

Podmag – Week Six

K: Welcome to this week's PodMag. I'm Karen Foley, and I might possibly be joined by Dave Middleton, who it appears has slept late, again. Anyway, in his absence you'll be pleased to know that I have a fantastic show lined up.

(Door opens, Dave is talking to somebody outside)

D: This is our recording studio. Oh Okay sorry -, I'll pass you a pack of biros.

(Sound of Dave rummaging)

D: There you go. Oh, hi Karen.

K: you know we've started don't you?

D: I went to see Baron Hardup. We just can't produce a brilliant, lively and entertaining PodMag from a stationery cupboard.

(There is a knock on the door)

D: Now what?

(Dave opens the door)

D: Hold on I'll check. Karen, can you see the red biros, the tutors need them for the TMA marking this week?

K: I think they're in that corner. Anyway, whilst Dave is busy keeping his customers satisfied, on with my show. Dave! Will you sit down.

D: I haven't got a seat.

K: here, use this.

D: An upturned rubbish bin. K: Anyway, Dave, what about that interview with our Student Connections keynote speaker?

Phone rings

D: Dave Middleton... Engin Isin's secretary? Oh yes, I was just wondering about that actually. What NOW? Perfect – I'm not doing anything important, I'll be up in a second!

I'll be back in a second Karen. If anyone needs a rubber band I've moved them to the second shelf.

D: so, here I am outside the politics department.

<insert interview with Engin>

(knocks on door)

E: Come in

D: Oh hi Engin

E: Hi Dave, nice to see you, how are you

D: I'm very well thank you. I'm with Engin Isin, Professor of Politics, here at the Open University. You are going to be a keynote speaker at the Student Connections Conference. What will you be talking about?

E: Well, I would like to address the issue of Educational Citizenship by just approaching it from maybe two different angles. One is Educational Citizenship in the sense that what kind of education would citizens need to be able to fully function as critical, well informed, active citizens but there is also the other aspect of Educational Citizenship in the sense that what do we contribute to society, what do we contribute to culture, in educating for example in mentoring, helping other people out, how do we conduct ourselves as citizens by actually being models for others to follow, which is also an aspect of education.

D: OK, it sounds like a fascinating talk. I'm sure the students will be looking forward to that immensely and it builds on work that you are doing in the day job.

E: Yes, what we are doing is we are looking at broadly understood citizenship practices around the world and comparing them and when I say broadly we don't necessarily take citizenship to mean holding a passport for a particular country but how do we conduct ourselves as citizens as say in Indian cities, how do we conduct ourselves in middle eastern cultures, in cities in Iran, in Jordan and Egypt. We have also a focus on various historical practices like for example in Arabic culture there is a very strong tradition of storytelling, but perhaps even subversive storytelling, meaning telling stories not exactly they mean what they say, but they also don't say what they mean, so how do people deal in their everyday lives with powers that be. How do people negotiate their everyday activities to speak truth the power as it were.

D: Now obviously what you are doing is something which students have great difficulty doing which is comparing and contrasting but you are doing it across very different cultures. Methodologically that must create quite a few problems for you.

E: Well it is a nightmare at one level because we have twelve researchers in the research project and I would not even be able to tell you from how many different countries, I have lost track of who is from where and we speak at least half a dozen languages and we come from all various different disciplinary backgrounds geography, politics, media studies, culture studies, citizenship studies, sociology – all these differences, it is really very difficult but one of the ways that which we have operationalized the idea of citizenship is this notion of practice, how do we recognize when someone is acting like a citizen, does that change from culture to culture, what we find the amazing thing is that people have this enormous capacity obviously historical, to be able to recognize exactly when someone else acts like a citizen, we have ways of recognizing them and marking it.

D: Now, the Students Connections Conference, we hope will attract around about 2000 people to it, it is all online as you know, is that a large audience for you? or is that just run of the mill for you?

E: No, it is not a run of the mill audience, I mean typically I speak to a small group of interested researchers and so on, so I'm really a small group person, 2000 is a huge order of magnitude for me but I think I can adjust to it.

D: Well I hope you can and I hope you get 2000. Well, Engin thanks very much, it been great talking to you, I'm looking forward to your keynote speech.

E: It's been a pleasure.

K: Whilst Dave makes his way back, let me remind you that we will shortly be starting our Activate Workshops. We want as many people as possible to sign up. There's no cost and no obligation.
(Door opens)

D: Karen, are you trying to sell your home made cakes again?

K: No Dave – that didn't go so well – remember?

D: Well, most of them are out of hospital now.

K: I'm just telling our listeners all about the Activate Workshops.

D: Yes, I'm really looking forward to these. When are they again?

K: Anyway, listeners, they start next Wednesday, the 29th January. There will be a number of them at different times to suit your lifestyle. They will be a lot of fun, won't they Dave?

D: These workshops are for you to find out how you might get involved with the Student Connections conference. We won't be putting you on the spot, or testing what you do or don't know. But, the workshops will give you a chance to think about how you, yes you (sit up at the back, it means you too), can get the most from the conference.

K: you might just want to come along and listen to others, you might fancy chairing a session or doing a presentation.

D: You might want to create a podcast it's really easy, any idiot can do it just like Karen, or a video, create a poster, be a conference blogger or tweeter.

K: However, you want to be involved, you can.

D: And, if you sign up for the Activate Workshop you can find out how much or how little you want to do.

K: oh, and don't forget, Dave to tell the listener the best things about the workshops.

D: That's right, you get to meet me.

K: No. Don't put them off. They get to meet each other. Do you know that there is evidence to suggest that just having another student to talk to increases your chances of success.

D: that's right. So sign up now. It's free and if nothing else we'll do our best to make it fun.

(Knock on the door)

K: Dave, can you get that?

(Dave opens door)

D: one second.

K: what are you looking for?

D: They want large staples for an e-book

K: Well, whilst Dave is busy. We know that many of you will be listening to this when you should be doing your TMA's. There are lots of deadlines in the next week so, I thought that it would be good to give you some advice. Unfortunately, we can't talk about every module so this week Mark Banks, Chair of DD206, has offered his advice about the upcoming TMA03.

<insert interview with Mark Banks>

During this TMA, what we are really asking is for students to think about the similarities and differences between the two theories, between the social theory and the gender theory relating to the division of labour. So it is really about looking at the module materials particularly week ten I think and thinking about what are the common elements of the two theories that are outlined and what are the differences or the divisions between the two, and there are certain themes that come out as been in common, so for example, fundamentally of course they are both about the division of labour, but they are also in some way both about similar kinds of issues so they are both about social structure in a way, and they also have common themes in terms of power, inequality and also an understanding of values. So those are the kind of similarities or the common themes that you might want to think about in relation to the first part of the question, but when it comes to contrasting you are thinking about what's different between the two theories, so in thinking about the differences you are really thinking essentially about what are the cornerstone elements of variation between those two theories, and that comes down to thinking really about class and gender based explanations. Those are the two pivotal points of difference if you like. It's really important to look at the skills activities on DD206, particularly skills activity 15, which is all about writing comparing contrast essays.

So the second part of TMA03 is about interpreting data – numerical data. A lot of students do panic when they see statistics of any kind but this is meant to be very gentle and a very kind of low key way into interpreting statistics, and what will really help here is going back to skills exercise 11, interpreting numerical data, which helps you reads tables and graphs and shows you how to calculate percentages and calculate percentage increases and decreases.

K: Remember, if you have an upcoming TMA that you are worried about, you can email the new regular feature of the show named "The TMA Surgery" with your questions. The address is: podmag@open.ac.uk.

D: And at that point listener leads us very well to the next part of the show. Just recently The PodMag team took a day trip to London to the British library, for the conclusion of the Enduring Love project. This is what happened:

<insert Enduring Love report>

"Mothers are significantly happier with life than with any other group and it does seem to infer that children do provide mothers with some sense of their self or give them some sense of value above and beyond a relationship, and that has been picked up in the media as I'm sure you have read if you have looked at any paper, we are saying that basically children make woman happy and that's partly because we also asked the question who are the most important people in your life, and mothers were far more likely to select children, they had a whole list of people who they could choose and 56% of mothers said children and only 30% of fathers said children. Fathers were much more likely to say their partners. In terms of an open texted question, one of the ones we posed was what does your partner do to make you feel appreciated?, but there is also recognition of the time and effort invested in everyday mundane tasks, but we were surprised about things like a cup of tea, there is something peculiarly important in our culture about a cup of tea and I do say some people went off and said a cup of coffee, but you know this "cup of "was really important especially for mothers

K: That was a really good event, wasn't it Dave?

D: I could talk about it all day long.

K: I'm sure you could, but fortunately listeners, you won't have to hear him. We've run out of time.

Thanks for listening.

D: And don't forget to sign up for those Activate Workshops.

K: see you next time.