

Student Hub Live Bootcamp - day 1 - Opening Session and Navigating the VLE

[MUSIC PLAYING]

KAREN FOLEY: Hi. And welcome to the Student Hub Live. I'm Karen Foley. And I'm going to be hosting the next two hours of our first of our series of four study skills boot camps.

So we thought this would be a good idea, because a lot of you are hopefully very keen and enthusiastic about your module starts, and about lunch, so I hear. And we thought it would be a good idea to meet up every Monday and go through some of the skills that we think are important for studying. Now just because we think those are important doesn't mean they're necessarily are.

We want to hear your ideas, your questions, anything you'd like us to cover in these four sessions, do let us know. And you can do that in a variety of ways that I'll tell you about shortly.

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

The best way to engage with these is through the Watch and Engage feature. So some of you might be in the Livestream. I mean, these events are open to anybody.

So if you're a student, you just sign into the Watch and Engage with your Open University computer username. And then you can see all the chat and the widgets that we'll be going through. And you can tell us what you think, et cetera. And if you aren't, you can request a visitor account. And then you can see all of that also. So that is an option to look at.

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

Right. I would like to introduce our hot desk. HJ! Hello! How are you?

HJ: I'm good. Thank you.

KAREN FOLEY: Good.

HJ: Really excited.

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

HJ: I know. It's going so well. We've got loads of people in the chat room today. So we're here for all their thoughts, comments, and questions to put to you guys. Yeah. Everyone's just introducing themselves, saying what modules they're doing.

We've got people from all over the place as well. So Margaret was just saying earlier she loves it when the parcels arrive with everything in. That's always a lovely moment.

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

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

KAREN FOLEY: Hello, Sophie.

SOPHIE: Hi, Karen.

KAREN FOLEY: How are you?

SOPHIE: Good, thank you.

KAREN FOLEY: Good.

SOPHIE: Happy to be here.

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

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

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

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

HJ: Yes.

SOPHIE: So we've got all sorts going on. So obviously we will be on the chat, hopefully get to as many people as possible. It's so busy on there at the moment.

If people could send in some selfies. If we could have some pictures of people's lunch.

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

KAREN FOLEY: So you want people to send in pictures to I guess our email?

HJ: Yes. So email us. studenthub@open.ac.uk. We've got a Twitter account @studenthublive. All the details are on our lovely board behind us.

We've got a little selfie up here from last time when Helen joined me on the social media desk. But we want to fill this board with all your stuff, because we want to know what's going on where you are and what it looks like from where you are.

Cause you can see us. We want to see what's going on with you too. But if you've got like study tips as well, we love those, don't we? We want to know those.

If you've got advice for other students starting, or something that you wish you knew when you started off, we'd love to know. So we want to hear from you, whatever way. Just let us know. We want to hear from you.

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

HJ: Oh, yes.

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

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

So either of those three options. studenthub@open.ac.uk.

Right. Our programme today. We've got a lot lined up. What we're going to be doing is first we're going to have Georgina Blakeley. And we're going to be talking about navigating the VLE, which is the Virtual Learning Environment.

So some of you may have already accessed this. This is the most important place for your modules. And she's going to tell us all about how to do that. And she's going to show us some options.

We then have Helen Clough from the library. And we're going to look at managing your digital presence. So this is going to be about using social networking sites to interact with your fellow students. And also she's got some really good tips about keeping up-to-date with your studies.

We then have Suzanne Schwenzer, who's coming in talking about time management, a very important skill for students. So she's got lots of different strategies and advice that she will go through with us for that.

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

Now the one thing I will tell you is that the chat can move fast. So if you are in the watch and engage and you're seeing that it is going a little bit quickly, there's a pin at the top of the chat. And you can pin that. And you can scroll down to see what other people are saying.

You can also change your screen layout. So there are three different options for that. And you can click on the bottom of the right-hand side, I believe, of the panel. Correct me if I'm

wrong, Sophie and HJ. And then you can change the interface and see exactly what view you would find best, whether that's more chats or more of the widgets, et cetera.

Now speaking of widgets, we're going to put five of them up, if they're not up already. We'd like to know where are you. So click on the map and tell us where you are.

Also, we'd like to know how you're feeling right now. So if you can sum that up in three words, if it's two, just put an x in the last one, or one even. But you do need to put three things in to populate that. So let us know.

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

OK. So let's have a look then. We've got a word here with just some very brief terms about how people are feeling. And there's lots and lots of different emotions.

And I'm really pleased that so many of them are overwhelmingly positive. We can see that you're ready to begin. I'm going to do the positive ones first. Ready to begin, excited, happy, engaged, inspired, hopeful. Some people are scared. Some people are anxious.

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

OK I think I have introduced everything, hopefully that we have to introduce. But no doubt there will be more as people are popping in.

So I'm going to introduce Georgina Blakeley. Georgina, welcome to the studio.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Hi.

KAREN FOLEY: Now, Georgina, you're the chair of DD 102, introducing the social sciences. And you're going to talk to us about navigating the virtual learning environment for students.

Now can you tell us briefly, I mean, we've got as we can see here, a screenshot of Student Home. This is really, really important. How do students tend to feel when they first, from your experience as chair of somebody who's starting a new module, how do people feel about all of this? There's so much information here.

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

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

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

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

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

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Absolutely not. Before the module starts, and that's where students are now, most modules haven't started yet. So you've got some time to make the most of that enthusiasm and that desire to get started. So I would advise students to just start clicking.

Once you're on Student Home, use that as your base. And then go from there. You really can't break anything. You won't spoil it for any other students.

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

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

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

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: I think on most Open University module websites, or websites in general, it's the central column that's really important. And you'll see here for this student who's kindly let us use his website, his Student Home website, at the start you've got the central column there which tells you which qualification you're on. And this student is studying politics, philosophy, and economics.

Unfortunately, this student isn't actually doing any modules at the moment. But what you'd also see in this central column is a list of modules that this student is doing. And from there, you click onto your module websites.

And I would say that if you're starting as a student, it's your module website that's most important, because that will tell you what to do and when.

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

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: OK. Let's have a go. They do say never work with technology. But here we go.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, I know. Wow.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: And it works. Ta da!

OK. You'll see this is actually an old module website. It's for the 14J presentation of DD 102. But this will look exactly the same for 16J.

So again, you'll see this central column down the middle here. And the first thing I would say to students is, click on the module introduction and see what happens. Shall we have a go?

KAREN FOLEY: Let's go for it.

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

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

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

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

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

KAREN FOLEY: OK.

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

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. One thing I really like is you can see the little column, which we saw at the top earlier, which showed you where that was in relation to other things. You know, sometimes I think it's about getting a sense of scope. How much there is and what you've got to do and how it all works.

So basically everything is populated in some sort of sensible order. And I guess if people don't want to watch the video, they don't have to.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: No. They don't have to. No. There's kind of two ways of navigating it, really.

You can use the contents list there, and simply click on it as if you were kind of going through a book, really.

Or you can use the top of every page. And the bottom of every page there'll be a Next button. So you can go Next. Or at the top you can go back and simply do it that way.

KAREN FOLEY: And you can also see where you are, I see, with the week 1 module start and et cetera.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Yeah. So we're here at the very start in the module introduction before we even get to week 1. And that's what we recommend students to do.

Most Open University module website will be very similar to that. So although this is DD 102, they'll all look pretty similar.

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

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

KAREN FOLEY: Cause I think that's the thing. You do want to start reading the books, don't you? Especially because they're tangible.

But actually, what you're saying is that this structures it. So there's a nice introduction. So it's going to tell you what you're then going to need to read.

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

I can't get it back from there. But anyway, go back there. And it will tell you sort of week by week the study plan of the central column in the middle, really tells you step by step what to do and when.

And it will also usefully give you an idea of how much time watching a video or doing an activity will take. So you can have a look and think, OK, I've got 10 minutes. So I will watch this video. I've got time to do that.

And that's really useful when it comes to planning your time.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Could you find that in a second while I talk about this thing? Because we've asked people what are your biggest concerns? Right.

So a lot of people have filled those in in the widget. And I just like to make a sense check so that we can try and address any of these things. So people have a lot of different concerns here.

We've got things like time management, note-taking, keeping up, time management is quite a big one. Falling behind, self-learning, academic skills, getting behind, doing two modules, being good enough, the amount of reading people have got to do academic writing, not understanding things, getting confused, medication problems, have I enough time?

Awful lot of anxieties. And thank you for being so honest about those. And those are very, very common anxieties, wouldn't you say, Georgina?

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

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

OK. HJ and Sophie, how's everything going there?

HJ: It's doing really lovely.

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

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

HJ: Well we're getting some.

KAREN FOLEY: I don't know how they're gonna get them into the studio.

SOPHIE: Some sent a Wotsits selfie.

HJ: Yeah someone's sending us their lunch. So please stop, guys. It's making me hungry. No. Not really. We want to see what you're eating. We're eating on this desk, too.

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

SOPHIE: Definitely. Yes.

HJ: So we've got loads of cool things from the OU. So if you've ever seen those really cool television programmes, and it says like you can send out stuff. We've got stuff to send out as well to you.

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

HJ: Oh, that's a wicked poster.

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

KAREN FOLEY: Great. So a bit of bargaining. I like it. So you send your selfies in electronically. studenthub@open.ac.uk. Or at student hub on Twitter. #studenthublive16.

Get those selfies or your lunch or your study space or even a study buddy, like a pet, to us. And we'll get those up on the social media board. And then we'll let you choose from our fine selection of Open University and BBC Production of materials that we've managed to secure.

OK. Great. I'd also like to know what you're most excited about. We're going to come onto that in a minute.

So back to all these anxieties, Georgina. A lot of these are really real. And they are issues.

And I think picking up on some of these things that people are saying. You know, time management is a key one. Getting it all done.

How is the study planner going to be helpful as a tool for people? And how should they use some of this? Can you talk us through the structure like week by week and how people might think about using them?

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Yeah. Absolutely. It kind of has a week-by-week basis. And you can see either the five-week planner, or the entire planner.

And it basically takes you through step-by-step. So each time you click on a week, you get that contents list opening up on the side there. And that tells you what you're doing each week.

What I would say to students, though, is don't panic. When you look at this, you think, oh my goodness me. There's 30 weeks there of work. And I'm going to have to do all this. And how am I going to fit it in?

It is planned. So it's almost like a journey. You're doing it gradually. You're taking it step by step.

If you could do all of this at once, you wouldn't need to do the module. Yes. So don't worry. Don't whatever you do, look at week 25 and think, [GASP] I can't do that?

You're not supposed to look at week 25 now. You're supposed to look at the introduction. I mean, you can look at week 25 and have fun and see what's there.

KAREN FOLEY: I can tell you. Who's gonna look at week 25?

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: I can't even remember what's in week 25. It's probably an assignment or something like that.

But you know the whole point is we think very carefully about how we construct these modules. So that we do take you step-by-step. You do have a chance to develop your skills and acquire the knowledge gradually as you go through.

So don't panic when you see all this a module lasts 30 weeks.

KAREN FOLEY: Show us one of the weeks as an example.

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

KAREN FOLEY: No. Try not to. That'll scare everyone. No. It won't scare everyone. But we're going to look at time management with Suzanne a little bit later.

And one of the things that I'm very keen to look at is how you can break down some of these tasks and consider when you do certain activities and how to actually use that. But it's just useful to be able to see what's actually in one of these examples from, and this is a social sciences module. So everyone is quite different.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: OK. So I've clicked on week 15. I decided not to go for week 25. And as you can see, as I said, there's the contents list there, which tells you the different sections for this week. It's quite a full week.

Most modules will probably have a common format each week. So you'll be doing similar kind of things. So on DD 102, for example, the first thing it actually tells you to do is to work with the chapter. So we still have books, as well as all these wonderful things online. So it will tell you to work with a chapter. It might kind of give you an activity of questions that you need to think about when you're reading.

And then you can go online and fill in that. And I'm quite pleased that I've chosen this one, actually, cause the Portland Road is actually based on the secret streets series that we did with the BBC. And that's a nice little video that kind of works with some of the ideas that you've read about in the chapters.

So often we find, for example, that students think, oh, that's quite difficult, that chapter reading that. But then you go to a video or an audio. And you think, oh, yeah. That becomes a bit clearer.

So there's different ways of learning things and different ways of working with the materials, because students study in different ways.

KAREN FOLEY: They absolutely do. Could you tell us about This Week You Will Study? And just a little bit about learning outcomes, and how a lot of the time we're trying to structure things so that students get an idea. Sometimes you can look at these things and think, oh, that's a lot of stuff, and then just get on with it.

But why is it important to get a sense of what you're actually going to be studying?

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: OK. This Week You Will Study is kind of like the overview. So it doesn't give you the detail. It gives you the main themes and the main activities that you're looking at this week.

So you'll see that you've got an activity that's reviewing the chapter. And that's the same every week. You've got a video. You've got an audio.

And then we've got a working with numbers activity. Because one of the skills that students learn on this introductory module is how to work with numbers.

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

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

KAREN FOLEY: It's good that people know that they don't know what we're doing. Cause a lot of our viewers out there are sitting in their dressing gowns, so they tell us. Very lucky that we can't see them.

And in fact, that's one of the benefits of these online tutorials, because we all do those in our dressing gowns, too.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: I couldn't possibly comment on that one.

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

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

A lot of people want the tiger poster. So that's a very popular one -

KAREN FOLEY: And they will have to send us in their selfies. That's the deal.

HJ: Yes. That's how it works, unfortunately.

KAREN FOLEY: Fine. So get those in.

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

So I think that's really nice.

SOPHIE: Yes, that's also quite good, because when you do get to the end, you'll remember how you felt when you looked at it. And you were nervous. And then you get there, and you can see your progress. You can see what you've done.

I used to like doing that. A bit of panic at the start. But then when you get there, you just feel so much better, because you know you can do it.

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

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

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Excellent. Now aside from this then, and when people's module websites do open, and you're coming back next week, aren't you, to talk us through in a lot more detail. We're going to focus on learning online next week. So we're going to take a look at actually how you learn online effectively, as well as where some of these things are.

So Georgina will be back. And we'll go in a little bit more detail about OU Live and forums and actually show you some of the workings around those. And some of you will have been allocated hopefully your module websites by then. So you can have a look and then ask us more questions.

So don't worry. This isn't the last time we're doing this. And it's certainly not the exhaustive demonstration of it.

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

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Absolutely. I won't go into great detail now. Cause as you say, we'll come back to this next week.

But I guess for new students, the key one, which you'll find on the right-hand side of the module website, is the welcome forum. That should open on Saturday for a lot of the new modules. And that's a great place to go, because you can ask questions of the module team. You can say hello to other students. You can find yourself a study buddy, someone perhaps studying the module near to you.

And it's a great place to get that sense of excitement and keep it going, but also to realise that there's lots of other students out there who are feeling just as nervous as you are. So I would recommend that new students in particular go to the welcome forum.

And of course, students who are not new but are perhaps doing their second or third module, again, the welcome forum is a great place to start just to find your feet on any new module that you're doing. When you get into your studies, you will then migrate from the welcome forum, which closes usually about two weeks into the module, so you go on to the cluster group forums.

The names aren't great, I must admit, in terms of what we call them, or your tutor group forums. And that's really where your studying takes place in these cluster group forums.

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

HJ: Well, we're getting lots of great questions through, which we want, about anything and everything. So just ask us. I think Sophie's got a fantastic question that you may be able to help us with now.

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

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

So yes is the answer to that.

KAREN FOLEY: So you can take it on the train. And you can do anything with your module materials and have them to hand at all time. Although, being on holiday and looking forward to that is very, very admirable.

Let's say what you're all excited about. We asked you to list three things that you are most excited about. We've got the results of that now. So let's have a look.

We've got learning new things and learning. Well, that's brilliant, because that is what you're definitely going to be doing. But it's interesting to see some of the other things here.

We've got things like new stationary, which I agree is incredibly important. Making friends is a really lovely one as well. In fact, I've made so many friends from the long time I started OU study. And you do make some amazing friends.

And hopefully on these sessions as well, you'll meet other people. Doing assignments. Changing my future. Doing something new. New qualifications. Getting my degree.

So a lot of things about being part of the OU, and actually the here and now, as well as an idea about the future and that end goal, which is obviously getting a degree and learning new things and having something to look forward to. Now those two things can seem quite difficult, the here and now and then the, I'm getting my degree.

And for a lot of students, that may be a six-year plan. And it can be quite difficult.

What would your advice be in terms of using the forums and using other students to sort of help manage that?

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Yeah. I think you have to be careful, because the forums can be very supportive. But they can also scare you as well and make you anxious in the sense that you might get a student on there who for a very good reason has decided to go ahead with the module, because perhaps they're going on holiday, or they know something's coming up at work.

So they'll say, oh, I've already done my first assignment. And I'm now on week six. And to another student, that's like, oh, my goodness me. I'm not anywhere near that.

So you have to be careful. Use them as a source of support. But don't feel that you have to do everything that everybody else is doing, because it can make you very anxious and actually make the problem worse. And it can also be a terrible distraction.

You can also think, I've gone on the forum. And then I'm studying. Well, yes, to a point. But at some point you also have to sit down and read the books and do the activities.

I would say one person we haven't really mentioned yet is a tutor, of course. So if you're talking to students on the forum, and someone says something. And you're perhaps a bit unsure about it, speak to your tutor. Because they really are there as a source of support. So any kind of anxieties they can help to allay.

KAREN FOLEY: So what might students expect? Because a lot of students won't have been allocated a tutor right now. And there's a massive process going on where the students and the tutors are all being matched up at the moment. So what if the module websites will open, it might take a little bit of time for the students to actually get their tutor.

What should they be expecting right now in the here and now? So they're going to get access to the module websites very soon. They'll be on Saturday.

And then they're going to get their tutor a bit later. Tell us about that process in the next week.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: It can be a very uncertain time, because you're wanting to start. But you're not quite there yet. The modules don't start usually till the beginning of October.

That's why we have the welcome forum. That helps to fill that gap. So if you've got any questions before you get your tutor, before you know when all your tutorials and all the learning events are taking place. You can ask questions of the module team. And they'll hope to answer them and help to kind of keep your enthusiasm going and to allay those concerns.

The other thing to be careful of is don't think I have to sit down and read all my book now. Yeah By all means, have a flick through it. As I said, use the time wisely at the start before the module actually starts to look at the module websites, look at Student Home. Click on these links and see what happens.

But do so in a way that's kind of helpful to you. And don't feel that, oh, well, I didn't look at that. And now there's all this. And there's all these on study skills. And oh, what do I do?

When you start to panic like that, take a deep breath, switch it off. And think about something else. And remember that step by step progress. It sounds very corny. But it really is a journey. And it's one step at a time.

KAREN FOLEY: And the nice thing is it's nicely planned. So week one starts very nice and gently before you ramp it all up to week 25. Can you just tell us briefly about some of the resources. And we have Helen from the library who's going to be talking about managing digital presence.

But this is the student home view again. So we've gone out of the module website. Some of the services we can see on the left-hand side here are really important. And they might be a place that students might want to have a little nosy around now. Tell us about them.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Again, use with caution, because you don't have to use everything, or do everything now. But there are some really important ones.

The computing guide is probably very weighty to kind of work through. But I would certainly plug the computing help desk. It's absolutely essential. And they are absolutely great. If you

don't know anything about computers and you don't really know what to do first, just give them a ring, because they're really great at solving problems.

My mum is actually 80 this year. And she did an OU degree in her 70s. And I think she had them on speed dial.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh bless. And they're open really sensible hours, aren't they?

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Absolutely.

KAREN FOLEY: Till like 8:00 or 9:00 at night.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: And she'd ring up and say, my internet's gone. You know. And I said, well, I'm sure it hasn't.

But you know, those kind of problems they're really good at talking you through and helping with that. So if you've got kind of IT anxiety, which many of us has, then the OU computing help desk is absolutely key.

Library services are great. Don't feel that you've got to use journal articles and books right at the start of your studies, because everything you need to pass your module comes to you either in the box in the post or via your module website. But the library is really good for kind of little bit-sized study skills, training courses. They also do some great online training courses to help you with the online tutorials and things like that.

So there are things there that are useful in the library, which I'm sure the librarians will talk about later on too.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. They absolutely will.

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

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Excellent. And there's also the careers advisory service and services for Disabled students. Now some of these we've got a freshers event on right at the end of September. And we'll be hearing a lot more from the Disabled Students group and the careers advice service joining them. But do let us know any questions that relate to any of that in the meantime.

So those are the most important things then, about the student home and the module website, Georgina.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Yeah. I think so.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. Thank you. Well, thank you so much for joining me today and for explaining all of this. I think it's really good just so that people can see exactly what's there. Click on the links when it arrives. And then next week you can come back and we can go

through some of the things like how to access online tutorials, how to go on a forum, how it's appropriate to post on forums, et cetera. And go through that in a lot more detail. That's been fantastic.

GEORGINA BLAKELEY: Yeah. Of course I will.

KAREN FOLEY: All right. Well, thank you very much. And we'll see you next week.

OK. Sophie and HJ, how's it all going there?

HJ: It's been brilliant.

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

KAREN FOLEY: Have you now?

SOPHIE: We've got a bearded dragon.

KAREN FOLEY: A bearded dragon?

SOPHIE: It's been put onto Twitter. Yes.

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

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

SOPHIE: Charlotte's bearded dragon, as well.

HJ: Yeah. I wonder if that sits on her keyboard while she's trying to do work. But we've also got study packages coming and selfies. And someone in their pyjamas watching us.

That's nice. That's the best way. I think I spent half of my OU stuff in my pyjamas. Yeah. We won't talk about that. But the chat's going so fast.

KAREN FOLEY: No.

HJ: The chat's going so fast. If you like us and struggle to keep up, there's a little pin on the top right you can press. And then you can manually scroll through.

But because it's so fast, if we miss anything, e-mail us studenthub@open.ac.uk. Or our Twitter @studenthublive. And we will get your questions answered.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. So that's good. Thank you for sending all those in. We'll get those printed off and put up on the board. And we're going to keep doing that over the next four weeks as well.

So HJ and Sophie, how are you going to keep your end of the bargain and send these posters and the various bits out to people then?

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

SOPHIE: No. We have got plenty.

HJ: If you give us your address in the emails, or direct message your address on Twitter. Don't put your address as well on any Twitter messages. Then we'll get those to you. But we love seeing them. So just keep sending us stuff.

And actually, Jessica had a great study tip. She says she gets a wall planner. And she writes different hints and tips on it at different times of the year when it's applicable.

So when it's exam time, she's going to write to exam tips on there. Maybe when she's starting off, she'll write some of the tips that we've got on there. So I really like that. And I'm gonna put Jessica's tip - I'm going to put it on our wall. There we go.

I really like that tip. So keep them coming.

KAREN FOLEY: Thank you, Jessica, for that. And thank you everybody else for your tips, I've heard there's a problem with our printer at the moment. So we can't get anything up on the desk. But thank you so much for sending all those in. And we do love to do that. And we'll certainly have them up and ready for next week, if not before.

But don't put your details on the Twitter feed. Do e-mail them to us or instant message us with them instead.

[MUSIC PLAYING]