

Pre session polls

What level of study are you?

- Access
- Level 1
- Level 2
- Level 3
- Postgraduate

What would you consider is your main area of study?

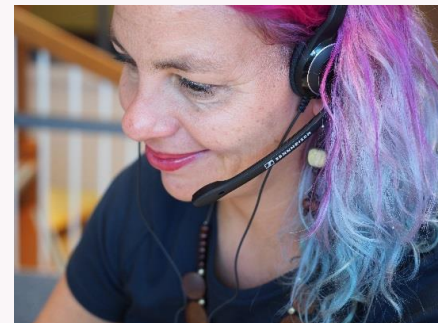
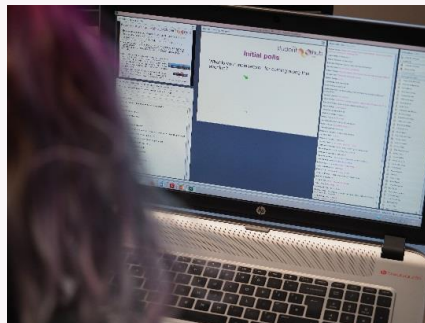
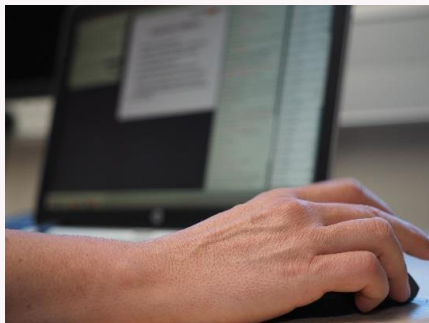
- Arts
- Languages (English & other)
- Social sciences
- Business and law
- Science
- Engineering or technology
- Maths
- Health sciences
- Education
- Sports
- OTHER

Have you been to any student hub live online events before?

- No (I'm brand new!)
- No (but have listened to one or more recordings)
- No (didn't have time)
- No (wasn't aware of before now)
- Yes any 19J (Oct-Dec 19)
- Yes earlier 2019 (Jan-Aug 19)
- Yes previous year (any 2018 or before)

What are student hub live online sessions?

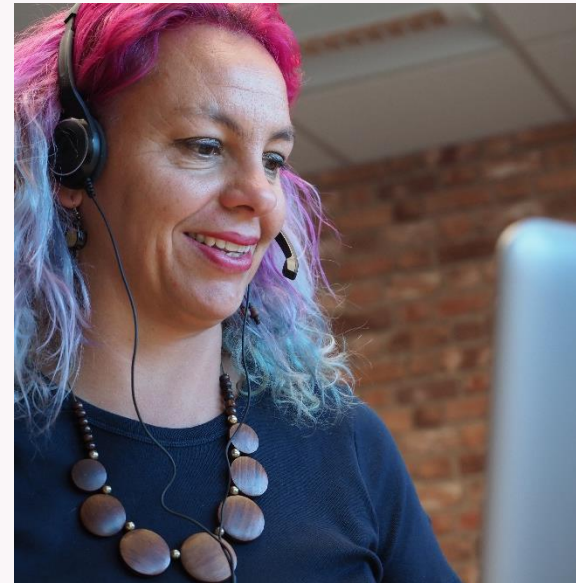
- All student hub live sessions are non modular and focus on skills relevant to study at university level
- Polls are anonymous to other participants but the chat box will have your logged in name associated with your comments
- All online sessions are recorded and available to view on catch up on a public facing website. *Small group discussions are not recorded.*
- Slides are available at the end of the session and from the main website



student hub live is the OU's live online interactive platform to support academic community



Karen Foley is a lecturer at the OU, head of student hub live and chairs Y032. She also tutors in social sciences, psychology and science.



Isabella Henman is an essay writing aficionado and skills trainer. She tutors in science and health sciences at Access to level 2.

Initial polls

What is your main reason for coming along to this session?

(If you are on a mobile device remember you need to tap into the polling option)



To come back to these slides after completing a poll click on the share pod slides icon



Effective online communication

This was our advert...

Effective online communication is something that often needs work. What might be appropriate and understood in social media settings is unlikely to be appropriate in an academic setting. In this workshop you'll look at some of the key skills involved in using online information for a purpose and how to communicate in a way that fits the need and shows your understanding.

Workshop

- This is going to be a structured workshop covering information about communication at undergraduate level
- We'll give some tutor advice about aspects that are important
- There is a lot of interaction so please be ready to answer polls (questions) or add to chat pod during the session
- You'll also get the chance to discuss things with others in a small group

Session purpose

Is for:

- Covering general study information
- Give some guidance about appropriate ways of communication including academic styles
- Provide a space to share ideas and connect with other students

Is not for:

- Telling you what you HAVE to do
- Providing any module specific advice

First thoughts

If you could choose any method to communicate with someone you know well which method would you use? Select your answer from the poll provided and have a look at what others have chosen

Now, if you could choose any method to communicate with someone you don't know well, e.g. for employment, study, finance which method would you use? Select your answer from the poll provided

Differences

- If there were differences in your chosen communication method from the previous 2 questions then please give any reasons you might have for that in the short answer poll provided. Then have a look at what others suggest (you may need to scroll to see other answers)

Communication...

- Is what marks humans out as intelligent beings and there are a variety of types
- Part of your skills development in Higher Education is to work out which types of communication are appropriate and develop these... ultimately to get what you want (more on this next)
- The end aim is to ensure the knowledge you have carefully understood during your studies can be communicated effectively and you can demonstrate that understanding

Poll time

- How are you feeling right now communicating in this studenthublive setting? Select any that apply
 - Really relaxed and chatty
 - I like this format of giving my views
 - I feel part of a big group
 - I feel what I am saying is helpful to others
 - I feel like what I have to say matters
 - People say the same things as me so I am not alone 😊
 - Others seem to find this easier than me!
 - I'm not always sure what to say
 - Overwhelmed by the choices!
 - Some seem more popular than others
 - Feel a bit anxious than I am going to be tested
 - I'm not chatting because I'm worried people may think I look foolish

Another question

- How is this different from tutorials? (please use the short answer poll to give your ideas)

Differences

- We (Karen and Isabella - SHL) are different from tutorials but we are the same people as we run tutorials too
- Different settings have different norms
- Communicating with your best friend at home / work / on the razz may well be different
- So communicating online depends on the setting and scenario

What do you want?

- We communicate for a variety of reasons
 - Knowledge exchange (give and take)
 - Clarification
 - Support and sharing experiences
 - Because it's part of my TMA
- It's important to know what you want so that you know when you have got it
- Sometimes what you want may already be available – for example on a forum – so search before asking
- Sometimes what you want may not be appropriate for that space

Online communication

Please use the short answer poll provided to say what is the first thing you think of when someone says online communication and have a look to see what others suggest

This is not what we mean!



Some ideas

- Often online communication is synonymous with social media.
- It is often associated with abbreviations and a different type of language entirely. no wot I mean hun? Xx lol?
- Sometimes "forums" can appear official, formal spaces.
- Some people might have thought of the nasty side of online communication such as trolls and keyboard warriors.
- That's not what we mean!

OU online communication

- What types of online communication might you need to use as part of your OU studies? Please use the short answer polling pod to suggest your ideas and look to see what others have suggested

OU online communication

- Email
- Forums
- Open studio
- Online rooms (Adobe Connect)
- We'll look at email specifically but then cover general points about university level communication overall

Emails -tutor

- Some (hopefully obvious) basics for email communication with your tutor:
 - Be real – its not an academic or assessed exercise, but being open and honest is the best strategy....
 - Be clear exactly what you are asking about as whilst you might realise which task /TMA / other you are referring to but it might not be obvious to your tutor

Examples such as

*where do I find the task information
from spaceywobbler@mymail.com*
aren't really very easy to track or answer

Always Include your full name and ideally module code

Emails -tutor

- Some students benefit from a rolling list of questions that they may email after a few days – very often we find the answer to the question when we understand the exact question we are asking.
- Remember that you have given a registered email address to the OU and your tutor will use that one to send messages so check it is one you can see!
- It might be helpful to keep a folder of email communication so you can refer back and check answers and instructions rather than asking the same thing multiple times because you have deleted everything without reading it

Poll time

- What does the term peer feedback mean to you? (Please use the short answer poll to give your ideas – it's OK to say you don't know!)

Peer feedback

- Peer feedback involves you as a student looking at an answer or piece of work from another student and providing some comments and feedback that will help them to know what they have done well, and what could be improved.
- Some modules involve this, e.g. openstudio or forum threads.
- Learning from others and providing constructive feedback can be really helpful to help you work out understanding and communication

Peer feedback

- It is really nice to say something about your peers contributions. Even in assessment tasks, you may say that you have something in common with their post
- Remember how nervous you might be about the task? Others are too 😊

Constructive peer feedback

- At points you may be asked to give specific feedback to help someone improve. You need to be more specific here than
- Constructive peer feedback doesn't just say things like "That's great" or "I really like it" or "I didn't understand" but says *why* and if there is something to improve, specifically what it is and gives ideas on how it could be improved
- You don't need to pick up every single point but could mention if something wasn't clear or if you were left with questions

Poll time

- Can you describe a time when you have felt uneasy communicating online (please use the short answer poll to give your ideas)

Conflict resolution

- Sometimes we miss out on the cues from face to face and there are complex communications online, which can lead to miscommunications
- Can you think of reasons why miscommunications can arise in an online setting? (please use the short answer poll provided for your ideas)

Our ideas

- Knowing which message someone has replied to
- Words alone might not convey what you really mean (emoticons can help here)
- You might have spent ages constructing a post and there has been no response
- The tone of a dialogue might shift and you think someone is annoyed
- Someone may disagree with something important to you when previously getting on well
- A view might be communicated that you find offensive
- You may simply not understand what / why the message is there (is it even relevant?)

Good conflict resolution

- Is the issue important to resolve?
- Can you / should you seek clarification?
- Sometimes a conversation may be a 'side conversation' so may be exclusive so think carefully about how this can be perceived / managed

Academic communication

- Is polite, more formal than other formats and is about demonstrating understanding
- Remember – you are studying in Higher Education so your communication needs to be appropriate for that
- Whilst direct is not cutting or rude, but doesn't 'beat around the bush'
- If you have dashed off a quick message along the lines of I don't understand, but then read the instructions and are clear – do make sure that you follow up your initial message to avoid the person / people spending time trying to help when there is no longer the need

So...

- So far we've mostly looked at direct and obvious communication elements, e.g. actual messages but communication goes further than that and include assessment tasks (TMA / iCMA).
- Academic English is a whole subject in itself but we'll cover some key aspects now to fit in with the idea of effective online communication.

Poll time

- What do you think (for you) is going to be the biggest challenge in communicating effectively within your TMAs? Please use the short answer polling pod available and have a look at other answers to see if others have the same or different concerns

Common issues (and some links):

- Knowing what is required
<https://help.open.ac.uk/understanding-the-question> (and our Understanding Assessment session from 8/10/19)
- Writing appropriately
<http://www.open.ac.uk/libraryservices/beingdigital/objects/57/index.htm>
- Spelling and grammar
<https://help.open.ac.uk/grammar-spelling-and-punctuation>
- Academic specifics like referencing and word count
<https://help.open.ac.uk/referencing>
<http://www.open.ac.uk/libraryservices/beingdigital/objects/131/index.htm>
- The good study guide:
https://help.open.ac.uk/students/_data/documents/helpcentre/good-study-guide.pdf

Discussion activity

- There will be 2 specific questions in chat pods for you to explore some of the elements we have discussed further.
- *What will be the most effective element of communicating online*
- *The thing I would like the most help with for communicating online is...?*
- You are welcome to add your thoughts and we will then pick up some of the themes and talk through them.
- Chat does have names on but the recording will be anonymised so you will appear as 'user number'

Take home message

- Communication at university level does need to be appropriate for the purpose so is different from common methods such as social media.
- Be clear about what you mean (and who you are if email) and carefully read information and answers so you know what to do

Final polls

What do you feel is the main thing you will take away from this session?

What are you going to do as a result of this session?

Which of the following elements of today's session did you find useful?

- Tutor led explanation
- Opportunity to chat in text chat box
- Opportunity to suggest ideas in polls
- Opportunity to read ideas suggested in polls
- Group text activity with direct questions for chat pods
- Any other aspect (please give details in chat)

Upcoming workshops

Study skills workshops: Effective online communication skills, Essay planning, Essay writing, Report writing, Developing a good academic argument

Details, booking and catch up

<http://studenthublive.open.ac.uk/>

