

Student Hub Live Bootcamp - day 1.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

KAREN FOLEY: Hi, and welcome to The Student Hub Live. I'm Karen Foley, and I'm going to be hosting the next two hours of our first of our series of four study skills boot camps. So we thought this would be a good idea, because a lot of you are hopefully very keen and enthusiastic about your module starts - and about lunch, so I hear - and we thought it'd be a good idea to meet up every Monday and go through some of the skills that we think are important for studying. Now, just because we think that it's important doesn't mean they necessarily are. We want to hear your ideas, your questions, anything you'd like us to cover in these four sessions. Do let us know, and you can do that in a variety of ways that I'll tell you about shortly.

So the next two hours, it is lunchtime. And I know that some people might be at work, but you can drop in and out of these sessions as you want to. It is available on the catch up, so if you've missed something or you'd like to watch it again later, you can do so.

The best way to engage with these is through the Watch and Engage feature. So some of you might be in the Livestream - I mean, these are events open to anybody. So if you're a student, you just sign into the Watch and Engage with your Open University computer user name, and then you can see all the chat and the widgets that we'll be going through, and you can tell us what you think, et cetera. And if you aren't, you can request a visitor account, and then you can see all of that also. So that is an option to look at.

So in addition to the chat, we also have a Twitter feed that we're going to be monitoring in the studio, and that hashtag is #studenthublive16. And you can e-mail us at studenthub@open.ac.uk. And the Twitter handle is @studenthub.

Right. I would like to introduce our hot desk, because - HJ, hello. How are you?

HJ: Hey. I'm good, thank you.

KAREN FOLEY: Good.

HJ: Really excited.

KAREN FOLEY: How's it all going? You've been chatting away to people.

HJ: I know. It's going so well. We've got loads of people in the chat room today. So we're here for all their thoughts, comments, and questions to put to you guys. Yeah, everyone's just introducing themselves, saying what modules they're doing. We've got people from all over the place as well. So Margaret was just saying earlier she loves it when the parcels arrive with everything in. That's always a lovely moment.

KAREN FOLEY: And talking of introducing, who's this sat with you today?

HJ: Oh, it's Sophie with me today.

KAREN FOLEY: Hello, Sophie.

SOPHIE: Hi. Hi, Karen.

KAREN FOLEY: How are you?

SOPHIE: Good, thank you. Yes.

KAREN FOLEY: Good.

SOPHIE: Good, happy to be here.

KAREN FOLEY: Yes. What happened to Annie, then?

HJ: I think she was fed up with the mess on the desk. But I didn't think it was that bad. But you know, Human Resources disagreed

SOPHIE: I'll be the judge of that one.

[LAUGHTER]

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent. Well, welcome, Sophie. So can you tell people who are new what are you two going to be doing on the social media desk, and what can they expect from you with that lovely board you've got back there?

HJ: Yes.

SOPHIE: [GIGGLING] So we have all sorts going on. So obviously, we will be on the chat to hopefully get to as many people as possible. It's so busy on there at the moment. If people could send in some selfies, if we can have some pics of people's lunch.

HJ: Yeah, we want to know where you're studying from, what the view is from where you are.

KAREN FOLEY: So how, you want people to send in pictures to -

HJ: Yes.

KAREN FOLEY: - I guess, our e-mail?

HJ: Yes. So e-mail us studenthub@open.ac.uk. We've got a Twitter account, @studenthublive. All the details are on our lovely board behind us. We've got a little selfie up here from last time when Helen joined me on the social media desk. But we want to fill this board with all your stuff, because we want to know what's going on where you are and what it looks like from you, because you can see us. We want to see what's going on with you too.

But if you've got study tips as well, we love those, don't we? We want to know those. If you've got advice for other students starting, or something that you wish you knew when you started off, we'd love to know. So just we want to hear from you, whatever way. Just let us know. We want to hear from you.

SOPHIE: And especially about what people are having for lunch.

HJ: Oh, yes.

KAREN FOLEY: Yes, I hear Peter's having smoked mackerel and rice, which I think is a very, very healthy option. Well done, Peter. Others are not so healthy. Speaking of which, I'm ravenous right now.

OK. So what we're going to do is you send your pictures and selfies. It'll be interesting to see how those get put up on the social media board. So do let us know either what you're eating or send us a picture of you to say hello, or send us your study space. So either of those three options, studenthub@open.ac.uk.

Right, our programme today. We've got a lot lined up. What we're going to be doing is first we're going to have to Georgina Blakeley, and we're going to be talking about navigating the VLE, which is the Virtual Learning Environment. So some of you may have already accessed this. This is the most important place for your modules. And she's going to tell us all about how to do that, and she's going to show us some options.

We then have Helen Clough from the library, and we're going to look at managing your digital presence. So this is going to be about using social networking sites to interact with your fellow students. And also, she's got some really good tips about keeping up to date with your studies. We then have Susanne Schwenzer, who's coming in talking about time management, a very important skill for students. So she's got lots of different strategies and advice that she will go through with us for that.

Then we have Sharon Davis, who's going to talk about task planning and what to do first. So after you've familiarised yourself with the wonderful Virtual Learning Environment and had a look at the various tools that you can use to access that and how you might do that, we'll then look at how you can get started with your studies. But as we say, do let us know any questions that were going in along the way.

Now, the one thing I will tell you is that the chat can move fast. So if you are in the Watch and Engage and you're seeing that, and it is going a little bit quickly, there's a pin at the top of the chat. And you can pin that, and you can scroll down to see what other people are saying. You can also change your screen layout. So there are three different options for that, and you can click on the bottom of the right hand side, I believe, of the panel - correct me if I'm wrong, Sophie and HJ - and then you can change the interface and see exactly what view you would find best, whether that's more chat or more of the widgets, et cetera.

Now, speaking of widgets, we're going to put five of them up if they're not up already. We'd like to know, where are you? So click on the map and tell us where you are. Also, we'd like to know how you're feeling right now. So if you can sum that up in three words, if it's two, just put an X in the last one, or one even. But you do need to put three things in to populate that. So let us know.

Also, do tell us at which level you're studying and which subject area you're studying. And we'd like to think about how you feel about starting your next module. So do populate those, and we'll see how everyone is feeling. And we'll introduce those throughout the programme.

OK, so let's have a look then. We've got a Wordle here with just some very brief terms about how people are feeling. And there's lots and lots of different emotions. And I'm really pleased that so many of them are overwhelmingly positive. We can see that you're ready to begin - I'm going to do the positive ones first - ready to begin, excited happy, engaged, inspired, hopeful.

Some people are scared. Some people are anxious. And that is really, really normal, because for some of you, this is a completely new journey. And those feelings are absolutely natural. And we hope that we can alleviate some of those fears throughout this session.

OK, I think I have introduced everything, hopefully, that we have to introduce. But no doubt there will be more as people are popping in. So I'm going to introduce Georgina Blakeley, Georgina, welcome to the studio.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Hi.

KAREN FOLEY: Now, Georgina, you're the chair of DD102, Introducing the Social Sciences. And you're going to talk to us about navigating the Virtual Learning Environment for students. Now, can you tell us briefly, I mean, we've got, as we can see here, a screenshot of Student Home. This is really, really important. How do students tend to feel when they first, from your experience as a chair of somebody who's starting a new module, how do people feel about all of this? There's so much information here.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Absolutely. I think the students have already summed that up really well. They feel really excited, because there's everything there, and you can't wait to get started. And as someone said, it's like getting the box in the post. You want to open it up and see what's inside.

But at the same time, they feel very nervous and anxious as well, because it's difficult to know what to look at, what to do first. Students often say, I'm waiting for someone to tell me what to do. And it's taking that first step, really, that I think students find very daunting.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. So what should they do, then?

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: What should they do? A very good question.

KAREN FOLEY: Can they break anything on this, by the way?

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Absolutely not. It's before the module starts, and that's where students are now. Most modules haven't started yet. So you've got some time to make the most of that enthusiasm and that desire to get started. So I would advise students to just start clicking. You know, once you're on Student Home, use that as your base, and then go from there.

You really can't break anything. You won't spoil it for any other students. So if you fill in something or press something, you haven't then altered it for every other student on your module. So just have a go. You really can't break anything.

KAREN FOLEY: But there's a lot here. I mean, we're looking at some of these things, and you can see there's profile information, there's various tools, there's various services, links,

stuff in the middle. Broadly speaking, for most people, what's the structure of this? And how does it work. then?

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: I think, on most Open University module websites, or websites in general, it's the central column that's really important. And you'll see here for this student, who's kindly let us use his Student Home website, at the start, you've got the central column there, which tells you which qualification you're on. And this student is studying politics, philosophy, and economics. Unfortunately, this student is not actually doing any modules at the moment. But what you'd also see in the central column is a list of modules that this student is doing. And from there, you click onto your module websites. And I would say that if you're starting as a student, it's your module website that's most important, because that will tell you what to do and when.

KAREN FOLEY: OK, brilliant. So shall we have a look at one of the module websites?

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: OK. Let's have a go. They do say never work with technology, but -

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, I know.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: - here we'll go.

KAREN FOLEY: Wow.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: It worked. Ta-da! OK. You'll see this is actually an old module website. It's for the 14J presentation of DD102. But this will look exactly the same for 16J. So again, you'll see this central column down the middle here. And the first thing I would say to students is click on the module instruction and see what happens. Shall we have a go?

KAREN FOLEY: Let's go for it.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: OK. We'll see. OK, and that takes you to a lovely shot of the module team. There you are. We can see us busy at work there, designing the module for you.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: And if you scroll down a little bit, and I shall try and do that, but this mouse is very -

KAREN FOLEY: There's a little thing in the middle, I think, that you can scroll with. Yeah.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: And it takes you to the first introductory video.

KAREN FOLEY: OK.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: So click on that, and watch the video, which will introduce you to the module.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. One thing I really like is you can see the little column, which we saw at the top earlier, which showed you where that was in relation to other things. Sometimes I think it's about getting a sense of scope, how much there is, and what you've got to do, and how it all works. So basically, everything is populated in some sort of sensible order. And I guess if people don't want to watch the video, they don't have to, and -

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: They don't have to. No, there's two ways of navigating it, really. You can use the Contents list there, and simply click on it as if you were going through a book, really. Or you can use, at the top of every page and at the bottom of every page, there'll be a Next button.

KAREN FOLEY: OK, brilliant.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: So you can go Next, or at the top, you can go back -

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: - and simply do it that way.

KAREN FOLEY: And you can also see where you are, I see, with the Week 1 -

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Absolutely.

KAREN FOLEY: - module start, and et cetera.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Yeah. So we're here at the very start in the module introduction before we even get to Week 1. And that's what we recommend students to do. Most Open University module website will be very similar to that. Although this is DD102, they'll all look pretty similar.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. So most of the links, then, that people need are embedded within each week. So is that the same, then, for things like assignments, or things like forums, and, is this the place that has it all?

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Absolutely. It's rather like your virtual box. A student talked about getting the box in the post. Well, you still get that with your books, but you also get another box online as well. And everything is in there that you can possibly need.

KAREN FOLEY: Because I think that's the thing. You do want to start reading the books, don't you? Especially because they're tangible. But actually, what you're saying is that this structures it, so there's a nice introduction. So it's going to tell you what you're then going to need to read.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Absolutely. You just simply work through it step by step. And I'm desperately trying to get back here to the start, but the mouse won't let me. There's not really much room on here. I can't get it back for now, but -

KAREN FOLEY: That's all right.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: - Anyway, if you go back there, and it will tell you week by week the study plan, or the central column in the middle, really tells you step by step what to do and when. And it will also usefully give you an idea of how much time watching a video or doing an activity will take. So you can have a look and think, OK, I've got 10 minutes. So I will watch this video. I've got time to do that. And that's really useful when it comes to planning your time.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Could you find that in a second while I talk about this thing? Because we've asked people, what are your biggest concerns, right? So a lot of people have filled those in on the widget. And I'd just like to make a sense check so that we can try and address any of these things.

So people have a lot of different concerns here. We've got things like time management, note taking, keeping up, time management is quite a big one, falling behind, self learning, academic skills, getting behind, doing two modules, being good enough, the amount of reading people have got to do, academic writing, not understanding things, getting confused, medication problems, have I enough time. An awful lot of anxieties. And thank you for being so honest about those. And those are very, very common anxieties, wouldn't you say, Georgina?

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Absolutely. Yeah, I really sympathise with that, because that's how students often feel. And I guess the good thing is that you're not alone. A lot of students are saying very similar things. And that's really helpful, because students will also support you as you go through your studies. So you get support not just from your tutor, but from all the other students on the module too.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. No, absolutely. And it's really nice. I think so many students don't recognise that actually, they're not the only one having these concerns and anxieties. And I hope, for you at home, that's reassured you that you're not alone and you're in that same boat. And there are various - we'll talk a little bit about how people can access some of those forums and sources for other students as well. OK, HJ and Sophie, how's everything going there?

HJ: Really lovely.

SOPHIE: Yes. Yes, it's mental. There's just so many people online. It's obviously everyone here.

KAREN FOLEY: Good. Have you had any selfies yet?

HJ: Well -

KAREN FOLEY: I don't know how we're going to get them into the studio.

HJ: Someone's -

SOPHIE: Theresa Wotsits selfie.

HJ: Someone's sending us their lunch. So please stop, guys. It's making me hungry. No, not really. We want to see what you're eating.

[LAUGHTER]

We're eating on this desk too. I've got some sweets. But we've got a selfie from the green room as well, which is lovely. So some of our guests have sent in a selfie. But if you do send us a selfie, we've got some really cool stuff that we want to send back to you, because we think that's only fair, don't we?

SOPHIE: Definitely. Yes.

HJ: So we've got loads of cool things from the OU. So if you haven't seen those really cool television programmes, and it says you can send out stuff, we got stuff to send out as well to you.

SOPHIE: I really like these ones with the animals. I'm a bit of a tiger fan, anyway. But this one here.

HJ: Ah. That's a wicked poster.

SOPHIE: Opens out. It's massive. But you wouldn't even know that the Open U do things like this. They've got things like all the different tiger bits and bobs, and so we've got loads of different things like this. So please do send your selfies through so that we can send these on to you.

KAREN FOLEY: So a bit of bargaining. I like it.

[LAUGHTER]

So you send your selfies in electronically, studenthub@open.ac.uk, or @studenthub on Twitter, #studenthublive16. Get those selfies, or your lunch, or your study space, or even a study buddy - like a pet - to us, and we'll get those up on the social media board. And then we'll let you choose from our fine selection of Open University and BBC production materials that we've managed to secure. OK, great. I'd also like to know what you're most excited about, and we're going to come on to that in a minute.

Right, so back to all these anxieties, Georgina. A lot of these are really real, and they are issues. And I think, picking up on some of these things that people are saying, time management is a key one, getting it all done. How is the study planner going to be helpful as a tool for people, and how should they use some of this? Can you talk us through the structure, like week by week, and how people might think about using it?

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Yeah, absolutely. It has a week-by-week basis, and you can see it either as a five-week planner or the entire planner. And it basically takes you through step by step. So each time you click on a week, you get that Contents list opening up on the side there, and that tells you what you're doing each week.

KAREN FOLEY: OK.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: What I would say to students, though, is don't panic. When you look at this, you think, oh my goodness me, there's 30 weeks there of work, and I'm going to

have to do all this, and how am I going to fit it in? It is planned so it's almost like a journey. You're doing it gradually. You're taking it step by step.

If you could do all of this at once, you wouldn't need to do the module. Yeah, so don't worry. Don't, whatever you do, look at week 25 and think, [GASP] I can't do that. You're not supposed to look at week 25 now. You're supposed to look at the introduction.

So I mean, you can look at week 25 and have fun and -

KAREN FOLEY: Everyone's going to look at week -

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: - see what's there.

KAREN FOLEY: I can tell you.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: That's great.

KAREN FOLEY: Who's looking at week 25? [LAUGHING]

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: I can't even remember what's in week 25. It's probably an assignment or something like that. But you know, the whole point is we think very carefully about how we construct these modules so that we do take you step by step. You do have a chance to develop your skills and acquire the knowledge gradually as you go through. So don't panic when you see all this. A module -

KAREN FOLEY: Can you show us -

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: - lasts 30 weeks.

KAREN FOLEY: - one of the weeks as an example?

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: I can. Let's have a look. I won't choose an assignment week.

KAREN FOLEY: No, try not to.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: I'll try not to.

KAREN FOLEY: That will scare everyone. No, it won't scare everyone. But we're going to look at time management with Susanne a little bit later, and one of the things that I'm very keen to look at is how you can break down some of these tasks and consider when you do certain activities, and how to actually use that. But it's just useful to be able to see what's actually in one of these examples from, and this is a social sciences module, so every one is quite different.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: OK, so I've clicked on week 15. I decided not to go for week 25.

KAREN FOLEY: [CHUCKLING]

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: And as you can see, as I said, there's the Contents list there, which tells you the different sections for this week. It's quite a full week. Most modules will

probably have a common format each week, so you'll be doing similar kind of things. So on DD102, for example, the first thing it actually tells you to do is to work with a chapter.

KAREN FOLEY: Right.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: So we still have books, as well as all these wonderful things online. So it will tell you to work with a chapter. It might give you an activity of questions that you need to think about when you're reading, and then you can go online and fill in that. And I'm quite pleased that I've chosen this one, actually, because the Portland Road is actually based on the Secret Streets -

KAREN FOLEY: Material we have.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: - series that we did with the BBC. And that's a nice little video that works with some of the ideas that you've read about in the chapters. So often we find, for example, that a student will think, oh, that's quite difficult, that chapter, reading that. But then you go to a video or an audio, and you think, oh, yeah. That becomes a bit clearer, yeah. So there's different ways of learning things and different ways of working with the materials, because students study in different ways.

KAREN FOLEY: They absolutely do. Could you tell us about this week you will study, and just a little bit about learning outcomes and how, a lot of the time, we're trying to structure things so that students get an idea? Sometimes you can look at these things and think, ugh, that's a lot of stuff, and then just go on with it. But why is it important to get a sense of what you're actually going to be studying?

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: OK. This week you will study is kind of like the overview. So it doesn't give you the detail. It gives you the main themes and the main activities that you're looking at this week. So you'll see that you've got an activity that's reviewing the chapter, and that's the same every week. You've got a video, you've got an audio, and then we've got a working with numbers activity, because one of the skills that students learn on this introductory module is how to work with numbers.

You'll also find at the end of each week that there's a conclusion and a summary. And they're absolutely vital, because they give you the main points that you really should have come away with that week. So if you get to the conclusion and the summary and they're a bit of a surprise, as opposed to, oh, yes, I did get that, then you perhaps need to go back and look at some things again.

And again, that's the ideal about this, really, in that you can go back as many times as you want. Your tutor won't see what you write in the activities. So if you're doing an activity and you write, blah, blah, blah -

KAREN FOLEY: [CHUCKLING]

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: - because you haven't really understood it, don't worry. Your tutor won't see that, and you can -

KAREN FOLEY: It's good that -

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: - go back to it.

KAREN FOLEY: - people know that they don't know what we're doing, because a lot of our viewers out there are sitting in their dressing gowns, so they tell us. So very lucky that we can't see them. And in fact, that's one of the benefits of these online tutorials, because we will do those in our dressing gowns too. [LAUGHING]

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: I couldn't possibly comment.

KAREN FOLEY: [LAUGHING] HJ and Sophie, how's everything going?

HJ: It's going brilliant. A lot of people are really, some people are a bit nervous and anxious waiting for their module website to open, so they're very glad that we're doing this session. Chantelle is waiting for her pack to arrive soon as well. So when it does arrive, send us a picture. So that would be great. A lot of people want the tiger poster.

KAREN FOLEY: OK.

HJ: So that's a very popular one. Charlotte and -

KAREN FOLEY: But they will have to send us in -

HJ: Heather.

KAREN FOLEY: their selfies. That's the deal.

HJ: That's how it works, unfortunately.

KAREN FOLEY: So get those in.

HJ: Christopher was saying when he looks at his study planner, sometimes he does like to look ahead, although it's maybe a bit daunting, because he'll look at it and he goes, that's something I'll know about later. So I think that's really nice.

SOPHIE: It's also quite good, because when you do get to the end, you remember how you felt when you looked at it and you were all nervous. And then you get there, and you can see your progress. You can see what you've done. I used to like doing that. Bit of panic at the start. But then, when you get there, you just feel so much better, because you know you can do it.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. That's a good point. Actually, I'm a massive fan of tick boxes. I love a tick box, I do. You can tick these, can't you? And then you feel like you're getting somewhere. And then, I guess, you can go back if you haven't had time to do something like watch a video, and then you can refer to it later.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Yeah. There's a great deal of satisfaction to be had from ticking those boxes there and watching your progress as you go through the week. So yeah, you're absolutely right.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Excellent. Now, aside from this, then, and when people's module websites do open and you're coming back next week, aren't you, to talk us through in a lot more detail.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Yeah. I will.

KAREN FOLEY: We're going to focus on learning online next week. So we're going to take a look at actually how you learn online effectively, as well as where some of these things are. So Georgina will be back, and we'll go in a little bit more detail about OU Live and forums, and actually show you some of the workings around those. And some of you will have been allocated, hopefully, your module websites by then, so you can have a look and then ask us more questions. So don't worry. This isn't the last time we're doing this, and it's certainly not the exhaustive demonstration of it.

But could you have a look? Did you want to talk us through forums and things? Because this is quite an important thing, when students do get to their websites, about how to get news and what's going on. And we see that there's some news down the side of, often, Student Home and the module websites that students should be alerted to.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Absolutely. I won't go into great detail now, because you should say we'll come back to this next week. But I guess, for new students, the key one, which you'll find on the right hand side of the module website, is the Welcome forum. That should open on Saturday for a lot of the new modules. And that's a great place to go, because you can ask questions of the module team. You can say hello to other students. You can find yourself a study buddy, someone perhaps studying the module near to you.

And it's a great place to get that sense of excitement and keep it going, but also to realise that there's lots of other students out there who are feeling just as nervous as you are. So I would recommend that new students, in particular, go to the Welcome forum. But of course, students who are not new, but are perhaps doing their second or third module, again, the Welcome forum is a great place to start, just to find your feet on any new module that you're doing. When you get into your studies, you'll then migrate from the Welcome forum, which closes usually about two weeks into the module. So you go on to the cluster group forums - the names aren't great, I must admit, in terms of what we call them - or your tutor group forums. And that's really where your studying takes place, in these cluster group forums.

KAREN FOLEY: Perfect. Sophie and HJ, what's up?

HJ: Well, we're getting lots of great questions through, which we want, about anything and everything, so just ask us. But I think Sophie's got a -

SOPHIE: Yes.

HJ: - fantastic question that you may be able to help us with now.

SOPHIE: Well, I can't take credit for this. But Joanne has asked, her pack is due to arrive when she's on holiday. So can she access her books electronically before that or while she's away or.

KAREN FOLEY: Good question.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Absolutely. Yeah, as we said earlier, the module website is like your box that you do get in the post. And in the past, it used to be a much bigger box than it is now. But you can access your books online. You can access them in a whole variety of formats, whether that's as e-books, PDFs, a whole different variety of formats. So yes is the answer to that.

KAREN FOLEY: So you can take it on the train and you can -

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Absolutely.

KAREN FOLEY: - do anything with your module materials and have them to hand at all times. Although being on holiday and looking forward to that is very, very admirable. Let's see what you're all excited about. We asked you to list three things that you were most excited about, and we've got the results of that now, so let's have a look. We've got learning new things and learning. Well, that's brilliant, because that is what you're definitely going to be doing.

But it's interesting to see some of the other things here. We've got things like new stationery, which I agree is incredibly important. Making friends is a really lovely one as well. In fact, I've made so many friends from the long time I started OU study. And you do make some amazing friends. And hopefully, on these sessions as well, you'll meet other people.

Doing assignments, changing my future, doing something new, new qualifications, getting my degree. So a lot of things about being part of the OU, and actually the here and now, as well as an idea about the future, and that end goal, which is obviously getting a degree and learning new things and having something to look forward to. Now, those two things can seem quite difficult, the here and now, and then the, I'm getting my degree. And for a lot of students, that may be a six-year plan, and it can be quite difficult. What would your advice be in terms of using the forums and using other students to help manage that?

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Yeah, I think you have to be careful, because the forms can be very supportive, but they can also scare you as well and make you anxious, in the sense that you might get a student on there who, for very good reason, has decided to get ahead with the module, because perhaps they're going on holiday or they know something's coming up at work. So they'll say, oh, I've already done my first assignment, and I'm now on week six. And to another student, that's like, oh, my goodness me, I'm not anywhere near that. So you have to be careful. Use them as a source of support, but don't feel that you have to do everything that everybody else is doing, because it can make you very anxious and actually make the problem worse. And they can also be a terrible distraction.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Yeah, you can also think, oh, I'll go on the forum, and then I'm studying. Well, yes, to a point -

KAREN FOLEY: [LAUGHING]

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: - but at some point you do also have to sit down and read the books and do the activities. I would say one person we haven't really mentioned yet is the tutor, of course, yes? So if you're talking to students on the forum, and someone says

something, and you're perhaps a bit unsure about it, speak to your tutor, because they really are there as a source of support. So any kind of anxieties they can help to allay.

KAREN FOLEY: So what might students expect? Because a lot of students won't have been allocated a tutor right now, and there's a massive process going on where the students and the tutors are all being matched up at the moment. So whilst the module websites will open, it might take a little bit of time for the students to actually get their tutor. What should they be expecting right now in the here and now? So they're going to get access to the module websites very soon, maybe on Saturday, and then they're going to get their tutor a bit later. Tell us about that process in these first, in the next week.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: It can be a very uncertain time, because you're wanting to start, but you're not quite there yet. The modules don't start usually till the beginning of October. That's why we have the Welcome forum. That helps to fill that gap. So if you've got any questions, before you get your tutor, before you know when all your tutorials and other learning events are taking place, you can ask questions of the module team, and they'll help to answer them and to help to keep your enthusiasm going and allay those concerns.

The other thing to be careful of is don't think, I have to sit down and read all my book now. Yeah, by all means, have a flick through it. As I said, use the time wisely at the start, before the module actually starts, to look at the module websites, look at Student Home, click on these links, and see what happens. But do so in a way that's helpful to you, and don't feel that, oh, well, I didn't look at that, and now there's all this, and there's all this on study skills, and oh, what do I do? Just when you start to panic like that, take a deep breath, switch it off, and think about something else. And remember that step-by-step progress. It sounds very corny, but it really is a journey, and it's one step at a time.

KAREN FOLEY: I know. And the nice thing is it's nicely planned, so week 1 starts very nice and gently before you ramp it all up - [LAUGHING] - to week 25. Can you just tell us briefly about some of the resources? And we have Helen from the library, who's going to be talking about managing digital presence. But this is the Student Home view again, so we've gone out of the module website. Some of the services we can see on the left hand side here are really important, and they might be a place -

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: They are.

KAREN FOLEY: - that students might want to have a little nosy around now. Tell us about them.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Again, use with caution, because you don't have to use everything, or don't have to do everything now. But there are some really important ones. The computing guide is probably very weighty to work through, but I would certainly plug the computing help desk. It's absolutely essential, and they are absolutely great. If you don't know anything about computers, and you don't really know what to do first, just give them a ring, because they're really great at solving problems. My mum is actually 80 this year, and she did an OU degree in her 70s, and I think she had them on speed dial.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, bless.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: And she kept -

KAREN FOLEY: And they're open real sensible hours -

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Absolutely.

KAREN FOLEY: - aren't they, till 8:00 or 9:00 at night, isn't there?

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Yeah, and she'd ring up, say my internet's gone. You know.

KAREN FOLEY: [LAUGHING]

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: And I said, well, I'm sure it hasn't. You know, which sounds, but those kind of problems, they're really good at talking you through and helping with that. So if you've got IT anxiety, which many of us has, then the OU computing help desk is absolutely key.

KAREN FOLEY: OK, great.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Library Services are great. And don't feel that you've got to use journal articles and books right at the start of your studies, because everything you need to pass your module comes to you either in the box in the post or via your module website. But the library is really good for little bite-sized study skills and training courses. They also do some great online training courses to help you with online tutorials and things like that. So there are things there that are useful under Library, which I'm sure the librarians will talk about later on, too.

KAREN FOLEY: They absolutely will.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Yeah. And finally, I guess, the Help Centre is great. If you click on that, it takes you to a whole variety of topics, frequently asked questions, and things that you can just click on if you're not sure about how to do something, like how do I put a picture on my profile, or how do I change my password? Those kind of things that we all struggle with at the start.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Excellent. And there's also the careers advisory service and services for disabled students. Now some of these, we've got a freshers' event on right at the end of September, and we'll be hearing a lot more from the disabled students' group and the careers advice service during them. But do let us know any questions that relate to any of that in the meantime. So those are the most important things, then, about the Student Home and the module website, Georgina. Yeah?

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Yeah, I think so.

KAREN FOLEY: OK, thank you. Well, thank you so much for joining me today, and for explaining all of this. I think it's really good just so that people can see exactly what's there, click on the links when it arrives. And then next week, you can come back and we can go through some of the things like how to access online tutorials, how to go on a forum, how it's appropriate to post on forums, et cetera, and go through that in a lot more detail. That's been fantastic.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Yeah, of course I will.

KAREN FOLEY: All, right well thank you very much for coming.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: You're welcome.

KAREN FOLEY: And we'll see you next week. OK, Sophie and HJ, how's it all going there?

HJ: It's going brilliantly.

SOPHIE: Yes, very busy. We've had a lot of pictures in of study buddies.

KAREN FOLEY: Have you, now?

SOPHIE: We've got a bearded dragon.

KAREN FOLEY: A bearded dragon?

SOPHIE: And it's been put into Twitter. Yes.

HJ: We've got, oh, we've actually got our Twitter photos. I don't know if you guys can see that, but lots of people send them in. We've got pictures of people's desks, and a desk selfie. I like that. That's a double whammy there.

And Dawn sent in a picture of her cat sitting on her stuff. Cats do that, don't they? They're always on keyboards or where they're not supposed to be. They pick the wrong times for attention. And -

SOPHIE: Show her this bearded dragon as well.

HJ: Yeah. I wonder if that sits on a keyboard while shes trying to do work. But we've also got study packages coming, and selfies, and, oh, someone in their pyjamas watching us. That's nice. That's the best way. I think I spent half of my OU stuff in my pyjamas. Yeah, we won't talk about that. But if you're, the chat's going so fast -

[LAUGHTER]

KAREN FOLEY: No.

[LAUGHTER]

HJ: No? The chat's going so fast. If you're like us and struggle to keep up, there's a little pin on the top right you can press, and then you can manually scroll through. But because it's so fast, if we miss anything, e-mail us, studenthub@open.ac.uk, or our Twitter, [@studenthublive](https://twitter.com/studenthublive), and we will get your questions answered.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. So that's good. Thank you for sending us all those in. We'll get those printed off and put up on the board, and we're going to keep doing that over the next four weeks as well. So HJ and Sophie, how are you going to keep your end of the bargain and send these posters and various bits out to people, then?

HJ: Well, if people keep sending them in, and we've got loads in, and we should have loads of tiger posters. I think people like those.

SOPHIE: No, we have got plenty.

HJ: But if you give us your address in the e-mails, or direct message your address on Twitter, don't put your address as well on any Twitter messages.

[LAUGHTER]

Then we'll get those to you. But we love seeing them. So just keep sending us stuff. And actually, Jessica had a great study tip. She says she gets a wall planner, and she writes different hints and tips on it at different times of the year, when it's applicable.

So when it's exam time, she's going to write her exam tips on there. Maybe when she's starting off, she'll write some of the tips that we got on there. So I really like that, and I'm going to put Jessica's tip, I'm going to put it on our wall. There we go. I really like that tip, so keep them coming.

KAREN FOLEY: Thank you, Jessica, for that, and thank you, everybody else, for your tips. I've heard there's a problem with our printer at the moment, so we can't get anything up on the desk, but thank you so much for sending all those. And we do love to do that, and we'll certainly have them up and ready for next week, if not before. But don't put your details on the Twitter feed. Do e-mail them to us or instant message us with them instead, because managing your digital presence is very, very important. And I'm joined now with Helen from the library, who's continuously telling me about how important it is to manage your digital identity and not give out your email address on Twitter.

[LAUGHTER]

And things like that. Helen, thank you so much for joining us.

HELEN CLOUGH: Thank you.

KAREN FOLEY: Now, the library are doing a series of sessions at these boot camps. And the one that we're going to talk about today is about managing your digital presence.

HELEN CLOUGH: Yes.

KAREN FOLEY: And we've been talking about forums and connecting students. And you would really like to talk about social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter and how to interact with students. So we have a widget for you that we would like you to fill in now, which is, which social networking sites do you use? So if you could select which ones you use, and we'll take a look at those, and you can tell us what you think of that, Helen. So welcome. OK, so what do we mean, then, by this idea of a digital presence?

HELEN CLOUGH: OK. So you leave a digital footprint when you go online.

KAREN FOLEY: Like a cookie.

HELEN CLOUGH: Basically, yeah. And that can be, say somebody mentions you in a blog post or in a forum discussion, if you post photos of yourself online, if other people post photos of you. And then, also, you've got your social networking profiles if you have them, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter. So that's your presence. That's your footprint.

And you need to be aware of that, because potential clients, potential employers, they will Google you. So you need to curate that presence to make sure that it's how you want to present yourself to the world. So yes, so it's just being aware of that, I guess. And I would say that, following on from what Georgina was talking about with the VLE and the module website and everything, if you do use Twitter and Facebook and would like to use them for study, then it's important, I think, to stress that these are optional extras. And it's not crucial, but it is nice to have. If you feel that you don't want to engage in this way, or you might be overwhelmed, then stick to your module website and your module forums, and you'll get everything you need there.

But the fantastic thing about being online is that you can connect with people. You can connect with your fellow students, you can get fantastic information that will actually help you with your studies, and also, going back to the employment theme as well, you can connect with clients, and you can connect with employers and move on in your career as well.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. Well, we've asked people which social networking sites they use. Facebook is the most popular, as I think we would naturally expect, with 41% using that. Do keep filling that in. If you haven't already, you can just select the item that applies and then press Enter, and the widget should return down. LinkedIn is at 12%. LinkedIn is an increasingly commonly used device, as you say, for networking and connecting people. Can you tell us why that's important at the start of a journey?

HELEN CLOUGH: Well, I think putting together a professional CV, putting it online in that way, I think it's great, because it can show your progress. So when you create that online CV, you're asked to list your skills or your knowledge. And then you connect with other people who have similar interests, and they can endorse your skills and your knowledge. So for example, Karen, you might say, I'm experienced at delivering via Livestream. And I could come along and I could endorse that and say, tick, yes, Karen is.

KAREN FOLEY: [CHUCKLING]

HELEN CLOUGH: But obviously, as you continue your studies with the Open University, you're going to develop more skills. You're going to develop more knowledge, and you can add to that profile. And then it's a fantastic way to showcase how you've developed as a professional via your OU studies. And you can then, not only can employers and potential clients have a look at your profile on LinkedIn, you can have a look at theirs as well, so you can scope out, if you're going for a job interview, you can see the profiles of people on the panel and see, well, is this a company I'd like to work for? So yeah, so LinkedIn is used, as you say, increasingly more in the job market.

KAREN FOLEY: So it's a good idea to get set up on that, get connected so that you keep building those connections. And then, when you're in a position, you'll have lots of things already on the back burner, then, I suppose.

HELEN CLOUGH: Yes, that's right. Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: But Facebook is increasingly used by students as a way of connecting. And you mentioned this earlier, and as you say, Georgina and I were talking about this. Now, students can find these Facebook groups, and sometimes they can be really supportive, and sometimes they can not be. Is there anything that you'd like to add to what Georgina was saying about that use of Facebook? Because I appreciate that we really want to talk about how we use them in the library, and using those various, more academic, I guess, or more subject-specific sites, as opposed to tutor group sites. But students do use those with varying degrees of effect for them.

HELEN CLOUGH: Yeah, they do. And I think there are some fantastic groups on Facebook. For example, there's the OU Dead Horse group, which is brilliant, because it's run by experienced students, and they'll post questions and answers in one post. And it's a great way to - if you're feeling a little bit overwhelmed by the OU procedures and acronyms, then it will help you to maybe get up to speed with that. And I think sometimes we forget that being an OU student can be quite isolating.

So if you're lacking any sort of motivation, or you're just feeling a bit down, want somebody to give you a bit of a boost, then it's a great way to just go onto a study skills Facebook group or something. And you'll have loads of students coming and saying, oh, no, don't give up. It's fantastic. Or I graduated last year, and it's well worth it. Keep going. Because of course, in a campus university, you get that by just going for a cup of coffee with your fellow students, whereas we have to sometimes make the effort to build those communities when we're working online.

KAREN FOLEY: It's interesting, A lot of people are saying in the chat that they're worried about whether or not the Facebook groups at OU are genuine. And a lot of them are just set up by people as support networks, aren't they? So the OU don't actually run Facebook groups as such. And some very good advice from a tutor out there not to give personal information out on Facebook. You can pick up and use them, you can come off them if they're not supportive, but they're not for everybody. But for some people, as you say, Helen, they are very supportive.

Another good thing to hear is that there's a lot of post being delivered. So I hear that a few postmen have very nearly been kissed, and there's a lot of excitement going on as some of the module materials have arrived. So do open those while you're watching boot camp. Don't let us stop you. It is very exciting, and that's good to hear. OK, so Helen, in addition to these various supportive aspects, what is important in terms of keeping up to date with your subject in terms of social media and managing that digital presence?

HELEN CLOUGH: Yeah, it's a fantastic way to keep up to date with your subject, I think. So Twitter especially is very good for this. So I'm assuming that students who have chosen to study a module - I might be wrong - have an interest in that subject, and they want to keep up to date. They want to find out what's happening, any new publications. Well, if you have a Twitter account, just follow a relevant organisation or a relevant person, and it's a great way to find out what's going on.

And also, I think, using social media in this way helps with module choice as well, because with a lot of subjects, you're asked to specialise at levels 2 and 3. And if you read around

your subject, you can get an idea of what interests you, and that helps with module choice. And also, at the higher levels, you will be required to do some independent study. And this is a fantastic way to find out what's being published and any news in your subject area as well.

KAREN FOLEY: So I guess it's really immersing yourself, then, in the things that interest you. And just when you've got a few minutes spare and you can just flick through your Facebook feed, if you like the things that are going to support that, then you can always go and find articles, et cetera.

HELEN CLOUGH: Yeah. So maybe spend a little bit of time finding out the key organisations and people to follow. So for example, as a history student, you might want to follow an academic or populist magazine like History Today, because they'll not only tweet about their upcoming articles and issues, they'll also retweet and link to stuff that's relevant to history.

And I also like the BBC Twitter feeds. They do Twitter really well. So they'll have Twitter feeds for their programmes. So for example, in our time with Melvyn Bragg on Radio 4, they had their own Twitter feed and podcast. And they'll advertise their upcoming programmes, but they'll also let you know about lots of other things to do with the topic they're discussing.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent. One of the things I like about Facebook groups is that often they'll have suggested posts. So you'll like a few certain things - I like the Tate and the National Gallery, et cetera - and then all of a sudden, you'll get suggested groups. And you can naturally build up a nice organic array of things there to get up to speed with. So those sort of things, in terms of your subject, are important. And as you say, you don't necessarily need to have them, but they're nice to know about just to support any knowledge, although you don't need to often do any reading, especially not early days.

But in terms of employability, managing your digital presence, as you say, is important, because people can check up on you, and they can see your feeds, et cetera. So one piece of advice that I think you wanted to talk about was about separating identities. Why is that important?

HELEN CLOUGH: Well, I mean, it's not for everybody, because we're all one person. We're not separate identities. But what I do is I separate out my work, my professional identity, from my personal life. So I have two Facebook identities that I created with different e-mail addresses. So with the work one, that's where I respond to student queries on the OU Library Facebook page. It's also where I log in to run the live Facebook chats that we do every two or three times a year.

And I do the same with Twitter as well. I keep it separate from my personal life. And that's because I can then control, for example, with Twitter, I can lock down my personal Twitter account, and so potential employers, they don't need to see that I live tweet Bake-Off.

KAREN FOLEY: [LAUGHING]

HELEN CLOUGH: It's not going to do me any harm.

KAREN FOLEY: - going to be something embarrassing, Helen.

[LAUGHTER]

HELEN CLOUGH: But it's perhaps not relevant to the people who follow me for librarian stuff.

KAREN FOLEY: No. But that's a really good point. For some of our students who are thinking about joining Facebook groups, in particular with all of these various issues around privacy settings, that might be a really nice idea so that their identity is, to some extent, protected, especially when you've got often pictures of your animals and children and various things on your own Facebook page. You might not want other people having access to that, especially if you're joining a fairly large group.

HELEN CLOUGH: Yeah, that's right. And that's a great way to do it, is just to separate it out, decide that you're going to have just one account for OU study, and stick to that. And that can make your life a lot easier, I think.

And also, there are some tools that can help you do this as well. So for example, there's a tool that you can use with Twitter called TweetDeck, where it's organised into columns. So for example, in one of my columns, I have OU people, and all the tweets are from OU people. And then I have another separate column for University Library Twitter accounts. And it's just a quick way for me to quickly scan down, see what's happening out there, and then if there's anything I want to follow up on, then I can.

So yeah. So think about having these separate accounts. Think about learning the tool, making it work for you. But if you find that you're getting overwhelmed, then take a step back. Concentrate on the module website, the module forum, and then you'll be away.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. No. Procrastination is one of the thing I know that people struggle with a lot when they're studying with the Open University. And this is obviously a very interesting way to go off on a wild goose chase of lots of interesting ideas. But as you say, it's important to be mindful that it's not always the right thing to do at that particular time, but it's nice to have on the back burner. And I love your tip as well about making those two different accounts. I think that could really work for a lot of people.

HELEN CLOUGH: Yeah. I think that that's a great idea, yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, Helen, thank you so much for coming to join me today. Have we covered everything -

HELEN CLOUGH: Yes.

KAREN FOLEY: - that I think we need to talk about? And there's some resources on our website.

HELEN CLOUGH: There are. So we have a tool called Being Digital. There's a link to that from the Resources page. And if you go there, you will find little bite-size activities - so five, 10 minutes long - where you can explore some of the topics we've covered. So there's an activity on social networking - is it for me - making the most of Twitter, keeping up to date using online networking, that sort of thing. So you can delve a little bit more in-depth into what we've discussed today.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Well, thank you so much for joining me. And I'm sure our readers will take advantage of those resources, which are on the web page, so back on the Student Hub Live website. And you can find the resources for this and all of the other study skill sessions as well, so there'll be lots of useful activities. Well, Helen, thank you very much. You've sparked a conversation about cakes and Bake-Off, so I shall let you get on with your tweeting about such matters. [LAUGHING] Excellent. Sophie and HJ, how's it all going there aside from the obvious talk about cake?

SOPHIE: Well that's sort of taken over just now. There's a lot of cake talk. It's making me very hungry. And we've also a lot of study buddy pictures and quite a lot of cats. They appear to be quite good study buddies -

HJ: The popular ones. Yeah.

SOPHIE: - by the looks of it, yes. And there's been a lot of good suggestions for study tapes. I know you've got a few.

HJ: Yes. I think one that I really liked that Lorella's said is she likes meditation as a study tip. So perhaps before a study session, if you're stressed out before an exam. So I really like that. So I'm going to pop Lorella's on our board as well.

SOPHIE: It's a good one, because it's only quick, a 10-minute meditation session.

HJ: I think Anne said there's some meditation apps that you can get.

SOPHIE: Yes.

HJ: So that's a good idea as well.

SOPHIE: Headspace, I think, is one of them. There's a few floating round.

HJ: But I think Matthew came in with a really good point relating to online stuff in sessions as well. It's that online stuff's great for making friends and support on modules and asking questions, but your tutor is always the main point of contact, and they'll know definitively what you need to do as well.

SOPHIE: Yes.

HJ: So I think he's right on that point. That is good to keep in mind.

KAREN FOLEY: Lovely. Excellent. Well, I'm afraid we don't have a cake widget, popular as the Battenberg and banana bread are. But I tell you what, we'll make one next time, OK? So if you come back next week, I promise you we will make a wonderful cake widget, and we'll see what your favourite cake is, all right?

And if you'd like to tweet Bake-Off, you can do so, or you can also send us an e-mail to let us know what your favourite cakes are on Twitter. And the hashtag is #studenthublive16. In fact, I know some OU colleagues who make particularly nice cakes, and I'm sure that they might send us some pictures in for next week of their wares.

Excellent. Well, time is pressing on, and without further ado, we're going to address some time management. Now, who is the right person to do this? Well, a mineralogist and planetary scientist, I think, is what we need. So Susanne Schwenger, thank you for coming along.

Now, when you're not specialising in Martian topics, we're talking a lot about time management, aren't we? And you're an expert at this, because you have a lot of things to do. [LAUGHING] Very exciting things to do, in fact. You've been gallivanting all over the place. And so when you're not studying rock integration and noble gases on the red planet, can you tell us how you're managing your busy academic life and why you feel that you're an expert to tell our students about time management?

SUSANNE SCHWENGER: Well, my expertise in time management goes back to the time when I did a PhD, because I was fascinated also by a museum. And it happened that I had to turn in my PhD two days before we had an exhibition at Frankfurt Airport. And with a totally volunteer-driven museum, and I am the only scientist on the team, I had to learn very quickly how to actually get all of this sorted and how to get all the demands sorted. And so I did the first thing, which, looking back, was very smart. I read a book about time management.

KAREN FOLEY: [CHUCKLING]

SUSANNE SCHWENGER: And all I have to say today is from what I read back then, what I practised back then. I'm not an expert. I am not a coach. I'm just talking from my experience.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent. Well, I'm glad we've got someone here from science, because something's been puzzling me all day. I put lemons and limes in this jar, and the lemons are all floating, and the limes are all sinking. What's that all about?

SUSANNE SCHWENGER: Oh. You are surprising me here. Well, since planetary science has a bit of physics, let's go back to the basics here. I mean, what floats must be lighter than water, have a smaller density, so to say.

KAREN FOLEY: But they're both citrus fruits.

SUSANNE SCHWENGER: Maybe your lemons have a thicker skin, because that white under the yellow skin is usually quite fluffy. And if they have a bit of a thicker skin, they might float. And the limes, with a very, very thin skin, they might sink. Maybe it's just a little bit of air trapped in the skin.

KAREN FOLEY: Probably.

SUSANNE SCHWENGER: You could verify that. You could now measure the thickness of the skin.

KAREN FOLEY: I could, but we don't have time. [LAUGHING]

SUSANNE SCHWENGER: Right. Good point.

KAREN FOLEY: OK, excellent. So Susanne, let's take a look, then, at some of the things that are very common sense, because time management is one of those things that often we'll

sit down and look at. There's a really nice resource, actually, on the website, which I was doing on the weekend when I was procrastinating, looking at time management. And it gives you an idea about how to prioritise and categorise different tasks. Now, time management, I think, is one of these sorts of things that people often know about.

We theoretically know we need to manage our time. We need to identify our priorities. But often, as you say, we think, but I must really go and read a book about time management instead. Or I must do something a little bit different and procrastinate. So how can you give people ideas about really doing this, bearing in mind that a lot of us know a lot theoretically about it?

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: Well, to me, one of the most important things is to take the time to think about my time management, and to categorise things. And there is a very easy scheme, where they say you categorise in a, b, and c, with a being important and needs to be done immediately, b being still important, but has a little bit more time - at least at that moment where you look at it - and c being neither important nor very timely. And then, you've got a scheme. You start with a scheme, and then you can write a list, and you can see what is the actually most important thing I need to do, and start there.

And another thing that comes into the procrastination a little bit, if we feel something is really hard, we tend to procrastinate more than if we think something is interesting and I can do that. Or we procrastinate more when we think, oh, that's a mundane task. That's actually really boring. So either if it's too complicated or if it's boring, we don't really want to do it. And one thing that I tell my students and also do myself a lot is start with that.

Do the boring thing first thing in the morning before you even had coffee. And that way, you've got it out of the way. You feel free. You feel you've achieved something already. And that stops you in wasting a lot of time that you could actually use to do something more interesting, or just go for a walk.

KAREN FOLEY: I'd like to see what's happening on the hot desk and what tips people have got. I saw a really interesting post on the OU's Facebook page today. I can't remember the exact wording of it, but it was sort of like next year I will. So something people would be doing differently next year. And I wonder if you've got any ideas about things that you're doing for your time management, or any tips, et cetera, that you've got. Sophie and HJ, have people come up with any ideas, or are you still talking about cake?

SOPHIE: There's still a little bit of cake conversation. But we've had a few come in, things like lists. People are fond of lists and mind maps and post-it notes.

HJ: Yes.

SOPHIE: Everyone seems to like -

HJ: Everyone seems to like post-it notes -

SOPHIE: Yes.

HJ: - don't they? But I think Judy also said it's a bit of a random question about lemons and limes. And Michael wants to know now, on the follow-up to that, do limes float in gin and tonic? So maybe we'll have to find that one out.

SOPHIE: [CHUCKLING]

HJ: But I think Davin said he recently found a good audiobook that he wished he'd found at the start of his studies, called *The Art of Learning*. So thanks for sharing that. And yeah, I'll have to look that up. I'm really excited to start, but I'm also very nervous as well. So this is very useful. But yes.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent. Well, thank you. And Anna apparently can't survive without either lists or cake. Now, lists are a good idea, and Georgina has shown us the study planner, which is a phenomenal list. That's the list of the module. That's everything you've got to cover in that.

So we know these lists are important. We can a, b, or c them. How do students, then, take and manage their time from getting that study planner and then thinking about what they need to do and prioritising them? Because I mean, it's difficult, especially if you've got a published list. And it's like, this is my module list.

And I think, oh, maybe I should be doing it in that order. Maybe I should be doing x, y, or z. We've seen, as well, that there are various videos, there are various resources, there's various activities that people need to fill in and do in their book chapters, obviously, as well. And we know that people have a lot of anxieties around their time, and they're out and about, they're often working, et cetera. How do they then manage their time with this study planner that they've got with all these various activities that is listed in a linear order? How do you deconstruct that list and make your own list?

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: Yes, I think deconstruction is the key word here. And we heard before that the lists are already broken down a little bit. But the lists need to be broken down even more, because every person is different. And someone might be very, very easy with the task of doing some of the math questions, maybe. I'm a scientist, so I'm always thinking about the math first, but being not so easy with reading a lot of text.

And then you need to try to assign your own times. And a lot of that is experience. But there's also something else to that. If you plan for your time, you need to add a little bit of buffer. So if you think, I can read that text in two hours, then you have to think, what else might happen in these two hours?

First of all, is it a good idea to try to do it in one block? Maybe it is. Maybe that's the time span you can focus. Maybe your focus span is only an hour, so you need to plan for a break in between. But also, you need to think, what else might happen?

Do my kids come home from school? Do I have to have dinner in between, because dinner time is in between and I can't read hungry? So it's a lot of individual planning of the exact day, and of the exact task. And as a rule of thumb, because that sounds very complicated, what I do is if I have a task, I think, OK, this will take me half an hour. Then I will ask myself the question, is everything in there in my control?

So is my time, is the task, everything in my control? Yes? Then I add just 10% for my own mind wandering. If it is not, because someone might actually come to my house or in my office, or I need a response from someone before I can move on and do the second part of that same task, then I add 20% of time to that half hour that I think it would take me. And that gives you these little chunks of time that you most of the time actually do need, but if you don't need them, well, then you can bake a cake.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, yes, you could. You sound so very, very organised. Now, one thing I do know is that a lot of the time on these study planners, they'll say, oh, this will take so long, so this is a one-hour activity. And a bit like the satnav - not that I ever speed - but a bit like the satnav, I think, oh, could I do it in a little bit less? What would you say about people adjusting and learning their times and how those might work within that study planner context?

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: Well, first of all is, for those who are just starting out, they need to try and find out how long they need. And what I tell my students when they start is, why don't you, for the first week or so, sit down and then make a little table on a scrap paper and say, OK, they say it takes an hour. It actually took me 50 minutes. Or they say, this takes an hour, and it took me an hour and a half. So you get a feeling for the tasks first, because those who are new to the OU, they will figure out, within probably the first two to three weeks, how times measure up to what we think they measure up.

KAREN FOLEY: And it's a really good point, actually. I'm glad you've mentioned going over, because that's nothing to do with how bright or not you are. It's just how long it takes you to do something. And it's better to read something fairly with meaning, I mean, the amount of times that I've read something, and then I've put it down and think, what did I read? I've read it quickly. I haven't retained any of it.

And so it's important that you measure that. I'd like to look at what people said was important in terms of time management so that we can pick up on some of these, because it seems like we've got a very conscientious bunch of people out there. So Susanne, these are some of the things that people have said are important. So these are the three most important things. We've got planning, prioritising, sticky labels are a big thing, very important, and I'd like to talk about stationery in a minute as well, thinking ahead, being realistic as well, which I think is so important. And a lot of this, another word here is flexibility.

So thank you for all of those. This flexibility is a really important thing. So whilst we can make our time and deconstruct our plan, we can use various devices and things that can help us. Now, people have said they love stationery, they love post-it notes, et cetera. We've got some various things here that should make life a breeze. I mean, some of these things, like these academic wall planners that you can put on with, we have nice thing about not only putting the content on here, but also putting tips, et cetera. What would be some of the ways that you would recommend people might be able to structure or use some of these lovely colourful things - like highlighters, a keen favourite - to actually help plan their time?

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: Well, what I do is because time management, as you say, needs to be very flexible. And tasks come in. First of all, don't just plan your studies. Plan your life with it, because otherwise, you will have a constant conflict. If you, for example, need to do something else, you need to bake that cake for a friend's birthday -

KAREN FOLEY: Could we stop talking about cakes, please? I'm getting really hungry.
[LAUGHING]

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: Well - [MICROWAVE HUMMING] - you started it.

KAREN FOLEY: I didn't start it. It was Helen, I think you'll find.

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: OK. If you really have to clean your kitchen - let's go get away from that - but if you have to do something else that's really important and that you can't get around, you need to factor that in. Because not only will you feel bad if you only get one thing done, the studies or the other task, but also, if you sit down to study and think, but I also have to, but I also have to, you won't be able to focus. Then you'll read that text, and you haven't retained anything.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: So what I do is I try to put everything on my list. And I have one here. I don't know if it comes through with the camera, but I have a list here that has all the tasks that I need -

KAREN FOLEY: Let me hold that for you so that.

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: - to do.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, my goodness. OK.

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: And -

KAREN FOLEY: This is Susanne's to-do list.

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: It has all the tasks that I need to do in my research, in my teaching, and for administration. And yes, of course it's a bit fudged. I had to take some names out.

KAREN FOLEY: You've got a nice tick list.

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: And it's a tick list, right. And it's got colours. You asked me how you could use these colours [MICROWAVE CHIMING] because it has colours as to whether I have to do something this week, I can do it next week or I can do it even later. And sometimes the highlighter comes in for importance. And that way, I can add things.

KAREN FOLEY: What's that noise?

SOPHIE: I thought that might be a little bit hungry. You mentioned Frankfurt Airport, so I've just made some hot dogs. Would anyone like one? Anyone like a hot dog?

HJ: I wouldn't mind one.

SOPHIE: Yeah?

[LAUGHTER]

KAREN FOLEY: Sophie, (WHISPERING) you're supposed to be doing the chat.

SOPHIE: Well, I am.

[LAUGHTER]

If I don't eat, I mean, it's not going to be very pretty.

HJ: And they're all talking about food as well, isn't it? It's not fair. So we've got to have some food as well. They're all eating cake and drinking tea.

KAREN FOLEY: Don't get ketchup on that keyboard, Sophie.

SOPHIE: I'll try not to. I'll try. (WHISPERING) Thanks.

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: But she is doing a very important thing there, because if you think about sports people, sports people, they talk about their nutrition all the time. They talk about their preparation all the time.

KAREN FOLEY: Yes, we have nice oranges. They're eating frankfurters.

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: Right, but she might just need a few calories right now. It's always a question of the time of getting your body in shape as well. If you have too much caffeine and too little sleep, you better go and take a nap and study when you have caught up on your sleep. If you are really hungry, you wouldn't be able to study. If you just had this big Sunday roast, you wouldn't be able to study as well. And so you need to factor all of this into your time management, because it's not just about doing something, sitting in front of your book. It's also about being fit, being focused, and being concentrated. And that is part of time management as well.

KAREN FOLEY: I have a thing of Brazil nuts by my desk. So I have a handful of nuts, because I've noticed that otherwise, I get these cravings to go off and have Marmite on toast very late at night if I'm working for long periods. But I suppose you are right. It is about having an important mix. And I guess the types of food that you eat also matter.

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: Yes. But honestly, for study, a little bit of something to eat is better than being really hungry, because if your blood sugar levels are low, your brain doesn't work.

KAREN FOLEY: No.

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: Of course, you should eat healthy overall. But eating nothing and trying to study is probably the worst thing that you can do, as well as overeating on heavy stuff, and then your blood isn't in your brain, to say it in a very colloquial way.

KAREN FOLEY: [CHUCKLING] OK. Well, everyone is now craving hot dogs, Sophie, so thank you very much for that. Hot dog sales will now soar through the roof. I hope they're delicious, because I can't eat any over here as well. Anything else sensible going on there?

HJ: Well, we got loads of really great study tips, what everyone's doing. People are talking about all these different techniques. We've got Pomodoro technique, bullet journaling, Cornell note taking method. So we're going to look all this up. And there was a great suggestion, because people are sharing all these great websites and great resources. We're going to put them all together, and I think we can put them on the Resources section on our website as well for everyone to share.

But Lucy had a great question for you as well. She says, with time management, is it a good idea to plan in breaks, or is it better to keep going until you feel you need a break?

KAREN FOLEY: Good question.

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: It's a very good question. And I would always suggest to plan the breaks in, because you might feel you are just on a roll. And then, yeah, of course, you can always skip the break. But you should ask yourself very critically if you really want to skip the break, or whether you want to take that break, take a breather, because like an athlete, they can run a lot, but they can't run forever. And your brain can run a lot, but it can't run forever.

There is, however, one thing about our brain. You sometimes get into that daydreaming mode, the flow mode, and then you don't really want to interrupt yourself. But chances are you won't think about your break anyway if you are in a flow mode, and you will just keep going, because you are totally focused, and you are focused on only that task in that mode. If you get there, you'll probably skip the break. It happened to me this morning that my colleague said, oh, I'm going for coffee. It's 11 o'clock. And I thought it was probably 9:00 or 9:30.

That's a good thing to happen, and you usually achieve a lot in that. But most of the days, you look at your watch and you think, is it time for the break now? Because you are getting tired after a while.

KAREN FOLEY: So what would you say is a good time? I mean, there are lots of different theories on this. And I guess, to a large extent, it's about figuring out people's own routine and their own bodies and what works best, and also in terms of what time of day, maybe, they're studying. But as a general rule of thumb, what would you say would be a good length of time to plan things to?

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: Anything between 45 minutes and an hour is usually quite good, because that's how long a school lesson is, and that's where we are used to from our school days. Even if that's long ago, you would be surprised how long this hangs on with you. And then you can go from there, and you can experiment. Am I better if I do it a bit shorter? Am I better if I go for the full hour? But 45 minutes is a good place to start.

KAREN FOLEY: OK, brilliant. And we'll talk about that next in our session with Sharon Davis, where we're going to be looking at the times of day and the types of tasks you might be doing and how we can fit that in. The idea of running and having a break is really important. I mean, it's something I often do. I'll read something and then I'll say, oh, I'll go for a quick run. And then I'll mull it over in my head and have that processing time.

It's something, I think, that people don't often factor into time management, is that time to reflect and think, what have I actually learned, and how much sense did I make of that? And it's something, as well, that when we start talking about critical thinking, is really important, because it's one of those things that you can know the material, and it's all very sensible being written in a book, but until you actually think, well what does that really mean? How does that really relate to this? Those sorts of times to think are difficult to time plan, aren't they?

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: They are, on the one hand, difficult to time plan, but if you have a 10-minute time slot after your studies that's dedicated to reflecting, then you at least have a start. You've got time to do it, and you are not thinking, OK, I read until 3:00, then I jump up and I do something else. But if you say, I read until 2:50, and then I take 10 minutes to just think, you at least give yourself the opportunity.

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely. Well, Leon and Lorella are so glad that they're here, and we're glad you're here too. They've apparently picked up loads, so I'm really, really pleased about that.

Right. Age-old problem to spend our last few minutes on, procrastination and time wasting, something I did whilst reading the time management resources on the website, rather ironically. But there are lots of different ways to procrastinate, and I can see Facebook and Twitter and Bake-Off being large ones that people might get sidetracked in. And it's very easy, like you say, to completely lose track of time. Not that you were procrastinating, because I don't imagine you'd do that with your tick list. But say you were.

So getting those sense of things, is wasting time important? Is that an important part of the thing, and how do you stop it? What do you do about that, bearing in mind it does happen, rather like eating considerable amounts of cake?

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: To me, it's something that I sort of plan as well, because I know if Germany - I'm German - if Germany plays in a soccer game versus someone, I will probably be way too interested in watching that. And so I plan my breaks around things that I know I will be procrastinating on, because there is no point in studying while I worry what the soccer scores are next door. On the other hand, it's also a question about thinking why you procrastinate. I mentioned that in the beginning. If you feel a task is too hard, you are much more likely to procrastinate.

And then, one thing is to break it down, and to say, OK, before I look at Facebook next, I do just this little bit, 10 minutes of that little bit. And so you drag yourself in, because procrastination comes quite often when you are unsure about the task, when it feels too big. And whenever a task feels too big, go and break it down. You showed my tick list earlier. And my tick list has lots and lots of very, very, very little items.

And that's because every of these items might take half an hour. If I feel it's still too big, I break it into two. And then you have little steps. It's like climbing a mountain. You've got this mountain ahead of you. If someone says, oh, just go climb that mountain, you probably find an excuse. But once you have started to walk, it's one step after the other.

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely. Everyone has their own study tips, which they're all sharing in the chat, and thank you for that, which are working for them. One of them I particularly liked is Dawn and Sarah says that, well, she leaves her mobile in the other room so that it doesn't

distract her. And sometimes I'll turn my email off if I'm trying to do something. But things like that, where you do have those distractions, actually eliminating that source of information can really help you crack on with what you need to do.

I know somebody who is an expert at procrastination, HJ. You've made a video on it, which unfortunately, we don't have today, but I will get for next time. [LAUGHING]

SOPHIE: We've had a really nice e-mail in, actually, from Kerry, with a good study tip on procrastination in the social media. On Facebook, there is a setting where you can disable the account for a couple of hours or some days or even weeks. So obviously, that would really stop your procrastination on things like Facebook and social media, so that's a really good tip. I liked that one.

HJ: I think Charlotte as well, she says she makes her husband take over the TV with his PlayStation when he has to study. I like that. Getting rid of all these temptations is very important, I think. But Harry's got me to look up mug cakes, which is really cool. So I think we're going to have to do that. And Laura has got an idea that we should do an OU bake-off, which I really like. I think we could do that, couldn't we?

SOPHIE: Definitely.

KAREN FOLEY: In your microwave, we couldn't? [LAUGHING] Which I'm very disappointed is in the studio. OK, so some really good ideas. And as HJ has said, we're going to collate all of those. So anything else that springs to mind that you want to share with other students, send us the link in the chat or an e-mail, studenthub@open.ac.uk, or the hashtag is #studenthublive16.

We'll collate all of those, and we'll put them on the Resources page of the website so that you can pick those up and make the most of those. But everybody sounds very conscientious out there, Susanne. I think the people obviously watching this are very organised, getting set up to study. So what would be your final advice in terms of managing time for people?

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: See your success. Look at what you've already done, because it's so easy to just get lost in staring at that mountain that's in front of you. Turn around once in a while and see what have you achieved, what have you done. Which boxes did you tick? You saw, in my tick list, there are little boxes that I can actually tick. And that gives you a sense of achievement and will help stop procrastination and get your motivation and also your focus up.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Well, Susanne, thank you so much for joining me today. It's your lunch time now.

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: Yes.

KAREN FOLEY: So -

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: You don't mind? I actually brought a lunch box here.

KAREN FOLEY: Right.

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: Hmm? I can take it.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, no, I've got another guest coming on.

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: Yes. So well, I'll take it with me again. I'll have my lunch outside.

KAREN FOLEY: What's in your lunch box?

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: I don't know, really. What did I pack this morning? I did this in a hurry.

KAREN FOLEY: It's a very sweet lunch box.

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: I did this in a hurry.

KAREN FOLEY: [LAUGHING] I can't believe you packed a lunch box.

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: Oh, look at that.

KAREN FOLEY: [LAUGHING] A banana.

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: Yes. A banana.

KAREN FOLEY: An apple.

SUSANNE SCHWENZER: An apple. And that's very, very important as well. Some sugar and energy to get me through the afternoon.

KAREN FOLEY: OK, Susanne. [LAUGHING] Well, thank you very much. I must say, you're not only healthy but incredibly organised. And thank you for all of your time management tips, and for explaining that. It's always useful to have someone from science here.

So thanks for that. And keep those tips up. And next in the studio is going to be Sharon Davis, and we're going to be talking about what to do first. But let me go back to Sophie and HJ. I hope your lunch is as healthy as Susanne's was.

HJ: Well, I don't know. I brought my lunch box too. So I've got a little tomato lunch box. I think Sophie's got a more grown up lunch box than me, though -

SOPHIE: I do, actually.

HJ: - I think. It's a very sensible one. But I really like my tomato lunch box.

SOPHIE: Yeah.

HJ: But I've - oh, what have I got in here today? Oh, it's not very healthy. It's chocolate and sweets.

SOPHIE: A tomato lunch box with chocolate in it.

HJ: [LAUGHING]

SOPHIE: Bit of irony there.

HJ: I'm going to put that away, because I know everyone will be disappointed.

KAREN FOLEY: You can't talk, Sophie, with your hot dog carry on.

SOPHIE: I have grapes, though.

HJ: [LAUGHING]

KAREN FOLEY: OK.

[LAUGHTER]

HJ: This is balancing out isn't it. I've got, I think, one study tip that I saw which was really cool, that some people put sweets along their pages, and every time they get to a section, they eat them, which I think is really good. And I've done that as well.

KAREN FOLEY: [LAUGHING]

HJ: So the only problem is I buy a tub of sweets and I eat most of them before I get to put them on my page, which is -

KAREN FOLEY: One for me, one for the page.

HJ: Yeah, I think that's how it works. But I like that idea, so I've been using that. And I'm probably going to power through these now as well.

KAREN FOLEY: OK, Sharon Davis, thank you. Oh, you have fruit as, honestly, I'm the only one without any food here. It's so unfair and unreasonable. All right. Sharon, thank you for joining me. [LAUGHING]

SHARON DAVIS: It's nice to be here.

KAREN FOLEY: You can see there's been lots of silliness, and you're going to bring a sensible tone to the dealings we have in hand today. We're going to talk about what to do first -

SHARON DAVIS: OK.

KAREN FOLEY: - and problems and judgments and decisions, and how to identify the various different parts of those, while Sophie and HJ crack on eating their lunch. Now, we've got lots of different widgets here that we'd like you to fill in. So we're going to ask where you like to work, so let us know that. OU students have very innovative study spaces, often very flexible study spaces. And it's important to bear in mind where you're studying and how

you're studying, and getting that right mindset within that space, be it a kitchen table, a bed, a train, et cetera. So where do you like to study?

Are you an owl or a lark? Do you like to study in the morning or at night? And what study skills do you feel that you currently have, and what study skills do you need to spend time on? Now, you'll see from our programme that we have a range of ones. This is really a getting set up for study session today.

But from next week, we're cracking on with some very important things, and we're going to look at writing and note taking and that whole essay writing process, as well as learning online and critical thinking. So we've got lots of study skills. It'd be very useful for us to have an idea about where you're at. And if you don't have access to the Watch and Engage, you can always e-mail us, studenthub@open.ac.uk, or you can put something on Twitter. The hashtag is #studenthublive16.

Right. So Sharon, what is this whole issue, then, around getting started? What do people do? We've seen that people are very excited, anxious, nervous, et cetera. How do they start?

SHARON DAVIS: I mean, one of the biggest things I find with students is that everything becomes quite stressful. And they don't know whether or not it's that everything becomes a problem.

KAREN FOLEY: I know a problem. The students are demanding that a lunchbox is issued to every student now, after our producers have given people lunch boxes here.

SHARON DAVIS: Well, they can make their cakes and put it in there, so they've got brain food, haven't they?

KAREN FOLEY: Problem solving. Good. [LAUGHING]

SHARON DAVIS: Problem solving. OK. So that's fine. That's fine. So that brings me on to, so let's have a consideration, because firstly, students often refer to things as a problem. I have this problem. It's stressing me out. I just can't do anything.

So what is a problem? I'm going to set you a problem. And this is what I want you to come up with, and let HJ and Sophie know. The problem is -

KAREN FOLEY: They've stopped eating now. Look. [LAUGHTER] They're very alert.

SHARON DAVIS: - A fox, a chicken, and a sack of grain, OK? So you have a fox, a chicken, a sack of grain. You must cross the river with only one of them at a time. If you leave the fox with the chicken, he will eat it. If you leave the chicken with the grain, he will eat it. How can you get the three across safely?

KAREN FOLEY: They're just, Sharon, they're just eating.

[LAUGHTER]

SHARON DAVIS: For those of you out there who are still eating but can multitask, OK, I want you to come up with some ideas or how many moves you could do that in where either

the chicken hasn't eaten all the grain or the fox hasn't eaten the actual chicken. OK, so the three have to, that's a problem for you to solve. So that's one thing.

And in my hands here, I have an apple and orange, and I have to make a decision. Do I want this or that? So usually, when I'm having a problem to solve, I have to think lots of steps. If I'm making a decision, I usually have the information there, and I have to weigh up pros and cons. So I think I might have an apple, because I don't want to be bothered to get my hands mucky with an orange.

KAREN FOLEY: OK, so this is typical when you bring a psychologist on to something like this. So we're looking, then, at the difference between what is a problem and what is a decision.

SHARON DAVIS: Yes.

KAREN FOLEY: And I guess what you're saying is that sometimes these feelings, which we've seen students have, they can be overwhelmed with a sense of anxiety about things, but not quite able to articulate or identify, even, what the exact problem is.

SHARON DAVIS: Exactly.

KAREN FOLEY: And then there's a decision, which is a choice. Do I study or do I go and make a cake?

SHARON DAVIS: Exactly. And what will drive that decision was how much time, or what are my deadlines, and how do I fit that in with everything. So one of the things that, if we look at getting ready to study, where do we study? I don't know what's coming in on the feed, but some people have a special space. Some people sort of wherever they sit with their laptop. Some people do it on the way to work on a train, however they are able to do it. Sometimes situation drives that decision.

But it's a question of them knowing how do I like to study? Do I need absolute quiet? Am I OK reading off a book or a PC?

KAREN FOLEY: Well I'll show you, Sharon, because we've got the top 10, I think, areas that people like to study. So we asked where you'd like to study, and we can see here, there's desk, bed, library, sofa, living room, office, and bed, bedroom featuring quite highly. That is a pretty common one. And the bedroom does, especially if you're on a bed, it presents a lot of both challenges as well as, because, well, one thing I like about sitting on a bed is I can lie everything out. And I guess everyone has different ways of doing things in terms of how one orders things.

But the point is that people aren't studying in a dedicated study space, is what our students are saying right now. And some people may have the luxury of being able to do that. But a lot of the time, it's about being compact. So why does that matter in terms of where you're studying? Does it affect your mindset?

SHARON DAVIS: It can do. It depends what you're trying, if you're trying to study something that you have to get it in, you have to take it on board, then you actually need to

have something fairly quiet, and you need to actually be comfortable. So actually, if you're sitting on a bed, and everybody's locked out, absolutely. Happy days. Go for it.

But if you are having to do it in the lounge because you can't lock yourself away, and the TV is on, then you have to be considering doing tasks that don't require an awful lot of brainpower. So it's a question, some people can block out sound a lot more than others. And some people just can't. If I'm studying something really that I have to concentrate on, I need quiet. So I have to take myself away.

KAREN FOLEY: So say this is a problem, then, for people. Say they're thinking, how am I going to get a study space? How am I going to get some head space? How could they then go about solving that problem in terms of where they can set themselves up for studying?

SHARON DAVIS: They have to work out what sort of studier are they. And do they need to be in that quiet space all the time, or are there some things so they can choose the quality moments to go to that space?

KAREN FOLEY: And this is a good point. I wanted to ask about this, because we saw with Georgina that there are many different types of activities on the study planner.

SHARON DAVIS: Yeah, absolutely.

KAREN FOLEY: And sometimes they're videos, they're activities, there's reading, et cetera. How do students, then, separate those out and decide how to allocate their head space to make the most when they can do things? Like when you're watching a video, when could you be doing that? I mean, I often will do something like that I when I'm doing the ironing or have something on in the background. And then I'll look at the transcript maybe later if I want to pick up some points.

SHARON DAVIS: That's a really good point, because sometimes, if I'm needing to do something, I think, well, I've got 10 minutes when I'm boiling the potatoes. I may just put the laptop up and just quickly look at something, because usually, people keep out of the kitchen when you're working in case you give them a job to do.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

SHARON DAVIS: [LAUGHING] So it's -

KAREN FOLEY: Good tip. [LAUGHING]

SHARON DAVIS: So sometimes you can grab a bit of space. And sometimes, if it's things like if you've got an appointment, and you go to the hospital for an appointment, you know that you're always going to be late. Very rarely is it on time. So you just take along something you can do. If you've got a tablet or something, you could download some work on there and just read.

So you just grab moments where you can. But if you're actually having to do work for an assignment, then you probably need to find yourself in that dedicated quiet space. If you don't get it at home, then your problem is, where do you go? So you have to look at different

options. What's available to you? Is the local library, can I grab an hour or two there just go and cut myself off? Or is there somebody's house that you can go to?

KAREN FOLEY: So I guess part of it is identifying what do I need in terms of do I need quiet? Do I need access to resources? Do I need my materials? And how can I be flexible enough to do that? And also, thinking about the locations and thinking about support and what people might need, I wonder how you guys feel about that side of things?

I've heard from a lot of people they might have difficulty asking for help, saying, would you mind having the kids? Would you mind doing x? When you're watching your favourite TV programme, do you mind if I go into the office, et cetera. So I'd be interested to see how people manage those. You asked HJ and Sophie a problem about this fox and chicken and grains, of which I think the fox is inedible. [LAUGHING] So I doubt they'll have eaten that. But how did you do with your answer, you two?

HJ: Well, we're not sure if they're edible by those hot dogs, because you never know what's in them, do you?

[LAUGHTER]

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, I was going to say, yeah.

HJ: But we've got some answers coming through. So let me, I think she may have came in first. She says, take chicken and grain, bring back chicken, take fox, come back for chicken. And Julia says, fox and grain first. Fox comes back. Chicken gets on raft. Chicken gets off and grain comes back. Fox gets on, and fox and grain go back. I'm getting very confused. This is very complicated.

SHARON DAVIS: There is some points there that you've got too many things in the boat. But also, at the same time, you've got times when you've got the chicken and the fox left together in the boat.

HJ: Oh, and we can't do that.

SHARON DAVIS: And you can't to do that, because one will eat the other.

HJ: I think Kerry may have come up with our definitive answer.

SHARON DAVIS: OK.

HJ: Says, the man and the chicken cross the river, and the fox and corn are safe together. He leaves the chicken on the other side and goes back across. The man then takes the fox across the river, and since he can't leave the fox and the chicken, together he brings the chicken back. Again, since the chicken and the corn can't be left together, he leaves the chicken, and he takes the corn across and leaves it with the fox. He then returns to pick up the chicken and heads across the river one last time. Has she got it?

SHARON DAVIS: Sounds good to me. Actually, if you read all those answers, there'll be several different ways of coming up with an answer. So there's not always, like with

problems you feel you have with study or where to, there's probably several different solutions. And the thing is what works for you best. And that's a problem.

And usually, sometimes, you may have to go elsewhere for help. So I think your tutor if it's academic based. It could be your tutor if it's academic based, or it could be student support team if it's about money or various bits and pieces along those lines. And if it's about time and where you do, you speak to members of the family that can give you a help. There'll be lots of things as long as you're thinking about whether is it a problem, or is it a decision I have to make? And sometimes it creates a judgement call, because I know if you've got little ones, for example, and you take them to gymnastics and swimming and yoga, or whatever, sometimes you have an hour or two while they're doing their thing that you could perhaps get work out, and just do a bit of that.

KAREN FOLEY: So it's about being flexible, but not thinking, gosh, I've got to cram this, and I'm never going to have a life, and I'm never going to be able to boil potatoes in peace again. It's about being flexible and thinking, when could I do these? How can I get through it all, and what can I do? I wanted to talk about the various hard and soft problems, because like all psychologists, we like hard and soft things. And the other thing I wanted to pick up on as well is that, whilst you're saying things like are you an owl or a lark, and I'd like to see - bearing in mind that we're watching this today in the daytime, when we've had quite a few e-mails from students saying why aren't we on in the evening - I'd like to see whether people are owls or larks.

Now, we've got the results in. 58% say they are owls. So nighttime's very, very common. Now, what I'm interested in here is this idea that people can say they're an owl or a lark, because they are studying that way, but is that the most effective way of studying? And we have an app, which you can find on the Resources page of the website, which is a game, actually, which Martin Thirkettle and colleagues designed in the psychology department. To see, actually, whether you are most effective in the daytime or evening.

And then you can plan those more complicated study tasks around those, because sometimes it is through necessity that we'll end up studying at a particular time of day. And actually, it's about thinking, is that my most effective, and when are those concerted efforts that I need to make? So what would you say about that, Sharon?

SHARON DAVIS: Well, I just think it's really quite, when I was at university a long time ago, doing my undergrad, my best study time for me was between midnight and about 4:00 in the morning. And I worked out in the end that it's not because that's when I study best. That's because when I was distracted the least. So I didn't use to get invitations to go out down the pub and things like that. Now, what I find is that I'm the most productive first thing in the morning, so anytime from 6:00 to about 1:00 o'clock. If I want to do some really good thinking work, I timetable that time.

If it's just stuff that needs to be done, admin-y or just reading over some bits and pieces, I'll do that in the afternoon, because it doesn't require my brain power. So sometimes, situation makes you an owl or a lark. And if you have children or young children, again -

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. A lot of people are saying that they study when their children are taking a nap. And somebody has actually got their child watching Minecraft at the moment while they're here, which is good. But there are a lot of things. And it is about this juggling

act, isn't it, I guess is the take-home point here, which is about wriggling around things whilst having some flexibility, and thinking about when you're most affected. So what are some of these various hard features about where you're working and when you're working? What few pieces of advice can you give to people about rethinking some of those?

SHARON DAVIS: I think, over the next few weeks, before you actually get into your module, I think one of the really good things to do is to actually, each time you're doing something, think, can I steal five minutes here or 10 minutes there? Or if I had my book with me, I could be reading something on this? Or can I download some of my apps or have a look at some of the information I need to at this very moment in time? So it's actually just a question about being smart with your time and working out when you may be able to do that for yourself.

KAREN FOLEY: Now, Stacy says she's going to be doing some of her reading on the treadmill at the gym.

SHARON DAVIS: Good. As long as it's safe.

KAREN FOLEY: So now some of these things are - [LAUGHING] yeah, you mustn't run too fast, then.

SHARON DAVIS: Bike's better.

KAREN FOLEY: But in all honesty, there's this idea, I think, and I'm just wondering whether there's some anxiety going on about trying to cram it in, because there is a lot to cram in, and also, not all of it is essential. So you need to look at the assessment. And this is something we're going to pick up on later about identifying your priority tasks, because you don't have to complete everything within that study planner, and you certainly don't have to do it week in, week out. And we'll be coming back to that, so I don't want to stress everybody out thinking that they have to be doing this all the time.

SHARON DAVIS: Not every moment of the day.

KAREN FOLEY: But there are certain tasks that you can do on a treadmill. There are certain tasks that may require a bit of reading. What would your advice be as a tutor, then, in terms of that effect of studying? Is it a good idea to do something half-heartedly? And again, we're looking at note taking next week, and reading, because there are some things that are important to skim read, and some things that are more complicated. So what would you say, Sharon?

SHARON DAVIS: I think, when you get your material, I think, for me, this is how I would do it. I would just skim as much as I could, keep up with the planner. I wouldn't have to go into it deeply. But if I found something interesting, I'd make a little note. I would also look ahead to see what my assignments are going to be about, possibly, and as I'm skimming through the reading, make a note of where I could find this information. So planning as I go, but not actually stressing myself out as to, I've got to remember everything, got to learn everything, because you haven't. You've just got to be familiar with the material, and then know when to use it to go back to it.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. Sophie and HJ, are you still talking about food?

HJ: What, we -

SOPHIE: [LAUGHING]

HJ: We do love our food here. I don't think we're ever going to get away from that now, are we? That's the problem.

SHARON DAVIS: It is a life skill.

HJ: Yes.

KAREN FOLEY: And it is lunch time.

SHARON DAVIS: It is lunch time, yes. So when your blood sugar drops, as Susanne said.

HJ: We've got some great things from people saying where they like to study, which is really nice, because we were talking about that.

KAREN FOLEY: What's the most unusual?

HJ: So Julie says she likes studying in her car while watching the ocean, and it's one of the benefits of living in Devon, which is really lovely. But Sylvia likes to study in the bedroom on top of her bed, because she feels that's peace and quiet. And Catherine studies first thing in the morning when everyone's asleep. So there's lots of different study spaces.

SHARON DAVIS: The only right way is the right way for you.

HJ: Yeah.

SHARON DAVIS: And that's what you have to, so it isn't important that you're stuck in the study isolated, as if you're in a naughty room, because if I'm in my office, and everybody else is downstairs, I feel as if I've been sat on the naughty step. And it's important that you actually enjoy and learn your study, but also know when you need to take yourself away and give yourself permission to actually say, I've got to focus on this, because this bit is important.

KAREN FOLEY: Now, there's one thing I wanted to pick up on. I remember when I first started my OU study, and I wouldn't go anywhere without all my highlighters and my stuff. And I thought, if I start highlighting this, and I do it wrong - [LAUGHING] you need to highlight everything. But I used to have this anxiety that if I did something wrong, if I read something and I couldn't remember it, then that would be the wrong thing to do. And I remember feeling those anxieties about studying. Now, I don't know whether that's normal or not. But what would you say to students who might be feeling under pressure with getting it right?

SHARON DAVIS: What is right? Who knows what is right? If you are following the material, if you don't get it, you just go back and read it again. If you don't get it, you go on Facebook and chat with the people on there. The warning is with Facebook is if you're coming up to assignments, if you're still unsure and they're telling you something different to you or something, you go back and ask your tutor. But they're a good forum for sorting out.

And I can read something several times before I get it. Sometimes they're written in a way that doesn't actually work the way my head works. And my head works quite differently sometimes. And I'm reading stuff and thinking, really? I just - what are they telling me?

KAREN FOLEY: I'm so glad you mentioned that, because this is something I think a lot of students struggle with, is they think, oh, I don't like reading, or I didn't get that. Or they like watching videos. So everyone's got their preferences, and everyone learns in different ways. And just because something is written down doesn't mean it's the right way of communicating. So it's important to recognise that it might not be that you're stupid. It might be that it's not explained in a way that you understand it.

SHARON DAVIS: Absolutely. And on the study skills pages, there's your learning style. And so that would be really good for you to visit, and just say, well, actually, I've never thought about this. I always thought it was my fault if I don't get something I've read or somebody's telling me. But actually, what you need to say is actually that they've not written that in the way my head interprets it.

So I need to find out how I can deal with that, because you can't change the textbooks. But you can actually say, OK, it's not me that's wrong. It's just that there's a mismatch with the way that the person who writes that book and the way my brain works. And so I have to work out how I'm going to make these two -

KAREN FOLEY: And then you can read around the subject, have a little look on the internet, a little look in the library, and figure -

SHARON DAVIS: And chat.

KAREN FOLEY: - a way out around that. So turning, then, to this idea of subject-specific things, you've provided a really helpful resource, which we're going to put on the website. So that will be, if it isn't already, on the website, so you can tick through and think about the various aspects that Sharon's been talking about, about where you're studying and how you're studying, et cetera. But in terms of actually the subject area and what to do first, we've seen that some students are getting their module materials right now. Hopefully there's more still coming through the post as this session is going. But for some students, they're going to get access to their module websites on Saturday. So what do they do first in terms of how they're starting to navigate that side of things?

SHARON DAVIS: The first, I think, is just play with the website. You know, Helen was talking about just go in there - you're not going to break it - and so did Georgina. You just go in there and explore and play. Have a look at the study planner, open up your books, and just get your head around how it's organised, and what they're talking about, because the acronyms in the OU are just, like, really? It's numbers and letters for everything. And you just think, whoa, what does this mean?

So the other thing is looking at a glossary of terms, because often, you would have studied some of these subjects at school. But most of these subjects come with a whole language. So if you understand what the language is, and if you've studied it before, there'll be new bits in there, because research is carried on. So have a look at the glossary and make yourself familiar with some of the language.

And don't forget that when things come at you, especially in some of the science subjects, you think, oh, my goodness me, I can't get this, it's actually, if you take out all of the nouns, which are different words, and you get to know what they are, then what they're saying about is really more straightforward than you think. So don't beat yourself up. And it's all new. So it takes quite a few weeks to get the hang of it, really.

KAREN FOLEY: I'll tell you who is beating herself up is Siobhan, who says, did anybody else plan to spend the whole summer getting ahead - I know, this is really familiar - [LAUGHING] and failed dismally?

SHARON DAVIS: Hasn't failed. She just needs to replan her time, that's all.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. Revisit your expectations, I think.

SHARON DAVIS: Revisit, yes. It's not failing.

KAREN FOLEY: But I've commonly had people say, what can I do right now? What can I read around? And Georgina told us that you only need to focus on the module materials, especially if you're in levels 1 and 2, and certainly in the early days of level 3, even. And you only do research when you're instructed to. But some students can think, I want to get ahead, and what can I do? And we've seen some of the resources that they could take a look at. But what would you say in terms of that feeling of anxiety?

SHARON DAVIS: I think the knowledge around the website and the materials will make you feel calmer. But also, some of the anxieties come across in terms of, I'm not good at sums or math, I'm not good at - so just go and have a look at all the resources on there. And have a play with some of the maths activities and essay writing, and just have a look at those skills. There's a whole set of little booklets on there about learning to study or using IT and things, and I think they're on the Resources guides. Just go and have a look at those.

And what you'll find is that you may have done essays at school, but if you're doing a degree, it is quite different, some of the writing that you have to do. And the OU is quite good in training you to do, sort of take you along with the skills. So it's a progression. So do not worry. Your tutor will help you through with those.

So it's a question of don't put the pressure on yourself yet, because you've not started in order to have that pressure. And just enjoy it, really. Really, just enjoy it.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. No, absolutely. I'd like to pick up on that point again about some of the skills. And we asked people earlier what study skills did they feel that they might need to brush up on, and see what they had to say about that in a minute. Because of course, that's the whole thing now, is that anxiety about not only the subject, but also the study skills.

So let's take a look at what people said. There's a fairly nice split here, with reading and note taking taking the lead narrowly by 26%. This is why I never got a job commenting on those horses. But anyway, 26% are saying reading and note taking is a key thing, followed closely by editing and referencing. So important parts of the process that we will turn on specifically next week to look at in a lot of detail. But partly, I guess, what you're saying is it's important to recognise which skills you might need to be mindful of, and bearing in mind there is a lot of stuff you can do, but it is a work in progress.

SHARON DAVIS: Absolutely. I mean, even now, I don't know how many essays I've written in my life. I hate doing them, I have to admit, and so I always look for a structure that suits. And they're always a work in progress. It doesn't matter how many years you've been writing them or doing them. This is why you write in teams of people who edit for one another.

So if you expect your essay or any piece of written work to go in and be perfect, well, it won't be, because we're human beings. So it needs to do what you're being asked to do, and no more. If you get commented on in terms of look at your paragraphing, or how many, these points that you're making in your paragraphs, that is something you'll learn on the job with your tutor. That's their job, is to guide you through that particular process. So we wouldn't expect you, day one, to produce this undergraduate academic essay that sings and dances, because it's a skill that you learn. And unless you've done a degree already, you probably won't have actually honed those skills.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. No, absolutely. And I'd be really interested, I don't know whether we can pull that widget up where we were looking at what level everyone is in in the chat room to see whether there are a lot of new students here. I hope there are. So let's see if we can pick that up in a couple of minutes.

There's a lot of love in the chat room for HJ's Miracle Mask game, so I'm certainly going to Google that later when I'm not procrastinating. But I guess, Sharon, just returning briefly to that point you're making about this whole journey, the OU does structure these things so that your study skills are often built into things. So you're not all of a sudden going to go and do note taking, et cetera. You will start to learn those, and in those introductory modules, they are very carefully planned out. So you've got the skills and the content.

And we've got 70% of people here who are studying at level 1 from our feedback. So that's fantastic. 16% at level 2, level 3. And of course, there are lots of tutors here, and lots of academic staff as well from the Open University. And thank you so much, for you guys as well, for joining us today. So interesting, OK. So what would you say about this progressive journey, then?

SHARON DAVIS: I think the thing is it's, look at for your tutor feedback. Those of you who are just starting out as well, attend, if you can, the day schools or the face-to-face tutorials, because that's when you can ask questions and tips are given. And also, OU Live. Don't be afraid of using the technology, because everybody goes and they say, well, I really don't like talking online and things like that. But once you've done it a few times, you forget what's happening there, and we have quite a good laugh and a community that comes on, and you get to know other people.

But you will actually pick up hints and tips, not just from the tutors, but from other students. So it's something that's been set so that you're assessed basically as you go along. So the expectation with a level 1 essay will be slightly different from that at a level 3, because you will be so much better at level 3. And the amount of referencing you do at level 1 - the first few essays you do - there won't be an expectation for you to put referencing in, for example. But they will guide you through, and - [MICROWAVE HUMMING] the activities will match those on your module website. So they tie this academic skills in with the module content and subject specific. So they chug along, together really.

KAREN FOLEY: I can get why people are anxious about note taking, because again, it's like, what are those? I have to still commit to note taking on the back of paper that I've written on, because I don't feel quite at a level where it can be on nice clean paper. So we all have our little foibles about things like that. But referencing, which is something that is taught, why do students get so anxious about that?

SHARON DAVIS: Because actually, it is a skill. It is a skill that you learn. And even now, sometimes, I get it wrong myself. And it's more complicated, I think, for students on some levels these days, because you've got all sorts of internet things and downloaded papers and reference books and things, which, once upon a time, you just had books or papers. And I bet now -

KAREN FOLEY: Sorry, there's a noise in the studio. Sorry, Sharon.

SHARON DAVIS: OK. Yeah, I wondered what, I wondered what that was. Anyway, so the OU tends to use Harvard, which is a specific style. [MICROWAVE CHIMING] And there's all sorts of - I hope that's for me.

KAREN FOLEY: [LAUGHING] Popcorn's ready.

HJ: Well, we just thought since we had the microwave there.

KAREN FOLEY: Sophie, what is going on?

SOPHIE: Well, I was wanting dessert.

KAREN FOLEY: You come here -

[LAUGHTER]

- with a microwave.

SOPHIE: So grapes just weren't doing it, I'm afraid. I wanted some sweet popcorn.

KAREN FOLEY: [LAUGHING]

SOPHIE: It's to share.

SHARON DAVIS: Oh well there you go.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, we're all wanting hot dogs. And now everyone wants popcorn. We're going to, honestly, we're going to have a lot to answer for.

SHARON DAVIS: Popcorn is something, often, I will have a bowl by the side when I'm studying sometimes, because, yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. No, popcorn is really good, actually.

SHARON DAVIS: It's really good.

KAREN FOLEY: I like salted popcorn. Anyway, now back to referencing. Referencing, referencing. OK, why is this a problem?

SHARON DAVIS: Why is the actual skill a -

KAREN FOLEY: Why are people nervous about it?

SHARON DAVIS: Because where else do you do it, other than in academic study? And you're actually training in academic skills. However, it's incredibly important skill you pick up, because otherwise if you quote somebody else's work without recognising all those years of research they've done, it's like cheating. It's called plagiarism, and that's a sort of academic heinous crime, really.

So it's something that you really do need to get to grips with. However, your tutor will take you through it in the activities. So again, like your essay writing, report writing, your data analysing skills, all these sorts of things will come in as you go along. So they'll be part of the process. So yes, make yourself familiar with them, and then just take it on board at the pace at which the module sets you, really.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. And as a tutor, then, how heavily do you penalise people who put the comma in the wrong place?

SHARON DAVIS: Hmm. Good question.

KAREN FOLEY: [LAUGHING]

SHARON DAVIS: I do like grammar. I do like correct punctuation. I think one of the problems is that if you don't put a comma in the right place, it completely changes the meaning of a sentence sometimes. And if I'm marking work and I have to read it six or seven times to think, what is they're saying?

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, yeah, obviously. I mean, that would be terrible. But I mean in referencing. [LAUGHING] Would never dream of it in a sentence. But in terms of referencing, people aren't expected to do it right the first time, right, are they?

SHARON DAVIS: No. Absolutely not.

KAREN FOLEY: And you know who's brilliant at helping with referencing, is the library. They run really, really good sessions. And in fact, next week, we're going to be having someone from the library take us through referencing. But it is an anxiety, and one that is there nonetheless. Let's see how everyone's feeling, Sharon, right now.

SHARON DAVIS: I've probably stressed them out more.

KAREN FOLEY: And Sophie, no more microwaving.

SHARON DAVIS: [LAUGHING]

KAREN FOLEY: Excited, calm, lunch box, cake, relaxed, eager, ready for study -

SHARON DAVIS: Not as stressed. Well, that's good.

KAREN FOLEY: - more confident. Oh, that's lovely.

SHARON DAVIS: That's reassured.

KAREN FOLEY: Still hungry though, Sharon.

SHARON DAVIS: I know. I think, yes, it's all the brain food. It's all the brain food.

KAREN FOLEY: We can do this. I love it. Can't wait to go. It's absolutely brilliant, and so nice to see all that enthusiasm. You know, I hope that you guys remember this enthusiasm at the start and you never let it go, because times do get tricky as you're going through. And as you may be not able to do things in the way you want to, OU students, I know from my years tutoring, are very, very exceptional people, that the way that they actually manage to problem solve and find ways around things is truly innovative -

SHARON DAVIS: Amazing. They're resilient.

KAREN FOLEY: - with complex and brilliant lives they've got going on.

SHARON DAVIS: Incredibly resilient, incredibly flexible, and actually far more able than they allow themselves to think they are. So the confidence will build. And it's just a bucket of confidence. You start off with one bite.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

SHARON DAVIS: Talking of bites, where's our popcorn? [LAUGHING] Sorry. The food's in the - And actually, when you do study, because as Susanne was saying, your brain uses an awful lot of - about 30% of your energy goes to feed your brain. So if you don't have enough food, this is why you crave chocolate when you're studying.

KAREN FOLEY: But obviously everyone's learning now, which is why they're all ravenous.

SHARON DAVIS: Absolutely, yes. So they're starving.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. OK, how are we doing with all the pictures coming in? Have you managed to exchange any of your goods for any more selfies that we can send in the last 10 minutes? And I want to also focus on some study hacks, so things that you can suggest that work for you, or that you're going to try, that you think that other students might like to know about. So what are some of the study hacks?

And Sharon and I are going to talk about - well, Sharon is, because I haven't got any myself prepared. But we're going to talk about some of the ideas that we think could be useful for students. But we'd like to know what you think about study hacks, things that make your studying easier or better or more efficient for you, and things that you'd like to share with other people. And also, send us in pictures of you. And next week, if you come along, you can see those put up on the board.

And it would be really nice, because what we're trying to do is build a community here. So if you can come along next week to look at note taking and essay writing and learning online, we'll be covering that topic in a lot more detail, and it will be great to have you here. And hopefully this has taken the edge off that anxiety and you've met some familiar faces. Sophie and HJ, what have you got going on?

SOPHIE: Quite a bit, actually.

HJ: Yes.

SOPHIE: Yes. Although I did distract everyone with my popcorn. I'm sorry. It was lovely though.

HJ: And Sophie was sharing.

SOPHIE: Yes.

HJ: So you know.

SOPHIE: It wasn't just for me.

HJ: There's some points there.

[LAUGHTER]

SOPHIE: I was sharing something I used to do, actually, when I was studying, because I used to have a commute. So I'd have about an hour each way. And I had CDs, so I'd get podcasts or the ones that they give you, and you can do that on your way to and from work. So it's a good way of using that time.

SHARON DAVIS: Absolutely, yeah.

SOPHIE: And people are just - people are getting ready for lunch, actually, now. The most I see at the moment is getting ready for lunch there.

HJ: I think Elizabeth's getting the popcorn maker out, isn't she, she said.

SOPHIE: I've inspired them.

HJ: But we've had loads of great stuff through Twitter and through e-mail. But unfortunately, we've had some technical difficulties. But we'll get those up on our board. And I think we're going to put a video on our Twitter showing all the lovely ones we'll have. And we'll get back to you with - and we'll message you asking you for your details if you sent us stuff in, because we've got loads of, I've been looking at this stuff. And we've got some really cool stuff to send -

SOPHIE: I like this one.

HJ: - you guys. You guys said you liked the tiger poster. We've made a note of that.

SOPHIE: Yes.

HJ: But yeah, there's so many cool things that we've got to send you guys, and we've really loved you sending us all your pets and where you're studying from. And someone actually sent us on Twitter a really nice how they do their study plan on Excel so they can move things round if they need to and make it flexible, which I thought was fantastic. So we're going to send you stuff as well.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant.

HJ: So yes, we will get back to you on that stuff.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent. Well, thank you for sending all of that in. Sharon, there's a lot of love for you out there. People would like to know what you're teaching.

SHARON DAVIS: [CHUCKLING] Psychology.

KAREN FOLEY: [LAUGHING] And you might have Sharon as a tutor. So wouldn't you be lucky? Stacy would like a whole boot camp on referencing. We can't have that, Stacy, but we will be covering it next week as part of the essay writing process.

SHARON DAVIS: If she's one of my students, I might give her a boot camp.

KAREN FOLEY: And Edward says he's going to be joining next week with a lunch box. Well, so am I, because I'm starving.

SHARON DAVIS: He's going to have send us a picture what's in it.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. Send us a picture, and we'll send you one of our BBC Open University co-production pieces of information in the post, which will be nice. OK, so study hacks. This really is, I think, as you put it, a snazzy way - [LAUGHING]

SHARON DAVIS: of saying study tips.

KAREN FOLEY: - of saying tips.

SHARON DAVIS: Yes. Are you going to give them a task?

KAREN FOLEY: No.

SHARON DAVIS: Oh. All right, then.

KAREN FOLEY: [LAUGHING]

SHARON DAVIS: That was a very definitive answer.

KAREN FOLEY: Should I be giving them a task?

SHARON DAVIS: Well, the term study hack, study tips. What's that? I was hoping that somebody in the OU would come up with a better term.

KAREN FOLEY: I remember this now.

SHARON DAVIS: A competition. I don't know what the prize, probably a popcorn. But sort a term that can be used by the OU instead of study hacks. What can we have it for ourselves?

KAREN FOLEY: OK, that's a very good one. I remember this now. Yeah. No, that's a really good idea. As I said, let us know if you can think of a better OU term, because when you are studying with the OU, you learn that normal things like assignments all of a sudden become things like TMAs, et cetera.

And there's a whole load of jargon out there, which amuses and delights us. So let us know. If you can think of something more sensible than study hacks, to let us know. But also, let us know what they are. We've only got a few minutes.

SHARON DAVIS: OK.

KAREN FOLEY: And we've been talking this whole session about flexibility being key, and about individuals learning things that work for them, and really adjusting around that. But what would you say, Sharon, is the most important study hack that you can think of?

SHARON DAVIS: Apart from the time management, organisation, and making themselves familiar, I think it's a personal skill, and that's being kind to yourself. So actually having a plan, and if it's not working, changing. But also making sure that if it doesn't work to plan, you change it. So I know it's flexibility, but one of the biggest things that we do is studying. It's like the sword of Damocles hanging over our head all the time if we haven't got something done.

So I'm going to suggest that you get yourself organised, but if things aren't working, you just change that. And as Sophie was saying, she used to study on the commute. So be flexible in how and when and where you study. I mean, I could give you things about every hour, take a break, or pace yourself. But actually, make sure you know when your TMAs are coming up as well, so that you haven't got last minute panics.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. So find out what the deadlines are and what you need to do before you need to do it is your advice.

SHARON DAVIS: Absolutely. I think I saw a big wall planner with them on.

KAREN FOLEY: OK, brilliant. HJ and Sophie, what are your study hacks? What have people been saying?

SOPHIE: Yeah, we had a good e-mail in from Lee, and he deliberately leaves his work when he goes for breaks halfway through a sentence, or somewhere that's not natural, because then what he will do is he wants to get back to that thought rather than leave it at a point what he could not come back to it. He wants to carry on that work, which seems like a really good idea.

HJ: We've also got some words instead of study hacks. I like some of these. They're really good. Lorella says study fireworks, which is quite cool. Elizabeth says study catalysts. Adrian says study steps. And Kerry says study tricks.

So you've got all these different words. So maybe the OU will adopt some of them. But we have had some great study hacks come in. I think Nathan's come up with a really lovely one, I think. He said he has a board of photos and goals of what I want to achieve above my desk, which helps keep me motivated when I lose my enthusiasm.

I think that's a really nice one. I might try that. But I also saw another great study hack that's getting into a little ritual before you start studying, which I thought was a really good idea. Some people put on a certain pair of glasses or drink a certain tea. I like to wear my hat, as well -

SHARON DAVIS: His study hat.

HJ: - before I'm studying. Did you bring your hat?

SOPHIE: Oh, no. No, I can't. My hair's too - I kind of have hat hair today, unfortunately.

HJ: I thought we discussed this. You were going to bring your hat. No.

SOPHIE: Have you got one for me?

HJ: Oh, yes.

SOPHIE: Oh!

HJ: I did bring you a hat. This is -

SOPHIE: Oh.

HJ: I thought -

SOPHIE: Beautiful.

HJ: - it's a really cool hat. I think you'd appreciate that.

KAREN FOLEY: Sophie, it doesn't suit you, no. Take it off.

[LAUGHTER]

SOPHIE: I think I can do this as a study hat.

HJ: I like your study - I think I'm glad I brought this as my backup. I always have a fez on hand. I walk around with one.

SOPHIE: Thank you.

KAREN FOLEY: But you two sit down and do your studying with hats on, is it?

HJ: Oh, yeah.

SOPHIE: I'm going to start this.

HJ: We're going to try this.

SOPHIE: Give it a go?

HJ: The tea and the hat. We're going to do this.

SHARON DAVIS: It also tells other people, don't mess with me. I'm studying.

HJ: If you guys have a study ritual, we'd like to know as well. A lot of people were talking about they like drinking Earl Grey tea earlier. I'd agree with that one. So let us know your study ritual too.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, I'm afraid this has all descended into a very farcical -

[LAUGHTER]

SHARON DAVIS: If there's one thing I could say that the last thing I'd like to say in terms of study hack is we live in a world where, if we're not physically doing something and busy, we actually don't think we're working. One of the things I say to my students a lot, think. It's OK to give your time. You can think wherever. You can think about your studies. What do I mean, or what do I understand by things?

And we do not give ourselves enough time to go out and find out what we think and understand. So you don't have to be writing and typing and reading. Sometimes you do need to take yourself away to get your brain working, OK, this is what I understand by this.

KAREN FOLEY: Sharon Davis, thank you so much. I know that that's been very, very useful, and a lot of people are really hoping that they've got you as their tutor. So not everybody will, but fingers crossed, you just might. OK, let's see how you're all feeling right now. We started today with a bit of anxiety and a lot of excitement.

So let's see how everyone is doing. I hope you found today useful, and that it's made you a lot more reassured about your study with the OU, and most importantly, that you're part of the OU community, having met some of the academics, some of the tutors, some of the students, and also each other. So let's see what you have to say. You say you were feeling a lot more relaxed, excited, chilled, starving - yeah, I'm sorry about all the food - a lot less stressed, I want my books - well, hopefully, some of you have got those books since you put that up - engaged, confused, worried I'll fail. OK, so there's lots and lots of stuff going on here.

And all of this is really brilliant, all of this is really normal, and there will be highs and lows with it. And next week, we're going to be talking about starting to study. So we're going to look at the online learning environment, how to actually learn online, so we've been talking about a lot of flexibility, but we'll show you some of the advice from some of the OU's people who specialise in online learning, and we'll also be taking a look at note taking and essay writing and the ever-popular referencing. But I would also like to thank my guests who've been on today. We've had the module chair, Georgina Blakeley of DD102. We've had Helen Clough from the library. We've had Susanne Schwenzer from the science department talking about time management, and Sharon Davis, a tutor, talking about task planning and what to do next.

There's loads of resources on the website. We're keeping the chat open for another half an hour, so if you've got any links you'd like to share, we will gather those and we will put them on the website. There are also some forums there. So this is the chance to say anything. We'll be monitoring those in the week.

Put things up there. Tell us how you get on with some of those resources. Some of them are absolutely brilliant, and they can be a really nice way of actually sitting down and thinking, OK, I really want to get on with something. What am I going to look at? So see what suits you, and maybe have a go at those, and let us know what you thought of that by putting a comment on the forum.

You can also select the Count Me In button on the website, and we'll add you to our mailing list. And we'll let you know about future events, although the next one, I can tell you very reliably, is at 12:00 noon on Monday. And we will all be bringing our lunch boxes, and I'd be interested to know what you have in yours. We will also have collated all the selfies that you've sent us. And if you haven't managed to do that, chuck it on a phone, e-mail it to us, studenthub@open.ac.uk, and we will have our social media board populated with all of those wonderful selfies, and looking forward to seeing that next week. Anything immediate from you two?

HJ: I think a lot of people are -

KAREN FOLEY: Any more trouble you want to cause?

HJ: I think, are we done? Are we finished?

SOPHIE: I'll be my best behaved -

HJ: Maybe not.

SOPHIE: - next time.

HJ: Yeah. [LAUGHING]

KAREN FOLEY: Right. HJ and Sophie will be back, or actually, it will probably be somebody different, on our hot desk, which is our rotating bank of people feeding in all of your chat, et cetera. So thank you two very much in all seriousness.

HJ: Oh, thank you.

KAREN FOLEY: Despite the microwave and the hats and the hot dogs and the popcorn, you have done a sterling job. And thank you all for chatting so willingly with each other, for filling in all those widgets. It really has been an enjoyable session. I hope you've found it useful. There's a feedback button on the website, so that'll just take a couple of minutes to tell us what you thought.

I'd really appreciate it if you do that. And if you've got any ideas about what you'd like to bring up in the future events, or ways in which we can improve this, do let us know. And you can also drop us an e-mail, which is studenthub@open.ac.uk.

I've been Karen Foley. Thank you so much for joining us. We'll be back next week. I'm really looking forward to it. I hope you've enjoyed it today, and we will see you next week. Bye for now.

[MUSIC PLAYING]