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TRANSCRIPT OF EDITED PROGRAMME

OPEN FORUM

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Bill Prudence

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Chris Serle
Interviewers Martin Stanford
Allan Powell

OPEN FORUM OPENING TITLE
SEQUENCE.

MUSIC

2S Chris Serle & Moira Stuart
Z/I MS Chris

CHRIS SERLE:

Hello. Welcome to the first of our new look Open Forum programmes. Now if a forum is a meeting place where ideas are exchanged, that's what we want this to be. Every month, Moira and I will bring you a round up of news and views and we won't just be talking about the Open University either. We want to include the rest of the world of Higher Education.

MS Moira

MOIRA:

And this month we've reports on the Secretary of States's recent visit to the Open University, a discussion with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, actress Sheila Hancock's view of the OU and how Tonto came to the aid of a damsel in distress.

MS Chris

CHRIS:

But first, every month we'll have

Z/I CU videodisc

MS Chris with disc

a feature about an issue that's currently buzzing round the old university cloisters. This is a videodisc. Now it's just like the sort of compact disc a lot of people have in their hi-fi's except that this one has pictures as well. Well over an hour of moving pictures or more than 100,000 still pictures. It's capacity is colossal. Now the disc has one big advantage over videotape. With tape, as you know it takes ages to spool backwards and forwards to find the bit you want. With this, the videodisc, the pick-up can go to exactly where you want almost instantly. If you connect the disc player to a small computer it becomes the most effective learning aid since teachers were invented. The jargon phrase is interactive video. You interact with the computer, it interacts with you and the disc and you learn quickly and easily. It'll

even tell you how well you're doing. Well, last week the Open University launched this -

CU "Stress at Work" disc cover "Stress at Work" which tells you how to spot the symptoms of stress and deal with them. Our reporter Martin Stanford took a taxi - hang the expense - to find out a little bit more about the disc and what it can do.

Mix to WS St. Pancras Station. Martin Stanford & taxi sequence.

TAXI DRIVER: Where to?

MARTIN STANFORD: Barbican please.

GV's & various shots Martin and taxi driver.

TAXI DRIVER: Being a cab driver you see a lot of human life amongst the drivers and passengers and I notice that passengers fell into certain categories and behaviour patterns so I thought I would quantify this stress and see just how true their feelings were.

MARTIN: Well in actual fact our

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cabbie, David Morris, already has an OU degree. Now his enthusiasm for learning then took him on to study for an MSc in psychological stress. We thought it would be interesting for David to take us on a journey to discover how much easier his learning would be today. Now our final destination - an exhibition of the very latest in educational technology. But first, a couple of stops on route.

MONITOR (WATER DISC): Antartica's covered with seven million cubic miles of pure ice ...

2S Roger & Howard & general shots with disc monitor. CU's of screen.

MARTIN: Roger and Howard are OU students on a Summer School exercize. Is it worthwhile towing an iceberg from the Antartic to Australia to provide fresh water?

MONITOR: This problem can be split into a number of separate steps. First, the total height from top to bottom of the iceberg

can be estimated and this allows us to find the total mass.

CU John Bolton

MARTIN: John Bolton, the discovering Physics Course Team Chairman is seeing how the students are using the BBC OU water disc.

CU MARTIN

MARTIN: What are you learning about at the moment?

3S & CU'S Bolton & student

STUDENT: We've discovered that about 6.8% of the volume of an iceberg is actually occupied by air so that's going to affect our calculations of the density. We've just checked salt and found to my surprise that icebergs are practically free from salt so we can disregard that as a problem.

MARTIN: Are they on the right lines here Ian?

CU IAN

IAN: I think they are, yes, very much.

MARTIN: Ian Every of the Open University's academic computing service wrote the software which controls the disc.

STUDENT: ... that calculator there.

ROGER BOLTON:

You don't need to actually, you can feed that in along that line if you like.

STUDENTS:

Oh I see, yes, of course, it's a calculation.

You must tell us what's happened there.

How about times 1.068.

Ah, that's right.

Does it actually ... you know we got it wrong just a minute ago.

Does it sort of remember that we've made a mistake. Are we assessed in any way on our performance on this?

GV's students with videodisc
& Martin in shot

IAN EVERY:

Yes it is keeping track of what you've done, which answers you've got wrong the first time, how many attempts you took to each question. But it's really only for fun. It's not kept on a permanent record or anything.

STUDENT: OK, so it doesn't affect our Summer School assessment.

CU Bob Lambourne (students
in B/G)

MARTIN (V/O): I asked tutor, Bob Lambourne whether the students found the disc useful and whether they tended to work in isolation.

BOB LAMBOURNE: But there is an enormous amount of information and it's quite possible for students to go in the wrong direction so it's still very important for a tutor to come along from time to time and make sure they're not going up a blind alley. But even the blind alleys

on the disc are full of information. One really can't go anywhere on the disc without learning something.

MARTIN: Is it worth towing ice from Antarctica to Australia?

TUTOR: Well they haven't done it yet but they're still thinking about it.

CU videodisc in machine

MARTIN: And on to another application of the new technology. An opportunity now for David with his specialist knowledge to see what he thought of the new Stress at Work disc.

Gv's David Morris & computer

Well, David, a graduate in Psychology who's also a cab driver, you've been using the machine for half an hour now. What do you think?

DAVID: Very impressive indeed. I'm now concentrating on one character, Bernard, and I'm

looking at his work profile, his home profile and what they call gossip.

Clip from videodisc

BERNARD (ON DISC): ... had time to digest it properly ...

MARTIN (V/O): The Stress Disc contains a 25 minute drama about a period of crisis in a publishing company. It allows the user to absorb the stress symptoms of the 6 managers involved.

MAN ON STRESS DISC: As for the finished product, well, I've read bits ...

SECOND MAN ON DISC: You've read bits?

FIRST MAN: I'll catch up as we go. I've made notes. I'm in charge of the flip chart.

SECOND MAN: Yeh, well that's something I suppose. Well, Sam ...

CU's & MS Martin & David

MARTIN: What sort of facts do you learn about him?

CAB DRIVER: Well, that he's fastidious, that he's pernickety and everything in its place. He has physical ailments like ulcers going back to 1977. I think it's a very useful tool because you're going through all the symptoms of stress and bringing those symptoms to the awareness of individuals.

MCU Clive Holloway

CLIVE HOLLOWAY: Now, perhaps, perhaps the disc is not as good as a brilliant tutor, a good teacher who knows his topic well but I don't think we'd be too arrogant to say it's probably better than a lot of run of the mill tutors who'se main subject interest isn't stress.

MCU David Nelsoan

DAVID NELSON: You can train a lot more people a lot more efficiently and it's fun. I think possibly the most interesting thing from a students

WS taxi

point of view is that they can tackle the material at their own pace. They're not having to follow a lecturer and it's not a passive experience.

WS Martin getting out of taxi
- going into exhibition.

MARTIN (V/O): Finally, to the exhibition of educational technology in London. Here we found that the pace of change for both school and higher education students is accelerating.

GV's exhibition

Already the 5 inch compact disc is used to store several volumes of data. Soon interactive video discs will appear in this format and artificial intelligence and data sharing will further expand its use.

MCU Phylis Edwards,
Sports Scientist,
Liverpool Polytechnic.

PHYLIS EDWARDS: By using the telephone lines it could be distributed down the lines and it could be used in your particular resource space, say in your school Ed.

Tech. Unit or in the library or wherever it happened to be stationed.

MCU Roger Broadie,
Education Advisor,
Acorn Computers Ltd.

ROGER BROADIE: So that the amount of information will be mind-boggling. It won't just be a question of using whatever information is to hand when you want to do something?

PHYLIS EDWARDS: The system will think and will allow you to make the judgements that I might make as an expert coach of many years experience.

GV's Martin & taxi

MARTIN (V/O): In the 30 years or so since David started his journey through learning, the techniques and associated equipment of teaching have changed dramatically. With the best expertise and an almost infinite supply of data at their fingertips it's almost impossible to imagine what further education will mean for today's school children.

MARTIN: So did you learn anything?

MS Moira in studio

MOIRA: That we'll never know. More about David's achievements in our radio programme, also called Open Forum, and that goes out tomorrow night on Radio 4 FM at 11.30, presented by Beverly Anderson and Peter Evans.

Graphics of Open Forum
TX times

MCU Chris

CHRIS SERLE: Each month Open Forum will be out and about investigating issues of moment in the world of Higher Education. Susan Blackmore will be one of our regular reporters and what she has in store is a mark of the new style of this programme. Susan.

MCU Susan Blackmore

SUSAN BLACKMORE: We really do want this to be an Open Forum so we need to hear from you as to what you want us to investigate. So drop us a line to Open Forum,

Graphics - OU address

BBC Open University Production
Centre, Milton Keynes, MK7 6BH.

MCU Chris

CHRIS: Thank you Susan. Do write to us.

Finding time to write essays, attend tutorials and keep up with the broadcasts should only be a small worry for the average distance learner but for some people that may make the difference between becoming a student and not becoming a student. Take heart and listen to Christine Descombes' story. It's this month's Regional Report, from East Anglia.

Graphics - map of Great Britain. Z/I to East Anglia. Regional report graphics sequence.

MUSIC



MCU Christine Descombes, OU student

CHRISTINE DESCOMBES: Through various circumstances mostly based around the fact of my being disabled, I have had fairly limited education opportunities and through the years I'd realised there were huge gaps in my education. I really wanted

Various shots Christine

to begin filling them and so, not so long ago, about 2 years or so, I actually began to make a serious attempt to look at the Open University. I'd seen various programmes and watched with interest but decided about 2 years ago to actually make an application and see how far I could get but I did see some problems.

MS Barbara Bilston,
Tutor Councillor

Various shots Christine with
computer intercut with
Barbara

BARBARA BILSTON: Christine's application was picked up in the regional office by the Senior Counsellor about 9 months before the course was due to start and as an Admissions Advisor I was asked whether I'd come over here and see her. It was fairly obvious that her main problem was going to be with her hands. She was obviously going to have great difficulty writing and turning out the sort of text that you would expect from a Foundation Year student and so I was

discussing with her how we might get over this problem and really just on the spur of the moment I said airily "What you need is a word processor".

CHRISTINE: Well that seemed a brilliant idea but the problem was there - money - because not having a job and only having various Government grants and pensions the idea of getting a word processor was pretty well out of the question and she then suggested to me that there were organisations that would be willing to help out. Well, I'd not heard of these before and it sounded amazing. But she put me in touch ... or she said could put me in touch with a local Lions Group and through the Lions she felt that possibly they would be prepared to loan me a word processor and this was what we actually set about planning to do. But when I spoke to the gentleman from the Lions, he

himself was an employee of British Telecom's and they offered to give me as a gift one of their Tonto's which is basically what they call a work station with a built-in word processing facility. So it really is very simple. Then, when I've put in whatever information I want to put in, perhaps written up a TMA or written a letter to my tutor counsellor, I can load it onto this little tape here, the little micro cassette and that goes into the micro drive and information is stored in there and of course I do this with all my TMA's and when I finally took my exam I was able to store all the information on the little micro-drives and send that to Cambridge as a back-up copy to the written work that my printer was able to produce. But it's a marvellous facility that enables me to do an

awful lot of very practical work
for the OU.

CHRIS SERLE (V/O): When Christine's
machine was up and running,
Barbara Bilston received another
surprise from British Telecom.

MCU Barbara Bilston

BARBARA BILSTON: Well it was
just simply a telephone call
saying that they had a lot of
Tonto machines and I ... by a lot
I thought they meant perhaps 4 or
5. When they said 40 I simply
couldn't believe it because
immediately I could see all sorts
of possibilities opening up of
being able to link disabled
students with each other and
perhaps form them into tutorial
groups and so forth self-help
groups. I thought that the whole
enterprise was very promising and
was very, potentially very
useful.

MS Christine & computer

CHRIS (V/O): The Tonto is more than just a word processor, it's also a home computer terminal which students can easily connect through a normal telephone line to study centres and even the main computer at Walton Hall.

MS Barbara Bilston

BARBARA: Well, we have a policy of course, of encouraging disabled students to apply and we very much hope that people will feel free to apply because we would like to be able to offer disabled students the maximum facilities that we can.

MS Moira in studio

MOIRA: A great success story. And the high point was Christine getting a distinction in her Social Science foundation course. But the East Anglia region still needs more printers to make up the latest set of Tonto's. So if you think you can help, please contact Dr. Valda Stephens, The Open University, 12 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 1PF.

Address - Graphics, black and blue on white

Higher Education Newsquest
graphics sequence

MUSIC



MS Chris & newspaper

CHRIS: Looking through the Times Higher Education Supplement we couldn't help noticing a reference to a couple of last year's 6,000 graduates.

Nigel Johnson, for example, is on the front page. He's a stained glass window conservator. And inside there's a lollypop lady, Mrs. Farnaby who we'll be hearing more about in this report from Allan Powell, BBC North East.

GV's Felicity Farnaby at work

ALLAN POWELL (V/O): The lollypop lady at a school crossing at Yarm, near Stockton, has more in common with the pupils than they know. Felicity Farnaby has been an Open University student since 1980 but had to break off for 2 years when her second child was born. But Felicity persevered and now hopes

that her degree will be a step towards an eventual career in Social Work.

FELICITY FARNABY (V/O): Well, I'm in the process of applying to do a Social Work qualification and I'm also applying to do a post-graduate teaching qualification and hope that I'll be accepted for one of the courses. I feel that it's really a background to some sort of further full time education.

Various shots Catherine Sarkar at home with books.

ALLAN POWELL (V/O): A former Midwife and Health Visitor, Katherine Sarker enrolled 4 years ago. At the same time she learned that she had Ostioarthritis, a condition that steadily worsened. Because of that she's taken most of her exams at home but was able to attend one Summer School.

MCU Catherine Sarkar

CATHERINE SARKAR: I looked towards it really in a bit of trepidation because I was

wondering whether I could manage it but then my husband was allowed to come with me for that week and he acted as my keeper, you know and we both had a very exciting week of it, really.

Various shots Peter & Sandra Brotherhood with dogs in garden

ALLAN (V/O): Peter and Sandra Brotherhood who run successful boarding kennels near Darlington have both graduated. Sandra is a part-time Staff Nurse and her husband is General Manager of a large psychiatric hospital. Peter, who left school at 15, persuaded his wife to keep him company on the 6 year course.

SANDRA BROTHERHOOD (V/O): You support each other, and because it takes up so much of family time when both of you are doing it, you can sort of keep each other going and motivate each other. And it's nice. We found it worked very well.

MS Moira in studio

MOIRA STUART: And thanks to our colleagues in BBC North East for that report. Now, you know how every so often a rather special visitor comes to call. Well, universities are no exception.

GV's Kenneth Baker
visiting the OU

CHRIS (V/O): In November last year, the Secretary of State for Education, the Right Honourable Kenneth Baker, arrived in Milton Keynes to see for himself what the Open University was all about.

Visits like these are an exercise in communication. The OU wanted to show its strengths in areas like academic standards, relevance to industry, emphasis on new technology and research, as well as offering the evidence for cost effectiveness.

MAN: ... profile and ... for an Honours degree.

CHRIS (V/O): The Minister wanted to learn, listen, show interest and,

as a bonus make an announcement
of a little extra cash.

MAN: Yes, the way it works is,
the student selects from amongst
our 15 courses ...

CHRIS (V/O): So, a good place to start
was the Technology Faculty where
the Minister was confronted with
a display of OU courses. While
he was there, Kenneth Baker
chatted to a student.

KENNETH BAKER: Where do you
live?

GV's Kenneth Baker talking
to student

WOMAN: I live in Birmingham.

KENNETH BAKER: And what have you
been studying?

WOMAN: I did Social Science the
first year and I was, um ...

KENNETH BAKER: And what did that
cover?

WOMAN: It cover Economics, Sociology, Psychology and a bit of Geography. One day I was watching the television and the OU programme come on and then I, when I look at it and they say this is the Open University open to everybody who wanted to get degree. So I ... and I saw the address and I wrote to the OU and I applied. My husband was very opposed to the idea of me doing an OU. He said to me, oh, I don't think I like the idea of you doing it because I don't think you could do it.

MAN: Now you were asking about computing. This is ...

CHRIS (V/O): One of the Open University's new courses is on a subject Kenneth Baker is known to be keen on.

MAN: Yes, this is a new course about Information Technology.

Technology, the electronics, the telecommunications, social science, the management economics side of ...

KENNETH BAKER: And you've got 1,500 students, have you?

MAN: Yup, registered.

KENNETH BAKER: Starting this February.

MAN: Yes.

KENNETH BAKER: What equipment do you use?

MAN: We're using the IBM clone as a standard.

KENNETH BAKER: Do you have to pay for it?

MAN: They can either rent it or they can buy it, or because it's actually a standard common in a

lot of offices they can, of course, use it.

WS Kenneth Baker & various people with computer

MAN 2: The significant thing about this course is that the numbers go up a great deal because I have 4,500 students a year.

KENNETH BAKER: On basic technology.

MAN 2: This is an introduction to technology and it takes ...

KENNETH BAKER: And this is computer technology, basic information technology.

MAN 2: No, it's technology generally. We are ...

KENNETH BAKER: You do chemistry?

MAN 2: Yes we do.

KENNETH BAKER: Physics?

MAN 2: Yes. We teach a range of basic science and technology principles but we also try and teach students two basic skills that will be of general use. We try to develop their literacy skills and we also try and develop their ...

KENNETH BAKER: That sort of literacy?

MAN 2: Yes. The sort of stuff that poets worry about. And indeed (inaudible) the state of Educational Sciences.

MAN: And this is the machine that we've built with Wolffson Foundation sponsorship. The ideal ...

CHRIS (V/O): But it wasn't just new technology courses the Minister was interested in. He was also shown the links between courses and research. Here, he found out

CU machinery

and research. Here, he found out about research in Earth Sciences. Finally, he asked about the increase in the number of OU applicants.

WS Kenneth Baker points to chart

KENNETH BAKER: Now why was that so high just after we'd had a fee increase? What is the correlation between the peak of enquiries in the wake of a fee increase?

MAN: I think I can explain that. I think that was ... we were fairly politically active in trying to get our grant up and there was a fair bit of publicity.

KENNETH BAKER: Right. Good.

MAN: ... effective campaign. Every MP is a local MP for us.

MS Chris in studio

CHRIS: The Secretary of State for Education visiting the OU

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last November. His guide on that visit was the University's Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Norman Gowar.

2S Chris & Prof. Norman Gower

Now Professor Gowar, your closing words in that film were "Every MP is a local MP for us". Does that mean you'd like people to write to their MP's about the OU?

MS Norman Gowar,
Deputy vice-Chancellor, OU

NORMAN GOWAR: Sure. What I was trying to say is, we are a national organisation. We feel the students are pleased with what you get from the Open University, write and tell the MP's. They need to know.

CHRIS: How much richer is the Open University as a result of that visit from the Secretary of State?

GOWAR: Well, we're a bit richer. He announced some more money for some new buildings which we desperately need and also a quite exciting start on a new programme

in Management Education. That'll be \$400,000 a year, we hope over 5 years to get that off the ground. And a little bit extra on the actual general grant - \$600,000.

CHRIS: Is it all good news? I mean, is the University actually richer or poorer as a result, in real terms over last year, for example?

GOWAR: In real terms over last year, we are poorer in our main undergraduate activity. We got a little bit to help but not as much as we needed. The basic problem is that the undersupplementation for inflation erodes our grant by about \$2 million a year and we've got an extra \$600,000.

CHRIS: What are the implications for 1988, cutbacks or what?

GOWAR: Sure. There'll be cutbacks in 1988. Not quite clear yet what the impact will be. The student services are protected for 1988 and what we're desperately trying to do is to protect our main line activities.

CHRIS: Now one of the issues discussed in that film was the fact that there are more applicants than the University can handle. Does that mean that there is going to be an even bigger shortfall, that there will be even more applicants failing to get in because the University isn't big enough to take them?

GOWAR: Yes, if we can't actually increase the intake of students and make inroads into that waiting list, the waiting list will just pile up. The trouble is if it piles up for too long, people will just lose interest. And this is our main worry, is

that there is an enormous potential for the University that we don't actually think is being exploited to its full by the Government.

CHRIS: Well, assuming that you've been lobbying the Secretary of State as hard as you possibly can, presumably you've reached the stage where he'll give you no more. Where do you go from there, very briefly?

GOWAR: Well, we try to get some more for 1989 and onwards. Also we're trying to get money from outside sources and this is one of the problems, we're investing money at the moment in trying to get some more money in but there is a difficulty there because a lot of the money that you get for other activities has to be spent on those activities so it doesn't actually help your infrastructure or your main line programmes.

CHRIS: Well maybe that's a discussion point for a future Open Forum.

GOWAR: I think so, yes.

CHRIS: Professor Gowar, thank you very much.

Open Access graphics sequence

MUSIC

MS Moira in studio

MOIRA: Now, every month we intend to reflect your views about Open Forum and Open University programmes. So if there's a specific programme you found useful, even fun, or one that's really annoyed you, just let us know. We also hope to bring you reports from new courses in production in the United Kingdom and around the world. Write to us at this address:

Address: black & blue on white graphics

Open Forum,
BBC Open University,
Milton Keynes.
MK7 6BH

MS Moira

And that's about all for this month. We'll leave you with a clip from a recent "Did You See" where Sheila Hancock reported on the Open University from her own perspective as a student.

2S Chris & Moira

From Chris and me, that's it.

CHRIS: Goodbye.

MS Sheila Hancock
Longstanding OU student
BBC specially shot film.
from "Did You See" programme.

SHEILA HANCOCK: Despite being considered quite bright at my grammar school, I caught the dread disease of wanting to go on the stage, so I left at 15. By the time I got to 30 I began to regret that and then in my forties I started to work with all the posh people at the Royal Shakespeare Company in the National. I was surrounded by university graduates and I felt totally, totally ignorant. So at 49 I started studying with the OU. Whilst I was there I saw the most miraculous changes come over my fellow students ...

CLOSING MUSIC

CHYRON END ROLLER:
black & blue on white B/G

Presenters
Chris Serle
Moirra Stuart

Reporter
Martin Stanford

Production Team
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Judith Rolph
Juliet Charlesworth
Naomi Gourevitch

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Technical Manager
John Fane

VT Editor
John Halford

Film Editor
Phil Stillman

Executive Producer
Ken Little

Produced by
Jane Johnson
Carol Winton

Editor
Kevin Newport

A production for
the Open University

BBC TV

c The Open University MCMLXXXVIII