

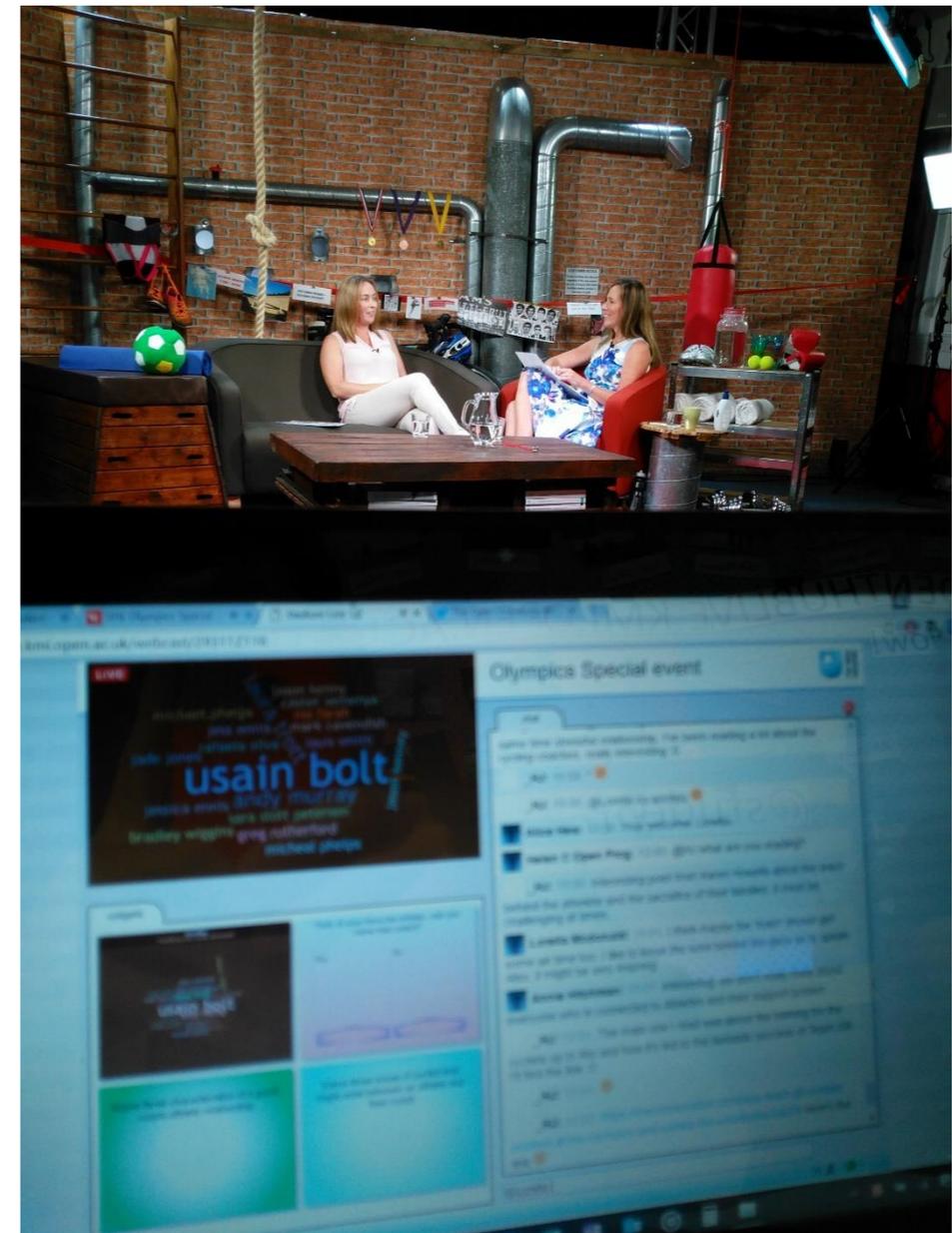
The Student Hub Live: an interdisciplinary approach to student engagement

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The Student Hub Live concept



- Based on an online interactive conference that was developed by the Faculty of Social Science in 2014, SHL was a platform for the live or synchronous induction for new students
- SHL is an online interactive event. Livestreamed breakfast style video is included in a platform that includes options for chat and widgets (interactive tools).
- Audience participation is included in the dialogue from chat, widgets and social media and this is relayed through the hot desk and feedback to the presenter.
- SHL is unique in the HE sector because of the format of programming and audience participation
- The main objective of SHL is to facilitate an academic community



the
student hub
live



<https://youtu.be/uEqqpFDJwC0>



SHL includes...

- Induction re (Fresher) events
- Study Skills bootcamps
- Faculty events eg. Showcases
- Course choice
- Academic discussions (Brexit)
- Careers and Qualifications support
- Preparing for examinable components

All content is delivered in a fun, interactive and visual way



The Student Hub Live;

- Offers potential for mass dialogue with a specific and topical feel using livestream technology
- Is interactive on a number of levels: incorporates social media and other forms of interaction
- Assets (recordings) can be created quickly and used for other purposes
- Facilitates a sense of community and offers the potential for those who are isolated to connect with others
- Sits aside formal curricula in an extra curricular space
- The ethos is to be accessible, open, engaging and interdisciplinary....

The SHL interdisciplinary approach



- Typically, sessions at the SHL are 25-40 minutes
- Interdisciplinary debates on topical issues are popular with the audience and academics
- Whilst not promoted explicitly, the value in contributions from different disciplines is that it advocates different perspectives whilst supporting the need to support positions with evidence
- This is perhaps one of the most difficult skills that students are faced with in a distance learning environment. Showing them **how** this can be done has huge merit
- In addition, the open and accessible nature of the sessions enables all willing students to take part. Externalising and expressing views is also something that has huge value in a distance learning environment



Engaging new students... in interdisciplinarity

In addition to learning from others and expressing views in a supported environment, interdisciplinary engagement is important because;

- It is essential for some students e.g. Open Programme students, Psychology and Criminology
- It can be enabling for others – engaging in discussions about Brexit, the Olympic games for example.
- Experiencing the reality of other disciplines can give an insight into optional module choices
- Identifying attributes associated with specific disciplines can enable students to identify skills they are developing and recognise when these may be transferrable. This speaks to employability both in the present and future



But whilst the SHL uses an interdisciplinary approach as a tenant for participation, there are other challenges in engaging students in a distance learning environment

- *I wanted to say that I appreciate the work of Karen Foley and Student Hub Live. Although it takes a light hearted approach at times (I can live without the popcorn) I really appreciate what SHL is trying to achieve. It is the only place where I can **see and hear** OU staff talking about their work in a meaningful way and giving people a chance to ask questions on the spot. SHL is a great opportunity to allay anxieties about study and provide interesting information about courses. Although it cannot replace the human contact of tutors and tutor groups - I can't emphasize enough how important real, human contact is to learning - but it does provide a window on the OU and OU study which is not otherwise available.*

The ODL problem

Student retention in open, distance and online learning (ODL) is notoriously poor because..

- Open access allows people with no or low PEQs to register for HE study often without adequate preparation
- Flexible options are most attractive to adults in work, with caring responsibilities, with a disability – they are time poor.
- ODL requires strong self-governance – it is easy to fall behind, disengage, drop out.
- Lack of physical presence and interaction restricts a sense of learning community and peer support.
- Isolation can cause disengagement

Why is 'engagement' important

- Creating a 'student' identity
- Being part of a learning community
- Fostering agency and legitimacy
- Developing and sustaining momentum
- A sense of belonging (Bourdieu – 'habitus')

How is 'engagement' facilitated in ODL?



- Through the curriculum and learning design
- Through interaction with tutors and peers
- Through early formative assessment
- Online fora, webinars, synchronous and asynchronous group activities, social media
- And through the Student Hub Live

The logo for 'the student hub live' features the word 'the' in a small, dark purple font above 'student' and 'hub'. 'student' and 'hub' are in a larger, dark purple font. Between 'student' and 'hub' is a graphic of vertical bars in orange, yellow, and purple. Below 'hub' is the word 'live' in a smaller, dark purple font. A dotted line is on the left side of the text.

the
student hub
live

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