

PodMag Week 7: 27th January 2014

Intro music

K: Hi and welcome to The PodMag. I'm Karen Foley and as usual I'm all on my own. This lovely stationery cupboard with an upturned rubbish bin which quite possibly is more use at times than Dave Middleton! Wonder where Dave is? Right, well I think we're going to start off with talking about the Student Connections.....

D: Psssst

K: Hello

D: Psssst. Has she gone?

K: Dave what you doing there?

D: I was hiding from Eugenie

K (laughs): Eugenie?

D: Yeah. Look, she's a really nice woman.

K: Yes, she's lovely.

D: But God can she talk.

K: Really?

D: Oh my goodness. I bumped into her last Wednesday. She just chatted and chatted. I didn't get home till Sunday. She does keep apologising that we got moved from the broom cupboard. But I did tell her that she could make up for it if she just.....

K: You didn't tell her where we were though?

D: I didn't mention it at all.

(Laughter)

K: She's obviously been asking around the Faculty.

D: She's tracking me.

K: Yeah.

D: I think she's tracking me. I'm being stalked (Laughter) I'm going to phone the police. I've got a stalker.

K: Oh well, we've also got some listeners and they've been writing in Dave.

D: More stalkers, I'm now really worried.

K: More stalkers, yes. Not exactly, but these listeners are really nice actually.

D: I like our listeners. Anyway I've got news.

K: Right news. I like it.

D: Not everyone will have caught this. But it is a really nice piece of news for the Open University.

K: good.

D: Last week the Open University was involved in a space mission.

K: A space mission.

D: Yeah, really cool. There's a project called Rosetta which is a spacecraft which has gone out into the galaxy and it's gone as far as it is possible to go. Well, it hasn't gone as far as it is possible to go, it's gone as far as it's.....

K: Able to go

D: Yes, it's gone a long long way anyway, and it was asleep. There's nobody on it. The ship was asleep. It woke up and you know what the first thing it did?

K: What?

D: Got up, went to the toilet, brushed its teeth. (laughter) No, it didn't do any of those things, the first thing it did was tweeted a message back to say 'hello World'.

K: How politically correct.

D: How fantastic though is that and that's something that's being organised by the Science Faculty.

K: What at the Open University?

D: At the Open University. They are involved in that rather large mission.

K: You know we often forget about all this really innovative research that the OU do. Other than just, you know, writing TMA's and modules and things like this. It's very exciting to be part of such a massive institution.

D: And of course very exciting as well to be part of an institution that does cutting edge research and it's not only in science that they do cutting edge research, we do cutting edge research as well.

K: Absolutely. Social science is where it's all at.

D: And, yes we do very good cutting edge research and some of that research will be featured as part of the Student Connections conference.

K: Absolutely. Our keynote speakers in fact.

D: Our keynote speakers are all cutting edge researchers. And, we'll have other academics taking part throughout. And what we want from students is to think about the sort of research that they either have done, because some of them will be researchers of course, or would like to do in the future. Projects that they're working on currently, projects that they might want to work on and

thinking about maybe coming and talking about that with us, because no research project starts as a finished article. Every research project starts at the same place. An idea in someone's head. So we want them to use their ideas, all of you listening, come to us with your ideas, tell us what they are, and then share them with people.

K: Absolutely.

D: Who knows? You might be waking up one morning to get a tweet from outer space.

K: And, there'll be many new listeners this week Dave because we're just starting a lot of our new module presentations. And, if you're really on the ball, yeah?

D: Yeah.

K: Yeah. You might be listening in to the PodMag. So, the whole idea here that Dave's talking about is we have this conference for all social science students, academics and members of staff and this is happening in June 2014, and you can become part of it and you can look at the website and find out loads more about how you can get involved, register your interest, and of course download previous editions of the PodMag, which will tell you all about it.

D: And do you know what's really exciting?

K: What?

D: Lots of things are really exciting. I get excited very easily but,

K: We do, yes.

D: What's really exciting is on Monday, we're re-launching the website.

K: Right.

D: It's going to be a better experience for you. When you go onto the website now it's going to be much easier to find the PodMag, it's going to be much easier to find This Student Life, it's going to be much easier to find news and, for the first time, you'll be able to actually register to attend the conference.

K: Fantastic, Dave. Those meeting with your yoga buddies friends at KMI have done really well haven't they?

D: Yes, KMI folks, the Knowledge Media Institute. You may not have heard of them, but you will be hearing about them because they are heavily involved in helping us to make our conference one of the most brilliantly funky things that you'll have ever attended. Really, anyone who misses it, you're just going to feel like 'Why wasn't I there' It's like those scientists. One of them was supposed to be on that space ship and he missed it (laughter) and all he's got to show for it is a tweet.

K: A tweet, oh well.

D: Sad though, isn't it.

K: You can tweet at our conference also. And, you know what? Maybe that space ship is listening Dave. Maybe they'll email at PodMag@open.ac.uk and send us a mail. Dave, shall I tell our listeners the other exciting news this week?

D: Go on then.

K: Alright. We are launching Student Support Teams. Not we as in the PodMag, but the Open University.

D: Recently I went to Cambridge.

K: Did you take your video recorder and do any interviews for us Dave?

D: I didn't take a video actually. I took an audio recorder because we don't have a video Karen (laughter)

K: Did you take your audio... Did you take your little recorder Dave and did you go an interview anyone for us?

D: I did. I took my cassette recorder with me and I managed to speak to a lot of the people that are involved in the Student Support Teams in Cambridge. If you're on the Psychology Degree these are the sorts of people that will be at the end of that telephone for you. Let's have a listen.

(Insert Cambridge interviews)

D: I'm with Julia Prosser, what is your job Julia?

J: I'm the Senior Manager of Learner Support Services in the Open University Regional Centre based in Cambridge.

D: So for the benefit of students who are our audience, what exactly does that mean?

J: Right, Learner Support Services delivers support to students of a variety of different kinds in fact. It will provide the service that will listen to you when you may be experiencing difficulties on your course which don't relate to the course itself but you might like some advice about what to do next.

D: Ok, so I am with Stephen Cooper would you like to tell us what you do.

S: I'm an Educational Adviser for the Open University. My role is to help students with all aspects of their study from choosing modules, qualifications, to talking about career aspirations, vocational guidance and anything to do with their study that affects them such as illness or disability. I think the message for any student is if you have got a problem talk to somebody.

D: OK, so I am with Ceri Phillips from the office in Wales.

C: Yes, it is going to be slightly different as in Welsh students will continued to be supported in Wales, but we will have a specialist adviser who is myself for Psychology, who will be in contact with all the SST members of staff and we will be just be able to give psychology students in Wales the knowledge that we get from the SST but also with our local national flavour.

D: So, I'm now speaking to Sue Bartram, what do you do Sue?

S: I'm an Educational Adviser in Region 6 in Cambridge.

D: Now your life is about to change because of SSTs so what is that change going to mean?

S: Well from a personal point of view I anticipate being able to improve and extend my existing knowledge of individual psychology modules and the psychology qualifications, so that when a student speaks to me about their pathway or their concerns on a module, I will be better informed and therefore be able to deliver a better service to that student.

D: OK, I'm with Bram Gieben; what is your job?

I'm a Staff Tutor in the Edinburgh office. Wales, Ireland and Scotland they have their own assemblies, they have their own political structures now and we now know that because of that the way those students will relate to the SSTs is almost certainly going to be a bit different from the way the English students do it, so they may have what is called Dual Affinity, they will have clear, strong links into the SST of their choice, but they will also have a link to their regional office and their regional advice for a huge range of things which would be different in Wales or Scotland than it would be for a student in one of the English regions.

D: OK, so I am now with Martin Kenwood, Martin, what is your role?

M: I'm Assistant Director Student Services for the East of England region and I am Student Services Lead for the psychology and counselling Student Support Teams.

D: Ok, this has been a major change in the way we organise support for students, you have been in the centre of it, is it all going to work?

M: Yes, he said confidentially, because there are a lot of staff who are working very hard at the moment to make sure it works, so I am confident that it will work

K: Ah, they sound like a really really nice bunch Dave.

D: I had a really lovely day with them. I really enjoyed talking to them. They were fantastic fun and do you know what? they made me feel that our students are in very capable hands.

K: Anyway I think our strategy of interviewing very nice people is working well Dave.

D: I do and we've got some really interesting interviews coming up in the next few weeks.

K; So Dave, back on the subject of being helpful then. Earlier you'd mentioned that you'd gone out and interviewed Dawn Mannay about DD101's fourth TMA. I think now would be a good time to listen to what she had to say.

(Dawn Mannay)

So the question for TMA04 asks you to “compare and contrast the modernist and flexible approaches to the ordering of traffic” so when you are thinking about the essay, I would suggest you think about social order in a wider way, so Al Buchanan’s work was done in the UK and was published in the 1960’s, Mondaman’s work in Europe was published and done much later in the 1980’s, so he was speaking to a different time. So when you think of Social order it has got to be seen as something that is socially constructed, in a particular time in a particular place, and when you look at Mondaman and Buchanan, you can see how their work is different and how this can be tied to the time their work was written, but also the geographical setting of their work.

So when you are reading and you are planning for your TMA try and think about comparing as looking for things that may be the same, and contrasting, you will be looking for things that are different between the two theories.

D: Okay, so that was Dawn Mannay, a tutor on DD101 talking about TMA04. We’ll have another TMA surgery next week...

K: And don’t forget if you’d like to be... oh sorry..

D: She’s always doing that..

K: Oh Dave.

D: She’s always doing that.

K: Do it again (laughter). Right, I think that’s all we’ve got time for today. We hope you have a good week and we hope you get the TMA results that you’re after, thanks for listening, and we’ll catch you next time.