

PodMag Week 23

Date: 30 May 2014

Dave:

Come on Karen, get a move on!

Karen:

Huh, Dave these shoes are killing me and look at all these cobbles, I have to get some flat shoes, I have to.

Dave:

Oh, that's just ridiculous.

Karen:

I can't go anywhere until I've sorted this out.

Dave (*angrily*):

That is just ridiculous, you've known we were coming to Birmingham, you know it's got cobbled streets and you've got to get new shoes – we're going to be late!

Karen:

We will not be late, look it will take me 2 seconds to buy..., there's an Accessorize, I'm going in there now.

Dave:

I've been looking forward for ages to go to the HEA Social Sciences Conference and you have to go and get new shoes..., and there she goes. Oh, now she comes back. That was quick.

Karen:

Ahh, that's better Dave, right let's go.

Dave:

Ok, we're off to the Conference.

Karen:

Aww, this conference looks fantastic and look who the key note speaker is?

Dave:

Hey, it's someone from the Open University.

Karen:

Well it would be.

Dave:

It's Mike Sharples from the IET, I know him.

Karen:

Ah, fantastic.

Dave:

Well, we'll go and see him definitely.

Karen:

Yeah, I'm going to go and ask him what he's going to talk about.

Dave:

Ok

Mike:

Hi, I'm Mike Sharples and I'm Professor of Educational Technology at the Open University, and I was a key note speaker at the Conference this morning, and the talk was about how we can understand innovation in higher education, particularly from a pedagogy perspective, so teaching, learning and assessment, and what is it about innovative pedagogy that will enable us to understand possible futures, and what I'm hoping to get out of the Conference is to understand how people see this from a social science perspective, so what is it that social scientists bring to understanding futures and possible futures in higher education that can really inform my research and my understanding.

Dave:

Ah, it's been a fantastic day so far, hasn't it?

Karen:

I know, some really, really good talks.

Dave:

Ours especially.

Karen:

Do you think? I didn't really listen.

Dave:

No, I wasn't listening, I never listen when you are talking..., anyway, it's the theatre next, shall we go?

Karen (excitedly)

Yeah, that sounds brilliant.

Dave:

Ok

Dave and Karen enter the theatre

(Music and singing plays in the background)

Violet:

Hello, my name's Violet, I'm 42 years old and I've just come back to University, I've been away for quite a long time as I've been bringing up my children, I've got 7 children – they are all boys!, so it's been rather a struggle, but I've come back to learn now, really looking forward to it and I live in Zone 2.

Kref:

Hello, my name is Kref, I'm 21 years old, I live in Zone 9 and I'm currently studying 'Twentieth Century Ancient History' (*laughter in background*), 'Literature Technology' and 'Lactose Intolerance' (*laughter in background*).

Geoff:

Hey, I'm Geoff, I'm 23, Zone 9, studying 'Drawings of Gender Reassignment', cheers.

Johnny:

Hiya, I'm Jonny....

Dave:

Right, now we're talking over them, but normal voices because otherwise nobody will hear what we are saying so... Aww, they're pretty good aren't they?

Karen:

Really, really good, yeah, I've really enjoyed all of that and again, you know, students are central to this whole thing, I mean, even though this Conference is all about learning and pedagogy and all of these initiatives that develop in curriculum and stuff, at the end of the day if we don't connect with students it is all pretty pointless.

Dave:

I think you're right. What they are doing here is very much about connections and do you know what?

Karen:

What?

Dave:

We're sitting in a room full of people with an interest in teaching and learning.

Karen:

Yeah, I wonder if we can find out some stuff about it from them?

Dave:

Well, it's about time we did actually, so, shall we go round and talk to a few people while this is going on?

Karen:

Yeah

Dave:

Yeah, I don't think anyone will mind. Hey, I'm glad it's not one of those theatre groups where they ask for volunteers, I hate that.

Karen:

Oh, I know, it's so like.... 1980's.

Dave:

It is and I was a bit worried because you've managed to get us seats right at the very front.

Karen:

I know, it's a good view isn't it?

Dave:

It is a very good view but I'm not volunteering.

Karen:

No, me neither.

Dave and Karen start to interview

(Students talking and laughing in the background)

Karen:

So I'm here with Jenny Carr, we are doing our interview for the PodMag. Jenny, tell us about this Conference, you've obviously been working so hard up to this event, how has it materialised and is it exactly what you expected?

Jenny:

Well, we were really, really interested in thinking about the future rather than just..., we quite often go to these Conferences, we present what we're doing, we know that this has some impact on the future but we really wanted people to articulate what in fact that would be, and so there is a lot of futures work going on and we started searching around the internet and we came across Kerry Fraser's work that she had done, and she had imagined these whole worlds, technological, social, political, economic, and it was just so handy to be able to take her imagined worlds and ask people to relate their research to them, so we were a bit scared, a bit nervous that people wouldn't do that but everybody has taken it on board, so they are talking about the work they have done now but they've really started to say well ok, if this is the world that exists, if it's an only connect world or a loyalty points world or a trust yourself world, this is the way my world will fit in that and then we thought, well why not, why not throw in a wild card, what do we do for the wild card, so we said well let's have apocalypse now, let's have them imagine a future for themselves and the range of ideas that we've had around that, whether it be the University is gone, there is no such thing as the University anymore, it's a couple of papers around that theme, writing has gone, everything is visual, students display their work visually, so academics have to learn how to analyse and critique visually, students are paying to come to the University so whoever pays the Piper plays the tune, if that's the way they want to represent themselves that's the way it should happen, and so that's what's been so exciting as people have either gone, let's engage with those themes, but on top of that there has been that fourth theme where they can go imagine an entirely new world.

Still in the theatre

(Students acting in background)

Graham:

I'm Graham Gibbs from the University of Huddersfield and, well I've only so far seen the first plenary sessions so there could be some really interesting things to come from this Conference but the one interesting thing I am going to take so far is the experience of Future Learn and so on, at the Open University.

Terry:

My name is Terry McAndrew and I'm from the Higher Education Academy where I am doing a digital literacies programme and I'm also working for Jisk Tech Disc and my interest here is the accessibility of the projects in this Conference. Now one thing I've discovered so far is a more enlightened attitude to the use of online resources than I expected.

Katia:

I'm Katia Hollandak from the Canterbury Christchurch University and I'm here to get some ideas and do some networking because the theme of the Conference this year links very closely with the new quite innovative (I would like to think), module a colleague and I are planning for next year which is 'Marrying Criminology and Sustainability due to the Justice Framework' and it's a module that's been funded through the University's internal ESD (Education for Sustainable Development).

Karen:

So Luke, we're here at the evening's entertainment, now last year I hear that the evening's entertainment was particularly good, would you like to tell us a little bit about what happened last year, and maybe a bit about what you are expecting from tonight's entertainment?

Luke:

Well, last year myself and Dave were on a team and we won the Pointless trophy, which is indeed pointless made of solid top-grade plastic, I think both of ours have fallen apart and tonight I expected another quiz, but I hear it's experimental theatre, so me and Dave won't have our chance to shine as normal.

Karen:

So you're not planning to take part in tonight's experimental theatre then?

Luke:

(Long pause) No!

Karen:

Thank you *(laughs)*

Sarah:

My name's Sarah King-Hill, I'm from the University of Manchester, umm...., gosh you're putting me on the spot now *(laughs)*.

Karen:

We are at the dinner now and it's a nice sort of fun time to relax with colleagues and have some chat, have you made any connections with other people or how have you experienced this whole event?

Sarah:

I attended the pre-sessional event this morning, which was the Project Leader's, and that was very interesting because we talked about all different projects that have been funded by the HEA and yeah that was interesting, it was all about teaching research methods and I think we discovered that a lot of our projects, although they are all very different, they kind of have a lot to say to each other.

Karen:

Brilliant, thank you, that's great.

Dave:

Oh, they were fantastic.

Karen:

Yeah, absolutely brilliant!

Dave:

I wasn't expecting the volunteer thing.

Karen:

No, that did come as a bit of a shock.

Dave:

I was just stretching my arm...

Karen:

What? You were first up to be fair Dave.

Dave:

Well...

Karen:

But you know what, it's so interesting doing those role plays and seeing how we can do things differently, I thought, you know, as a sort of learning point that was a really, really interesting thing and very entertaining too.

Dave:

And it was brilliant to see my old friend Luke Sloane from Cardiff University.

Karen:

Yes, you did go on about not having a quiz this year but I think you will agree that the theatre was well worth the effort instead.

Dave:

Well, honestly....

Karen:

And I would prefer you stopped talking about the quiz.

Dave:

Luke and I would have liked a quiz because we won a cup last year.

Karen:

Yeah, I know, I know.

Dave:

And we're very proud of those.

Karen:

So did Mike, who was sitting next to me, who didn't seem quite as enthralled in the whole thing as you did.

Dave:

No, that's true.

Karen:

Anyway, everyone did a very, very good job.

Dave:

I thought that they were fantastic, you got up last?

Karen:

Yes, it did end after that, which I'm not going to take personally.

Dave:

No I wouldn't either but, you know, personally I thought the tap dancing was great, but you know, it's not.....

Karen:

It's not everyone's cup of tea is it?

Dave:

No, absolutely not.

Karen:

Anyway, it's been a really good night.

Dave:

It's been a fantastic Conference.

Karen:

Yeah, really, really good.

Dave:

Well done to the people at the HEA Social Sciences who put this Conference on, it's been a great Conference.

Karen:

Yeah, no, really well organised and thanks for your continued support and it's been really good to talk about the student connections project as well. If anyone is listening, as you know, this PodMag is something that we regularly do to support our Conference and you can find out more at connections.kmi.open.ac.uk or you can email us at PodMag@open.ac.uk.

Dave:

Or send us a tweet at PodMag.

Karen:

Perfect, excellent, and don't forget everyone is welcome to come to our Conference, it's free, it's online from the 30 June to 4 July.

Dave:

In fact it's a (MOOC) Massive Open Online Conference.

Karen:

Yes

Dave:

Which isn't what they mean by MOOC, anyway, (*Karen laughs*), that's enough for us, we're off now, so we're off on holiday?

Karen:

I'm off on holiday now, yes.

Dave:

I thought we were off on holiday?

Karen:

No, I decided someone had to stay here and sort the desk out.

Dave:

But I brought my bucket and spade and everything.

Karen:

Yeah, I am sorry but there's quite a lot of complaints we'll have to deal with as usual, so I just thought it would be best really if you kept an eye on things. I hope that's alright?

Dave:

So you're going without me?

Karen:

Yep

Dave:

Right, ok, I'll keep an eye on the desk then.

Karen:

Thanks, but don't forget to sort out all that paperwork over there.

Dave:

I've got to sort out the new studio as well.

Karen:

Oh yeah.

Dave:

I got Eugenie to clean it for us.

Karen:

Oh, when did you meet her?

Dave:

I saw her a couple of days ago, just after we managed to....

Karen:

Oh she tracked you down did she?

Dave:

Yeah, after we'd blown it up and she offered to..., well when I locked her in I said she's not getting out until she cleaned it up basically.

Karen:

You didn't lock her in again did you?

Dave:

I did, yeah, because it was the only way I could get her to stay. She kept hitting the door for some reason.

Karen:

I know, she doesn't like it, anyway, you sort that studio out because as I said before, I'm not coming back unless it's clean and tidy.

Dave:

Ok, well we don't want you getting your clothes all dirty again.

Karen:

No

Dave:

Right, ok, well that's it then, so you are off on holiday.

Karen:

Yep

Dave:

Have a nice time without me, bring me back.....

Karen:

I'll come back all nice and relaxed and I'll bring you that stick of rock.

Dave:

Yeah, ok then.

Karen:

Alright, see you then.

Dave:

Bye

Karen:

Take care

Dave:

Bye everyone.

Karen:

Don't forget to do that paperwork.