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**KAREN FOLEY:** Hi, and welcome to the Student Hub Live. Well, this is our Freshers Fair for the 2016 October start. So, welcome everybody to the Student Hub Live. I'm hoping that there will be some people who have come to events before. And I'm hoping that there are lots of new people out there as well. And some of you will be watching in real-time and some of you will be watching on the catch up.

But over the next two days we have a huge programme lined up of exciting events that you can participate in. So how does it all work? Well, if you're in the Watch and Engage function of the website, you'll be able to see the chat. You can press the interactive widgets, and tell us where you are, how you're feeling, which subject you're studying, which level you're studying, how you feel about starting your next module, and whether you've been to a Student Hub Live event before. We'd love to know the answers to those.

For those Wordles - which are the three questions - if you could only think of one or two things, just put a cross in the other boxes, because it won't allow you to submit unless you put your answers in. But they're fairly self-explanatory.

There might be a lot of chat going on. And there's a little pin at the top hand, so you can stop that and scroll down if there's something you'd like to catch up on. And you can change your interface on the bottom right-hand side of the screen to get the chat larger or smaller. So choose the option that's best for you.

So you can chat in the box, but you can also e-mail us. If you've got any questions, you can email [studenthub@open.ac.uk](mailto:studenthub@open.ac.uk). And our hashtag is #studenthublive16. So do put your selfies in there for us to see in the studio and any questions that you've got for our panel. You can look at the programme and put anything to us, and we'll ask them in real-time.

So I'd like to introduce Sophie and HJ on our hot desk. How are you both?

**SOPHIE:** Hi. All good, yeah. Excited.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Good. Good, good, good.

**HJ:** There's always lots going on in the chat, isn't there? And I think, well, yeah, we just love

chatting to everyone, so I think we're glad to be here.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Excellent. No, well, that's great.

Well, tonight is a really nice session because we are going to talk to Liz Marr, who's the Director of Teaching, about being a student. And then we have our famous Wheel of Ologies Quiz, which the team are really excited about backstage. And then I'm going to talk Hazel Rymer about being an -ologist. And Hazel is a vulcanologist, so that's going to be really, really interesting.

A lot of you who come to bootcamps have said, why aren't there evening sessions? Well, this is it. So I'm hoping that you're able to join us in the evening as well. And we also have some stuff on tomorrow evening, as well as in the day.

So without further ado, I'd like to welcome Liz. Liz, hello. How are you?

**LIZZ MARR:** Hi, Karen. Thank you. And it's great to be here again.

And I absolutely love Student Hub Live events. I've been in all of them so far. And hopefully there will be many more to come.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Excellent. Now, Liz, we've been having these bootcamps which have all been about getting ready for module start. And everyone is very, very excited. We've got lots of new students, and some of them are bit nervous about doing TMAs, so we were talking a little bit about that today in our bootcamp. What do you remember about being a student?

**LIZZ MARR:** Well, I was thinking about this, Karen, because actually it was quite a long time ago when I was a student. And believe it or not, there was no internet. No internet. There were no mobile phones. Unbelievable. And so the world has changed very, very considerably. But I think the thing that I most remember about being an OU student - before I went to a face-to-face institution - was that the relationship with my tutor was the most important thing.

And so my AL was my main contact, my associate lecturer. My tutor was my main contact. And I did everything through him. And he was so believably supportive and helpful.

And I do remember going to a tutorial very early on. And the piece of advice he gave was, you may be sitting there thinking, I can't ask this question because I'm going to sound stupid. He said, everybody else in this room is sitting there thinking exactly the same thing. And there's

no such thing as a stupid question.

And that relaxed us all and made us realise that it was possible to ask anything. And that amount of support from your tutor is just invaluable. And that's the thing that I learned, I think, mostly to rely on.

As I say, there was no internet. There were no mobile phones. Everything was through the text. Everything was through the post. Fortunately, there were no post strikes when I was a student, which have been known to happen, and so it all went quite smoothly. But that's what I mainly remember.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Because today we were talking about some of this, and people were saying, I never realised that other people felt like this as well. People in the chat were talking about some of their anxieties and things. How important is it, do you think, that students can get together and talk about these things? And how does that work in a distance learning environment?

**LIZZ MARR:** I think it's really important because you have to understand that, as you say, everybody else is feeling the same as you do. But it's a lot harder to appreciate that when you're sitting at home and you're not necessarily interacting with other people. So I would say use the forums, use all the means of social engagement that you can to talk to other students. And you'll find that although you might not want to admit your own fears and insecurities straightaway, soon people will start to do it and then you can join in. And actually you can say, oh, I hadn't even thought of that thing to worry about. There's another one.

**KAREN FOLEY:** You can wind yourself right up with lots of things.

**LIZZ MARR:** Yeah, wind yourself up brilliantly. But it's great to have that support from your fellow students. And that's one of the reasons why we think Student Hub Live is such a brilliant idea because it's a way of bringing students together in a forum that they wouldn't otherwise be able to access.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yeah.

So as Director of Teaching, then what do you think is important for students right now in terms of things? I mean things are changing quite a lot in terms of our access to things. We've had sessions on not procrastinating and managing our digital material.

There's lots of ways that students can go out and join Facebook groups and engage on

forums and cafes and various things. So with all of this access to a lot of stuff there, how do students navigate a lot of this? How do they stay centred with all of the excitement and looming TMAs?

**LIZZ MARR:**

Yeah. That's really challenging because it's very easy to get distracted. And so you can think, well, I'm going on social media because it's work. And maybe it isn't always work. You've got to have times when you're not working and when you're relaxing and perhaps interacting with other students in a social way.

But I think it's important to plan your work carefully. Decide on the times when you're going to study. Keep those times sacrosanct so that you can concentrate in them and everybody else knows that those are your times to study.

But, also, make sure that you limit what you engage with. So you make your decision - please make your decision that you're going to engage with all the Student Hub Live events. That goes without saying.

But in terms of all the other things, how often are you going to go into forums? Make your mind up in advance how often you're going to do it. Limit yourself to that.

Decide on whether you're going to be tweeting or Facebooking or whatever. But make your decision and stick to it, and don't get distracted with lots and lots of different ways of interacting.

But most of all, just enjoy it, because it is so exciting, I think, to be starting as an OU student and engaging with study materials. Just take the time to really really enjoy it.

**KAREN FOLEY:**

Yeah. Excellent.

Everyone's very excited in the chats. Talking about cake and supper, and is joining us online and talking about how they're going to win the quiz. I know how they're going to win the quiz. And you're not allowed to Google anything! So that's all exciting.

But you are right, Liz. I mean, a lot of it is prioritising and holding that excitement, but focusing and, I guess, identifying where you're going to go with some of that.

But for a lot of students, this is the start of maybe a four- or six-year journey. How do you hold onto that excitement and keep it front of mind when maybe things are getting a little bit tricky

and you might be wanting to procrastinate a bit?

**LIZZ MARR:** Yeah, it's always hard and life does get in the way very often. But I think there are two things, one is about wanting it - I mean, really, really wanting it. And I think that Open University students generally do really want it because it's another opportunity that they may have missed out on before.

But I think the other thing that I used to do is visualise the success. So I would imagine myself walking across that platform, shaking hands with the vice chancellor, and all of my friends and family saying, look, she's done it at last. And that was what kept me going-- visualising my success.

But also recognising that there are times when things are going to be-- you're not going to want to do it. And just accept that, and have a break. Take a week off and refresh yourself, and then come back to it. But keep that in mind while you're doing it and what you're going to get out of it.

**KAREN FOLEY:** No, it's important, isn't it? Because I think, you know, you have this goal. And I've heard so many people saying it's that graduation and that's what really matters-- thinking about getting to that point.

And I know you've been to a lot of graduation ceremonies, and you've had the most incredible stories of students who have overcome so much in that journey to get there. And as you say, if you're really determined, it does get you there in the end, doesn't it?

**LIZZ MARR:** It does. And I'm constantly amazed at the stories that you hear.

So a couple of graduations ago, a woman walked across the platform. She had nine children. She had nine children, and she had done her degree in six years. That's just pretty - I couldn't manage nine children, let alone do a degree as well. So pretty impressive.

So, yeah, there are some amazing stories of what students do. And I think that's what makes OU graduates so special, because not only can they demonstrate their knowledge and competences and qualification at a particular level, but they have also managed to do it whilst holding down jobs, looking after children, managing all kinds of additional responsibilities. They're ultimate multitaskers, and really good at it as well.

**KAREN FOLEY:** No, exactly. It is incredible. And as you say, it's so important to, I guess, get a sense of what's

important to you and why you're doing all of these things.

We asked our audience how they were feeling right now. And I'd like to take a look at where everyone's at, because we've got a lot of people here.

You said, come to all Student Hub Live events. Well, 93% of people have been to a Student Hub Live event before, so that's brilliant. They're coming back, hopefully, to play the quiz. And we've got a lot of first students and also an increase in the amount of STEM students, possibly because of some of the planetary scientists and vulcanologists we have on later tonight. So that's very good.

But let's take a look at how everyone's feeling right now.

So we've got people feeling pensive, happy, excited, hungry, looking forward, organised, anxious, ready, cake - cake always comes up quite a lot - quizzy, fed up. OK, so lots of very, very different emotions out there. And obviously food having some level of influence.

But we've also got a lot of Level 1 students tonight, 71% Level 1 students, so people very much at the start of that OU journey. What advice would you give to them then about, I guess, holding some of this and continuing as they're about to start? They're getting their books. They're just getting their tutors allocated. Hopefully, we'll get their tutorial timetables in soon. What would your advice be for Week 1 coming up?

**LIZZ MARR:**

Don't try to do everything at once. Don't jump to the first assignment. Don't try and read all your course materials. Go through it systematically. Use your timetable, the study planner, to see what you need to do and when you need to do it. Respond to the e-mail messages that you might get.

But don't just try and jump in and do everything on the first day. There's a temptation to think, oh, I need to get it all out of the way now. And it just doesn't work very well doing it like that. So spread it over your weeks, and make sure that you take an organised, orderly approach. But be realistic about what you can do in the time frame.

**KAREN FOLEY:**

Well, a lot of the people who have been to the bootcamps have been super organised. A lot of them have already found their first assignment and had to look at that. And we've been doing lots of things on reading and note-taking and writing and planning TMAs and going through feedback. So everyone out there, I think, is really ready for their module to start.

But tell us, then, about the quiz tonight and why are we doing that and what's that all about, because, as you say, you're very keen on coming back for this sort of activity.

**LIZZ MARR:** Well, I'm keen on coming back for the quiz because it means that I can take revenge on my colleagues by scoring them low and making them fail. But no, the real reason we do it is because we want to inject a little bit of fun and excitement into these events.

Student Hub Live is not all about the study skills and about the content, but it's about enjoying being part of an academic community and being able to see some of the academics that are preparing the courses that you're studying, presenting the courses that you're studying. So it's about seeing them, not necessarily in their best light, as we shall see. But it's also an opportunity for the people at home to play against us, as the academic teams, in the quizzes and to just really have some fun, I think.

**KAREN FOLEY:** No, it is lots of fun. And it's interesting because all the people backstage, it's so funny seeing people going, oh, I haven't seen you for a while and nice to see you and this, that, and the other. And we realise that this is a really thriving academic community with so many diverse disciplines going on and so many ways of connecting as well. So whilst we're trying to connect with the students at home, it's also nice to connect as part of this community also.

**LIZZ MARR:** Yeah. And you wouldn't believe how competitive those teams are. They already started vying with each other before they even got any questions. So they're all in there warming up.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Oh, good. Well, maybe you should have a philosophical boxing match with some of them another time then, which was the way we settled our plenary for the earlier bootcamp today. In fine form, it was. OK. Excellent.

Well, I think we should break now and go up to the quiz. And we're going to show you a little bit of a video break. And we're going to look at the funny thing about scientists, which will hopefully get you in the mood for the quiz and introduce you to a few familiar faces.

Sophie and HJ, before we do that, is there anything you would like to add?

**SOPHIE:** Well, it's very busy in the chat actually. So there's a lot going on. Again, a lot of cake, popcorn, pizza, discussions as per.

**HJ:** As per usual. But I think as per usual as well, we're just excited to be here and to chat to everyone. And as usual, we're here to put your thoughts, comments, and questions to the

studio. Anything you have on your mind or want to chat about, that's what we're here for. And we're excited to talk to you.

And as well, we had our bootcamps events. And we just finished our last one earlier. And people were sending us loads of wicked things, like selfies of cats and study buddies. And we got loads of them on the boards behind us. This is Holly's hidden kitten. But if you want to send us stuff as well, remember you can do so, [studenthub@open.ac.uk](mailto:studenthub@open.ac.uk) and our Twitter [@StudentHubLive](https://twitter.com/StudentHubLive). And we have stuff to send back to you, too. So, yeah, we're just here to join in the chat and put everything you think to the studio, too.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Aw. And by stuff, you mean electronic stuff? You can't have real cake. I know you've tried.

[LAUGHING]

But it's not happening.

**HJ:** We do try.

**KAREN FOLEY:** [LAUGHING]

Yeah. OK.

**LIZZ MARR:** Have we got no 3D printers yet?

**KAREN FOLEY:** Oh, that would be good, wouldn't it?

**LIZZ MARR:** Yeah. Print your own cake.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Although I must say, I've had some very good recipes coming through. In fact, we have, haven't we? We've had some good recipes.

We've got apples, of course, so that's healthy. Not going down very well with the panel, but we can but try. Excellent.

Well, let's have a little break and we'll gear up for the quiz. At home, go and get ready. Get your pizzas. Get your cake, popcorn, et cetera. And we'll see you in a few minutes after this video break for our fabulous Wheel of Ologies Quiz.

[MUSIC PLAYING]