

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**KAREN FOLEY:** Welcome back to the Student Hub Live. Well, what did you think of that? Isn't that an amazing virtual reality app? Mychelle, what are you up to?

**MYCHELLE:** Well, you see the goggles. They are absolutely brilliant. If you're scared about presentations, and you want to get in your bedroom and try these on and have a go with that, that's absolutely brilliant.

So the app makes you feel like you're giving a presentation to real people. They react to you. They say to you- or they can walk out of the room, for example, if they think you're looking down too much, or if you're mumbling, or if you're not interactive.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Do they applaud at the end?

**MYCHELLE:** They do applaud at the end as well. So you don't have to leave your bedroom to do a real presentation. It's absolutely brilliant. And they've got many other uses. There are loads of apps that you can download onto your phone that are virtual reality, that you can use the goggles for afterwards, not just for educational purposes.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Wow.

**MYCHELLE:** I'm not wearing these for the rest of the day.

**KAREN FOLEY:** no. Fair enough. I think you've got to give them back because they're in high demand. OK. Excellent. Well, I'm glad you've enjoyed that. OK.

Our next session is called a Sight for Sore Eyes. And I'm welcoming Dean Fletcher and Ben Melliush. Now, you are, Dean, the academic conduct officer for the faculty. So why aren't you wearing a hat and looking a lot more official? [LAUGHS]

**DEAN FLETCHER:** I just thought I'd dress down and be nice and summery today for the rain outside.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Excellent. Now. You've prepared this fantastic session, which is basically talking about plagiarism, which is one of the things that students are very, very frightened of, but many will inadvertently do some sort of copying or taking ideas in some sort of way. And what we wanted to talk about in this session was understanding, I guess, we all don't want to plagiarise.

We don't want to steal anything. None of this is inadvertent. But it's very easy to somehow end up sometimes taking things that aren't maybe your own.

**DEAN FLETCHER:** It is very easy. And probably the biggest offender, if you like, is the person who inadvertently commits plagiarism. And often, what that is is lack of knowledge, particularly with people, new students in particular, coming specifically to the OU, having maybe not had a previous background in education or a high level education.

It is quite a skill that you need to get used to. And even traditional universities, where it's taught in a lot of modules, it's still something that can catch people out. And the intention, of course, is as you say, to move students on and help them not to do that.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yeah. And Ben, you are a Student Experience Manager for the Faculty of Business and Law. And you're working with B100. So what we've done in this session is taken some neat ideas to talk students through some of these aspects.

So on your screen, you're going to see lots of widgets in this session, these interactive voting tools. And you'll see some now. Would you take the umbrella without paying for it? And you see other people taking umbrellas without paying for them.

Now, these are not trick questions. We genuinely want to know your opinion on things because this is a very subtle area. So let's see our first case. So getting wet is the first example that we've had. Shall I read through this?

**DEAN FLETCHER:** Yeah.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yeah? So this scenario is this. You head out to the shops on what starts to be a mild day. I mean, this is very typical for today, actually, which is pouring down outside, I think, still. Soon enough, the cold kicks in, and the rain begins to fall. Wearing your shorts and t-shirt was a bad idea.

In one of the shops, there are hundreds of umbrellas, which we can see models here. The shop has already sold hundreds of umbrellas that day, and it's made a handsome profit. You pick out an umbrella you like and then are faced with some issues.

And the issues are this. Would you take the umbrella without paying for it? Yes or no. And you see other people taking umbrellas without paying for them. Would you do that now? OK. So

these are the questions that we would like you to vote on at home.

This is one of these issues, I guess, that has to deal with corporations. Often, if it was an individual, it's slightly different stealing from a grandmother with her only umbrella than a shop who maybe has a lot, who's making a lot of profit.

**BEN MELLUISH:** I mean, you see lots of other people doing it. Are you more likely just to copy them and go with the trend? Go with the flow and do what they're doing, because they're maybe taking an umbrella without paying for it, but is that right? That's the discussion we're hoping students would have while they're trying to answer these questions today.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I think it's very likely that a lot of people- well, I don't know. I mean, would you take the umbrella without paying for it?

**DEAN FLETCHER:** there's always a circumstantial aspect as well. If it's raining outside, the need for the umbrella become greater. I personally wouldn't take it, no. But then, I'm supposed to say that because I'm the academic [INAUDIBLE].

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yes, Dean. You'd get in all sorts of trouble. You'll probably get a form. [LAUGHS] So we asked people at home what they would say in terms of taking the umbrella without paying for it. Let's see what you had to say.

OK. So no was 88 per cent. But yes is 12 per cent. OK. Very honest of you. Thank you for that. And what about when you see other people taking the umbrellas and not paying for them? What would you do then?

Let's see. If you haven't voted on that, you can do that already. But 83% had said no. OK, So we've got a slight decrease there in the number of people saying no, they wouldn't take an umbrella for it without paying. So firstly, they said no, they definitely wouldn't. But if they see other people, then there's a bit of an increase in the number of people who might, because there's a decrease in the figures going down there. OK. So interesting point.

**DEAN FLETCHER:** Are we able to find out who these people are that would take it?

**KAREN FOLEY:** No, and you can't email them. [LAUGHS] Right. Getting likes. OK, this is another scenario. So we're going to put some more widgets on the screen here. These are the questions.

Would you edit the picture to delete the photographer's details and upload it to an Instagram

page- you can see we're getting a bit more complex now. You've had an issue with capturing the photos. Here is a photo I took. And would you see an issue with not crediting the photographer?

So this is all about a graduation at the OU, isn't it? Is this a true story?

**BEN MELLUISH:** It's not a true story, but it very easily could be a true story.

**KAREN FOLEY:** OK. So at your graduation from the OU, there is a photographer circulating and taking pictures that can be bought. I think this is a really common issue, and there have been a lot of graduations this week. The photographer uploads the pictures onto an album on the internet, containing his name and his details.

You are liking one of the pictures of you and are convinced it will get at least 100 likes of Instagram. However, the watermark of the photographer's details are ruining the picture. So the question is would you then edit that picture to delete the photographer's details and upload it to Instagram, if indeed you could do such a thing, and would you see an issue with captioning the photo?

So here is a photo I took, or would you credit the photographer? And would you see an issue with not crediting the photographer? OK. So would you edit the photograph? 77 per cent have said no, but 23 per cent have said that they would. So it's nearly a quarter. Is that Higher than you expected?

**BEN MELLUISH:** It's about where I thought it would be. I think when people put a photo online, they don't always think it's stealing, because it's just a picture online, and it's a picture of me, therefore, if I'm just going to take it and post it, really, what's the harm in me doing that?

But we need to try and educate students and get them to think about, well, there is something wrong with that. And if you took that photo, and if it was your livelihood, you would feel bad if someone was taking it away from you.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Even though it's there in the first place.

**BEN MELLUISH:** Even though it's there in the first place. So say I took the photo of Dean at his graduation, and I was trying to sell it to him, and then he just took it off my online album and posted it as something he took himself. It's not right. It wouldn't sit right with me as a student or as an individual.

**KAREN FOLEY:** And is there anything about editing this and sort of changing it slightly, the subtleties there, with the watermark?

**DEAN FLETCHER:** Well, the point of that is obviously, nowadays, with social media, et cetera, it's quite commonplace really to be using pictures of yourself or things that you want to use yourself. And if somebody else has produced that, then there's every reason for you to use that as your profile picture, for example, and do it how you want it, ultimately.

I think probably the balance here is that this- from the photographer's perspective- this is a product that he's advertising. This is his business, for example. Just like when you go in the shop in the first scenario, there's an umbrella for sale on the stand.

Well, here, his stand is the social media platform, the internet. And so there isn't really much difference there in terms of you taking that, whether you choose to edit it or not. You could argue, perhaps, the editing it is perhaps going that step further to suggest that you are willfully unintentionally trying to pass that off as your own and take away any identity from the photographer.

**KAREN FOLEY:** OK. So there's that issue, and then there's also the captioning with the naming or titling. So we asked people, would they see an issue with captioning the photo and saying, this is what I took. So basically lying and saying that it was something that they took. Let's see if we've got any feedback from that and see what you had to say about that.

We've also asked about not crediting the photographer as well. So if you haven't filled that one in, do so now. 89 per cent have said that they would see an issue with captioning the photo. So there's a bit of a difference here between sort of putting it on, and then saying who had or hadn't taken it.

**BEN MELLUISH:** So a lot more people would post it, but not lie about who took it.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yeah. OK. And then I guess we're going down a path here. Would you see an issue with not crediting the photographer? So let's see what you had to say about that. 74% said yes.

**BEN MELLUISH:** Let's practise now.

**KAREN FOLEY:** OK.

**DEAN FLETCHER:** Well, that suggests that clearly people using the photo, they would expect to say where that

come from.

**KAREN FOLEY:** HJ and Mychelle, do you have some advice on this?

**HJ:** Yes. We had- actually, Graham has just commented, saying that digital rights is a big deal, and you might end up getting a phone call, because you never know with these sorts of things. And some companies and people are very fastidious in following up on it. But there is a ways online as well.

We were just talking to Angela about Creative Commons. And usually they'll say if they're happy for it to be used. And if you use things like Wikipedia, the photos on there, they'll say what you can use it for and whether you can use it on your own work, and you have to say who it's by.

So there's lots of helpful tools about to help you navigate through what you can and can't use, and it's just being aware of them and being cautious, I think. And I think Graham is right. You want to avoid any phone calls on that front.

**MYCHELLE:** and each photo is different. So one, the photographer might have many photos, but they might have one set of guidance for one photo and a different set of guidance for another photo. So for each photo, you do need to check out what is and isn't allowed.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Excellent. Thank you. OK. So now we get to the nitty gritty, which is about assignments. OK? And we've been talking a little bit about this today. We don't want to terrify people, but here's our scenario. Now, you'll see that there are five widgets here, which we'd like you to fill in, as you've been doing so.

So the final TMA is due, and you've worked tirelessly on it. Being modelled here. You spent a lot of time attending classes, researching content, and studying materials in order to achieve the score needed to help you achieve your target grade. So people have been setting their expectations. All very good.

But a colleague, however, has not been able to produce the assignment and now asks you for your assistance. OK. So this is what we would like to know. The colleague asks you to use your assignment as a reference guide in order to then complete their own assignment. So would you let them, yes or no?

If the colleague had asked for your assignment to copy from, would you then let them? Or,

unbeknownst to you, your colleague takes a copy of your work and then submits it as their own. Do you think it's acceptable? And if the roles were reversed, and you were the colleague in need of assistance, would you see an issue with taking someone's work?

And the final one is it transpires that you and your colleague received the same grade for a piece of work. Do you think that is fair? This sort of thing used to happen to me when I was studying, because I met people at tutorials, and we'd often talk about things. And I'd often have someone on the phone, going, I can't, because of course, I was really diligent, and on time, and always.

But sometimes there would be someone saying, I really can't deal with this, this, and this. Sometimes I talk to people, and sometimes, to be fair, it actually really helped me clarify in my mind what some of the points were. So I liked talking to other people about stuff. But there are a lot of issues here about the extent to which that line can be crossed.

**BEN MELLUISH:** That's happened to me as well. So the best way I learn is through teaching, so I really like talking about what I'm trying to write about with someone else. But I've had people ask me, well, can I see what you've written for that question or for that assignment, and maybe I can take some ideas from you or to see how you've structured it. It's a grey area whether you should or shouldn't show them this piece of work.

**KAREN FOLEY:** As opposed to talk about it.

**BEN MELLUISH:** As opposed to talk about it.

**DEAN FLETCHER:** There's probably an addition to that as well, in that in order to enable plagiarism is an offence also. So to what extent- everybody chats, and everybody discusses the TMAs or their assignments that might be due. And I think in principle, there's not much wrong with that.

The point at which you present your work for the student to do whatever that student chooses to do, whether you have an agreement that it's copy and use it as a reference guide, whatever that might be. If they go ahead and ultimately copy it and essentially plagiarise, then the onus is kind of taken away from you. That's their issue that they've plagiarised. But your issue is the fact that you've allowed that plagiarism to occur in the first place.

I think you'd avoid that by ultimately not providing anything. That doesn't rule out the fact that you can still have a discussion with students. And I think in some modules, that will be encouraged, to have that chat with fellow colleagues. But it's to the extent in which you are

protecting yourself and ensuring that you're not going beyond what you should be doing within the student code.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yeah. No, absolutely. It's a very difficult one. And I think one of the things that we often think about with these cases is would this happen at a brick university. Students talk the fact that we're at a distance doesn't mean that we shouldn't be talking. And that's about the extent to which collegiate, academic discussion is useful. And indeed, as you progress in your studies, it's increasingly useful, both to sound stuff out in your own head, as well as to get other people's opinions.

**BEN MELLUISH:** Definitely. It would help one critically analysing or looking at anything to discuss it with someone else that's studying the same subject, some same topic as you. It's just whether you want to share everything you're writing, and your opinion, and your viewpoints on that, or whether you just want to discuss your thoughts around a topic, as opposed to what you're going to submit as your answer to that question being posed.

**DEAN FLETCHER:** Ultimately, as well, if you are using words, phrases, assignments from fellow colleagues, then you can avoid it entirely by referencing that. And if I choose to use somebody else's work, whether it is a colleague of the university and a student of the university, then I can't do that. But I need to accredit that person being the source of that.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Right. So we've asked people about this whole situation, and I've got all of the results here, which I'm going to tell you about. So the first question we asked was a colleague asks to use your assignment as a reference guide. So this is maybe where they're sort of-

**DEAN FLETCHER:** Helping each other out.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yeah. But not copying out. 12 per cent have said that they would let somebody do that. And 80%- oh, now we've changed a bit, actually. 11 per cent and 89 per cent have said no, they wouldn't.

I mean, is this allowed? In the academic conduct, you're sort of comparing- we have the software, which I want to come on to in a minute, and things. But is this legally allowed, for students to sort of say, here's my assignment, have a look at it.

**DEAN FLETCHER:** Again, that's probably quite a grey area, because it's the extent- if you're enabling plagiarism- as I said, which is an offence in itself- then you might potentially open yourself up for an



investigation. Is it allowed to discuss ideas, discuss content? Then yes, of course.

It's getting that balance, I suppose, between what's considered going beyond what an ordinary discussion would be, and to what extent now are you stepping over to go, here is my work, whether you want to copy it or not is up to you.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Absolutely. OK. People were a little bit more clear cut on the other questions. If a colleague asked your assignment to copy, would you let them? 100 per cent have said no.

**BEN MELLUISH:** Very good.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Very good. OK. So that's going to stop a lot. Unbeknownst to you, a colleague takes a copy of your work, do you think it's acceptable? Again, 100 per cent have said no.

If the roles were reversed, and you were the colleague in need of assistance, would you see an issue with taking someone's work? And they said yes, 100%. So clearly listening.

And then we've asked this question about grades, which I think is a really, really interesting one. It transpires at your work that you and your colleague receive the same grade for the same piece of work. Do you think this is fair? And 31 per cent have said yes, and 79 per cent or 71%, actually, it's changed, have said no.

**DEAN FLETCHER:** There might be a balance there, because I suppose the fairness aspect is you want consistency when pieces of work are being marked. So if I produce exactly the same piece of work as somebody else, then I would want to ensure that we get the same grade. Whether it's fair in a moral stance to say that, hang on a minute, I've done all the work, and he's got the same grade as me is perhaps what the 70 per cent of people are.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Absolutely. Because of course, everything is standardised in terms of the way we mark, so markers have to mark- it's a very strict, tight marking guidelines. And of course, it would be that hopefully the same piece of work marked by different people, albeit by different students, should get the same grade because of the standardisation process.

OK. So we've also asked, do you think you would complete plagiarism at the OU? And this is the perhaps the most important part of the session. So can you tell people, Dean, how we measure and track these things? Not to scare students at home, because they're clearly not wanting to plagiarise, but so that they understand some of the processes and how we pick certain things up.

And in particular, we've talked about stealing stuff, but also there's this issue that's more common, which is copying amounts of word, or just thinking, oh, they've written it so well, I couldn't possibly write it any better. I'm going to change every third word. And then it's not going to show up. Tell us about the systems we use and what happens.

**DEAN FLETCHER:** Well, the first point says, as you've touched on there, that from an OU perspective, we don't want the students to plagiarise. So we're not here on a witch hunt to find people that are doing it. Ultimately, we'd rather prevent that rather than cure it, as it would be.

But OU uses two pieces of software to detect it. Now, every single assignment will be run through these pieces of software the day after the deadline for the assignment and four weeks later. So every assignment, whether it's late or early, is submitted through it and is detected.

And there's the Turnitin software, which detects plagiarism in the sense that that will compare sources from the internet and any handbooks, OU materials, for example, and there's copycat software which detects any OU work that's been submitted previously. So the Turnitin will essentially detect the standard plagiarism, if you like, where people have used something from the internet and not referenced it correctly.

The copycat software will detect anything where you might have used a friend's work who submitted the same paper last year. And the Turnitin provides a report on a percentage of what content of that has been plagiarised, and the same with the copycat software result. That will essentially show us a script of the student's assignment, and every single word is highlighted in a colour.

So red, for example, is an exact match. Highlighted blue might be that word is repeated. Like I said, in word one, and has now been replaced with word three, for example. The top and bottom of it is that if it has been copied or used from another source, it will be detected.

**KAREN FOLEY:** OK. And in terms of severity levels then. In your role as academic conduct officer, like you say, we're trying to often give students study skills and support, because often it is inadvertent. But sometimes students might get an essay off the internet. Sometimes they might take a large chunk of stuff from Wikipedia. They might even reference that, but still, there are study skills. But when does it get really bad, that an academic conduct officer might intervene?

**DEAN FLETCHER:** Again, each case is taken on a subjective basis, really. It's very difficult to apply a blanket approach. Because a case, for example, that might have 50 per cent plagiarism, when you

review that, it might not be as bad as a 10 per cent plagiarism case, for example. And that might be down to things like the content of the word that is plagiarised.

If it's a review in a piece of material, that might not be seen as bad as a conclusion aspect to the assignment, for example. That is expected to be your own words. Equally, if you're a level two or three student, then you might be expected to have a higher standard than the new entrant level one student, for example.

But it's really difficult to say what would and wouldn't class as plagiarism, and we often get asked things like is there a particular percentage that I will get caught? Am I allowed 10 per cent, for example. Now, in theory, you're not allowed anything. But again, on a case-by-case basis, there might be reasons why a particular percentage is more severe than another, for example.

**KAREN FOLEY:** If you're including a lot of definitions of things, for example, that you need to quote, it might show. But the point is, really, it's about the intention. If you deliberately go and nick your friend's work, or take things or big ideas and write them down as if they're your own, as if you took that photograph, as if you have taken something that's not rightfully yours, that is fundamentally wrong. And then you'll have to fill in a form. [LAUGHS]

**DEAN FLETCHER:** Well, sometimes, there's clearly attempts by students in some cases. We will read the assignments. So we see the report that comes through, but you compare that with the assignment itself. We're not just going off a report and seeing a percentage figure.

Some students, it's clear that they are trying to reference, for example, but perhaps just not doing it correctly. So a prime example of OK, you need tuition, and an extra hour with your tutor, for example. But yeah, in other instances, you might have students that- whether or not there is intent, which doesn't have to be there, it's clear that they are trying to use other people's work and use it as their own, ultimately.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Brilliant. Well, Dean and Ben, that's been a fantastic session. I've really enjoyed that. You've brought up some of the subtleties of this whole issue. We asked at home whether or not you would plagiarise. I think you've all said no, so that's good. Phew. But thank you very much for bringing to life this issue and introducing us to some of the ways in which we tackle this at the OU.

**BEN MELLUISH:** Thank you very much.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Lovely. So we are now going to show you a short video, which is the online library with Nicola Beer. And then we're going to talk about being online, and we're going to get online. So our next session is going to be about online rooms, which is the new OU tutorial system. After that session, we're going to offer you the opportunity to come into the room and be online with Rob, who is going to be leading the next session.

Now, you'll find the link to that on the website and also in the programme. The abstract for the next session, all that's listed for the next session, will have the link to that room. So you might want to get that set up in the break, or you might want to watch this video, which is Nicola Beer and the online library. I'll see you in a few minutes.

[MUSIC PLAYING]