

[MUSIC PLAYING]

KAREN FOLEY: Hello, and welcome to the Student Hub Live. For those of you who've just joined us, a big hello. My name is Karen Foley, and I'm a lecturer at the Open University, and I'm a tutor, and I'll also be your host for the next two hours where we're going to be taking a look at feedback.

So your TMAs, what do you do with that feedback? How can we make the best use of it? And how can that ultimately help you to improve your grades? A topic that will be very, very relevant whether you're just starting out or you're midway through your Open University journey.

Now, it's great to see some familiar faces. And for those of you who've been here for this morning's session, we've been doing a math skills builder, which was lots of fun. We did lots of equations, and got a lot right, too. And I think that's really increased our confidence in maths.

And if you weren't able to take part in that, it will be available on the catch up. So you can watch the video and see all the fun we've had cutting up pizzas, cakes, and looking at a variety of ways to get the best bargains when you go out grocery shopping.

But now we're going to have a look at assessments. So in the next two hours of this live, interactive discussion, I've got four guests. And we're going to take a look at various parts of the TMA process. So I'm hoping that this will be very, very relevant. Now, how you get involved in this is as follows.

Most of you will be watching through the Watch and Engage option, and that's where you'll be able to see the live streamed video. You might need to refresh that, and you might need to work on a different browser. For example, if you're on a very old version of Internet Explorer, just switch to Chrome and it should all be fine.

You'll also see a chat box on there. Now, you can change the interface. So there's a little button at the bottom right, and HJ will pop some information in the chat about how you can do that so that you could have the chat or the video larger or smaller so that it suits your viewing experience.

You can also pin the chat if it's happening very quickly. But the chat, as I've been mentioning quite a lot, is a very, very important part of this process. So this is where you can talk to each

other about what you're studying, what you're doing, your thoughts, your questions. It's a real space for you just to engage and be part of your OU academic community.

So you can say what you like in there, and that will all be listened to and heard by everybody else, and moderated by Evaghn and HJ who are on our hot desk. But if you are in the Watch Only option where you're only seeing the video stream, you won't be able to interact with the widgets to tell us where you are, what you're studying, and what you're doing-- which incidentally should be on your screen right now.

So you can fill those in, select the button that applies, and then close the widget. And your results will then populate, and you can see what everyone else has said as well. So if you're in the Watch Only, you can engage with Twitter. We've got a hashtag of #StudentHubLive17, and our handle is @StudentHubLive. You can also email us, which is studenthub@open.ac.uk.

So there's loads and loads of stuff you can do. But let me introduce you to Evaghn and HJ, if you haven't been here before this morning, who will be managing all of this and bringing your voice to the studio and the show. Evaghn and HJ, hello. How are you? How was lunch?

EVAGHN: Good. Yeah, it was good. Pretty good for me. You?

HJ: It was good. We were talking about lunch in the chat, and Stuart said we'd be very jealous of his lunch. So I said if he sends us a picture on our Twitter, @StudentHubLive. But then he said by the time he gets round to taking a photo, he would've already eaten it. So I don't think that's going to happen any time soon.

But yeah, we had a great last session. Lots of people joined us before and joining us again. And really, all we're doing here is chatting to you and putting your thoughts, views, and comments to the studio. So we're really excited to do that.

And I know Sylvia had a great discussion about assignments just before we got on. SO perhaps she'll have some questions for us today as well.

KAREN FOLEY: Ah, excellent. Nice to see you, Sylvia. It's really nice when regular people come to the Student Hub Live and can talk to other students who may be a bit bewildered. Let us know, though, what you're studying, at what level, what you're doing, if you've been to a Student Hub Live event before.

Because that's really good for us to know, because then we can fill you in on what you might

need to know, and miss some of the details if we don't need to know it as well. Evaghn, how are you getting on with your pie chart? How much have you demolished now?

EVAGHN: I think it's all gone, actually.

KAREN FOLEY: All right.

EVAGHN: We had lunch and ate it all, yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: No pie charts left, OK. Excellent. We were having fun eating pie charts earlier. So that's all good. Excellent. All right.

So yeah, like I say, let us know where you are. So what are we going to be covering in the next two hours? Firstly, we're going to be looking at feeding back to the task and thinking about how well you actually did. And Peter Taylor is my first guest who I'm going to introduce in one second, just after I've introduced the programme.

Then we're going to take a look at the short term. So what happens when you get your assignment back and dealing with that, often while you're writing another one. So how do you deal with that little moment in time where you're trying to make sense of it all and make the most of it?

We're then going to look at considered feedback, which is our ideal perspective. So when we're looking back and reflecting and think about how we can incorporate the feedback from our tutor into future assignments. And then we're going to hear from Conor McQuaid, who's a post graduate student at the Open University, and about how he's learned from feedback.

Because as you all well know, when you start doing studies with the Open University, and when you further your academic career, feedback is an important part of academic life whether you're having a paper peer reviewed, or you're at a conference presentation having people ask questions. It's not just something dedicated to tutor marked assignments. So it's a very important thing to get your head around.

But welcome, Peter, to the studio. Thank you for joining me today.

PETER TAYLOR: Thank you for inviting me.

KAREN FOLEY: Yes. And another colleague from science. You specialise in organosilicons. Kinds

PETER TAYLOR: Organosilicon chemistry, yes. So that's all things like-- silly putty is organosilicon chemistry, or the kind of caulking you put round baths, and the windows sealants. They're all silicon. So that's part of what we do.

But there's a lot more interesting and important things that you can do with silicon. So at the moment, we're looking about how you can have wound implants, things which will block up a particular part of the body, but allow cells to grow within it, and tissue regeneration. So yeah, lots of interesting research things we do.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent. Now, you also do a very worthwhile thing. You're involved with the Open Programme and assessment more generally. And you're going to talk to us today about how well people do at the actual task with the TMA.

Tell me briefly, introduce us to the subject, by telling us about your interest in assessment. I mean, why is it so important to actually have this point where you think how well did I actually do? I know I got x percent. I know I've got lots of stuff here, lot of it seems bad.

But this part of the process where you actually have to take a step back and think, well, how did I do at that task. Why is it so important to you?

PETER TAYLOR: Right. Well, I've been involved in assessment for a very long time. So as an academic, I've been involved in setting assignments. As an associate lecturer, I've been involved in marking assignments. I've been on various university committees and projects looking at assessment.

And the real issue is one of writing an assignment. So I will write an assignment which I think is going to assess certain learning outcomes within the module. And I'm looking to be able to test the student's ability to be able to achieve those learning outcomes. But it's not really until the students actually do the assignment will I actually really understand about how well my assignments have worked in actually testing those learning outcomes.

So I've learned over the years what works and what doesn't work in terms of setting assignments. But from a student perspective, the assignment isn't just about measuring how good you are at a particular subject. It's also about helping your tutor to understand what it is that you get and what are the things that you don't get.

What are the things you understand, what you don't understand. What you need help in. And so there's a really important formative aspect of the assignment, which is in many ways, from a student perspective, a lot more important than the mark because it's about how I as a

student will be able to get information about how I can improve on what I've done, but how I can improve on my next assignment.

And that's one of the things that I think we're going to be talking about over the next few minutes.

KAREN FOLEY: No, absolutely. It is. I mean, you say it is more important than the mark. But the mark, I know, matters so much.

PETER TAYLOR: I know. I know. And in many ways, you know, the assessment is both to measure how good the students are and how well they're getting on. But as I said, but also to provide this feedback. And there's a tension sometimes between that.

And so students will often get their assignments back. They will say, oh, look, I've got 60%, and breathe a sigh of relief. And then not quite get round to looking at the feedback. And that's the thing, the message I want to get across about how actually irrespective of what grade you've got there's always good feedback in the assignment that you can learn and improve from.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent. Well, Peter, we've been asking our audience what they're studying, what level they're at. And the majority are at level 1.

PETER TAYLOR: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: So I've got 36% of students at level. 29% at level 2. And so they are the bulk. And a lot of STEM students as well--

PETER TAYLOR: Excellent.

KAREN FOLEY: Maybe because they've heard about you, or maybe because we've been doing maths. But 67% are doing science, technology, engineering, and maths.

PETER TAYLOR: Excellent.

KAREN FOLEY: And then next we have 25% with doing arts and social sciences. And then some doing health and social care as well. So that's the level we're looking at.

PETER TAYLOR: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: Some students may have done a TMA. Some may just be starting. So if you haven't filled in the "Have you done a TMA in the last month?" let us know. It just gives us an indication about maybe when you're studying and how immediate the feedback of a TMA is.

So we need an assignment, don't we, Peter?

PETER TAYLOR: We do.

KAREN FOLEY: To look at. But how are we going to do this with such a diverse range of levels and students?

PETER TAYLOR: Well, I think we have to choose something fairly straightforward that most people can do.

KAREN FOLEY: Right.

PETER TAYLOR: And we'll, in many ways, reveal lots of different aspects about any assignment. So what do you suggest?

KAREN FOLEY: Oh. Well, we could do a compare and contrast essay, maybe?

PETER TAYLOR: We could. Yes. Is that too much time?

KAREN FOLEY: I don't know how much time we have.

[LAUGHTER]

They're tricky, aren't they?

PETER TAYLOR: Yeah. People have done all that math this morning. Maybe a math question?

KAREN FOLEY: Yes. Well, they all got them right.

PETER TAYLOR: Yeah? Oh, well.

KAREN FOLEY: Yes. They were very good at all of that.

PETER TAYLOR: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: But again, those things, it's a tick or a cross, isn't it? It's easy to see how your marks adds up with things like that. It's easy to see where you've gone wrong. So how useful is that? We need something different.

PETER TAYLOR: Right. How about a drawing?

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, a drawing is a good idea.

PETER TAYLOR: Right. What should we draw, then?

KAREN FOLEY: How about a fish?

PETER TAYLOR: A fish. A good thing to draw.

KAREN FOLEY: It is. I can draw a fish.

PETER TAYLOR: Yeah. I can draw a fish as well.

KAREN FOLEY: OK.

PETER TAYLOR: It won't be very good.

KAREN FOLEY: All right. So what's the idea, then? We're going to all draw a fish.

PETER TAYLOR: Yup.

KAREN FOLEY: And then mark it, is that it?

PETER TAYLOR: Yep. Yep.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. All right. So let's see.

PETER TAYLOR: Everybody can--

KAREN FOLEY: HJ and Evaghn, you need to draw a fish.

HJ: OK.

EVAGHN: OK.

KAREN FOLEY: And mark it. And then if people want to send us a picture of your fish, then you can do that.
How long have we got, Peter? It's very important to put the parameters on an assignment.

PETER TAYLOR: Well, I think it should be about three or four minutes at the most.

KAREN FOLEY: OK.

PETER TAYLOR: We don't want to leave it too long, and people-- it's about the speed at which people can draw.

Thinking about what you need to put on to the diagram.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. So why don't we have a little go at drawing that, and then in three or four minutes-- because I think that's quite an important thing to think about. So they need to draw for three or four minutes. And then we'll think about how we can mark it.

But in the meantime, I wanted to ask. You mentioned that you've been doing various things around assessment.

PETER TAYLOR: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: Have you ever written an assignment and got people coming back with something completely different to what you thought it might be?

PETER TAYLOR: Well, particularly around computer marked assignments. So with computer marked assignments, where you're asking a question and then people are using various ways of choosing the right answer.

And sometimes when-- a long time ago, when I was much younger-- you try to put in distractors, things that are almost right--

KAREN FOLEY: Yes.

PETER TAYLOR: --but not quite right.

KAREN FOLEY: Yes.

PETER TAYLOR: And sometimes I got too clever, and actually the distractor was too good. And it was confusing students. So I've learned sometimes to not try to be too clever sometimes.

KAREN FOLEY: Now, this is an interesting point because often when I'm teaching, I'll say to students, this is not a trick question. We're genuinely trying to assess what you know. And so you need to answer the question, not think, well, it could mean this or it could mean that.

PETER TAYLOR: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: Have you got any advice to students about how we're setting assessment to measure things in a distance learning environment?

PETER TAYLOR: Well, one of the things that I think you have to remember-- and we come back to this again

and again-- is the context. So what's the context that the question's being asked in?

So usually you're studying a particular subject. So when you're asked a particular question, you've got to gauge your answer in the context of that subject. So that's the first thing to think about. And then to start to just to look at what some of the words mean.

So in the question, "draw a fish." Draw. OK, there are various meanings of the word "draw." But I think it's pretty obvious we want people to use a--

KAREN FOLEY: Not copy and paste.

PETER TAYLOR: --pencil or colour to draw it. But a fish. A fish could be many things. So I'll be interested to see what different kind of images of a fish appear. And that's part of the challenge for writing questions, is to try and stop those ambiguities within the question so it's quite clear what's being asked for.

And I have to confess, sometimes for people like me who are so steeped in a subject--

KAREN FOLEY: Yes.

PETER TAYLOR: --you forget how difficult it is for the newcomer to come and understand what the question and what some of the subtleties are there for. And that's why when I write a question, I usually get a range of different people just to test it out for me before it goes to the student.

So members of the module teams, maybe an associate lecturer, will read through it and say, actually you're being a bit too clever here, or a bit too subtle there.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

PETER TAYLOR: Just check your language and make it clear what you're asking.

KAREN FOLEY: And often you'll communicate these sorts of things in these student guidance notes, won't you?

PETER TAYLOR: Well, they're really important. So sometimes the question is gauged. But then there is a useful narrative just explaining, trying to un-pick what exactly is wanted. And it's important to pay particular attention to that.

So one of the mistakes I think students sometimes make is that they answer a question they

want to be asked rather than the question that was asked. So they will give you a particular answer. But when you look at it, you think, hm, you haven't actually dealt with the things we asked you to do.

So it's important from the student perspective to really read and understand what's being asked of them, and to give a response based on what's being asked rather than what they would like to be asked.

KAREN FOLEY: Yes. Indeed. So reading them before you do the assignment is obviously really important.

PETER TAYLOR: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: And many people will highlight them and go through them.

PETER TAYLOR: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: But reading them retrospectively can also help you make sense of how well you've completed the task.

PETER TAYLOR: Yeah. So often, and this is particular-- it depends on the size of the work sometimes. But often with a big piece of work, and I'm an associate lecturer for one of the project courses. And if someone's working on a project, I often say to them, when you finish writing it just put it down and leave it for a week, and then come back and reread it.

When you're writing it, you're often so involved, you miss things. And it's only when you've taken it out of your mind and come back and read it again that you can start to notice some of the things that are missing.

KAREN FOLEY: Looking at it a bit more objectively, isn't it? Absolutely.

PETER TAYLOR: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. Well, I think we've had about three to four minutes now for fish.

PETER TAYLOR: OK.

KAREN FOLEY: But just before we do that, you'll see some widgets on your screen which are specific to Peter's session. So we'd like to know, have you got an assignment that you can look at? Because that in all honesty would be quite useful not just through Peter's session, but

throughout this whole next two hours.

If you've got something, you might be able to take a look at it and think about whether any of the things that other colleagues are talking about can apply to you. Also, I'd like to know whether you think you got the grade you deserved. Have you drawn a fish, yes or no? I'll need to know that quite quickly.

And then when we score them, we will do a nice bar chart to see what you score. So please fill in the first three widgets there that are appearing on the screen if you're in the Watch and Engage. And if you're not, come into Watch and Engage. Use your student or your staff ID to access that. And you'll then be able to see the chat, the interactive tools, as well as the video stream as well.

OK, Peter. So everyone-- I haven't drawn a fish. I've been busy chatting away. But HJ and Evaghn, have you drawn a fish?

HJ: Yes.

EVAGHN: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: Let me see your fish, please.

EVAGHN: Tried to. They look the same, actually, don't they?

HJ: They do look quite similar.

PETER TAYLOR: Yep.

KAREN FOLEY: Have you also been chatting? Because in three to four minutes--

EVAGHN: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: 79%.

HJ: Perhaps we procrastinated a bit on this assignment.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh.

EVAGHN: Yeah.

HJ: But we've also been given another fish by Angela. And apparently fish is a lead singer of some band.

EVAGHN: Marillion.

HJ: I can't say that. Marillion.

KAREN FOLEY: Marillion.

HJ: There we go.

KAREN FOLEY: All right. Yes.

HJ: So I'm not sure that's quite what we're after there.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, Peter didn't specify.

PETER TAYLOR: --about context. That's really interesting. Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent.

EVAGHN: That's right probably, then, right?

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. Well, let's see. 79% of you have drawn a fish. So let's mark it, Peter.

PETER TAYLOR: Right. Well, I brought some props along.

KAREN FOLEY: OK, good. Good. We like props.

PETER TAYLOR: I knew we were going to draw a fish somehow. So I have a fish here, and a very, very small fish here. And again, they're about illustrating context.

So in this particular mark scheme, there is one mark if there's a mouth.

KAREN FOLEY: Everyone will be very good at maths, by the way, so they'll all be able to add this up.

PETER TAYLOR: One mark if there's an eye. And one mark if there's a tail known as the caudal fin. Two marks if you've got scales on it. Two marks if you remember that fish do need to breathe, so it does have to have gills.

And then two marks for each of the other four fins. And it appears that a fish has four fins.

There's a dorsal fin on top, a pectoral fin near the mouth, a pelvic fin underneath, and an anal fin at the back near the tail. So that accounts for 15 of the marks.

KAREN FOLEY: Evaghn is positively shocked.

[LAUGHTER]

Don't worry, Evaghn. This isn't a real assignment.

PETER TAYLOR: Now, in true OU style, there will need to be a title. So we want five marks for a title. And then there's 10 marks if it's drawn to have a three dimensional representation. 20 marks if it's in colour. And 50 marks if you remembered to label all of the fins and the eye, et cetera.

So we've been a bit harsh there, I know. But it illustrates an interesting point. So we want to write down your score out of 100, and let us know what they are.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent. So when you have added all of those up, you can score them. So we've got naught to 20, 20 to 40, 40 to 60, and so on and so forth. So if you just let us know where your mark applied.

And you might want to put your feedback to Peter's feedback about the scoring in the chat, and let us know what you thought about that. So Peter, I guess your point here is that unless you know what you're being assessed on--

PETER TAYLOR: Yep.

KAREN FOLEY: --magnificent as your drawing may be, if you don't know how it's being graded.

PETER TAYLOR: Yeah. So it looks as if, from the marks scheme, it was a pretty anatomical image--

KAREN FOLEY: One of your colleagues must have done it.

PETER TAYLOR: --of the fish. That you wanted to say, it's a conventional fish with all of those particular key aspects to it. Whereas you know, the skate-- that's a skate, by the way-- you know, it's a very different kind of shape. So probably that would have been quite a challenge in terms of making sure everything was in and fitted with the mark scheme.

And the singer with Marillion is similar kind of issue. So making sure the context is right, that you need to draw a conventional fish. And you need to think about what kind of diagrams it's looking for.

I was looking for some fish in art the other day, and there was a Matisse picture of some goldfish, which was a beautiful picture. But when you actually looked at the fish, they would not have got many marks on this particular grading system because they were just splurges of orange.

And similar, I was looking at some [INAUDIBLE] symmetrical diagrams when the fish gets converted into a bird. And again, the fish in that particular painting would not have got many marks. So it's understanding what the context, what you're being asked to do, and understanding that yes, you need to draw this anatomical version of the fish.

And so we were a bit mean in just saying, "draw a fish." I would expect us normally to say, draw an anatomical version of a fish, remembering to include all of the fins and other kind of aspects of the fish. Draw it in three dimensions. Draw it in colour. Label it.

So I think we'd ask for those things specifically to make sure that students understood that they were needed. But from a student's perspective, it's important to remember to do all of those things. Because in the end, it was, what, 50% for drawing it in colour.

So that's half the mark. So understanding the importance of the various aspects of the task is quite key.

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely. No, it is. We asked people-- I mean, it's great. A lot of you have got an assignment that you can look at. So 78% of you are saying that you have got something that you can look at. So that's brilliant. Get hold of that.

If you haven't got something and you're not studying, you obviously can't get something. But if you haven't got something and you'd like to dig around for it, do get that out and maybe you can spend a bit of time having a think about how you might take on board some feedback. A recent assignment would probably be the most useful.

We also asked people whether they felt they got the grade they deserved, and 87% said they did, which is very, very interesting. I would like to pick that up as well. And we've also got the scores on the doors.

So HJ and Evaghn, let me see how you did. And then we'll see how everyone at home did.

EVAGHN: You go first.

HJ: Well, I've got five points.

EVAGHN: Oh, I've got 28.

HJ: Ah, there we go. But annoyingly, this one also got five points just because it's got the title.

[LAUGHTER]

So I'm square with that one. But I think a student commented as well that he's going in for a reset with this one. So I might have to join in.

KAREN FOLEY: Are we allowed to reset on this?

PETER TAYLOR: Yeah. I think so.

KAREN FOLEY: OK.

PETER TAYLOR: I think technically the question was faulty, and we should allow students to reset.

KAREN FOLEY: OK. Well, let's see how you all did at home, how everyone got. OK. So 46% got naught to 20. And 20 to 40 is 31%. So most people would have got, technically in terms of OU passing thresholds, would have failed this assignment, Peter.

PETER TAYLOR: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: But on a plus note, 15%, 8%, and 8%. So just over 30% would have passed.

PETER TAYLOR: Yep. But I think that's because it was not a well thought through assignment.

KAREN FOLEY: No, it wasn't. But we would like to thank our colleagues from D100 for letting us use that, because it really is a great teaching point.

PETER TAYLOR: Yep.

KAREN FOLEY: If you don't know what you're doing, magnificent as it is, you're not going to get the best marks.

PETER TAYLOR: Because we were drawing, I did go and look at one of our arts courses. So this is "Renaissance Art Reconsidered." And I thought to myself, I'll just check what kind of information that students are given about assessment. So there's a booklet called

"Assessment Information for Arts."

KAREN FOLEY: Yep.

PETER TAYLOR: So that's arts courses themselves. There's the module guide.

KAREN FOLEY: Right.

PETER TAYLOR: And in the model guide, there is a description of what's needed for the general assessment activity. Then there's an assessment guide, which has got lots of useful information in it. And then there's TMA01.

And it's interesting that this TMA01, as well as having the question, then includes exactly what you said in terms of guidance notes. So as well as asking a question, it explains what they're really looking for. So there should be enough material within the course for students to be able to get a clear understanding of what's being asked of them. The problem is making sure that students search it out and know where to look.

KAREN FOLEY: Yes. Because like you said, there is plenty. And often they're in different places with different things. There might be a referencing guide, which would be useful to look at. How to submit, how to format the TMA. There's so much stuff there. But again, it's about recognising what you need to know, and then how you can get it when there are multiple ways.

PETER TAYLOR: In particular-- that's right-- when you move from one module to a next, the website is differently organised. And it's trying to make sure you can move from one to the next.

KAREN FOLEY: Yes. No, absolutely.

PETER TAYLOR: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: HJ, what's this about appeals with the marks?

PETER TAYLOR: Oh, yes. So I've been told this needs to go for re-marking. And it's actually got seven, so more than mine, not the same, because Fish has eyes and a mouth.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh.

PETER TAYLOR: Excellent.

[LAUGHTER]

KAREN FOLEY: OK. But I mean, assignments can also be appealed if students don't understand.

PETER TAYLOR: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: So when you're getting your assignment back and you're thinking-- a lot of our students are saying, yes, they do think that they got the grade that they deserved.

PETER TAYLOR: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: So they would be unlikely to do anything. But it's very important to be able to actually understand what your tutor's saying in terms of what feedback you're getting, and whether or not you think that mark is deserved or not.

PETER TAYLOR: Yeah. So I think one of the things is to read the feedback carefully, because the feedback should be explaining to you where you gain the marks, but also where you lost the marks, and how you can improve next time round.

So I think you really need to read that carefully, and only if it really doesn't make sense to you do you just go back to a tutor and say, can you just explain this again? And hopefully you'll get a clear understanding of what's needed.

I think in many ways, the important thing is to look at the feedback you get and think about things like what were you being asked around the fish? What was wrong with my fish? But think about if you were given that question again, how would you answer it differently? What have you learned from the feedback you've been given, and how can you then apply that to the next assignment and the assignment after that?

So for me, the feedback isn't just about making sure that you know how to draw a fish properly next time. It's about next time when you're asked to draw a dog or an elephant or whatever, you then have got some ideas about what you might be being asked to do.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent. Peter, that's been a brilliant, brilliant session. I'd like to end by asking-- I mean, that's great advice. But is there any other advice that you would give people?

Because we're going to move on to this very tricky emotional time with Klaus-Dieter, who's going to talk about that immediate return of the assignment, and what we do. But what's your general advice?

PETER TAYLOR: The general advice is to make sure that you do make some time to look at the feedback. It might not necessarily be at the time you get it back. So you might get it back, and you look at it, and you're busy doing other things. So you open it, you see the mark.

But make sure you've built some time into your study planning to be able to say, when I've got this back, I'm going to spend half an hour or an hour just going through that feedback and thinking about how I could improve and how I can use what I've learned in my next assignment. So it's about making time to do it as an important activity.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. Absolutely. Peter Taylor, thank you so much for coming along today. That's been a really, really useful session. And we will see very soon at our Freshers' Fair, where you're going to be talking about--

PETER TAYLOR: I'm looking forward to that.

KAREN FOLEY: --lots of different activities as well there.

PETER TAYLOR: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent. All right. Well, that's been great. My next guest is going to talk about what happens when we get the assignment back. So a lot of you have got assignments, and you might like to put something in the chat-- and I'm going to go over to HJ and Evaghn in a second-- to talk about how that feels in terms of when you're getting that assignment back.

Often you might be working on another assignment. They might be completely unrelated tasks. So you think, well, that was an essay. I'm doing a report now. What's the point in looking at this one to compare to that one?

So we're going to spend a while looking at how one deals with that space. And if you've done an assignment recently, which a lot of you have, then you might have some ideas about how you handle those various activities going on. HJ and Evaghn, what sorts of things are people talking about right now?

EVAGHN: Yeah. So there's some good stuff in the group. Someone had fish for lunch, which is quite fitting. So we've enjoyed the chat about the fish and the marking stuff.

Kate said that she often finds it hard to continue studying until she's got feedback from the last TMA. So I think there might be something there to say about how to deal with feedback and

how to emotionally handle it.

And Sylvia also said she finds it pretty stressful that when she's told a TMA is marked, but hasn't looked at the mark yet. She finds that little period of time quite stressful until she sees the mark. So again, I think it's just about handling your emotion and setting yourself, being ready to receive the feedback and the mark, basically.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. What about you two? Because you've both been studying with the Open University. How do you both relate to that side of things? Is it really difficult to start something new before you've ended something else?

HJ: I think personally I found that I agreed with this point when it came up. Shantelle said she agreed with it as well. I'm not too sure why, and it-- we talk about it might be an emotional thing. And I think that's it.

I don't know, the expectations that you put into an assignment. And then just waiting for it to come back, and feeling like you can't move on to the next bit until you've done that. So yeah, I'm not sure.

EVAGHN: Yeah. I think for me it's difficult. I mean, I think if you're doing one module, it's a lot easier than if you're doing two. So at the moment, I'm doing two. And what happens is you finish one assignment and you have to go onto the next one, but you want to give yourself a break. And you want to see how well you did with that one.

So I think it's just a mental thing in terms of coaching yourself to keep going until the end of the module, as it were.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah. And often they come at similar times, don't they, because of the way the assessment patterns work.

EVAGHN: Mine are about a week and a half apart, which is quite annoying. But at the same time, at least if I'm in that mood for work I can hopefully just try and keep that momentum going.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah.

[MUSIC PLAYING]