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**KAREN FOLEY:** I'd like to welcome Jonquil to the studio. Welcome, Jonquil.

**JONQUIL LOWE:** Hello, Karen.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Hello. Now, we're going to take a look at considered use of feedback, so this is after Klaus-Dieter's immediate reaction to the TMA and thinking about what things you might do in that immediate aftermath. And we're looking really now at being a more reflective learner generally and thinking about things in a more considered way, so maybe a little bit later after that process that Klaus-Dieter's been talking about.

Now, we've got some widgets here which we'd like to know your responses to. So how many times do you look at your feedback when you receive it? There's no right or wrong here. I know that you're very conscientious students and very good at maths, but let us know honest how many you look at it-- once, twice, not at all. And did you understand what you did well? So again, picking up on this point about recognising some positive feedback.

Do you understand why you need to improve? A lot of you had mentioned before that there were some areas of confusion, maybe disappointment, et cetera. So you might want to put something about that in the chat, as well. But yes or no, do you know where you need to improve? And then we've got a word cloud here. So three things, but if you can't think of three you can just think of one or two and in the other spaces just put a full stop so that at least your responses will send.

What are some of the areas that you need to develop on? So are there things that keep coming up that your tutor has told you about-- introductions, conclusions, referencing, et cetera-- are there any things that are coming up in your work that you feel that you need improving on? It will just be interesting to know really what, as a collective group, people are dealing with at the moment. So Jonquil, you're from the social sciences and we've got a lot of STEM students here and also a lot of students from arts and social sciences.

Now, this whole idea about considered feedback is a good one because I think it's something that we often know how to do in our heads and we think, yes, I should look at my feedback. We all know that's a good idea, I should pick it up maybe a couple of times and look through it.

But sometimes it can be hard to do that, can't it?

**JONQUIL LOWE:** Yes, it can. And I've got a couple of slides with me that I'm going to use, and the first gives us that kind of big picture. And then we'll have a look at what that means in practise. So here's the big picture of what's going on. So you've done your TMA, you've got the feedback-- you've got your mark, you've got your feedback. Now, to really make the most of that feedback, the next stage is that you really need to both read that feedback and internalise it, reflect on what it's actually saying to you.

What have you done well, what are your strengths, what are your weaknesses? When you've done that, you can then put yourself in a position to have some kind of action plan of how you're going to address those weaknesses, how you can build on the strengths that you've got. And then you experiment, put them into practise in your next TMA. And you can see this is like a cycle. And so this is the cycle of learning.

It's about becoming an independent learner. It's not about your tutor telling you, you must do this. It's about your tutor helping you to reflect on how you become a better learner. And eventually, you'll do this cycle of learning without your tutor. You will be self-reflective as a matter of course.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Now, this is such an important thing because I mean-- and like many social sciences diagrams, you can see the cyclical nature of things here, which is all well and good if the tasks are similar. But often, we'll do a descriptive essay, a compare and contrast essay, a report, et cetera, and we might have a plethora of assessment types in one year. You might think, well, I'm not doing it another compare and contrast essay, so it doesn't really matter right now because next I'm working on this.

But next year, you might be doing one and these are skills to develop. And so what I really wanted to focus on is I guess trying to take on board some of the feedback and identifying really where things are context- or subject-specific, in particular if you're doing a varied degree or an open degree or something like that, and also when you can recognise, well, I may not be writing an essay of that kind, but there are various things that I could include still in my next piece of assessed work. So how would you recommend that students can identify some of this? I mean, do you use a journal? How do people work on this so that they can either use it now or save it for later?

**JONQUIL LOWE:** Yeah, good questions. Well, let's break it down into stages. These come from some of the

open teaching toolkits. And what I've done here is I've slightly rejigged these steps in order to fit this nice mnemonic, PROACCT-- double Cs, not great.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Don't worry. There's no one from the English languages here.

**JONQUIL LOWE:** Just as well. But the reason I've done that is to stress that this is about you being an active learner. It's not a passive process, so it is about you engaging with your learning, which I think is exactly the point Klaus-Dieter's made, as well. So first thing is that you probably don't want to do this immediately when you get your mark. When you get your mark, you've already talked about that. You've got a kind of reaction to how that fitted with your expectations and you're probably not in the best position then-- you might be busy doing other things anyway-- to have this kind of reflective period.

So the first thing you want to do is to set yourself a study period. Put it in your diary, allow yourself about 20, 30 minutes when you know that you're going to sit down and really look at the feedback you've been given and reflect on how you can use it. So that's the first bit, plan this meeting with yourself. Now, I would start with the PT3, the assessment summary.

So your tutor will both have marked your assignment and put comments on your script but will also have made this summary of feedback. And a lot of that feedback actually is feedforward. It's about how you can do things better in the future. So your tutor will probably have highlighted some of the strengths that you've got, that's great and you know that those are things you can continue doing. You might want to develop them further, but they're good things that you're going to continue with.

And then there will be some other things which are weaknesses that your tutor is suggesting that you might put more time into, more effort, and that they might then take you forward further. Now, very often those will be kind of generic skills. So we're talking about generic academic skills, generic study skills, sometimes employability skills as well. But they tend to be the sort of skills that will apply whatever the assignment you're doing in future, and so they're well worth putting that effort into.

So that assessment summary, the PT3, is where you'll get that kind of overview. Now, I know some students just read the summary and never bother to look at the comments the tutor has put on their script. And I think part of that is as you say, it's because well, I've done that assignment, I'm not going to do that one again so what's the point? But actually, I would recommend that you open up the assignment and what you'll see there is still these widely

applicable comments of things that you could be doing better.

It might be referencing, say. But what you've also got is the specific example, here is how you've done it; here is how ideally you would do it. And your tutor may also have given you some suggestions of resources that might help you. But an important thing is that if you don't understand your tutor's comments, then get in touch with your tutor and ask. Your tutor is opening a dialogue with you, so if you feel that you are not quite clear what he or she is saying, then get in touch and find out more.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Now, you teach in economics. Do many of your students get in touch with you if they don't understand things?

**JONQUIL LOWE:** Well, I think it depends on the student. I wish more would-- I wish all of them would. But there are some students who are definitely better at using their tutor. And sometimes it's just about breaking the ice. I don't know about you, but I really go to quite lengths at the start of a module to make contact with my students. Because once you've broken that ice, they know they can contact you and they feel more comfortable doing it.

But there are some students who perhaps prefer to study on their own. And that's fine, but you really should contact your tutor if you have a need, if you don't understand something. That's why your tutor is there, that's part of their role. And you have the right to contact them. So yes, I think all students should be proactive when they want to.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Excellent. In the chat room, we're learning lots of new words like feedforward, which actually in all seriousness is a very important teaching point and something we do try and do. So often, those things will come through in the script comments about doing things better next time. And feeding forward I guess is the opposite of feeding backwards. So it's about saying, when you're writing an essay you could do X, Y, and Z.

And sometimes, I've found certainly when I'm marking, there are a number of times where I'll really sort of thrash out what needs to change about an introduction. And then after a while I'll think, the student isn't maybe engaging with some of the stuff. I mean, these students are-- we've got like 31% looking at it three, 31% looking at it four times.

**JONQUIL LOWE:** Really?

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yes, at their feedback.

**JONQUIL LOWE:** That's really heartening.

**KAREN FOLEY:** And a lot of them understanding it and a lot of them getting a real sense of where to improve. I mean, but these are the very diligent students and we don't always expect that. Some students, because they're doing so many other things don't have time and all of a sudden, it might be three months in. I haven't had time to talk to you, sorry about that, but I need you right now. Would it be OK then still to get in touch with your tutor and say, sorry I haven't been doing so much stuff, but actually now I have a bit more time or space to do things because life permits, so could we have a dialogue?

**JONQUIL LOWE:** Yeah. That's absolutely fine. And I mean, it's a given with distance learning that students are engaged in all sorts of other things. They're working, they're looking after family, all sorts of other demands on their time. We know that students can't get in touch with us always exactly to some kind of timetable. But your tutor is there throughout the whole module, whatever stage you're at and knows perfectly well that you're studying at the pace and in the chunks that fit around the rest of your life. It's not expected that all students are on page 136 on day X, that's not how it works.

**KAREN FOLEY:** OK, brilliant. All right. So we've talked about this idea, so we've got the PT3, which you've said is the summary that's the sort of discursive lengthy part of the assignment and then you've got the detailed dialogue or the script comments that are going on. And are you suggesting that they need sort of separate approaches because they're doing different things?

**JONQUIL LOWE:** Well, I think the summary has kind of packaged for you what your strengths are, what are the areas that need work. But the script comments, it's a bit more varied because obviously those comments are more focused on this particular assignment. But there are sort of common themes that will be emerging. And so as you read that, you'll be able to see those common themes, as well.

But I think why the script comments are really useful is because you're getting in-context examples of what your tutor is talking about. So on the PT3, you might have said, you need to improve your referencing. When you go to the script, you will actually see some examples of oh, I see. Yeah, I didn't phrase it that way.

**KAREN FOLEY:** What if there aren't the examples? Would it be OK then to go to your tutor and say, you say I need to do this, but I don't know how. And then you could say, I can see I've done X, but not Y.

And actually, like Klaus-Dieter and I were talking about, sometimes going through that process can help you become your own sort of guide in terms of where those areas are. But I guess otherwise, you would seek clarity, wouldn't you?

**JONQUIL LOWE:** You would seek out clarity, that's right. But I would also stress that most certainly social sciences assignments have a self-reflection at the end of the assignment and not all students do that self-reflection. But it really is a good idea to because that is the beginning of that self-reflective process. It's also interesting, it's the opportunity to kind of steer your tutor and actually say, well, these are the areas that I think I'm having problems with.

And so you kind of take the lead. You are being proactive there and saying to your tutor, these are the areas that I think I want your feedback and feedforward on. And your tutor will quite probably agree, sometimes they won't. Sometimes they'll say, well, actually you seem to be doing that fine. I thought this other area was something that maybe you should be focusing on.

**KAREN FOLEY:** There's a lot of chat-- and I'm going to go to Evaghn and HJ in a second-- about bothering tutors with comments. And I know that most teachers are conscious when they're marking, I certainly am, about giving appropriate levels of commenting. So it might be sometimes, for example, that you really need to work on your basics and then the next time you get an assignment, you might pick up on things that you hadn't mentioned that were still not happening there but they were less of a priority.

So there's this whole idea about the extent to which tutors can appropriately feedback without overwhelming people completely. So, would students be bothering tutors if they A, didn't understand what the tutor said, or they were noticing things where things are being picked up, where perhaps they were affecting on the feedback and nailing those and then getting other sorts of comments.

**JONQUIL LOWE:** Right. So there are two things there. I mean, one is you're never bothering your tutor. That is what your tutor is there for. If you were in a bricks and mortar university, you would quite naturally go to your teacher at the end of the lecture or you'd go and knock on his study door or whatever. Because with distance learning, OK you're going to do it in a different way-- it might be email, text, phone, whatever-- but it's the direct equivalent.

Your tutor is there to support you in your learning and yes, you should get in contact. And he or she will never think you're bothering them at all. And in fact, most tutors enjoy that engagement with students. That's the interesting part of teaching, after all.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Absolutely. And even though they work part time, there's always a way that you can get in touch by texting or emailing or whatever, saying, can I have five minutes or whatever? And in particular, I'm always impressed when people identify what the issue is they'd like to talk about because it shows that they've thought some of that. Evaghn and HJ?

**EVAGHN:** Yeah. I think it might have been Jeanette that made the comment about bothering tutors. And Sophie's on the chat, as well. So Sophie's basically just said, it really helps to get into the habit of actually contacting your tutor even if you don't need help, just so you can get a further understanding.

I think my point of view is you can never ask enough questions. So the more you talk to your tutor, the more questions you ask, the more you'll get a better understanding and hopefully get a better mark. So I think people are getting that point now.

**HJ:** I think, as well, what I used to do to talk to my tutor and kind of enter into a conversation, even by email, I'd ask, oh, just confirm is the tutorial still going ahead on Saturday? And he'd say, oh, yes. Were you looking at this, this, and this? And then we'd start a conversation, which was really good.

So I like the idea of getting into practise and habit so maybe saying, oh, I saw the assignment, thanks for the feedback. And just when there is something that comes up, you have the confidence that you know that you can approach them. But all the tutors I've found are absolutely brilliant. And like Jonquil said, they want you to come and talk to them. And I think Kate and Chantelle are just talking about in local study buddies, as well.

So just having someone else just to talk through. It doesn't even have to be another student. So sometimes I just like talking out loud with other people kind of helps rejig things and work things out, as well, and sort through some problems you might be thinking about with your assignments.

**EVAGHN:** I was going to say just exactly to that point, the squeaky wheel gets the oil. So really, if nobody asks for help, no one will get help. And if somebody asks for help and the tutor things, oh, the student might be struggling with this point, he might be sent something out to make other people understand it. So you might not just be helping yourself, you might be helping everybody else as well.

**KAREN FOLEY:** That's a brilliant point, Evaghn. Because I often find that, especially when assignments change each year. So sometimes you might think actually you start getting a few questions and you think, oh, they could do with some clarification around this. So it's a good point. Excellent.

**JONQUIL LOWE:** I think that's great. A couple of things come out of there for me. One is that no problem is too trivial. You might think, I can only bother my tutor if it's a really big, major issue. But it doesn't matter if it's a small issue. But yeah, also if you're asking it, you can bet there are loads of other students who have also got that same question in their head. And so yeah, do ask it. Yeah, it's great.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Brilliant. Excellent. OK. So the next part, then, is your action plan, isn't it?

**JONQUIL LOWE:** Well, that's right. So you've got all these comments, so what are you going to do about them?

**KAREN FOLEY:** This is what I want to know.

**JONQUIL LOWE:** Well, it kind of depends, doesn't it, I suppose on what the comments are. But you're probably going to focus more on your weaknesses, to be fair. You should never forget the strengths because those are the things you are already doing well, you need to continue doing those. But if there are areas where you need to do better so your tutor will have given you some guidance-- we've talked about referencing, but sometimes it's about planning your essays, sometimes it's that you tend to put forward views but not arguments so you're not bringing evidence in.

So there are all kinds of things that might be going on. So you've got to having identified what those weaknesses are think, well, OK, what's my plan for dealing with those? So it might be that you need to go back and look over some study skill material. It might be that you contact your tutor, ask for suggestions of what you should do. Your tutor might, for example, have some study sheets that have some worked examples to give you some practise. Or it might be that you just need to discuss with your tutor to get this concept kind of clear in your head.

So there are all sorts of actions, that's why it's kind of action plan rather than a sort of more detailed. It depends what the weaknesses are. But you've got to think, OK, I've got this weakness, I want to make it a strength, so making it a strength is my goal. What's my plan for getting from where I am today to where I want to be? And your tutor is there to help you do it.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Now, what's your take on this? This is something when I'm marking and giving feedback, I find really difficult. Because you're writing a lot of comments and sometimes one thing would make



a massive difference to the grade, but it is still proportionately one sentence out of a lot of sentences. And I'm really interested in how you recommend students can identify the areas that would be easiest and most effective, bearing in mind they've probably got maybe, I don't know how many, maybe 30 or so comments on a shorter essay and there may not be 30 or so things to improve. So how do people prioritise and recognise, then, where those things might be? Because I think sometimes it can not be obvious to people.

**JONQUIL LOWE:** Yeah. Well, hopefully your tutor is pulling out some of those things, particularly in the PT3, in the assessment summary. So your tutor is well aware that there might be 30 things that they could pick up on, but they themselves are going to prioritise because they don't want to overwhelm you. So your tutor hopefully will have done some prioritising anyway, and the PT3 should be kind of pulling out the kind of most important points the key points.

Otherwise, I think really, I think you would need to talk to your tutor. Because I think it's quite hard as a student to know whether it's your academic voice or the lack of evidence that is the really big issue. I mean, probably it's going to be things like the lack of evidence, really. But at the end of the day, by the time you get to the end of your module, hopefully you'll have cracked all of those things. But you're right, you can only do so many at the time.

So we might take these slightly out of order, but having the action plan. You might have a lot of actions and you do need to choose those priorities.

**KAREN FOLEY:** That has no impact on your acronym here because they're both to Cs.

**JONQUIL LOWE:** It was cunningly designed. But let's talk about the learning journal, because I think that's a really useful way to help you to choose your priorities and kind of getting to know yourself as a learner. So a learning journal is not a list of kind of what you've done or what you read in your module text. It's a reflection on you yourself as a learner. And so it's more about thinking about, OK, why did I do things that way?

Could I have done it differently? And some of what you put in that learning journal will be about that feedback you've had on your tutorials and on your TMAs. So it's, OK, my tutor said I wasn't very good at doing introductions and conclusions. OK, I think I agree with that. Here's how I might do that differently. So it's this kind of more internal looking at yourself as a learner.

And that learning journal, I mean you might put all sorts of things in today. I mean, I came across something today which was a little matrix of how to organise something. I thought, well,

that's really useful. If I had my learning journal with me, I'd have put that in. There are just certain things. You might also come across little tests that help you to know whether you learn perhaps more visually or you're more text-based.

It just helps you to understand how you learn best and how you can develop as a learner. And it records, as well, that journey of learning so you can actually look back over time and you can see, well yes, I was there but hey, I'm here now. And as Klaus-Dieter was saying, that actually she can be very motivating. But in terms of your TMA, what that journal does is it's noted down the key points of your action plan and the things you're going to focus on.

So when you come to prepare your next TMA, then you can take those items from your learning journal. So you haven't just you haven't just picked up that TMA and looked at it for a few minutes and put it on one side. You've actually thought, how do I use all of this feedback and feedforward, how do I use it to make my next TMA even better?

**KAREN FOLEY:** And so maybe having a flick through and thinking about what's applied over even the years and modules, et cetera, could be useful if you had a little synopsis. Let's see what everyone said, because we asked you what areas you needed to develop. So let's see how that word cloud is looking. So some people say introduction, more detail, explaining, critical thinking, understanding the question. Critical thinking seems to be quite prominent in a number of guises-- needing simpler languages, writing maths, working.

So some specifics, as well. Time-keeping, different sources, literature searching, evidence, academic writing. So there's a real range of things that people have identified working on. One thing that springs to my mind with your journal is this whole thing of evaluation or critical thinking. And it's a common thing you have not evaluated this enough, you have described it too much.

And it can be a difficult thing to translate because of course, every example is very, very different and the level of detail or evaluation will depend, depending on what frameworks you might be using to evaluate that within. So that could be something worth picking up as maybe an example in your journal, couldn't it?

**JONQUIL LOWE:** I think that's right. I mean, all learning is really about internalising and then using that material as a kind of synthesis within you. So a lot of these skills that you're learning, they're about how to take that knowledge to move from description to actually taking that knowledge and using it in a way that produces something different which may be your evaluation, it may be your

comparison or whatever. So yeah. It's that whole process and that journey of getting to be.

I think often is actually confidence. I often read essays where you can see the description is actually, I'm just trying to put off the moment when I actually have to reveal myself and my tutor might not like what I'm going to say. You have to get over that hurdle.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Yes. No, absolutely. We're nearly out of time and I wanted to end the last of your feedback points here, which is about TMA preparation. And as we were saying earlier, this can often be happening concurrently so while you've got the feedback, you're then working on your next TMA. So what have you got to say about this part of the process?

**JONQUIL LOWE:** Well, it really is essential, I think, that you take that feedback from your previous TMAs and consider it when you do your next TMA. I mean, otherwise, you're just really looking at your TMAs in isolation and you haven't got that cycle of learning going on. It's back to that first diagram that you need that reflection to feed into next TMA. And that gives you this sort of hopefully a steady progression.

As you go through your module, you'll be building those strengths. Each TMA, you'll have a few more strengths under your belt. You'll be able to feel that progression as you go through.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Excellent. Jonquil, this has been a really, really useful session and thank you so much for coming along and spending the time to talk to us about this today. So thank you.

**JONQUIL LOWE:** Thank you.

**KAREN FOLEY:** And I hope you found that useful also in terms of thinking about the TMA. Like I said at the very start, these are often things we know about, but it can be really useful to actually sit down. And I don't know whether have you have with that TMA that you've identified earlier been able to maybe think of a couple of points that you could actually improve on for the next piece of work. So it will be very interesting to know in the chat whether through Jonquil's session you've come up with any ideas about either things you could do like a reflective journal to identifying points that you could maybe test out with your tutor prior to your next TMA or areas that you might want to focus on to think about doing differently next time and maybe marking those pre your tutor marking them to see how you're actually faring in terms of developing those skills.

So before we move on to our next guest, who's going to talk to us about their experience from a student perspective, HJ and Evaghn, I'd like to spend some time with you and think about

how everyone is feeling and doing and how they're making sense of this.

**HJ:** I think we're very happy with this session. Kate says, yes, using feedback in future TMAs is invaluable after what Jonquil said about looking at TMA as a whole. And she said earlier that she's going to contact her tutor with a view of feeding forward, which I don't think we can stress this enough about talking to teachers. Some people are saying that they're concerned about not building a relationship with their tutor because they can't go to tutorials or things like that. But through seeing your TMAs, they have sort of an idea about how you work and how you write.

What I did is asked my tutor once, I brought it up before, about what I could do generally to improve my academic writing as a whole. And because he's seen my TMAs, he was able to give me some pointers that helped me improve overall. So even though you can't attend tutorials or maybe can't attend online tutorials, because they've seen your work they do have a bit of an idea of how they can help you. And it's just about dropping them an email, really.

**EVAGHN:** Yeah. I think everyone really loved that session. Some good comments about the cycle of learning. Stuart says it seems like it's never-ending and Kate says it's something that doesn't really come easily, but she's still learning how to do it efficiently. I think that's the importance is literally to keep going. The art of reflection is probably quite difficult to master. But as Jonquil said, it's quite vital for steady progression throughout the TMAs and the whole qualification. So keep reflecting.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Good. And are people feeling happier about their TMA? Well, not that it's sort of a learning outcome to feel happier about it, but making more sense of what to do with some of that content. Are there any good ideas that have come through?

**EVAGHN:** I think the thing about just keeping in touch with the tutor, also trying to facilitate collaboration between the peers as well because you're all in the same boat. So you've got probably the same problems as each other and also the same ideas as each other, which if you talk about you could hopefully develop into better ideas.

So I think there's a big point about collaboration. And again confidence, once you've done a bit of things and you see that you're doing the right thing, it always gets easier to do better. So I think people are going quite happy, yeah.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Brilliant. And it would also may really useful to know how you found this experience being with

other students in the chat. If you want to put something in there about how you found talking to people, whether that's helped alleviate things, whether you've identified commonalities with other people. So it will be very interesting to know how you found that experience being at the Student Hub live event in this real time and thinking about that.

And I'm conscious that people drop in and out, as well, throughout these sessions, which are all available on the catch up if you've missed any. And if you are just joining us, then welcome to the sessions. It's all live and interactive, best on the Watch and Engage option, but you can also watch only just to see the live stream, as well.

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