

**Week 10 – The Podmag** (19<sup>th</sup> February 2014)

The Podmag!!!

K: Hi, and welcome to the Podmag, I'm Karen Foley..... and Dave, would you sit down please?

D: Where am I supposed to sit? and what is this great big contraption?

K: That is the new photocopier, isn't it amazing, we had a memo about it last week and it's arrived.

D: But its massive, where am I supposed to go? wwwwoooooohhhh, I wasn't expecting that!!!

K: You can't sit on the photocopier

D: Where am I supposed to sit Karen?

K: Here, come over here and we will squeeze in, I don't know how we are supposed to produce a lively and entertaining news programme from such a confined space.

D: I suppose we will just have to get on with it

K: yeah, OK, let's do the news.

(News jingle)

D: OK we have to start today with a little bit of sad news, very sad to report that Stuart Hall who was the Head of Sociology retired from the OU in 1997, sadly passed away last week. Stuart was a very committed teacher, he served for a decade as head of the department of Sociology, having joined the Open University in 1979. He was an inspiration figure and recently was a subject of a film called the Stuart Hall Project. He worked on a number of ground breaking courses including popular culture, understanding modern societies and culture media and identity. These were inspirational for students and I'm sure many students will remember Stuart with affection, as do his colleagues. This is Kevin Hetherington, Dean of Social Sciences.

*Kevin Hetherington says...*

*Stuart Hall was a hugely influential figure within the faculty, he was with us for about 18 years and he retired in 1997, and I think one of the major contributions that he made was that although he was a sort of a leading intellectual figure within British Sociology who pioneered many debates, he did a lot of that through his teaching at the Open University, he didn't separate out his research work from his teaching and I think that was a critical and important part of what he did and achieved for us.*

D: Stuart of course was much more than just an academic at the Open University, he was a very public intellectual very??????? regularly for the new left review which he help to found and also for **marxism** today. He had a great influence on many people who met him including Hugh Mackay who was a colleague of his in the Department of Sociology.

*Hugh Mackay says*

*The best thing for me about a getting a job at the Open University was working with Stuart. He was really good company and we always had some fantastic conversations about contemporary culture politics as well as what was going on in the University. Fantastic working with an academic, who throughout his life had this incredible link to activism and commitment to changing the world that we live in, so he was about as far as you can get from an ivory tower academic which was enormously refreshing. He, of course, had a huge influence across the whole of the Social Sciences. He was of a very few people who I think made cultural studies intelligible, very often people get very convoluted and internalist when they start talking about it. He I think was one of the main people who meant that many of the ideas from cultural studies had have a huge influence on other disciplines.*

D: So that's very sad news about Stuart Hall but one thing I can be reasonable confident of is that had Stuart still been around, he would have been very enthusiastic about what we are trying to do with the Students Connection Conference, he was very committed to teaching and very committed to students, and he will be sadly missed and our thoughts go to his family.

K: OK and the next item of news is the Conference Registration. Well, thank you to everybody who has registered already for the conference you will see on our brand new website that you can click the "register now" button and give us your email address and we will keep in touch with you. We will then have a dialogue with you about how you can get involved with the conference and what you might like to do. So please do register your interest now so that we can keep you up to date with what's happening.

D: The workshops – well we have had a lot of people asking us about the Activate Workshops and those of you who were listening last week will know that we had to cancel them for a technical reason. They are now back on. And the very first one will be on March the 19<sup>th</sup>, starts at midday, lasts for an hour and then will be repeated again at 8pm again for an hour. You can come to either of those and if you can't make either of those the following week, March the 26<sup>th</sup> they will be repeated again and we will be doing them a few more times. What's going to happen to you when you get there? Well, basically you come to the workshop to find out what you can do to make the best of the conference and that may mean doing a presentation, it may mean doing a blog, it may mean just turning up and listening to other people. We want you to enjoy the conference in any way you can. March 19<sup>th</sup>, that's the big day, put it in your diary and hopefully we will meet you there.

K: That's great, OK and our next item and final item of news is our digital storytelling workshops.

D: Now these are going to be brilliant, what are the dates of them again now Karen?

K: Well they are overnight on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> April until the 9<sup>th</sup> April, and then also on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> May.

D: And they are going to be really good fun. Now this is an opportunity for you to engage in a little bit of film making. We have got a professional company in to work with us – **Mediadrome**, and you will come along, we are going to get your ideas and we are going to work on them. Now there are only places for six people.

K: That's right, there are six students and you have got to be able to get to Milton Keynes, be enthusiastic and have lots of ideas about how you can share your experiences as a student with other students.

D: But mainly you have got to be able to get to Milton Keynes.

K: That is essential.

D: yeah, enthusiasm would be nice as well. Ok, so if you want to get involved in that just register for the conference using the register now button, we will send you an email and then you can tell us that you would really like to be involved in that part of the project. Now, there are only places for six people so it's going to be on a first come, first served basis, and so get that registration in as soon as you can.

K: Perfect.

(News jingle)

K: Great, while we have this photocopier in here I thought I would print off all the referencing guidelines and make copies for all the students who write in and requesting them.

D: Blimey Karen, this photocopier just doesn't stop going, we must be doing the photocopying for everybody in the Faculty.

K: They did offer to pay us five pence a copy and ten pence if it was stapled bound.

D: Oh did they, I quite like that

K: We could earn enough money for a new studio ....

D: Or even some wages. Anyway I'm getting a bit cramped in here now so I think I will go off to the restaurant

K: You are going to the faculty restaurant?

D: Yes, well it's getting close to that time now

K: We are supposed to be recording Dave

D: Yes but I also have another reason for going

K: What is that?

D: Well **Eddie Tunard** from the Careers Service said he wants to talk to me

K: OK

D: And I think it's about time I did have a career

K: Ok, well why you are there could you get some information for our listeners about how the Open University and Careers can help them?

D: Well I try that, but as a fall-back position I will at least bring you back a sandwich

K: OK

**Eddie Tunnah – Careers Service Interview**

D: *OK so I have come across to the East Campus and I'm in the Henshaw café. I'm meeting **Eddie Tunnah** from the Careers Service. Hi Eddie.*

ET: *Hi Dave*

D: *As you know many of the students studying for Social Sciences are studying in order to change their careers so what can the careers service do for them?*

ET: *I think we can help in lots of way Dave. I think we can – we tend to get a variety of queries really we might get students coming in who know exactly what they want to do, they are doing their degree, they have already made their career decision, that's one situation. Far more commonly I think students don't know what they want to do but they have chosen to do their degree, they know they want to change career but they are not actually sure of their options. So we have got a wide range of resources we have got a lot of website resources which will help them with that sort of career exploration and will help them think about what their options are and they can do that initially starting with the website is quite a good starting point and for lots of people that's probably enough.*

D: *Where do they find the website what is the address?*

ET: *The website is [www.open.ac.uk/careers](http://www.open.ac.uk/careers)*

D: *I had an email from one of our students – **Lowri Williams**. Someone recently described the Social Sciences as “wishy washy” and she thought that maybe employers might have that view of the Social Science degree. Have you got any evidence to support that?*

ET: *I don't think that is the case. I think that employers do employ Social Science graduates in large numbers. Don't sort of quite know where that comment has come from. I would say that a social science degree equips students with a wide range of skills that employers are looking for, but there are a whole other range of skills as well that a social science degree equips you with, there are skills like critical thinking, decision making, those type of things that employers also value very highly.*

D: *I had another student contacted me – **Sarah Macthius**, and she said her dream is to work within Social Services preferably with children services, she is studying with the OU because she has a full time job and she wonders if you have any advice that you could give her on the way forward for that specific outcome?*

ET: *I would say she will need a degree to get into that type of work, so carry on with the degree and obviously do as well on the degree as possible.*

*D: What kind of transferable skills can a Social Science graduate go away with?*

*ET: Things like organisational skills and communication skills are two very important ones, so I would urge students to make the most of the opportunities and if they can get involved in them in student activity perhaps having a blog, doing these types of things and really sort of learning how to communicate with large numbers of people in sort of modern online technologies. I mean that's the way things are going to be going in the future so I think anything like that would be very beneficial as well to be talking about things you are perhaps doing on your sociology degree but you might be explaining it to a psychology student or an environmental science student or something like that, so you might be talking to them in a different language but pitching it accordingly so that's I think communicating in sort of different ways for different sort of audiences.*

*D: **Eddie Tunnah** thank you*

*ET: Thanks Dave*

K: So that's all we have got time for, next week we will be back as usual

D: And that's it for this week, we have run out of time

K: Again, well catch you next time and thanks for listening

D: I will just collect my photocopying and I'm off!!!