

[MUSIC PLAYING]

KAREN FOLEY: Welcome back to the Student Hub Live induction event for sport and fitness. Joining me now are Helen and Karen, who are both academics from sport and fitness team, and both active researchers in their areas contributing to the development of the learning material. So I'm sure you will see their names in books that you're going to engage with over the next few years. Helen is chair of E3113, Exploring Psychological Aspects of Athletic Development. It's a mouthful. And Karen is chair of E233, which is Sport and Exercise Psychology. And we're here today to talk about your social media and your blog. So these are great things that your student-- well, for any student can engage with. Helen, I wonder first if you could tell us about the blog that you've got.

HELEN OWTON: Yeah, sure. We have a sport and fitness blog which focuses on different sort of topics, perhaps contemporary topics that might be going on at the moment with media in sport. I focus a lot of the topics on gender and sport. So I've recently got something on the blog at the moment on women in sport and the success of the Women's Summer Sports, and so we talk a little bit about the contemporary issues. Then we link some of those topics to some of the modules that we have. And we try and engage people through the blog, to try and then take on some of the interesting topics and take them forward into the modules.

KAREN FOLEY: Now blogging is increasingly used in academic circles to expand ideas and I guess make things into bite-size chunks. But they're also a great way to feed back. Many students will make a comment on a blog. So it's a nice way to actually be able to engage with members of academic staff. How does that work?

HELEN OWTON: Yeah, that's right. We have comments available for students to make. So of course, we welcome any comments, if anything is particularly helpful for anything. Then we welcome students to comment and it's monitored by the chair, for example, like Caroline might comment back on anything. And we do encourage some of the blog's material to go into some of the module to spark off some discussion. And we try and encourage people, and it's very accessible to writing to get to draw students in to a particular topic. And we draw on research as well, but we try and make it very accessible to not only to our students, but wider audiences as well.

KAREN FOLEY: Because your students have such a range of skills, and such a variety of settings as well, that I can imagine that a lot of people would have something to say about it, many of these things.

HELEN OWTON: Yeah, that's right. Yeah, and it's a really good platform to encourage that sort of debate, as well as not just in terms of like you say about the sport and fitness, but there's another for example, the psychology. I've just started a blog. And I like to think that that's sparked off from perhaps our bloggers encourage other people to sort of stop that sort of thing going. And it's really good, because we can work together to sort of show people other blogs going on in different departments. And some of our students do crossover with other departments as well, so it's really nice to see the people engaging in those sorts of blogs as well academically.

KAREN FOLEY: Now it's a really hot area, and a nice one to be able to read in a little bit of down time, when you're not watching TV

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

But Twitter's another great thing. And again, something that's increasingly used in academic circles, often at conferences. And we'll get sort of dialogues going. But how can students engage with you guys then in terms of Twitter?

KAREN HOWELLS: Well, we've got a number of Twitter accounts. We've got our main Twitter account, which is ou_sport, so students can follow us on that. And we've got a second account which is really showcasing our annual conference, so sport and fitness team run a conference each year on a contemporary issue. And this year, we're looking at really the dark side of sport. So the mental health problems associated with it, particularly in elite sport. So students can find out more about that on Twitter with its ou_sportconf, C-O-N-F. And through those Twitter accounts, we can keep students up to date with what we're doing, and also really to let students know some of the contemporary things that are coming up in the media that they might find in their module.

So for example, we use a hashtag for one of our third year modules, which is the E314 Contemporary Issues in Sport and Exercise. And we use the #oue314. And through that hashtag, we talk about concussion, body image. So for example this morning, there's been a lot of talk about concussion in rugby. And concussion is one of those topics that students can use for their end-of-module assessment. So we've retweeted that this morning, so the students then have access to the very up-to-date media stories that are coming out of sport and exercise, the media, the research.

So students don't need to follow us on Twitter. I know some students are not particularly engaged with social media and don't want to be. But it's certainly beneficial to their learning if they're getting the upstate stories. And rather than them having to look for them, we're providing them.

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely. And it's great to have a few really key things that you are following, so that if you do have a bit of downtime, it's great just to sort of immerse yourself in what's happening, because as you say, so many of these are very topical and very relevant. And then there's new things that are going to happen that are going to shift the way that we maybe see something.

KAREN HOWELLS: And students, for example, some of our new students on E117, if they're to follow us on Twitter, on our main account, and follow the #oue117, then will be tweeting things that are relevant to some of the things they're reading at the moment. So one of the topics they look at are the 10,000 steps. I'm going to say myth, is that what they should be aspiring to. So whenever we come across a story about that, then we'll put the hashtag on that. And then they can explore that a little bit further and really stay up to date.

KAREN FOLEY: How do you guys manage? I mean, it's an increasing thing now. And the library does some brilliant sessions on managing your media. How do you both as academics keep abreast of things other than Twitter and blogs? Are there any other things that you'd recommend for students in terms of social media and ways of staying connected that are easy to do, but that sort of support your knowledge and keeping you up to date with the news?

KAREN HOWELLS: Well, I think from our perspective, we're looking at journal papers, up to date research. So we would be looking at that. I think what we are in a position to do is to pass that down to the students and say that this is a relevant blog to look at that might be based on the research. I'm not sure necessarily that the students should be going looking through journals and journal articles, looking for the most up to date research, unless we've directed them to do a search for that. But we're in a position that we can identify to the students what would be worth looking at. I don't know whether Helen's got anything to--

HELEN OWTON: Yeah, I think there are some challenges as well with Twitter and blogs. And it's important to be quite critical when you're reading some of these things, because there's so much out there now. And we can just look at kind of a short tweet and think we've got a [INAUDIBLE] kind of go oh, that's happening now. And that's not always the case. You have to, I would really

recommend clicking on that link and reading that whole article and being critical of it, and any blogs that you read as well. And that's the whole point of our blogs as well, they're not there as read. They are there to encourage debate and encourage students to be critical.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent. Well, thank you so much, Karen and Helen. And Helen, you're going to stick around and we're going to talk about how important establishing a good relationship with your tutor is. Let's have a quick video. We're going to show you one of the buildings on campus, and this is the Gardner building, so just to show you what's outside the studio in Milton Keynes, we've prepared a little video for you to look at. So join us back in a few minutes when Helen and Ola will talk about the role of the tutor.