammed in, I mean there are some theorists that are I think, there is some that – I mean I don't know what yours are like but mine have kind of, mine kind of tend to lean towards 4 theorists and when in doubt they just sling those in

R: Yeah *laughs* Stuart Hall

T: Stuart Hall, David Gauntlet and mine randomly love Hesmondhalgh

Laughter

R: I think it's his name

T: They're less keen on Curran and Seaton

R: We just call him HesmondThing like the Twitter handle

T: It's a nice word to write as well if you do it joined up

Laughter

R: And also I'm really scared now, well actually they're not doing any exams this year so but I was really scared that they were going to write HesmondThing in the exam and I was just like, but anyway. It's yeah. I mean thinking back to when you first learnt of the specification change, well the curriculum changes; what was your kind of initial reaction to hearing about that?

T: At the very, very beginning I was just grateful that Media was still running

R: Right

T: I did kind of run and I actually spoke to my, went and had an appointment with my local MP about, because originally Media was, it was one of the last ones wasn't it to be approved all the changes

R: Yes it was yeah, yeah, yeah

T: So I kind of ran my own little campaign in Bury

R: Oh brilliant!

T: And so I got loads of my ex-kids to write me stuff about what the subject had given them and the opportunities and what they'd learnt and then I went to speak to my local MP and he was really good and so at the beginning I was just grateful. Then as you begin to look at it, it is incredibly overwhelming. I think I kind of almost remember the point when I had it, it took me 2 years to get to actually what the kids were being asked to do and I was in the middle of teaching and suddenly I felt the lightbulb literally ding above my head and I turned to the class and went; 'I now know exactly what we're doing' and it kind of just switched then. Because I found it all, particularly **Comp1, Comp2's** not so bad is it because **Comp2** is essentially **MS4**

R: Yeah

T: But with a different hat. It's Comp1 that's the jigsaw and I think once you've kind of got your head round Comp1 its not too bad. So

R: Yeah it is very convoluted and I always sort of second guess myself a bit on that one and the double bluff as well – I think once I've got it, I think in my head I've got it sorted and then something else crops up and I think well maybe I haven't and you keep questioning yourself quite a lot

T: Yeah, even with Comp2 – with Comp1 Section B's alright because ultimately I say to my mine, if in doubt just go in and rattle off the facts and I don't have a class of high fliers by any stretch. So ultimately if some of these questions are out of 10 and they're going in and averaging half marks on everything, you'll be getting enough to get you through and a decent mark. I'm not looking at kind of, you know these amazing answers – I've got a couple that could pull it out the bag and obviously I teach to that level but ultimately I'm wanting them to essentially rattle off the facts. It's the first section on Comp1 that I think is the worst of the whole thing

R: Yeah

T: Because its **something-ness/us** of what white, middle class text are these kids going to be expected to understand

R: Yeah, yeah

T: When I live in a Northern, working class town – with kids with not a great deal of cultural capital, so that's the issue.

R: And I think that's being felt quite, you know I've done a lot of these interviews now and I think that's being felt quite a lot round the country you know, because a lot of schools now are not – well the kind of schools that have the kids that potentially would suit Media Studies now, are not doing Media Studies. So you've got this massive disconnect between what they think the kids are going to be able to do and what they actually are doing, or are able to do.

T: Yes

R: And it's really, you know I think this is one of the very interesting things that is coming out of this is that, the differential between those expectations is huge. So yeah I think that's really really key.

So did you, is there anything you particularly like about the course? Or, I mean you've mentioned you don't have a huge problem with things but are there any things that stand out as something you really enjoy teaching or that the kids

T: I quite like teaching online Media, I do Zoella and Attitude because I've never taught that before. Attitude is probably one of my most favourite texts ever

R: Yeah, yeah

T: Because its so, just because its so away from anything that they're probably used to seeing and I teach, that's the, I teach that text different to everything else either – I literally

sling them in an IT room for 2 weeks and we just answer questions and then we just, it's much more discussion based as opposed to, I do a lot of discussion anyway but it's just done in a slightly different way. I mean I like the online Media, I know not everybody – sometimes I think the Facebook page can be quite draining.

R: Yep

T: And I would rather Life on Mars wasn't there, mainly because I taught Life on Mars in 2006 on MS, ME6, so I keep saying to the kids; I am bloody Sam Tyler. I would rather that wasn't there but I can see why it is. I like The Bridge, the kids love The Bridge which I really didn't think I'd get any engagement out of

R: Right

T: I quite like Comp2 but I, again at the risk of sounding being big headed, I know I taught MS4 very well, so I think if you have the skills to be able to teach MS4 – Comp2 is reasonably straightforward because it's the same.

There are some texts that I quite, see I don't have an issue with Late Night Woman's Hour – which I know a lot of others, I don't mind the home thing and I quite enjoy teaching the other stuff around it

R: Yeah. What about your students, do they, do they like those texts?

T: Oh no, they hated, they hated it but they were asked that in groups because I kind of get them to rank *unsure* come up would always be near the bottom but when you actually get them to think about the fact, its rattling off facts about the BBC and it's rattling out, the audience is very very very clear and once you've done that with them, of course they're like; actually this is dead easy

R: Yeah

T: But its, like I said I don't mind, I think Section Bs quite straightforward. I don't like Black Panther, I preferred Compton but that's probably more personal taste

Laughter

R: It would be nice if we had the choice though

T: Oh the choice – this is the issue is, that's what the joy was again going back to MS4, the joy of MS4 was the fact you could do exactly as you wanted and it was just lovely and it was just such a good – I loved MS, randomly I had a conversation with a woman on Facebook last week and we were both sat, about an hour sat in the afternoon reminiscing about the good times of MS4

Laughter

R: It gets quite sad doesn't it?

T: And then I was going; you remember *ME/unsure* because before that I used to love ME6 as well which was a superb paper

R: Yeah

T: It made me kind of

Talking over

R: I was just saying, OCR curriculum I started teaching in 2000 so it was the change to the curriculum 2000 and I taught the original OCR paper which was, and again I had the same with you, I was talking to an ex-colleague the other, a few days ago and we were like; oh the old days of teaching, American and social class

T: Oh good times – you get quite misty eyed looking back

Laughter

R: How sad are we?

T: I know it's pathetic isn't it, that's the afternoon conversation – old Media specs I'm like, you can tell we're in lockdown, there's nothing else to bloody talk about

R: Exactly, you know when we're old and mad and locked up, this is what we'll be rocking backwards and forwards thinking about

Laughter

T: We might look back on these spec changes and go; oh Late Night Woman's Hour and Assassin's Creed, what a time to be alive!

Laughter

T: So it's for me, it's the first section, it's the Newspapers – we teach them The Mirror which I loathe because it's hard if they don't get politics, so if they don't understand politics you can't go anywhere with it not matter how many times you try and explain it and *unsure/Disney/Dizzee??* which I also can't stand. But I also refuse point blank to teach Beyonce so that's possibly my own opinion. And I'm intrigued as to what on earth Riptide is going to be compared with, I find that and I have a feeling that's what it was going to be this summer – it was going to be Riptide

R: Interesting, yeah I always wondered what that was going to be for, I mean it's only really Representation of Women that seemed to kind of come up and I mean

T: Yeah

R: And [Media] language I suppose

T: Yeah

R: Music videos

T: That was what, yeah that was it, that's what I was because that was my predication – I thought it was going to be The Times and Assassins Creed in Section B and Riptide for Section A

R: Yeah

T: But we'll never know!

R: We'll never know. Mind you they're just going to recycle it for next year probably, they've probably got their, probably rubbing their hands together and thinking; 'Haha! We've got an extra 12 months grace now, we're going to just recycle'

T: Yeah, quite possibly.

R: But yeah, I think you're absolutely right and, I mean I always thought the music videos they just got us to do because they were going to put it as an unseen you know, so that you study it for the kind of forms and conventions but not actually, but not actually the text itself but you know

T: Yeah

Talking over

T: I was going to say, the only kind of other thing it could have been I think this summer was going to be Kiss of the Vampire which I think for me feels a bit more of an AS text than an A level one

R: Good intro text

Coughing

T: It's quite a nice, I quite like that, that's quite a nice little text, I don't mind **Tide** to be honest but

R: No, I think any of these texts are alright if you have more time because you can actually go into other texts and look at connections and context and you know you can actually bring in other non-set texts to sort of you know, match it all up with but it's – I think its just because you've got so much to teach in such a short space of time that it just seems like a real production line of things that you have to get through and there's no time for really

T: Because like at the, I'm still teaching my linear kids the way that I taught my AS kids. So this is why I've finished the spec with my second, well I haven't done The Times – we were about to start that on the Monday so I've given them the results because if they wanted to go do that on their own but teaching the AS text I you could, if you teach the AS text then come back to the A level text, I found I have loads, I still found now I have loads of time – I did 5 weeks of unseen texts with mine going back over all of the unseen, all of the texts become one Section A and just slowly loads of unseen and the most frustrating thing was, during that final week is the fact that they could finally analyse on their own and talk about Rep and talk about context and do everything and, oh it was just so – that Wednesday when he said; 'that's it, its over', you're kind of, gods sake

R: Yeah

T: They just analysed on their own today!

R: Yeah, they're not going to reap any of the rewards of what I've done

T: No

Wry laughter

R: I know, I know, it's soul destroying isn't it, it's awful. Well I'm sure some of the kids are quite enjoying the fact that they don't have to do exams now but it's, it's, for the ones that worked really really hard and you know

T: Yeah

R: It's a real kick in the teeth to not have something as final as actually getting that reward from doing the exam but you know

T: Have you had a couple of emails from your weaker ones as well? Or the ones that have done nothing for 18 months?

R: Yeah

Laughter

T: 'Shall I finish my coursework? Er can you mark it?' No, you've had flipping 8 months

R: It is, its really interesting though like, they come out yeah, they come out of the woodwork and its like, you can see what they're doing – they're like; ooh now I've got an opportunity to maybe influence my final grade a bit better than what it was going to be and, yeah no. It's and I've had a couple of students who, **coursework/score** it wasn't brilliant and they were like obviously, they've always been in good communication and they were like; can we do some more work? And I'm like; well yeah you can do the work that I was going to set absolutely, but you just have to know that I cannot possibly mark it, take it into account, you know this is the cut off point. And I keep redirecting them to emails that came from on high and you know

T: Yeah

R: And you know and I just feel so sorry because they're obviously desperate like; I want to do the work, I really, you know, I want to finish it!

T: Yeah

R: And then they just cant and it's awful having to say to them; I'm really sorry but you just can't do any more if, you know its not going to influence your final grade anyway, you cant if you want but, there you go.

T: I think it's a shame for those weaker ones, you know the ones that just kind of come into their own in the last few weeks

R: Yeah

T: They're the ones that I'm really dithering over – not your ones that have been good all year, it's them that suddenly the penny's dropped in the last 3 weeks

R: Exactly and that's going to be the big travesty of the whole thing isn't it? These kids that just, they're sort of, sort of been burning, slow burning for like 2 years and then literally just kind of lit, yeah I know, I know. And you know, it is a really trying time for them – I mean, how many of your kids are going on to Media related courses at university do you know?

T: I've got 13 A level kids, I think 9 in some way shape or form, yeah

R: That's healthy, that's a healthy proportion isn't it?

T: Yes

R: And is, so you say sort of Media related – any sort of, sort of kind of pure Media courses like Media Production?

T: Yeah I've got a lot, I've got a lot going and doing, well maybe 5 or 6 going and doing Media Production, Radio Production, Radio & Film, TV & Film – that type of stuff because I've got 6 kids that do Film and Media as well

R: Right

T: So all of them are going to do something Media related – yeah because I would count, I've got 1 that's going doing English & Journalism, so that would count. I've got 1 going doing Costuming & Set Design but she wants to, which again I would argue is **unsure/Film** and stuff

R: Yeah definitely, it's obviously related isn't it? So that's really good. What's your kind of general perception of their, of their enjoyment and engagement on the course? You know are they, have you had any sort of informal feedback from them? Or any kind of student audit/surveys and things like that?

T: **Pauses** They love the classes because like I said, I'm very lucky that they all get on and they do all work very well together and they are very supportive of each other. It's been the text engagement which has obviously been, at some points a bit hit and miss going back to like I said; Assassins Creed and Late Night Woman's Hour. With my second years I'm glad that I did Compton with them – I don't know if they would have got through Black Panther because my first years went **non-committal noise** with Black Panther but I've got a couple of kind of Sci-Fi comic book nerds in there so that does kind of help I think.

R: Right

T: And first years as well, *I'm only thinking about the second years* **laughs**. So I think its more text engagement, with my first years I did; for Late Night Woman's Hour, I made them listen to 'Home' but I did, I didn't do the ones that everyone because everyone else has done the Love Island one haven't they on Facebook. I did, it was one about, oh Tati Westbrook and James Charles – you know the make up artist bloke who fell out with that woman. Well

that one was brilliant because it actually talks about kind of people who live their lives on Instagram which is really good for Zoella

R: Yeah

T: And they actually, we had quite an interesting discussion afterwards about, because they obviously don't know about Mummy bloggers and stuff like that, kind talking about that type of stuff. So I didn't fancy that, I didn't do the Love Island one, I did one about obsessive love that wasn't as good but that one was particularly good. I think broadening these texts out a little bit, it does make me wonder whether they might do that with the Film and maybe we'll go to; if we're very lucky, any **Ken Loach** film or something like that

Laughter

T: Put **Kes** on and slowly finish them off.

R: I did that in English for years, like no not again.

Laughter

T: Oh we used to do Looking for Eric on MS4 when it first came on the spec and the kids loved Looking for Eric but we used to show them Kes before, you'd put it on and they'd go; how long is this on for? 2 hours. How long has it been on? 4 minutes. Oh my god

R: I think it was on my Year 10 GCSE spec for, or was it Year 9? I can't remember, anyway long time since I taught it now but I did say, we ***unsure*** Kes, An Inspector Calls and Kes was always taught on it

Laughter

T: I can't believe they're still wheeling out An Inspector Calls for English, it's dreadful

R: I don't know, I haven't taught it for a long time but yeah

T: It's still there! It's still on the spec!

R: Oh is it still there? Oh right – I'd love to have the royalties for that, that would be amazing. Carol Ann Duffy as well with the poetry

T: Yeah, oh yeah, nothing changes

Talking over/laughter

T: It doesn't, apart from obviously Media

R: Yeah

T: So, but yeah text engagement was on and off so and again I think it depends – I've got one lad that is massively into computer games so he loves Assassins Creed and he kind of taught the lesson for a week which was great

R: Brilliant

T: Yeah, it's about what and you know some of it is so far off their radar. It's just so hard for them to engage with so

R: Yeah, sure. Ok and like, in terms of like your resources; do you generally create your own? Or do you have a mixture of other peoples and textbooks and things like that?

T: I create quite a lot of my own and then when I'm desperate I go on the Facebook page and nick what's on there.

R: Yeah

T: Not a great deal but I have, what I generally do and I should imaging other people are like this because the groups been running for a couple of years – is there are people on there who I now, who if I see their name and they said they've put something on I'll go; that'll be alright

R: Yeah

T: There are some people whose work I avoid like the plague.

R: Yeah

T: When we first swapped specifications there were 2 of us, my boss left at the end of the first year, so we prepped everything together for the first year. Second year was really hard work to do all of that on my own because again, I sort of mentioned it briefly because I was teaching Film I had 5 new films on Film and then 8 or 9 texts on Media that I still had to prep

R: Yeah

T: So at some point but I think that's probably why, for example I taught Attitude as I did – just to throw them in an IT room with the questions because I just ran out of time

R: Yeah

T: I've used the EDUCAS resources – partly because of the Life on Mars stuff and The Bridge, we prepped by, my old boss

R: Right

T: And the Life on Mars stuff is actually, most of it is my old stuff from 2006 so

Laughter

R: *Make those recommendations on *unsure*

T: That's right, that's why I do Life on Mars because I'm bone idle, so

R: You are *an authority?unsure* on Life on Mars

T: Yeah I am, sadly, I am the expert. So yeah nick stuff off there. The textbook I thought the first year one was better than the second year one but I know that they were running miles behind for the second year one

R: Yeah

T: The issue with the second year textbook in particular is the amount of then additional theories – that really irritated me when I was reading it. So when they are saying; ‘use Gauntlet here but you could also use the theories of this that isn’t on the specification – so lets add them in and them in and them in’ and I think that’s just, I don’t know whether it’s the way my brain is programmed but it can only hold so much and it felt like at points it was knocking out stuff that I already knew

R: Yeah, yeah

T: What else? Oh and my friend, I have a friend who teaches at [REDACTED] – so we have swapped stuff as well so I sent stuff to her, she’s sent stuff to me, kind of when we’ve both reached the point of going; I’ve got to teach this tomorrow, have you got anything?

So probably 60/70% on my own and then the rest from kind of other sources

R: Yeah

T: So I don’t have a full set of class textbooks, so I don’t use them very often but the kids love it when the textbooks come out – they get very over excited. I think they feel that that’s true as opposed to what I’ve said to them which is a change from me just re-reading the textbook to them. So that’s generally how I’ve done it

R: Ok, brilliant and you’ve kind of touched on

T: Oh I’ve just to add as well, Mrs Fisher’s videos – doesn’t everybody use Mrs Fisher’s videos?

R: Oh yeah, yeah

T: When in doubt that will pass 10 minutes

Laughter

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

T: She must have, she has her own cult following doesn’t she. When in doubt, sling a Mrs Fisher video on

R: But she's got, she's got great delivery and I think it's simple but it's also really well explained and sort of as detailed as it needs to be for some of the weaker students but also to engage with the stronger ones

T: Oh yes, definitely

R: You know, so I think she's been a real godsend to lots of people

T: Oh she has definitely

R: And students as well. I hope she makes some money out of it because she's put a lot of time into it. In terms of, you've mentioned it already but how have you found the Facebook group, the EDUCAS Facebook group?

T: It's better than it was maybe 12 or 18 months ago

R: Right

T: When at various points I felt it was getting to fever pitch with ridiculousness. I think you can see on there that I don't think it's quite as bad as it was then but there used to be a phenomenal amount of over teaching that was going on

R: Yeah

T: And I think sometimes when you would try and offer advice that then you would get your head ripped off and various other things so I've kind of stepped back a little bit now. That said there are people on there that I do, there's probably half a dozen names that if I see them come up I'm like; right, what have you got to say? Right I like that resource, I like your – or I don't agree with your point of view but that's an interesting perspective, I'm stealing that as like a, I don't know, as a Stuart Hall sort of reading or whatever it might be

R: Yeah

T: I think it's much calmer than it was, definitely. I think the resources on there are better. I think the advice people are offering now is much, I think everyone seems a bit more singing from the same hymn sheet if that kind of makes sense

R: Yeah

T: When I think before people, I think again it's different if you've sat the AS, you've got a rough idea of what it's going to look like. Whereas I think people doing the A level, particularly this time last year – nobody really knew what to expect. So but I think there's some really useful stuff on there. The key issue that I have with it and again I'm on the Film one – is the Film one is moderated by [REDACTED] who is a Principle Examiner herself

R: Yeah

T: So there is more control over it. She is often on there and will come on and offer advice or guidance or support, when I think the Media one again 12 months ago was a free, it was like the wild west on there, it was a free for all. I don't think it's like that now though, I think it's calmer and I think people are much more supportive of each other and I think it felt a bit one

upmanship at some points; 'I've written a 67 slide PowerPoint' When I think now people are a little bit more common sense but I think that's it, I think EDUCAS should have more input to it.

R: Yeah and

T: Because you see people going; Hilary can you help? Hilary can you help? And there's just no response, so

R: Yeah I, and do you, what kind of post would make you post? If you see what I mean. Or would you post off your own back? Or would you more likely

T: Yes I have done before. Quite often I think, I think a lot of the time if you're going to post yourself, or if I'm going to post it because I want a little bit of help or guidance. So for example; a few weeks ago I ran, I had to go into a school, I've never been into a school before and teach a Year 9 class which I was terrified about. So I had no idea what level to pitch something at for a Year 9 group

R: Oh yeah I saw that actually, yeah yeah

T: Yeah so kind of doing that because I've not done it before – that's the kind of stuff I would ask for. I think I've previously, oh with the magazine brief last year which I think I posted about; can someone just clarify what's meant by a Lifestyle magazine – in fact that was 2 years ago and I think the post had about 150 responses with everyone just going; 'well mine are doing a Guitar magazine' and then somebody else go; 'well they've all got to look like GQ and I know' I think it got to a point in the end that I think [REDACTED] did wade in

Laughter & talking over

T: It did really get out of hand because nobody really knew what, well I still am vague really on what they mean by Lifestyle magazine but that's my own opinion so

R: Yeah

T: So but yeah I have posted before, yeah

R: So I mean, do you, you've mentioned the Film group that you use; do you use any other online social media type you know platforms for your professional development, like Twitter or other things like that?

T: Sometimes Twitter, that would be about it. I did have, up until November last year, I ran my own Instagram account for work but work made me shut it

R: Oh right, ok, yeah

T: Because of safeguarding issues and various other things, which was really frustrating because the page was never used like that and actually the kids – particularly over these last few weeks in the run up to the kind of the lockdown and – this is nothing to do with anything but before Christmas I had an accident and broke my elbow so it was really awkward to kind of, you know the words you're wanting them to do and you can write it down and send it in as a list to somebody but it doesn't make sense – when I think the Instagram and the kids

actually said when I went back; if you could have posted on there every day we could have looked and we'd have known what we were doing. And they loved that and that was a great resource because you could just, so for example there's a thing on BBC1 about, oh it was like stuff like that Panorama about Zoella and Insta-bloggers and stuff like that. I didn't know it was on until about twenty past eight so you could just kind of fling it on there and go; ooh this is on, take a watch - or something like that and its instant engagement to them

R: I get it, yeah

T: Maximisation, I think, yeah

R: Sorry I was just saying, they've got their phones right next to them all the time so its instant isn't it? Yeah absolutely

T: Yeah, it was a great little teaching resource and it was, because I'd had it for 7 or 8 years and yeah I was, I had to just shut it within, I basically got hauled in, told off and told go and shut it now so. And it was a shame because it was a great teaching resource and the kids loved seeing stuff on there and you know, occasionally you'd put their work on there and you know, they loved all that – they like the engagement that way so

R: Yeah, yeah, it'd be, that's actually really interesting and you know, progressive ways forward in doing things seems to be, everything seems to be lagging behind you know, everybody else seems to be lagging behind that, yeah I think that's a really, really interesting way of doing things and one that the kids will definitely respond to because its what, it's part of their lives

T: Yes

R: And it's **new Media** so we have to keep up with that don't we

T: I don't think education establishments quite get that, I think that they all kind of, they're so worried about safeguarding, which I do completely understand but sometimes I think you have to trust that, but its always that one member of staff out of a hundred of us that isn't going to behave in it I guess so

R: But there are ways round it, I mean you know, again we're the same as you, we're not allowed to do things like that, we're not even allowed to video ourself talking from home to put up for online teaching

T: We're not either

R: Yeah and its, I mean I understand that but also there are ways round it, I mean I'm actually a safeguarding governor for my kids primary and you know, there are lots of really clever way you can do it without actually compromising yourself as professionals, you know and its, or putting the kids in harms way either but I think it's because people don't want to take the time, the higher powers don't want to take the time to understand this. You know, often but yeah it's a shame, a real shame.

What do you think the future of the subject will be? Just out of interest – what do you think going to happen over the next few years?

T: I'll be amazed if Media exists in 10 years.

R: Really

T: Yeah. I'm not optimistic that I'll be running an AS class this September, a first year class

R: Right

T: So I've got 12 in my first year class that's going to drop to 10 at least because I've got 2 non-returners. I've got a couple that are rogue, so I'm not quite sure what's going to happen there – they're obviously going to let me finish next year, I know that my predicted numbers for September in about February were low so, and I was in the middle before this of arranging to go out and do some classes at high schools and stuff like that. So I'm person, from my perspective I'm concerned that Media won't run in my college from September.

R: Right

T: And I think as a wider thing because the numbers are dropping and the amount of posts that you see on the group as well about the swapping from Media to Film or the amount of people that it's just gone completely

R: Yeah

T: That it is a worry. I do wonder sometimes, I don't, I've kind of, in a couple of classes at various points have said, I do wonder sometimes where they've made the spec so complicated and so ridiculous at points for people to almost kind of get rid of it from a government perspective

R: Yeah

T: That we are living in times where they don't want us to question

R: No

T: We're no longer allowed to leave our houses *laughs*

R: Yeah! *Laughs* I you know, I'm very cynical about what's going on at the minute I think as well

T: Yeah

R: I'm of the Noam Chomsky sort of sort really but

T: Yeah so maybe there are various points, I'm not quite sure how much this new spec encourages critical thinking where it's, which you used to be able to do on the other specs with your own freedom of choice texts as well

R: Yeah yeah

T: I think you particularly see that when you look at the mark schemes stuff as well, where the marks, you know for like past papers and **the sands**, where; this is what we are looking for – when it doesn't perhaps offer a lot of deviation and maybe they don't want us to have an oppositional reading to what's going on *laughs*

R: Yeah or even a negotiated one for that matter

T: No we all need to be preferred, so

R: Yeah, yeah – oh good old Stuart Hall, he hit the nail on the head, he didn't know how

T: Didn't he just, yeah

R: Oh [REDACTED], I just hope everything carries on, you know and gets more positive because I think you know its such a vital subject and I'm really interested in a think that you said earlier on that you, when you heard the specifications were changing that you, or sorry you worried about Media not being up for reform you got involved with the kids doing stuff and the MP and, is – so an angle of my research is that Media Studies has always been a site of resistance and conflict and

T: Yep

R: I'm looking at it from different angles, I'd be really interested – do you have anything like anything from that time that the kids wrote, that I could have a look at? I'm just really

T: Oh, you might have to give me a couple of days

R: Oh no absolutely

T: Because I think what I did is I summarised it all and it's on a laptop – so if you give me a couple of days I can find it and ping it over to you. What I did was I cut and paste all the comments that they sent me and I might have the letter that I sent as well to the MP – I don't, I do have his response but I think that might be somewhere at work

R: That's, or even just a summary of what you did, I'm just fascinated because I, what I'm sort of seeing from my research, there's lots of little pockets of amazing kind of, little activism pockets kind of going on and I'm just sort of, trying to piece together that, you know peoples reactions to the Media reform and all that kind of thing and I think its really interesting hearing peoples responses to how that happened because I think, you know it really does support quite a lot of the things that I've been seeing over, like just doing my literature review of like Media when it first started – it's always been characterised by something, you know some kind of conflict or resistance. You know and this is kind of a new, another stage in it's kind of lifecycle of people, you know feeling very strongly about things and it's got that sort of political element to it as well.

T: Just to kind of add really at the end, at the risk of sounding like really naff and cheesy – I've studied Media, I did Media GCSE, A level, my degree, I worked in Media and I've taught it or, for me it's 30 years, I did Media in 1990 and when I look at everything that I have in my life and everything that, Media Studies is one of the great loves of my life and it saddens me that, the way that the, rightly or wrongly with the new spec and the impact that I think, we we're not encouraged to critically think and question the Media and to me Media should be up there with Maths, English and Science as subjects that we should have an awareness of and we don't because and as Stuart Hall's conceptual roadmap would say

Laughter

T: They don't want us to think like that, they don't want us to question, they want to keep us in our place and like I said as I'm locked in my house, whatever day we're on now, 18, 19, 20

R: Yeah, yeah

T: Yeah, it's a shame

56.28

CONVERSATION SWITCHES

Laughter, talking over

T: Thank you

R: No that's absolutely brilliant, I absolutely I think we're definitely of the same school of thought. I didn't have the luxury of studying Media at A level or GCSE or even at university, I didn't even really know that the subject existed, I was, I don't know why but I'm from the North East originally and it didn't really, it wasn't really on the curriculum when I was at school. But so I've come to it a bit later than you but sort of like through the back door really

T: Yeah

R: But I absolutely agree with you. What did you do at [REDACTED] by the way, out of interest?

T: It was, at the time it was when [REDACTED] had loads of satellite channels – it was like satellite TV was just starting, so I did 18 months in home shopping, which anyone should do 18 months in home shopping because they are the hardest working people in television

R: Yeah

T: On live for 9 hours a day. And then I worked at [REDACTED] so I did 3 years – so it's Manchester United Football, so I did that for 3 seasons

R: Right

T: And I used to do freelance bits as well so I did quite a bit of football for a couple of years in studio and then outside broadcast at matches and stuff like that so

R: Oh brilliant

T: Yeah it was good

R: I remember a really funny trip, we, I took my students – so I live in London but we took the students up to [REDACTED] to see the, the filming of [REDACTED]

Laughter

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Laughter

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

T: I'll dig that stuff out for you Michelle and I'll send it over the next couple of days

R: That's brilliant, you're a star, thank you so much

T: No problem

R: Cheers

T: Ok, speak to you later

R: Bye

Starts: 1:25

Researcher: ...proposed changes?

SO: I think initially I think there was quite a lot of anxiety because you know, the kind of proposals and kind of the, you know the proposed subject content was, yeah quite different to kind of how A level Media Studies had been previously. And so I think, you know certainly I think I, as a teacher had a lot of concern about what that would look like as a specification and how that would impact on, you know on teaching my students.

R: And did you, did you get involved in any of the kind of early consultation type meetings and questionnaires and things that were sent out?

SO: I think I kind of responded to the questionnaires and I did, with the GCSE we were involved in testing some assessment stuff

R: Yeah

SO: So yeah, I think I kind of responded in that way.

R: Ok and in terms of your involvement, were you, presumably were teaching OCR before and since – is that correct?

SO: Yeah that's right, yeah

R: Yeah. So what was the kind of feeling when obviously OCR was the second one to be approved, out of the specs. What were your kind of feelings around about that time when, I mean EDUCAS was the first and then OCR followed and then there was AQA quite, after that as well.

SO: Yeah and I think, so obviously you know, the OCR spec was accredited really really late for teaching in the next September. So I think you know, particularly in that kind of like, that summer term when we're looking at getting ready for first teaching a new specification – you know that was a real concern but you know, having looked at the different specifications, you know I felt that the OCR one was the one I would be happiest with and having taught OCR pretty much my entire teaching career I thought, you know I had a better understanding of; how they work, what they're expecting. So I kind of decided to stay with them for A level for that reason. I mean, I found some aspects of the specification more appealing generally than the EDUCAS one even though that had been accredited first.

R: Yeah. So can you tell me a little bit about what you did find more appealing than the other ones you looked at?

SO: I think primarily it was the set texts. I think I found the OCR ones a bit more appealing, yeah looking at things like Stranger Things, Jungle Book – I thought there's more there which I would enjoy teaching and more which I thought I could see the, the students being engaged by. Whereas I felt with kind of EDUCAS, some of their set texts I thought wouldn't

really work for our students and I hadn't really, didn't really even consider AQA because they were still **so harsh on the** accreditation that, that's and obviously the way they work with their closed set products, its quite different as well so I wasn't particularly interested in them so it was really just looking between EDUCAS and OCR and

R: Right, yeah

SO: I think it was really the set products which kind of tilted it for me.

R: And was that, was that your decision to stay with OCR?

SO: Yeah I was the Head of Department so it was my decision, yep

R: Ok, yeah. And how many colleagues did you have at that point?

SO: Working within the department there was about 3 or 4 teachers who were kind of, they're mostly English teachers who also taught some Media Studies within the department.

R: But you were primarily the A level teacher, is that right?

SO: Yeah that's right. Yeah I taught the A level primarily with the Head of English

R: So just with your, sort of just with your teacher hat on; what were your kind of experiences – you know you've talked about the appeal of the set texts but in terms of the actual structure of the course and the content and the sort of the breadth of the content as well and the theorists, plus the reduction of the practical side of things – what was your kind of experience over that period?

SO: I think the kind of the key thing that I found quite difficult, particularly in that summer term when I was kind of looking at the draft specification was trying to get my head around, you know what I needed to deliver, was just that kind of breadth, you know the different amount of things that needed to be covered and the different ways set texts had to be studied in relation to different elements of the framework and different contexts. I think when you first look at it, it is quite confusing, it is quite complicated and just trying to make sense of that initially you know, was quite difficult I think. I think once I actually got into teaching and making sense of it, it kind of worked better, I think kind of looking at it a step back it all seems quite over whelming but when you're actually in the classroom and you're kind of, you know addressing the issues I think it does kind of **adhere more** than I thought it initially would.

R: Right, yeah and in terms of the kind of teaching of it yourself, the style of teaching, did you feel you had to change your kind of pedagogical approach to teaching the course at all? Or was it fairly similar to how you taught the previous spec?

SO: It was, I think I changed it a little bit. I think, I think because obviously I only taught it for the first couple of terms, I think kind of an area where there would have been a bit of difference is that with the previous spec the format of the exams was incredibly predictable – essentially you know, students would have prepared answers, learned those and go into the exam and do well. Whereas obviously the new spec is much more unpredictable in terms of how things are assessed, so I think supporting students to kind of deal with you know the fact that questions can be worded quite differently, they can assess a wider range of content,

I think it's a key area where you know I would have to have changed how I taught to make sure students were better able to kind of respond and I think that was kind of one of my big concerns about, about the current new specification; the exams were much more demanding in terms of expecting students to be able to respond to a wider range of different styles of questions – whereas kind of previously the format of the questions at both GCSE and A level was you know, **really fixable**, really straightforward, very simple to kind of prepare students effectively for. Whereas I think with these specifications, you know it is much more unpredictable and they're covering a much wider range of content and I think you know that, that was definitely an area where I was aware I would need to kind of change how I supported students for the exam.

And I think also I, I think **with doing the new** specification I tended to focus a little bit more on like research tasks and getting students kind of familiar with the different areas of the framework and then kind of balancing that with maybe a bit more kind of like, teacher led lecture style stuff because again its quite a lot of factual content to cover particularly for like the Industry stuff so its about balancing those. And also I think because of the reduced amount of, reduced balance of **NEA** stuff, it was about also trying to find some practical opportunities you know within the exam stuff so that, you know you're still getting students to have a bit more of a practical experience than perhaps the strict weightings of the course would have allowed for

R: Sure, sure. And so you said you taught it for 2 terms and then you became OCR Subject Officer, what sort of, what kind ***of necessed*** that transition, was it something that you'd wanted to do for a long time or is that something that just came up out, as an opportunity?
Or

SO: I'd been at the school I was at for more of my teaching career, about 12 years and I, you know I think I'd done as much as I wanted to there and I was kind of looking to either move on to a different school or you know I think also I was kind of thinking about getting out of teaching primarily because of the workload, I think you know. It is incredibly demanding and I think you know, doing it for a long period of time is, its incredibly draining and I just thought I want to do something different so the opportunity to kind of do something with kind of, related to what, you know related to my teaching career and you know all that sort of stuff but you know, had a better work life balance which was really kind of appealing at that time.

R: Yeah, I completely agree.

Laughter and agreement

R: Yeah, I've done it a slightly different way to you but yeah. Just scaled it right down but yeah. And I'm just interested as well in like sort of the key challenges as a Subject Officer now because obviously you had opinions about the framework and specification before you became Subject Officer – has that changed? Have you got a kind of slightly different perspective or you know, thoughts about how the framework operates with, across the national picture?

SO: To an extent, I think it's ***pauses*** you know having gone along to CPD and you know, spoken to the teachers webinars and those kind of things to see how they are approaching it has kind of, you know given lots of different perspectives around it and also in terms of kind of how it works in assessment, I think you know until we had the first assessment last summer, I think how the framework works from assessment perspective, you know was not unknown but you needed to go through that stage of having it assessed to get that sense of

you know, what does it need? I think particularly for the MEA/NEA because obviously that's assessed in relation to the theoretical framework rather than the practical skills as it was in the legacy. Getting an understanding of what does that mean in you know, in practical does that mean the students work, or does that mean how its marked? I think that only took that first assessment to kind of get a good sense of

R: And do you, do you think it's equipping students with the kind of skills that they need in terms of Media Studies – I'm not just talking about OCR but I'm talking about the kind of the way in which Media has changed in terms of the framework

SO: I think it is, I think, I mean I think the, obviously one of the big differences is you know, the legacy specification gave much more freedom for, you know in terms of updating texts and things like that and kind of you know responding to developments in the Media. Whereas obviously with you know, the kind of specifications, you know the use of the set texts it is a little bit more static but I do still think within that there are the opportunities to draw in contemporary debates and to kind of look at other contemporary examples beyond the set texts. And I think in terms of like the key areas, you know they are the same key areas that you know we've had in Media Studies you know, throughout the different specifications over the lifetime of the subject. I think, you know to an extent, you know the shift away from the practical side having as much weight is you know, is a shame in some ways because I think that is you know what most, many students get the most out of and find the most rewarding but at the same time you know, that opportunity is still there – they are still getting the chance to you know, develop those skills, in two different types of Media thinking about how they can kind of you know, develop practical skills and link those two in their understanding.

So I think, I do think that you know, they are still really valuable specifications that do equip students with you know, a wide range of skills around kind of critical thinking and now there's this understanding of you know, Media ownership and how that affects things. So and I do find as well, you know in those first couple of terms when I was teaching it, I did find that students were still really engaged by it, they were still really interested in it and despite some of my kind of, initial misgivings you know, even teaching things like Minecraft which I thought no one would find interesting at all, the kids were actually really really enthusiastic and really interested in it and you know, doing things like Stranger Things obviously works really well with them. And I think even doing things like the News topic which it's a big topic and obviously its not something students engage with very much, at the same time when we talk about the importance of Media Studies, we talk about you know, addressing things like 'fake news' and you know, Media influence and all that sort of stuff – so I think if we're talking about it, you know it does need to be part of the curriculum in some way.

R: What kind of, what kind of dialogue have you got with Ofqual? Is that like a regular thing? You know, are they asking you for feedback regularly?

SO: No, I mean, not very much. I mean they were, they, they attended our kind of summer standardisation, to kind of observe that process and I think they did that across, I think they did it across all the new Media Studies exam boards so they had a kind of sense of that but I think, yeah the experience subsequently relatively hands off given, you know given their close attention during the kind of accreditation process, it, there hasn't been subsequently you know a huge amount of scrutiny that I've been aware of.

R: Right, ok. Do you, I mean, just sort of I know put your finger in the air kind of thought, do you think they're receptive to any feedback that the exam boards might offer and want to try

and initiate? You know any sort of changes or you know, adapting some of the texts in the future?

SO: I mean think, its difficult to say in terms of Media Studies. I know that in other subjects like Music; they have done consultations on making changes to how those assessments work for their **revised** specification because current teacher feedback and I think in that case it was very much, you know issues that had been flagged by the exam boards during the accreditation process with only when the teachers would have, you know going back and saying; this is an issue - they'd have a look in relation to Music. And I think if we wanted to go back to them and you know, then work out specific areas where we needed to make changes you know for assessment purposes – I don't know if they would be receptive to that but I think, you know I think from their point of view, at least everything's you know, working as they would expect it to. I think they would only look to make *changes if they had* very clear issues where teachers weren't able to kind of deliver or assess certain types of content.

R: Yeah and is OCR looking to make any changes in terms of the specification like things like set texts and any initial

SO: Yeah I mean the plan is we are hoping to have to kind of just refresh some of the set texts probably, I mean not for at least another 12 months I don't think because of the current issues, I think adding another load of stress to teachers wouldn't be helpful at this point so yeah we would look to refresh some of them but I think it is about getting that balance between you know, teachers **unsure** with these texts, they've got the resources but at the same time you do need to have, you know you do need to keep them contemporary and you know, make sure they're still relevant. So trying to balance making some changes so we've still got that relevance with you know, not creating extra work for teachers and putting them under more pressure.

R: Yeah and what's the kind of process for changing those set texts? Is it like, do you have to go through Ofqual and get it signed off or do they just give you the freedom to do that and, you know what's the red tape around that?

SO: Yeah it would have to go through Ofqual.

R: Yeah and who does, if you don't mind me asking, who does all the checking of that? Who's sort of directly involved with those kind of issues?

SO: In terms of Ofqual or in terms of OCR?

R: Yeah [in response to Ofqual]

SO: To be honest I'm not sure because we were kind of lucky to start that process about a month ago to currently look for future changes but we subsequently have suspended that because I think Ofqual are obviously very focussed on other things at the moment and so they're looking to kind of move forward with that possibly you know, in the next academic year. So I'm not 100% sure at the moment.

R: Ok and what sort of mechanisms do you have within OCR to kind of discuss with colleagues about, you know your feelings about how things are going and you know, I don't

really know the structures and set up there so it would be useful to kind of know who's involved with the kind of discussions about those things.

SO: I mean there's kind of 2 key areas outside of my role; one is kind of around assessment standards – what are called Assessment Standards Managers and they're the person who are responsible for all for all aspects of assessment, so the process of designing exam papers, signing them off, the process of kind of **re-awarding** in the summer series – all those assessment based decisions are overseen by them and I work quite closely with the Assessment Standards Manager for A level Media and particularly ahead of the first assessment, looking at the textual issues, looking at anything we need to do in the future to kind of make sure that, yeah we're all addressing any areas of concern. And then there's also what we call Product Managers; who are basically kind of responsible for the qualifications as products so they kind of have an overview of you know, who the market is, they look at it as how it fits into our portfolio, they look at kind of how, how centres are responding to it and they're kind of the two key areas that manage the product alongside my role.

R: Ok and in terms of like the uptake, obviously there was a big kind of level of uncertainty when the first specs were announced, you know at various different times the exam boards announced it. What kind of impact has that had on your kind of business as kind of like students taking the OCR qualification?

SO: Yeah there's, I mean I think partly because obviously we were accredited so late, I think quite a lot of centres went with EDUCAS because they were the first – I think being accredited first obviously gave them a huge advantage and I think there has also been a general decline across A level Media Studies with centres who were kind of thinking you know, it is too demanding for their cohort of students going to vocational qualifications like BTECs or Cambridge Technicals or possibly kind of you know in some cases going to Film Studies because I think that's a bit more accessible as well.

R: Yeah and so what, is there kind of a strategy for, I mean has there been many people, many centres moving back over to OCR from initially changing?

SO: There's been, there has been some movement, we have, yeah I've had contact with centres who have you know come back to us or are looking to switch to us. Its not a huge number because it think you know, given how significant the change in this specification was to the legacy, I think you know given we've only had one assessment I think centres are quite reluctant to you know, make any additional changes. But at the same time I think given how prescribed the subject content is, that does actually make it easier in some ways for centres to switch exam boards because it's really only the set texts and how they're assessed that are different. You know all the kind of the subject knowledge is the same and they have to know, you know the same Media forms, they have to know the same theoretical framework so I think it is less of a challenge perhaps for centres to switch now than it might have been with the legacy specifications.

R: Yeah I think that's a really interesting point actually that there's a lot more parity isn't there between that

SO: Yeah

R: But it's just down to the choices. So I guess like, for you and OCR, the set texts are the key things that are going to hook centres in or not.

SO: Yeah, I think they are the key differentiator between the exam boards really, are set texts. I mean you know there's some current nuanced differences in the structure of the exams but not massively, I think there's some kind of slight differences in picking **unsure** the NEA briefs but again not, not too significantly. I think it is really you know, looking at kind of what the set texts are is kind of one of the main things that centres will use to kind of differentiate between the awarding bodies.

R: Yeah, yeah. And I suppose just thinking, just sort of rounding those points off really, looking to the future; with both with your teacher hat on and your Subject Officer hat – what do you think the future for the subject is long term?

SO: **Pauses** Yeah I think, I think there is a kind of growing sense that you know, a growing kind of recognition of the importance of Media literacy and things like that. I think its about trying to kind of you know, make it more explicit that you know, that's what Media Studies, that's the role that this qualification can have you know, is giving young people the opportunity to have a better understanding of all the different Media forms and how they interact with them and how they're influenced with them and also, you know from the other perspective; of all the different ways in which learning all the skills you use and develop in Media Studies are you know, ideal for a range of kind of future careers, you know particularly given the increasing digital culture we live in. So I think, you know I think on the one hand, I think there's huge scope for Media to, for Media Studies to expand in the future – I think obviously at the moment you know, it does feel like kind of Media Studies has been kind of beaten back and you know, that you know, I think like with things like the EBacc and all those sort of things you know it kind of undermined the position of the subject. I think it is about kind of finding ways to kind of emphasise why Media Studies is important, what students can get out of it and you know, thinking about you know, how with potential future reforms – how we can make sure that future specifications equip students with the skills they need

R: And do you think the subject – like the way it is now, in terms of education fits into a wider picture of how educations gone, I'm just again thinking, you know when Michael Gove announced the reforms, he said he wanted to make everything 'Gold Standard', 'rigorous' etc. do you think, do you think the current specifications have achieved that?

SO: **Pauses** It's, it's difficult because I think the thing with that is, we talk about all of that but at the end of the day we also have comparable outcomes so we have a situation where students still might come out with roughly the grade they would have got under whatever specification so I think yeah, there is a sense that that isn't, wasn't particularly like a realistic way of viewing things and I think you know, I think you know the new specification is obviously much more rigorous but at the same time, kind of how its assessed and you know, what the final outcomes are you know, are still comparable to, to the legacy and I think you know, it does, it does require students to you know; be familiar with a wider range of content and I think in some ways that is positive, I think. You know when I was teaching A level Media we wouldn't have covered the range of different Media in the current specification having to cover 9 Media forms whilst you know, quite challenging in some ways, I does mean that you know, students do get that kind of like more rounded exposure to different types of Media rather than like just the Media forms that I as a teacher felt most confident at delivering.

R: Yeah and in terms of like the set theorists, what are your feelings about the kind of choice of set theorists and the way in which that ended up on the framework?

SO: I feel kind of ambiguous about it. I think on the one hand you know I think there are some theorists on there who I wouldn't have chosen, I don't think are particularly relevant and you kind of question you know, why are they on there? On the other hand I think when we were selecting our own theorists to use, you always find like, you know you've always got this like you know - beyond kind of obvious ones you know will this theorist be, you know will they get credit for quoting this theorist or you know, are they slightly too obscure? So I think the fact that they are set gives you at least that reassurance. But yeah I do think that making them prescribed does call into question are they all relevant? And I think the fact that you know, you have to think about them in relation to a range of different Media texts – not all of them are clearly applicable to them, I think is something slightly artificial and I think it's less of an issue for our specification because we only cover theory in relation to 3 of the Media forms but I think you know, where you're having to pile all those different theorists across a wide range of different Media forms; they're clearly not all relevant and there's not a huge amount of analysis that you can use for each one of the, in relation to all forms. You know at the same time I do think, you know Media theory has always kind of been one of the things I most enjoyed about teaching A level Media so that's why I was, I still kind of enjoy teaching those theorists and you know the ones I didn't like, it was useful to kind of discuss with students what their limitations might be and why they might not be as relevant anymore. And so I think it is still valuable given that theory's a really really important part of A level Media Studies and it's embedded there but I think potentially for future reforms it might be nice if you know there was maybe a little bit more flexibility and maybe, you know a, maybe more consideration over what theorists are relevant and what theorists aren't relevant.

R: I think you know, having done quite a few of these interviews with teachers now and [REDACTED]

SO: Oh right, ok!

R: I think there is some concern about like the, the level of depth that anyone can go into. You know I think I know Julian's expressed kind of, **unsure** anyway but about kind of you know, having 3 bullet points to do with *Curran and Seaton* or whatever and that just being regurgitated and students having no real like, understanding of what that theory is. But then there's other teachers who are going; well actually it's good to introduce, I think like you say – its good to have that breadth and introduce students to these theorists. So you can't be expected to kind of capture everything within the A level, so it's – have you sort of sensed that kind of tension between those two sort of viewpoints? On one hand its good that they're being exposed to theorists on the other hand its quite superficial, some of the things that they're having to engage with

SO: Yeah I think, I mean both from my kind of teaching experience and from kind of speaking to teachers delivering the qualification, I think there are lots of different ways people kind of feel about the theories. Some kind of really struggle with it and don't see, or see a lot of it as kind of irrelevant and struggle to be able to apply it and some find it really you know, it can be quite engaging if its delivered in the right way, if its pitched in the right way. I think because there are so many theorists, you know set theorists to be studied, you know it can only be a few bullet points, you know we couldn't expect students to know 19 different theorists in, inside and out - it has to be fairly sort of superficial

R: Yeah

SO: And I think, I think even with the legacy specification, you know you were only introducing students to theoretical ideas and getting them to think about; what is the idea, how can it be applied, what kind of are the weaknesses of it, what are the strengths of it – you know we weren't going into huge amounts of depths on different theorists. I don't think there's a massive amount of difference in terms of the level of depth between kind of the legacy and the current specification in terms of certainly how I approach theory – it was always about this is a basic understanding you know what this theorists idea is, this is how it might apply to this Media text and beyond that I think you know particularly, for like the sort of cohorts I had – you know you had to make sure it was pitched at a level that you know, these students could understand and lots of them you know, there was always a kind of mixed ability obviously and a lot of students that did really respond to them and engage with them and might have been able to kind of expand that further but also lots of students who really really struggled with it. You know and I think **unsure** theory was something that whenever I was teaching it, initially students just really really found hard and were like; what's the point of this, how do I apply it, how do I write about it – but kind of once they understood it I think you know was again something they did find quite rewarding, being able to kind of you know understand that idea and explain how it links to that and you know, I found that again when I was teaching the new specification – you kind of done like an introductory thing on kind of all the different theorists, and were all kind of covering different set products which you know they didn't need to be applying the theory to, then sort of going back and saying like; oh this links to Jenkins here or whatever it is. And so I think you know, I think the students do like to be able to apply it and have that kind of confidence and, so I think I understand why people are kind of concerned about kind of, it being superficial but I think you know, for the level they're working at and all the **unsure** content they need to cover, I do think it's appropriate.

R: Yeah, yeah, no I agree. In terms of like the kind of peripheral resourcing, you know like and CPD kind of opportunities like you know, Facebook groups – you know for the OCR teachers; what and obviously there's things on Twitter as well and, what's your kind of feelings about the sort of peripheral networks of teachers that exist?

SO: I think you know, I think it's a positive thing, I think obviously the OCR Facebook group is teacher run, it's not affiliated with us. I'm kind of on there in kind of an informal capacity. You know it is good generally for teachers to have those kind of networks to be able to kind of you know throw out ideas, throw out concerns and kind of get responses - so I think that is quite positive. I think its quite interesting because it wasn't something that happened with the legacy specification, I think the legacy specification was so kind of blog focussed – everyone was just kind of sharing blogs and things like that, so it is quite interesting that its kind of gone, gone to Facebook as a, kind of that platform. I think, I think it is really good that teachers have got that network and they can, you know connect with each other and share ideas in this way. I think obviously particularly for, for this new specification which you know is so different, is so demanding compared to kind of what we were used to, I think having that additional support is a really big positive for teachers.

R: And what's your kind of like role within that Facebook group? Do you, do you, are you kind of a lurker, you know I'm not – I don't teach OCR, so I don't sort of follow it on a regular basis but, do you, you know are you aware of what's being posted? Do you keep a sort of monitoring presence on there? Or

SO: Yeah I tend to have a look and just see like, you know, what you know, what they're talking about, particularly you know if there's any kind of issues or any kind of concerns or any kind of areas where they're unhappy. I don't, I **unsure** informal, yeah if they tag me in something, ask a question then I will respond but I try to encourage them to kind of you know contact us through the official email or call us because obviously you know that's, that's kind of the way that I need to kind of engage with them. But it is useful to kind of see, you know what are the things that they're concerned about and you know, that does kind of inform the sort of support that we give so kind of in the run up to like the first assessment it was very clear there was confusion in some areas about you know how unseen, how unseen sources could be used on Paper 1 – so I did a blog about that, just kind of clarifying it. So it is useful to kind of inform me of, you know what are the things they understand, what are their, what are their kind of concerns; so you know we can think about how we can support them with that.

R: Cool, yeah, yeah, no absolutely. I think its just really interesting – that's part of my research as well looking at the 3 different groups that have sprung up as a direct result of the specifications changing and you know its quite an interesting sort of ethnographic observation of the kind of things that are posted on there and the kind of different relationships and dynamics that go on between teachers on there I think its, its interesting.

SO: Yeah, I can imagine

R: Yeah, yeah I mean I have to declare; I teach EDUCAS – that wasn't my decision, we were with OCR for years but I was on maternity leave when it was decided

SO: Right, ok

Laughter

R: So, yeah. I'm now part time, I

SO: Oh right ok

R: I don't have, I had all autonomy taken away from me – have a baby and that's what happens, you know but anyway. But it's, its fascinating to sort of see, particularly the EDUCAS group because that's got the biggest membership but I can sort of see the master and apprentice kind of relationships going on between teachers on there and it's quite fascinating. And interestingly, the Film Studies EDUCAS one has the Subject Officer as the moderator of that group but not for the EDUCAS Media Studies one

SO: Oh right

R: So it's quite a different tone when you go on there. I mean I don't actually use it myself at the minute but I sort of look at it for various obviously research reasons and it's, it's just interesting seeing all these different kind of dynamics and I think it's a brilliant piece of interesting CPD – not always one that has all the right answers on there but its

SO: No

Laughter

R: Well we are a very diverse bunch, I gather.
But yeah ██████ thank you so, so much and I know these are really challenging times for, for the exam board as well and I really do appreciate you taking time out.

CONVERSATION SWITCHES FOCUS

How's everything going with the whole kind of lockdown and the absolute shit show I'd say

Laughter

R: With the quarantine

SO: Yeah it's just, it's just been really weird. It's been like lots of kind of like waiting around til you know something and then you get some information and then all like have to scurry around trying to get ready and then you know a bit more waiting around and it's, I think you know once we're getting to the point where our teachers are ready to submit their assessed grades I think, you know I think I'll be very busy but I dunno it's just a, I don't think anyone ever expected anything like this did they?

R: No I mean it's just, just the weirdest time I think, I think I find, you know my A level students, A2 students were like initially quite elated but I think that the long term impact of that might sink in

SO: Yeah

R: We'll find out late how they actually really think, you know I don't think any of them are going to want to take the exams in, I think it's the Autumn isn't it?

SO: Autumn, yeah no I, I cant see them being particularly appealing to anyone but

R: *Laughs* I'd barely finished the content to be honest by the time it went

Laughter

SO: Yeah

R: I'm not sure I'd want to take the exams either but there you go

SO: No

R: I guess it's the Year 12s that are the, the big sticking point, you know they've missed out on all this time and

SO: Yeah I think that's the thing I think, I think that's what I'm, you know what I'm particularly looking at is how we can support you know, Year 10 and Year 12 kind of going into you know 2021 assessments and

R: Yeah

SO: I think, you know again because we don't know, you know how long you know schools will be closed for and all of that sort of stuff – again its all very uncertain at the moment which is not good but

R: Definitely. It's quite interesting as well, like the universities are very quick to talk about you know, the no detriment approach, you know I'm obviously with Bournemouth and

SO: Yep

R: And you know, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Laughter

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

█ Yeah it's just, weird just you know, just to have all the like online meetings and stuff where you're just like sitting there and just like – is this, why are we listening to each other like this, it's weird. You have like a 2 hour meeting where you can't actually see anyone, it's very kind of disorientating but

R: Really stiling, stilted as well, I had one

SO: Yeah

R: There was about 11 of us and it was just like, you know everyone had to mute their microphones, it's like there's no, it was just the same person that always commands meetings still doing it

SO: Yeah

Laughter

R: There you go. I was quite happy to be honest, I was just like; yeah that's fine, you tell me what to do

SO: Yeah I've, I'm just permanently muted now that way they'll *unsure*

Laughter

R: Yeah just you know, just do something else at the same time. That's until Zoom tracks your eye level engagement or something, anyway but there you go

SO: Oh does it? Oh no

R: Apparently, there was also something kicking off about that – it's like the new Facebook isn't it

SO: It is, it's terrifying

R: Anyway, thank you so much, I won't take up anymore of your time. Is it ok, I just need to get you to I don't know, e-sign a participant agreement form and I will anonymise you unless you don't mind me using your name, you know you've not said anything controversial so

Laughter

R: Nothing that anybody else hasn't said anyway but

SO: No

R: I'm interviewing █ from AQA and hopefully █ as well █

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█
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Laughter

[REDACTED]

R: Alright well all the best and thank you very much and good luck for the rest of the lockdown

SO: And you

R: And all the exam stuff. Cheers, bye

SO: Cheers, bye

Transcription
[REDACTED]
Trainee Teacher

Research pseudonym: Rae

Starts: 0:43

Researcher: No thanks every so much for talking to me today, I really appreciate it

Teacher: No, no problem

R: I don't know how much *audio becomes muffled* but I'm interested in finding out about your experiences of the new specifications as a kind of newer teacher.

T: Yeah, ok

R: Are you currently one of [REDACTED] trainees or are you in your first year, NQT year?

T: No I'm PGCE

R: Just been getting in contact with a few people from this year and last year

T: Right, ok

R: So which ones are which. So yeah, so its, how are you coping with all this strange lockdown

T: Yeah, its very strange, I mean they've given us stuff to kind of be completing which is good, it gives us a bit of routine but obviously being away from our placements and stuff it's, yeah it's a strange experience, it is strange but we're getting on ok

R: Good, good. I mean I suppose everyone's in the same boat so it's not as if like you know, it's one person and everyone else is ok but

T: Yeah

R: Have you got a job to go to in September?

T: I have yeah, thankfully I secured a job at my second placement school kind of before all this kicked off

R: Oh brilliant

T: So yeah I've got a bit of security there which is good

R: Yeah because I know, I know this time of year normally is the kind of wild time where everybody's like

T: Yeah

R: Getting jobs and it's sprung to a halt

T: Yeah

R: Kind of a bit of a flurry of activity in September when people kind of like start panicking they haven't got enough, you know positions

T: Yes, yeah, absolutely. I think the other thing is, a lot of teachers are choosing not to leave now because of all this going on and the uncertainty of it

R: Exactly

T: So, yeah, counting my lucky stars.

R: Yeah, I was going to say

Laughter

R: Are you staying in London?

T: Yes I am, yep

R: Oh that's good, that's good but yeah – I think we all just crave a bit of stability

T: 100%, definitely

R: It's and nobody really knows what's going to happen in September either so

T: No, I know

R: But it's strange times indeed and but also interesting to see how the teaching profession has kind of responded to this and you know, while my initial; oh great I'm not going to have any of my students now to see

T: Mm, yeah

R: I kind of think well, you know it's, this is going to be a kind of global issue and become part of the research as well, you know interesting.
So I'm actually researching what the impact of the new specifications are and I've spoken to a lot of teachers who are much more experienced and I guess when I called for participants, the more vocal teachers who have got something to say

T: Yeah

R: They tend to be, certainly shall we say just to be kind, the slightly older variety of teachers

T: Sure, yeah

R: And it became really apparent quite early on that I wasn't getting a kind of variety or rich diet of

T: Sure

R: I really wanted to hear from people who are either training or are new to the profession to kind of see you know, with a pair of fresh eyes really.

T: Yeah

R: Did you study Media at A level?

T: I did, yes

R: Yeah so that's really interesting, so like that's brilliant because you've got kind of the double perspective; you've got what you had and what you are and that to me is really useful because it adds a bit of variety to some of the other perspectives that I've got.

T: Sure

R: So just sort of thinking about the comparisons; what do you think are the main differences between the A level that you did as a student and the one that you have experience of as a trainee?

T: Sure, I think its difficult because obviously when I did A level I was in the position of being the student and I just took everything as it came, I didn't really think about what the spec said necessarily in terms of what was set. But looking back I can see that it was a lot more kind of fluid, that my teacher definitely kind of picked things that she knew about in detail and she felt kind of expert on and could deliver best and had some control over that. Whereas now its obviously a lot more prescriptivist and I mean when I was teaching my Year 12 A level group I was kind of having to learn all this information myself first – even though I'd done A level Media, it's still kind of like such a step up from what I did with all the different forms and a billion theorists and it's just so – I felt quite overwhelmed even learning about it myself, let alone delivering it.

R: Ok

T: So I think that's probably the biggest difference for me, is that kind of shift towards or a lack of control for the teacher in terms of choice in what's being covered but alongside that as well; I think the fact that obviously in terms of practical work and coursework that percentage has dropped from 50/50 to 70/30

R: Yeah, yeah

T: And I remember when I did A level kind of feeling like the coursework was really important – I mean we do still communicate that but it was, I mean it was half your mark. So that kind of, really getting stuck in and spending so many lessons going out and filming and coming back and editing and that sort of thing

R: Yeah

T: Whereas now, the school that I'm at, they have no equipment whatsoever, they don't even have computers in the classroom bar the one for the teacher and it's a lot more kind of like; oh and you have to do this as well by the way. Its kind of more of an afterthought whereas when I did it it was one of the things I loved most about the course and that opportunity to be creative and yeah, like contribute in your own way to the industry – even though its not that,

that you're not really but you feel that kind of connection to the possible professions that you could go into

R: Yeah

T: Whereas now I feel its very much like; memorise this, learn how to put it in the correct or same structure and oh by the way you have to create a screenplay or a short video or whatever it is. So, yeah

R: Do you think if you had studied the current specification when you were a student, your choices of degree – did you do Media at university or?

T: I did, yeah

R: Do you think your choice of degree and what you're doing now would still be the same?

T: That's a difficult question actually, I don't think, I think it would be the same – I think for a lot of students that take Media, obviously Media has kind of got this perception of being a easy subject, one which kind of lower achieving students take and that's obviously led to this big shift into kind of making it a lot more difficult

R: Yeah

T: So I think for a lot of those students who took it kind of as almost like an afterthought, like; oh I have an extra options pick for my A level, I'll take Media – I think for those students it could potentially kind of put them off looking into the industry more and going down that kind of route of profession. For me, I was kind of interested in the stuff like Advertising and looking at the industry more so than kind of being a producer of it or, I was interested in the analysis kind of side of things so I think I still would have gone down this route but I think for a lot of people that wouldn't be the case.

R: Yeah, so it has the potential to actually kind of actually change peoples ideas

T: Yeah, definitely. I think it really kind of limits, the way things are at the moment, it kind of limits that, that space to talk about; oh this is the kind of thing you could do with a Media degree or a Media A level, these are the skills that you learn. Obviously you have things like critical thinking and analysis and all these things which I think are hugely important but in terms of actually pulling on that creative side I think that, that's what a lot of students go into Media looking for and might not necessarily get anymore as much.

R: Yeah, so the choices are kind of streamlined

T: Yeah

R: So, I mean I guess its kind of hard for you to tell having you know, just had a short period of time doing this but do you get any feeling from the students that you've taught this year that they have, are still wanting to go to university to do Media related courses or Film related courses? Or has that not really registered?

T: Well I'm not sure about A level, I know for my Media GCSE groups that I taught, they were very much; 'we hate Media' and they were very vocal about it and I even had a frank

conversation with them – the teacher that I was essentially taking over from, was very much, took like a lecturer approach to the lessons this is with a Year 10 group

R: Yeah

T: And he'd kind of like say; this is the information you need to know, now write about it. And I went in like; right here's all these magazines, here's glue sticks, right cut this up, stick this, make this collage whatever – and talking to them they were like; oh we just hate Media, like it's so boring, we thought we were going to get to watch stuff, we thought we were going to get to make stuff and we're not doing any of that. So I think for them definitely, they were even asking if they can change their options there and then, which was really sad to see because I didn't do Media GCSE but I did it at A level and obviously really enjoyed it

R: Yeah

T: And seeing these students who, you could see they were wanting the kind of, the interaction with the Media and to get stuck in and instead they were kind of put on whole like; no, this is your guidelines, this is what you need to produce and that's that. So yeah I think its quite disappointing, I know for a fact that a lot of them wont be taking it at A level

R: Yeah

T: I'm not sure about the A level students taking it further into degree level or what but I didn't get an overwhelming feeling of; this is their favourite subject and they're so glad they took Media

R: Yeah

T: Yeah

R: No that's interesting. You know, the kind of criteria for changing the curriculum back in 2014 was to make everything standardised and to make it more rigorous; do you think the current specifications now have more rigor to it than the old one that you took?

T: Yes, definitely, I think it's that, yeah its that sense that everything is very much standardised and there's not much wiggle room – I think that was what I liked about Media, kind of going in to teach it was like, oh you can kind of take these ideas that you really are passionate about or this film that you've seen that you really think, oh I need to pick out this part or I saw this advert and it really made me feel this; I wonder what my students think? Because I found the thing that attracted me to Media also was that you're teaching a group of students who probably know more about it than you do but they're kind of living in it, they're surrounded by it – you're going to get some really interesting discussions out of, and you still do but I think with this kind of, well you have to listen to Late Night Woman's Hour or, it's just not, it's not their demographic and I understand showing students things that they wont necessarily consume in day to day life but I think it can become so far detached from their own experiences, that really it doesn't connect at all – they don't feel this, they don't want to engage with it, it doesn't connect them, there's no like desire to find out more. So yeah I think that's a shame that because it's become so set in that way

R: Yeah

T: There's very little time to go; oh and also there's this thing which you might find connects with you more – and introduce them that way, there's not really the time for it, which I think is a big shame

R: Yeah. Do you think as well that it has had an impact on your experience as a trainee teacher – you know the way the course, you know the way it's been delivered, the way you know, do you feel a tension between how you have delivered it and how you'd maybe wanted, or would want to deliver it in a different kind of context?

T: I think so, I think I'm really passionate about getting students to do stuff, to kind of make things and I find that even as its exam content, the actually practically doing tasks to make them understand things a bit deeper and I found particularly at my first placement that the teacher, he was a 50-odd year old man and he had been teaching Media for years but he was very much like; this is how it is, this is the content you deliver and that's that. And I felt kind of a bit like, yeah I wanted to deliver it in this way and I'm not necessarily able to and I did try to get as much wiggle room out of it as I could, and I could tell that the students were engaging with it more when we were looking at things like Representation in Quality Street adverts in the 1950s

R: Yeah

T: And getting them to actually make their own for modern day magazines and getting them to creatively make their own content – you could see that they were a lot more like; oh this is quite cool and this is how it's all put together, I see it on another level now

R: Yeah

T: Whereas he wanted to take more an approach of – right Representation; there are two women, that objectifies women. Bleh bleh bleh like, just very much kind of like bullet point – bullet point lessons I suppose. So yeah I think that did kind of limit me in some ways, I mean I planned everything from scratch so it wasn't like I was taking content that was pre-existing, every lesson that I taught I had to start from a blank Powerpoint. So I did have a kind of opportunity to choose what I covered when and how in depth I went on certain, certain elements of it but I think yeah, I think if my mentor had had his way if would have been a lot more kind of lecture-y, yeah

R: It's good though that you did actually have the opportunity to kind of try things out and explore

T: Yes

R: Obviously that's important anyway as a trainee, not just you know, for yourself

T: Yeah

R: That's a time that you get to experience what things, you know what works, what doesn't work and

T: Yeah

R: What works with one class may not work with another and you know

T: Absolutely

R: it's a constant learning process you know, I've been teaching for 20 years now and I've never stopped learning and

T: Yeah

R: Things and I think the day that you say; well that's it I can't do any more or learn any more, then you should probably leave teaching

T: Yeah

Muffled audio

R: But you never feel like you've completely nailed

Laughter

R: Yeah, I think that's really interesting. In terms of, just picking up what you were saying about like, you making all your resources from scratch; what kind of, was that something that you chose to do? Like because you wanted to? Or was that something because you had to?

T: Yeah, no it was something I had to do – there was nothing, there was nothing pre-existing for me to use within that school. So that kind of drew upon, I think I would have liked to have some resources to kind of get an idea about because obviously I hadn't taught Media A level before – the last time I'd done it was very different

R: Yeah

T: So kind of having to just go on the EDUCAS website and take everything in and think; 'right exactly what needs to be covered' and building up from there. I found it quite challenging, it was enjoyable because I had that, even though it was very prescriptivist, I had that control over what exactly was being covered within that topic

R: Good

T: But it was difficult, especially kind of at your first placement, with not a lot of support from your mentor – so yeah it was a challenge, I'm glad I did it but yeah it was definitely a very different experience to when I think back to my Media lesson as an A level student and how they all seemed to, kind of like flow with my teachers thoughts almost and obviously she'd been teaching for a lot longer than me, like she could probably come up with a lesson the minute she walked in the room. However the way that she kind of structured things, it was, it was just a lot more fluid – there was a lot less; right we have to tick these points off today, even though we still covered the content, it was just done in a way where it, it fit her needs as much as it did ours. She was able to make the lesson kind of comfortable towards what she knew as well as delivering content which was engaging and interesting for us and I think that's kind of diminished a little bit in terms of, yeah what can be covered, yeah.

R: And how did your experiences at like, compared to what your expectations were, before you started the course how did you expect it to go and what did you, you know did those change? Or

T: Yeah I think kind of when we started our course, [REDACTED] gave us a task where we had to pick like, our dream nine forms – if we could teach anything from these nine forms, what would you teach? And even from that moment, which was like over the summer holidays completing that, I was a bit like; oh they, they have to cover Radio and they have to cover this and they have to cover that – which I wasn't used to and I was thinking; I don't know any online like content that you'd cover, I don't know what I'd want to do!

R: Yeah

T: So I think from that moment I was a bit like; oh this isn't what I was expecting because when I was doing A level it was kind of like, we watched loads of Thriller films and we learnt the statistics about how much The Dark Knight raked in and that was it *laughs*

R: Yes

T: Whereas, yeah and looking into kind of the amount of theorists and all that kind of thing – I think I found it quite overwhelming even at that point, I thought; oh, I knew this was going to be difficult but I've really got myself in for a bit of a hole here.

R: Did you feel like your kind of work/life balance and kind of wellbeing suffered?

T: Oh abs, yeah absolutely – I do. Obviously PGCEs are difficult anyway but with that kind of pressure particularly when you're planning lessons from scratch and you're teaching 3 lessons a day kind of in your first couple of months – it was a lot of pressure, I'd spend a lot of nights late at the school just trying to, because it was the fact that I had to learn the content before I even taught it – I never listen to Late Night Woman's Hour, so I was having to listen to hours of it, figure out what kind of content they showed, get this kind of overarching 'I am the expert' sort of information, and then having to whittle that back down again into what the students actually needed to know, checking it against the spec - all that kind of thing; I think it was definitely overwhelming and it was the kind of thing where you start dreaming about it. Like you'd come home and think; oh god what a long day, and then you'd go to bed and be dreaming about Beyonce's music video and how you were going to teach it, like make it engaging and cover all the right things. So I think yeah, it definitely kind of, of course I think teaching is one of those professions where it does kind of take over your life, it's something you're constantly thinking about – whenever I see a certain advert on the tele I'd be like; oh that's really interesting

R: Yeah

T: I'd like to bring that up! And you analyse everything in depth – so it think that is natural but in terms of the pressure of delivering the right stuff in a set amount of time, I think that was, that was a lot of pressure.

R: Do you think if you'd had much more free choice of the texts, that would have made it easier for you?

T: I do, yeah. Because I think when you've kind of got that prior knowledge of say a certain film industry or a magazine or a newspaper where you're like; oh I've been reading this for years, I know what kind of stuff it covers – you've kind of already got that prior knowledge, you already feel like the expert, you're already confident in it.

R: Yeah

T: Whereas when you don't have that, you kind of have about an hour to become that expert, become confident in this thing that you really don't know much about and deliver it to a group of young, young boys and girls who are just, they trust you they expect you to know it all and you're stood there a bit like; oh I hope I'm saying this right *laughs*

So I think yeah definitely if there was a lot more choice in terms of what was actually being covered – I think just overall I would have felt a lot more confident and comfortable earlier on teaching Media A level.

R: Yeah. Say you had the choice and the power to change something about the specifications from September; what would be the kind of 3 main things that you would change out of the current spec?

T: I think it's difficult because I have a habit of going; oh I'd change this but I don't know how.

Laughter

R: Yeah

T: But I think, I think definitely that the kind of coursework/exam percentile should go back to how it was, if I had my way. I really think that that creative coursework element is really important and really gets students to love Media and from what I've seen it feels like, students are kind of losing that and are becoming very much engrossed in; oh this is another essay subject. Which it is but I always loved that there was that balance, that was one of the things that attracted me to it – so I'd definitely say that as 1.

Also this idea of kind of like having a bit more fluidity – I think there should be some standardisation in terms of maybe like; these are the like 5 texts that do need to be covered but you can sway a bit with this kind of thing. Like just a bit of, a bit more fluidity, kind of more options for the subject teacher

R: Yeah

T: Because I think when you've got so many texts and so many theories it can, yeah it can just be a bit overwhelming whereas, I do think there should be that standardisation to some extent for the students across the country who are all on the kind of same page and learning the same kind of content – I think that's important as well. But as I say, I don't know how this would be done but I think there should be a bit more fluidity in that sense.

And finally, I'm not sure, I think maybe having the opportunity for students to explore a bit more about kind of, what they can do with a Media degree

R: Yeah

T: Or a Media qualification.

R: Right, yeah

T: Would be really nice because as I say, there's not really time for it, particularly with how much needs to be covered now and I think a lot of students go; oh I'll just take Media because its easy, because I've got one choice left whatever – and then when it actually comes to them utilising it they're like; oh what can I do with it? Yeah I feel like its all quite

limited in that sense so having, I don't know things like trips to different sectors of the industry and getting them to really see how Media isn't just either kind of; oh I'm a director/I'm an actor or whatever – it's a lot more, a lot broader than that and there's a lot you can do with the skills that you gain from it, outside of either the Media industry. So yeah, I think having the opportunity to do that, for a bit more kind of space and time, which is impossible but that would be nice.

R: Have you had any **experience of/influence on** teaching any of the vocational courses like the BTEC? Or CTech?

T: I haven't, I haven't but from kind of – I did a **blurb review????** during my first placement and I think that kind of much more of a focus on the practical side of things, it reminded me more of what I'd done at A level. But I think alongside that this kind of generational thing of; oh Media, its kind of a Mickey Mouse subject

R: Yeah

T: I feel like BTEC has that same reputation if you like. So unfortunately, even though I was like; oh yeah this is what I remember – I think a lot of students would steer away from taking a more vocational course because it might not look as good on their CV to a, to a certain employer

R: Yeah

T: So yeah I think it's a real shame but I do think that the vocational courses have, have that something that's missing from A level today

R: Yeah, yeah

T: Yeah

R: In terms of the Facebook groups, do you belong to, you teach EDUCAS or you have taught EDUCAS

T: Yeah

R: Do you belong to the EDUCAS Facebook group?

T: I did, I don't necessarily use it anymore as I haven't taught Media in my second placement

R: Right ok

T: But I did use it, I did find it was quite a nice kind of support system, particularly when I was planning from scratch, to kind of get a few ideas from people and how you can approach different topics. So I think definitely that sense of community was something that was really needed and quite important in starting Media A level and I'm sure continuing to do so as well.

R: Yeah

T: Yeah I think definitely having something like that, yeah was really valuable to me during that time.

R: That's good and do you think that sort of online resources, I mean ok those, the kind of shared drive on there is free but there's lots of other kind of resources, like obviously there's the textbooks but also there's subscription sites; there's like Media Edusites and

T: Yeah

R: Oh all sorts of different ones available. Do you, what's your kind of feeling about those? Would you ever – if your school could afford it, would you invest in those or would you just prefer to make your own resources?

T: I think, I think it really depends on the unit. I think there's definitely some where I think; oh no I've got this one, I'm absolutely fine – I'd be happy to plan everything from scratch and even knowing from my first placement, I know even if I struggle with something, I can learn about it and plan from scratch with it

R: Yeah

T: Obviously having those extra resources is a nice aid to have, I don't know if its, it would necessarily be something that I'd invest in, I think I'd be far more likely to turn to one of my course mates who maybe had covered that subject, that topic or looking on the online free resources and kind of working my way from there

R: Yeah

T: Because I feel like when I take resources anyway, I normally change them so that they're hardly what they were to start with

R: Yeah

T: So actually investing so much for these resources, I don't think would, would actually have much value to me

R: Sure, sure.

T: Yeah

R: Interesting. Well Jessica thank you so much

T: No problem

R: I mean, is there anything that you think you want to, you've got a burning thing to tell me that I haven't asked you about or covered or that there's a gap somewhere?

T: Sure, I don't, I don't think so. The one thing, I don't know if its really linked to what you're researching into but I think Film Studies alongside Media Studies is really interesting and kind of how that's, Film Studies almost to me is a lot more how I remember Media A level to be.

R: Right, yeah

T: In that kind of, you can just pick one film for this unit and you study that and you pull it apart and then you write about it and – that kind of side of things I found a lot more reminiscent of what I'd studied in Media. So I think, I feel like Film Studies like this little glimmer of hope of; oh no we've still got a bit of that kind of, security I guess.

R: Yeah, yeah. I think its interesting and like exactly you know, you're right and its, you know I definitely am considering it alongside Media because I think Film Studies has had an easier ride of it comparatively – from not just public perception of the subject because it's obviously, if you're going to get a Media related subject at university in the red bricks – you're going to get it's Film Studies, not Media.

T: Yeah

R: So there's always that but also I think in the, like the consultation process, Film Studies never really had much of an issue – although I think the only sort of fear initially was when it didn't appear in the first round up for reform and people were worried that Media and Film were going to go and then Film was announced and then Media was announced but during the consultation process Film Studies wasn't characterised by any of the kind of discord and arguments and conflict and interference from the, people at Ofqual and the DfE that Media Studies had. And so, yeah I think and it's really interesting like how it's manifested itself in terms of specification, you know you're absolutely right – it is really similar or as similar as it can be to the old A level. Whereas Media is almost like they've ripped it up and started it again and

T: Yeah, absolutely

R: Which kind of speaks to a wider narrative about; well what was behind all of that? What perceptions, we can only be you know, we can only know to a certain extent or feel and think about that to be what in our cynical heads but

T: Yeah

R: But it's a really interesting, it's an interesting kind of comparison to make, you know

T: Yeah

R: That Media has always had the PR problem whereas Film Studies seems to be this kind of rooted in almost kind of literary studies in many ways

T: Yeah absolutely – I mean because I'm, I've been teaching Film A level at my current school and I'm not a massive film buff and I think when they said to me; oh you'll be teaching Film, I was a bit kind of like; *intake of breath* oh I don't know Film! But when it actually came down to it, I was like; I feel much more comfortable teaching this than I did the subject which I thought I knew so well. So yeah, it's really interesting how that kind of shift has taken place.

R: Absolutely, well you know, hopefully in the future Ofqual, I know they've taken on board some – they had 2 meetings this year; they had a meeting with the teachers and they had a meeting with people from HE and some of the academics that are involved in teaching

Media at university. I know that their, their hands are tied to a certain extent because I think, you know the, whether the DfE are kind of going to just not be bothered anymore about what happens with Ofqual and the exam boards can just kind of you know, sneak stuff under the radar that will change but I know, I know that some changes that certainly have been taken on board – whether they actually happen is a different matter but you know, its fingers crossed.

But I'm hoping my research, although its not going to be coming out any time in the next sort of few months, hopefully at some point it will, you know have a body of evidence to say that the teaching profession does not value the changes that you know

T: Yeah

R: And actually that wasn't my intention, wasn't to provide you know evidence to say this is what happened

T: No

R: But it became very clear from the, I had my own personal views about it

T: Sure

R: I have to sort of bury them a lot of the time

Laughter

R: But the very reason I'm doing the doctoral research in the first place probably gives away what I think about the specifications

T: *Laughs* Yeah

R: But you know, my general kind of principle is to think about it as capturing a snapshot in the evolution of the subject because, you know as I say I've taught it for a very long time and I've seen, you know things change within the subject

T: Sure

R: It's been characterised by, not arguments as such but discourse about what Media Studies is but actually its always been within our subject

T: Yes

R: Within the educators, then suddenly in 2015/16 when the consultation was taking place it became really apparent that our voices were removed from that **part of the reform**

T: Yeah

R: And it became much more from outside forces from people like Nick Gibb was definitely making comments about the content and what it should and shouldn't be

T: Yeah

R: And he got very seriously involved in non-Media specialists you know devising the course and interestingly the person, the consultant with Ofqual who came up with the, sort of developing the framework is actually a Film Studies teacher and not a Media teacher, so again that comparison between Film and Media

T: Yes

R: You can see that, well obviously that's their subject and Media isn't their subject, it's the perception of somebody who doesn't teach Media full time

T: Yeah

R: This is what the subject should look like **and because if you do it's not necessarily right.** So you know, I was incredibly, I was more than happy to have people you know, counter argue

T: Sure

Laughter

R: And you know it would have made for an easier ride in some respects, I could have talked about you know, my non, my bias as a researcher being, but I was finding out all these things that unfortunately

Speaking over

R: It seems to be reiterated whether I'm talking to a teacher of 15 years, 20 years, 25 years versus someone in training, so its interesting to have those sort of perceptions you know repeated over time.

T: Sure

R: Slightly depressing

Laughter

R: But I think the key thing now is looking to the future and you know, I've sort of talked to teachers about what they think is going to happen within the next sort of 5/10 years and that's actually where the split is. A lot of people think it's really positive and Media's never going to die and it's going to be fine and then you get a small chunk of people who think; nah, they're killing the subject, it's gradually disappearing and you know, unless **the theorists change in** curriculum reform again

T: Yeah

R: But yeah I, where I stand on that I don't know, I mean I've seen it come and go in terms of popularity and trends

T: Sure

R: The sort of 2008/2009 I think we saw the most number of students take it that have ever taken it

T: Right

R: And I think we're back down to, I think it was 30 something thousand and now we're down to 19,000 from last summer

T: Right, yeah

R: So its, I don't know if that trends going to be reversed in the next few years but obviously it has implications for us as professionals and the roles that we have and the jobs that we do and

T: Yeah

R: So, but I'm optimistic by nature so

Laughter

T: The best way to be

R: Yeah, exactly. But you've got a job so

T: I do, yes

Laughter

T: Yeah, all good

R: But thank you ever so much

T: No problem

R: And thank you for returning the forms as well and that's brilliant and yeah, hopefully see you online at some point as well

T: Yes! Great, brilliant

R: Cheers

T: Alright then, thank you

R: Bye

██████████ Kate - Interview transcript

██████████ is and it's just not the idealistic experience they were expecting. It's a constant struggle of falling into that trap of thinking

Their mentor has drilled into them that it absolutely has to be this way – you're not going to get through the set texts or the students get their target grades if you don't do X, Y or Z. There is no time for them to do any of those creative approaches. I will go into observe them and say 'why didn't you use this activity with them?' and they will say there just isn't time. They will often say they try to teach more creatively but will get told they can't do it by their mentors because we've got to get through the content. That sense of panic, that sense of urgency.

Sometimes it is down to the pedagogical approach of the school, sometimes it is about playing it safe. It may not be down to the 9 forms of media or no 9 forms, but when you see a pedestrian lesson, where they are not doing the thing they've tried out in the sessions, you have to wonder. You just have to wonder whether they've just forgotten or been told 'stop that nonsense' and stick to the SOW.

I took that fact that OCR took a while to get accredited as a good sign – a sign that they were pushing back.

Pedagogy - Autumn to xmas – we just did media studies and we didn't worry about the set texts. And when we got to Mojo as the set text they were like 'and here is just another music magazine text' We were doing the knowledge and skills of media studies with the intention they would translate. What do you want your students to think your subject should be?

Woman at Friern Barnet teaches via key concepts touches on set texts but widens out beyond that. Back to set texts in year 11.

Forestgate – trainee thought it was great but left and realised how constricted it was.

Some trainees try things out and others conform

In favour of set texts – one trainee wanted to impart very white middle class texts to 'idiot teenagers' so set texts avoid this. At least the set texts are not the horrendous, canonical middle class set texts that some teachers were getting away with

Media magazine – I get pitched a lot of articles who I know they would have been teaching the things they were taught at film school. A type of teacher who used to teach film in media more. – trying to stamp that out.

Media/Film split -move to film cos they don't like media

Film studies has more choice – simple as. Everything in media is prescribed.

Having a set text for this long means that it is rinsed, it is done. I don't want to teach the same thing for more than 3 or 4 times. The meaning becomes dead and the ideas go - and I'm telling them what this means rather than working it out for themselves.

No one will be observing you next year, go out and teach how you want.

Tension between the approach of Goldsmiths PGCE and the schools the trainees go in to – 1.30.

What should media studies be – manifesto – get trainees to do that.

Sociology set topics, family, criminal justice – compared the a level sociology paper with the a level media paper - how they approach knowledge – rigorous and open in a way that media studies isn't'.

Exam questions to fulfil the requirements of Ofqual/DfE - convoluted questions - You'd have to be really (f'in) clever to be able to answer the sample question , plan to write and synthesise. 1.39

I don't really know if Ofqual could ever do anything. All of the issues are with the DfE document content – while that document is as rigid as it is, I don't know what we can do. I don't know, do we wait until we think the DfE isn't looking anymore? Like an uncomfortable pair of shoes, at the start its unpleasant, bleeding and everyone's crying, but over time it gradually becomes reshaped and people just really know what to expect. And the panic that teachers have at getting through the 9 forms.

Talks about SP – trying to get through the 9 forms and CP hopes that SP will one day have the confidence to do things in a different way.

You want them to be in the clothing section of Sainsburys and thinking of gender performativity. You want them to turn that theoretical lens onto the world around them and you want to take that theory on a walk. IN the old style essays, you would drop a name in of theorist if you wanted to but most things are things that students can come up with themselves anyway. Anyone can be a theorist. You're immediately distancing yourself from the essence of the theory by mentioning the theorists.

The same three bullet points being repeated over and over again for theorists,

Rigour – one persons definition of rigour is different to anothers. What is measurable and monitorable and what holding people to account. What everyone is doing is making sure eo is accountable. Performative assessment rather than real assessment. I'm sure you've been in a situation where you're performing assessment not doing assessment. I know of Tas sitting in the library going through and just ticking books. There's nothing in that for the kids, nothing in that for the teachers – it's just performing.

Everyone had interventions after school. And then my new school it was so much more freedom – I was given free reign for the gcse curriculum. It was like being an NQT again, I taught some really fun stuff and we had lots of fun. I didn't teach any of the set texts in the first year but when we were

doing Mojo, one boy asked me if magazines had a regulator. No one had ever asked me that question off their own bat before, and I really felt this class knew more about media studies than any other year 10 before that. The person who took over from me in year 11 must have hated me though as I hadn't covered any of the set texts.

I taught an interview lesson once to a predominantly white class in Chingford and they just all got it. I hadn't taught media to kids who had that understanding of British Culture before. The feedback was that the lesson was not challenging enough. Teaching the set texts now to Bengali kids in Tower Hamlets, I think I would really struggle.

Telling students what they should be thinking about a certain text – Beyonce's dance moves in Formation for example – then I'm not doing my job

She's got the teacher guide from eduqa which say these are the key things to say about Formation. She's got to try and get these Bengali and Muslim girls who dislike the video and who are not massively into Beyonce, and who do not see her as an empowering female or cicon to parrot the received opinions of what Beyonce is trying to do.

She struggled to find texts they would engage with and that over time she would be able to get to know them and work this out but this is the issue with set texts - you don't have the luxury or privilege to do this, to change them up every year and you can't look at your class and see what they are into. Like, these guys really like Game of Thrones so I'm going to show a sequence from GOT. There isn't time, apparently, to do that.

Teaching is a subversive activity.

I never achieved a good work life balance before having kids because I was always changing the texts I taught.

I never felt that there were things they should know about so I just changed up every year – which was actually incredibly stressful.

Trainee - Because the exam board says so – regarding the rationale. What kind of message are you sending to the kids if you say 'because we have to, it's not me!'. She knew it felt wrong to say this but

████████████████████

It's empowering to be having conversations with kids about these things but you can't have the debate with them about what the government have prescribed or compare this course to the old spec because it makes them think that what they're studying is somehow substandard. They've

chosen this A Level and they just want to get their A Level, they're not interested in the rest. They want to feel that the A Level that they have done is actually a good one.

Resistance doesn't mean it has to be explicit -

There are more low tariff courses for media now at uni, the academic media courses are on the decline.

██████████ said the a level is a bit of a joke. It's not good preparation for university and they are also missing out on the production work which would have got them on to the more practice based courses. He felt that students would come to university with a really bad attitude and a really bad understanding of what a media theory is. He went through the list and said that most of them aren't theories. They are just ideas, they are not academic research but discussion points. A skewed idea of theory and they would have to do a lot of unlearning to get on to his course. A lot of the contents of the A level would not even be studied until year two of a degree. They would have a very Ladybird book of theories that they wouldn't even introduce to people in their first year they would wait until they were a bit more mature because they were not fully accessible or understand them at the right level if they were introduced too early. Reductive – reduced down the bullet points

WEBVTT

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

she's quite happy to

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

15
[REDACTED]

16
00:01:27.780 --> 00:01:29.280
Michelle Thomason: Your, your PPC

17
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Yeah, so, and I think that that really informs a lot of my perspective, I suppose.

19
00:01:41.760 --> 00:01:42.630
Michelle Thomason: Yeah yeah

20
00:01:42.750 --> 00:01:56.280
[REDACTED] So I'm an Assistant Head of school. And so I'm there for four days a week and I do my teacher training on on a Friday. But actually, if you can remember teacher training course you know the trees happy she's every day.

21
00:01:56.430 --> 00:01:57.690
[REDACTED] So, it permeates every

22
00:01:57.750 --> 00:01:59.340
[REDACTED] You know, every day for me.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] And I've just they just done their feedback at the end of the course. So might might even share a little bit about their experience, but

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Normally, I'm in school.

25
00:02:11.160 --> 00:02:24.330

██████████ So I look through policy and academic debate around Meteor education through the lens of what happens in a classroom and the kind of practical issue.

26

00:02:25.320 --> 00:02:33.810

██████████ Issues and opportunities and challenges that teachers face and heads of department face and the accountability measures that all schools around that.

27

00:02:34.410 --> 00:02:35.490

Michelle Thomason: Yeah, absolutely.

28

00:02:36.570 --> 00:02:37.650

Michelle Thomason: So what

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00:02:38.340 --> 00:02:39.570

██████████ Academic, I suppose, as well.

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00:02:41.820 --> 00:02:52.890

Michelle Thomason: Well as I know that that's a, that's a moot point, isn't it, it's, um, I guess we were you involved in the consultation before the DFC came up with a framework.

31

00:02:53.070 --> 00:02:54.330

██████████ Know, only after

32

00:02:54.810 --> 00:02:59.760

Michelle Thomason: Only after what what did what were your first impressions of that framework when it first came out.

33

00:03:02.190 --> 00:03:06.360

██████████ Okay, so I suppose before even that happened.

34

00:03:08.340 --> 00:03:12.600

██████████ I, I mean, I started off as an English teacher and then moved into media.

35

00:03:13.650 --> 00:03:18.600

██████████ Etc. And then went back to university did a bit trailer. I had no grounding in the subject at all.

36

00:03:20.130 --> 00:03:21.930

██████████ I had a kind of interest in

37

00:03:22.980 --> 00:03:27.690

██████████ Cultural Studies, I'd say from afar, but not as an academic subject.

38

00:03:28.770 --> 00:03:31.320

██████████ But being a teacher of English.

39

00:03:34.110 --> 00:03:40.590

██████████ Asked me to ask some questions that weren't actually within the framework of the English National Curriculum

40

00:03:41.310 --> 00:03:55.710

██████████ There are issues around institutions, there are questions around audience. I think broadly we do talk about forms or language and representation, but those two mothers are not part of the interview. So, and I was drawn to that and I was also

██████████

██████████ You know, as a young teacher interested in and still am interested in issues of equity and also what experience young people have of the study of English and I wanted that to be something to be based in some values that that I that I

42

00:04:15.570 --> 00:04:24.840

██████████ Agreement and I wasn't sure about that. So, so the call to media was basically because of my some of the limitations of weaknesses within

43

00:04:26.160 --> 00:04:34.020

██████████ And then I moved into media and then did some study I studied on the job. And so when I first took meteorite I to learn all the tech side to learn

44

00:04:34.920 --> 00:04:40.140

██████████ The theory or to learn how to use them that cameras in the edit and all of that, you know, from scratch.

45

00:04:41.820 --> 00:04:42.930

██████████ So,

46

00:04:44.190 --> 00:04:53.370

██████████ media available media degrees into to teach me to. So that was my brilliant to the university stuff.

47

00:04:54.570 --> 00:04:56.340

██████████ Which we've done since 2006

██████████

██████████ And I think it's slightly different media teachers they studied GCC and a double degree.

49

00:05:02.820 --> 00:05:11.280

██████████ And then they're teaching it as opposed to somebody who has an interest and then picks it up. So in that context of a short window.

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00:05:15.780 --> 00:05:19.710

██████████ In that context, when the curriculum change happened, I was

51

00:05:21.210 --> 00:05:23.790

██████████ I was really, I was really worried really

52

00:05:24.300 --> 00:05:27.120

██████████ I was really worried about the subject itself. The

53

00:05:27.330 --> 00:05:39.750

██████████ City from the changes from 2010 the coalition government and then into the Conservative government meant that there was a radical revision of

██████████

██████████

██████████ Of education policy.

55

00:05:45.570 --> 00:05:52.590

██████████ And I saw that and I felt that and the pragmatic side me had to then make those adjustments in my leadership role in school.

56

00:05:54.090 --> 00:05:54.630

██████████ But

57

00:05:56.340 --> 00:06:00.540

██████████ Media didn't really have a natural place within this new this worldview.

██████████

██████████

██████████ And so I was concerned that maybe this was an attempt to get rid of it really because it didn't really particularly fit in with the more Hirschman knowledge driven

59

00:06:19.980 --> 00:06:22.200

██████████ You know, high culture version of

60

00:06:22.710 --> 00:06:27.150

██████████ What constitutes as effective knowledge. Yeah.

61

00:06:28.260 --> 00:06:35.850

██████████ So why was really good. So what. So actually, for those people who fought the good fight and number of whom will have felt like they lost the good fight.

62

00:06:36.300 --> 00:06:48.120

██████████ Just that there were these court they still existed was. It was a huge. I was really pleased about that. But, anxious, with the more prescriptive on one level, the more prescriptive nature of it.

63

00:06:48.630 --> 00:06:55.980

██████████ Yeah. That said, I had always been more of the opinion that

64

00:07:01.950 --> 00:07:13.680

██████████ Media education media studies and Film Studies all those subjects that you have been have been texting video production, whatever we did need to legitimize ourselves within the curriculum.

65

00:07:15.660 --> 00:07:19.260

██████████ And to some degree. We had to play by the same rules as all the other subjects.

66

00:07:21.000 --> 00:07:28.020

██████████ And all the time we were on the periphery, but we will almost reveling in our peripheral status.

67

00:07:30.330 --> 00:07:38.190

██████████ The allowed to those who wanted to marginalize us to do it with some impunity really

68

00:07:38.460 --> 00:07:38.910

Yeah.

69

00:07:39.990 --> 00:07:41.010

██████████ And so

70

00:07:43.620 --> 00:07:51.360

██████████ I've got that issue, and I felt that there was an attempt to even if it was not within the terms, I would define it was an attempt to legitimize the subject.

71

00:07:51.660 --> 00:07:52.050

Yeah.

72

00:07:53.850 --> 00:07:57.450

██████████ The second was way more practical issue, which is

73

00:08:00.570 --> 00:08:13.830

██████████ I always found it slightly problematic that teachers had such a degree of freedom to choose the text. The text and also the theoretical models with which to analyze those texts.

74

00:08:15.900 --> 00:08:27.300

██████████ Practically, because I just felt that was all well and good. If you were a real had some knowledge or some real interest in some some background, but if you didn't you were kind of on your own.

75

00:08:28.950 --> 00:08:31.140

██████████ And there wasn't an accepted body of knowledge.

76

00:08:31.500 --> 00:08:32.820

██████████ Yeah, and

77

00:08:34.110 --> 00:08:46.230

██████████ Really allow teachers to support one another because EDF this eat something that somebody else really knows and likes or you'd have to kind of figure out how you apply to the text that you like I'm up

78

00:08:47.250 --> 00:08:49.110

██████████ I didn't seem very grown up to me.

79

00:08:50.490 --> 00:08:55.140

Michelle Thomason: Interesting to me. I'm just gonna shut my door is actually as well because there's somebody just started drilling outside

80

00:09:06.060 --> 00:09:06.270

██████████ So,

81

00:09:07.290 --> 00:09:09.000

██████████ The short answer to your question is

82

00:09:09.330 --> 00:09:09.510

Michelle Thomason: Yeah.

83

00:09:09.600 --> 00:09:17.850

██████████ I was concerned about how it was defined, but it didn't necessarily have a problem. There was an attempt to try and define it.

84

00:09:18.480 --> 00:09:34.170

Michelle Thomason: Right, because the feedback from a lot of the teachers that I've spoken to already. So I've had about 22 interviews with a variety of different teachers at various different stages of their careers. Again, you know, teachers who have come into doing media from an English background.

85

00:09:34.770 --> 00:09:36.990

Michelle Thomason: My background is really similar to yours, actually, that

86

00:09:37.500 --> 00:09:56.460

Michelle Thomason: You described pretty much how I came into doing media as well. And then obviously I've, I've spoken to teachers who have got, you know, media only background. So they've come in, either from industry or

they've come in straight from media specialist degree as well and sort of fairly unanimously.

87

00:09:57.660 --> 00:10:07.410

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

93

00:10:57.210 --> 00:11:06.240

Michelle Thomason: It's almost like not not necessarily canon, but I kind of body of texts that that certainly are recognized as being part of that of a media study

94

00:11:07.470 --> 00:11:07.830

Michelle Thomason: But we

95

00:11:08.700 --> 00:11:11.100

[REDACTED] Haven't actually got up. I know it's become

96

00:11:11.190 --> 00:11:15.630

[REDACTED] Fashionable I haven't got a problem with a cannon, as long as it's

97

00:11:16.800 --> 00:11:18.900

[REDACTED] Fluid fluid Kenya, things can move in and out.

98

00:11:20.040 --> 00:11:20.670

██████████ There are

99

00:11:21.300 --> 00:11:22.350

Accepted

100

00:11:23.520 --> 00:11:28.650

██████████ Theories or models or ways of looking at media. I haven't really got a problem with

101

00:11:29.580 --> 00:11:40.740

Michelle Thomason: So, what, what about the the sort of choice of theorists that are on the specifications that sort of the 19 theories that are there because again you know

102

00:11:41.670 --> 00:11:47.340

Michelle Thomason: A lot of people say, Yeah, they really want theory in there. They've been teaching theory in a kind of slightly more haphazard way in the past.

103

00:11:49.680 --> 00:12:07.170

Michelle Thomason: And it they've they've welcome to kind of tightening of that in terms of, you know, an insistence on theoretical context. But again, a lot of teachers have express the views that it's a slightly obscure choice of theorists doesn't, it's not coherent necessarily as it as a list.

104

00:12:08.160 --> 00:12:08.760

██████████ No, I've got

105

00:12:09.690 --> 00:12:11.790

██████████ Absolutely. Sympathetic with that and actually I've

106

00:12:14.730 --> 00:12:17.340

██████████ Developed my view of my

107

00:12:18.600 --> 00:12:26.340

██████████ So I think there's a the notion that there should be a cannon or an accepted body of theoretical knowledge.

108

00:12:28.410 --> 00:12:31.980

██████████ And there's a difference between that and actually. So what's actually in that Canada.

109

00:12:33.060 --> 00:12:33.930

██████████ Or in that list.

110

00:12:35.490 --> 00:12:40.770

00:14:09.540 --> 00:14:12.810

██████████ The way complex way in which takes work.

123

00:14:13.770 --> 00:14:14.640

Michelle Thomason: And I think that

124

00:14:15.480 --> 00:14:17.760

██████████ That's i think that's that's the weakness of it.

125

00:14:20.370 --> 00:14:21.270

██████████ Yeah, sorry.

126

00:14:23.010 --> 00:14:24.960

Michelle Thomason: I completely agree. And I think, I think, you know,

127

00:14:24.990 --> 00:14:33.720

Michelle Thomason: Again, a lot of the the feelings of the teachers that I've spoken ██████████
██████████

128

00:14:34.320 --> 00:14:44.070

Michelle Thomason: You know, that doesn't necessarily, you know, they're trying to find ways of drawing in Livingston in London or current and Seton into something that is a little bit 10 us

129

00:14:44.460 --> 00:14:46.830

Michelle Thomason: And forgetting where those theories came from in the

130

00:14:46.830 --> 00:15:04.590

Michelle Thomason: First place may not have been necessarily related to the media form that they're looking at yet they're trying that the students are trying to shoehorn in and finding it sort of reduced down to bite size chunks that they're kind of repeating and you know it's

131

00:15:05.760 --> 00:15:16.380

Michelle Thomason: Well, having Talk. ██████████, you know, and his, his initial kind of drafting ██████████ for the ██████████
██████████

132

00:15:16.590 --> 00:15:19.110

Michelle Thomason: What you described about being eg rather than

133

00:15:19.380 --> 00:15:20.310

Michelle Thomason: Include you know

134

00:15:21.900 --> 00:15:26.910

Michelle Thomason: specifying that the theorists he. I mean, he wanted it to be eg

135

00:15:27.180 --> 00:15:34.740

Michelle Thomason: And he gave so the theorists that ended up on the list where the ages that he gave but when an exhaustive list.

136

00:15:35.580 --> 00:15:41.190

Because some of them have written books and books and books and books and books and some of them are written, you know, one tone. Some of them.

137

00:15:41.850 --> 00:15:44.130

You know, they're not they're not they're not have equal

138

00:15:45.360 --> 00:15:47.220

Even merit really all

139

00:15:47.220 --> 00:15:47.520

Michelle Thomason: Yeah.

140

00:15:47.580 --> 00:15:55.080

Well, this might be just one aspect of their wider kind of cultural studies research or you know it it

141

00:15:56.190 --> 00:15:59.310

It's a bizarre list for anybody who knows anything about media.

142

00:15:59.850 --> 00:16:06.000

Michelle Thomason: Yeah, and I guess I guess the equity like like you're saying between the theorists and then the works, they've produced is

143

00:16:06.480 --> 00:16:15.360

Michelle Thomason: Is not apparent to the students because often to the teachers. It's not either you know it. There's a lot of teachers who have gone into teaching this who who've had to Jen up on

144

00:16:15.840 --> 00:16:23.580

Michelle Thomason: All sorts of things even even teachers who have come from a very specialist media background academic media background and

145

00:16:23.760 --> 00:16:24.570

Michelle Thomason: They've had to

146

00:16:24.750 --> 00:16:29.520

Michelle Thomason: Read books about, you know, all the books to get to get them up to the

147

00:16:30.180 --> 00:16:36.960

██████████ When we say gen up. I mean, how you know undergraduates don't do those 19 theorists.

148

00:16:37.170 --> 00:16:45.330

██████████ Know exactly. There's no way in which a teacher can really imbibe all of those ideas and then be able to

149

00:16:46.020 --> 00:16:57.000

██████████ present them in such a way that the 1617 YEAR OLD IS GOING TO BE ABLE TO TO APPLY THE with anything apart from something that's quite tokenistic. And I think if you go back to those people who do the marketing.

150

00:16:57.510 --> 00:17:07.350

██████████ I think the examples has been saying that. Yeah, it was mentioned the name and they've mentioned it in relation to gender yeah that's fine you know it's it's not particularly

151

00:17:09.660 --> 00:17:13.320

██████████ It's not delivering what I think they wanted it to deliver even, you know,

152

00:17:14.430 --> 00:17:18.750

██████████ How could they, how could someone have a detailed knowledge of boatyard

153

00:17:20.340 --> 00:17:25.500

██████████ Second or third hand from their teacher who's doing their absolute best to just try and, you know,

154

00:17:27.150 --> 00:17:27.570

Michelle Thomason: As

155

00:17:28.110 --> 00:17:45.450

Michelle Thomason: As well, is it that the time that the content, the sheer volume of content that has to be covered in the two years prevents that from happening. Anyway, it's not you know it's it's almost like this. The system was kind of broken before it even started. And it's that sense because

156

00:17:46.770 --> 00:17:54.300

Michelle Thomason: That teachers are having to literally whisk themselves through the content with the students before you can have any sort of in depth.

157

00:17:54.870 --> 00:18:06.210

Michelle Thomason: Thought about have a theorist apply or you know any other kind of discussions about that. So I mean that there that the soul structural issues with the course as well. I think teach the fam particularly difficult

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

161
00:18:32.220 --> 00:18:34.830
[REDACTED] Would it be okay to just give you the other side.

162
00:18:35.100 --> 00:18:35.730
[REDACTED] In terms of

163
00:18:36.450 --> 00:18:43.140
[REDACTED] How, what, you know, what are we contrasting it with because I'm not sure that what but if it was

164
00:18:44.190 --> 00:18:54.600
[REDACTED] appreciably better before I think some of the things you've identified will have existed that so I think there will always be mediated you haven't really understood the subject, we're delivering it.

165
00:18:54.810 --> 00:18:55.860
[REDACTED] Yeah yeah

166
00:18:57.540 --> 00:19:06.900
[REDACTED] But with very with no guidance. I mean, the worst, the worst. But the most obvious example of that is with practical work. So there will be teachers who will say,

167
00:19:07.950 --> 00:19:13.260
[REDACTED] I don't know how any of this works. Okay, you've got to make a music video.

168
00:19:14.640 --> 00:19:21.090
[REDACTED] With just about got some equipment and literally will do some analysis because I can do that that and then off you go.

169
00:19:22.740 --> 00:19:25.020
[REDACTED] Now that doesn't seem to be a

170
00:19:26.310 --> 00:19:29.220

██████████ Credible position to hold

171

00:19:30.900 --> 00:19:37.080

██████████ And understand why that happens because jet is set up being pushed into roles and then they feel that haven't got the skills.

172

00:19:37.710 --> 00:19:49.770

██████████ But that will happen. And then, you know, even in the F 36 or six homes sets and there will be practical support, you go to that person. I don't, I don't need to know. So I think to some degree.

173

00:19:51.930 --> 00:19:53.550

██████████ That has always happened.

174

00:19:54.600 --> 00:19:56.490

██████████ And its worst excesses.

175

00:19:58.410 --> 00:20:01.320

██████████ People. People. People were making their own

176

00:20:03.030 --> 00:20:14.280

██████████ Even if it was deeper than knowledge was deeper. It was rooted in their own kind of interests, you know, I like this bill, my life in this genre. I like this magazine and

177

00:20:16.260 --> 00:20:18.300

██████████ I seem to be asked him to the indulgent to me.

178

00:20:19.800 --> 00:20:27.780

██████████ You will get the passion, you get the interest, you get the love you get the kind of real genuine interest. Now, I get that. But

179

00:20:30.150 --> 00:20:34.500

██████████ That's very much depends on which to where you're at and teaching I'm teaching you. Yeah.

180

00:20:35.580 --> 00:20:44.880

Michelle Thomason: I guess as well. That also feeds into this kind of narrative about teachers imposing their own version of cultural capital students as well you know that there's

181

00:20:46.020 --> 00:20:55.020

Michelle Thomason: There's this idea that if a teacher really likes a text already wants to do something, then is it still in the student kind of best interest to for them to know that it is it

182

00:20:56.520 --> 00:21:05.760

Michelle Thomason: You know, is it imposing something that of the teachers kind of own cultural capital on the students that might not necessarily be appropriate.

183

00:21:06.780 --> 00:21:12.630

Michelle Thomason: So, I suppose, having the specification way is it sort of standardized is everything.

184

00:21:14.190 --> 00:21:14.700

Michelle Thomason: And

185

00:21:15.480 --> 00:21:20.370

Yeah, and you know, I think there's always a dialectic with these things, you know, on one level.

186

00:21:23.070 --> 00:21:32.820

The things I love most about media teacher were the things that I where I shared something I loved. It's not like I don't understand that notion. And actually, I've

187

00:21:34.620 --> 00:21:49.080

I've taught people who are now teachers and they took things that we did somebody wrote to me over the last couple of weeks ago. So we're doing documentary, we're doing Bowling for Columbine with doing Supersize Me, we're doing, trying to the world we're doing

188

00:21:50.640 --> 00:21:53.670

Whatever, whatever else we did you know that's what we studied

189

00:21:53.880 --> 00:21:54.450

Michelle Thomason: And yeah.

190

00:21:54.540 --> 00:21:58.110

It's like, you know, so I don't and you know I've taught things

191

00:21:59.370 --> 00:22:06.150

And permanently permanently white schools, we've looked at lots of issues around race, ethnicity,

192

00:22:07.500 --> 00:22:08.730

And social class.

193

00:22:10.140 --> 00:22:12.030

Through in the old days.

194

00:22:13.680 --> 00:22:22.320

██████████ Yeah. Popular Music I loved it. You know, I took my interest and the things I was listening to it and let it go, but

195

00:22:23.400 --> 00:22:32.790

██████████ I suppose a week. But the challenge of having media is not like any other subject because all of those all that cultural all that capital.

196

00:22:34.260 --> 00:22:36.420

██████████ It's not just me has come. So the children.

197

00:22:36.870 --> 00:22:37.620

Michelle Thomason: Yeah, exactly.

198

00:22:38.040 --> 00:22:39.600

██████████ Bursting public and private

199

00:22:39.780 --> 00:22:40.050

Michelle Thomason: Yeah.

200

00:22:40.140 --> 00:22:44.190

██████████ And I suppose it's it's that point where, where's the line we're actually this is indulgent

201

00:22:44.220 --> 00:22:45.000

Michelle Thomason: Rather than

202

00:22:45.330 --> 00:22:47.940

██████████ Oh, actually, I think, I think you've thought about these issues.

203

00:22:48.810 --> 00:22:51.240

██████████ My reception all about the representation of immigrants.

204

00:22:51.780 --> 00:22:53.130

██████████ And migrants and

205

00:22:55.020 --> 00:22:57.600

██████████ I was obviously exploring those worlds, you know,

206

00:22:57.690 --> 00:23:05.850

██████████ Yeah, and I was choosing some of the texts and but some of the text came from them particular on social media because I didn't know what was gone viral

207

00:23:06.930 --> 00:23:09.450

██████████ So I like the idea of exchange rather than

208

00:23:09.570 --> 00:23:13.740

Thinking, even within this current curriculum its top is is top down.

209

00:23:14.160 --> 00:23:14.580

Michelle Thomason: Yeah.

210

00:23:14.790 --> 00:23:19.500

And where's it places for the young people were the spaces for it to be dynamic and live and

211

00:23:19.890 --> 00:23:23.730

For you to be informed and you to be challenged actually as a teacher.

212

00:23:24.300 --> 00:23:26.700

Michelle Thomason: That's that's fascinating. You say that as well as I was

213

00:23:27.810 --> 00:23:34.440

Michelle Thomason: On a webinar yesterday with the it's an education, the tutors education summit and George, the poet was the key.

214

00:23:34.500 --> 00:23:36.480

Michelle Thomason: Note speaker at the end. And he was saying.

215

00:23:36.900 --> 00:23:40.890

Michelle Thomason: Exactly what you've just said, but from the students perspective of how he

216

00:23:41.970 --> 00:23:48.120

Michelle Thomason: The last session was about, you know, how do you revolutionize teaching and he was he was saying, well, it's about

217

00:23:48.270 --> 00:23:50.670

Michelle Thomason: Celebrating acknowledging and

218

00:23:50.850 --> 00:23:58.410

Michelle Thomason: Using students knowledge and cultural capital and engaging them that way. That's how you do it. And finally it you know

219

00:23:59.520 --> 00:24:07.440

Michelle Thomason: The, the discussion really went the opposite side to how education is that the minute for the golden view of education, the Hershey and view and

220

00:24:08.010 --> 00:24:10.920

Michelle Thomason: Literally, I mean, there was a huge range of different people.

221

00:24:11.760 --> 00:24:22.860

Michelle Thomason: Attending but it tended to kind of go for the more constructivist inquiry based learning project based learning kind of styles and that's what people are kind of moving towards and saying, well, this is how you

222

00:24:23.160 --> 00:24:33.840

Michelle Thomason: How you do this is how you engage students and exactly what you're saying, you know, you need to kind of hook them in through their own understanding and always learn together in some ways.

223

00:24:34.020 --> 00:24:41.610

██████████ Particularly again. I do think that the subject is saddled with quite lofty aims probably too lofty for us to over deliver

224

00:24:42.060 --> 00:24:57.960

██████████ But we do want to engage young people in the world as as exists now for all of us. And that is one of the things we lost in September. I mean, I still think you can in directly explore if she's a representation

225

00:24:59.580 --> 00:25:00.510

██████████ And power.

226

00:25:01.470 --> 00:25:11.850

██████████ You can still do all that. But fundamentally what you've got is a is a subject which is is in its essence, something that is critical of the established order.

227

00:25:12.750 --> 00:25:15.180

██████████ So the established the assumption are always going to be

228

00:25:17.100 --> 00:25:18.990

██████████ The never can find that they're using

229

00:25:20.280 --> 00:25:20.730

██████████ And I

230

00:25:23.040 --> 00:25:30.930

██████████ Got veering off a little bit, you know, one of my train. He said to me, You know, where are the right wing media theorists on the list.

231

00:25:34.920 --> 00:25:43.950

██████████ And so I think we do have to consider I think was basil Bernstein, who wrote about just about the notion of the of the subject, you know, and its composition and its values.

232

00:25:46.890 --> 00:25:51.750

██████████ It has a inherent view of the media.

233

00:25:53.130 --> 00:25:57.090

██████████ And its importance on its influence and

234

00:25:59.370 --> 00:26:03.060

██████████ You know they study media all the top university. They just don't call it media studies do though.

235

00:26:04.860 --> 00:26:17.490

██████████ I think it would, it doesn't. That doesn't help us if we don't have those with opposing views and it'd be better to talk about some of those debate, you know, through you know the theoretical components around debates around

236

00:26:18.750 --> 00:26:20.070

██████████ Representation, or about

237

00:26:20.100 --> 00:26:21.000

██████████ Yeah, no.

238

00:26:21.690 --> 00:26:25.200

Michelle Thomason: Field mediations debates paper wasn't there, you know. Yeah.

239

00:26:26.820 --> 00:26:29.160

██████████ Never brought you know if it's all kind of

240

00:26:30.180 --> 00:26:32.130

██████████ Radical. They're all radicals.

241

00:26:33.150 --> 00:26:33.630

██████████ And

242

00:26:35.280 --> 00:26:37.650

██████████ Again, that doesn't help us either. I think

243

00:26:38.190 --> 00:26:48.240

Michelle Thomason: Hmm. So in an ideal world, what, what would you keep with in the if you had the option to change it or would you keep them. What would you get rid of

244

00:26:50.040 --> 00:27:02.490

██████████ It yet. So I would probably I'm quite happy to have a more. Now I'm going to say knowledge based kind of example. Okay, I'm going to say that legitimacy.

245

00:27:04.500 --> 00:27:16.410

██████████ Is also false by arena or all everything has knowledge, you know, it's about how those about the hierarchies and knowledge and who values, different types of knowledge. So I think there's any kind of learning that

246

00:27:16.950 --> 00:27:21.840

██████████ You know, it's not as though we've met. We've never been interested in fact you would have been interesting.

247

00:27:23.610 --> 00:27:24.420

██████████ obsessed by them.

248

00:27:25.680 --> 00:27:34.260

██████████ So I would be happy with a paper which has except some kind of accepted, I say accepted as in that everyone does it.

249

00:27:34.770 --> 00:27:37.620

██████████ Was good for that example body of knowledge.

250

00:27:38.820 --> 00:27:40.740

██████████ Maybe some set texel whatever

251

00:27:42.960 --> 00:27:54.510

██████████ The practical work is really crucial. A lot of young people that reason they chooses to develop their practical skills, but I do think made this point before the practical skills have got to at heart and develop

252

00:27:55.530 --> 00:27:56.520

██████████ What they already know.

253

00:27:57.150 --> 00:28:05.550

██████████ And foster their creativity. So it might be, well, let's see, you know, you can do this stuff with, I don't know, whatever it might be.

254

00:28:07.470 --> 00:28:21.090

██████████ But actually, let's try and be a bit more less developed your creative sense if it's but the. For others, it might be. So you can do this. But actually, now we're going to show you how you can do something that's that's enhances that was a bit more

255

00:28:21.090 --> 00:28:25.050

██████████ Professional. That's something practical work and I think it needs to be group.

256

00:28:26.760 --> 00:28:31.380

██████████ I don't think there's any individual media text here is that so

257

00:28:33.300 --> 00:28:33.630

██████████ That

258

00:28:34.680 --> 00:28:35.790

██████████ Really foster

259

00:28:38.580 --> 00:28:41.640

██████████ An honest acknowledgement of have a text get made.

260

00:28:42.420 --> 00:28:46.860

Michelle Thomason: Close. I think if you go back to what they've wanted for the curriculum reforms was to

261

00:28:47.220 --> 00:28:49.050

Michelle Thomason: meet the demands of employment.

262

00:28:49.890 --> 00:28:54.300

Michelle Thomason: It's not, it's the opposite to that, isn't it, you don't you don't work on your own and media.

263

00:28:54.480 --> 00:28:58.320

Michelle Thomason: Ever so it, it's almost going completely against

264

00:28:58.830 --> 00:29:04.890

Michelle Thomason: That you know what he said for ambitious rigorous and meet meeting the demands of employment.

265

00:29:05.310 --> 00:29:05.610

Yeah.

266

00:29:06.660 --> 00:29:07.380

██████████ I suppose what

267

00:29:08.430 --> 00:29:12.180

██████████ Whether this third everything has to be in three components in it.

268

00:29:12.540 --> 00:29:12.870

██████████ It has

269

00:29:12.960 --> 00:29:18.330

██████████ Both a space for a component, which allows young people to express

270

00:29:20.940 --> 00:29:25.050

██████████ Or research or investigate something that's either

271

00:29:25.230 --> 00:29:26.700
[REDACTED] Something of interest to them.

272
00:29:27.120 --> 00:29:32.430
[REDACTED] Or might be of interest to that center to that teacher to, you know, so it could be a paper where

273
00:29:32.850 --> 00:29:35.370
[REDACTED] You know, maybe the center look at a case study.

274
00:29:35.550 --> 00:29:36.480
Michelle Thomason: Something. Yeah.

275
00:29:37.470 --> 00:29:48.420
[REDACTED] And then another component in that if it has to be an exam where where the students are doing their own independent research into an issue based when I see I used to have very broad kind of

276
00:29:49.710 --> 00:29:50.760
[REDACTED] Descriptors and that

277
00:29:51.060 --> 00:29:51.990
[REDACTED] Night. But, you know,

278
00:29:54.120 --> 00:30:01.200
[REDACTED] I think that's what's missing. So I think what's happening is teacher. The probably still doing some of that, but they're doing it in this in a science.

279
00:30:02.760 --> 00:30:03.810
Michelle Thomason: Yeah. Yeah, definitely.

280
00:30:03.930 --> 00:30:08.520
[REDACTED] That's what's, what's so I think you still could retain some teachable autonomy.

281
00:30:10.260 --> 00:30:12.630
[REDACTED] Around some broad debates in media.

282
00:30:13.140 --> 00:30:15.120
[REDACTED] And those could be further explored by

283
00:30:15.240 --> 00:30:16.050
By individuals.

284
00:30:18.600 --> 00:30:22.590
[REDACTED] How long ago it was but you know she did use through an independent research project.

285

00:30:23.400 --> 00:30:24.750

Michelle Thomason: Chris closer to one.

286

00:30:24.960 --> 00:30:26.340

██████████ Critical research study at school.

287

00:30:26.490 --> 00:30:26.940

Michelle Thomason: Yeah.

288

00:30:27.000 --> 00:30:30.090

Michelle Thomason: That was the old I see one, wasn't it, yeah.

289

00:30:30.120 --> 00:30:34.320

██████████ We still have to do an exam question and they chose their own text me

290

00:30:34.740 --> 00:30:36.570

██████████ There's a much more kind of grown up way of

291

00:30:37.050 --> 00:30:37.710

Michelle Thomason: Receiving the

292

00:30:37.770 --> 00:30:38.520

██████████ Room zero interest.

293

00:30:38.730 --> 00:30:45.150

Michelle Thomason: You could take four sheets for sides of a forum is in here. Yeah, yeah, I love teaching and the kids love doing that as well.

294

00:30:45.480 --> 00:30:49.440

██████████ I'm assuming the reason they don't work all of those because they wanted to be more individualized

295

00:30:51.000 --> 00:30:53.670

██████████ And supposedly more

296

00:30:59.100 --> 00:31:00.180

Michelle Thomason: I think, I think that's an issue.

297

00:31:00.180 --> 00:31:01.440

██████████ Of trust something that's done.

298

00:31:02.400 --> 00:31:04.650

██████████ In time conditions with no support.

299

00:31:05.160 --> 00:31:05.550
Yeah.

300

00:31:06.630 --> 00:31:21.960

Michelle Thomason: It's yeah I mean the terminal assessment obsession is is another another thing entirely, and like I see it's become a parent from discussions with people who are involved in the consultation both like with off call and

301

00:31:23.190 --> 00:31:33.030

Michelle Thomason: The social media that sociology had a much easier ride with it in the consultation period because they were allowed to basically the subject association. So she apparently

302

00:31:33.810 --> 00:31:44.640

Michelle Thomason: Pretty much allowed to do say whatever they wanted to be in this back and it didn't go on. It went on question virtually whereas there was a huge amount of political interference. As you know from

303

00:31:45.240 --> 00:31:45.840

Michelle Thomason: Mr give

304

00:31:48.150 --> 00:31:51.570

██████████ Off quote consultation, the post one

305

00:31:52.710 --> 00:32:01.080

██████████ We, we looked at this, the sociology one compared to the media where it's much it's much shorter and much more. But it's more guidance.

306

00:32:01.320 --> 00:32:02.760

Recommendation rather

307

00:32:04.440 --> 00:32:05.550

██████████ very prescriptive.

308

00:32:07.110 --> 00:32:12.270

██████████ I think those that the media ones had, you know, literally, you know, there's ministerial sign off.

309

00:32:12.660 --> 00:32:16.260

██████████ You know, underlining words. Deleting stuff, and you know

310

00:32:17.160 --> 00:32:20.070

Michelle Thomason: It's really interesting because it's it's funny for

311

00:32:21.120 --> 00:32:34.440

Michelle Thomason: Think about all the kind of duration that media has had over the years, and particularly for them, you know, the people who have now significantly interfered in it is they obviously were

312

00:32:35.760 --> 00:32:42.300

Michelle Thomason: The division has come from a place of fear because you know it seems to be that they got so involved that

313

00:32:43.320 --> 00:32:51.120

Michelle Thomason: And wanting to, kind of, I don't know, contain it so much, or as some people have cynically said to get rid of it entirely.

314

00:32:51.870 --> 00:33:00.300

Michelle Thomason: That it's obviously recognized as being a really powerful has a really powerful potentials, the subject. So I kind of see that as a

315

00:33:01.980 --> 00:33:09.840

Michelle Thomason: Always a tacit acknowledgement that media is quite a dangerous subject for students to really fully engage with into question.

316

00:33:10.170 --> 00:33:11.190

██████████ But I suppose that

317

00:33:11.460 --> 00:33:21.030

██████████ Oh, that's why I said earlier that you know he exists as a critical lens on the culture of the world that we're in.

318

00:33:21.480 --> 00:33:33.630

██████████ So therefore, it's going to have that there's going to be a suspicion about its purpose and function. But I do think we could assuage some of it by not making it just the kind of activists type

319

00:33:34.260 --> 00:33:34.680

Michelle Thomason: Who

320

00:33:34.740 --> 00:33:39.720

██████████ Kind of subject. Now, if it's brand identity is it just exists in order to critique.

321

00:33:40.770 --> 00:33:41.220

██████████ Then

322

00:33:43.500 --> 00:33:45.930

██████████ I also think that you potentially could lose some students

323

00:33:46.740 --> 00:33:56.430

██████████ who speak really specifically. So something that I'm really interested in is about issues of race, ethnicity, which seemed quite which are live at the moment.

324

00:33:56.760 --> 00:34:04.380

██████████ Yeah, if you teach race, ethnicity, and all you do is look at Stuart Hall and you look at how rip how

325

00:34:05.400 --> 00:34:16.620

██████████ texts are structured in order to offer particular views of race, ethnicity, and you leave it kind of it that

326

00:34:17.010 --> 00:34:18.450

Michelle Thomason: Who in

327

00:34:18.510 --> 00:34:22.500

██████████ A class classroom full of

328

00:34:25.800 --> 00:34:37.740

██████████ What am I to my whatever classroom. Okay. But, you know, then you invite the students essentially to accept that as the only viable interpretation of how the media functions.

329

00:34:38.220 --> 00:34:42.330

██████████ ██████████ And, in the main, that's what happens with representation, I think, essentially we are told that

330

00:34:43.140 --> 00:34:48.720

██████████ What's interesting about about gender, but around race, ethnicity, that the media offer stereotypical

331

00:34:50.610 --> 00:34:51.180

██████████ Views.

332

00:34:52.320 --> 00:35:03.540

██████████ With gender there came a point where those that's quite simplistic notion was a question from within post-feminism to say, well, actually does.

333

00:35:04.440 --> 00:35:13.440

██████████ It is that how it functions is that the is that the effect is that how you're speaking for me. And actually, it becomes a lot more complex and

334

00:35:13.560 --> 00:35:15.330

██████████ Moves on the assumptions of problem and size.

335

00:35:16.770 --> 00:35:23.310

██████████ But still, that was within the radical wink. You know, there are lots of people who have used that I might disagree with.

336

00:35:24.450 --> 00:35:26.880

██████████ About media now you know about how the media operates.

337

00:35:28.560 --> 00:35:37.080

██████████ I'm not sure we particularly studied it, that's all those people think there's an inherent you know right wing bias in the BBC. There were lots of right when you think there's inherently biased.

338

00:35:37.350 --> 00:35:39.120

██████████ Yeah, so

339

00:35:39.330 --> 00:35:40.470

██████████ But we don't we don't do them.

340

00:35:43.050 --> 00:35:43.380

██████████ Yeah.

341

00:35:43.440 --> 00:35:49.440

Michelle Thomason: I think that kind of, again, you know, we've seen that a lot in terms of, like, this is just a very binary opinions being

342

00:35:50.730 --> 00:35:57.930

Michelle Thomason: Seen all over, not just media, not just education but like in politics and other areas, you know that you, it's almost like you have to pin.

343

00:35:58.800 --> 00:36:06.750

Michelle Thomason: Yourself to one flag or another, you can't you can't have any kind of nuanced debate and and i think you know this idea that I'm gonna, it's kind of

344

00:36:07.380 --> 00:36:18.540

Michelle Thomason: Kind of current phrase that minute but this isn't cancel culture, you know, is is operating within this kind of binary that you can't have any you can't be on a spectrum, you can't not have an opinion about something. Can I think, you know,

345

00:36:19.380 --> 00:36:29.670

Michelle Thomason: We've seen that every single day in in the current crisis of covert crisis. You've got to have an opinion about something, whether it's about somebody leaving their house too many times a day during lockdown or whatever, and it's

346

00:36:30.750 --> 00:36:35.010

Michelle Thomason: That we've lost we've lost that kind of friendly critique.

347

00:36:36.210 --> 00:36:38.070

Michelle Thomason: That nuance debate, I think.

348

00:36:38.400 --> 00:36:43.770

Michelle Thomason: And it just filters down into everything and in, you know, to the students as well.

349

00:36:44.550 --> 00:36:47.130

Michelle Thomason: Yeah, they can't they can't see the nuances.

350

00:36:47.310 --> 00:37:02.400

██████████ Yeah, essentially doesn't leave them anywhere to go either have to accept that kind of the implicit premise, upon which the the the theoretical kind of

351

00:37:03.540 --> 00:37:04.350

██████████ Lens.

352

00:37:05.610 --> 00:37:07.320

██████████ Understands that media text.

353

00:37:08.970 --> 00:37:14.490

██████████ When in fact, that doesn't leave many were to if they have to kind of show that they understand how it how it does it.

354

00:37:15.030 --> 00:37:17.790

██████████ Yeah. And what what that

355

00:37:18.810 --> 00:37:23.100

██████████ Nothing. That's this version of be your studies and all previous ones as well. To be fair,

356

00:37:27.150 --> 00:37:32.340

██████████ It for some shoes. There's a dissociation between what they're writing and what they really think

357

00:37:32.670 --> 00:37:38.250

██████████ Yeah. And for me that's the most that's that's a problematic issue that

358

00:37:38.460 --> 00:37:47.760

██████████ runs across all of this. So in my when I did my research about immigration. What was most happening is when children were asked about what they what they think.

359

00:37:49.200 --> 00:37:50.310

██████████ But what they do.

360

00:37:55.290 --> 00:38:10.230

██████████ And what they say and those what so you saying you're thinking you do you would expect to be consistent and then not and the minute you introduce Oh actually, you said that actually you do that and hold on. You think that, how does that work out with what you do, then

361

00:38:11.400 --> 00:38:27.510

██████████ Then you're leaving it up to them, but you're you're asking the question, whereas if you just say the media offer this representation, it's universally you know it's narrowing it reinforces power structure need to cover cut off and not not

362

00:38:29.130 --> 00:38:31.320

██████████ Really have to do much work. Remember what

363

00:38:31.710 --> 00:38:33.300

Michelle Thomason: The teacher said, yeah, yeah.

364

00:38:33.690 --> 00:38:38.010

Michelle Thomason: It was really interesting. A few months ago, what, you know, long before this, this situation.

365

00:38:39.120 --> 00:38:44.760

Michelle Thomason: When lockdown. I had to teach students were discussing, I think we were just discussing Gilmore and colonialism and

366

00:38:45.930 --> 00:38:50.070

Michelle Thomason: There was something came up and I can't remember it was now something came up in the news that day about

367

00:38:51.300 --> 00:39:02.160

Michelle Thomason: Wasn't Black Lives Matters, but it was something similar and had two students both black students in the class one very angry and very

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00:39:03.150 --> 00:39:10.440

Michelle Thomason: You know animated about what was going on him and it was clearly, you know, very passionate about anti racism and

369

00:39:11.070 --> 00:39:19.170

Michelle Thomason: And another student completely in denial of of any of what he was saying, it was just really interesting, like you were saying, those, those kind of different

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00:39:19.650 --> 00:39:32.490

Michelle Thomason: Ways of being, you know, thinking doing and saying, you know, and eventually that the student who had disagreed and didn't think that that racism and their lives are problematic.

371

00:39:33.840 --> 00:39:47.460

Michelle Thomason: Came out the opinion because they had said, Well, how do you do this. How do you say this, what's your experience in in your life, what did you do this morning. And it was really interesting how the there was a discussion between them. And I just, you know, they, they basically

372

00:39:48.510 --> 00:39:57.720

Michelle Thomason: lead the discussion and it was it was it was fantastic to see that students were actually thinking critically and for the first time and actually having their opinion changed.

373

00:39:57.750 --> 00:39:59.940

Michelle Thomason: You know, it was really, really interesting.

374

00:40:00.360 --> 00:40:01.380

██████████ Or not you know

375

00:40:02.460 --> 00:40:05.250

██████████ Just talking about is good enough for me, you know,

376

00:40:06.390 --> 00:40:12.570

██████████ How many times have I just had one conversation something fundamentally changed my view, very rarely you know it's it's a process, isn't it.

377

00:40:12.780 --> 00:40:13.350

Michelle Thomason: Yeah yeah

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00:40:14.070 --> 00:40:14.220

██████████ It's

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00:40:14.400 --> 00:40:27.120

Michelle Thomason: A wonderful thing to do as well in a way of saying that what you've helped and believe me when you get older, as well, you kind of, you know, you have everything under mind that you felt and thought for a long time if you if you suddenly change your mind about something quite

380

00:40:29.280 --> 00:40:31.770

██████████ A bit of interviewing myself that I said that to you.

381

00:40:32.070 --> 00:40:36.360

██████████ Yeah, and I've been interviewing my trainees and talking about

382

00:40:37.410 --> 00:40:40.080

██████████ Their own kind of family backgrounds and

383

00:40:40.410 --> 00:40:42.570

██████████ How that informs their view of issues of

384

00:40:43.590 --> 00:40:45.720

██████████ Immigration and some have

385

00:40:47.130 --> 00:40:49.740

██████████ Families who have very strong views, one way or the other.

386

00:40:50.010 --> 00:40:50.460

You know,

387

00:40:51.990 --> 00:41:00.510

██████████ It's much easier for the one who has the very liberal parents who are very tolerant accepted on one level because it's always more complex than that.

388

00:41:00.750 --> 00:41:01.200

Yeah.

389

00:41:02.340 --> 00:41:07.110

██████████ To Teach me your studies and to be able to trot out the theories and and to believe in it and all of that.

390

00:41:08.490 --> 00:41:18.090

██████████ Much harder for that one of my trainees who comes from a background where parents have got real issues because of the local environment around migration.

391

00:41:19.530 --> 00:41:22.200

██████████ Have got quite strong views about race, ethnicity, and

392

00:41:25.680 --> 00:41:30.360

██████████ In fact, how to reject all of that what she says she has, at one level on a rational level.

393

00:41:30.930 --> 00:41:31.950

██████████ Very hard to do.

394

00:41:32.460 --> 00:41:35.160

██████████ Yeah. Yes. What your pet you know what your parents have said you

395

00:41:37.170 --> 00:41:42.960

██████████ Know, sometimes we are out of our children and, in the main, I think they just go, I will just tell you what you want to hear.

396

00:41:44.430 --> 00:41:49.410

Michelle Thomason: Yeah, that's up to you in terms of in terms of your trainees, I'd be really interested

397

00:41:49.410 --> 00:41:50.580

██████████ To hear your perspective.

398

00:41:50.730 --> 00:41:51.060

On

399

00:41:52.710 --> 00:41:58.260

Michelle Thomason: How they found training as media teachers I spoke to a

400

00:42:00.600 --> 00:42:06.360

Michelle Thomason: Few weeks ago and you know it was really interesting talking to her, because obviously you know she's

401

00:42:07.380 --> 00:42:11.550

Michelle Thomason: Teaching media background fairly recently shouldn't have much experience of the, the new specs, but

402

00:42:13.740 --> 00:42:28.920

Michelle Thomason: It she you know she's obviously teaching students who don't know so they they do know the aspects but only as students themselves, not as teachers that was quite interesting. I'm just wondering how your trainees have felt about

403

00:42:29.760 --> 00:42:30.090

Well,

404

00:42:32.070 --> 00:42:35.970

██████████ My reading of the situation, but I would say

405

00:42:37.140 --> 00:42:43.290

██████████ That for a trainee teaching I teach is hard enough. Okay, so many things to grapple with, you know, the

406

00:42:44.190 --> 00:42:51.900

██████████ And so many standards that you've got to meet that actually there being a shared body of knowledge.

407

00:42:53.490 --> 00:42:58.080

██████████ I've been teaching since 2006 so I really can make a contrast

408

00:42:58.110 --> 00:42:59.190

██████████ Yeah, no.

409

00:43:00.570 --> 00:43:14.490

██████████ They were able to share resources, they were able to, we could look at a particular text that nearly all of them are going to be

teacher and run through it. This is very different from before where, you know, I'd say, Well, right. Well, we're doing science fiction.

410

00:43:15.630 --> 00:43:20.550

██████████ But hey, this is how you would look at the genre studies, you know, you must adapt it and water or, you know,

411

00:43:21.810 --> 00:43:28.440

██████████ Action or whatever it might be. It's much more tangible and practical

412

00:43:28.800 --> 00:43:31.350

██████████ I think that's one has always been the criticism of my

413

00:43:31.950 --> 00:43:33.750

██████████ My media studies courses before

414

00:43:34.020 --> 00:43:35.190

██████████ Was kind of

415

00:43:37.260 --> 00:43:39.180

██████████ exemplars they were kind of

416

00:43:41.310 --> 00:43:49.410

██████████ Well, this is how I do it. You're gonna have to make it work with whatever you you know your your whereas now we're doing the arches, you know,

417

00:43:49.740 --> 00:43:50.370

██████████ We're doing

418

00:43:50.490 --> 00:43:50.730

Michelle Thomason: You know,

419

00:43:51.510 --> 00:43:53.580

██████████ The Times newspaper front cover.

420

00:43:56.070 --> 00:44:00.600

██████████ On a very practical level on a really busy course where everything is essentially new

421

00:44:03.000 --> 00:44:06.090

██████████ I think it's really helping them I'm when I do my placement visits.

422

00:44:08.250 --> 00:44:17.700

██████████ So it's not a symbol of it historically going to meet your classrooms and they would be like a like a bedroom of the media teacher

423

00:44:18.900 --> 00:44:21.210

██████████ So it'd be a reflection of them. Okay.

424

00:44:21.630 --> 00:44:27.120

██████████ So the text and the design and all of it. And now it's more uniform

425

00:44:27.660 --> 00:44:35.190

██████████ Yeah, those when those Facebook groups when they share the resources of the you know the blue poster that read posts there on about the different campaigns.

426

00:44:35.520 --> 00:44:40.800

██████████ They're everywhere. Now, on one level, you might say, well, that's a horrible kind of style and this kind of approach. It's all the same.

427

00:44:42.000 --> 00:44:46.650

██████████ It does give consistency and shared language my train. Yeah.

428

00:44:47.970 --> 00:44:50.160

██████████ And I say that this is a

429

00:44:51.630 --> 00:44:55.890

██████████ You know education policies pendulum swings.

430

00:44:56.070 --> 00:44:56.550

██████████ Know,

431

00:44:56.970 --> 00:45:00.180

██████████ What I think when I first started teaching. We did 100% coursework.

432

00:45:01.320 --> 00:45:02.490

██████████ And media studies six pieces.

433

00:45:03.690 --> 00:45:07.230

██████████ And now it's all you know pretty much exams.

434

00:45:07.710 --> 00:45:07.980

Michelle Thomason: Yeah.

435

00:45:08.700 --> 00:45:16.530

██████████ It will come back so you know I'm trying to we're trying to prepare them for an entire career where the things will change, you know, move

436

00:45:16.590 --> 00:45:32.730

Michelle Thomason: Yeah, I guess, I guess for new teachers, like you said, he is. It's a good kind of training grounds under the new specs because it gives them a very firm foundation and you know if and when the pendulum does swing back then there'll be more experienced and they will have the confidence.

437

00:45:33.150 --> 00:45:46.200

Michelle Thomason: So yeah, I hadn't thought about it that like that before. But that's a really interesting perspective. And definitely, I think, to the benefit of those teachers and I have spoken to, to trainee teachers from Goldsmith's and

438

00:45:48.510 --> 00:45:57.960

Michelle Thomason: They actually that that's that they did actually say that they liked the consistency and the resources and all those kind of things.

439

00:45:59.400 --> 00:46:07.980

Michelle Thomason: What they didn't like was that they felt they weren't able to experiment with that teaching.

440

00:46:08.640 --> 00:46:19.770

Michelle Thomason: And all the things I don't assume that your training, but I know you know I was encouraged is try loads of different stuff out and whether it worked or not doesn't matter because you're just training and it's fine.

441

00:46:20.220 --> 00:46:28.290

Michelle Thomason: But they fell under pressure massively they were getting pressure. I think I'm not class fault, but I think they're getting pressure as a kind of

442

00:46:29.160 --> 00:46:38.190

Michelle Thomason: An ideal is a trait is a training course from from cloud to, kind of, you know, experiment and try new things out and be creative and all those things, but then

443

00:46:38.580 --> 00:46:43.920

Michelle Thomason: They got into their schools and different placements and obviously they buried quite differently as well but

444

00:46:44.730 --> 00:46:50.640

Michelle Thomason: They found under pressure from their mentors there that the teachers that they were sharing the classes with that they just had to get through the content.

445

00:46:51.120 --> 00:47:00.000

Michelle Thomason: And we're going, you know, this is all very well, but you know you've got great ideas, but we just have to do this today, and we have to get through this particular text, whatever. So

446

00:47:00.480 --> 00:47:15.720

Michelle Thomason: I think there's a definite tension again. So this is that binary that you think well to get through content. You can't be creative, where you can be both, but I think they did feel very strongly that they weren't allowed to have the freedom to do what they wanted to in terms of

447

00:47:16.110 --> 00:47:21.690

██████████ Experiments. But I suppose that's where you understand it from a skills perspective, which

448

00:47:22.050 --> 00:47:24.090

██████████ I often try to do as well. Yeah.

449

00:47:24.570 --> 00:47:30.630

██████████ You know, they're they've got to deliver knowledge rich courses.

450

00:47:30.750 --> 00:47:44.160

██████████ Yeah, in a limited time. Okay, so I suppose if you trained in a time where it was 100% coursework, then your training experience will be defined by the context in which those young people are going to be assessed.

451

00:47:45.240 --> 00:47:47.610

██████████ If they're going to be assessed essentially by terminal exam.

452

00:47:48.660 --> 00:48:05.190

██████████ Then I'm afraid it's going to, it's going to reduce the flexibility of that mentor to say, Oh, we'll try this out. If it doesn't work. It doesn't work. I just think that's to do with when they're training, you know, the period in which they're training and I and I always say to them.

453

00:48:06.900 --> 00:48:07.380

██████████ You know,

454

00:48:08.700 --> 00:48:16.620

██████████ And I suppose it's my own view of it just just nailed the basics of it. It's hard enough. And we're hugely more accountable.

455

00:48:18.270 --> 00:48:31.410

██████████ Climate for schools for teachers and for trainees that whereas before I might have said, we, you know, I think it's absolutely fine to fail, you know, and for things to have, you know, glorious kind of

456

00:48:31.560 --> 00:48:32.880

██████████ Defeat disasters.

457

00:48:33.360 --> 00:48:36.480

[REDACTED] As part of the training experience, but actually

458

00:48:38.160 --> 00:48:47.280

[REDACTED] This game your mental is not gonna it's gonna find it difficult to sit at the back of the room while you're just having kind of experimental lesson.

459

00:48:48.270 --> 00:48:49.560

[REDACTED] What I need to know this.

460

00:48:49.650 --> 00:48:50.100

Yeah.

461

00:48:53.100 --> 00:48:55.770

[REDACTED] No, no, you will know where you're going into

462

00:48:57.510 --> 00:49:01.410

[REDACTED] In a different time. I think that would be more flexible, but I know, I suppose.

463

00:49:02.490 --> 00:49:05.070

[REDACTED] That's a very tiny. See, I'm way more conservative

464

00:49:06.210 --> 00:49:08.400

[REDACTED] A very tiny thing. Yeah, your mentor says

465

00:49:09.060 --> 00:49:12.480

[REDACTED] And they'll, they'll define how much leeway, you've got

466

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

472
00:50:12.900 --> 00:50:21.900
[REDACTED] Suppose, what I would say about those teachers and I'm probably one of them really I trained in 1993 as a long time ago and I invested a lot of my a

473
00:50:23.370 --> 00:50:28.020
[REDACTED] Lot of me went into into doing my best to media. So I think

474
00:50:28.770 --> 00:50:34.110
[REDACTED] And I say this to my trainees. The worst thing you can be as a badly prepared me to teach you just confirm everything

475
00:50:34.560 --> 00:50:38.160
[REDACTED] Yeah, and those students those parents and your colleagues think that media is about. Okay.

476
00:50:40.380 --> 00:50:43.710
[REDACTED] But there is an innate conservative again with a small seed of

477
00:50:43.770 --> 00:50:46.800
[REDACTED] Love that attitude or what it was. That's how it should be, you know,

478
00:50:49.050 --> 00:50:56.760
[REDACTED] I mean, a lot of those a lot of those teachers would probably prefer to teach the broadcast media and the press.

479
00:50:58.680 --> 00:51:02.580
[REDACTED] Anyway, you know, social media, which has fundamentally changed everything.

480
00:51:05.220 --> 00:51:11.280
[REDACTED] And where the theory isn't solid enough to be able to go into the Canon really

481
00:51:12.150 --> 00:51:12.780
[REDACTED] Really pretty

482

00:51:14.460 --> 00:51:16.770

██████████ But that's where, that's where it's at, you know,

483

00:51:16.860 --> 00:51:17.820

Michelle Thomason: Absolutely, yeah.

484

00:51:17.880 --> 00:51:18.750

██████████ Miles away from it.

485

00:51:21.510 --> 00:51:27.330

Michelle Thomason: Well, thank you so much for talking to me, everybody knows your name. I've heard your name a lot

486

00:51:28.110 --> 00:51:28.560

And

487

00:51:30.270 --> 00:51:32.670

██████████ I hope I got over that I'm not

488

00:51:34.320 --> 00:51:36.330

██████████ I'm not a reactionary, you know, I'm not

489

00:51:39.270 --> 00:51:45.720

██████████ My heart is in the same place as probably most of the people that you speak to, because we are to set a small goldfish bowl.

490

00:51:46.080 --> 00:51:46.410

Michelle Thomason: Yes.

491

00:51:46.470 --> 00:51:51.660

██████████ We will go into it with essentially the same. I think the same values.

492

00:51:51.990 --> 00:51:53.400

██████████ How I express them.

493

00:51:53.850 --> 00:51:56.790

██████████ is rooted in I'm still in school for most of my time.

494

00:51:57.450 --> 00:52:01.380

Michelle Thomason: Yeah, and, and yet and comes with that a lot of little pragmatism.

495

00:52:01.860 --> 00:52:02.940

██████████ Yes, yeah.

496

00:52:06.300 --> 00:52:07.890

[REDACTED] You're kind of, you know, your values.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
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[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

00:53:34.050 --> 00:53:36.630

Michelle Thomason: And then tracing that through kind of almost like

508

00:53:38.460 --> 00:53:45.420

Michelle Thomason: A conceptual approach to how you know meet your arguments of kind of evolved and I'm just trying to capture a state another stage and time.

509

00:53:46.530 --> 00:53:48.000

Michelle Thomason: Of media and

510

00:53:48.180 --> 00:53:49.410

Michelle Thomason: Who knows what the next stage will

511

00:53:49.440 --> 00:53:49.860

Michelle Thomason: Be

512

00:53:50.580 --> 00:53:53.970

Michelle Thomason: Yeah, but it's I think it's important to capture it and you know

513

00:53:55.230 --> 00:54:02.790

██████████ I don't know how many more interviews, you're doing, but I would happily offer you know one or more of my trainees. I'm sure that they would

514

00:54:04.290 --> 00:54:04.980

Michelle Thomason: Be fantastic

515

00:54:05.040 --> 00:54:13.980

██████████ I think it's interesting. Again, I don't talk too much about goldfish bowls, because I've said about me. But there is a goldfish bowl about about London media studies as well.

516

00:54:14.340 --> 00:54:21.750

██████████ Yes, and actually getting out into the provinces is not a bad idea as well because I think the kinds of

517

00:54:22.380 --> 00:54:35.610

██████████ Context of the schools and a competition of the pupils in those schools and the classrooms have its own impact on what media studies is, you know, talking about reflecting your local world. That's very different depending on where you are.

518

00:54:35.970 --> 00:54:37.320

Michelle Thomason: Yeah. Yeah, absolutely.

519

00:54:37.740 --> 00:54:40.050

██████████ So just get in touch them. And I'm sure they

520

521

00:54:46.380 --> 00:54:52.560

Michelle Thomason: More because I think that's really, really important to have that, you know, balance and perspective. So if you would be able to

522

00:54:53.130 --> 00:54:56.700

Michelle Thomason: Recommend any any because if you remind me by sending me a line that

523

00:54:57.270 --> 00:55:01.110

██████████ I know I don't. So, you know, your research needs to get get

524

00:55:01.140 --> 00:55:02.520

██████████ Out and go further. So

525

00:55:03.030 --> 00:55:14.610

██████████ You know it hasn't went our course. You know, if we if we're back on campus, you must. If you want to come down and talk to next year's trainees, of which I think we might have another topic might have 12

526

00:55:15.120 --> 00:55:20.310

██████████ Yeah, definitely. It's a good time to be a teacher. So very, it's very odd in that

527

00:55:20.850 --> 00:55:21.240

Michelle Thomason: Yeah.

528

00:55:21.330 --> 00:55:26.130

██████████ One of the plus size of code is that people are considering teaching in a way that they might not have done.

529

00:55:26.130 --> 00:55:26.610

Yes.

530

00:55:28.290 --> 00:55:37.740

Michelle Thomason: Yeah, but no, that's absolutely brilliant. And I had hoped to come to your event last year. Actually, it was about this time last year, wasn't it, yeah. And

531

00:55:38.610 --> 00:55:42.450

Michelle Thomason: There are a couple of while I didn't work out for some reason did it, did it happen in the end.

532

00:55:42.570 --> 00:55:43.200

██████████ It happened.

533

00:55:44.730 --> 00:55:46.440

██████████ ██████████ So she was

534

00:55:46.710 --> 00:55:50.190

Michelle Thomason: Yeah, yeah. So two things we've done in our last two conferences.

535

00:55:51.630 --> 00:55:56.820

██████████ Which is again, it's a hard thing to get off the ground is not a lot of support in within my university. And this is interesting, but but

536

00:55:57.480 --> 00:56:11.700

██████████ This is basically the school of education, social work based in School of Media film and music This the two schools have not very little book has nothing to do with each other from we did the conference together.

537

00:56:12.780 --> 00:56:16.920

██████████ But they're two worlds, who are interested in the same kinds of things, but they don't

538

00:56:18.360 --> 00:56:18.990

██████████ They're not linked

539

00:56:21.330 --> 00:56:21.900

██████████ Yeah, I think that was

540

00:56:24.300 --> 00:56:26.040

Michelle Thomason: Just such a good because I think ██████████ was

541

00:56:26.580 --> 00:56:28.230

██████████ Was yes he didn't he Yeah.

542

00:56:28.470 --> 00:56:38.430

██████████ Oh, we asked what the partners trauma. When we did the last two we got lectures at universities of ██████████ to do some theory workshops really because that's

543

00:56:39.390 --> 00:56:51.420

██████████ The teachers didn't have more concerned about it, never been taught it, most of them have never, I've never studied media before. So we covered major theorists through these workshops which have which was fantastic.

544

00:56:52.680 --> 00:57:02.910

Michelle Thomason: Yeah, that's what I remember now can get day release that my my place didn't want me to go for some reason I can't remember why I think it was another CPD thing typically that he go

545
00:57:04.500 --> 00:57:05.040
[REDACTED] Teach

546
00:57:05.490 --> 00:57:07.380
Michelle Thomason: [REDACTED]

547
00:57:08.760 --> 00:57:11.640
Michelle Thomason: I'm happy. Yeah, I've been there for like

548
00:57:13.050 --> 00:57:18.450
Michelle Thomason: So I did run the Department for about 10 years and [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

550
00:57:21.690 --> 00:57:25.680
Michelle Thomason: And immediate Bournemouth. So, what time is it, yeah.

551
00:57:26.730 --> 00:57:30.840
[REDACTED] How did you so when I started my studies.

552
00:57:32.460 --> 00:57:39.000
[REDACTED] And didn't complete them with [REDACTED] the late 80s and it's all rallied education is a big kind of as a hub their

553
00:57:40.050 --> 00:57:44.820
[REDACTED] Authentic they still do stuff at the iOS, but certainly born with is the place to go.

554
00:57:45.180 --> 00:57:56.580
Michelle Thomason: Yeah, no, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] and took on running the media faculty and

555
00:57:57.450 --> 00:58:02.850
Michelle Thomason: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

556
00:58:03.870 --> 00:58:16.050
Michelle Thomason: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

560
00:58:57.960 --> 00:58:59.070
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] Good luck with it and

561
00:58:59.790 --> 00:59:05.760
[REDACTED] Yeah, you need anything else, just let me know. I'll send you
the recording once once it does it's bit and hopefully

562
00:59:06.540 --> 00:59:09.660
Michelle Thomason: Now, you're really kind. Thank you so much, we really
thank you

563
00:59:10.050 --> 00:59:10.380
[REDACTED] Bye bye.

564
00:59:10.770 --> 00:59:11.100
Bye.

Transcript - Oliver

The piece on reform that David wrote is uncannily similar to my experience of the reform process. However, I don't think it can be called really a reform process what even review process it was a strangulation process - there was a definite attempt to get rid of media studies - it felt more comfortable with film and in fact that this was an elite subject. It was clear that media studies was not going to be included in the best of what is thought and and is said.

The BFI hosted two working parties I chaired the media and [REDACTED] chaired the film. These were meant to be a neutral holding space they are subject to try and get stakeholders to reach consensus. I don't think we were ever going to argue that scrutiny wouldn't be valuable in subjects and we entered into what we hoped it would be a proper review in good-faith. However it was clear that there was a civil service shadow process that the DfE was doing. We were not sure whether the lead civil servant was in direct contact with Nick did always just second-guessing and trying to anticipate what the minister wanted. The phrase kept cropping up 'the minister doesn't like concepts'. The civil servant by sheer virtue of their role do not hold expertise and it was clear that there is going to be a foundational change to the subject.

Theorists were mentioned - didn't even consider some of them to even be theorists such as that in one of the review meetings - guys who we didn't know their names but we called them Rosencrantz and Guildenstern because they seem quite out of their depth and didn't really know what was going on. Their job was to report back but also felt that it was giving people a sense that they were being watched.

David and Natalie made a huge fuss and went in with a hobnailed boots - they are essentially recuperated subject content and averted a much bigger disaster.

When the review documents came back they were over 100 tracked changes there was a lot of filibustering going on and we felt this was done to take it beyond the deadline that we could make meaningful change - people thought that and there was a feeling we were being spun out by Ofqual. We also felt the DfE had tied their hands slightly.

There's a feeling as well that's the theories were very auteurist and all group work were taken out

Whilst Gibb is definitely malign and toxic he is very clever and fairly obvious that media has its history as a Marxist subject and there was an ideological and political project going on to get rid of it. Media offers an implicit promise to students to interrogate and is more dangerous and a live and hotter subject than say sociology.

I wonder whether Natalie Fenton's hacked off connection had some bearing over Proceedings

It is inappropriate to wait for a Labour government to change media perhaps media should be depoliticised and thought of instead as a critical subject

The Halcyon days are long gone and media needs to be fit for a different media environment

There is potential for different ways of framing and conceiving the subject rather than just stop with the key concepts it needs to be refrained the new generation.

It could be reimagined as subject if the exam forwards the media education Association teachers, smart teachers and the Scottish the Scottish subject association got together

When you close the classroom door you are the most powerful person the government contact you in there and you take back what is yours in that space

The most enduring work in Media - this should be done by educators, collaboration between educators and its future lies with teachers

Media is a unique it deals the stuff that was made yesterday and it bought to change and challenge our practice

The pedagogy of media hasn't changed in 20 years - the liberatory emancipatory and Democratic nature of the subject has been moulded to fit in with the teaching of what is right versus wrong and it hasn't changed to match the pace of the subject

Have you read Biesta - The Heautiful Risk of Education? He talks about education is forming subjects,also Ranciere - the challenges of teacher as an expert - The Ignorant Schoolmaster

The future of media studies and the defence of media studies is a good prospective project - we could look at how media studies is a diffuse in poorest subject. I'm not be retrenched around core values that look around the edges of the subjects for example social media we need to abandon the name? What happens at the margins of the subject? What about its content experiences

I thought the Shamima Begum and the girls who went to Isis was a moment that we could have looked at the subject differently – also fake news this could have been a time when we could brought in the important media all through education

New thinking around media studies is needed - decolonising and black lives matters absolutely highlighted this

It is a useful instrument to interrogate in the subject it needs to be more diverse anything more people of colour there is not enough representation in subject there are students being taught by people who don't represent them

It has origins as a textual subject but media studies is now bigger than this. There was no or cultural studies in its early days. As teachers skill sets change what will happen to the subject? Teachers have very different skill sets.

I liked the south London reimagining of film posters with he black characters in

