Student Hub Live Bootcamp 3

[MUSIC PLAYING]

KAREN FOLEY: Hello and welcome to the Student Hub Live! I'm Karen Foley, and this is the third out of four of our bootcamp sessions. So welcome to everybody who's come along before, and a big hello to everybody who is joining us for the first time.

So what is this all about? Well, we thought it would be a great idea to get together every Monday and gen up on all those skills for module start. And today we're going to be looking at critical thinking and reflection. It's going to be a really, really useful session. No matter what level you're at, what subject you're studying, I hope there's something in here for all of you. We've got a really good lineup today. But you guys also are going to have lots of ideas about your own. And so I'd really like you to be able to share those with each other, share them to the social media desk, and I'll explain how that works in a second. And hopefully we'll all learn something new today.

So most of you are in the watch and engage option, which is brilliant. And anybody is welcome to join that. You just need to put in your usual student details or your staff details, if you're a member of staff. And if you aren't, then you can create a visitor account. That's really easy to do and there's a Frequently Asked Question section on the website that will explain how to do that. Now that is the best way to engage because you can follow all the chats and you can put all your questions in there as well.

You can also tell us what you think using the interactive widgets. So those are going to pop up very, very soon if they haven't already. And we're going to ask you where you are in the country, how you're feeling right now. So three words for that. Now, if you can think of three words on any of these, by the way, just put a cross or something else, because you do need to complete all the fields to be able to enter and submit your answers. We'll also ask you which subject you're studying, which level you're studying, how you feel about starting your next module, and whether or not you attended last week. And that's really useful for us to know so that we can get a hang of where to pitch this particular session.

Now, that's not the only way, though, that you can get in touch with us. You can also email us, and email box is being manned, and that is studenthub@open.ac.uk. now, we love seeing what you're doing, who your study buddies are, maybe what you're eating. There's been a lot of very good food coming through. So send us your pictures, send us your selfies, and they will be coming live into the studio in real time so that we get a sense of our whole academic community. You can also use Twitter for the same thing, and our hashtag is #studenthublive16 and our handle is @studenthub.

So without further ado, I'd like to introduce the hotdesk. We have Annie and Ben today on the hotdesk.

ANNIE: Hello.

KAREN FOLEY: Hello Annie, hello Ben.

BEN: Hello.

ANNIE: Hiya. Yes, we're here. Everyone's introducing themselves and already starting hot topics for today. We've got loads of people in the chatroom. Keep the chat coming. If you're watching just from the livestream, it would be really good to switch over so we can engage with you and you can ask us questions. We're here for your voice, so ask us questions that we can put forward. And that's going to be really interesting. I'm really excited for this session. Thank you, as well, for your selfies last week. We really enjoyed going through them, and we'd love to have more. So keep them sending over. You can send it to the email at studenthublive@open.ac.uk. And we will try and get as many as possible.

And, as last week and the week before, we have some prizes if you bring them in that we will post to you. So Ben, do you want to introduce your chosen one?

BEN: So I chose The Met, it's a lovely law one. And pulls into the degree that I'm studying with the AU as well. So send us in some stuff so you can win this. I'll be competing for it as well.

ANNIE: Fantastic. We've also got a tourist's guide to our secret streets, which I thought was really cool. And you open it up and there's a map there. And it goes through all the streets from like the 1600s up until now, and big facts about them and what they looked like then and what they looked like now. And lastly we have Wild Weather.

BEN: The Wild Weather. So as the UK and the weather has been quite mental the last week, thought we'd go with this theme as well.

KAREN FOLEY: Fabulous. Very, very good choices, Annie and Ben. I like those, thank you. So if you send us in a selfie and then send us your name and address, we'll send you your choice of one of those items back. Now, these are things that the Open University has done in conjunction with the BBC. We do a lot of stuff on programming. And a lot of the time we'll create additional resources that you can get, often through OpenLearn, or at the end of a programme you can write in. We thought it would be a good idea that if you're sending things to us, it's only really fair that we send something back to you. So we look forward to that during the session. And we've had some lovely pictures as well, last week from Caroline Dixon, David Weller, Ross, Andrea, Julia, Mark, Allie, Kelly, Robert, Marilyn, Lottie, Tanya, Shannon, Mason, Hazel, Harris, Nissa, Sam. Thank you for all of those, and as I said, we'll be showing those throughout the programme and the break.

So Ben, you're here replacing HJ because he's gone off to university today. And you're studying law. Now, not many people know that the OU is doing law. So how's all that going?

BEN: So got access to my module materials, and now having lots of fun really trying to understand a bit more about what the modules are and trying to pick it all up from there. So yeah, it's interesting, it's mind blowing. But the Student Hub Live sessions are really helping me already. So I'm really interested to see what the guys have got to say today.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. And it's going to be a different experience for you, because I know you've been engaging in all of the chat remotely. And so now you're in the studio today. What are people talking about in the chat now? What's their big concern? I know we've got 62% of students at level 1 and 69% are here from last week, so hopefully there's a lot of familiarity going on and people saying hi to each other. What's really happening, though?

BEN: So at the moment, they're all worrying where HJ is. There's a lot of issues going around. Has HJ been fired. So don't worry, he's still with us. He's at university today, I believe that's what you said. So, yeah, he's OK.

KAREN FOLEY: Good. So he's all right. Good, good, good. Excellent. OK, well, thank you for that. And of course, a big welcome. There's a lot of new people here as well. So welcome to you as well. You can watch the previous weeks, if you'd like to, on the catch up function. That's on the website. So do check that out later if you're interested in learning about learning online and the VLE, the Virtual Learning Environment. And we've also done a session on essay writing and note taking, which is apparently very useful for students. We've had good feedback about that one. So thank you for that. So you can check those out later. But welcome. Anything goes in the chat. You can ask any questions and just talk to each other. So please do give it a shot.

So what have we got lined up today. Well, we are doing critical thinking and reflection. And I have John Butcher coming to the studio to talk about critical thinking, and he's going to give us a really nice broad overview about what that is. Then Janette Wallace, who is an associate lecturer, or tutor, is going to talk about using critical thought in a TMA. This is a big challenge, in particular for students going from level 1 to 2. But you can never start too early or learn too late.

I then have Terrell Golding and Steven Harrison, and they're going to talk about being a reflective learner. And then we have Wendy Chalmers and Nicola Beer from the library, who'll be giving you some really practical evaluation frameworks that you can use to be a critical thinker. So I'm hoping that by the end of it, we pick up some tools for critical thinking and reflection. That is my aim.

We can see today that we've got about 46%-- so just under half of students-- doing FAS, arts and social sciences. And 32% doing the science, or STEM subjects, as well. So that's always good for us to know. Lovely. Well, without further ado, I'm going to ask our first guest to come into the studio. And voila, here he is. Magic, isn't it?

JOHN BUTCHER: Hello, Karen.

KAREN FOLEY: Hello, John. And how are you today?

JOHN BUTCHER: I'm very well, thank you.

KAREN FOLEY: Thank you. So John, thank you for joining me, because you are the deputy director for Access and curriculum in the Centre for Inclusion and Collaborative Partnerships. And we asked for some autobiographical information. You said that you used to like dancing to The Smiths.

JOHN BUTCHER: I did. Just my back, now.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. All right, John. That's fine. We won't go into that because we've only got a short session, and I want to know about your background in critical thinking. So I think everyone's going to say, well, you know, how come you're here talking to us today about this. Why is this so important.

JOHN BUTCHER: Well, it's really important because I think what Hugh and the rest of the speakers are doing today is something terribly revolutionary in higher education.

KAREN FOLEY: I know, it's brilliant, isn't it? There's no food at the studio at all.

JOHN BUTCHER: No, I haven't been bribed. This is because, I think, for many years, academics have realised the importance of critical thinking. We use it when we assess students' work, particularly in the higher bandings. But I think we've been very poor at communicating the importance of critical thinking to our students. So I think this is kind of levelling the playing field, making things a bit more transparent.

I'm here because I recall critical thinking being really hard. This is a difficult challenge. I managed to enjoy, and I did enjoy, a degree in English and History and an MA in Victorian Studies without really becoming a critical thinker at all. It wasn't until I did a Masters in Education, and there was very clear information on the assessment criteria about how to get the higher grades that I realised the importance of critical thinking. And then when I did my own doctorate, it just became part of my approach, really particularly when I was doing things like the literature review, to put on a critical pair of spectacles, if I can put it that way. But it's not easy, and it wasn't taught to me, and it took me a long while to get it. So I hope students out there will really engage with this in a kind of very open way.

KAREN FOLEY: We've only got 20 minutes, John. It's going to have to be a brief helicopter view. But one thing I really liked about what you said is that there's this idea that it can learned, and also that sometimes it can be confusing to understand really what that is all about. So I'd like to ask you at home to complete our interactive tools, our widgets.

We've got three that are going to pop up for you, and we'd like to know in three words-- you can have two or one if you want to, just put an x for the others. In three words, what does critical thinking mean to you? So just to get a snapshot view, I guess, of some of the things that spring to mind. Also, yes or no, do you understand-- or do you think you understand-- what critical thinking is all about, and which aspects of the selected few that we have chosen is important in critical thinking. So have a go at those, and we'll feed those into the session. So John, what is this idea? What is critical thinking? How would you define it?

JOHN BUTCHER: Well, I think there are two areas to think about, really. One is the skills bit of the phrase, and we're talking here about cognitive skills, not practical skills. So this is to do with how we think. And there's been a lot of work over the last few decades around notions of what's rather pretentiously called, perhaps, metacognition. But is really thinking about thinking. And I think this is where the reflective element of this comes in, and students being aware of their own thinking processes and becoming kind of active agents in that thinking. So this is the opposite to just passively receiving information. So the engagement with it through those cognitive skills is very important.

The second thing is, I guess, a kind of disposition. So it's really helpful if you are open minded, inquisitive, happy to take on other people's points of view, and just generally curious about things, curious about your studies. That will get you there. And then what you're probably going to be doing is-- and in a sense, this is what's not critical thinking. So what's not critical thinking is when you do your assess tasks, you do your thinking for your OU studies, and you're really just reproducing what people already know. You're describing things. So assessors will always talk about try to analyse rather than describe. So the analysis

bit is hard, but it's about trying to evaluate, trying to judge different evidence sources, and bringing evidence to bear on your own argument. So that would be the-- that's the quick definition, I think.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, this is very interesting, John, because you've mentioned a lot of things here. And what's very interesting about that is that when we started, before you said your first sentence, we had about 47% of our audience saying that they thought they understood what critical thinking was about. That's rapidly declined as we've been talking. Because you have mentioned quite a few points, and I guess there's this idea about critical thinking. We think yes, that's a good thing. We also think, yes, it's about thinking a lot. But what you're saying really is it's about the way in which you think, and the way in which you engage with things. And also the sense that it's not just, I guess, dismissing things. It's about how you actually use various frameworks to identify where the gaps are, where things are adding to other things, and how things are pieced together.

JOHN BUTCHER: People can misunderstand the word critical, which is important. The reason it's, I think, such a complex area is it really comes from three different academic traditions. So long history of critical thinking in philosophy, which is a kind of rational way of arguing and thinking about marshalling evidence. A pretty long history in psychology, particularly behaviourist psychology, looking at the skills that people use when they do think critically. And also which is the area I'm more interested in, really, from education, particularly going back to Bloom's taxonomy, which gives a kind of hierarchy of academic skills. And those skills around evaluation and critical judgement are right at the top of the pyramid. So this is the highest order thinking you can do, and that's where we do it in universities.

KAREN FOLEY: That sounds a bit scary, doesn't it? Because like you say, OK, so this is part of something in higher education. It's complicated, it's difficult, it's progressive. So that complexity then, that might unnerve people. Do you think?

JOHN BUTCHER: Well, I think crucially, and I was a victim of this as well, I think it needs to be taught. I think critical skills can be taught. There's a debate about whether they are taught discretely. In American universities, there are lots of courses you can do on developing critical thinking, but they're kind of discrete from the main subject students are studying. So there are debates about whether that transfers across. I think probably the more effective way of doing it is embedding critical thinking skills in the curriculum you're studying. For example, in things like medical education. There's a lot now problem based learning, which means people engage with this in a much more active way. And I think for teaching purposes, and I think this is helpful for students as well, is the idea of can you learn collaboratively. So can you build on what a colleague has argued and take that a bit further and challenge them, and then reach a kind of consensus amongst the two or three of you.

KAREN FOLEY: OK, interesting. So some of it can be subject specific. Some of it is, as you say, taught or integrated within the way that we teach things at the Open University. But equally, you know, there is, I guess, issues around when it's appropriate and what to do. And one of the things we wanted to do today was to have a SWOT analysis. Because frameworks are a really good thing to use for critical thinking, and we're going to come on to a lot of those later, with the library session, for example. So we have a SWOT analysis on the hot desk, replacing all of the pictures, but only for today. Annie and Ben, I would like to challenge you to get some thoughts and comments from people for the SWOT analysis. What

we're going to do with the SWOT analysis is like-- it is a traditional SWOT analysis. We're going to look at strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of critical thinking.

Now, critical thinking we often think is a good thing. I mean, it must be a good thing if it's something in higher education and it allows us to get better marks. But is it always a good thing, is it always appropriate. So I'd like to know your thoughts on when you think critical thinking is a good idea, what might some of the weaknesses be around critical thinking. I know for one sometimes I'll try and critically think, and then all of a sudden I'm down a very dark alleyway down in the library on the literative searches and on a completely different tangent to where I should be. Some of the threats might be that you can go a bit off track and maybe not answer the essay question. And some of the opportunities are there to really, I guess, enrich things. For not only you, but also your colleagues.

So your thoughts on what the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities and threats are for critical thinking. Chuck those in the chat box and Annie and Ben will feed those into the conversation. Have you got any yet?

ANNIE: Yes, we have. We've got quite a lot of people, Amy Smith and Marilyn, in particular, say that they go off on a tangent quite a lot and they find it quite hard to focus. Their brain goes in overdrive and they're thinking too much about it instead of kind of thinking on one main point. And Sylvia Logan asks if you could help us with this. Does critical thinking mean you need to criticise the author and his primary sources?

KAREN FOLEY: That's a brilliant question, absolutely brilliant, Sylvia. It's something, actually, that we thought was worth talking about. Wasn't it, John?

JOHN BUTCHER: Yeah, I can address the first one. Then you have to remind me what the second one was. But the first one, I think, part of critical thinking is about being kind of self reflective. And so if you find yourself thinking about something and then going off on a tangent, I think you plan to build in certain, as it were, stop points to test your own understanding. So rather than just kind of wandering, you have lots of kind of pit stops on the way. And during those stops you can think, look again at the question, if it's an essay, am I getting there, is this helping me, et cetera, et cetera. Remind me what the second one was?

KAREN FOLEY: So Sylvia's question was how does critical think-- oh, I guess how does critical thinking differ from criticising something.

JOHN BUTCHER: So it's the notion of the proper meaning of the word critical, really. And I think the trouble is nowadays people tend to think of criticism as being an entirely negative thing. This is about a slightly more disinterested notion of criticism. So you're evaluating, the evaluation is very important, you're judging the extent to which something is believable. And often you do that by synthesising-- there's another one I'll throw in. So you're drawing on the kind of persuasive elements of different authors to reach your own judgement. But certainly in terms of a higher level skill, your informed evidence based judgement is really important.

KAREN FOLEY: So I guess setting those parameters and, I guess, deciding what you're actually being critical about.

JOHN BUTCHER: Yeah. And don't assert. Because again, some of my students will do this. They'll misunderstand it and think they have assert a personal opinion, and that's not critical thinking at all.

KAREN FOLEY: Let's see, we asked you what critical thinking means to you. And let's see what words came up within that Wordle that you thought were important. So we can see here, there are lots of things. Analysing, evaluation, comparing, asking questions, lots of evaluating, philosophy, making connections, interrogating, examining evidence, opinions, cognitive bias, lots and lots of things coming up here. Thank you so much for all those thoughts. John, how do you feel seeing that, where there's so many sort of-- I guess a lot of it is about evaluating.

JOHN BUTCHER: Yes.

KAREN FOLEY: But there's also some subject specific things and some different, I guess, action points being thrown in there. What were your thoughts?

JOHN BUTCHER: I think critical thinking also takes different forms in different discipline areas. So in maths and largely the science areas, for example, that notion of deductive reasoning and showing your working and demonstrating something is very important. In many of the social sciences, the kind of statistical validity will become much more an agent of the extent to which you are persuaded by something. Then I think there's a challenge in the arts, which we all recognise, of subjectivity. Because so much of stuff in the arts is around a subjective judgement which you have to back up. What I would is I'd give one example of, if you were asked to form a critical judgement about a piece of architecture in a legal argument, you would obviously bring different criteria to bear. So it's still critical thinking, but some of it is discipline specific.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. I'd like to ask you a little bit more about this point about not having your own voice. Because it's a really interesting idea. You're using a lot of your insight as an individual to think where are some of the gaps, where are some of the aspects that aren't being covered here. So you're using your own opinion to critically analyse things or critically evaluate them. But you say you shouldn't really include that in your writing. And it's that tone of voice about actually having, I guess, some sense of balance by saying well, you think this, you think that. How do students get around that idea? It's a very complex one.

JOHN BUTCHER: I think the challenge is the further you go in your studies, you become more of an expert in the field you're studying. And I think that gives you the confidence and positions you to take a view that some writers write more persuasively than others. The challenge is when you're doing your undergraduate degree-- and I've seen this even with Access students-- some students are starting to critically evaluate, but many aren't. And it's going on a journey, which is why I think it has to be taught, to reach the level of confidence which is being critical, but isn't simply asserting an opinion.

One of the things about being critical, I think, is knowing when you're leaping to an intuitive judgement about something. And just stopping yourself and thinking, well, hold on a minute, are there other sources of evidence I might look at before I cling to that. And that's an error a lot of us make. We intuitively think something is so, and then we seek out the evidence to support that, which is rather the wrong way around, really.

KAREN FOLEY: And someone had put bias and subjectivity into that Wordle, which is very accurate. It's very difficult, I guess, because the thing with knowledge is that you're coming at it from a perspective and you're bringing your own-- either it's discipline specific ideas to that table when you're looking at things, as well as your own individual thoughts. So then this idea, I guess, about what evidence to use, but also you're saying about how to use it. How to write, tone of voice, and things like that. How important are those aspects when you're actually looking at things objectively?

JOHN BUTCHER: I think being cool and tentative is not a bad starting point, actually, because I think in a lot of academic writing, it is developing an argument. And I think you don't develop an argument by shouting and being assertive and finger pointing. You develop an argument by referring to literature and evaluating that perhaps some evidence is rather more powerful and persuasive than other words, than others. So I think if you're feeling a bit hot under the collar about something, have a walk around the garden or something before you continue with your writing.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent advice. OK, we asked our audience which aspects they thought were important in critical thinking. And this is a bit of a trick question, isn't it? Because I guess to some extent, they all are. But I don't know. What do you think about their answers? OK, highest, we had 58% of students who said that the testing of the soundness of an argument was most important. 33% said actively seeking out and testing out sounding was important. And then we had the lowest amount with testing out the evidence to support the claims, which was around 9%. So all of these aspects are important in critical thinking. Is there a hierarchy? Are there things that you should be doing more than other things?

JOHN BUTCHER: I think you build your skills as you go through your undergraduate and then into your post-graduate journey. And I think you can't get away from the fact that you need to know the discipline area. So you obviously engage with your OU materials, you engage with the content, you do your activities. But I think what you're seeking to do is build the confidence to have a confident academic voice yourself, but that is based on evidence and isn't based upon assertion, really.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. All right. So what would your advice be, then, for students who are starting to think critically? You've already said at level one, you may not be doing it quite so much. You may be writing more descriptive things. Last week, as well, we were focusing on content words and process words and things like the importance of describe and compare and contrast, et cetera. But I want to ask your thoughts on that. But before I do, John, I'd just like to go over to the hotdesk and see what Annie and Ben have to say.

BEN: So we've got a really good question coming from Lee Christie, who asked, "How does critical thinking differ in assessment requirements between levels one, two, and three?"

KAREN FOLEY: Very good question. Very good question.

JOHN BUTCHER: OK, well, that is a humdinger of a question.

KAREN FOLEY: How long have we got?

JOHN BUTCHER: I think, essentially, it is a hierarchy in that by the time you get to your third level, evidence of critical thinking is really important. I think probably at level one, it's

less important. But what assessors are looking for is some evidence that you're starting to think critically. But certainly, in a very pragmatic sense, if you were going to ask me, how do you get a good grade, a good honest classification in your degree, the more you can feel confident about your critical thinking and expressing that in your writing, I think the more likely you are to fall into those top bands. So it is hierarchical, I'm afraid.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, absolutely. We spoke last week about the difference in terms of grades of essays. And in particular, the Bs to the As, there was often an aspect of critical thinking or independent judgement being involved in the difference between those two grades.

JOHN BUTCHER: And sometimes that is about learner confidence. Many-- particularly, I think Open University students, but not only-- they come to their studies, they're provided with all the fantastic materials, and they think that they have to kind of bow down before these great thinkers. You know, that is the final word. And they're very important words, we wouldn't put them in our materials otherwise. But what we're really interested in is the extent to which students engage with those and use them to develop their own thinking.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. So how could people then start thinking critically and going through this process?

JOHN BUTCHER: Well, I think the latest session you're going to have on reflection is important, because I think if students start to reflect and understand exactly what that means, if they're then being kind of metacognitive, so they're starting to think about their own thinking, that will set up systems, really, in how they approach things. And then I think they really just need to develop the confidence to try things out. And I have to say, I think learning with a study buddy or something like that can be incredibly helpful, because then you can bounce ideas off one another.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. So you've mentioned that this was something that I guess you started to get in your later academic career.

JOHN BUTCHER: Much later.

KAREN FOLEY: And aside from getting good grades, which is obviously a key reason to start thinking critically, what would be the other benefits of it? I mean, why is it something that is featured so prominently in higher education, and why is it such an important part of good academic practise?

JOHN BUTCHER: Well I have to say pragmatically, the gaining of good grades is a really good reason for doing it. I think secondly that there's a notion of what it means to be a lifelong learner. And I think if we are committed to being lifelong learners, we do want to increase the criticality of our judgments as we go through. And the third thing-- there's a lot of fuss about this in America at the moment-- is the idea that if you enable people coming out of schools and universities to be proper critical thinkers, they're going to make much better decisions in their lives.

I think this is quite controversial. I'm sympathetic to the idea that if you're a good critical thinker, that you're maybe going to be more democratic, for example. One thinks of what's happening with Trump at the moment in America. But also the Americans will claim you

make better life decisions, and I've seen evidence of things like you will have fewer clothes in your wardrobe that you never wear, because you've made a critical decision that actually, I'm not going to wear that so I'm not going to buy it. And even more extreme is the claim that people will have less unprotected sex because of their critical thinking. So I'll leave that one dangling.

KAREN FOLEY: Yes, I think we will. Excellent. John, that's been a really interesting introduction to this idea of critical thinking. What hope is there then for students to pick this up? What would you say to people who are sort of thinking, oh, I'm not really sure I get this.

JOHN BUTCHER: It is hard, but. And I think the but is have a look at yourself, have a look at what you've chosen to wear today. Did you look in the mirror in the morning, did you--

KAREN FOLEY: All right.

JOHN BUTCHER: --form a critical judgement about that. No, I'm doing that one at me because I did look at the footage of my last appearance on Student Hub Live and I've dressed slightly differently today. So that's me exercising my critical judgement.

KAREN FOLEY: The rocker look was great, though, John. Don't listen to everybody else. You're your own person. Excellent, yeah. No, you're right, though. We do often use a lot of these skills, and I think sometimes it's just bearing in mind that thinking about things and being critical of-- you know, there is a difference, as you pointed out, between being critical and critical thinking. But those concepts and ideas are something that apply to everyday life. And I guess it's about transferring some of those and deciding when they're appropriate for study.

JOHN BUTCHER: And a lot of the literature-- and believe me, there's a huge amount of literature on critical thinking-- a lot of the literature is about the challenge of transferring critical thinking from one to discipline to another. I personally think you can, but I think you have to be kind of taught how to transfer that approach to thinking. But often I think it's taught far better by different assessment approaches. So for example, things like problem based learning, for example, or authentic assessment, whereby day to day problems are shared amongst groups of students. Seems to be much more effective way of doing it than kind of telling people how to do it.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent. John, that has been absolutely fantastic. Thank you so much for coming in, and I hope that that's been very useful for you at home. I'm going to go to the hotdesk and see how everything's going there. Ben, have people got a little bit more clarity now about critical thinking, or is there more confusion?

BEN: I think so. I mean, it's quite a confusing subject, I think, for a lot of people. But there's been a whole load of questions on referencing and backing up critical thinking through referencing. So hopefully this has helped out and pointed people in the right direction. There's been a few questions of critical thinking and if it's important when choosing a particular type of cake. So I mean, it's a big term and a big issue that we need to cover here. Unfortunately, there have been a few issues as we've seen in the past few episodes with food. And we have received some health and safety notices from the food police, effectively, at the OU, telling us we can't have cakes.

KAREN FOLEY: What does it say? no excessive cake.

BEN: No excessive cake consumption. So if we're going by the letter of the law, that says no excessive cake consumption. But surely you can eat--

KAREN FOLEY: It does, doesn't it? Because mind you, last week was fairly excessive. Does that mean no cakes at all?

BEN: I think we could probably get away with some, maybe.

KAREN FOLEY: It came in the mail, didn't it? So there's probably no immediate impact today, yeah?

BEN: Exactly. Saying we've got no popcorn as well. It took ages to clear up.

KAREN FOLEY: It did, to be fair. There was

BEN: State

KAREN FOLEY: That was all your fault, Annie.

BEN: Oops. No microwaves in the studio. We've applied that one, so that's fine. And then finally, no saucepans. So all cooking utensils are banned from the studio. Thank you. And food as well. Maybe we could flex the rules somehow.

KAREN FOLEY: Aw man.

[BUZZING NOISE]

BEN: Sorry, guys.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, are you having food at home? I bet everyone at home's still having food. Are they?

BEN: We have a few. So on Twitter, Andrea Robinson sent us through a picture of her plain bio yoghurt and banana today. So that's looking good.

KAREN FOLEY: Good. Sylvia's having Black Forest gateau. I'm having a green smoothie, actually. Because last week I got this really fabulous recipe from Adele who said that great smoothies are much better to study with. So I've gone really healthy this week. Excellent. All right, guys. Well, thank you. Keep those thoughts coming through. Any developments on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for our critical thinking SWOT analysis?

BEN: So we've got some great ones here in terms of bullet points and listing out the pros and cons, obviously.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, good.

BEN: So I think bullet points seem to be quite a running theme throughout the chat room. So that's definitely a strength.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent. OK, Alexandra, enjoy your carrot cake. Sounds delicious. Right, our next session is about how to do all of that critical thinking. So I'm joined by Janette Wallace in the studio. Janette, welcome.

JANETTE WALLACE: Hello.

KAREN FOLEY: Thank you very much. I see you've brought some food.

JANETTE WALLACE: I have brought some food. I didn't realise there were rules about the food. Yes, I've brought some chocolate brains.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, thank you. Oh, how lovely. I've never been offered chocolate brains in the studio before. That's very kind of you, excellent. And this is a perfectly appropriate thing to eat during a critical thinking conversation.

JANETTE WALLACE: Yes, yes.

KAREN FOLEY: lovely. Well, thank you. We shall enjoy tucking into those later. Now, Janette has been an associate lecturer or tutor with the Open University for quite a number of years, haven't you? And you teach in science from level 1 all the way up to Master's, which is quite interesting, because you're going to have a very broad, I guess, perspective of what critical thinking is all about.

JANETTE WALLACE: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: Hopefully.

JANETTE WALLACE: Hopefully.

KAREN FOLEY: So we're going to talk about this, and we're going to change the widgets over now as well. So we've just got one this time, which is about which technique you feel most confident in practicing. So do you feel most confident in the idea of, whether you're studying already or perhaps something just theoretically you might like to think about, using content and examples, using themes, or doing things like linking and signposting. So various different techniques there that one can use when, in particular, writing critically. So we will focus a little bit about that.

So Janette. We've been talking a little bit, John was talking about what critical thinking was all about. And the key things that he was mentioning was that it was different to criticising something, so it's not just about saying well, it's no good, or this, this, and this. And he also said that it's very important not to use your own voice in doing that. So we're trying to develop, I guess, an academic argument as opposed to an individual perspective about how rubbish this, that, or the other is. He said that's definitely not critical thinking.

We also mentioned that in terms of the grades, critical thinking can be really important. In particular, from distinguishing, say, a B from an A. So there's issues there in terms of marks. But also he said that those are quite specific to levels. So at level one, you're often trying to be descriptive, you are trying to outline things, for example. And then when you start going into level two, you're then starting to, I guess, evaluate, compare and contrast, and use other sorts of words that might indicate some critical thinking. So where do you as a tutor see that

distinction in terms of your students' journey? When do they start getting the hang of critical thinking, when does it start to matter?

JANETTE WALLACE: In my experience as a science tutor, it starts-- they do start a little bit in level one. Maybe not too much. As an experience, yes, they would perhaps analyse a graph. So something quite simple, comment on it. So it's not really critical writing yet, but it might be just a few comments about a graph. It tends to be more, beginning in level two, where they might be writing an essay where there needs to be arguments or a claim put forward, and they need to start giving evidence to come alongside those arguments and claims that they're writing about. So I'd say it begins in level one, and you start to think a bit more critically as you're studying, and it becomes more apparent as you're answering questions in level two. I would say in science, anyway.

KAREN FOLEY: Now this is an interesting idea, because John said, you know, there was this idea of meta-thinking, meta-representing ideas. So you're thinking about what you're thinking about, metacognition. But are those students, then, who have started to pick up points of a graph, do they even realise that they're critically thinking?

JANETTE WALLACE: Probably not, no. Maybe do we actually realise that we're critically thinking all the time in our lives, everyday activities that we do, we're critically thinking. So imagine as I'm a tutor, I might be answering emails. And I might get a request from a student for an extension, for example. So I get an email saying I would like an extension. In answering that email, I'm actually going to be critically thinking about what I'm going to be doing.

So I will be looking at student, have they had an extension before, what is the reason for the extension, how long do they want-- one day, two weeks. I will be evaluating that information and coming up with a decision or an opinion based on that to say yes, you can have an extension, or no, it's not a valid reason, or whatever. So even just doing a simple thing like answering an email, I'm critically evaluating the information in there. So it's everyday life, you will be critically thinking anyway.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. Now I know that you know the library are coming in to talk a little bit about some evaluation frameworks later, and we've got these various ones that we use. In particular, in science we use PROMPT frameworks and various things like that to help, I guess, identify and compare and contrast various aspects or certain areas around something that we're looking at. How important, then, would you say those frameworks are? Because what you're talking about, I guess, is critical thinking in everyday life. The way that we think we appraise situations, we're thinking beings. So when does it become just normal thinking, critical thinking. How useful are frameworks in trying to get a grip on structuring some of those thoughts?

JANETTE WALLACE: I think they're very useful. You mentioned PROMPT, in science we use PROMPT quite a lot. It's a type of analysis. PROMPT is an acronym, and it stands for a variety of words. And you look at it normally in an article, say, in science. But you can apply it to a website, anything really. And it's just a method by which you would look at information and note down different aspects of it.

You could also create a table. There is a table in the critical thinking booklets that's on the skills for study website. There's a table in there where you, when you're looking at

information, you would write a description, and then you would look at it any claims in it, any weaknesses or strengths. And so you start noting down what you're thinking, so that when it comes to answering a question, you can use that information to import into your answer. So things like essays, you would be looking for arguments and you'd be looking for points of two sides of an argument, perhaps. And so you need to gather that information together. And actually, they're useful, those things.

But what I suggest to my students is to actually get a big piece of paper, for example, an old piece of wallpaper. The back of an old piece of wallpaper. And if you've got an essay, write the essay question in the middle. And then if you've got certain points or arguments you want to make, write them down, and then gather information and add it to your bit of wallpaper and stick it on your wall. And there you have your essay. What you do then is construct an essay from this.

It's sort of like a mind map, I guess, that you would talk about. And then you would construct lots of arguments and write your essay based on your bit of wallpaper that you've got on your wall. So I often tell students, think of things visually. So record the information, but then maybe record it visually, little diagrams and things like that. Because often students don't just think-- they do think visually, and it helps them a lot.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, no, absolutely. Last week, actually, we had Nicky Harlow, who was an arts tutor. And she was talking to us about mind mapping.

JANETTE WALLACE: Oh, OK.

KAREN FOLEY: And what was really interesting was she was saying, you can have all of these ideas, but how many of these are really relevant to the question. And we were starting to carve off, then, the section that was relevant and trying to stick tight and hold to that. It's interesting because when we asked people about techniques that they felt confident about using, 80% said using content and examples, they felt confident in using those. Whereas only 8% said using themes, and 11% said using linking and signposting. That's gone down just a little bit, actually, as the data's been coming through.

But these are very interesting ideas, aren't they? Because so often we think that critical thinking has to relate to content. And largely, it does. But the other two points about using themes, which may be things that I guess emerge from module materials, they might be strands that run through a course. And also linking and signposting, a real writing technique. Those techniques are also useful for presenting a critical view on something as a tool. But I guess people aren't so confident using them, perhaps because we've got quite a lot of level one students here.

So going back to the idea, then, of the 80% or 78% about using content and examples. You spoke about trying to break some of these things down, so we might use PROMPT or we might use a various sort of framework. And you were saying to students, you know, write them down, get things down. Can students then think-- do you find that they think, oh, I don't know what headings to put. I'm fine filling in a table, no problem at all. But then what do I include, what don't I include. If I don't-- I used to remember doing this. If I don't include everything, will I be missing a big bit. What would you say about just getting on and going for it and trying to look at things in that sort of way, no matter what framework you've got to work with?

JANETTE WALLACE: Well, they need to just, like you say, get on with it. Write the answer. But the other thing that you can do that many students don't even think about is actually be critically thinking about the question and what it's asking, and actually spending time analysing questions and what is it that the question is asking them to provide. There are often a lot of information within a question, giving you hints and tips and suggestions of where you might go.

But this is why sometimes you go off on a tangent, because you write your essay, you think, oh, I need to include all of this information. It's about, say, depression, the causes of depression. I'm going to write everything that I know about the causes of depression. Actually, you need to go back to the question. Perhaps the question only wanted to know about the biology of depression. Perhaps it didn't want to know the psychology of depression. So being critical of the questions will help you in your assignment as well.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent, brilliant point. How do you then know when students are submitting an essay that's an A to a B when they're using that critical thought, when do you sit there and think, actually, this student is really applying some of these critical thinking ideas. What signposts or what things do you look for that would indicate that?

JANETTE WALLACE: Well, it's really-- you can tell from the writing that there's a true understanding of the material. So they haven't just passively read the material and noted down information. They've actually looked at the material, understood it, and developed an argument from it so that they can-- and you can see the argument in the writing. They might, say, give a point, and then they justify it with evidence that is good evidence from, maybe, the module material. Not just from personal experience--

KAREN FOLEY: Very good point.

JANETTE WALLACE: --which is needed on science modules in particular.

KAREN FOLEY: So they've identified where the appropriate evidence is used, and then they're making the points in, I guess, an individual way. So they're saying, well, I've read this here, and there's this point. And I guess just that linking of two things shows some aspect of criticality. Ben, where's Annie gone?

BEN: Um, so HJ popped up in the chat and mentioned he'd left his bag.

KAREN FOLEY: He's supposed to be at school.

BEN: Yes, he is. But he seems to have left his bag somewhere. So Annie's gone out to try and find it for him. Not really anything I can see around here, but I'll try and have a look.

KAREN FOLEY: It's a lot tired here, actually, to be completely honest, since he's not there.

BEN: Well, don't want to say anything bad about him, so you know.

KAREN FOLEY: No, don't, actually.

BEN: No offence,

KAREN FOLEY: Don't say anything just in case he's watching. Because you never know.

BEN: Definitely is. He's making sure that we're looking for it. So there is a search party out to look for his bag at the moment, so it's all good. Um, chat room's going mad, of course. In terms of how they have a kind of structure and they do a lot of visual kind of building together of all of their points for their essay. So Michael Hunter, for instance, loves a spider chart. And then we have it down to using a combination of mind maps and bullet points to try and picturise it as well. There's also talk of referencing, good referencing, bad referencing, and where to go to find some references. And there's a lot of people that are mentioning that Wikipedia isn't the best idea to use that.

KAREN FOLEY: Ah, good, good. Well, we'll listen to what the library have to say all about that later.

BEN: Which is great. But yeah, overall, everyone's really engaged and loving the content.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. What are some of the questions about referencing, Ben? Is there anything that we need to clarify here before we go on?

BEN: So it was really just about where is a good source, effectively. So that's where Wikipedia then came from. So it's really just from, I guess, my end, just making sure that you're aware that the site you're looking at or the journal you're looking at is a relevant one to the course, effectively.

KAREN FOLEY: That is such a brilliant point. And of course, I'm glad to see some people have been reading the programme, which I hope has sort of sparked that off. Because the library will, in fact, be talking about sources. And I guess certain frameworks that can be used to critically evaluate the extent to which one should believe in some of those sources. But Janette, what would you say about students who think, I'm going to be really critical. I'm going to go online, I might go into Wikipedia or Google Scholar, and I'm going to find out everything there is to know that my tutor probably doesn't know. And then they'll think I'm being really critical. What would you say about, I guess, selecting the right material, and when do you know what is appropriate to include?

JANETTE WALLACE: Well, we never say don't go outside the module materials. You know, if students are interested in a subject, then yes, go ahead. Go and look for external sources. But keep to peer reviewed articles or textbooks is usually the best way. I would say that normally, an assignment is-- it explains in the assignment what they're looking for. And, you know, each module, we're looking to see what you understand about the module materials that are there. So focus in on the module materials. And you can include external material, but not to the-- don't leave out something from the module materials and include something from an external source because you think it's the brilliant answer. Try and focus in on the module materials for your information. There's often links on module websites to other sources, and they're good places to start looking.

KAREN FOLEY: It's a brilliant point, actually, because I sometimes I do think students think, oh yes, I'll go and do that. And you haven't covered X, Y, and Z point. And of course, in a chapter you can't, can you. They won't be exhaustive representations of things. But you know, it's about being appropriate. And like you say, you're marked on what's in the module. Ben, is there a question?

BEN: Yes, so we had a question coming in from Matthew Cole. He just said, so timing this is a part of critical thinking, because you have to think about is this up to date when analysing your evidence. So I know from law-- in fact, in cases, they're always evolving and always changing. So would you consider having the information as being up to date as a core part for referencing.

KAREN FOLEY: Very interesting. And I guess it depends, doesn't it, on the subject.

JANETTE WALLACE: Depends on the module as well. For one of the level three modules that I tutor on, it's one of the final modules. And the students do a literature review. And so they have to do a lot of critical thinking and analysing and writing in that particular module. And they'll choose a topic, and some of that material can be quite old because the topic is very narrow and there's not much research going on in that particular area. So it depends on the subject and the topic, and whether something is classed as old, I guess.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, and how much is going on. I mean, one of the courses we teach on, we're looking at things like depression and dementias, both of which are completely different ends of the spectrum. So some things are happening really quickly in terms of dementia treatment and care, and so then I guess the year and the relevance of that source becomes a lot more important than it might do with something that's a little bit more longstanding academically.

JANETTE WALLACE: And some subjects, there's just not the research in it all. The interest in it, or perhaps they haven't found anything new for quite some time.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. But it's a very good point, and I think it's about being appropriate with those things and thinking, well, does time really change. Do those things, I guess, have an impact in terms of what we're looking at. If something's 10 years out of date, you know, are we as humans still the same 10 years ago as we are now. And also, I guess, how long it takes to actually get the darn thing published and out there as well. So, you know, there can be an issue of things not being possible to be so up to date in certain circumstances.

Excellent. OK, so we've mentioned some tools and some various library things that we're going to look at. Did you want to give-- just to sort of end off, did you want to give anything like a live scenario, possibly including chocolate brains? Which I'm very keen to eat. Because I've had a think about this, and I think that they don't comply with any of the notices we've had from security.

JANETTE WALLACE: No, they're not cake, and they're not a frying pan.

KAREN FOLEY: Or excessive.

JANETTE WALLACE: No. So we can use them.

KAREN FOLEY: It's fine. OK, so what is there that we can say, then, about chocolate. It's a topic of much delight at the Student Hub Live.

JANETTE WALLACE: Well, we could actually think about whether chocolate affects memory, for example. Say we had to write an essay about chocolate and memory. Chocolate affects memory. Now, if this was a level one essay, you would be very descriptive. And if it

was level two, we'd be looking for some arguments. So we'd expect you to go off and go through the textbooks and find out, yes or no, chocolate affects memory or not. So we could have a little think about, what do you think as a student. Do you think chocolate affects memory.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, what is chocolate in the first place? We've got two different types.

JANETTE WALLACE: Well, yes. Yes, what is chocolate? And is there any evidence that it affects memory? If you went out there and you were looking at the publications of Cadbury's, for example, or at-- ooh.

KAREN FOLEY: Ah. No, I'm joking, it's fine.

KAREN FOLEY: They're one of our sponsors. No, no, I'm only joking.

JANETTE WALLACE: If one of the--

KAREN FOLEY: No food in here.

JANETTE WALLACE: --companies who makes chocolate claims that it was good for memory, for example, is that a valid claim? And you could then go and analyse the information and evaluate it and think, is there bias in this research? It's been sponsored by a company who makes chocolate. Do they want the results to be a certain way? That sort of thing.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, yeah, yeah, for sure. No, absolutely. So I guess it's all about thinking about, well, what are the sources. So who's actually providing the information. And what is it measuring, I guess. Sometimes when we get some of these studies, and in particular when they've been published in journal articles, it looks all very sensible. Then it's in the module material, you think, yeah, that's black and white. That makes complete sense. You think, should I really be criticising that? Because clearly, someone's given them money to go ahead and do some of this research.

So how do you then look at, I guess, where the parameters are in terms of what is and isn't acceptable to criticise? Say, for example, with the chocolate and memory. You know, they might have done some word tests, they might have done various things. How much can you really say that is evaluating memory?

JANETTE WALLACE: Well you need to have a-- well, for some scenario like that, you would have a really good look yourself at the methods that are being used. See if the methods, the tests that they are doing, are something that they've done or somebody else has done before, whether they're actually using background information from other scientists, or whether it's just a made up experiment that they've decided to do. And yes, you're allowed to be critical of anything. And being critical, as I think John mentioned, doesn't mean criticising, necessarily. It means looking at it and deciding where it's coming from, is there bias, been open to what you're reading, really.

KAREN FOLEY: Claire says surely spinach should be brain food, not chocolate. However, I'm really liking this smoothie, it's making me feel a lot better. Mm. OK, so it's all about deciding, I guess then, what you're being asked to do. Not being afraid to look at really what

that piece of research is doing, and then taking some of those frameworks that we'll talk about a little bit later to be able to, I guess, deconstruct some of those areas.

JANETTE WALLACE: Yeah. And it's just something that you'll learn as you go along in your degree. We're not expecting you to do this in level one. In level two, you begin to be a little bit critical. There'll be the odd essay here and there where you need to come up with a point and some evidence to prove your point. So basically you're proving your point. And then by level three, that's when you'll be going more in-depth and probably being critical of the actual methodologies a bit more. So it's a stepwise progression of I'm learning a skill, I'm practicing it, and doing it. You'll get better and better at it. As John mentioned before, how he didn't learn until he got to PhD, I think, I was probably the-- I don't remember learning at university how to do this. It's something that comes with time and experience and using some of the resources that we have at the OU.

KAREN FOLEY: Lovely, thank you very much. Janette, that's been a really, really interesting session. And thank you for coming along. And thank you for bringing the chocolate brains.

JANETTE WALLACE: I'll leave you with those brains.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, thank you, I shall enjoy those. That would be wonderful. And so nice to have that reassurance, I guess, that this is a skill. It can be something that's learned. And I guess then, you know-- well, you'd naturally probably encourage students to look at some of those critical thinking booklets that the OU provide.

JANETTE WALLACE: Yeah, definitely.

KAREN FOLEY: And those are the skills for study website as well. We'll put a link up on the resources page, if we haven't already, for that critical thinking book. It's a lovely little PDF of a booklet that you can download. It'll give you some tips on critical thinking and some of the tools, in fact, that we're using today. So do do that. Thank you very much, Janette. That's been really, really useful.

OK, so before we have our next guest, Ben, I'd like to come back to the hotdesk and see how everything's going with you.

BEN: So we've got some selfies in, which is great.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, good.

BEN: So Marilyn, and this is Marilyn's study buddy, Kens? That'll be right there. Who else have we got? So Lee's. Check that out.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh.

BEN: Those fish look brilliant. So that's from Lee. Slightly damped study buddies, I'm afraid. Here's Lee hoping for the wild weather today. I think someone's trying to win something, so thank you very much for that. This is Kate, the selfie study this morning. And then we've got a nice desk layout from Pete. So thank you for that, Pete. And then as mentioned earlier, Andrea's yoghurt and banana breakfast, which is looking good.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, very nice.

BEN: And healthy, very healthy. There's not a sign of chocolate there.

KAREN FOLEY: There's been a healthy theme today, hasn't it, Ben? Do you think it's because we're looking at critical thinking?

BEN: Maybe, and brain food, et cetera. Obviously with the likes of spinach. There's people who have been talking about fish.

KAREN FOLEY: Yes.

BEN: Which is great for the brain, apparently.

[BUZZING]

Try that.

[BUZZING]

OK, we're good, we're good.

[BUZZING]

[STOMPING]

Yep, sorry about that.

KAREN FOLEY: That's all right.

BEN: So there's a lot of love out there for HJ, of course.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, yeah. How's he getting on? Is he still--

BEN: Doing well, doing well. We have a picture for him.

KAREN FOLEY: Poor Annie, I think it's terrible she's gone looking for it. What is in his bag-- oh.

BEN: Can you be mad at that face?

KAREN FOLEY: OK, fair enough, fair enough. So what's so important that's in this bag that he needs to interrupt the Student Hub Live for?

BEN: I don't know, to be honest. I mean, it's definitely not back here. I'll get under the desk a bit later. But--

KAREN FOLEY: Has he got popcorn in there?

BEN: Probably. But as we've seen, there is a big health warning against that.

KAREN FOLEY: But he's not there, is he?

BEN: No.

KAREN FOLEY: No.

BEN: But it's in the studio, isn't it? We've got to be a bit careful with that. Don't want the food police to come and arrest us. But yeah, we'll see what we can find.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

BEN: Hopefully we won't get arrested for anything that's in there.

KAREN FOLEY: No, no, fingers crossed. Because we like the student hub, and we'd like to continue doing this. So we don't want to get done on any technicalities, do we? Excellent. How are people feeling, Ben, then, about this whole idea of critical thinking? Are we feeling a bit more reassured now with the whole subject area? I appreciate it's a lot to sort of cover, but broadly speaking, it's this idea then that things can be learned, the things are integrated in module materials and that it's a little bit different to just criticising things coming across well.

BEN: Yeah, there's a lot of information that's come out in terms of questions on the best way of doing it and how they're actually going to picturise it and make it make sense, effectively. A lot of-- there's a few art students on here that are wondering how you actually critically evaluate something with art, which is a subjective kind of view of things. So there's a very interesting questions that are coming up from there which I will drop in when I get hold of some more.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. That's a really, really good point, actually, because I think so often we think, oh, well, it's very easy to critically evaluate something objective, something from the sciences maybe, or social sciences. But art, when you've got a piece of writing, that can sometimes bring about different subjects. And there are different ways of doing that within each discipline as well. So yes, in particular, philosophy. That can be an interesting old one to critically evaluate.

OK, well, we're going to now move on to this idea about being reflective learners. John had mentioned earlier on today that it's very important as part of your critical thinking to be reflective, to have this metacognition, to be able to think about what you're actually thinking about. And also, we've spoken about reining in some of these parameters. Now, being reflective is obviously a really important part of that. But it's also difficult, because like this whole idea with the arts, you know, it's really easy to think, oh, it's hard to be really objective and really stern with yourself, I guess, about where you need to develop ideas and also to love yourself when you do something really well. So this whole idea of being reflective is equally as important in academic disciplines as well as critical thinking.

So to discuss this with me I have Stephen Harrison, welcome Steve. And Tyrrell Golding in the studio. Now, you both have interesting backgrounds, and I'm delighted you're here because you've run a lot of sessions about reflective learning, which I'm really looking forward to hearing more about. Steve, you're a lecturer in education. And Tyrrell, you've been doing a different sort of work before you came to the Open University, doing work as a youth and community worker.

TYRRELL GOLDING: Mhm, yep.

KAREN FOLEY: So thank you for coming along. We've also got some widgets that we're going to feed into the session, those are going to be popping up very soon in your view if you're in the watch and engage. If you aren't in the watch and engage, by the way, do come in, because you can see a lot of the chat that's happening there. And also vote using these interactive widgets to tell us what you think about things. And we would like to know where do you note your thoughts and feelings? We've got a list of options there. What is the first thing you look at when you have an assignment returned to you? And from your last piece of assessed work, can you remember which of the following options? And where are there opportunities for reflection?

I'd also just like to have a sense check just to see if things have changed in terms of which level you're studying at, and also which subject. So I think most of you, around 62%, are at level one, which is great to know. So there's some here who are at levels two and three, slightly more than weeks before. Which is great, because these skills often apply to those later levels, even though, obviously, it's great to get in there right from the start. So Tyrrell and Steve, tell us that about this whole idea, then, in terms of what is reflection and why is it so important.

TYRRELL GOLDING: Shall I start?

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

TYRRELL GOLDING: Well, reflection, I think particularly-- we both come from practise background, so youth community work, that sort of area. So new practitioners, but also students first coming to study, quite often they think about reflection as-- we quite often use the metaphor of the mirror. So reflecting in the mirror. And sometimes students will think that reflection is reflecting back to the tutor what you've read or copying what you've seen. But actually, the idea of reflection is to think back upon something that you've done, and that might be something quite recent or it might be something quite long ago. To think back on that, to start to pull it apart, to think about what it is that you did, what was the outcome, was that the outcome you wanted, would you do it again in the same way. But really to look at ways of developing your practise or what it is that you do.

So for students, it should be around looking at building up a skill, and just like John was talking and Janette talk about, being critical as something that you need to learn. The same is true for reflection. And I think quite often, we reflect back on things, but we don't think about what we would do differently, and we don't try to do something differently in a new-- so in our next TMA, for example. And that's when students get really frustrated that reflection, and being asked to constantly reflect on things, is really boring and dull, and they don't know why they're being asked to do it. Because they actually haven't quite completed the whole cycle.

KAREN FOLEY: Tell you what a lot of my students do, they get their TMA back and they go, that wasn't the mark I wanted. And I'll say, what would you do next time, they say, I'll get a better mark. So what would you say about this whole idea, then, about setting, I guess, realistic expectations and actually having some idea about what you're trying to do differently. How important is that in part of the whole reflective process? Especially when, like you say, TMAs can be so emotionally value laden in terms of what you get and then what you want to do.

TYRRELL GOLDING: We were talking about this earlier, about the idea that sometimes a student will look at their mark and say, but I tried so hard. And it's really unfortunate, because I think people were already talking earlier about how students gain their marks. And actually trying hard is really important, but unfortunately, that's not necessarily going to translate into your TMAs. I think it is about being realistic. And some of the best tutor feedback I see as a monitor is when ALs give really, really good feedback, but then will say to a student perhaps one, two, three key things that they need to think about in order to develop their next TMA. Because if you try and change everything, you're not going to necessarily know what's had the effect. But trying to get a key message from your tutor, what is the one thing I need to focus on that will help me the most, and then that's what you can do for your next TMA.

STEPHEN HARRISON: I think there's something else to add to that, as well, pointing back to the example of receiving feedback on a TMA. I think it's a critical aspect of reflection, is the idea of looking or reflecting through different lenses. So if you look at the TMA mark, for example, through the lens of, what does this tell me about me as a student, then I think that form of reflection will give you one way of thinking about it. So you may have a set of informal success criteria which are your own. Let's say you get a 65 on a TMA, you reflect on that through the what does this say about me as a student lens, and then you combine your informal criteria and you come to some conclusion.

You can imagine for one student, that may be wow, brilliant, I'm a success. For another student, they may get the same grade and say, oh my gosh, I'm not good enough. Because that's dependent upon the lens that they're looking through and also the criteria they're applying. I guess you could change the lens, as well, there. You could ask a question, rather than what does this tell me about me as a student, you could ask the question, how can I learn from this, which is a different type of reflection, a different type of lens, if you like. And it leads to a different set of reflections. So I think reflection in and of itself needs to be thought of as a means for learning, a means for filtering feedback. But I guess we need to think about what kind of criteria that we're applying at the same time. And if you like the metaphor of a lens, what lens we're adopting to undertake that reflection.

KAREN FOLEY: So this is all-- this is all well and good, this, in terms of having lenses and things. I'm going to talk about how we do that, because that's what everyone wants to know. Because this is such an emotive subject. I mean, Joan says that if she doesn't get the mark that she wants, she just feels like packing it all in. In terms of the widget responses that we had for students, 78% of them said that the first thing that they look at is the mark. Only 14% that they look at the overall feedback, and 7% the detailed feedback, in terms of the first things they're looking at.

So the mark is absolutely massively key here. You know, so we also asked people about-- first thing's they're looking at the mark, is key. And can they remember something positive and negative. Well, 36% the negative, and only 15% of students said that they could recall something positive from their last TMA. Now, being reflective we often associate with, like you say, what can we do differently next time. And there's I guess this sort of connotation that it must be improving on things. How important is thinking about reflection in terms of both the positives and the negatives, like you were talking about, I guess, this lens?

STEPHEN HARRISON: This is something close to my heart, because I've--

KAREN FOLEY: Listen.

TYRRELL GOLDING: This is

STEPHEN HARRISON: Recently been a student with the Open University having to deal with this myself, but also family members, my own daughter going through a degree at the moment and having to handle feedback. Again, in a lot of ways, the way in which we reflect and the result of that reflection is based on what we are seeking from it. And if we're seeking validation or reassurance, then the tone and how we interpret that feedback is critical. I think where reflection comes in and how it can mitigate that process is by suspending your initial response, and then asking questions of it.

For example, you might ask the question, is my response to this correct? Is it correct to feel that this isn't good enough or this isn't a sufficient validation of my efforts? Because, in essence, I think at Open University, as most educational institutions that adopt a feedback approach with TMAs, the feedback is there because we believe that we are in an ongoing process of deepening our understandings, refining our subject knowledge, or refining our practise. But this is an ongoing, lifelong process. If we get-- I understand. I wholly understand the feeling of oh my gosh, this isn't what I wanted.

TYRRELL GOLDING: I want to hide under my duvet.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

TYRRELL GOLDING: We've all had-- we have all had that feedback.

STEPHEN HARRISON: But if we allow ourselves to become stuck at that point, then our chances of progression are seriously limited. So when I'm talking about a lens or reflection, I guess in this instance, I would be encouraging the student to-- yeah, I understand the emotion. Now can we find a space and time and opportunity, and that might be different for each, to just take a different perspective, to reframe the question and see if there's other things that can be learnt from it.

KAREN FOLEY: It's difficult, because like you say, we are looking at deepening understanding. But also we're looking at learning, and so then I guess on the flip side of that, there's this idea about, well, I want to be improving. I want to learn from my feedback. Therefore, my marks should be going up. I mean, Lee said, you know, his first assignment he ever got was 100%. And his tutor said, well, it's all downhill from here. Because I guess you can't go up. And there's this whole thing, then, I guess, about having this numerical score, this amount of detail for something in particular, and then having all this feedback associated with it. And like you say, you know, that number could mean different things for different people.

So what I want to explore now is how you flip this. How you reframe what you want to look at in terms of reflection. What is appropriate. You mentioned it might be different for every person. I imagine it would be very different for a lot of different people. But are there some common things that you think might be useful for students to think about as opposed to just the numerical aspect, which we must admit, I guess, is important to a large extent. What else can they think about?

TYRRELL GOLDING: I think Steve's absolutely right in terms of reflection being-- and all the things that you've been looking at today and discussing today-- being about lifelong learning skills. And it is a consistent journey. So I think it is reflecting on yourself as a student and how you deal with feedback just on a very personal sense. And similarly, I'm an OU student, and there has been feedback where I literally just thought I want the ground to open me up. I've humiliated myself. I need to get my dog, hide under the duvet, and that's it. And then fortunately, because I was in Wales at the time, by the time I drove home, I'd calmed myself down.

But I'd reflected on it and just thought OK, what is the purpose of this feedback for me. And what-- you know, that people have taken-- because sometimes you open it and you see so much feedback, you think, oh my goodness. But actually, if a tutor spent that long trying to give you advice and guidance on how to develop your work, actually you've got to think that they're really invested in you as a student. That this is-- when students talk about quality of teaching or all the other things that people think are important in terms of education, one of the key teaching methods that tutors have is this feedback for you. And they spend a lot of time.

So whilst the mark is there to guide you as to where you are in that current TMA, but also it's a journey through the modules and through your study. So you've got the whole rest of the module to try and develop those skills as you progress. And then similarly, sometimes students you'll find they go up to level two and you struggle with some things because there's a sort of an increase in the challenge of the material you're studying. So it is a journey.

STEPHEN HARRISON: I like to use the idea of moving into new landscapes with students. That whilst we become familiar with our own neighbourhood, if you like, as we've become familiar with our neighbourhood, our ability to move around the neighbourhood becomes second nature. So we become very competent within that landscape that we're knowledgeable of. When we engage in a journey, which this is a journey no matter what, and students listening in today will be at different stages, the idea is for actually we move beyond that which we're familiar with into new landscapes. And that may well be moving into the adjacent neighbourhood, or it may well be moving into a completely different landscape, like moving to a different country.

And we know if we go on holiday in a different country, the signs are familiar, but the information that they carry is different, different languages used, and so on and so forth. And our competence, whilst we're competent in our own neighbourhood, it becomes challenged in new environments. And if learning is a forward movement, it's kind of an increase in our understanding and knowledge. Then as we move into new landscapes, as we move into new terrains, it's going to become challenged, our competence is going to become challenged.

And I think that feedback, if you like, reflection is that if something jars with us, the grade isn't what we expect or the feedback isn't what we expected, it draws our eyes to something to consider. It's a little bit like coming off Eurotunnel and then having to change lanes, driving in whatever sites. Trying to describe it, I'm not very good at, but I can do it now. I've done it enough times. So reflecting back on experience of being in a different landscape, what's changed here, like a movement from level one to level two. I may be hitting in 80s, 90s at level one, and then all of a sudden I'm scrabbling around in the lower 50s, lower 40s at level two. Does that mean I've unlearned something or become less competent, or does it mean that the landscape's changed and the criteria by which I'm being assessed.

Well, it is the latter, the level's gone up, the criteria's changed. I may not be fully familiar with that at the beginning of level two, but as I move through level two, I'll become increasingly familiar with the criteria by which I'm being judged, with the criteria against which a feedback is being given, and importantly, the criteria against which a mark's been awarded. And this can change within a module, between modules, and across levels.

Sometimes I've heard it being as expressed as inconsistent marking or grading, and I suspect there is a possibility of that happening sometimes. Although we have very, very robust systems to mitigate against that. But actually, within a module, I've seen students score high, then dip and be very upset, but then rebanged amazingly once they've consolidated the two pieces of learning across those two activities. So whilst grade is important, because it's important to pass, because people want to pass, and people want to pass a particular level, it's only top level feedback you need to dig in, and also we need to consider what use am I wanting to make of this. What is it I can learn, what do I want to learn from this.

KAREN FOLEY: That's a brilliant point. I'd like to come to you, Tyrrell, on that subject. Because Janette says, you know, we're back to this idea of critical analysis and thinking about what do these comments mean, how can I look at them objectively, yet equally acknowledging-- and there's a lot of sharing going on in the chat, because there is so much here that people can really relate to. But how, then, when you're getting this TMA and you've gone under the duvet with the dog and then you come out again and you think, OK, I need to make some sense of this. How do you then go about doing that in a way, and why do you think so many of our students are focusing on the negative aspects more predominately than the positive ones?

TYRRELL GOLDING: I think in terms of focusing on the negative, I think for many of us it's probably just innately part of who we are. And I think when you're putting yourself into this new landscape, this new space, we want to be-- people are here because they want to study and they want to do well. So that's sort of the mark you are reflecting how far you are from where you should be. And I think it's quite natural to do that. For me, and I'll be brutally honest, yeah, I will check the mark first. And then sometimes I do need to go and give myself some space. And as I say, I have my dog. I do a lot of reflecting on my dog, with walking my dog.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, so your dog.

STEPHEN HARRISON: on your dog

TYRRELL GOLDING: His behaviour, his reflection skills as a spaniel are awful. But his-- I was looking at the student photos and how many-- a number of students I sort of speak to on Twitter, I was talking to somebody about reflection yesterday. And you know, how many people have their dogs or cats by their side. And I think to start off, you might be writing things down, keeping some kind of journal, diary, all that kind of thing.

There are a range of models that you might get introduced to that you can follow to make sure that you're not just reflecting on how something made you feel, but you actually think about what can I do differently. I do think time is an important thing. Give yourself space and time to think about it. And I think the student we said was Janette, absolutely right. The reflection and criticality are very interlinked, that you are looking at an issue and you're

trying to pull it apart and you're trying to understand what's gone on there and what the process is.

And when you do that-- and it's like any skill. You do have to develop it and work at it. And think how can I get better next time. I sometimes do highlighters with my feedback, and I can highlight the things I need to act on. And sometimes when you do read that, sometimes when you're having an emotional reaction to something, you're reading it and reading it and reading it but you're not taking it in. And that's a time when you text or you email your tutor and say, can we talk this through. Because that's key.

KAREN FOLEY: And it's important to understand, I guess, if your tutor's written something that you don't understand, or you think that you need more evaluation here, and you don't understand what sort of evaluation you might need to get, you can always, I guess, ask them. We asked people earlier where they keep some of their ideas about critical thinking, and 48% in their heads, 43% on paper, 6% said friends, 3% said social media.

So quite a clear sort of mark of people putting things down on paper or in their heads. I know I keep a lot of them in my head, and then sometimes I think oh, I must bullet point those and write them down on paper. I used to do that when I was a student. I think I'll pick up three things I'm going to do differently for my next TMA-- this was when I was being well behaved. And then I'd write them down and then I'd put them by my next assignment, because, you know, then at least they would be transferred from one to the other and I wouldn't be bombarded with this barrage of negativity.

TYRRELL GOLDING: Post-it notes are great. So I am an academic at the OU, I suppose, and I have it's, its, and its', because that's one of the things that I just have to think about when I'm writing, to make sure I'm not using my apostrophes incorrectly. But I also-- I'll put Post-it notes around when I-- you know, these are the things I want to focus on and these are the things that I do well. So around my screen at home, there are some positive comments about, these were the three things that you did really well last time that you want to try and continue, and these are the things you want to address. Because like Steve's metaphor, sometimes I use the metaphor of juggling. And you can catch a ball really well, one ball. When you add the second one, you not only drop that, but you sometimes drop the first one because you're trying to combine those skills. So sometimes students can then focus so much on what they want to develop that they forget to make sure that they did what they did well last time as well.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, brilliant. Steve and Tyrrell, thank you so much for coming on. This has gone so, so quickly, and I know that academically you're also developing a lot of these models here, in terms of the way that people think. And there's a whole discourse behind reflection which is really important. But our chat room have really loved this conversation. And I think the one thing that you've really sort of both given us as well has taught us is that having that space to be able to reflect, and also to be able to not be brilliant at everything, to be able to share and to learn things, is so important and so valuable. And I hope that that's something that people can take away from this session. So thank you both so much for coming along.

STEPHEN HARRISON: Thank you.

TYRRELL GOLDING: Thank you.

KAREN FOLEY: Ben, how is it all going? I see Annie's still--

[BUZZING]

Do you think this is a result of all this fruit? My smoothie?

BEN: I think it might be that healthy stuff you're drinking to be honest. I'm not so sure on that one.

KAREN FOLEY: Do you think?

BEN: Mm.

KAREN FOLEY: I don't know. I think we should get in touch with Health and Safety and ask them to fumigate the premises.

BEN: I think we need to, to be fair

KAREN FOLEY: That will teach them to send us notes.

BEN: You didn't really have this problem when there was cake everywhere and popcorn. So I think it's the healthy stuff. Lay off that and cake is standard issue next week.

KAREN FOLEY: All right, fair enough. Cake next week, good plan.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent. What are you guys talking about? I know there's a lot of sharing going on and a lot of people feeling, I guess, some nice sense of space to be able to talk about some of these things.

BEN: Yeah, everyone really, really engaged with that session, it was really good to see. A lot of tips in terms of how to-- the best kind of way of dealing with the feedback in terms of putting aside your emotions and trying to look objectively at the feedback that you're provided to help you kind of take it on board rather than take it as a real negative criticism or anything like that.

KAREN FOLEY: How do people then do that, Ben? Have you got any advice from people about what sorts of things they're doing to actually make the most of that?

BEN: So it's just bearing in mind that actually the tutors are here to help, and they do everything they can to make sure that you're getting the best feedback possible to help you grow as a student. And so it's really just trying to take a step back and understand that they're not doing it to dig at you. They're doing it to try and help you as a student, really. That's the key takeaway from all of this. But overall, when you do get positive comments from tutors, it's a really great thing that people are really happy with. So, yeah, lots of great stuff coming in from the chat room. So yeah, overall, it's looking good. The search for HJ's bag is still on.

KAREN FOLEY: Right, how is all of that going? Have they looked upstairs?

BEN: I believe they've looked upstairs and they're walking around campus now looking for it. So they're trying to trace HJ's steps from the previous day.

KAREN FOLEY: And has HJ said why he needs it so much?

BEN: No, he hasn't. Other than it may have a lot of study material in it. So he might need it for his school work, who knows. But we're still on the case with it.

KAREN FOLEY: I hope we find it.

BEN: We may find something, hmm. Yeah. I mean, just have a look. Does that look familiar?

KAREN FOLEY: That does, actually.

BEN: HJ, jump on in the chat room, just let us know if this is yours, it would be really good. We'll have a look.

KAREN FOLEY: Have a rummage through it. See what-- open it, it might have his name in it.

BEN: There's no name stitched in on it.

KAREN FOLEY: He wouldn't have stitched his name on it.

BEN: His mum may have done.

KAREN FOLEY: Maybe.

BEN: Popcorn.

KAREN FOLEY: Get rid of that, quick.

BEN: So what else have we got. Student planner. Obviously planning his time effectively for study here.

KAREN FOLEY: Is there anything in that book, though? I bet it's blank.

BEN: There's just one thing, and that is for date of the 19th of September, to go to university. So it's on plan, is always good. He's got a nice book of quotes here. Just a lot of Latin.

KAREN FOLEY: Was there anything in his notes about remembering his bag?

BEN: Unfortunately, not, no.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, see?

BEN: Something the next time, maybe.

KAREN FOLEY: Clearly the problem.

BEN: What else have we got in here? Lots of stationery.

KAREN FOLEY: He likes his stationery.

BEN: Likes it a bit too much, I think. A bit big, that one. A bit unwieldy. What else we got? Oh.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, none of that, to be quite honest, Ben, I think is absolutely essential for going to university today.

BEN: Agreed.

KAREN FOLEY: I think he's just being a meddling, you know, person.

BEN: I think he just wanted to get in. Which is great, because, I mean, he's stimulating a lot of chat in the chat room and really answering a lot of people's questions, so.

KAREN FOLEY: HJ, what is in the bag that you need? Because I can't see any reason why you've taken Annie out of the studio to go looking for this bag. Actually, yeah.

BEN: I mean, there was a few other things in here that Annie has now gone off to put on eBay for us.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, OK. Good, good, good.

BEN: But other than that.

KAREN FOLEY: HJ.

BEN: [INAUDIBLE]

KAREN FOLEY: You can't take things like that to university. You're a politics student. Heaven' sake. Right, OK. Let's get on with something more sensible. Right. We've looked at reflective learning, we've looked at critical thinking, we've looked at how you might go about doing that and how to impress your tutor in doing so. But we need some frameworks as we've all acknowledged through the way. So to join me in giving you some frameworks, we have Wendy Chalmers and Nicola Beer from the library. Welcome both, thank you for coming along. Oh, I see you two have brought a brain for our session.

WENDY Chalmers: A cabbage.

KAREN FOLEY: A cabbage, oh, right. Sorry.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

KAREN FOLEY: My mistake.

WENDY CHALMERS: We will do it live.

KAREN FOLEY: OK, good. Because-- yeah, so I'm glad you got the message about healthy eating, which is what we're doing this week.

WENDY CHALMERS: We always bring a cabbage.

NICOLA BEER: It's good brain food.

KAREN FOLEY: Yes, yes, a lot of our students are into cabbage, spinach. Also, I've been having a green smoothie. It's been delicious, actually. You're both learning and teaching librarians, and you have various interactions with students. And some of our students may have spoken to you on the help desk, for example. And you're also involved in helping produce module materials and various other things at the Open University. But we wanted to come and talk to you today about what to trust.

And people have been picking up on this very early on in the session. They've been taking about referencing, they've been talking about Wikipedia. And we'll show you some widgets which we're going to use in the session, but I want to just show you them so that you don't think that there are going to be a lot of them during this one. We've got one about which is true or false, and we've got one about a continuing poll. So we'll be using those as and when in the session, but they will appear in your widget panel very shortly if they're not there already. OK, so, what are we going to talk about and what is all this stuff that you've brought in today.

NICOLA BEER: We're actually going to start by talking about April Fools' jokes.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, good.

NICOLA BEER: OK. And the reason is because every year, a whole load of silly stuff gets put out on April Fools' Day. All sorts of people, all sorts of organisations, they all get involved and try to trick us. And firstly, I was aware I've definitely been caught out a few times. I was a little bit worried, I was like, am I the only one? I'm sure I'm not the only one. So we did put a little poll out on Twitter this week to see if anybody else has. And we had almost 70% of people who responded said that they'd been caught out. It was like yes, OK, it's not just me. So we had a little look at some examples, and Wendy's actually got a couple of brilliant ones.

WENDY CHALMERS: One of my favourites, you may recall, it's a BBC Panorama documentary about growing spaghetti crops in Switzerland. This was recorded some time ago, and it covered the spaghetti harvest, the spaghetti bushes. And it was broadcast at a time when spaghetti wasn't, perhaps, a popular part of our diet, and many people fell for this. So this is one of my favourites. And one of my colleagues was telling me about again, a few years ago, Freddie Laker and Laker Sky Dot. This was published in The Observer. And the plan was that people would be reduced in size to increase the speed of air travel. So they'd be reduced in size and then transmitted by laser beams to their destination. And it may be difficult to believe, but many people did fall for this as well. So Nicola said she was happy to be reduced in size, but she would prefer to travel by airplane, so this is an airplane.

NICOLA BEER: Yeah, I thought I'd leave the lasers for later.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah

NICOLA BEER: I'll stick with the plane for now. So you might be wondering what on Earth this has got to do with all the evaluating, but actually, April Fools' jokes, although they seem, now, when you look at them, they seem absurd. And you think how on Earth did anyone ever for these things. But actually, they can be really convincing. If something comes from

somewhere that you trust, you're kind of naturally inclined to think oh, OK, yeah. That's probably true, you know, they're telling me about this thing. Why would they tell me if it wasn't true?

So it is really easy to be misled. And it doesn't just happen once a year on April Fool's Day. It might not necessarily always be quite so much in the trickery sense, but lots of stuff that you read online, or even some scholarly information, you need to kind of think a little bit carefully about where is this coming from, what are all the sources, is this really completely true or do I need to think about bias, that kind of thing. So we wanted to kind of lead on from that into some evaluation frameworks.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Excellent. We've spoken about some a little bit earlier, and one that Janette was mentioning, because her and I both teach on this science module that has a lot of these frameworks, the PROMPT framework in particular, and how useful these can be to students. And so people are really keen to hear about them.

NICOLA BEER: Yes. We're going to come to PROMPT in particular a little bit later. But first of all, we've got a poll.

WENDY CHALMERS: Yeah, so before we get started to discussing some of the issues and how we can critically assess some of the sources, there is a poll in which we would like you to select which of these statements you believe to be true. Hot dogs have been found containing human meat. You can buy selfie shoes into which you can plug your smartphone and use your foot and leg as a selfie stick. Could be interesting. EU bans bendy bananas. And there's a land of stray dogs where dogs roam free. So we'll come back to these later, but if you can select at the moment.

KAREN FOLEY: We've got the results, people have been going mad for this already. We've got 58% of people, which is the highest of the scores, saying that the EU banned bendy bananas. 26%-- or 25% now, say that there is a land of stray dogs. Oh, these are going up and down all the time. We're influencing things. Selfie shoes are 16%, and hot dogs contain human meat is 1%. Partly, I think, because we had a bit of a hot dog incident, to be honest with you, in the first week. Sophie brought in a microwave into the studio and started cooking her lunch. So we had a look at what was in hot dogs, and I don't think we found any human meat as such.

WENDY CHALMERS: Thankfully.

KAREN FOLEY: So we've already done a bit of prep.

WENDY CHALMERS: Little bit of research.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

WENDY CHALMERS: A small sample.

NICOLA BEER: Yes. Now luckily, I can tell you that the hot dogs human meat thing isn't true.

KAREN FOLEY: Phew.

NICOLA BEER: It's not true. It's not true. Actually, the one that was true is the land of stray dogs. So there is actually a place in Costa Rica where there's a whole load of dogs all roaming free. You can go and visit them, you can adopt one if you want to. They're just running around enjoying their life.

KAREN FOLEY: Aww. Oh, how lovely. They'd be perfect for TMA results. Go there and be really happy.

NICOLA BEER: They would. But the point of that little poll was kind of to illustrate that you can't really tell, with just a little bit of information, what is true and what isn't.

KAREN FOLEY: Especially when there's so many ridicul-- I mean, today is international Talk Like a Pirate Day, for example. Which is true, but is anyone talking like a pirate in the chat, Ben?

BEN: No.

NICOLA BEER: Arr.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, sorry.

BEN: Not at the moment. Give it some time.

KAREN FOLEY: That was asking for it. Yes, sorry.

NICOLA BEER: We'll try and be a bit more serious. We've got a few other examples of things that kind of-- a little bit not quite right. So this is one of my favourite stories, actually, from last year sometime, I think it was. And this is why we got a cabbage. This is one of the reasons we've got a cabbage. We're quite cabbage mad today. This was a story all about Chinese teenagers who were supposedly taking cabbages for a walk to help them get over depression. And it looks great. It was a brilliant little story. There's all sorts of quotes in it, supposedly from the teenagers themselves, saying things like, "It was much easier than walking a dog because it didn't bark."

So it was a really well taken up story, circulated quite widely in all the kind of Western news outlets. But unfortunately it's not true. So it actually turned out that what had happened was there was a performance art piece at a festival in Beijing, and they were walking cabbages as part of that. But it got picked up, circulated around, and the facts were kind of twisted. So that's just one illustration of how, even with a photograph, you think you know what's going on. Things aren't always necessarily what they seem.

KAREN FOLEY: Hmm, interesting.

WENDY CHALMERS: So here's another interesting headline. Dating scams add 27% increase in fraud. Quite an attention grabbing headline. But when you actually read the story, there's a quote from a spokesman from the Office of National Statistics saying the rise in fraud has been partially attributed to a change in the way the data is collected, which is completely different from what the headline says. So there's no actual evidence for the rise. So this just shows you why it's important to read beyond the headlines, and many good news

stories will give you information about the report. So you could access the original report and the statistics and look at the origin of the statistics.

NICOLA BEER: Yeah, statistics in particular are one of those things that quite often they get kind of thrown around. They're kind of quoted and re-quoted, and everyone's seen them. But no one actually goes and checks, you know, where did this come from, is this true. And there's that famous quote, 67% of statistics are made up. Which illustrates quite well, that one there. it's something that you might have noticed in the EU referendum.

KAREN FOLEY: Or, I guess, taken completely out of context. Because you could have one statistic, but without knowing how something was actually done, you don't really know what it's saying.

NICOLA BEER: Exactly. Yeah, that's something that you might have noticed with the EU referendum recently. There was quite a lot of that going on. There were statistics quoted kind of all over the place, but actually, they were out of context and they didn't necessarily mean what you thought they meant.

WENDY CHALMERS: As Nicola said, they're quoted and they're re-quoted, and people think, where does that originate. So back to our theme of cabbages, one statistic which was reported during the EU referendum campaign in social media and newspaper was that there's 26,911 words of EU regulation on the sale of cabbages. More or less, the BBC radio programme actually investigated this. And they found something completely different, that there has only ever been less than 2,000 words of EU regulation. And in fact, there's now 0 words on the sale of cabbage. So it just shows how these things are repeated, and they can sometimes become accepted knowledge. So when you do come across statistics, don't take them at face value, and try and go back to the source if you want to use--

KAREN FOLEY: Well, I'm glad they've stopped procrastinating and writing about cabbages when they've got more important things to be doing. Ben, how's everything on the hotdesk?

BEN: So, it's--

[BUZZING]

Thank you for all the swat information you're sending through, we really appreciate it. So the social media desk is going nuts, again, surprise surprise, on the media side of things. So Janet May mentioned the media twisted the facts, that's hard to believe. Lorella McDonald is saying yes, look beyond the headlines. And really, there seems to be the element of distrust of the media and how they change things because they're business. So, yeah. All agreeing with your quotes.

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely. I think that there are some things that are very obvious, and particularly the examples that Wendy and Nicola introduced from the library today. But also, just to sort of link this, I guess, with some of the module material as well, in terms of how having that critical view on things. Whilst we're talking about examples that may be a little bit more interesting and funny, there are ways of actually analysing this in terms of things that are printed in your books which you may believe slightly more than you would, say, something in The Sun, for example.

NICOLA BEER: Yes, absolutely. We've actually got one more example that we wanted to show. And this one kind of illustrates brilliantly how you can use something like an evaluation framework to do kind of a structured assessment of something, and come to the conclusion. Is it is exactly what it seems, is it not. And this is a much more serious example, which Wendy is going to show us.

KAREN FOLEY: OK.

WENDY CHALMERS: I've got some more newspaper headlines. I don't know if you can see that from there. Three newspaper headlines. These were published earlier this year, caused some confusion and controversy. First of all, from The Mail, "Statins may be a waste of time." From The Times, "Bad cholesterol helps you live longer." And then a more critical report from The Guardian, "Don't throw away your statins yet." And these headlines were all based on a study that was published in BMJ Open, which is an open access journal. And it did cause a lot of confusion, particular amongst the statin-taking members of the population.

So NHS Behind the Headlines, it looks at an unbiased analysis of health stories. Quite a good reference point. And it looked at this study and reported on the study. And just to pick out a couple of points, it looked at the methodology of the study, and it was critical of the methodology because it felt like the authors had only selected evidence which suited their needs. So they've been quite selective about the evidence they'd use and report. And they also said there might have been a risk of bias, because four of the authors were actually members of, I think it was a international group of cholesterol sceptics.

So it may be that they had arrived with a preconceived bias. So that's a kind of analysis that was done by that particular organisation. But it's a type of analysis that students and all of us can apply to information they come across.

NICOLA BEER: Yeah. That particular example is the kind of thing that, perhaps if you were doing a web search for a TMA about high cholesterol or something, that's the kind of information that you might come across. And you can see the NHS did a brilliant job of kind of breaking it all down and properly critically analysing it, coming to a conclusion about it. But at some point, you might need to know how to do that yourself. And that's where the evaluation frameworks really come in.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. No, absolutely. I'd like to have a look at those. And in particular, it's really highlighted how-- I mean, Joan was saying, if we can't trust the BBC, who can we trust? So there is this issue, I guess, about how information is being used. Would you say-- I mean apart from the cabbages, you know, are people deliberately trying to mislead, or is this just a case of us needing to evaluate things more effectively in terms of how we use that knowledge? Do you know what I mean, in all seriousness?

NICOLA BEER: I think most of the time it's a case of just needing to have a critical eye to make sure that what you're reading suits your needs, it's going to be decent enough for your TMA. I don't think a lot of people are out there to purposely mislead you. There are cases, particularly kind of like stuff that circulates on social media. Some of that you might find people are trying to mislead, because they've got an agenda and they want people to believe certain things. But the stuff that you're likely to come across in your modules, things to help you with your TMAs, they're not likely to be trying to mislead you. You just need to think about what might they be trying to tell you, and is there perhaps another side to the story.

KAREN FOLEY: That word agenda is such a good one. Janette was talking about that when we were looking at, you know, how tutors know when you're critically thinking and how to do that. And how things can be written by someone with a particular perspective, and often be funded by somebody with particular aims.

NICOLA BEER: Absolutely.

KAREN FOLEY: Lovely. So what, then, are some of these frameworks we can look at?

WENDY CHALMERS: Well, if we first of all look at--

KAREN FOLEY: I've got one of yours down here as well.

WENDY CHALMERS: --this is the WWW, Who, Why, When criteria. And this is a fairly simple framework, and it can be applied to websites. So when you come across a new website, perhaps when you're doing some research, it's Who, Why, When. And so if we look at this website here, this is the website of the agreement on the conservation of African Eurasian migrating water birds. Could have picked a shorter title. But first of all, the who at the bottom. So we can see here it's the United Nations Environment Programme and the AEW who are behind this website. And the about, there's normally an about on a website. And that usually tells you the aims of the website, why it exists and what you'll find here. And in this case, it's to provide information and to promote the protection of these water birds. So that's a fairly simple criteria that you can apply to websites.

NICOLA BEER: So, yeah. That's a really useful quick one, WWW, especially when you're just surfing the web, finding quick bits of information. This one, which you've probably heard mentioned before, is PROMPT.

WENDY CHALMERS: So first of all, we have Presentation. You could apply that to a website, talking about how easy it is to navigate the website or the structure. You could also talk about the clarity of the language or how well an author communicates their ideas. The next criteria is Relevance. So that's probably relevance to your needs, if you're looking for a source for your assignment. So it could be something like, is it the right geographical area. You could think about whether it's the right level for you, because different information is written-- it could be useful for a Ph.D. student, or it could be relevant or useful to someone doing their school homework. So think about if it's written at the right level. And then there's the emphasis as well. So, for example, you're looking for something about illegal drugs. That could be about the crime figures, the social costs, or the psychological aspects. So there's different emphasis on an article.

And then we have Objectivity. And there you might look for bias. So you were talking about agenda earlier. Is it written by a company, is it trying to promote something, you can look and see whether there are balanced arguments in an article, and whether the arguments are supported by evidence. So the evidence is important, or whether it's just an opinion supported by facts.

NICOLA BEER: And then we've got Method, so that's when you'd be thinking about the methodology of how a piece of research has been carried out. So if, for example, it's a trial, like a clinical trial or something, then you might want to think about how many participants did it involve, was it enough, really, to have conclusive results? Was there a control, that kind

of thing. Provenance, so where is the information come from. So that's kind of, who's the author, is it someone well-known? In which case you think, you know, they've written a lot about this, probably trust them. Or is it someone brand new in the field. Or can you not tell who it is at all, all things to think about.

And then finally, we've got Timeliness. This one's really useful. Depending on what information you're looking for, you might need to have the most relevant kind of up to date stuff. So in science, you'd-- kind of topics, for example, you'd probably want to know that you've got the most current research. So you want to have a look at the date. But if you're studying the arts or history, and you're interested in finding out what was going on 100 years ago, you might want to find a primary source. So something that was actually written at the time, 100 years ago, would tell you more about it than now. So that's PROMPT.

KAREN FOLEY: Now, these are really useful, because they make it seem so easy to do. If you've got a framework like this, you can just fill in that table and you can start looking at it. In terms of, I guess-- I know you've got more prompts to go through. But just briefly, bringing it back to the idea of critical thinking, where would be the most interesting juicy bits you'd get out of that PROMPT form that you could then use in your critical thought. Pretty sure that's a difficult one without a subject, or an area, or a discipline. But what sort of aspects from that would really sort of be something that people could talk about?

NICOLA BEER: I think kind of the agenda and the why. So with the WWW, the why, and with PROMPT, kind of the providence and the objectivity. It's the, why is someone telling you this. I think that's the one that really gives you a good idea of what's going on. Because once you've got an idea of why someone's trying to tell you a certain piece of information, it sets off alarm bells sometimes, or it reassures you other times. Either they're just trying to teach you something, or they're trying to convince you of something, or trying to sell you something. And it really helps, I think, once I know that, to have a better idea of how I feel about a piece of information.

KAREN FOLEY: No, it's more-- and I guess it's about also being appropriate with it. Like sometimes, you will have someone funding a clinical trial. Sometimes you will have people who are prolific researchers in a certain field. And so you might think, well, they're obviously trying to do this. Which they are, they're trying to develop something. But then sometimes you might read a module chapter, and you might then want to think back to the learning outcomes, maybe. Or thinking again about why you're trying to tell me the story, what are you trying to do here. Before we talk about the other ones, can I briefly just catch up with Ben? How's it all going there, Ben?

BEN: Yeah, good, there's a lot of questions about where Annie is. I can confirm she's actually reshelving the OU library at the moment to house all the 72 books that HJ had in his bag. So no wonder it's so heavy.

KAREN FOLEY: I bet he's got a lot of overdue fines because he is always in the library.

BEN: Boris Johnson's autobiography was in there, as well. So, good.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, Annie, come back, we need you here.

BEN: So there's a deluge of information on here. It's quite difficult to keep up at times. But Jane Grithis, Griffis-- sorry, Jane-- had a question on if tutors see feedback or marks from previous modules. Would you be able to shed any light on that one for us?

KAREN FOLEY: Well, as a tutor, I can say that we do get a vague idea about what's happened in your previous module. So your tutor will have an idea about what marks you've had before in terms of your overall grades, and if you're doing concurrent modules, they can sometimes see how your marks are going with that. The useful thing with that from a tutor perspective is, I guess, just to see how people are doing. If you're a level one student, it doesn't necessarily mean that that will transfer to the next module in terms of those grades.

And tutors have a really strict criteria with which they need to mark. So that will depend on the module that you're doing, the component that you're being assessed on, et cetera. And we have really tight marking guidelines. So even if we think, ah, this is a-- we don't. But even if you were to think, well, you're bracketing me as a level one, two, or three student, or pass one, two, or three, whatever. Tutors can't actually mark that way, even if they were to know about that. So yes, they can see your overall feedback in terms of your record. But they can't see the detailed ones. And no, it doesn't influence how they mark you, because we all have to comply with the marking guidelines for that particular module. Does that answer the question, Ben?

BEN: Yeah, I think so.

KAREN FOLEY: Good, good.

BEN: Claire Fleetwood Smith asked, where do we find correct sources and relevant sources? What are your top tips to track one down?

KAREN FOLEY: Ah, we'll ask the library that. Good question.

WENDY CHALMERS: So, well, there is the library. Depends on the area. Top sources-- I mean, for academic work, you might be looking at journal articles. And that's where the provenance comes in. Think about your sources. For example, you think something which is published in the British Medical Journal is a good source, and a lot of these articles are peer reviewed. So they're reviewed by other experts in the field. So that's a good tip, to look for peer reviewed articles. And as I mentioned earlier, if you do find a newspaper report, look at the source of that report. Where did that report go to, and try and go back to that report. And we maybe talk about Wikipedia later, but a similar thing. Go back to the references, the reports.

KAREN FOLEY: Right, we've only got 10 minutes before the complete end of the show, and we've got a lot of other bits to get through in the meantime. Were there any other criteria that you wanted to look at?

WENDY CHALMERS: I'd just like to mention another one, this is CAN. Credibility, Agenda, and Need. This could be particularly useful for social media. Credibility is similar to provenance, so you might be thinking about how much do you know about this person, is this person using their real name when posting online, so how much do you know about them. Agenda, similar to bias, what is the individual's agenda? Why are they posting online? Is it balanced?

And then need. Need, perhaps, I would also relate to relevance. Is it relevant to your own needs, and how much do you need this particular source? So that's another quick evaluation which is quite useful. And you'll find more about CAN, PROMPT, and other evaluation criteria on the library's Being Digital site. That's a collection of short activities, covers a wide area, finding information, referencing, but also trust online. So that would be a useful place to visit.

KAREN FOLEY: Good. Well, this is all well and good and very theoretical, but I believe you have a task for us to do.

NICOLA BEER: We do. We do have a task.

KAREN FOLEY: We like our homework and our assignments.

NICOLA BEER: I feel quite mean making you do something before you've properly started study. But, here we go. This is a page of a website. And what we'd like you to do is have a quick read of it. You don't need to read it too carefully because there are some hints elsewhere on the page, not in the text. And think about those evaluation frameworks that we were talking about. And decide whether you think this would be a trustworthy source to using in a TMA, and perhaps a TMA-- perhaps on health benefits. And there should be a sliding scale on the screen. So you can plot where on the screen you think it is between kind of very trustworthy or not trustworthy at all.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. So you're asking people to vote based on this example here, which is just-- this is just a quick exercise. So yeah, if you can just, based on that continuum poll, where do you think you would position yourself on that scale. And we'll have a look at that.

WENDY CHALMERS: The quick hint.

KAREN FOLEY: The quick hint.

NICOLA BEER: Have a little think about where the information is coming from, how old it is, and what they might be trying to convince you of. And use those, that should help you.

KAREN FOLEY: OK, good. So frameworks all the way are the way to look at these things. Excellent. All right. Now, we'd said at the start, while we're waiting for the results of that poll, people were asking about Wikipedia. And I'd like to touch on this, because it's a commonly used thing. A lot of students use it very sensibly to get information around something they may not understand. But should it come into an assignment, when should one use it, and what are your views on it?

WENDY CHALMERS: Well, it's often the first point of call for everyone, for myself, for students, for many people. And there are alternatives. There's some excellent reference sources in the library which students can use. Wikipedia, mixed views. There are concerns about the quality of the content. As you were probably aware, anyone could contribute. So there's variation in the level of the material, it can be understood by a schoolchild or you may need a Ph.D. in the subject to understand.

And there's also variation in amount written. So it really depends on the popularity of the topic, how much is written in it. It's not always written by the experts, it's written by those who have an interest in it. Which may well be the experts, but not always. So it has been subject to vandalism in the past. It's just something to be aware of. There are guidelines, people are supposed to write from a neutral point of view. There should be no original search, it should be balanced, and everything should be verified by citing references. So that's an important thing to look at, the references.

KAREN FOLEY: Should you ever put it in your TMA?

WENDY CHALMERS: Well, I'll pass over to Nic. Our view is?

NICOLA BEER: I think that's going to have to be a no.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

NICOLA BEER: But like Wendy said, there are actually plenty of good points about Wikipedia. It can be really useful as a starting point. But the thing is, it is supposed to cite everything that they've used. So what you should really do is if you find something on Wikipedia, and there's no harm in using it as a starting point and finding out something useful from it. But you should then go and have a look at the references and go to that reference, the one that tells you that little bit of information, and see if you can back it up somewhere else. So basically, use Wikipedia by all means, but don't stop with Wikipedia. Make sure that you follow it up and you find it somewhere else.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Excellent. I quite agree, I hate seeing Wikipedia mentioned in things, because sometimes you think, well, we've explained it really well in the module material, why aren't you listening to that? But equally, like you say, it can be a good idea to look around. Would you like to see what our students thought about your poll?

NICOLA BEER: Yes.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. Now, you did prime them and you did say there's a clue here. And I think this has influenced it, because most people have said they think it is a very bad source. The library have brought in a very bad source, we do not approve. Tell us why is it such a bad source?

NICOLA BEER: OK, let me try and hold it up again. So yes, that's exactly what we were hoping for is that you'd all think it is a bad source. And the reason why is because when we read it through-- actually, it is written fairly well and we think it's probably presented OK. But there are a few things about it that set off a few alarm bells with us. So the first was where it's come from.

So Natural Health, your guide to alternative health treatments. So you can see that that's not going to be based on medicine. So you know, that's not to say it might not be valuable information, but we don't know that. It's not going to be mainstream stuff that we're used to. It does mention a scientific study, but it doesn't tell us what that is. So we're going to have to go and find that out for ourselves if we think we're going to use this. It's also trying to sell us something. So it's likely that this is going to be persuasive, they'll not have mentioned, perhaps, some of the bad points. And it was last updated in 2004, which is ages ago. So if that

scientific study was real, it's very, very old. So we definitely would think twice about using this one in a TMA.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, I don't think you should buy Noni juice, I think you should make homemade green smoothies, personally. Excellent.

WENDY CHALMERS: Homemade cabbage juice.

KAREN FOLEY: So what are the take home tips, then, for people, in terms of what to and not to trust. Oh, no, come on.

WENDY CHALMERS: Not which specific source, but I think always approach it-- don't fool me, don't take things at face value. Think about some of the evaluation criteria. You might want to, if it was an in-depth study, look at the methodology or look at the source. Don't necessarily accept statistics, but think about-- question it. Where did that come from? Is it valid, is it real, is it true?

NICOLA BEER: Yeah. I think I'm going to reiterate the Wikipedia tip, which is don't stop at Wikipedia. Go and check it out yourself. Because you can apply that to pretty much anything. Everything that you find, go and check it out yourself. Make sure that it comes from somewhere else.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Excellent. Thank you so much. So Nicola Beer and Wendy Chalmers you've been brilliant today, and our students do love talking to you on the helpdesk and getting all of the access to the library. And you can find out more from the Resources page about how you can get involved in various online activities with the library. So thank you both very much for coming along today.

Well, that's nearly all we've got time for. We're going to wrap up now, so I'm going to show you some different widgets. And I'd like you to sum up-- hopefully, if you can-- in three words. If not, just put it in the remaining ones. Which three words best describe your experience of today's session? So it would just be really nice for you to say some things that have come to mind about how you find being here today. That's both in terms of the content and just generally being here.

We'd also like to check our learning outcomes, because you know we like these. So I'd like to know, do you think that you now know more about critical thinking? Yes or no. Do you feel that more about reflective learning, yes or no? And, the killer question, are you going to come back next week? I hope you are. Ben, how's it all going? You've done a sterling job there whilst Annie's been on bag hunting duty and now has been commandeered to the library.

KAREN FOLEY: She's probably going to be exchanged for these two, now. I hear you've got a bit more filing to do when you get back.

NICOLA BEER: That's all right, I think we don't have very many books and there's plenty of space on the shelves. Everything's online.

BEN: Annie's putting you some more up as well, so excellent. I've got a few more selfies to go through quickly. So Amy has chosen Olaf as her study buddy, there. Can't escape the

cake. Holly's carrot cake with a caramel filling. And we've got RD's tech messy desk, which is rivalling HJ's, apparently.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, I love having messy desk pictures in here, because all of these very organised ones are so intimidating, I find.

BEN: Andrea's study space and hard working cats, there.

KAREN FOLEY: Good.

BEN: And then we've got Mike's worried selfie, lonely and aged in Cheltenham.

KAREN FOLEY: Aww.

BEN: You don't look old at all, sir.

KAREN FOLEY: Aww, no, that's true, actually. There's such a range of students. And not lonely, as well, because there's all of us here. And I hope that being here online has made it a little bit more of a community, a bit more of a friendly place here. So thanks for sending all those selfies in. Ben, are we going to get things out to people, then, for that?

BEN: We will indeed. So I've chosen--

KAREN FOLEY: And what's the plan?

BEN: Lee is going to win the wild weather one. Because he's ready for the wild weather. I'm going to send the law one to Lee, because something's a bit fishy. You have to excuse these ridiculous puns. And then Marilyn's study buddy wins the streets guide because he might like to have a walk. So yes, that's that. If you could send this through your details, guys, to the email address, which is studenthub@open.ac.uk. We can get those sent out to you.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Ben, thank you so much. You have done a sterling job on your own there, albeit with some questionable jokes.

BEN: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: But thank you very much. I know everyone has really appreciated that. Let's see how you have experienced today's session with our Wordle. Fun, informative, confident, helpful, satisfying, knowledgeable, educational, enthusiastic, cake, friendly, helpful. OK, brilliant. Aww, no Annie, no HJ, missing HJ. HJ, you're not supposed to fill in the widgets yourself. Only joking. Thank you so much. I'm really glad you found it useful, although there has been a considerably less amount of food here. 93% of you say that you now know more about critical thinking, 97% about reflective learning, and-- I'm really pleased-- 100% of you are coming back next week. That's brilliant news, because we have a massive programme lined up for you next week. You're going to need cake for this one for sure.

I'd like to thank my guests before I tell you about that, who have been John Butcher, talking about critical thinking. Janette Wallace, who was talking about using critical thought in a TMA. Tyrrell Golding and Steve Harrison were talking about being reflective learners. And

Wendy Chalmers and Nicola Beer from the library were talking about evaluation frameworks. So we've got some forums on the website. If you'd like to discuss anything there from this week's session, please, please do.

There's also some feedback on the website. There's a very short little form. We'd love to know what you thought of the session, and if you have any ideas or suggestions for improvement. Again, we can be reflective about those. There's a count me in button on the website, and if you give us your email address, we can keep you up to date with when we've got events. You can also email us, studenthub@open.ac.uk.

And, in fact, if you've sent in a selfie, we will send you out one of our featured merchandise. So do send us your email-- oh, sorry, your postal address, and we'll get that in the post to you and which one you would prefer. Our hashtag is #studenthublive16, so you can keep the conversation going there. And we'll have the chat room open for another half an hour or so, and we'll play you a short video, if we can, after this session.

Now, our next event is on Monday the 26th, and that is all about assessment. That's going to be really amazing. We're going to talk to you about how to find your TMAs, what to do when you've found them, how to submit them. That is going to be really good, especially if you're new to the Open University. And then we're going to have a summary. In fact, we're going to have a boxing match, because the philosophy department love boxing matches. So we're going to have a boxing match and see who wins in terms of who's learned the most. So that will be loads of fun.

But that's not all, because then we're going into our Student Hub Live Freshers' Fair, which is going to start in the evening. So for those of you who haven't been able to make the evening sessions, I hope you'll join us. We're going to be having quizzes, we're going to be finding out about being a vulcanologist with Hazel Rymer. Then we've got jam packed programmes on the 27th and 28th. And then for those students who are studying business and law, we have a special induction for you on the 29th.

So I hope you can join us for those packed weeks of sessions in the daytime and the evening all week next week. But until then, I will see you on Monday. And that's all from us here at Student Hub Live. Keep chatting in the chat room for another half an hour, and thank you for being here. And we hope to see you very soon.

[MUSIC PLAYING]