

# So where did that idea come from then - 19 April 2023

[MUSIC PLAYING]

ROB MOORE: Hello everyone, and welcome to Student Hub Live with me. I'm Rob Moore. And as you can see, they've let me out of the study shack. I've actually been allowed off my leash and I'm down here in the studio at Walton Hall today, which is fantastic. So, great to see so many of you joining us already, and today we're going to be talking about the ideas that we pick up and where they come from. So the title is, "Where Did the Idea Come From, Then?" So we're going to be talking about the different ideas that you pick up as you go through your studies and talk about ways of including different ideas in your assignment. This is a follow-on session, so some of you were with us last night. We had an Adobe Connect session where we looked at some of the practical elements of using different theories and ideas. And the link to that session is available on the screen, so you can definitely go and check that out later on.

Today in the chat room we've got Matt, George, and Mark, and they're going to be answering your questions. So if you've got any specific questions or any comments, you can pop them in there and let us know what you think. Give us your comments, your thoughts. We also have some widgets that you can take part in and you can give us some feedback.

We also have a question that we want you to answer. Basically we want to know what concerns you've got. What questions have you got about using other people's ideas? And we're going to be taking those questions in the next session and we're going to try and answer those for you. And of course, we've got Heidi that's looking after you as well. So Heidi, lovely to see you again today. So who have we got joining us, and where are they from?

HEIDI: Lovely to see you too, Rob. Yeah, lovely to be here. So lots and lots of engagement going on in the chat. If you're finding that it's moving a little bit fast for you, in the top right hand side there's a little icon and you can click on that and then it pins the chat for you. So sometimes it can feel like it's moving really fast and if you're trying to keep up with it-- so if you press that, it will kind of slow things down for you and then you can go through at your own pace. So that's what I use. I recommend that if you're trying to engage with the chat.

So hello to Deborah from Northants. We've got Georgia in South London who's studying our arts and humanities foundation module. I did that one as well. I did literature with the OU. Absolutely loved that much. I think I've still got the book over on my shelf actually. Helen's joining us from Derbyshire. Karen is joining us from the Isle of Wight. Katherine is here with us today who's studying health and social care, and we've got David from Oban. Sharon is in Lanark in Scotland and is studying for an Open degree. Holly is joining us from Essex. Hello to Andy in Shropshire, who's studying natural sciences, and Emily is studying English literature.

There's two shout-outs I'd like to give specifically to Helen, who has lots of snakes and has said that all of them are sleeping at the moment apart from the boa constrictor who is in his hunting position. Which is a

little alarming to me, but OK. And then also to Ian's wife. So Ian said, "I'd not be able to do any of my degree without my wonderful study buddy, my wife." And I thought that was absolutely lovely, so a shout out to Ian and his wife this morning as well.

ROB MOORE: Thank you, Heidi. And yes, the study buddies is a bit of a theme we have at Student Hub Live. These can be pets, they can be family members. They can be a pot plants. They are things that help you to study and focus. Yeah, so we do like to celebrate our study buddies. Remember, if you've got any comments you can also email them to the Student Hub Live website-- email address, which is on the screen now. So feel free to get in touch any way that you want to today.

So my guest today for this first session-- we've got Anactoria, who is a staff tutor in English Lit. And we also have Mike Richards who's a senior lecturer in STEM and Computing. So thank you both for joining me today. And I'm just going to throw some questions out and you can tell us a bit about your experiences of how students have used other people's ideas within their assignments.

So first one to you, Anactoria. You see it on a number of module teams. What is it that we're looking for in the university when it comes to students using other people's ideas? What is it that's going to get them some marks?

ANACTORIA CLARKE: OK, so first of all I should probably say that we definitely want you to use other people's ideas. It's not a bad thing to be finding other people's ideas and thinking about how you can build them into your argument. When you're answering a TMA question, we would be expecting you to use your primary sources. So I'm a literature and classical studies person, so if you're writing about a short story or a novel, I'd be expecting you to be answering the question and giving some brief quotations and evidence from the primary source, from the text that you're talking about.

However, sometimes you've got an idea, you've got your evidence from the actual text, but maybe you read something that a scholar has written. Maybe you read your critical introduction in the text or maybe you read something that the module materials point you to and you think, oh, I'd not thought about that particular aspect like that. That's really interesting. I could build that into my argument.

So that's what we want to see-- is you using those scholarly sources, those secondary sources to help support your argument. To help build your ideas and refine them and give them a little bit extra. But the important thing to remember is not just to repeat the idea. What we want you to do is to show that you've kind of taken it on board, that you've thought about how it fits with what you're saying, and really that you can put it in your own words. You do obviously have to attribute it as well, but that you've understood what the scholar is saying and you can work it into what you're wanting to say about the text.

ROB MOORE: Absolutely. And do you find with your students that they get a bit paranoid that they might be plagiarising by accident? And they might be, so they're almost scared to use other people's ideas?

ANACTORIA CLARKE: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, it's not plagiarising if you acknowledge where you have them from. But we-- I've written a PhD on literature and I've used plenty of other people's ideas in there. I couldn't have written 100,000 words on my own just with stuff that's in my head. So we absolutely do want you to take on board those secondary sources and those critical ideas. That's not a problem, so don't be worried about plagiarising as long as you acknowledge where those ideas have come from.

What your tutor can do then is help you to refine how you're using them. But if you acknowledge where they come from and you give your tutor enough to give you guidance on it, that's absolutely fine. That's not plagiarism.

ROB MOORE: Fantastic. And over to you, Mike, for a second about STEM and Computing. Is it a similar approach there, or do you find that you rely on more theories and ideas from other people in your faculty?

MIKE RICHARDS: It's very similar. We do want students to realise that you go beyond the module material. So if you're just starting out with us at level 1, most of what you're going to draw on is in the module texts themselves. And if we need you to look at other resources in your assignments, we will say specifically in the assignment where you're to go, what sources you should use, and how you should use them.

As you move through your study level to level 2, level 3 and you're working towards final year projects or dissertations, the expectation is that you would use these external sources. So whether it's Wikipedia, which is a great starting point for your research, or using academic journals or technical reports, we would expect you to use them though we may not specifically tell you to do so. So at second or third level and certainly at postgraduate, the expectation is there that you will do it without us giving you any guidance. And we'd also expect you to use them in a much more formal method. So this is where referencing comes in. So if you look at the back of your Open University materials, quite often you will see a list of sources the authors have drawn on. And they're-- they're summarised in a very brief, rather terse format, and this is academic referencing. It's a skill we do teach at undergraduate and postgraduate level-- that it's necessary. Because what it's doing is demonstrating that you used an external source and that other people can then go to that source and see whether you reported it accurately.

So yes, use them. Don't be worried about plagiarism so long as you're telling us where you got the information from. Because if we don't know where it came from, we can't give you any guidance on whether you reported it accurately, tell you what you should do if you miss something. I'd also encourage you, because if you're using references and we see it in an assignment, your tutor is going to say, well done. And if you do it-- if you do lots of it or you do it where it wasn't really expected, your tutor is going to be really happy and is bound to put a nice comment in your marked assignment.

ROB MOORE: And as tutors, we love to be happy and give good, positive feedback. So what do you think about feedback if you've already started your studies with us? What do you think about the feedback that you've been getting from your tutor? Why not give us some examples in the chat of the types of things that your tutor has said. Maybe they've given you some good advice. The feedback we give is there to help you develop these skills and to grow.

And Anactoria, I know that you've been involved in writing some support materials for students to help with their academic skills. What are the sorts of things that you would advise students to do as they progress and develop from level 1 through level 2 and 3?

ANACTORIA CLARKE: Yeah, I think even at level 2 and 3 quite often we point you in the direction of some scholars-- scholarly sources that you can use. So there will quite often be a steer particularly for

TMA's of where you should have a look at things. Certainly at the end of some of the level 2 modules I teach, we give you direct links to articles that we want you to read and things like that.

But just showing that you've got an awareness really of what are appropriate sources is quite important, and this is something that we do build in to level 1 study and the things on academic integrity. Mike mentioned Wikipedia, which is an absolutely great starting point for anybody trying to find something out. And they often have a list of references, but it's just making sure that the stuff that you're using is peer reviewed, that it's come from a verified source, which is really important. And make sure that what's there hasn't just been made up by somebody on the street who had a dream about a novel and decided to write it down.

ROB MOORE: And I think that one-- the example of Wikipedia is a great one, and I'm with you both there. For me, I think it's a great starting point to give you some inspiration and some directions to travel. But you do have to be careful because you can't always make a judgement on whom put the entry in. I have a lovely story about Wikipedia that I can't share in this session because it's not suitable to be recorded, but where somebody edited the name of a person on Wikipedia and they ended up being given an award with the adjusted rude name on it. Because the person had used Wikipedia before, they engraved the name on the award.

But yeah, great place to start. And it's that skill of being able to judge your sources. Knowing where it came from. Is it reliable, is it authentic? And also making sure that it's doing what you want it to do. Sometimes we look at a source and we forget-- we might not consider why it was created in the first place. So are we using it out of context?

While we're talking about using things out of context, Mike, we had a chat the other day about artificial intelligence and how that's moving forwards. And we-- during the session last night we had a bit of a discussion about the extent to which artificial intelligence could be impacting on assignments. Could you share some of your thoughts on that, and where do you think we're going in terms of things like ChatGPT?

MIKE RICHARDS: Yeah, we knew that ChatGPT was going to come up sooner or later, didn't we? Would it help if I just quickly whip through what ChatGPT is in case there's some people here who are wondering what on Earth I'm talking about? OK. Rob, would that help?

ROB MOORE: Yes, sorry. Sorry, Mike, yes. Yeah, if you could just give us a quick overview. Because as you say it's been in the news a lot, but it's not always obvious what it is or what it can do. So what is it?

MIKE RICHARDS: Absolutely. Well, so-- yeah, OK. So one of the words you'll hear about ChatGPT is what's called a chatbot, which is where you type something in on a computer and it responds back to you again as text. And they've been around since the early 1970s, but ChatGPT really is a huge leap forward for this technology.

It's what artificial intelligence research would call a large language model. And what that means-- it's basically gobbled up huge amounts of free text on the internet. Billions and billions of words. And what it's done is it's calculated the statistical relationships between individual words and how they fit together in sentences. So when you type your request into ChatGPT, say, tell me about how a computer works, it

then searches through the billions and billions of words it's been trained on and produces a sentence about computers that reads as-- as good, structured English.

But the important thing about ChatGPT is it doesn't know in this case what a computer is. It is just putting words together in a meaningful order. So it produces what looks like really good text. However, that text can be complete nonsense. For instance, a couple of weeks ago I was playing with it and I asked for it to come up with a delicious recipe incorporating canned fish and chocolate.

And it sort of said, well this is an unusual flavour combination and then produced a recipe for a chocolate mousse to which you add a can of tuna. And it said at the end of it, your guests will be delighted and surprised by this dish. ChatGPT doesn't realise that under no circumstances should you ever mix chocolate and fish, but it was able to produce a meaningful sentence out of it. Which means if you're a student and you're asking it to help answer your assignments, it will produce text that is meaningful and look superficial, but it can be either partially or completely wrong.

So this is a technology we would say at the moment, play with it. It's a lot of fun, it does have some uses, but under no circumstances should you be using it for your assignments. Not least because under a reading of the Open University Code of Practice for students, it would be considered plagiarism because the work isn't actually your own. It's the product of ChatGPT.

As an institution, we are aware of it. It's come on very fast. Even dedicated artificial intelligence researchers were surprised how sophisticated ChatGPT was, and they really weren't expecting this for several more years. So the institution and other universities is trying to see how we can use this technology and how we can give guidance to students to use it in a useful manner.

There are lots of ways we can see in the future of using chat ChatGPT. Perhaps as a study buddy if you don't have a cat or indeed a snake to hand, or perhaps as a some-- an informed sort of always available there tutor who can give you a little bit of guidance in how to summarise information.

We can't say, don't use this technology, it should never be used, because it's going to be everywhere soon. We've all talked about ChatGPT. It's only one of several products out there that are using these large language models. Google has one called Bard. There is another one developed by Meta, who own Facebook, which is called LLaMA, and that is being widely used. I think there's another one called Dall-E which has also come out quite recently and is in widespread use.

And ChatGPT, which is owned by a company called OpenAI which is in turn partially owned by Microsoft. So Microsoft itself is incorporating some of the features of-- the underlying features of ChatGPT into its Bing search engine. So for the few people who don't use Google, if you use Bing you can now get search results that look much more like regular English interpretations of knowledge.

And also Microsoft is going to be incorporating ChatGPT-like technology into future releases of Office where they're going to call it Copilot. And what you'll be able to do is ask it to summarise documents for you and suggest ways of wording things. So it's pointless, us saying don't use it, because the tools we expect you to use to write your assignments such as search engines, such as word processors, such as spreadsheets are all going to incorporate it. We can't turn it back.

Give us some time. We will give you a student's proper guidance on how to use this technology. We're going to write materials about when you should trust it, when you shouldn't trust it. But at the moment, please don't use it in your assignments. We can detect it. So if you use ChatGPT and use its outputs in your assignments, we can actually spot it and it will be treated as plagiarism, which is not a good outcome for anybody.

ROB MOORE: No. Thank you for that, Mike. That's told me quite a few more things that I didn't know about ChatGPT. And again, I think the thing-- the point you're making now is really interesting. We're not trying to stop people using tools. We're not trying to stop people using sources. But as with any search engine, it is a tool for you to use. It is a source for you to use. And when we come to using other people's ideas, it's about taking those concepts, taking those ideas, taking those thoughts and using them to build our own arguments and develop our own points.

So a good word of warning there. Don't say to ChatGPT, please write my assignment. Because first of all, it won't be a very good assignment. And secondly, if you get found out there could be some penalties. We are going to touch on that in the next session-- some of the challenges about using people's ideas inappropriately.

I'm going to come to Anactoria and Mike in a second. I'm going to ask you to give me some examples of where you've seen people use ideas really well or inappropriately. So I'm going to give a couple of-- a quick example of my own, and then we'll move on to examples from Anactoria.

So my example-- so I work in the Faculty of Business and Law, so I'm a business tutor and I had one student who wanted to support their argument by using module text. And they were using the ideas from the theorists in the module materials, and what they did were they copied out long pieces of argument and put them in alongside their statement. So they made a statement and supported it by a long quote from the module.

And that's the right way to think, but in presenting it within the assignment what they needed to do was to actually take that idea and apply it and use it and explain how it supported their point of view, rather than just present the text from the-- the theorist they were using. And that's the difference between copying somebody's idea and putting it in and there being somebody else's words, and using that theory to support it.

And we want to see a lot more examples of you developing the ideas and theories of others in your argument and using them. And acknowledging. Then you need to cite the sources you're using and acknowledge them correctly. But just copying the text-- first of all, it flags up. On all of our beautiful electronic systems we get a lovely report that tells you-- tells us what percentage of your answer matches the module materials. And this particular student, it was 49%. So 49% of the text wasn't their own words. That wasn't to say that the thought process was wrong in terms of the sources they were using. It's just the way they used it. So Anactoria, have you got any examples of where you've seen that with students' work, or where you've perhaps had to give them a bit of guidance? Or maybe some really good examples where students have done it?

ANACTORIA CLARKE: Yeah. I mean, I think I've got a similar one to the one that you gave, Rob, in that it was the right thought processes. And a student had gone and they'd looked at some scholarly articles and clearly been very interested in what they'd read and they'd been really invigorated by it. And they'd used it in their TMA, but actually some of the stuff that they'd put in wasn't helping them answer the question. It was taking them off onto a bit of a tangent.

So-- and I think we find this, don't we, as scholars ourselves? We'll read something and we'll think, that's a really interesting point. But then essentially you have to bring it back to, is it entirely relevant to what I'm

writing at the moment or is it just something that actually is really interesting about this text, but doesn't really fit into to what my focus is?

So yeah, it was a case of the student was doing all the right things. They were going to the secondary sources, they were getting really excited about the text and what they were reading about it. But they just needed to do that double check of, does this point actually help me answer the question?

ROB MOORE: Brilliant, yeah. And we see that all-- and again, this is one of the skills that you develop. As you move through your university journey, you're going to enhance these skills and you'll get better at it. Mike, have you got any examples of where students have done this particularly well or particularly badly?

MIKE RICHARDS: Well, yes. One of the big things-- and-- is quite often we'll ask students to basically summarise a topic. And perhaps we have-- there are two positions here. So I teach at level 1. I teach aspects of computing law. So there are several large pieces of legislation, and they have good points and bad points. And what we will ask students to do is sometimes to summarise the good points and the bad points of-- of a piece of legislation or a particular case and then come to a conclusion.

And there are two things we're asking in that question. The first is we're asking you to look at the breadth of the argument. So to look at, say, the pro points of a piece of legislation and the cons of that argument. And you need to look at them both and to look at them more or less equally-- give them equal weight before you come to your conclusion, which you can then take an opinion on.

So quite often we will see a student will take the side of the argument they already agree with and then pay less attention to the side they disagree with. And yes, that's fine when you come to writing your opinion. But you have to as an academic study give equal weight or good weighting to both sides of an argument, particularly where it's finely balanced such as in cases of law.

On the other side where I've seen it done very well-- I also teach a postgraduate cybersecurity module, and one of the things we do in our assessment there is we ask our students, most of whom are employed and in roles that are relevant to the module-- we ask them to use their personal experience and then relate that to the academic documents. We ask them to go and do the research.

So they go to the Open University Library, which is a great online resource for these things, they find some peer reviewed journals, and then they apply the findings in those papers to their work. So they're actually linking their personal experience, but they're backing it up with the academic material. And if they do that and they reference it properly, they're going to score very highly.

ROB MOORE: And it's a really good point about the OU library and the resources that we've got there. And I don't know if everybody watching is aware, but the library run online training sessions to help with a whole range of different topics and approaches. And there are sessions on finding and using sources appropriately, as well as sessions on referencing. Some really good opportunities.

If you go to the library home page, you can see all of the training sessions that are coming up if you want to join live as you do here. And there are-- those sessions are also recorded, so if you want to see the past ones. To be honest I don't run sessions on referencing with my students anymore. The library does it so well, I send people there and say they do it far better than I could. So if one of your questions is about referencing or citing sources, have a look at some of the library resources.

One of the things you said there, Mike, about opinion-- that's a really interesting word. So when you're writing assignments, one of the things to be careful of is how much of your own thought or opinion goes into it. In the assignments that I mark there are instances where I want some personal reflection and I want some personal opinion, but the majority of questions that are asked, I want them to be argued from an academic point of view objectively. So Anactoria, is that the same in English literature? Is that what you're looking for, or do you want more of a personal opinion in your assignments?

ANACTORIA CLARKE: I think it's fine to have a stance on the question in the text. That's absolutely fine. I think as human beings we can't help but have an opinion about something. But what I've found in my own personal experience is my initial opinion can change once I start looking at text closely and trying to evidence the points that I'm trying to make.

So what I'd always say to students is it's fine if-- you can not like a character. You can think a particular thing about the answer to a question. Because we all look at a TMA question and maybe have an initial thought about how we want to answer it and what we think we're going to find, but what we need to then do is check that actually the text backs us up with that.

So going through the text, can you evidence things? Can you show that and support that opinion maybe with that evidence? And if you can, then it becomes a scholarly interpretation rather than just, "I hated that character" with no actual reason why. You then have a scholarly reason for hating that character, which is always more satisfying.

ROB MOORE: Oh, I like that. Come up with a scholarly reason for hating something. That's what you want. A really justified example. I'm going to give an example of where one of my former students used a source-- used a source really effectively, and this is a module I taught on a few years ago. and this particular student was the director of an adoption agency and he was on a module with us that was very much focused on workplace and personal experiences and what you're doing.

And what stood out-- and I use this example a lot because it really struck me how well somebody could use a source that was a little bit obscure. And what this guy did is he needed to come up with a project or a suggestion for changing-- making change in the workplace. And the suggestion he came up with was to buy a sofa and a coffee table. And that was it. That was the crux of his project-- was to buy a sofa and a coffee table, which in itself isn't massively impressive.

But what he did was he went to the sources that he'd used. He used some discussions from people about emotional intelligence and how people related to each other and how the environment in which discussions were taking place were important. And he went on to discuss the fact that in his office, if you wanted to make a coffee went to the kitchen, which was effectively a work surface with a kettle and a toaster. You made a cup of coffee, then you brought it back to the desk and you sat on either side of the desk drinking coffee with a big monitor and a printer on it.

And he used the discussions around making people comfortable and negotiations and brought it into the context that a lot of the people visiting him in his office were people who were looking to adopt. They wanted to have very personal conversations, they wanted to make some life-changing decisions. And it was all talked about in the context of the theories that he'd read-- making them feel comfortable.

And he'd interpreted that as, well actually, sitting down and having a coffee-- that's great. People are relaxed when they're having a drink, but it's not so relaxing if you're peering over somebody's computer



screen or their laptop. And he-- and he actually did this as part of his project-- went out, bought a coffee table and a sofa and a comfy chair and he made an area in the office specifically for having those conversations.

And the reason I really liked that particular example is because there isn't a theory called "the theory of the coffee table" or "the theory of the sofa." He'd interpreted these different approaches and these different ideas and he contextualised it within his situation-- how people felt-- and came up with a very practical approach. And it was one of the highest-scoring assignments I marked that year simply because of the way he'd taken these different sources, taken out the bits that he needed, combined them together to give a really clear justification for the action that he'd taken.

Just to remind you all that in the next session we're going to be answering your questions. So if you've got a question you want to ask about using ideas, or maybe you've got some examples to share with us, pop them in the chat and then we can come back to those in the next session.

So Mike, what would you say is the hardest thing when you're marking somebody's work? What's the hardest thing about separating out the theory they're using and what the student said? Because I often get students come to me and say, well, I don't want to reference everything because I made it up. It came out of my head, so what have I got to reference? I get that quite a few times. So do you find there's a challenge in separating that out when you're doing your marking?

MIKE RICHARDS: Perhaps less so in our area, because certainly at our introductory levels and through to level 2 we're very clear where we expect-- we do expect students to provide references and to say where they're getting the information from. Quite often we will have templates for things such as essays and-- essays, so we might actually have a section called a literature review, which is where you summarise the sources you have used.

And the marking guide to the markers basically says, have they provided evidence they-- the student has actually read these articles? And unfortunately if there's no evidence, the markers can't award the marks. Now we're always-- we'd like to give the benefit of the doubt wherever we can, but if an answer is just information and it doesn't have any references, we can only give partial marks at best. Because it could be a correct answer, it could be factually correct, but without knowing where the information comes from we can't give the marks for the referencing.

So it is-- it's an annoyance when you start as a student. It's a very odd way of working perhaps to have to go away and try and justify almost everything you're saying. That's why modules do have these sessions about information literacy, about using the library, and about referencing. I know they can-- they may not be the reason people sign up for a module, and they sometimes can seem a little bit tedious or a little bit abstract. But it is a really useful skill certainly as you study at university, but also in wider life.

Because knowing the ability to go away and look for sources of information and work on their credibility is increasingly important for all of us. We've just come out of COVID. I don't know how many times I saw someone online saying, I've done some research on the internet and vaccines don't work or whatever. Or you-- or you didn't have to be very long on social media before someone-- you bump into someone who says the world-- the Earth is flat or it was created 6,000 years ago because I did some research on the internet.

And yes, there are people on the internet who say the Earth is flat, vaccines don't work, and the Earth is only 6,000 years old, but are they credible? And having the ability to go back and look for your sources, to

find the authoritative sources and be able to list them in your own work basically adds credibility to you because you are saying, I'm drawing on the work of credible other people.

So vaccines and dinosaurs and Earth flat thing is an extreme example, but I'm looking for evidence when I come to marking and when I write assignments, because part of our role as central academics is to write assignments. I try to structure the questions I set to you to indicate I'm expecting you to go and use references.

So if you're a new student and you're just starting, I will tell you if you need to use references. But as you become more advanced, I'm expecting you to do it. And so do it-- always do it if you can. Do it if you're told to. And if you're in any doubt, ask your tutor. And if they don't, know they can ask the module team whether referencing is expected.

And yeah, we don't write trick questions. That's the other thing I think is really important. We tell you what we want you to do. We don't-- we don't play with you. So if we say use referencing, use it. And if we don't say it, make a judgement call for yourself. And if it's not clear, go and talk to your tutor. They're nice people.

ROB MOORE: Absolutely. Some of us are nice. We try to be. We try to be. I have a special injection once every four months to keep me nice. But no, absolutely. One of the things that I do write occasionally is, I'm having to read between the lines here to figure out where you got this from. And another thing I write quite often is, state the blooming obvious. Just because it's obvious to you, we sometimes need it explaining because we can't read between the lines.

So thank you both for that. That's been fantastic. I'm going to ask Heidi to give us a quick update on what we're hearing in the chat at the moment. So Heidi, what are people talking about at the moment?

HEIDI: Well you were talking there about tutors being lovely, and actually that leads me on perfectly to some of the comments that we've had in the chat. We asked earlier about some of the feedback that students have been getting from tutors and what that experience has been like, and it's really positive, which is really nice to see. So Helen said that her tutor has been great. David said, "my tutor is very supportive." David had to defer last year, and "my tutor and student support team were really supportive, which is great." And Suzy also says that "my tutor is very approachable and supportive." And then going back to this ChatGPT conversation, which is absolutely fascinating. This is brand new to me so I'm really, really enjoying this conversation. I've had lots and lots of apps advertised to me recently about ChatGPT saying this can save you so much time, and I was thinking, oh, that seems a little bit too good to be true. So this is really, really interesting.

David's got a couple of great suggestions. So David says that he uses Grammarly to check for plagiarism and for grammar checks. And I swear by Grammarly. I used it for all of my post-grad. It was fantastic. And Emily also uses the same. Also finds that really useful. David has also shared a video, What Computers Can't Do with Kevin Buzzard, which is a Royal Institute lecture from five years ago. So that's in the chat. If anyone wants to go and have a look, you can copy that link and have a look at that.

And then finishing off with a fantastic point from Helen. She says, if you ask ChatGPT, should I use a hammer or a fish to push in a nail, it will always answer fish every time. So that might be something that others want to try doing. I'm certainly going to give that one a go and see if that happens.

ROB MOORE: I've been doing it wrong for the last 50 years. Goodness me. I always use a hammer, so ChatGPT obviously knows something I don't know there. So thank you for-- for that, Heidi.

So we're coming towards the end of the session, so just to pull out some of the key points we've made so far-- and we're going to be coming back over some more examples after the break. Things to remember. We want you to use other people's ideas. We want you to use their sources and their concepts. In fact, your learning outcomes quite often make that an explicit aim. So you need to not only do it, you need to do it in a way that your tutor can recognise it and give you marks for it.

The worst thing I ever write on an assignment that fails is, this could have been written by somebody who hasn't studied the module. I write that more often than you would think. You will not pass an assignment if your tutor is looking at it and thinks, that could have been given to somebody off the street who's never heard of the Open University and they could have come up with that answer. So using the ideas and the concepts of other people, your module materials, things we all allow students and tutors-- that's where your marks are going to come from.

So after the break we're going to touch on some of the-- some advice and some consequences. Don't forget, you've still got time to put some questions in which we'll look at over the break so we can answer them properly for you in the next session. And during the break we've got a couple of videos coming up. We've got one of my favourite videos, the plagiarism video from the Help Centre. And this features a character called Bob, obviously my favourite for various reasons.

And then we've got a video from Zack about the student support team and how they can help. And then there's a short video about how you can get the best out of the OU Library. So that's all in the break. And just before we go to the break I'd just like to say thank you again to Anactoria and Mike. Thank you for your contributions. That's been fantastic.

Hopefully everybody's got more of an insight into how the OU expects them to use other people's ideas. And a really interesting discussion on AI. And I'm sure we'll be coming back to this, and I can see a session coming up next year. Once we've got those official policies around artificial intelligence, we'll be coming back there. So thanks again everyone, and we'll see you all after the break.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Hello and welcome back. Hopefully you found those videos informative. And we really recommend some of the library resources and some of the library training sessions. So you've been busy posting your questions to us, and we're going to come onto those in a second. And for this session I'm joined by Chelle. So Chelle is a staff tutor in WELS, which is Well-being, Education, and Language Skills, and also in Education, Childhood, Youth, and Support-- ECYS.

And we've got Helen with us. So Helen is a fellow tutor of mine. We work on a module together-- postgraduate module together. But Helen is the person in the title who's the poacher turned gamekeeper gone back to poacher again. So Helen was an MBA student with the OU, became a tutor, and now is gone back and is studying law. So we're going to be interested in some of Helen's views on how we have-- how she's developed her skills in using theories and ideas.

But first we're going to go to Heidi. So, Heidi, what have people been talking about during the break, and can you give us the first question you want us to try and tackle?

HEIDI: Absolutely. Well I will admit, I'm a little bit confused about what's happened in the chat. There's been a little bit of an explosion of some confusing conversations going on. So Matt, who's my colleague here at Student Hub Live, posted a very interesting question for our guests in the chat and we've had lots and lots of responses. And there's lots of conversations going on about crocodiles and hawks, and rats and hawks. And yeah, I'm sorry. I'm a little bit confused about what's going on, but lots of people responding to that question in the chat.

And yes, lots of questions have been coming through, so let's start with the first question. This is from Helen. So have any of the OU tutors tried getting ChatGPT to see what it does with assignment questions?

ROB MOORE: OK. So, Chelle, would you like to-- have you any experience of that yet? Have you-- have you tried out ChatGPT at all? --on mute. Can you turn your mic on? OK. I think Chelle's mic's on mute at the moment, so we'll just get that sorted. And while Chelle's sorting that, Helen, what about you? Have you had a go at one of the AIs? Have you tried ChatGPT to generate an answer?

HELEN MELLARS: [INAUDIBLE] if anyone asks me that. But I should be honest and say I haven't. So, no. Have you tried it at all?

ROB MOORE: I've had a go, yes.

HELEN MELLARS: Have you? Very good.

ROB MOORE: In our faculty we've had a bit of a tutor discussion about this, though as Mike said in the previous session, there are no official guidelines yet. It's very much early stages. And I think every university is looking at this themselves. So we had a go in the business school and asked ChatGPT to give us a business strategy for a company-- a similar question to a TMA. And what it came up with-- and I think in the previous session Mike summed it up really well. ChatGPT isn't very creative. It looks at what's there, it reassembles it, and it gives a credible though not particularly creative or critical answer. And what we found was if we were to mark it, yeah, it would probably have got a pass. It would have been a low grade pass. Again, we're coming from our faculty, we're coming from business, and the reason it wouldn't have scored highly was because it was really stating-- making statements rather than challenging or criticising or developing arguments. So we did have a bit of a go. I mean, we were quite surprised that we would have given it a pass. So that was a bit of a surprise. Well—

HELEN MELLARS: Yeah?

ROB MOORE: It definitely wouldn't be a tool that would help somebody to achieve a better grade, but I was going to say, that was us having a bit of a play as tutors.

HELEN MELLARS: Interesting.

ROB MOORE: How is Chelle? Chelle, have we got your sound back now?

CHELLE OLDHAM: Can you hear me now?

ROB MOORE: Oh, that's it. Yes, that's perfect. So have you—

CHELLE OLDHAM: I apologise.

ROB MOORE: --had any experiences of trying out ChatGPT?

CHELLE OLDHAM: Yes. When it all came out we were expecting it, so lecturers in OU and elsewhere have all been trying it out to see what answers it might provide for assignment questions. The one caveat that I would say and certainly share with students is it-- it does offer the very, very, very similar answers for-- for all the questions. So if ten students put the same assignment question in, it will provide very similar answers and will-- it's likely that it would be picked up by Turnitin.

ROB MOORE: So it might not say that it's ChatGPT, but it might suggest that these students have been colluding and working together to come up with an answer. So hopefully that answers your question, Helen. If you've got any more, obviously add them in the chat box. This is a very flexible session that we're going through, so we're happy to expand on these questions we go through. Now Heidi, what's the next question that we've got?

HEIDI: A great one from Andy here. So just following on from that conversation a little bit more, can we expect it to evolve again? So this ChatGPT, can we expect it to evolve again and become even more sophisticated?

ROB MOORE: Oh no. Go on, Chelle, what do you think? So you've been having some discussions in your role about it, so where do you see it going?

CHELLE OLDHAM: Yeah, so lots of the academic conduct officers have talked about ChatGPT and other AI. It probably will evolve. It's something that is evolving all the time. But my advice to students is unless your lecturers, unless your tutors [AUDIO OUT], I would steer clear of it for now.

ROB MOORE: I think that's-- I think it's-- we're in the very early stages. I think there are lots of organisations playing catch-up. It's hard to say where it's going to go because I hadn't heard of this till January. That was the first time I came across it, and it was a friend of mine who's a PhD student in-- who actually works in artificial intelligence. And yeah, just talking to somebody who is an expert in the field, the potential for it to develop is amazing.

So it will develop. How far it will go, what will be put in place to control it I don't know. There will have to be things put in place. It's a really useful tool. You can definitely see the nature of some jobs changing as a result of it. I can imagine just doing a whole session on this one day, but we will stick to it in terms of the using ideas for now.

And the warning there from Chelle is really good. Avoid using it and copying from it for your assignments because you will be found out. It is not a unique output. So we have lots of-- lots of technology that's looking for these specific ideas. So, Chelle, in your work on the academic conduct team, what sort of things get flagged up?

And I know we're not looking to punish, so the point of the team is not to go out and hunt down students who accidentally plagiarise. But there are consequences if students don't engage with the team and develop, so I just thought-- useful to see some of your experiences of your work on that team.

CHELLE OLDHAM: Yeah, we all work together as a team to offer student [AUDIO OUT] and improve their answers to TMAs and various assessments. And the idea of the team is to actually prevent students plagiarising either on purpose or accidentally and to teach students how to write effectively. So the goal of the team is not necessarily to punish any of those students.

We want to make sure that everybody is supported and that students, even if they do flag up through one of the pieces of software like Turnitin, we work with those students to improve their understanding of referencing and citation and to understand the power of paraphrasing. So if you are going to use ChatGPT, you could paraphrase the output from it, but you will struggle in terms of references and citations and where those sources have come from.

So one of the most recent examples that I wanted to share was we did a training session with a group of students. And we do that quite often either in groups or individually. And when the students submitted their work, it was perfectly referenced. So the references were correct, the citations were correct. They had things in italics and quotation marks. It was great.

The problem was that it came up as a 90% match on Turnitin. Now Turnitin doesn't detect plagiarism. It just shows matched text. And it came up as a 90% matched text, and what the student had done is they had chosen to use very, very long quotations so that 90% of their assessment was actually other people's work from the sources that they had read, from the sources they had chosen to use.

So it wasn't technically plagiarised, so there was no punishment or anything like that around plagiarism because they had referenced everything correctly. But they did fail the assignment because only 10% was their own writing and only 10% could be marked in terms of their own understanding of the things that they had read.

So even if you do know how to reference really well, just remember that an assignment or any assessment-- it's testing your understanding of a topic, so you can't just reference copied text or matched text. You'll still struggle to get a pass mark if you do that.

ROB MOORE: I think that point is so important, that what you're being assessed on, what you're being judged on are your own words. If you copy an entire assignment and you state that you've copied the entire assignment and you cite it, it's not plagiarism but you get zero marks because there's none of your own work there.

Just looking at the next question, are Roberts-- sorry, are robots the next big thing? No, but Roberts are. So that's my answer to that one. Heidi, what's our next question?

HEIDI: Moving on from that one, then. So Sinead, I'm using materials to understand critical writing but not meeting the mark in the essay. So I think that we definitely just picked up on that there, but perhaps to expand a little bit more for Sinead, perhaps with some ideas on how we can provide some support there.

ROB MOORE: I'll bring this one over to you then, Helen. So as a tutor and a student, how are you making sure you're meeting the critical element? And OK, this is something that we develop in our level 2, level 3 post-graduate students-- is this critical evaluation, critical thinking. So what do you do to make sure that's in your work, and how do you advise your students?

HELEN MELLARS: Yeah, and it's very interesting, Robert, because obviously going back into now being a student it reminds me first of all, 500 words doesn't last very long. And that's probably one of the key things. And it's about-- and it was interesting just listening to the conversation now. It's almost about what do you take out?

Because I think as a student you want to include everything you possibly can to demonstrate I've understood the module material, I've understood the question, and put lots and lots of information, but actually then miss that piece, which is, where's the assessment of it? Where's my critical thinking? Where have I demonstrated that I've understood it, but actually is there a contrast that I could bring in or an alternative sort of theory that I could use to perhaps support or further push the argument.

And I think for me now, again it's kind of really reinforced it going back into student mode, which is I don't tell everything. I need to really carefully plan what elements I want to bring to life and then make sure that I'm actually applying that critical assessment to it and using evidence, supporting my evidence, referencing, and all of that piece really.

So I think that's-- that's the bit. Because it's a challenge, right? Because that's one of the things we say is it's easy to say here's everything that goes on in our world, but now sort of say from a business point of view how would you actually start to analyse it and provide that critical assessment?

ROB MOORE: And I think there's an element of having that sceptical eye. Where did this come from? Why did they write it? What's the purpose behind it? Who was involved? And it's not just taking things that are presented to you at face value, and this me is one of those challenges. When we get students that come in at level 1 and we start to introduce the-- the fact that there are all these models and theories around there and we start to get students to realise that these things exist and recognise them.

But the next stage then is to say, oh yes, they exist, but why do they exist? What's the purpose? Why was it written? And those are the skills you develop as you go up through the different levels. Challenging, looking for the purposes, looking for the appropriate use of these different ideas. And the best question that you can ask once you've written a piece is, so what?

You make a number of statements. So what? What's come out of that? What's the important thing? Where does it lead? Where does it take me? We want your arguments and your theories and your discussions to take us somewhere. We want to be convinced by your argument. Rather than just see that you've blindly taken on board what somebody said, we want you to challenge it a little. And that's absolutely essential.

Once you get to level 3 and post-graduate, we don't want you to believe everything that you're told. We want you to challenge it. Challenge your tutors, you know? Apart from me, not all tutors are infallible. No, we are there to be challenged. And if you've got a different point of view, a different idea or you want to know where we get our ideas from, ask us. Because if we can't justify it, then we shouldn't be writing it. So feel free to be-- critically evaluate your feedback as well. Be nice challenge.

Any more questions left, Helen? Sorry, Heidi?

HEIDI: Yeah. I'm going to go to a question that we've had in from Georgia here, which is a great one. So novels often contain facts without attribution. What are your thoughts on referencing in creative writing?

ROB MOORE: Now this is where we need Anactoria back from her expertise on English literature, I think. Yeah, that's a really interesting question. Chelle, have you've got any thoughts on that? So the facts that are in novel-- so how would you reference things in creative writing? Have you any experience in that area?

CHELLE OLDHAM: If you're answering a question about a piece of creative writing, then reference the novel. If you're creating a piece of creative writing and you want to put those facts in, I imagine that it's covered by the literary rules in terms of if it's a piece of fiction, it-- you can put whatever you want in there. It's a piece of fiction. If it's a piece of factual writing, something that might be in a magazine for example, then you can reference and include citations. And you'll see that in pieces of factual writing.

So it's the difference between something that's fact and fiction. We can argue that there are facts within a piece of fiction, but ultimately something that's a novel for example is a piece of fiction, so you wouldn't see citations within a piece of fiction. Whereas if you were writing an article for National Geographic for example, then you would see citations. And if you're talking about the novel, then reference the novel.

ROB MOORE: Yeah, I think that's-- that's really-- it's not an area that I've been involved with. But yes, I can see that. If you're producing the creative piece yourself, then you wouldn't expect things. But if you're commenting or you're developing an argument on a piece, then yes, citation would definitely come through. Heidi, any more questions? We've got time for one more if there is any more?

HEIDI: Yes, we've got one more from Ian. So, would you agree it's better and more productive to work on the feedback your tutor provides you with than to know how a piece of work is marked?

ROB MOORE: OK. So, Helen, how do you do with feedback? Because I know as a tutor, the worst student to have is a fellow-- a fellow tutor because it makes it really hard. So how do you deal with feedback from your tutor, and any points on that question that you can give to Ian?

HELEN MELLARS: So I think-- I think again what it's demonstrated is how much as a student you just-- you really need that feedback, you want that feedback, and as detailed as possible in some ways. I always look through to see what the tutor has said, what feedback I've got. And I think in answer to Ian's



question, I tend to take that on board as my first point, if you like, for when I'm creating the next or answering the next assignment.

So I would say that's probably the bit that I focus on first-- what feedback I've been given, how I can address it, what needs to be improved for next time, and all those different elements. But I do think it's still interesting to understand how something has been marked simply to understand how you've got to that position. Because if there's something that you're not sure of or you need to know a bit more about, then I think it's quite good to understand if you like almost the process behind it.

I think the other thing is, both as-- in both roles now as a student and also from a tutor point of view, if anyone gets feedback they're not sure about or it doesn't make sense or they don't agree with, come talk to us. And I think you've said it as well, Rob, but I think that's the thing I always encourage all of my students to do.

If you're not sure and if you don't agree, come back and talk to us and we can go through it. Obviously you can explain the position. And it's good to really understand it from a student perspective as well. So yeah. So I think-- I read it, I take it in, I apply it the next time round. But if I'm unsure about anything, go back, speak to your tutor. That's what we're there for.

ROB MOORE: Thank you, Helen. We've just had another question pop in that-- specifically, what do you do if you don't agree with the feedback that you've received from a tutor? So I'll answer this first of all by saying that there are specific appeals processes. If you want to find them, you go to the Help Centre. It's a nice link at the top of Student Home in the right hand corner. And just type in the word appeals, and there is a process to go through.

The first stage of the process is exactly what Helen's just said, which is talk to your tutor. Believe it or not, students don't always like what I say. I'm quite blunt. I'm blunt because I want students to improve, so I give some very pointed feedback. And if they don't agree with it, the offer is always there that we can sit down and-- I love teams. We can have a proper face-to-face teams meeting and we can run through the points.

Strangely, having done this for just over 20 years now, I've never had a student after we've had that discussion who's come back and said, I still disagree with you. Once we've gone through the detail of what I'm looking for, why I made the points I made, then the students realise what it is I'm after. I mean, they might have misunderstood or didn't necessarily agree with the way the question was presented or why I was looking for it, but once we've had a good look and a discussion, we always come out.

And I think in 20 years I have changed marks four times where a student -- And that's-- again, we're not perfect. Somebody's put something in and I missed what they'd put in, so it's worth having the chat. But always do it in a positive way. Don't just go to your tutor and say, I disagree with that. Can we have a chat? Because that won't get you a good response.

What you need to do is do it in a proactive, academic way. "You made this comment. Could you explain it in more depth?" Or, "I thought I did this here, or I did that there" so that your tutor has got something to base a conversation on. But it's well worth going and having those conversations.

I think we've run out of time for questions now. So Heidi, just back to you for any other comments that are coming up. Anything that's popped up in the chat since we've been talking through the questions?

HEIDI: I think our audience have been stunned into silence, actually. No, we haven't got any other questions. But it's been great to have everybody's questions in the chat and everybody's comments. It's been really, really dynamic. It's been moving very quickly. So thank you so much to everybody that's contributed to today's session. It's been fantastic. I've certainly learned a lot myself.

ROB MOORE: Fantastic. And fantastic job as always, Heidi. And Helen and Chelle, thank you so much for joining us today and for your input. And a bit of a strange approach. We've not tried this approach before where we just try and answer questions. It's always a bit nerve-racking when we don't know what we're going to talk about when we first appear. But yeah, so thank you for spending the time with us today.

Just a couple of things to point out just before we leave. There is a feedback form we'd like you to complete. Did you like the topic today? Has it inspired any other topics you'd like us to explore? Did you like the format? And also, look out for other sessions coming up. So I know that Isabel is running a session on procrastination on the 25th. Definitely one for me. Anything sparkly and shiny and I'm off. So that's a good session if you struggle with procrastination.

And then I'm working with Nicola on the Carers event on the 28th. Just be aware the time has been changed for that. We had a few people come back and mention to us that 2:00 is a particularly difficult time for carers because they have commitments, so we've moved that particular session forward to 11:00. So if it's one you're planning to go to, just make sure you're aware of the new start time. And it also means we can have a bit of a chat and a coffee over lunch.

So that's it for me today. Thank you to everyone who's joined us. It's been great, and we look forward to seeing you at the next session. Thank you.