

Ross Thornburn Interview Summary

(Beginning missing)

[00:00] New/Pre-service teachers would watch people teaching different classes (i.e. adult teachers would watch people teaching children and vice versa). Overall 2.5 days face-to-face contact on that course.

[01:00] *(How is video integrated?)* Online TEFL courses and pre-service training when teachers first arrive. Also people on the Trinity Diploma in TESOL; there's a video of RT teaching adults which teachers watch before their practical, discuss criteria and grade his class – if you haven't done it before, it's difficult to know what to expect, so it's expectation setting. Also filmed a couple of training sessions and used them in trainer training sessions: trainees read an article on different modes of input and watched clip of him leading a Cert TESOL training session and tried to look which parts of the training corresponded to which part of the model.

1 RT: but i filmed some training sessions and then ive
2 used them in like trainer training sessions. so
3 for example i cant remember what it was. i think
4 there was some if youve read it like a jerry
5 gabberds article about. is it jerry gabbards? maybe
6 it is maybe it isnt. anyway i cant remember what
7 it is. but someones got an article about some
8 different modes of input. i cant remember what they
9 are. like feeding throwing. i dont know if youve
10 read this or not. but anyway i did a training
11 session on this where they read the article and
12 then we watched the 15 minute video of me running
13 a (xxxx) training session. and then they tried to
14 look at which parts of that training you know that
15 video fit into which parts of this model. so that
16 was something.

[03:29] That was still with EF. Each school would have 10-20 teachers, one 'senior' teacher in each school would run a lot of the teacher training in the school, then at least once a month (in Shanghai) would try to get them all together with a trainer training them. Tried the video in his last week, but worked quite well; also interesting posting it on social media. Also useful to send people to this material from where he is working now, where input tends to involve lecturing.

[4:51] *(Job now)* Director of Teaching and Product in Global Education, subsidiary of Pearson (China) – primarily test preparation for IELTS and TOEFL, scope of his job takes in teaching quality and management, as well as teacher training.

[6:05] *(What do you use to film?)* Just an OK camera – about £500 worth. If doing group work and monitoring then just phone. Editing afterwards, using Windows Movie Maker (*JG refers to Huw Jarvis re use of Movie Maker.*) Not a brilliant program, but it's free – with these things you get to a basic level of competence where you make something that's good enough and you start plateauing.

17 JG: so sorry. is this with pearson now?

18 RT: yes. just an okay camera. i think i spent when i
19 was at ef it wasnt my money but i spent
20 about maybe 500 quids on an old white camera with
21 an okay microphone. so if used that. and then not
22 very professional but when im filming something
23 and doing group work and im monitoring ill get my
24 phone out.
25 JG: phone out. yes sure. well its what people do.
26 RT: shots on my phone so that you can kind of like
27 switch. because i find its quite boring if the
28 class the whole thing is just from or long training
29 is just from one (xxxx) for 15 minutes.
30 JG: okay. so are you then editing it afterwards?
31 obviously editing these bits together?
32: RT: oh yes yes yes yes yes. absolutely.
33 JG: so what are you using to edit it?
34 RT: i think probably windows movie maker i think is
35 what i used for that. which is i think its free. i
36 dont have it on my new laptop. but it was certainly
37 it was installed on the old ef laptop. so i presume
38 it must have been free. because ef didnt like
39 paying for the stuff so.
40 JG: yes. i know. i was just talking to do you know
41 huw jarvis? tesol academic?

[08:15] JG: Classroom practice, but also tips and things? RT: A bit of an extension of the flipped classroom idea for a 1-hour teacher workshop, go online and watch video, get input before coming to the face-to-face training. The face-to-face training would be very practical. Then started running online courses; inspired by chopping up content from Trinity Diploma, making it easier and turning it into a 10-week course on pronunciation. At the end the trainees had to make a 5-minute video on some aspect of pronunciation – similar to how that pronunciation part is assessed, where you have to do a 5-minute talk and answer 5 minutes of questions afterwards. Realised that having trainees talk and include footage from them teaching a class was creating more and more content. Expanded that to other aspects of English (pronunciation course, grammar course, lexis course).

42 making your videos then youve got the classroom
43 practice. but youve also got some tips and things
44 havent you? so how how are you?
45 RT: yes. so those were a little bit different. i
46 guess those were a bit of an extension of that
47 flipped classroom idea. so what i tried again
48 was when i was first in that position at ef
49 was sort of more of a like a one hour teacher
50 workshop flipped classroom idea. where you would
51 go online and youd watch the video get that input
52 at some point before coming to the face to face
53 training. and then the face to face training
54 would be very very practical. you know kind of
55 a lot of almost like this role playing whatever
56 the skill that week was. so thats kind of how
57 they started. actually you might find this

58 quite interesting. you then started running like
59 online courses in ef. so i was sort of inspired
60 by like taking some of the content from the trinity
61 diploma. and then chopping out and making it a bit
62 easier. and then turning it into like a ten week
63 course. so like say taking the pronunciation aspect
64 of the diploma. and putting like that stuff all
65 online. and at the end of the ten weeks the
66 trainees would have to make like a five minute
67 video. so its about some aspect of pronunciation
68 right? so this a very similar to the how that
69 pronunciation part is assessed. where you have to
70 do a five minute talk and answer five minutes of
71 questions afterwards. but what i realized was
72 that then by getting them to make a video of
73 that and not just talk about what they were doing.
74 like talk and then also have some classroom
75 footage of them you know actually doing the thing
76 in the class. that that was then creating more and
77 more content. so we sort of expanded that and did
78 it for different you know aspects of english.
79 there was a pronunciation course a grammar course
80 a lexis course.

[10:28] RT would not use the snippets recorded by trainees, but on EF website – around 200 teaching clips – more experienced teachers’ clips could be placed online and used as content for the new teachers to watch. Internal, but anyone could watch it.

81 JG: i mean just stop a minute. so when you say its
82 creating more content. so that the snippets that
83 theyre recording youre then using in further
84 onwards sort of training. are you? is that what
85 you mean?
86 RT: well yes. so i wouldnt use them. but they were
87 on this ef website. it might now be defunct.
88 but i think we ended up having maybe like maybe
89 200 different five minute like teaching skill
90 videos on there. but it was really cool right?
91 because the content was self replicating. with
92 the more advanced teachers whod been teaching
93 well advanced in esl (xxxx) terms. maybe had like
94 two years of experience. which here its quite a
95 lot. you get authorized to make videos and then
96 place them online. and then that can be then used
97 as content for the new teachers to watch.
98 JG: for the newer people.
99 RT: yes. and that was on the sort of company internal.
100 but anyone could watch it.

[11:22] (*Issues about permissions?*) No, because it’s China. Quality not fantastic. (*Still exists?*) [Efenglishfirst.ning.com/page/videos http://ef-teachers.com/video/video](http://ef-teachers.com/video/video)

Looks a bit out of date and stopped using [Ning](#) now. Problems with YouTube in China.

[14:25] (*Feedback?*) Vary a lot between a few hundred and a few thousand views. EF employs about 2,000 teachers – about half might be working in franchise schools (beyond reach of head office). (*Just EF teachers watching?*) RT knows from his YouTube channel that not just EF teachers watching, but hard to say how many. Many people use VPN, so difficult to know where people are watching from. Flipped classroom feedback: too easy, good for new teachers, not for those with some experience, but RT didn't buy into that. Most important that teachers got the training they wanted – ended up changing their system so there was more choice. Overall some people like it, many didn't - always get that with CPD.

[19:45] Biggest value was for people doing the online courses – did get a lot of feedback (can download that – a lot of data: around 1,500 responses) with people, generally, saying it was really useful seeing people teaching. All explanations text-based, videos were a bit of a mishmash, e.g. reading about behaviour management – here are some techniques you can use - watch a video – answer questions, but also 5-minute videos of the 'here's how to organise your whiteboard' variety. Aimed at people coming to the 1-hour flipped course, but ended up using them for the online course, too.

[22:55] (*Reason for using YouTube? Storage, or desire to disseminate more widely?*) At first when doing the online course the videos were on the same server and took ages to load, so band aid solution to put on YouTube. Semi-conscious decision to put them on his own, not EF channel, perhaps with a view to doing something with them later – now halfway there. Still gets a lot of traffic from EF courses and uses this to direct people to his own website.

101 JG: when you say anyone could watch it anyone
102 in the company?
103 RT: yes. well i guess its sort of changed at different
104 times. to be honest i think when we first made
105 that online tefl course we had the videos
106 as part of the course. so they were like stored
107 on the same. im not much of a.
108 JG: on the same server or whatever.
109 RT: stored on the same server blah blah blah. which
110 meant that the training took ages to load.
111 because every time you were loading something
112 you were loading a giant video. so basically
113 we figured it would be much easier to take the
114 videos off. you know the kind of bandaid solution
115 was to take them off and then stick them up on
116 youtube and youku. but i think at that point i was.
117 i cant remember to be honest how much of a
118 conscious decision this was. i guess at least
119 semi-conscious to not put them on like the ef
120 youtube channel. but just to put them on my own

121 youtube channel and then maybe eventually turn that
122 into something else. which i think im sort of half
123 way to doing at the moment. you know because i dont
124 work there anymore. but i still get all this
125 traffic from people on that ef online tefl
126 certificate.
127 JG: so what do you see as?
128 RT: so you know and then i can use that to bounce
129 them over onto my website.

[24:20] (*Plans for the videos?*) Another face (added to social media), where people might search and come across him and be bounced onto his website – website still a hobby at this point, as not monetised yet. (*JG recounts her experience and they discuss the professional benefits of an online presence.*)

[29:55] JG: You don't see a great deal of good lessons on YouTube. RT thought an advantage of recording things was you could edit it to show just the good bits - a safety net. JG: Useful CPD for you, personally to watch yourself? RT: Less than he thought.

[32:37] (*Using video where you work now?*) Filmed something very recently – video will become important here, to get across to people the alien concept that there's another way of doing things (i.e. not lectures). Didn't go very well. Good to have examples of things not going well e.g. kids misbehaving for YL videos. (*JG outlines outcomes of project.*)

130 JG: or is this just sort of on the side? then your
131 stuff now?
132 RT: we actually interestingly i filmed something on
133 friday for the first time here. and i think its
134 becoming important here or will become important
135 here. because like i say ive observed two
136 trainings so far. and both of them you know by very
137 experienced teachers whod been teaching ten years
138 and theyve been just lectures. so even to sort of
139 get across to people of the concept. getting the
140 trainees to do something in the training. and they
141 go well you dont understand. theres not enough
142 time. theres only two hours of training.
143 JG: well better they go away with something having
144 learned something rather than just having gone to
145 sleep for two hours isnt it really?
146 RT: i know. ive actually seen i actually have seen
147 people falling asleep in classes here. yes.
148 teachers will go you dont understand. like
149 theres so much information to get across to people.
150 so i think for me yes. its going to be important
151 to film some things here. almost just to give me
152 the credibility that you know i can do this. or
153 to be honest it seems to be such an alien concept
154 for example to some you know the teachers and the
155 trainers that theres another way of doing things.
156 that you know you can teach a class thats going

157 to be useful for the trainees that's not a lecture.

[37:14] Most of the videos RT made out of necessity – couldn't find anything that wouldn't be a fail lesson. Almost surprising that some of the bigger people (publishers etc.) haven't done it. Why if someone does film, don't they find good teachers? (*JG recounts a British Council video watched on the MA course.*) Discuss issues of control.

Closing remarks. Happy to share.