KAREN FOLEY: Hello, and welcome back to *Student Hub Live.* Well, it's a very chatty day today. I hope you're having fun. We've talked about lots and lots of different things. Our attention now turns to celebrating diversity in WELS and beyond.

We have some exciting widgets we'd like you to fill in. So we have a multi-choice question. Would you be willing to travel in a driverless car? There are some options there. And also, what is the wildest use of artificial intelligence that you can think of?

This as one of our word clouds, for those of you who are joining. You can put 1, 2, or 3 things in the box. But something needs to be in each box or the results won't send. So if you can't think of three, just put a full stop in. And then you can see what people at home say also and contribute further, if you would like to, from there.

So I am joined by Mirjam Hauck, who is the associate head of school for internationalisation, equality, diversity, and inclusion, and also Mychelle Pride, a regular at *Student Hub Live,* who is now the academic lead for access participation and success. Big, warm welcome. So before we start talking about some of the responses that I know people are filling in to our widgets and word clouds, Mychelle, Mirjam, I wonder if you could tell us a little bit first about what you're doing exactly to make sure that some of the courses are of interest to such a diverse student body, as we see we have here today.

MIRJAM HAUCK: OK, thank you, Karen. Well, we are now not only offering our core curriculum, our more traditional modules that allow you to get an OU degree, a BA in language studies or maybe eventually an MA in translation, in our new Open Centre for Languages and Cultures, we are offering non-accredited short courses in languages, in intercultural communication, in artificial intelligence.

And these are more for the leisure learners or for so-called CPD learners, that is learners who want to study or learn a language or languages for continuous professional development purposes. And we do know that in the post-Brexit and in the post-pandemic world, languages are going to be more in demand than ever.

And it's also important to mention, I think, that if you do such an non-accredited short course, you will have the opportunity actually to turn this into accredited learning with the Making Your Language Learning Count module that we are currently producing within The Open University's open programme.

And finally-- and you'll probably see a link to that-- we have a hub on Open Learn, where you get access to free tasters to these short courses-- so two weeks for free. And hot off the press, the latest product, our short course in Tamil, one of the heritage languages spoken in the UK. Not many of you might be aware of that very popular language, a very widespread language. And we are going to launch this in time for the celebrations of the South Asian Heritage Month in this country.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. So lots of exciting things to look at. I know people have been saying that they'd like to learn different languages. So there's your opportunity to go and have a look on Open Learn. And with the links in the chat, you can pop up a window and browse at your pleasure to see what may be of interest to you there.

So that's really good in terms of the diversity of things on offer. But the other thing is we're talking sort of about diversity of our student population, Mirjam. And you're responsible for equality, diversity, and inclusion in the school now.

But apart from the sort of flexibility and study opportunities-- you've mentioned some of these tasters, and short courses, and accredited learnings. What are some of the things that you're doing to sort of make sure that you're catering for all the different backgrounds, and different motivations, and tastes that our students have? As there's so much there to tap into.

MIRJAM HAUCK: There is. And it is a huge challenge to cater for everybody. It's probably almost impossible. But at this very moment, we are working with something called the Inclusive Curriculum tool. It's a grand word for a set of prompts, for a set of questions that we are using to look very closely at our study materials, at the content of our modules and short courses.

And we are asking questions such as, is the language used in our feedback simple? Is it transparent? Is it accessible? How do we take account of potential communication challenges that learners who are not speakers of English as a first language have?

How do we assess written outputs from our students that might not read at outputs produced by native English speakers? And we are working on this with a group of associate lecturers. But much more importantly, we are working on this with a group of students.

KAREN FOLEY: Now, you've got something specific that you wanted to talk to people today about. Because you mentioned the importance of students in a variety of aspects, but one of the things that you're particularly keen to do is work on coauthoring with students. And that's quite a different idea. Tell us a little bit about that.

MIRJAM HAUCK: Well, it's a pilot we are pulling off the ground. It's about coauthoring content for our short courses in collaboration with you, with the learners. And the first attempt is doing this in our new short courses in artificial intelligence-- co-created content with you, the learners. And with this, I hand over to Mychelle.

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely. So that sounds super exciting and not something I think many of us were expecting-- apart from that I did sort of talk about this with the widgets and things. But if you're coming to talk about languages, artificial intelligence, which is such a super subject, wouldn't have been something I thought about.

Mychelle, give us a bit of context around this. We've been getting some results from people at home in terms of the widgets also. But I wonder if you can sort of tell us why artificial intelligence might be a really good starting place to pilot this. Isn't there enough going on? [LAUGHS]

MYCHELLE PRIDE: Alexa, turn on Christmas. So that's just a little bit of silliness to get us started. So my Alexa-- we call her Mrs. A-- is connected to a power socket that, at Christmastime, has all of our-- or any kind of festive season that you might be celebrating, you could turn on your lights for. So that's a bit of silliness to get us started.

I know people have been filling in the widget, which is absolutely great, but Mrs. A is an example of conversational artificial intelligence. And I'm not an AI expert, but I have had some interesting experiences.

In 1992, I was really fortunate to go to Cupertino, California, which is the headquarters for Apple. And for two hours, I sat and spoke to a machine-- turn on, turn off, fast forward, et cetera-- because it was in the infancy of developing speech recognition.

And we were given a T-shirt that said, "I helped Apple wreck a nice beach." And there was a beach with apple cores all over it. And on the back it said, "I helped Apple recognise speech." And I think that's really interesting how that speech has developed.

But if we turn to cars and think about that for a second, even the terminology-- the language around driverless cars could be confusing. We hear "autonomous." We hear "self-drive." We hear "driverless." And they're all slightly different things.

Inside the car, something called natural language processing allows the car to interact with the human. So natural language processing is how does language from a machine interact with language from a human? And it's being used for many different purposes.

So a straightforward concept, let's say we have a driverless robo taxi taking you somewhere. So you have to say to the taxi driver-- to the driver. [LAUGHS] There's no driver to the robot car.

It's a concept we've got to get our heads around. There's going to be no driver. So we're going to say, "take me to Karen's house," because it's so beautiful there with your cello. I want to hear some music in person. Take me to Karen's house.

And then they might say-- the car might say to you, "Well, what would you like to hear or watch along the "way? And I go, "Oh, *Student Hub Live* is streaming right now. I want to watch*Student Hub Live.*" And it would play it for me.

So those are examples of in the future. We also have to think about how the car is going to interact with pedestrians. So at the moment, the car might stop and wave, or the driver might wave to you. But what if there's no driver. Or the driver waves you to go forward, or the driver tells you to stop. So they're using language technologies as well to figure out how to communicate with the pedestrians.

And there's some ethical issues to consider around cars as well. And this has been really, really interesting experiments around the globe. I find this fascinating.

So a car with no driver is going to have to make a decision. Let's say they can smash into person A or smash into person B, which is a really terrible thing to think about, and particularly if someone's experienced that. But there's a website that I encourage people to check out, moralmachine.net.

Maybe you can get that in the chat box. Because it's fascinating looking at how different cultures prioritise life. So would you choose the male over the female or the female over the male? Some cultures choose one, some the other.

Would you save the elderly? Would you save children? Again, there are cultural differences. So it's fascinating in terms of the complex questions and the ethical questions around artificial intelligence. Karen, can we have a look at the responses to widget 1?

KAREN FOLEY: Yes. Everyone's been diligently filling it in, Mychelle. We have some interesting things here. Let's take a look at what you said. Well, I'll tell you the results actually.

Because it's been changing so much, it's literally been going up and down. It's sort of-- now, it's not sure. 37%, that's the key thing. Whereas before, I think people were a little bit more in the middle on this.

Only 15% say that they can't wait. 30% say once they've seen it's safe, and 19% say absolutely no way. But--

MYCHELLE PRIDE: Wow.

KAREN FOLEY: There are differences, I guess, in automation. Because well one of our cars? You talk to it, and I'm just sort of getting to grips with it. But I also sort of breaks if you're in someone's stopping distance.

MYCHELLE PRIDE: Totally.

KAREN FOLEY: There are different levels of things that-- perhaps like if you'd come to me beforehand when we were talking about this, we were saying, well, what would people think they could contribute in terms of AI? And then we start saying, well, we're all used to Alexa.

We're actually all used to interacting in some of these ways. And some of us with dodgy New Zealand accents sometimes get some of the words wrong whenever I'm typing. I know we've both had our wrist problems, Mychelle and been mad on the old text chat and then dictation stuff.

MYCHELLE PRIDE: Using artificial intelligence-- that's artificial intelligence--

KAREN FOLEY: Yes!

MYCHELLE PRIDE: That helped us get through our wrists-- our broken wrists. Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. And it's really interesting. And so when you were saying that thing about Apple and "wreck a nice beach," "recognise speech," such subtle differences, aren't there? But these are things that are really important because they can make or break the way that you're actually able to use some of these interfaces, aren't they?

MYCHELLE PRIDE: Yeah. And speaking of cars, my father's car has a lane minder. So it stays within the lanes, which I find fascinating as well. And I think just coming on to some other ethical issues-- so our Mrs. A is definitely biassed at home.

But it's a real problem because it has been proven that there are racial and gender bias in using artificial intelligence and languages. And Mrs. A is much better at recognising white male native English speakers because that's who trained Mrs. A. So we know that there is far less accurate recognition for speakers who identify as ethnically Black and for females.

And we see that in our house too. I end up going, "Come on, Mrs. A!" And my husband can walk and say it once, and she just responds to him, which is really frustrating.

But another issue is around artificial intelligence and jobs. So let's think about language translators or language interpreters. So for years, we have obviously people who have trained for years and years and who are highly skilled-- because as Mirjam will tell you, translating is not just about knowing another language. There's a whole skill set around being a translator. There's a whole skill set being around an interpreter.

And we've always believed-- or at least I was part of that belief-- that machines will never get good enough to be translators or interpreters. And they are getting there now. And so they're taking jobs away.

And there's an ethical issue here about technology that takes away jobs from people. The technology saves money. It makes money. But where does that money go? What's happening to the people who've lost their jobs? So there are a lot of ethical issues around how wealth should be distributed that is being created due to machines taking human jobs.

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely. OK, so lots and lots of massive things here. I don't know if there are any philosophy students in here, but some of them might get to grips with some of these complex ideas.

Coming back then to this notion of this co-creation, because you were sort of saying wanted students to co-create this course in artificial intelligence. Let's take a look at our word cloud, because we've been asking about the wildest use of artificial intelligence.

So let's see what people at home had to say about this. And Mychelle, you can then feedback on some of these ideas. So here what we can see is we have pandemic modelling coming up a lot with people, which I think would be so interesting, and I think something that we're getting increasingly obsessed with.

But other things, like driving cars and planes, shopping, surgery, space, human lookalikes. Cleaning the house, wouldn't that be-- well, I don't know actually. There are all these implications and everything.

Bricklaying, taking a holiday-- so lots and lots of different things here coming up. What do you think, Mychelle?

MYCHELLE PRIDE: Well, I know my husband wants a robo lawnmower. I don't think that's on the list there, but absolutely. There are obviously things here around-- that are help society, because I see here the space exploration. Well, rap song writing could help society as well, but I'm sure I saw something in here a minute ago.

But predicting things and helping people-- yeah, there's lots of things-- AI surgeons, absolutely. There's lots of great things. And what's really interesting is in the 2010s, it was all about vision technology-- so facial recognition and that kind of thing.

And then the 2020s, we are going to see significant changes and improvements in language-based AI tasks. And there are some incredible state-of-the-art natural language processing tools coming. So the focus is really going to be on language and AI.

And we're looking for students to help us co-create the short course on language and artificial intelligence for social good. And we're looking for students who would be interested in attending a couple of workshops over the summer, where we're going to put together the content of the short course. And we're particularly interested, as I said, in language technology for social good.

So there's something called Do Not Pay, that it helps people appeal fines, parking fines, apply for emergency housing, and so forth. There's also a storyteller chatbot that was created by a social enterprise startup IVOW. And that allows us to share cultural knowledge and promote sustainability through traditional stories. So there's lots of interesting things coming. And we would like students to attend the co-design workshops.

Now if you're sitting there thinking, "That's not me. I don't know anything about this. What can I offer? Other people know more. Nobody like me ever does this." Well, we want a really diverse representative group of students to be involved in this.

So if you are sitting there thinking, yeah, I could offer something, we want curious students to help us, wanting to know and being willing to research and explore and be a part of this co-creation is more important than already knowing. So if we've sparked that interest in you today, you want to be part of a new course at The Open University, watch out for opportunities to get involved in this co-creation.

And Karen, I'd just like to find out what our students think about the future of AI and language technology. We had a widget on that one too. I don't know if they filled that in yet at all.

KAREN FOLEY: We do. They have. They have. They mainly say it's bright. So we're seeing an increasing line up toward that end of the spectrum.

But some really interesting comments. Eric, I'd like to come to you about some of these things because we've heard from Tracy, Jessica, Colin, and Martin about various different things. But one of the things I love, which Colin said-- which I know, Mychelle, you will like-- is about robot cats being used in Japan in care homes as friends and to notice changes. Mychelle probably would argue that only real cats are the main thing. There's Gary, aww.

MIRJAM HAUCK: Eric, what are they saying at home?

KAREN FOLEY: But Eric, what are people talking about?

ERIC ADDAE-KYEREMEH: Yeah, I think a lot of the conversations are centred around, I'll say, AI, but also the move from semi-autonomous to fully autonomous. And the Tesla car has been used as an example. But just to point out that AI and machine learning, it's nothing new. It's been around for at least over 30 years.

When I did my first master's degree in computing over 22, 23 years ago, we were looking at decision support systems, which were around AI and machine learning. But we're seeing them as semi-autonomous, helping you, the end user, make decisions. But I think the move to fully autonomous and having cars being fully autonomous, it's one of the things that's interesting.

But this language element that you're putting in, I think, could be a game changer. And I think it's very interesting that we're beginning to look at that within the OU. But yeah, very interesting conversations around robotics, how that plays in robotics, how that plays in drone technology. And all of that is what we're discussing in the chat.

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely.

ERIC ADDAE-KYEREMEH: And mind you--

KAREN FOLEY: And I really feel that Jessica--

ERIC ADDAE-KYEREMEH: Mind you--

KAREN FOLEY: Sorry.

ERIC ADDAE-KYEREMEH: I was just going to say aircrafts have always had a lot of AI and machine learning stuff for many, many years.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. Now I think Martin was saying, well, if these things are used in military, drones and things like that, why hasn't it taken off in commercial aviation? I think a lot is actually now operated in that sense, but you have to have those pilots on that plane. But yeah, it's that whole divide, isn't it?

So lots of things-- Jessica says she sometimes asks Alexa stuff when Alexa is not even there. So when she's out on the street, which is very embarrassing. And I know, like Colin says, his kids are often asking all the questions to these various Siris and Alexas and things. And I find the same.

In fact, my daughter used to sit doing her homework going, "Alexa, what's 2 times 4?" And I realised she was doing this and getting all the answers, which wasn't, I think, the idea of it all. But it is really interesting how there are so many questions on how we can just have that access at the touch of a finger and how our culture has shifted so much, isn't it?

ERIC ADDAE-KYEREMEH: Exactly. And it's not just Alexa now. So we've got Google, we've got Siri, and so many others all coming up in terms of interacting. The human interaction with operating systems is growing. And I think-- yeah, with the language element, I think it's going to be very interesting and fascinating.

But Mychelle made a very important point in terms of those writing the codes behind these devices. And I think that's where the EDI element has to be taken into consideration. Otherwise, it gets skewed. Because don't forget, they're still being programmed by human beings. And depending on the diversity of the programmers and the coders, there's always that risk of the learning that takes place within the machine to be diverse.

KAREN FOLEY: And I guess this is the point you were making, Mirjam, is that there's so much diversity there. And this is why you're really after students to be able to co-create and ask some of these questions because, well, as Mychelle pointed out, if we have these inherent biases, and we don't get that diversity of experience, all we're going to do is exacerbate the very problems that were there in the first place.

ERIC ADDAE-KYEREMEH: Exactly.

MIRJAM HAUCK: We need students from all walks of life. Really, do come approach us. We have planned these workshops to bring you all together. There'll be two or three over the summer. And we want everybody's voice to be heard, not only during the workshops but also in our materials that we use to teach those short courses. So please come forward.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. So all you need is yourself, your enthusiasm, your ideas, and a great opportunity to work with colleagues. Working on some of these things, in all honesty, is so exciting, gives you such a different insight as a student to get behind the scenes. So I'd really encourage you to get in touch. Mychelle, how do people let you know they're interested?

MYCHELLE PRIDE: Well, we'll have to get the link and put it into the chat box for people. So we'll make sure that we get that available. If not, I don't know-- Mirjam, how are you planning on communicating with students? Are you going through--

MIRJAM HAUCK: Via the feedback we get from today, we'll get directly back to the learners.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. So if you're interested, or you just want to find out more, email artificial intelligence-- with the title, and just email studenthub@open.ac.uk. And we will forward your email on. So if you'd like to know more, then as we say, please do get in touch. It really, really will be fun and very, very exciting.

Mirjam, and Mychelle, and Eric, thank you. That's been a really, really interesting conversation, not one that I suspected we would be having, thinking about languages. But isn't it amazing how diverse these things are? And it really showcases the importance of having diversity of voice and experience in something because it will make it all the more rich for that combination of knowledge.

Really great session. Thank you. We're now going to have another of our campus tours. This one is about the landing lights. And then we'll be back for our next session. I'm really excited about the next one. We're going to be doing some movement.

So this is a chance-- we've been sitting down for some time. We've been concentrating and chatting. Now is going to be a time to loosen up for the afternoon's activity. So stay tuned. Enjoy the video break, and I'll see you very soon.

[MUSIC PLAYING]