

KAREN FOLEY: Welcome back to the Student Hub Live. We've been talking a lot about individuality throughout this programme in a number of different ways, about volunteering, about how you might do things differently, and about finding the right approach for you in your studies. In this next session, we're going to take a look at what type of learner you are.

And Mychelle's put a link in the chat for people. And we've got this fab quiz. So you can fill that out while we're talking, or save it for later. And if the chat is going quite quickly, remember that there's a pin button at the top right hand of the chat box. You can press that, and then the chat will hold so you can go and find any links that you may have missed.

OK, so I'm going to introduce you to my friend David Heley. Thank you for coming along. Now, you're an art tutor, but you're also a director for Day And Night Theatre Company. And you've been-- well, you've been with the OU since the 1970s. And we were just talking about remembering a lot of the materials that Ruth was talking about earlier. But you were a senior manager for the OU access programme. So why have you come today to talk about learning styles, and why is this important for students?

DAVID HELEY: You know, just before I came in, I had it all ready to go about learning styles. And I think learning styles are quite important, right? So we're going to talk about that. But I also think that, you know what, a degree level-- a student is a student, and the student's got to write essays, and they've got to pass exams, and they've got to do that. So actually, the learning style of writing and being able to construct an argument and so on is very important, right? So I think it's more about how the student understands that there are these different learning styles around, , and not so much about what type of learner they are, but what approach to take when, quite simply, they're taking notes and beginning to learn the subject that they're studying. So that's what we're going to talk about.

KAREN FOLEY: Fantastic.

KAREN FOLEY: And HJ was here because, originally, a week ago, I was going bring in a deck chair with instructions about how to put it up--

KAREN FOLEY: But then you heard about his power napping, and--

DAVID HELEY: Yeah, yeah.

[LAUGHTER]

And I was going to see whether HJ preferred reading from how to put up a deck chair, yeah, to me showing you how to do it, to you doing it and me pointing out what you should do. And in that way-- and you'll see, students will see, there's thousands of websites out there, and there's quizzes and things, which help you establish whether you're better with written instructions, whether you're better at being shown what to do, whether you're better, a bit like me, being thrown into the deep end and drowning for a while, and then finally managing to do it.

There's also a learning style called global, which I think I really am, which is about winging it, and--

[LAUGHTER]

--improvising, and being quite emotional about it, and bringing your personality to it. And that's what I'm kind of going to talk about today, about how I went from a very kind of very fixed, static, new-to-degree-studies learner right through to what I hope I am, just being more open to it. And I think anyone can do that.

I'm not saying I'm better than anyone else. But it's just the way I work. So I want to talk about that, if that's OK.

KAREN FOLEY: No, absolutely. It's a really important idea because I think so many people take these quizzes and then think, I'm in this category, right? I know what's good for this category, what's bad for that category. And these psychometric tests, they can be really helpful in some ways, but sometimes they can sort of pigeonhole you. And how interesting that you're talking about this historical context, because this idea that you sort of got a learning style, and come hell or high water, that staying with you forever until you finish studying or whatever, can sometimes not work for people, as well.

DAVID HELEY: Well, I think so. Actually we've got a session later about determining the kind of student you want to be, and being in control of it. Students need to take control of it. Yes, it's being imposed on them. There's a university. They've got all this material. They've got teachers who are more qualified than them.

But if you take ownership and be responsible for your own study, and actually clear the path through the jungle for yourself, tailor it to yourself, you're going to be far more successful.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, you see, you may say this, David, it's all well and good saying, well, everyone's got individual learning styles. But we know, we've got our study planners. We've been learning about them. We know we've got to tick them off. We know we've got to look at the module material, the books. So how do you work, then, with this idea of, I guess, exploiting your individual strengths when you've got this fixed program?

DAVID HELEY: I think, if I could to share what happened to me-- I was one of the original OU students. And all this wonderful material came through the door. And I opened it, and I sat there, and I couldn't write on it, because it was so beautiful. So my first thing was, I had notes. And basically, I copied out the whole of the book.

So I mean, there's the book, and then my notes-- so if anything, they were longer than the actual material.

HJ: I did the same thing when I started, as well, yes.

DAVID HELEY: It's just crazy. And in someone at a tutorial said, you know what, I just write in the margin. That's what it's for. And I know we're all online now, but I'm getting to a place-- well, not quite all online-- but so, the first thing I started to do was write on the books. And it was sacrilege at first. But I did it, wrote in the margin. And then I also started to underline with one of those yellow or blue markers. And, then I ended up underlining everything.

So what I finally realised was I was much better if I just took an idea or a word, like-- let's see, like someone just said in that Shakespeare clip, it's not the text. It's how the actor speaks the text. And I would say that. And it would open up, all these doors, all these avenues. And in fact, I did drama with the OU, and we went to Stratford. And we all were at the front. The tutor blocked out some seats for us. And we all had our books following the play, like this. And I knew the actors were watching us. It was so linear. We just couldn't let go of it.

This is what happened to me. I fell asleep, do you know. I was in the front row--

KAREN FOLEY: Power naps are really good. We've learned this, David.

DAVID HELEY: --and the late great Alan Rickman was onstage in *As You Like It*, "All the world's a stage" speech, right? And then he saw that I was-- and afterwards, we were walking up to The Dirty Duck for a drink in Stratford. And he was there. And he came walking towards me. And he said, you fell asleep during my play. And I went, yeah, I am really sorry. No, no, I'm joking.

Come in for a drink.

I had a drink. that chat with him for five minutes taught me more about how actors approach Shakespeare-- In other words, I was being global. I was being open to it. I could have easily said, no, no, no, you're Alan Rickman. I can't come and talk to you. Do you know what I mean?

So go to the theatre, but don't take the text. Just enjoy it and listen to it. So that was my kind of journey. I went from being very, very linear, very, very stark in taking all these notes, right through to being actually quite free about it, and taking what I felt I needed for myself.

KAREN FOLEY: So how did you develop some of this confidence, I guess, is the one thing that springs to mind?

DAVID HELEY: You know, there are some strategies out there. And there's a really good visual strategy that was taught to me. Again, he's a kind of guru in how to study. I'm sure you've come across him before, Tony Buzan, and how to study. Now he's the one who invents mind maps. So that's a really good technique, a mind map.

So if we took a banana, and I said to HJ, we're studying the history of bananas. You might want to taste it first. Or you might want to put the word banana, or draw a banana, on a map. And you start going out. You start going, it's sold in supermarkets. And from there, you go that, actually, it's a huge global commodity. And you connect it there to maybe poverty in Africa, or in the Caribbean, and how much money-- and then you start connecting to coffee and fair trade, to green politics, to-- I mean, it's a fantastic kind of tour. So I really recommend the mind map.

But here's the other thing. So if I-- I'm just going to rattle off five things on the table. So bowl of fruit, glass of water, a banana, flowers, and Lee. Say those back to me in order.

HJ: Oh, oh, I really--

DAVID HELEY: It's not that easy.

HJ: No, it's not.

DAVID HELEY: Is this OK? I'm going to teach you this name game.

HJ: OK. Yes.

DAVID HELEY: It's 1 to 10.

HJ: OK.

DAVID HELEY: 1 is run. 2 is shoe. 3 is tree. So what's 1, 2, and 3?

HJ: Run, shoe, and tree.

DAVID HELEY: Yeah. 4 is door. And 5 is hive. So we'll just stick with 5 for now. You can go up to 100, if you want. So run that past me again.

HJ: Run, shoe, tree, door, hive.

DAVID HELEY: OK. So 1, for you to remember, is a bowl of fruit. So I don't want you to remember a bowl of fruit. I want you to remember someone running with a bowl of fruit, because 1 is run.

HJ: OK

DAVID HELEY: OK. 2 is flowers, right? But it's not a shoe. So imagine someone with shoes on, great big shoes, smashing some flowers.

HJ: OK.

DAVID HELEY: OK. 3 is a glass of water, tree. Imagine a tree with all glasses of water hanging from the tree.

HJ: OK.

DAVID HELEY: Got it?

HJ: Yes.

DAVID HELEY: Yeah? 4 is table, yeah? 4 is door. So imagine L table is being used as this amazing door on a *Game of Thrones* castle or something. Yeah? And 5 is hive. And let's take this thing, a notepad--

KAREN FOLEY: --to do less, actually.

[LAUGHTER]

DAVID HELEY: And so, I don't know, imagine hive, imagine all the bees not in a hive, but in that notepad.

HJ: OK.

DAVID HELEY: OK, so give me the list back now.

HJ: So it's fruit, flowers, water, table, and the notebook. Is that right?

KAREN FOLEY: That's amazing!

DAVID HELEY: It's amazing. Six is-- by the way, viewers at home, do this at home.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. Are people getting this at home, Mychelle and Lee? I know everyone's been filling in their learning styles, and that's been brilliant, as well.

LEE: Absolutely. There's some people following along. We've actually been having a little mini debate on how we think HJ was going to do.

[LAUGHTER]

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, typical!

LEE: Unfortunately, HJ has kind of ruined the moment and got it all right. So--

HJ: Don't they have much hope in the first place?

MYCHELLE: I think one--

KAREN FOLEY: Tell them you won't go back unless they're on your side, HJ.

HJ: Yeah, that's true. I'll go on strike.

[LAUGHTER]

MYCHELLE: Yeah, we were having some talk about note-taking, and coming back to something that David said earlier, and about using colour coding and tabs, and marking things out. And Ronald suggested that you start with your TMA to find out what it is you have to study. And then when you're reading your text, you use whatever technique works for you to mark out what's directly relevant to the TMA.

KAREN FOLEY: Brilliant.

DAVID HELEY: That's a really good idea.

KAREN FOLEY: Did Robert watch our session yesterday on the stationery?

MYCHELLE: I don't know, but I've got erasable highlighters with me today, pens that give me happy thoughts-- so if I'm really struggling, I pick this pen up, and it really helps me out. I've got some massive paper clips, as well, to put the things together that are relevant maybe for a TMA, or something else that I'm doing, to kind of organise myself a bit better.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, I've combined stationery with my notebook, with biscuits, and chocolate mousse for my pen. So that's been really handy. And I've been writing all the things that I'm going to do down, as well.

Now, we did ask everyone about their learning styles at home. And I'd like to touch on this, because the results have been changing quite a lot. Most people had tested their learning style before, but it was only just marginal. So let's take a look and see what people said their learning style was.

Auditory, 41%, followed next by visual. Then, we're looking at analytical thinkers. Only 6% are with you on the global, Dave.

DAVID HELEY: Yeah. I think it's something to really think about, and not be scared to embrace at sometime in the future, to bring your emotions into it, to bring your personality-- now, I'm not saying about, in an essay, saying, I think Shakespeare is great. But don't be afraid to-- you go and see a film, you go and see the new *Blade Runner*, which I'm really looking forward to tomorrow, and you've got an essay on science fiction, say. You bring this in. It's something that you've seen.

So long as you're objective, you talk about how, visually, it kind of really resets the future, do you know what I mean, or reshapes the cliché of what the future would be like, something like that. You bring that into an essay about science fiction writing, even though it's a film, you've gone a bit global there. You know, you've connected with the issue. But you've not been afraid to use your own material, as long as you remain objective. That's the key thing.

KAREN FOLEY: Now, what about people like Terry, for example, who've come up on the test as unknown? She says variety is the spice of life, and I completely agree, because I'm just thinking I'm not quite sure which one I'd fit into, because I definitely like things visual, but equally, auditory is good.

DAVID HELEY: I would say this. It's almost blasphemous, I think-- and I'm sorry to anyone academically who I'm upsetting here-- but I don't think we are one. I don't know if we are one and a bit of two. We are all of them. And we've got to release our potential for all of them.

So read about them on the website. Do the quiz, if you haven't done it. Understand what they are. But try and embrace a bit of all of them.

And I'll give you an example. I studied film after I did my degree at the OU I went to the States, and I studied film studies and drama studies. And I remember a screening of *Casablanca*. And I was there writing. I was really flash. I had a little light on, so you could-- like film critics do, so you could make notes in the dark. And I'm writing about the ending. And I've got all these notes.

And actually, when I got back to the seminar, I didn't understand them, because I was there trying to look at the film. And I remember the director said this-- the teacher said this, he said, at the end of the film, we all want Ingrid Bergman-- I'm sure most people know, if you don't, it's a great movie, go see it-- we want Ingrid Bergman to go with Humphrey Bogart. But if he does, the good guys will not win the Second World War, because her husband is leader of the resistance. He can't function without her. He needs her love.

So Rick, without saying that, says, you've got to get on that plane. Our problems amount to a hill of beans compared to the world's problems. And he doesn't even say it like that. He says it kind of Humphrey Bogart. But visually, the camera is telling the story. It goes for about 10 seconds closeup on Ingrid Bergman, then on her husband, then on Rick. And then it goes back.

And each time, each of the close ups gets shorter, and shorter, and shorter. The last shot of all is Elsa, Ingrid Bergman, standing next to her husband. And they listen. And they turn, and they go on the plane. So visually, the film has shown us the meaning, and what's the right thing to do. And I thought suddenly, oh my god, I get this. No textbook has ever explained that to me. The director's just pointed it out. Be open to visual meaning, and to know the meaning of art and film.

I mean, I know a lot people are studying science, but I still-- and social science. It still applies. Be open to it. Connects with it. You are not an empty vessel. You are a full vessel. And the OU and your studies will help you to bring all that out.

So was it Terry you said she doesn't--

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, yeah.

Me Me, too. I don't really know. I want to embrace all of them.

KAREN FOLEY: And again, for different things-- I mean, we ask people whether they thought learning styles were fixed or fluid. And everyone said fluid, which is great. But I know when I've done tutorials and I've taken some learning styles-- and just the fact that people are different can really surprise people, because they often think, well, I thought we were all the same, because we've all got the same books, we've all got the same sort of stuff to do. But I really struggle with reading large dense things. I really struggle with listening to stuff, you know.

And people are sort of having these different battles. And this idea that we could have these differences, and that some people are better-- but it all wriggled around in the end. And it was just about really sort of recognising that, actually, there's no problem in sort of saying to your tutor, I'm really struggling with this, because it doesn't sort of fit my way of doing stuff. We can't change that. But we must have techniques that can help us through.

DAVID HELEY: Well, I certainly agree. It's what we said earlier, take some responsibility, take control of your own studies. I helped to train some of the tutors in the OU. And they're all great, and they all work really well. But they should be open to this, because you don't want a two hour lecture tutorial. You don't want a two hour PowerPoint, yeah? But what you do want is a five minute PowerPoint, a seven minute little chat.

One of the best things that ever happened to me when I was a student-- and I use this technique-- the first ever tutorial on a second level course, and we're all sitting there, Shakespeare. He threw the book on the table. He said, this play's rubbish, Shakespeare is totally overrated, and just sat back, put his feet up. And we all sat there.

Slowly but surely, during that year, all of us emerged, because he gave us an example. He was being polemical. And I don't think he believed the play was rubbish. But he got us really in the stomach very early on. And by the end, we were all really confident learners because of what he generated, what he'd shown us, yeah?

So say to your tutor, either after the tutorial or by phone, or by email, say, do you know, I think with this subject that's coming, I would really like some visuals. Is it possible we could do-- I think tutors will be up for that.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

DAVID HELEY: They really want to hear from that. It's a really lonely experience being an OU tutor, because

you're not in a kind of common room with all the other tutors. You have to kind of prepare what you think the subject demands. You really want to hear from your tutors.

KAREN FOLEY: And like you say, it's so nice to take control of your own learning. I know for me, when I was doing some science stuff, I was thinking, I really want to see a demonstration. I got into the Khan Academy. I've watched hours, in fact, of those. But I really liked being able to see things physically. And I really liked hearing people's voices, because I could think, actually, you've come from the States, or you're from here. And actually, that sort of context, in terms of what they were wearing when they were doing what they were doing, and what sort of accent, sort of helped embed that culturally for me, in a way I found really brilliant.

And one of my tutors had said, well, if you don't understand this, go on YouTube and look that up. Just get some background information. If you're stuck, you need to shift something. And that doesn't necessarily mean your tutor is going to give you everything. You can go find it yourself in a variety of ways-- at the library, for example, as well.

DAVID HELEY: Absolutely, absolutely. It's I would really try to encourage students to really think outside the box what's right for them in terms of their note taking, what's right for them in terms of the subject-- even the subjects they want to study, and the pathway they want to follow. But one day at a time. Don't be afraid to talk to your tutor about things.

Now, I just wanted to talk about one thing. I learned how to sculpt, not as an artist, but as a trainer. And I never used it in my teaching. Few years ago, it was the best thing. All the light bulbs came on. And I used it. I took my drama group into Wormwood Scrubs Prison, and we worked with some lifers, right?

But before we could even start doing drama, they wanted me to kind of do some kind of work on understanding about life, and all that kind of thing. And I remember, we made out the room was, first of all, a map of Britain. And these lifers were from different ethnic backgrounds, different ages, and so on. And they were really a nice group of people. Probably quite dangerous people, as well, but within the safety of the prison.

And so, first of all, I said, well, go to where you were born. They had never talked about that. They'd never talked about it. So a couple went up to Scotland. A couple went to London. A couple went down to Southampton, or wherever. And a couple didn't move.

I said, what about you? They said, well, I wasn't born here. I said, great. So we extended it to

Europe. And they said, no, I still can't go anywhere. So we extended it to the world, right? So there we had an example-- visual example-- plain to see for anyone, of people's ethnicity and where they came from in the world. And it was a revelation. And they started getting on really well.

We then said-- because some of the white guys were like, well, I'm English, kind of thing, yeah? And we said, well, think about where your parents came from, your grandparents. And even the white people in the room started spreading out. It was a miracle. And I think those guys got on much better after we'd done something like that. Sculpting is a visual technique, really powerful.

KAREN FOLEY: People are going bonkers on the chat, talking about different learning styles, and making friends. And Terry and Holly have decided that they're a new category of multi learners, because they were unknowns, as well. Mychelle and Lee?

MYCHELLE: I'd just like to show a picture that Sarah has sent in. I don't know whether we can do it in the camera there. This is the library that she was talking about earlier. And a of people talked about the library, and the cake that you get there. And Davin, oh my goodness, has set up this picture of his snacks that he's having at the minute.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, Davin.

MYCHELLE: So, oh my goodness, I would like to be with you right now, Davin. Any more cake talk, please feel free to share it with me.

[LAUGHTER]

People are absolutely loving what you're saying, David. It is so nice to have you here. And the conversation is flowing really well. People are excited to think about ways they can learn.

HJ: Would do you suggest, then, if I do the quiz and I find out I think I'm more an audio learner, that I work on some of the other ways of learning? Do you think that would help, if I seem a bit weaker there?

DAVID HELEY: I don't think it would hurt to kind of try and embrace them. But I think if you're reading some material, and you turn out to be more of a visual learner, you can draw a picture. There was a guy, when I took my exams in New York-- I was telling this to a colleague earlier-- he would put objects on the table. The examiners had given him permission to do it. One was a baseball

one was, I think, one of those kind of little birds, almost like an art object, and I can't remember what the other one was-- a banana or something.

The each one was there not for him to cheat-- he hadn't written on the outside of the banana or anything-- it was to prompt memory. One of the greatest novels ever written, by Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, it's like seven volumes, thousands and thousands of pages of writing, all prompted at the beginning of the book, because he smells a cake. I can't remember what the Cake is now, it's embarrassing. But he smells the cake, and it reminds him of his childhood. And this whole novel comes from this.

So be open. Smells, touch, taste. One of them is tactile, very, very tactile. And a lot of drama training, actor training, is about touching, so you become more aware of your senses. I think we can apply-- and I do this with tutor training-- get them working as kind of actors, and getting more in tune with their emotions. So when they prepare their tutorials, they're open, because as sure as eggs are eggs, there's going to be 20 different variations of learning styles in that room. Lots of them multi, lots of them more this than that. They're all different. So you can't just impose a big thing on them.

KAREN FOLEY: No. Well, the multi learning thing is kicking off full time, so David, it's all we've got time for. But you're coming back tonight. So us what you're going to talk about tonight.

DAVID HELEY: Tonight, I think we're going to talk together, aren't we--

KAREN FOLEY: We are.

DAVID HELEY: --about actually following one of these themes, about the student being much more in control of their studying, and actually setting really good boundaries. For instance, it may be that a student's got a wedding to go to. Their son or daughter has got a show on at school in the next two weeks. And mum's got to go to rehearsals, and so on. And you know what, it might be OK to just get 60% in this essay, because if we set ourselves up to get 100% in every essay, in every exam--

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, we do.

DAVID HELEY: We do, we do-- you've got to look after yourself, and you'll be a much better learner for doing it.

KAREN FOLEY: It'll be a fantastic session.

DAVID HELEY: That's what we're going to talk about.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, it is, indeed. So, I'm so sorry we're out of time. But I'm so glad you're coming back, because that'll be brilliant. So stay tuned, if you've enjoyed this session. Tonight at 7:00 o'clock, David's going to be coming through. And that's a great time to have some space to really think about what you're hoping to achieve on your module, in your qualification, and in your TMA.

HJ, you can take some high-- low glycemic index appropriate study snack away. We're going to come back after this video. We had some questions before about plagiarism, so we've dug out the Bob video. So take a look at that. And we'll be back in a minute with the graduate school. Thank you, HJ and David.

[MUSIC PLAYING]