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KAREN FOLEY: Hello, and welcome back to the Student Hub Live. Well, it's the 31st of July. It's our results and progression special. Welcome to all the new people who've been popping in today. We've been having a really, really good morning so far covering lots and lots of essential things that you need to know.

What a great session with Simon Balin on online learning beforehand. We've looked at study intensity. We've looked at the whole idea of what your results actually mean with Matt and Georgina. And we've been starting now to look through the levels of your study.

So this session is looking at level 1 to 2. So when you've done the two 120 points of level 1 credit, and you're starting to get to level 2. Things ramp up, and I think a lot of you out there are in this situation. So let us know what you're studying. And you can see the widgets that are in the Watch and Engage box. Just select the one that applies to you. So we'd like to know which level you're studying-- level 1, 2, 3, or post-graduate.

And which subject are you studying? Now, this is a trick question. You can put up to three things in there, but you might only be studying one subject. In which case, you need to put a full stop in the other boxes, or your results won't submit.

So let us know what you're doing. It might be a range of things, but it would be great to hear from you.

Poor old HJ's been doing a sterling job, and we've been feeding him substantial amounts of sugary snacks so that he can keep an eye on the chat. But it's great to have all of your feedback, and your comments, and your support for each other. That's what makes the Student Hub Live events so special to us as your support for each other and ideas and tips that we'd like to steal and share more widely.

So thank, HJ, for that. How's everything going? Have you replenished your supplies?

HJ: I have, yes. I'm still learning at minus 3, which is good. And I've had lots of sugary stuff, which I think is about that time anyway. I think lots of people are eating cake as well. This seems to be a staple for OU students' lunch. I didn't think-- it's like if we had an official lunch, this would be it.

I'm not sure if that's any good, but--

KAREN FOLEY: It's no good, HJ. Because I've actually-- and I have had complaints from people saying that we shouldn't talk about sugary snacks and biscuits quite as much as we do because there are healthy food alternatives available. And actually, I'm very healthy, I agree with a lot of this sort of stuff.

But anyway, eating-- I mean, it's one o'clock. Eat. You need to eat, especially if you've been here with us for a bit. It.

OK. So Sue and Nick, welcome to our mad world here that is the Student Hub Live. Now, you've got a very difficult task because we're going to look at some of the key developmental skills that are evident from level 1 to 2. And things get a lot more harder. Lots of stuff is happening here. It's getting a lot more exciting, and it matters more.

So let's look at the main differences then between level 1 or 2. So there's the starting to specialise. OK. So that that really matters to a lot of students. Often like Sue and I were saying beforehand, it's about getting more to grips with the content that you really want to start studying. But also, you're perhaps looking at different terms, different theories, and different ideas that are beginning to get a little bit more complex. So the subject matter is getting a lot more complicated.

So, Nick, what are some of the pros then of this whole idea of specialism for students? What could people look forward to about getting what they actually want to study?

NICK CHATTERTON: So as you say, basically the main thing would be hopefully they're choosing something that they're more interested in. Because obviously, a lot of level 1 subjects have been quite general, which is great in terms of developing study skills and a breadth of subject knowledge. But a level 2, for most students they're choosing something that they're probably more actively interested in. Which, of course, can be a great boost in terms of their enthusiasm for the subject.

But as you've already warned, the level of understanding is greater. So, therefore, to a certain extent, they're going to have to work in a different way. Maybe make sure that they have the exact right of preparation from level 1 so they know all the basics before they move on to level 2. So it's very important they're prepared well because all that first year, level 1 stuff will be required in level 2 as well.

KAREN FOLEY: So it's good to have the foundations. But what I've often noticed accompanies this shift is a decrease in grade. So students at level 1 may have expected a certain grade. That may get a little bit more complex as they're moving to the second part of level 1-- so the level 1 to 2 that we're-- year 1 to 2 that we're talking about. But at level 2, things are arguably a lot more challenging, and sometimes that can mean that there is a decrease in grade.

Now, Georgina, and Matt, and I were talking this morning about setting expectations in terms of study and thinking about what you wanted to achieve-- and also thinking about the difference between grade levels in terms of the skills that were being looked for within those areas. What advice could you give to students about maybe being mindful of what they were hoping to achieve so that they could manage their expectations as they're moving into a more complex subject, either to get something more on track with what they're actually going to get, or to find more time or more, I guess, specific things to study so that they can get the grades they want to?

SUE PAWLEY: I think you do have to be realistic about what you can achieve. I think so many people in different situations, when they're studying-- and you'll have, I don't-- single mothers studying that have very little time. And you'll have retired people that are doing it actually more for just pure interest, and so they'll have more time to study, and reflect, and to work. And so maybe they'll be able to work harder or just have more interest and get better.

So I think you need to look at yourself and go, what can I realistically achieve? What do I want to do? What do I need to do? And actually just look at yourself. You can't really look and base yourself on other people. You've got to look at just what you want to do.

And if you are worried that you're not going to achieve what you want to achieve, then talk to your student centre. Talk to the student teams, and see what advice they can give about how you can actually achieve more. Again, talk to your tutor. Find out exactly what it is at that level that you need to give to feedback.

So I think a lot of things change between level 1 and 2. At level 1, certainly in maths-- sorry. See, I am talking about maths.

KAREN FOLEY: And I want to talk about maths banned.

[LAUGHTER]

SUE PAWLEY: I always want to talk about maths.

KAREN FOLEY: He'll go on about chemistry then yeah?

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

SUE PAWLEY: Certainly at maths, we kind of-- you get to be a little bit fudgy with the language at level 1. But at level 2, there's certain specifics you're looking for. And when you ask a student a question, you're looking for those key points to be mentioned. And at level 1, maybe you could get away with it, and you'd still get full marks. At level 2, you won't necessarily because it's just getting more technical.

KAREN FOLEY: So is this the same in chemistry, then, where you're expected to have a sort of fluidity with some of the language, being able to use words in the right context?

**NICK
CHATTERTON:** Well, I mean, words and ideas, I think-- so basically-- and I think it's probably fairly similar to maths, unfortunately, in this regard. So there's a foundations that you build upon, and you use those foundations throughout your study of the subject. And there are other subjects like that. Whereas at this bit of school, there'll be a little bit more of this area is a level 2 area. And it's quite different to a level 1 area.

But in subjects like maths, and maybe physics and chemistry, there are some foundations which you build upon throughout your studies. But certainly, in terms of studying it, it will be-- the ideas may be slightly more advanced. They may even be slightly more mathematical. But that is because you're dealing with it in, I guess, a more detailed and a more complete way.

And that's probably the case for all subjects. You're looking at them in a more complete way. You introduce the ideas in level 1, and then you look at them in a more complete way as you move through the levels.

KAREN FOLEY: Now, there are other things that are different as well. So in addition to the assessment, which tends to be a little bit more complex and rigorous, you might be starting to encounter exams for the first time, depending on what you're doing. There's also differences in the levels of support and contact the students could have. I guess because a lot of this is moving towards independent study, so things are meant to get harder for that reason.

**NICK
CHATTERTON:** Yeah, completely. I mean, I think certainly in the science subjects, we finish with this project model in level 3, which is very much an independent-- I'm a tutor on that module-- which is

very much an independent project. So they are working individually. They choose their own area. We as tutors just provide the supports that guide them in the process of writing the review.

And you're working towards that, I think, certainly in the science area. You're working towards that independence, looking slightly beyond the study materials to a greater understanding and not taking things necessary quite so much at face value.

SUE PAWLEY: Yeah. I think level 2 is certainly-- level 1, the books are very thorough. They will tell you everything you need to know, and very little that you'll be tested on will not be covered in the books. Whereas at level 2, it's the next step up. We're urging you towards that brilliant thing at the end of being that independent learner. To actually go, I want to know something. What do I need to do to find it out? What do I do? So

With the second-- level 2, which is that transition period-- we're going from that we're going to tell you everything to actually, you need to think about things a little bit more. You might need to do a little bit more research. You might need to use the library. You might need to go and look at something else. We're not going to give you all the answers this time. You're going to have to do a little bit more on your own. And then like Nick said, onto the third level, and true independent study actually being given a free reign.

KAREN FOLEY: Now, we asked everybody what level they were studying. And we have 43% of students who are studying level 2. Level 1 is 38%. But let's have a look at what subjects you're are studying so we can see. Sociology, business, psychology, history, work with children, early modern-- oh I can't see that quite so far away. Computing. Oh, there's some maths in there for you. Classical studies. Early modern Europe. Economics. Management. Lots and lots of very interesting subjects out there that people are studying.

Now, I wanted just to pick up on this idea of independent study, because I think it's a really, really important point. Often, there'll be optional activities for students to do. Often, they'll start to think, independent study. Right, I'm off. I'm going to the library. I'm going to go and research a lot of this.

And you've also said that sometimes there are gaps. So it might be that there's a sort of link that students might need to make, as opposed to going off and doing primary research. So this idea of independent study and about thinking a little bit more critically about some of the content that's there-- what would you say to students is important in terms of being mindful of

what they've got, and what should be in their assessment, ultimately?

SUE PAWLEY: I think-- again, we're on a learning journey. So we need to talk to tutor, I think, again. It's a subject I will keep on coming back to and back to. With every module, it's slightly different as to what you need to do, and what your learning expectations are, and what you're going to gain from that module. And your tutor is the person that knows where that module sits in the degree and where they need to go.

So I think with different subjects, talk to your tutor. The tutor will give you the guidelines. So if there is something that they need you to go and look at, then they'll probably often give you a little pointers to where to go, so you're not just swimming in a sea of the internet going, I don't know where to start looking-- or even over-looking and doing too much. That's a problem as well.

KAREN FOLEY: So the independent study is quite clearly signposted, then, a lot of the time. But it's these links that can be a little bit more problematic, often, for students. Because sometimes, they think, this is level 2. It's a lot more complex. And actually, what may be required is that they start to think about those links and make sense of them.

How is your experience of that, Nick?

NICK CHATTERTON: So, I think you're right. I think there is a danger of being given this free reign of the internet and just going, I'm going to find out lots of things to answer this question. But I think certain-- unless otherwise guided, I think you are-- basically, the study materials will be certainly at level 2-- still your number one thing to look out first. And then use those as a sort of springboard to look at things, if required, to extend your understanding from the internet. But I really wouldn't-- I think as Sue's already said, using your tutor's advice, and obviously any guidance given on any assessment.

If you're asked to go and look at something using the internet, there'll sure be guidance about the number of words you're going to be writing, the type of resource you should look at. So you never-- I would imagine you're rarely given free reign to go and just Google away. You're always given some sort of structure to work with.

KAREN FOLEY: But it is difficult sometimes, I think, especially when you start getting very interested in things. So this leads to my next question, which is about how students can best prepare, then, for level 2 studies.

Now, we've already talked throughout the day about sometimes it's very important to have a break. Sometimes is important to take this time to brush up. And it's really important to be mindful of what works for you as a student. But broadly speaking, if students were reasonably fluent in terms of their subject content at level 1, what sorts of things might the more conscientious ones want to do over the summer to start preparing for level 2?

SUE PAWLEY: I think, again, they can go and look at the study materials that are available. Again-- so we keep on repeating ourselves.

KAREN FOLEY: But people are logging in and out all day, so that's absolutely fine.

SUE PAWLEY: That's fine. Yeah. So-- but yeah. Go and look for the materials for the module that are available. Go and look at the Open Source websites. Go and look at the Open Learn. See what there is there. Look at the different languages.

I think one thing we can't stress enough is there will be a difference-- there will be a marked difference between level 1 and level 2 with the expectations of how a student produces their work. We are trying to just progress students throughout the whole degree, from a beginner up to actually maturing. And so this level 2 stuff will just be a little step up, and the work will be phrased in slightly different way.

It won't be so complete. And it may use terms that they don't explain that you need to go and look up. So again, you can get your notepad and write down the terms you don't understand. And relook, and focus, and just think about things, really. Just work. Work hard, I think.

KAREN FOLEY: And of course, come to our boot camps, which are going to start in September, where we'll be giving you some very practical advice right up to the module start.

But for the summer, then, we've mentioned various Open Learn materials. But the qualifications websites can be a really nice portal for students. And STEM, in fact, do do some boot camps and various things where there is a more complex requirement. So how might students, then, make the most from their qualification websites?

SUE PAWLEY: Well, as Sue's mentioned, certainly in the science we've got a few boot camps or what we call "get ready fors", which is complementary to the "are you ready fors", which are, of course, a great thing the students look at which are available before the start to the module to get some practise, to make sure they know the key things from their earlier modules to feed through to

the level 2.

So in terms of these qualification websites, we have links to things about careers as well as just educational help. And in our boot camp type things, which I know little about, we have lots and lots of questions and answers basically, just to give the students a bit more confidence so that they are-- they have got this fluency that I've mentioned already.

OK. So it's quite important to give yourself an opportunity to make sure that you do understand what we-- what, essentially, people will expect them to understand a little bit in level 2.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. Now, we've talked about content, but there are also the skills. And these are an important thing because, again, when you're trying to make conceptual links between things and thinking a little bit more critically, doing a bit more independent study, there are different cognitive skills that are being assessed. Now, these are quite hard for students to get to grips with often because, well, they're hard to explain as well, aren't they-- be a bit more critical, make links, et cetera. So, ah!

But a lot of this is about making space. And Simon gave a really good session earlier about online learning and thinking laterally, using mind maps, thinking of ways of making connections, of identifying the things that were really important, that were trying to be delivered by the module team in terms of the content for the overall module. But what would your experience be in terms of these skills, then, that students need to start thinking about? And is there anything that they could do in their spare time to maybe shift some of those things from the descriptive to the slightly more valuative?

SUE PAWLEY: They can have at the study skills website, which is a really good place to start, because the study skills website does actually look at further studies, as well. So they have got their basic study skills, but then they can look at ways that you can actually reflect on the study skills you've got and actually move forward to make better note-taking, or more analytical thinking, and so actually looking at those more progressive skills that we're trying to teach at level two.

KAREN FOLEY: Now, there were things here that you've listed, like critical reading techniques, considering your own learning style. I mean, a lot of these things sound difficult and complex to do on your own, but they can be taught. I mean, there are frameworks, there are ideas around having a scaffold to look at something more critically. But equally, it's time. So if there's one skill you think that might sort of really benefit students in this break, what would it be?

SUE PAWLEY: What do you think?

NICK
CHATTERTON: Well, I guess it depends on the subject, on the student, a little bit. But I think I'm sure that that sort of ability to almost even just-- because I think the amount of material is probably going to be slightly greater at level two, so even speed reading, or ability to digest information, that would be useful-- [INAUDIBLE] text, and picking out the key points. I mean, these are the kind of things that I think I'd probably use this time to do. You can just work on that sort of stuff, that sort of generic scale, which will help you digest the material more.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

NICK
CHATTERTON: That's my view, anyway.

KAREN FOLEY: I mean, a lot of students will have techniques that they use, but there are also lots of different techniques. And sometimes, when I've been doing tutorials, I say, why don't you try this? Why don't you try that? And people will go, well, yeah, but I really like what I'm doing, actually. And I like to keep doing it. Would you say, though, it's a good idea to practise some of those things? And has there been a time in your academic careers that you've maybe tried a new technique that's actually shifted something in your ability to do something quicker or more effectively?

SUE PAWLEY: I think one of the things that I tend to look at a lot is learning styles, because different people learn different ways. But equally, you learn different things different ways.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

SUE PAWLEY: Sometimes, it's really good to, I don't know, listen to a recording of something and just listen to it. Other time, reading something helps. And so I think I would certainly use that time to actually explore different learning styles.

I think the one that worked for me is good. But actually, in this time when I'm not studying anything critical, I could actually see if I could improve my learning technique and see if a different style works for me that I've maybe not tried before. Think a little bit outside the box. And there are loads of ideas on the skills website.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

NICK Real quick, just to add to what Sue said there, really, you obviously have a learning technique,

CHATTERTON: which you use, but it could be there could be alternatives that are better. So as you say, just looking for alternatives to see whether they do suit you, because you end up picking up a way of doing things, which isn't necessarily the best, it's just the one that you've kind of organically developed. And it's an opportunity to maybe, as you say, look at alternative ways of doing things.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. HJ, do you remember that time when you had an assignment? And I'm the queen of, like, deadlines [LAUGHING] and crummy things. And whereas, H.J. likes to plan his work. And so I told him some of my techniques about doing things very quickly and trying to get the gist of things.

HJ: Yes. I think that was just me being in a big panic. But I think, yes. And I do really appreciate you listening to me.

[LAUGHTER]

But I think one of the good things, actually, about having a short deadline is that you realise what's important. And just by identifying what's important and what's really big that you've got to do first, I think that's what led me, actually, to get it done in a very short space of time.

But I think we do have-- I have been-- as an aside-- chatting to Bruce. And Bruce says, decreasing grades when I go up a level. And I think everyone has it. But you do sort of drop slightly, but then you build yourself back up as you get used to studying at level 2 and kind of learn what's expected of you.

And at level 1, you've got the big chunks of making sure you know the materials and are sort of able to interpret it and answer the question. And then, when you go up to level 2, they might expect some more independent work. And that's added onto you. And then, when it's level 3, it's all the independent research. So I think, yeah, something that happens to all of us.

And I think Bruce [INAUDIBLE] really enjoys listening to other people's experiences, because it makes him feel a bit better about going to step up as well. But I think [? Piah ?] as well has a question about where you might go to find useful reading ahead of courses. to sort of prepare and maybe get a bit more understanding beforehand in a new area of study, if you have any advice on that?

SUE PAWLEY: Yeah. Each of the subject websites generally have some ideas as to what you're actually going to study. So actually, the module listing will tell you what you're going to study. And so you

could look at some of the topics on that. I mean, you can look through the internet and see if there are various topics. But I think a good place to do is to maybe to talk to some students who have studied it already, and they could give you some pointers at to what to do.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, absolutely. And lot's of openlearn courses being mentioned in the chat. And people are already chomping at the bit to get on with their studies, which is great.

I do think, though, that picking up on Bruce's point, there is this idea that, whilst there is a jump, it's not a massive jump. You're not, all of a sudden, going to be expected to suddenly start being this amazing, profound critical thinker. Things are staggered, and they are weighted. And I think it's very important for students to get the assessment, get the weighting sorted, and start to think about those things.

And you know, it strikes me, when I'm teaching at level 2, that there is still some aspect of description often. It's just understanding where the ratio lies then between, often, level 1 being largely descriptive, and level 2 being slightly descriptive. And what I find students tend to do is maybe miss out that description, because they're so focused on the other stuff that the very basic things can be overlooked.

So this is all really going to this whole idea of reading the assessment, reading the student notes, getting to grips with what you're trying to do. Any advice then for students? Because sometimes, again, depending on your subject, these can be a little bit slighter than maybe they were at level 1, as you're being handheld a bit less.

SUE PAWLEY: I think, hopefully, it is a seamless progression, and they won't actually notice the difference in notes and the change in style. And because as they learn more, they will just simply accept it. I think it's nice to move gently through. What would you-- sorry, the question?

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, no. That's fine. No. I was just saying that people have been talking about getting ready for study, et cetera. But this whole idea of this transition not being so much of a jump and using these tutor notes to get a sense of what you'll be expected to do. And there might still be some description there, so it's not this massive sort of hike.

SUE PAWLEY: It's not a massive hike at all. No. It should be seen as-- and I think a lot of the things that you study at level 1 you do just absorb. And you do start doing, without even thinking about it. So you probably will continue to use the skills that you have done at level 1.

And if not, again, talk to the tutors. Ask them how they feel. Ask them if what you're producing is the correct thing. Because sometimes, feedback on the continuous assessment, as detailed as they can give it, written down, actually a conversation it's what's really useful. And so you can call the tutors, and they will speak to you on the phone. And you can organise extra sessions if you want to. And just try and get a focus as to what you need, really.

KAREN FOLEY: We've been talking earlier about taking on board feedback from the previous year and thinking about some of the things you're doing, but also being mindful that you might be expected to do slightly different things. And just something struck me that, when you're sort of saying a piece of feedback, sometimes, it might be on an assignment you need to think more critically, you need to do more independent thinking. That might be one of 25 comments that you've got, but actually it's the most profound one in terms of improving the grade. So there's this idea of getting a sense of how things are marked and what matters.

NICK CHATTERTON: Yeah, definitely. I think, obviously, there's the role of the summary, hopefully, on the TMAs to pick out the main things. And that is definitely the case. I mean, as we just reemphasized as it's already been said, I'm pretty sure that the start of level 2 will be basically fairly general, fairly introductory. It gradually ramps. There's nothing to fear there.

But then, it is just picking up on those things and those comments there. OK, we wanted more explanation, rather than description, is the key thing. So explanation and description are quite different things. And if you're explaining the idea, you're not describing the idea. And I think these are important things that students eventually develop. But they do seem different at first.

KAREN FOLEY: Is there a value then in maybe feeding back on some of this as well? Because often, in particular at access, you'll get very nice clear descriptions of these. At level 2, it might be you might expect to know them. You might even think you do know them. But like you say, the difference between explaining and describing is quite substantial. So is there a sense of maybe students looking back over things that would help them identify some of these key terms?

NICK CHATTERTON: So in terms of the distinction between the two?

CHATTERTON:

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. Yeah. Because often, they're very well-explained early on. And some of the study skills at level 1 are brilliant. And you think, oh, you should really be doing this again. But often you think, I've done that, so I'm not going to go back and look over my previous year's modules.

But they can be helpful.

NICK
CHATTERTON: That's really good advice, actually, because a lot of that stuff will be very much more covered at level 1, level 2. And it'll be implied-- so we've talked a lot about content, but there are all those other things they need to reflect back on as well. Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. So again, because can't remember everything from level 1, can you? OK. Brilliant.

So the take-home point here is that this level 2 thing is quite different, but it is staggered. And it's just bridging between level 3, where you're doing a lot more independent thinking, and level one, where you're doing a lot of describing. And so it's somewhere in the middle. And I guess identifying what the priorities are at this point is really important, using your tutor for information, using your peers, and talking around subjects.

SUE PAWLEY: It's just a change of focus, that's all, just a subtle shift in focus, which most people will cover without even noting they're doing it. I think, certainly, as the content they're studying becomes more detailed and more directed, then they will gain that focus.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant. Well, thank you both, Sue and Nick, very much for coming along. We've had lots of people talking about how they can access information. So our next video we're going to show you is "Accessing Information From the Online Library." Hopefully, that will give you some steels and tips and addresses the final point that we were going to cover in our session.

Level two is brilliant. It's a really, really fantastic chance to explore the subject in a lot more depth that you're working toward. So do enjoy it.

We'll be back in a short minute to look at level 2 to 3 with Eleanor Betts. And we're going to have a particular emphasis there on some things that you can do over the summer to start thinking more critically. So even if you're still at level 2, this really will apply to you. Stay with us, and we'll see you in a few minutes after this brief idea about the library.

[MUSIC PLAYING]