

KAREN FOLEY: Welcome back to the Student Hub Live faculty of Well-being, Education, and Language Studies. Well, it's been a fantastic day, some wonderful chat, and some wonderful sessions. And if you've missed any of those, you can catch up later. So we'll send out the link for that on the website. And then we'll be packaging all of these up and putting them on our YouTube channel where, of course, there's a lot more content that you might like to delve into before you start your studies.

We're now going to do one of the first three sessions where we focus on each school within the faculty. And we're going to first look at education, childhood, youth, and sport. So representing the school, I have Tyrrell Golding, who is the Associate Head of School Curriculum and Quality and is also the Associate Dean for the faculty, and Kate Breeze, who's the Associate Head of School Students and Nations. And Kate's the academic lead with our faculty student support team, oversight about associate lecturers and also our tuition. Welcome, both.

So the School of Education Childhood Youth and Sport is a big, big school, nearly 18,000 students. Tyrrell, can you tell us why your courses appeal to so many students?

TYRRELL GOLDING (Associate Head of School (Curriculum & Quality), Deputy Associate Dean (Curriculum)): Well, because we're the best school and the best university in the world.

KAREN FOLEY: You can't say that, Tyrrell. That's not on. The rest will have a fight with you, even a virtual fight.

TYRRELL GOLDING: I know. They know what I'm like. But we do have-- the OU has the best students. So we're fighting over all being number one really. I think one of the many strengths-- and actually we're very nearly at 20,000 students this year, which is really, really exciting-- is the breadth of each of our subject areas. But I also think it's the way we teach the subjects in ECYS.

And that's the way we shorten the terminology for the school. And that our students tend to be studying their subjects in a work related manner, rather than necessarily work based, which means we might be getting lots of people who are interested in education, but not predominantly based in a school. Although, many of our students are in work, in schools, in new settings, in early childhood settings, and in sport and fitness areas working with and across communities.

So it really-- our subjects create an umbrella through which our students can study those different subjects in quite an individualised way actually despite the fact that we are such a big school. I think the other thing to focus on as well is how we support our students in four different-- in our four different nations so that it's particularly-- so I come from a youth and community work background.

It's really, really interesting to see how the Welsh government have written policy about youth work that's slightly different to the Scottish government and also what's happening in Northern Ireland versus what's happening in England. So what also creates a really dynamic learning experience for our students is to be able to share the different policy discourses that are happening. And there are probably students watching now who are thinking policy is not interesting.

But I'm sad. And I find it really, really interesting, particularly over the last few months, where we've been looking at COVID and the different responses that governments have been having. Actually it shows that in the kind of areas that we're working and our students are working, policy can make a really big difference.

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely, and it's so important if, for example, you're going into an educational youth work setting that the school is so varied in terms of where people might be. We might have sports coaches, teachers, and people who work in a variety of settings. But as you say, I guess one thread that holds through is this often part time. Although, increasing number of students are studying full time as well with us.

So yeah, they have a very practical nature. Now, Tyrrell, as well as the undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, the staff in ECYS, Education, and Childhood, Youth and Sport, involved in a range of research and consultancy. So I wonder if you could give us a few examples. We've had some today already. But can you tell us some of the projects that colleagues are involved with?

TYRRELL GOLDING: Yeah, I mean, goodness, they're as varied as the subjects that we teach and really impact and inform our teaching as well as our teaching being shared through them. So there's a range. I mean, you just heard Matt talking about some of our international work, and particularly in EYCS we work very, very closely with our colleagues.

So we've got TESS-India, TESSA, which is working with teachers in India and sub-Saharan Africa. We've got English in Action projects in Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Peru. So those are some of the international work. And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

So if you're interested in finding out about the school and your academics and what they do, if you just Google the Open University and you have a look, you can find the school. And you can find the pages that explain much more about what we do.

But we do lots of things quite locally with communities staff are based-- whilst we might-- many of us work in Milton Keynes, we also based in each of the nations and across the UK. So we may be working and volunteering with our local communities. We've also got initiatives that span and bring together practitioners, such as our Reading for Pleasure Research project.

And if you're interested and you're on social media, please do follow @ECYS on Twitter. And that will help you link into other accounts because you'll be able to be part of those Reading for Pleasure Communities. And particularly, if you're in our early childhood and education subject areas, that will be something that you're interested in, I've no doubt.

We engage with the BBC. We're involved in lots of BBC coproductions So there's been some very popular work that our sport and fitness teams have done. And there may be programmes that you watch when at the end it comes up as if you're interested in this, go to the Open University. There's lots of really engaging programmes that we're involved in, our research and teaching is involved in. So I'd really recommend going and having a look at the ECYS website on the OU pages and finding more if you're interested.

KAREN FOLEY: There's plenty there, isn't it? You've also been working on a Getting Fit at Home with instant Instagram bloggers, My Autistic Family and The Super Head. Did you want to mention a little bit more about any of those, Tyrrell?

TYRRELL GOLDING: Well, I mean, I'm too old to be an Instagram blogger. I mean, I think it's really exciting work. And there will be probably many of our students who really clicked into that.

To be honest, I also-- the cameras up here for me because I haven't been getting fit at home with our colleagues. But I'm looking forward to them getting me back on track now we know that we might be working from home a bit more.

KAREN FOLEY: Yes, no, they are-- they're brilliant. And just listening to some of those projects, Tyrrell, it's such a diverse range of interests, isn't it, within the faculty? Really, really, really so broad, which is wonderful. Kate, I wonder if I can come to you now and talk a little bit about supporting students because this is one of your key areas of your role.

And one exciting development has been a course to support students in their study skills. So can you tell us a bit more about what it is and how it might help?

KATE BREEZE (Associate Head of School – Students and Nations): Yeah, Hi, Karen. Yeah, we're always looking for new ways of supporting students who are learning to learn online. And one of the main ways that we work with students in terms of getting to talk to each other and talk with our tutors is by using online forums. And we find that some students love it and some students are terrified of working on forums.

And so what we've done, we've developed a module, which is now on Open Learn. And it's called Building Confidence in Using Online Learning Forums. And it's an eight hour total study free course for students to study, to have a look at how to make better use of forums, how to feel more confident in using them, to have strategies about what sort of things to post, how to post, how to respond, how to listen on forums, kind of those basic skills that just make the whole experience so much more enjoyable and yeah, raise confidence in using them.

So it's on Open Line, Open Learn, sorry. And it's free. And it's something students can be doing even now before their modules start in preparation for the next academic year.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant, I love those bite-sized chunks of learning. They really can focus your attention and take one school off the list. The other thing I wanted to ask you about, Kate, was around student voice because we've said to students that The Open University really value the student voice, which is all fine and good saying it.

But you're working on specific projects. So can you tell us how what you're trying to include that and also well-being as well within the faculty? So student voice and well-being. What are you doing? And how is it going to benefit our students?

KATE BREEZE: Well, we have various formal ways to consult with students and to gather students views and opinions about their studies. So we have student reps on all our major committees. We have student representatives who come to us through the Open University Student Association, who may get involved even in being critical friends when we're writing new materials and things like that.

But actually, we want to broaden our understanding of student voice and be more creative in how we create spaces and opportunities for students to talk to us, to talk to each other, to share their stories, and to play a greater part really in building their learning experience. And the other thing is that we think there's a really close link between having a voice and being listened to and well-being and belonging. And altogether, we just-- we're working hard now to create a project, which gives students more opportunity to have a say, but equally to share what works for them and to really build a sense of being part of the Open University community.

And we're going to be doing this in all sorts of ways through setting up different activities, through involving students in different parts of the university life. And any student is interested can find information about this on their subject websites and on their module websites starting this week even with an opportunity to share stories about who's inspired us to be here today and where we are today. So yeah, I'm really excited about this project. And I hope students will get involved and feel that it's something for them as it develops over this next year.

KAREN FOLEY: That's absolutely wonderful. And Stacy, people at home are talking about some of the modules that they're studying as well. And we've been sharing links to various spaces and recordings and co-production. How is everyone at home? I, for one, am shattered and need a nice cup of tea. Mine's gone cold.

STACY: Oh, bless.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, Stacey, I'm not sure that-- are you on mute at the end? I can't hear you. Have we muted your button?

STACY: Oh goodness me, she's made the faux pas.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, there we are.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

STACY: [INAUDIBLE]

KAREN FOLEY: I haven't done the sign language course, you see, yet. So I thought we could be scuppered, and I should have done it. I needed baby signing. So yeah, good.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

STACY: --up there wasn't it? Spot the noob-- just came straight in and made an error.

KAREN FOLEY: No, [INAUDIBLE].

STACY: Anyway, you couldn't hear me-- as I was saying, you couldn't hear me. Lots of lovely people in the chat still here, still with us right through to the end, chatting away, letting us know what they're studying. Lots of lovely ECYS people. We've also got people doing languages in health and social care. So it's bubbling away nicely.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, that's wonderful. My dogs come here to say take me for a walk. But it's raining, Megan. You'll have to go down there.

I'm brushing the dog away. No, that's actually wonderful, Stacey. And thank you for making people feel so welcome on the chat also. Tyrrell and Kate, it's been a really, really lovely introduction to the school.

I'm sure people are going to have many other questions. And we're all just getting excited about their learning. So don't forget, we've got other student hub live sessions that we'll use to familiarise you with the virtual learning environment, tutors, tutorials, et cetera.

We've got heaps and stores to support you. And as some people are saying, your learning doesn't quite start now. So it's great to see that you're engaged from the offset and go.

It's going to be a really, really wonderful journey. So we're going to show you a video now. We're going to look at one of our campus tour videos again. And then we have the spotlight on health, well-being and social care. So stay tuned for that.

I'll see you very soon. And if you are leaving us for today, don't forget to subscribe to our mailing list. So that we can keep you up to date with our events. And check out the website for our programme over the next few weeks as the module starts this academic year. See you after the short break.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[Text on screen: [studenthublive.open.ac.uk](https://studenthublive.open.ac.uk)]