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KAREN FOLEY: Hello, and welcome back to our Student Hub Live Open Day. Well, there's been a lot of chat. A lot of new people joining the OU. Welcome to our campus. Welcome to our session. I hope that you're having a good time talking to people and answering questions, etc. We've got a jam packed programme over the next few hours for you. Come and leave as you wish. Enjoy what you can do, but please do ask us any questions if you've got them. And also for our students who've already been studying with the OU, thank you so much for coming along and sharing your advice with our new students. Please do keep chatting in the chat boxes there. We also have our hashtag, which is #StudentHubLive17.

Sophie, how's it all going?

SOPHIE: Very good. Nice and busy. There's lots of people in today. So if we do miss anything, please do drop us an email-- studenthub@open.ac.uk. Also if you happen to be on campus today, we'd quite like to have some Student Hub Live selfies I think. So if you can come down, we're on the Mulberry lawn. Come and have a selfie with our little clapper board and we'll pop you on Twitter and you'll get to meet everyone.

KAREN FOLEY: Immediate fame and fortune. Right. We've been talking with Georgina and Matt about what you get when you start studying, and sort of a little bit about how that experience might pan out when you start in September. Some of you may have already started, etc. But this time, we're going to talk about space. Not space as in planetary sciences, we do that at other sessions. Here we're going to be talking about the physical space-- so what it's like going to tutorials. How you carve out your study space. How you reach out for support. And I'm joined by George Gallagher, who is our Champion for Nations. It makes it sound very athletic.

[LAUGHTER]

And Evaghn, who has been an MBA student and has been at some Student Hub Live events before. So we thought we'd start talking about what we do. Now, we're on campus, as you know. A lot of people won't ever come to campus. You can if you want to, but most of the time you'll be studying at home in your environment. So George, can you tell us where are the campuses, and what happens in the various nations? Because we're a four nations university.

In fact, an international university as well. But how sort of might students interact physically with the OU?

GEORGE

GALLAGHAN:

Well there are national offices in the four nations of the UK. So there's one here in Milton Keynes. There's one in Edinburgh, Belfast, and Cardiff. Now these are where many of the support staff live and work, and some academics. But in terms of thinking or conceptualising the Open University, I think what students need to imagine is that we book physical tutorial space throughout the length and the breadth of the United Kingdom. So from the Orkney Isles in the north, right down into the southeast of England, there is physical tutorial space booked by the Open University.

So when students are thinking about what university are they a part of, there are Open University physical buildings, but also we rent out physical tutorial space in local colleges and local universities and community centres all over the United Kingdom. So they may come across the Open University when they go into one of our badged buildings, but also when they go to face-to-face classes. They will see the Open University.

KAREN FOLEY:

So it's probably more likely for the majority that it would be at a tutorial, isn't it? That they would sort of come into contact with their tutor and other OU students at one of these venues.

GEORGE

GALLAGHAN:

Yes that's right. I mean, if you are new to the Open University and say you've begun at level one, you might expect a physical face-to-face tutorial every month. As you progress through your studies, these tutorials are less frequent, so maybe once every six weeks. But every month you will have an opportunity to meet with your tutor and meet with your fellow students. And I'm not sure if Matt and Georgina mentioned it, but as one of the Open University academics who also tutors level one economics, I would strongly encourage students to participate and attend these tutorials.

Your university, the Open University, it puts a lot of resources into these. And what really brings them alive is the Open University students. Because what differentiates Open University students learning-- one is that they're tremendously well motivated. Two, because the average age at the OU probably is a little bit older than most universities, they bring with them an incredible depth and breadth of life experience. So if you're studying a social science subject like economics, which is my specialty, they bring all of this life experience to the class. So when you're talking about unemployment, inflation, the challenges life throws up, people can bring their own life to that and it gives a little bit flavour to some of the academic theory.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. I'm always so amazed at how much students know, especially when they're bringing things-- often students are in a career already, and it's incredible some of the sort of stuff that transpires.

Evaghn, did you go to tutorials when you were a student?

EVAGHN
DESOUZA: Yeah. Well, I still do. I still go to them. I think mine are probably less frequent than the level 1 ones, but there's so much to learn from them.

KAREN FOLEY: So what happens, then? How does-- did you not-- like I would be a bit nervous if I didn't know where one of these buildings was. Probably at another university, often, or a college somewhere. What happens?

EVAGHN
DESOUZA: So a lot of mine, I think all of the tutorials I've had have taken place at hotels. So what happens is you'll get an email to say your tutorials are now bookable. And the thing I like with the University is they give you an option of dates, so if you can't make one weekend, there's another few weekends you can make. Or there's online sessions you can make. And so I just check my calendar, find out which is the best one for me, which is closest for me. Book it in, and then just attend.

So you literally just turn up. You will probably have-- about 12 students come. And then we all meet each other. And for me, those are probably where the most powerful bits of learning are done, because everything that I'm doubtful of or I'm not sure of, I can check with someone else. And the comfort as well, as everyone else is in the same boat. So sometimes I feel like I'm a bit behind, and then you meet up with everyone else and they're all facing the same challenges that you are. And your tutor is there to support you through that as well. So I think it's definitely something that students should attend as much as they can.

GEORGE
GALLAGHAN: Karen, students make-- something else that's very, very practical for attending a class. The tutor will go along with an academic plan. They usually will ask the students if there's anything particularly challenging or troubling them that they can go over. But they may also cover what is in the tutor marked assignments. So when, you know, usually-- not always, but usually-- the face-to-face classes and online classes are scheduled to be one or two weeks prior to an assignment date. So you're there to learn, but part of that learning is actually handing in assignments. So it's really practically worthwhile for the assignment if you go along to the class. But it is almost certain that your tutor will be teaching elements of that during the tutorial.

KAREN FOLEY: Now, we're talking about physical tutorials. And later we're going to talk about another very important way of having tutorials, which are online rooms-- our new tutorial system. So you know, this is just the sort of physical side of things. So don't worry if you can't get to a tutorial or if you've got a disability that prevents you from being able to go to a tutorial. We will be covering that a little bit later.

So we're talking about being prepared and that some other students may be bit behind. And this is quite a nice supportive environment. And like you say, Evaghn, one of the key things is talking to students and sharing experiences that have the deepest sort of sense of learning. And also George, that you might be coming up with stuff that could help you tackle your TMA-- your tutor marked assignment.

I also wanted to ask your advice about space. Because Georgina and Matt were talking about physically carving out space in the home and saying, you know, I'm studying now. I'm a student. How do you communicate this to your friends, family, etc, that what you're doing is going to be important and will probably require some relatively consistent time? How do you recommend people do it?

GEORGE GALLAGHAN: Could I take a tiny step back. And if you conceptualise the notion of space, I think, perhaps before physical space what students need to do is get a little bit mental space. So they need to have in their own study calendar, their own to do list during the week, to carve out, let's just say, for example, three two hour study periods. Now that could be between 6:00 and 8:00 in the morning, 8:00 and 10:00 at night, whenever it is. Put that in their diary, treat that as a really important business appointment. So that's the mental space. That will be my Open University study space.

The next question is, where am I going to do that study? Now ideally, the ideal situation, would be of a very quiet room where no one is going to disturb you. So I think students should aim for that ideal. But the reality of people's lives often is they don't have a separate quiet study. And they might have a back bedroom, they might have a kitchen table. So try and get the best-- the quietest, the least disturbance.

And I think I did hear Matt and Georgina talk about almost a kind of study family. So if you can bring-- you know, if you are living in a household or a flat share, to try and say to the people you're sharing that household with, look, on Monday between 7:00 and 9:00 at night, I'm going to be doing Open University studies. And hopefully this will benefit us all, so can I get a little bit

of peace and quiet for those two hours? So carve out the mental space. Make sure that is there. And then try and identify a physical space that you can do some kind of quiet deep thinking in.

KAREN FOLEY: That's really important. And I guess it's having that confidence to say, this matters to me. This is my space. It is a priority. It's not just something that's always going to be second. How did you deal with that?

**EVAGHN
DESOUZA:** So I think that's a good idea. For me it depends what I'm doing. So if I'm reading, I don't mind being at home. Maybe in my room or in the conservatory. But I also live at home with my parents and sister. On weekends they're doing whatever they're doing. So to help me out with that, I actually come into work. So I'll come in-- I'll either stay late in the evenings or come in on a Saturday. And for me that helps me, because whenever I come into work my mind is set for work. So if I'm walking in here to study, it still feels like I'm coming in to do work. And I feel like that is where I get the most out of it. So if I'm doing tutor marked assignment or there's something I need to read and really understand, I'll do it here. But otherwise if I'm just doing general reading, general activities, I can do them at home.

KAREN FOLEY: And I guess having a lunch break as well can sort of be a nice time. Because even if you're working, it's a different thing from what you're doing in your day-to-day. I mean, I used to take my lunch break and then I'd do things. And I know I just have an hour. I'm just going to blitz it. And I'd still feel refreshed because I was doing a completely different task. So even though I was sitting there with the sandwich doing some reading or this, that, and the other, it allowed me that sort of space to have something when I was focused.

**EVAGHN
DESOUZA:** Yeah. I think it's also about training. So like if you haven't studied before and you need to learn start to study with practise, that becomes a habit. Whereas say, for example, if you take every Monday lunchtime where you study, give it a few weeks and you'll be finding doing that it might be hard at the start, but when you get into it, it just becomes normal.

**GEORGE
GALLAGHAN:** I also think, Karen, you can separate different types of study, much as people can separate different types of work. And if we could speak about shallow study and deep study. The shallow study could be just flicking through, checking the highlighted notes. Maybe checking your emails. I think you can do that on the train, on the bus. But if we can move on to what you could think of as a deep study, now this would be the kind of study you need to do when you're doing your assignments. I think for that, you do need quality time. So that's where you need

your hour to two hours of uninterrupted space. So students can steal a half hour, and indeed many students will download their physical book on a PDF, read it on their Kindle on the way to work. So it's perfectly legitimate and it should be encouraged, but I think we also need to have that kind of gold standard of study. The deep study.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. Absolutely. And this was something Georgina and Matt were also talking about earlier is sometimes watch a video or do some of those things that don't require things late at night because you're keeping going. Instead of thinking it's all got to be perfect. I've got to have my two hours or nothing. It's about getting that time and finding those bite sized areas that you can focus.

GEORGE I couldn't agree more.

GALLAGHAN:

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. Brilliant. Thank you so much, George and Evaghn. As usual, we're out of time and there's so much more I'd like to cover.

Sophie, I'd just like to see- have anybody got any tips that we need to bring into the session right now?

SOPHIE: There's quite a lot going on, actually. So we've got a couple of people who are suggesting places to go to study-- I used to use coffee shops. I'd take a certain amount of money with me and sit and have a coffee. That was my treat. So there's loads of things going on. We've got a couple of people starting at AA100 as well, which is nice. People who are getting impatient already and wanting to know their tutorials for September. So unfortunately, you've got to wait a little bit longer for those, but they'll be out soon.

Any other questions, do let us know, especially for the next session.

KAREN FOLEY: Thank you, Sophie. Right. Sinead, you've never been to the OU campus. We're going to be showing you around a little bit today. So let's take a look a little bit later. But before we do that, we've got a video with Liz Marr. Now, the Open University is open to people, places, methods, and ideas. Anybody can study here. And I spoke to Liz Marr, who is big into access, which is all about the fact that anybody can start a modular at any level. And also anyone can study even a level one module. So this is what she had to say about access and the Open University's openness. See you in a minute.

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