Hello, welcome to Studio. We were on Facebook Live, or we were intending to get on Facebook Live and it wouldn't let us. We've now switched to YouTube Live, so hopefully we will stay alive, and spend a pleasant time with you this evening, all you OU students. And I suppose really we need to start by introducing ourselves, Studio hosts. My name's Sue. I'm an honorary life member of the Student's Association, having graduated, oh, a few years ago, but I got my honorary life membership for services rendered, as a volunteer student.

You can't leave.

Yeah, and I can't leave. And it's just lovely to be invited back on the radio. I was the first voice on the first radio show. And so I've got different hosts with me tonight and we will see who they are, why they're here, what they're doing, and hopefully during this time we'll be able to ease you into your studies, because oh, is it tomorrow?

You can't leave.

Right, so who are you and where are you from and why are you here then?

I'm Fanni, I'm Vice President of Media and Campaigns. I've been in my role for two months but I'm an OU student. I'm going into my second year of my business studies full time.

Yes, it is tomorrow.

Yes, and you're an active student as well.

Yeah, I'm an active student. I'm a horse rider, I'm an interpreter, and nothing really interesting about me.

Okey-dokey.

I'm Ellie. I'm going into my second level of English literature, and I think this is my third or fourth time on the radio now. I've lost count, but yeah.

A seasoned pro.

I've done it a few times, yeah. I wouldn't go quite that far, but yeah.
Michael  I’m Michael. Like Ellie, I think we started on the same one as well, so three times. I’m studying full time maths and stats, and going into my third year tomorrow. So hopefully I’ll be done by June, if all goes to plan.

Kat  I’m Kat. I’m doing an open degree and I’m VP Community for the OU Students Association. I’ve been in role about two months now, getting used to it. You’ve probably seen me on Facebook everywhere.

Fanni  Annoying me.

Kat  Posting loads of stuff about meetups with the community.

Sue  So we’ll be able to chat about those later.

Kat  Absolutely.

Sue  Splendid. Right, because you’re out there, all of you, you’ll need to know how to get in contact with us. We have a website. I’m always a bit bad when I come to read the information, oustudents.dot.com for the website. Facebook. Facebook.com/oustudents. Twitter. Do you know what the Twitter one is?

Fanni  OU students?

Sue  Twitter.com/oustudents.

Michael  You missed a significant bit there.

Fanni  Yeah.

Sue  Do you know what the Instagram one is?

Fanni  Instagram.com/oustudentslive.

Sue  Oh, and live. Well done, yes. So that’s Instagram.com/oustudentslive. So get in contact with us, please do, because we’d love to hear from you, whether you’re a new student, a returning student, you’re a student who just wants to ask a question, because no question is a silly question is it? And we’ll be sort of talking a bit about ourselves and our studies and…

Kat  Can we start by talking about the most exciting thing that’s happened recently?
Sue Yes.

Kat Yes? So for the last two weeks it’s been Freshers Week, Freshers Weeks, and there’s been loads of really exciting stuff happening over the last couple of weeks. So we’re coming to the end today so we’re doing our…

Fanni Wrap up session.

Kat Goodbye freshers Studio. So some of you might have seen, there’s been lots of meetups happening over the last two weeks, and indeed either side of these two weeks. We’ve had nearly 150 students going to meetups.

Sue Brilliant.

Kat In 19 different locations so far, so there have been things happening all over the country, meetups in Scotland, meetups in Wales, all over England so…

Fanni Was there one in London?

Kat Yeah, there was a meetup in London that we had 50 students attend. That was really, really great. You took over the British Library didn’t you?

Fanni We ran out of chairs at one point.

Ellie Were you expecting that many people or..?

Fanni Well, I thought about ten or 15 were going to show up and then we sat around this table that was about one square metre with like six chairs at the start and then we moved into another area with like three tables and we had to start moving tables and stealing chairs from like other parts of the library so we could sit people down. So it was really good and most people stayed for the three hours as well.

Kat And I’ll give a shout out to the ten students that came and saw me in Sheffield. (laughs)

Ellie And there’s loads of different meet ups, like I saw on the website there’s ones from like, you know, coffee and a chat to like, cocktail night and stuff like that.

Kat Yeah, a cocktail night is happening in Chester I believe?
Ellie    Yeah.

Sue    Is it?

Kat    It is.

Michael    Are you going?

Sue    Well, I might just take a little jolly jaunt along there.

Kat    But we’ve also had online events happening, so it’s not just been a face to face. We’ve had a community drop in which runs every two weeks. We had a special kind of freshers version yesterday.

Sue    If they’ve missed all of this where would they find the information?


Sue    Thank you.

Fanni    /freshers.

Kat    /freshers.

Sue    Is that forward slash?

Fanni    It’s that way.

Kat    And we’ve also sent out loads and loads of freebies, we sent out nearly 2,000 freebie packs.

Fanni    Did we have 1,000 first and then we ran out?

Kat    We had so many that we had to send more, so the 2,000 students got some free stuff.

Michael    I’m sure some of those 2,000 must be listening. We want to hear from you what you think of your freebies.

Kat    Yeah, absolutely. We want to see pictures of where you’ve put your stickers and your wristbands and…
Fanni: They got sticky notes.
Kat: Sticky notes, yeah.
Fanni: I’m a sticky note collector.
Sue: Always handy as a student to have a sticky note. Do you make notes and put them on the fridge or in the books?
Fanni: I put them on my wall.
Sue: And on the wall.
Kat: Absolutely, and I think there’s been…
Fanni: Yes, we’ve had… What else did we have? We had faculty chat which I was going to host and then I kind of failed to host, but we had all different faculty chats, we had ((0:13:43?)), we had PLEXUS welcome chat, societies.
Kat: Yeah, the faculty chats. We had one for business and law, WELS and…
Sue: What’s WELS?
Kat: Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies. And the faculty of Social Sciences.
Sue: So are these all run by student volunteers?
Kat: We forgot STEM, we can’t forget STEM.
Sue: What’s STEM?
Kat: Science, technology, engineering and maths.
Sue: Maths. Well done, well done.
Fanni: Great acronyms.
Kat: Yeah.
Fanni: Have you guys attended any freshers?
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<td><strong>Ellie</strong></td>
<td>No I haven’t if I’m honest. No, I’ve been moving house the last couple of weeks.</td>
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<td><strong>Fanni</strong></td>
<td>Where to?</td>
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<td><strong>Ellie</strong></td>
<td>Still in Coventry where I live. I’ve just kind of moved down the road really, but yeah, it’s kind of been taking up all my time.</td>
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<td><strong>Fanni</strong></td>
<td>A busy time.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Kat</strong></td>
<td>Yeah.</td>
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<td><strong>Fanni</strong></td>
<td>Well, at least you got it done before modules start.</td>
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<td><strong>Ellie</strong></td>
<td>Exactly, yeah. I was rushing to get it done. I’ve still got to go home and unpack boxes, but yeah.</td>
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<td><strong>Kat</strong></td>
<td>There are still lots of meetups still planned and hopefully some of our lovely new meetup hosts are going to carry on doing meetups regularly, so keep an eye on the website to find out when they are.</td>
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<td><strong>Sue</strong></td>
<td>I saw, I think it was on Facebook, that Manchester had had a meetup and then I think a few days later next month’s, so November’s meetup was posted. So I know that…</td>
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<td><strong>Kat</strong></td>
<td>Yeah, and I believe Cardiff are now doing a regular meetup.</td>
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<td><strong>Ellie</strong></td>
<td>Yeah. I think the one for Milton Keynes is tomorrow between 11 and one at Wetherspoons.</td>
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<td><strong>Kat</strong></td>
<td>Yeah, and that’ll be with me and Fanni, so come along and say hi to us, we’re lovely people, and that will be at Wetherspoons in Milton Keynes, the one nearest the train station. Yeah, we’ll be there from 11.</td>
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<td><strong>Sue</strong></td>
<td>Is it just for chat? Dining? What do students expect?</td>
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<td><strong>Fanni</strong></td>
<td>Just turn up and…</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sue</strong></td>
<td>Just turn up and chat. And how will they recognise it’s you? Because obviously walking into a pub or any other establishment…</td>
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Fanni  Well they'll see me tonight.

Sue    Well they'll see you so they might recognise you but if the pub’s busy is there any way they can recognise a student at a venue when they go to a meetup?

Fanni  That would be the loud ones. No, we'll have stuff on the tables that will suggest that we are…

Sue    Branded goods is it? Like a balloon or something.

Kat    Yeah, most of the time there'll be signs on the tables so don't worry if you’re ever worried about not finding the hosts. There'll be things on the tables to identify the OU students. And we will have more freebies tomorrow if you come to Milton Keynes.

Sue    Because it can be a bit scary can't it if you’re making your first sort of sortie into going and trying to socialise with other students and you don’t recognise anybody.

Fanni  Ahead of the London meetup I had quite a few people messaging me and they were like, “Well you know, I’m knew and I’ve never met anyone and I’m quite nervous,” and then I was like, “Well most people are going to be new and most people are going to be in the exact same shoes as you are.” And as soon as they sat down they were just talking. And at the start I was trying to escort people and guide them around and sit them with a group of people, but after like two sentences it was just like, you’re fine now, you’ve found your little group.

Kat    I think nervousness is quite common for lots of new students.

Sue    And you've actually all got one thing in common haven't you when you meet up because you can say hello, say your name and what you're studying, and that’s the sort of common theme amongst all of you.

Michael It’s great in that it breaks down the barrier that you think you’re the only one doing something or the only one going through stuff.

Ellie  Yeah, I think that’s the same at every uni, it's scary when you go and meet new people isn’t it? It’s easy to forget that you’re all in the same boat and probably no one’s going to know anyone.
Kat Did everyone else kind of have first day nerves when they first started with OU or…?

Sue Well, way back when… ((laughter)) in the dim and distant past it was… Was it this millennium? Yes, it was this millennium.

Michael It was arranged by carrier pigeons. ((laughter))

Sue I had an invite in an envelope through the door. Yes, in those days.

Kat To Hogwarts.

Sue Not to Hogwarts, and I opened this letter and it said, we’re having a meetup in my town in South Wales, and I looked at it and I thought, oh shall I, shan’t I? And it was just for a couple of hours and I thought I’d got nothing to lose. If I don’t like it it’s only two hours out of my life. And I went along and actually those two hours turned into a number of years. But the support I felt in those two hours in the early session, because it was the day before my module started and I didn’t know whether or not I could open my box of study materials, I wasn’t actually familiar with my student home page, and the students who were there, there were some new ones and there were some old continuers, they helped me just do those first initial bits of saying okay yes, it’s okay to open the box before the start date. Check on this, this is what this is. It was recommended that I set up a student email because I would probably end up speaking to an awful lot of students and then that way it kept my own personal email free for everything else. So I set that up, but not being very technical…

Fanni That’s very ((0:19:24?)�

Sue Well, I’m not very technical, and I couldn’t find where I’d set it up but eventually I found it and there was a whole box full of messages, so yes.

Fanni Well we had a freshers event where we tried to screenshare on how to set it up but it turns out you can’t set up two, so I wasn’t able to and we tried to explain, “It’s like the third button from the top on the left side of it,” and it wasn’t easy to explain.

Sue Oh, right.

Fanni But there is a link.
Sue  Oh, that’s all right then. So, prior to that, I did possibly feel a bit isolated because I didn’t know of anybody. This box of books had arrived and for all intents and purposes I didn’t at that point even know if there was a brick building that was the OU. So I don’t know whether any of you have felt like that, that initial isolation as well as your nervousness?

Ellie  Yeah, I think especially with it being… There is a brick building, we’re in it, but we’re not…

Sue  Yes, we are, we do exist.

Ellie  But we’re not like a typical uni that’s based in a brick building we’re not on campus all the time. So I think that can be a bit nerve wracking and you feel a little bit isolated and like you don’t really know who’s around you, who’s also doing your course and stuff, and that’s great. When you get on the forums and stuff and there’s usually a forum like oh, you know, is anyone from this place or this place, and you kind of can connect with people on social media and meet up for coffee or go to one of the meetings.

Fanni  When I started last year I was very ((0:21:16?)) that I was going to have a study group that we were all going to be studying business in London, and ever since then we’ve been planning these study sessions, but it just never happened face to face, so we just end up sort of helping each other and studying together sometimes online. And I think at the start I was like no, I’m going to do everything face to face and I’ve realised that you can have a really great community as well online.

Kat  Yeah, I think the online community with the OU is really strong. Everyone’s helping each other all the time on Facebook and online kind of Adobe Connect sessions. Someone explain what Adobe Connect is.

Fanni  What is Adobe Connect?

Sue  I don’t know. ((laughter))

Fanni  Okay, Adobe Connect is where we do tutorials, online tutorials, and you go to them and you listen to people talk, you find out what you’re supposed to be studying.

Sue  So will the students come across that within their module?
Kat: Yeah, so the online tutorials are run on Adobe Connect and it's a bit like a kind of chat room and the tutor can share slides.

Sue: Do they have to log in to that thorough their StudentHome?

Kat: Through the StudentHome, yeah.

Michael: I've got a related question from one of our viewers. Andrea asks, “What are the best places that you have all found to study that supports you the best?”

Sue: Anywhere.

Fanni: Anywhere.

Sue: I used to study at my computer at my desk. I had, or I've got medical issues, and I was supported throughout my study and so I found it easier actually in my own study with my desk and my chair and my voice Dragon software and things like that. When I was trying to learn languages I used to walk around with headphones and just say the random word in whatever language I was learning at the time…

Michael: And hope that no one around you could speak it. ((laughter))

Sue: I realised one time when I was out on a dog walk that with the headphones on my voice had obviously got loud because nobody was around. Then somebody appeared on the horizon laughing their socks off because they could obviously hear me in my franglais, spanishglais, whatever language I was doing. So yeah, train journeys.

Kat: Yeah, always on the train.

Fanni: On the tube, on the bus, in London especially.

Sue: What do you study with? Do you study with your hard copy books? Do you study with your gadgets?

Michael: Oh, I can't deal with books.

Ellie: What?

Sue: You can't deal with books?
Kat The only student in the world that can’t deal with books.

Michael They’re still in the box that they came in through the door.

Fanni What? You can’t be in this room.

Sue So what do you use then?

Michael I just have my laptop and then I have different… So if I’m doing a TMA I’ll have…

Sue What’s a TMA for the newbies please?

Fanni Tutor marked assignment.

Sue Thank you.

Michael On one screen I’ll half it between the module book and the TMA.

Sue Oh, right?

Fanni When I tried doing that it just pisses me off.

Kat Language.

Fanni Oh, sorry. It just makes me angry.

Kat You all thought it was going to be me.

Sue We had bets on that. Sorry in advance.

Michael But it works really well because you don’t have to deal with pages and like you only need this much space on a desk, you don’t need to set like your whole room out with stuff. So yeah, that works.

Fanni But that’s the fun of it, you highlight, you scribble.

Michael I’ve never been an artsy person.

Sue Okay, because obviously we’ve had technical issues tonight with the interweb what happens if your internet goes down?
Michael: Oh, everything is on my computer, like I don’t use the internet.

Sue: Oh, right.

Michael: I’ve got everything local.

Ellie: And I think that’s artier than just scribbling, because I literally just need a book and a pencil and I’m just sort of like…

Kat: Kind of like 20 highlighters.

Sue: So you scribble through your books?

Ellie: Yeah.

Sue: Have you always done that, or is it a new thing?

Ellie: Yeah, because I study literature I guess as well. If you have like a novel it’s just easier to scribble all over it and annoying them when you want to get rid of the books because you’ve kind of just got to throw them away.

Fanni: Keep them as a souvenir.

Sue: And they gradually mount up in the corner and form your own library.

Kat: Well there is a Facebook page I believe that is selling OU books.

Michael: Oh, I’ve got a top tip for freshers actually, because I made this mistake last year. So obviously, being that I don’t really use books, I was like no need to keep them, so I prematurely might have got rid of some of them, not realising that the module handbooks were in there as well. So come time for my exam and I was like ah, where’s that book that I can take into the exam that makes my life a lot easier? And it was somewhere in a Barnet dump. So yeah, so I had to go through the OU to get replacements. So make sure you keep those until you’re done.

Sue: Because that’s the other thing I’ve seen sort of on the social media, people ask questions as to does 5,000 words actually mean 5,000 words? There are books and on the online information and resources that actually tell you the facts on there. So do read through those if you’re new to it because that will
give you what you’re supposed to do for your assignments and for your studies. So where do you study? Anywhere extra to…?

Fanni On my bed, at my desk, wherever. I don’t really mind.
Sue Any particular time of day?
Kat Can you study at night?
Fanni Nights.
Sue You’re a night owl.
Fanni I’ve heard people talk about waking up at six am and studying and I’m just like… If I wake up at eight just don’t talk to me till 12.
Kat Absolutely not, yeah.
Fanni I’m not a very morning person.
Ellie I used to try studying in my bed when I got home from work and stuff and I’d just end up falling asleep on my laptop.
Fanni I do that.
Ellie So yeah, I wouldn’t recommend that. In the summer I like studying outside.
Kat Yeah.
Fanni Yeah.
Ellie But if not, just usually in my room, yeah.
Michael I find it very difficult to study anywhere apart from my desk.
Fanni Yeah.
Michael Like outside I’ll just get distracted by black bugs, they’re like crawling onto my laptop and I’m just kind of…
Fanni You’re just trying to find a distraction really.
Ellie  Bird watching becomes very interesting.
Fanni  When is an OU student’s room the tidiest?
Kat    You see, I really like studying in the uni libraries with the library cards.
Sue    Do you?
Kat    You just go in all access.
Fanni  Oh yeah, you can get that.
Kat    Yeah, I found that really beneficial, because when you’re in a library environment I think that really helps to kind of…
Sue    So did you know about SCONUL access or did you have to find out?
Kat    So you can find it on StudentHome under the library page and, well they’ve got a really good info guide on there, but basically for anyone that doesn’t know, SCONUL access is for distance learning students who can apply and you get a library card and you contact your local university library and you can go there and you can get access to the library.
Sue    Does that give you access to Wi-Fi, or just the library itself?
Kat    Well, you can use eduroam in the libraries.
Sue    Right. Which is new for us isn’t it?
Kat    It is new, yes. So you can log into it.
Sue    Well done for all the years of campaigning for that.
Kat    Yes, so you can use eduroam on the university campuses to get the free Wi-Fi to sign in with your OU email address.
Michael I used to be desperate for that when I was doing my GCSEs and going to uni libraries, like oh please can we have Wi-Fi?
Sue Yeah. I'm aware over the years that some areas, say North Wales and Anglesey, if the weather closed in their internet went down. So you almost have to have…

Michael A study schedule around the weather.

Fanni It’s not so predictable.

Sue But I suppose, going back to, who was it who asked?

Michael Andrea. And there’s a further question from Danielle which is, “What is everyone’s favourite ways of taking notes?” I guess that’s like in a tutorial or something.

Sue Just thinking about where people are studying, because the OU is worldwide as a university we’ve got people in the forces out in protection zones, war zones, who are also studying. We’ve got people who are in a secure environment, prisons and other institutions, and some of them are studying. So we have students literally studying anywhere and everywhere. So, making notes was it?

Michael Yes.

Sue You scribble all over your books.

Ellie Yeah.

Fanni I don’t make notes.

Sue Yes, you said you had post it notes?

Fanni Yeah, but those are not really notes, those are just more like memory things.

Michael Thoughts.

Fanni Those are just thoughts. I can’t read my own handwriting, so we’ve got a problem there. I just highlight things, I use colour coding.

Kat Yeah, lots of colours in notes.
Michael  I used to take notes but I found that I never actually read them back, so it became a fairly pointless exercise for me.

Ellie  No, but I think it helps it get in your head a bit more if you kind of simplify sentences into things that just make sense for you, even if anyone else who read it wouldn’t understand them.

Sue  Is there a formula or something? You could put a post it note on the fridge so every time you go in there for your milk for your tea or whatever you’ll just read E=MC² or something more technical. I don’t know.

Kat  And we’d like to hear about your study tips and kind of any other questions about studying, how best to study.

Michael  Richard asks on the back of that, what’s the best way to make a cup of tea?

Sue  Slowly.

Kat  No, no, there is a formula for that.

Fanni  Milk in last.

Sue  Oh, milk in first.

Fanni  No, you put in the tea bag, put the hot water on it and you’ve got to leave the tea bag in for three minutes and 30… No.

Ellie  Three minutes?

Fanni  Three minutes and 15 seconds.

Michael  That’s a strong cup of tea.

Fanni  I’ve timed it. It’s the best cup of tea.

Ellie  Take it straight away and then put the milk in.

Fanni  No, there is a formula for it.

Sue  Do you know why milk used to go in first?
Ellie  Why?

Sue  Because in yesteryears... I'm showing my age now. No, it was history, I learnt it. It was bone china and the tea would stain the china cup, so by putting the milk in first it stopped you getting your white porcelain...

Michael  There's a fun fact for the day.

Sue  Yes, how useful. We're at university now, we might even have quizzes and questions later.

Kat  I have just moved to Yorkshire and everyone from Yorkshire is very, very passionate about how they make their tea. And it's a hotly debated subject in Yorkshire, is how to make a cup of tea.

Fanni  Frequently, on a different note, we have had a question.

Sue  Oh, right.

Fanni  Well, one of the questions, it was on Twitter, and the question was, “What are your study aspirations for the year ahead?” And we have a winner.

Sue  Oh?

Kat  So this is a prize draw we had, so we had a couple of prize draws during freshers, so hopefully the winners are listening.

Sue  Send us a note when you hear your names.

Kat  So we had three competitions. Two was for new students and back to OU students, and then the third one was by Student Voice and...

Fanni  I have the answer.

Kat  Fanni is going to give the answers.

Fanni  So, our first winner... Do we have like special effects?

Kat  Drum roll.

Sue  Not too loud because of the microphones.
And so the first winner is Claire Thompson.

Yay! And?

And she will be getting a classic OU goodie, a luxury notebook, a Joto did you say that was?

Joto.

Joto pen. A gold pin. An Amazon voucher and a seven inch Kindle Fire and case.

Oh, that’s exciting.

Yeah, that sounds like a lot of things.

Well done.

Well done, Claire.

That’s a nice way to start your studies off isn’t it?

Yeah, a new Kindle.

Were there any prize draws around when you started?

No, not that I’m aware of.

You just weren’t involved enough at that point.

Yeah, I was only involved sort of locally.

So if people are struggling with their academics and stuff there are ways that you can get support and stuff like that isn’t there?

Yes. So we have... What do we have? We have a lot of things available. One of them is peer support, which is our own support service which is a peer to peer support where you can anonymously... It’s anonymous, right?

Yes, it is anonymous.
Fanni You can anonymously ask other students who are more experienced OU students around studies and get sort of study help and study tips from them if you feel like you’re struggling and you just need that little extra push. And it’s via forums and it’s okay to go in there and it’s on our website which is oustudents.com and it’s at the support section.

Kat And I believe you can also find it on StudentHome, is that right?

Sue Yes. If you’re new getting to grips with StudentHome, the easiest way when you turn on the screen in StudentHome the middle sort of blue bit is your classroom, that’s the easiest thing to remember, that everything you need to know about your module is in that classroom section. Just click away on all the links. The left hand side is all your online student life. You can create an email there, you can follow the links there, just click away. If you get a bit lost go back up to the top of the page and return to StudentHome. And the right hand side is messages from the OU which we recently had a message from the OU, also on the lines of support which was called the Big White Wall. And details will be going up online but are you able to explain a little bit more?

Ellie Yes, so it’s a new service, it’s 24 hours and it’s for any students who want to anonymously discuss any issues on academics to helping with addictions, depression, anxiety, anything like that, and you can write your thoughts on basically a big white wall. And there are resources on there like self-assessment things where they’ll point you in the right direction of resources that can help you. You can speak to trained counsellors and other users on there as well.

Sue So that one’s OU led is it?

Fanni Yes, so it’s a recent affiliation of the OU that’s now available to students and you just need your OU email address for it. There are a lot of other things.

Ellie You can find that under www.bigwhitewall.com.

Sue Thank you. So as we say, the details will be online for that and as you said, we’ve got peer support. We’ve also got access to Nightline. Do you want to share with us a bit more about Nightline?

Ellie Yes, so Nightline is run from 6 pm to 8 am, and that’s for students run by students and again, you can call up or you can text or you can email and they do skype now as well and you can talk about anything again.
And that’s completely anonymous again isn’t it?

Yeah.

And that’s during term time I think isn’t it for Nightline? So there’s no need to be isolated or worried out there is there? I mean I think part of our role as students and doing this student radio show is to say we’re students, we’ve either been there, we’re going through it, we all started somewhere like yourselves. Don’t be afraid to ask because there is help out there. And it might be that you don’t need help at the moment but life is an everchanging rollercoaster and so is your OU journey. But so long as we sort of give you the information so that you know that stuff is out there you can always then use the social media platforms and say…

Or the forums.

Or the forums yes, because we must not forget the online forums, because we’re conscious that a lot of people don’t do all the Facebooks and all the other things, that just by posting in there somebody will hopefully pick up the message and point you in the right direction.

I mean we’ve got a Facebook group. I’m in it, I don’t know if anyone else is, but it’s the OU Insomniacs, if I’m pronouncing that right. You can go on there at 3 am and most likely somebody’s still going to be up.

I didn’t realise there were actually so many insomniacs as students, or students as insomniacs or whichever.

I often study till 4 am so it’s a perfect group for me.

I think that’s a common side effect of being a student isn’t it? Not being able to sleep.

But I think one of the things we need to say is that it is confidential, so do get support if you need it, because you’ve got to take care of your mental health haven’t you really? Is it mental health coming up soon?

Mental Health Day is on 10th October.

So that’s coming up soon.
Fanni That is coming up soon. And we’ve got various different stuff happening for it, for OU, and I’ve just seen before we started, PLEXUS is doing an online chat for it as well.

Sue Who’s PLEXUS?

Fanni PLEXUS is the LGBT+ students’ group or students’ association.

Sue Have they got a website or anything?

Fanni Yes, so they have a website, I don’t know their actual website so I will just say that…

Sue Information will go up.

Fanni Yes, it will be on our website, information on behalf of the PLEXUS microsite.

Sue Oh, a microsite. We’re learning. Times have changed.

Michael Another point on like this, there are other things that Andrea raises, that she studies during the day when the children are at school otherwise they wouldn’t get the chance, so there’s all sorts going on. And I know for myself I have to do it around work and there’s also all those sort of bits and pieces going on.

Sue I think for newbies it’s good for them to explore when is the best time to study for themselves and not to worry about if they are a night owl or a lark. You will settle into your rhythm and routine and it’s important I suppose to say your study calendar, use your study calendar, look for when there’s breaks. Like because we’re starting now I know that they tend to have a break around Christmastime, so if you need to catch up don’t particularly fret, inform your tutor that you may be a bit behind.

Contact your tutor, drop them an email, or they’ll have hopefully written to you all now and then done further communications to you as per your requirements if you’ve got any disabilities or other ways that you want to be contacted. But a lot of them send out a generic email to start with, so that everybody gets some sort of communication, and then it’s followed up, which is why it’s important that you tell your tutor or the OU if you’ve got any sort of study issues that might affect you.
Fanni: I would say as well that if you’re expecting something to be coming up it’s always good to let either the students supporter or your own tutor know, because they can’t see into your life, so if you don’t talk to them ahead and you wait until you’ve fallen a month behind, and I have done that myself last year, and it was like very late and I was really struggling and I’d only gone to them when it was really bad. And I think being upfront about it helps as well because they can help you which parts you need to be focusing on.

Michael: They are on the whole part really supportive. Like I’ve had to call for support a few times and like they genuinely want to help you and do the best they can to…

Ellie: Your tutor doesn’t want you to fail, so if you can see something upcoming which may mean that you may need an extension I’d definitely recommend putting that forward as soon as possible.

Fanni: Absolutely.

Sue: And it’s better that they know because then they might be able to, again, point you in the right direction of something, rather than let it sort of mushroom into a massive issue. I did meet a student once at a residential school for one of the modules, and they’d had an issue and they let it sort of fester and fester and fester, and it grew sort of out of all proportion and then eventually they thought I’m going to have contact my tutor. The tutor got back to them sort of within 24 hours and completely put the student’s mind at rest, and they said from then on if they had an issue they thought about it, went away, attempted to do whatever it was again. If they couldn’t do it was like email off to the tutor with the difficulty, a response would come back, the issue then could be dealt with.

Fanni: And a lot of the time a lot of your answers will be in your tutor group, or your tutor group forum as well, so it’s useful to post… a lot of students will post questions up there and some people still get the module ((0:43:58?)).

Sue: One of the engineering, going back to residential schools again, one of the engineering residential schools, speaking to a student, they’d been doing formulas for their engineering and they’d sort of battled with getting it done and they thought they’d learned them all, and they’d got them all wrong. But they looked round the class and when the tutor raised it and everything else about these formulas and they’d all got them wrong. ((laughter)) So you think you’re alone on sort of something and you think, say reading threads in forums and
whatever that people are ahead of you or better than you, but you’ll all just get there.

Kat   Yes, and there’s lots of support out there.

Fanni Yeah, and everyone goes at their own pace as well. Like I personally study full
time obviously and like as well I think…

Sue   So what does full time study mean for you then? How many credits is that?

Fanni That’s 120 credits a year. So I’m intending to finish in three years. I don’t think
it’s going to happen. We’ll see.

Michael Which year are you going into now?

Fanni I’m going into level 2, so it will be my second year. But I think it’s also that, you
know, you can’t always stay ahead, and especially with full time you can’t stay
like months and months ahead because it’s double workload essentially, but
even if you’re part time as long as you’ve done better that ((0:45:21?)) that’s
fine, or if you need a bit longer and you ask for an extension I think that’s fine.
And it’s just those expectations at the start that would mean the way I’m going
into it is I’m going to attempt full time but if it doesn’t work I’m ready to give up
on one of the modules, I’m not going to hold onto it and not get the grades that
shows my actual knowledge.

Ellie   And don’t be afraid about asking for extensions as well, because on a lot of the
Facebook groups a lot of people do ask for extensions. I mean I’ve asked for
extensions before, everybody here has at some point, they are really common.
So it doesn’t mean that you’re failing or really behind or anything.

Sue    Because life gets in the way. I mean as an OU student you’re part time
effectively for a reason because you’ve perhaps got ill health, you’re a carer,
you’re working.

Michael A parent.

Sue    You’re a parent.

Ellie   Yeah, and like I said, yeah, tutors don’t want you to fail, they will help you.
Michael Amina asks on the comments, “How would manage stress of studying and anticipation before TMA results come in?” My personal view on that is if you’ve gone your best on something and sent it off just focus on what’s next, because that result will come in what it’s at and you can only do what you can for the next one. So rather than place the focus on what’s really gone just focus on what is coming ahead.

Sue And do you use the… when you get your TMA results back, do you read through the guidance notes that have been given?

Michael Yes.

Sue And how helpful have you found those?

Ellie Yes, really helpful, yes. And the beauty of having like, I mean I don’t know if it’s the same for every course but I usually have about ten assignments to every module, and the beauty of that is it’s kind of like if you do not so great on one it’s all right because…

Michael I suddenly feel really good, because I have about three or four per module. ((laughter)) So I feel really good at the moment.

Fanni As soon as you said ten I ((0:47:25?)) The most I’ve had was five.

Kat Yeah, the most I’ve had is five.

Michael With 120 credits I have 17 TMAs this year.

Kat Oh, wow.

Michael But that’s divided by four and…

Sue So how will you spend your time doing that then?

Michael Sorry?

Sue How will you divide up your time? You must have worked out a strategy.

Michael Yeah, so I’ve planned my holidays from work… Actually, I didn’t plan it around it but it fits really well into when the TMAs are due. I’ve done one already because I just had to, and yeah, so that takes me up to like December so I’ve
got two months to do three TMAs. And then the rest are in February so I’ve got all the rest of December and all of January where I’ve got two weeks off from work to get the next batch done. And it just seems to work.

Sue And that’s your routine that you’ve found.

Michael It’s more the exams that worry me than the TMAs, because I find with TMAs you have the space to ask or support, you can go on the forums, there’s all this stuff, but I find, yeah, unless I see annotated handbooks are allowed in the exam I get a bit anxious. That’s the magic phrase.

Ellie I don’t think anyone likes exams really.

Fanni I don’t have one till level three.

Sue I suppose some students actually choose modules don’t they without an exam in it. End of module assignment, assessment.

Michael Oh, I had one of those in my first level one.

Ellie Yeah, I did one last year. It was okay.

Sue But that’s a long way off if you’re a fresher who’s opening their books tomorrow.

Ellie Yeah, don’t worry about that. They prepare you well for them as well. the thing I would say about exams is don’t ever go onto Facebook afterwards because when I did everyone was like, “Oh, what did you get for this question?” “Oh, I got this.” “Oh, I didn’t get that.” Yeah, don’t do that.

Kat That would just stress me out.

Fanni Yeah, when I submit a TMA as well I try to… when I press submit I just kind of try to use that as a letting go, that it’s like done and I’m done with it.

Ellie Yeah, whatever happens will happen.

Sue Did you celebrate once you’d hit submit? No? It wasn’t like oh, finally I’ve done that and then you could breathe?
Fanni: Yeah. No, I feel relieved. I know that a lot of people stress about the results coming back but I kind of forget about it in a sense as well, and then when I get the email I’m like oh, I’ve got a result and then it makes me happy. And then I just suddenly go nervous and I open it and I’m like fine, I’ve passed it.

Ellie: Yeah. Usually you’ve done better than you think as well.

Fanni: Yeah. Especially on level one I think a lot of people think that…

Ellie: It’s going to be really harsh, yeah.

Michael: I think we’re going to go to a break in a minute, but as well…

Sue: We need a break don’t we? We need a cup of tea.

Michael: With milk in first. And the question is from Andrea, “How do you switch off your brain after studying?” And I find like the best bit is just to do something a little that you enjoy. So for example I started playing piano a year and a half ago and to me…

Fanni: Oh, that’s one of the best things.

Michael: It’s the best thing, just like after an hour or whatever doing a TMA just go in like ten minutes, just play piano or even go for a walk or whatever but something that you really enjoy that kind of…

Kat: You see mine would be a big glass of wine. ((laughter))

Sue: And chocolate?

Kat: And chocolate.

Fanni: No, you eat all the chocolate during the TMA, there is none left.

Ellie: Yeah, go to the pub, or go for a long drive as well.

Sue: Well treat yourself, or even if you can’t… because obviously some of our students actually can’t get out of the house so how would they so rot do that wind down thing? So it could be the binge watch or whatever of your favourite programmes that you’ve missed because you’ve been studying. It could be a takeaway that you order in. It could be a meal that you cook for yourself. It
could be a game of cards or a boardgame with the family or phone calls or going to a social meetup. There's lots of ways of sort of including life around your student... Get involved in the Student's Association. It's all your association isn't it?

Kat And I think after the break we’re going to have some more prizes to give away. That should be exciting.

Fanni But that's like when you finish a series and it's like you can't stop now. People can't leave now, they have to come back.

Kay Yes, you have to come back. Two more sets of prizes to give away, so stay tuned.

(BREAK 52 mins)

(RESUME 57 mins)

Sue And we're back. I hope you made your cup of teas all nicely: milk in, milk out, black tea, white tea, coffee, Horlicks... wine.

Kat Wine, absolutely!

Sue Yes. Welcome back. We hope that you've got a lot out of the first half of the session, with us jabbering on about all things studenty. And we've been made aware that there's still loads of questions and the lively online chatter-chatter's going.

Michael Yeah, so one of the questions is 'How long do you study for at a time'?

Kat Before we do the question, though, can we do our prize draw?

Michael Oh, we certainly can.

Sue You'll just have to wait for your studying.
We’re in suspense.

We were left in anticipation over the break.

Alrighty.

Take it away.

Yes, so we did a back to OU prize draw, and the winner is

Ooh, ((doing a drum roll)) gentle taps.

Chloe Acheya – I’m so sorry if I’ve pronounced that wrong. And she tweeted ‘My biggest achievement so far is getting above 86 in every assignment for my first module, which has given me the biggest sense of self-belief I’ve ever had. I can’t wait to start module two in a couple of days #lovebeingastudent. So, well done.

Well done.

And well done for getting over 86 as well.

Yeah that’s amazing definitely.

And she has got an OU Student Association bundle, which includes a grey and navy zoodie, a notebook, an OU Student design mug, a Mister Owl soft toy, which I don't know if you can see.

Oh look at Mister Owl.

And more.

Brilliant, well done.

Brilliant, well done.

What’s a zoodie?

A hoodie with a zip.

Oh, right.
Sue A zoodie, I learned about a zoodie. It’s not a hoodie. A zuddy. I learned about a zoodie. It’s not a hoodie.

Ellie I’ve never heard that.

Sue Yeah. No, they’re stunning. So on the basis of that, for any of you who don’t know what an OU zoodie looks like, we do have an OU Student Association webshop –

Kat We do.

Sue where you can purchase merchandise.

Kat And don’t just have zoodies, we also have hoodies and –

Sue t-shirts.

Fanni sweatshirts.

Michael For the traditionals amongst us.

Kat So those of us that haven’t quite evolved to zoodies.

Fanni I’ve got a zoodie.

Michael Very modern.

Kat Well done.

Sue And there’s the t-shirts.

Fanni They’re great. They’ve got a little hole in the pocket and a (?) so you can put your (?) through them.

Kat Oh wow, that’s cool.

Fanni And I thought mine was faulty and it just had a hole.

Kat We’ve got some windbreaker shaggy jackets. I don't know what you call them actually – shell jackets?

Sue Yes, we’ll call the shelly-type jackets a shell jacket.
What else have we got? We’ve got some cool travel mugs, notebooks, pens.

Graduation memorabilia. There’s all sorts. And one of the big things –

Exam past papers.

What’s that?

Exam past papers.

So how would they get hold of those?

Through the shop.

Log in – through the shop.

And we also have a book on the history of the EU. The EU?

Free post during Brexit maybe? Now, what shall we call it?

It’s the history ((laughing))…

Of the Open University, is it?

Of the Open University, not the EU, although you may want to pick one of them up.

It’s one thing our shop doesn’t stock. Okey dokey.

We do have no EU memorabilia. Sorry, I meant OU.

For the first one who finds something, you too can get a prize. Classic absolutely classic.

Anyway where were we? What was the question?

How long do you study for at a time?

I wanted to answer that but I’m still crying.
Ellie  I try and do – like, I’m really bad with this because either I do, like, five minutes and then get distracted or I do, like, a block of three hours in one go and completely forget to have a break and then realise that nothing’s going in. So I think it’s really good to set a timer for maybe like 35 minutes or so at a time, maybe to an hour, depending on your level of concentration.

Kat  There’s a really good app actually for this. You can get it on the app store and you set it for a time. It’s called Forest, I think, and you set it for a timer and it’s 35 minutes, and as long as you don’t touch your phone in 35 minutes, a little tree grows.

Fanni  Ah!

Kat  And you have to grow a whole forest.

Fanni  That’s really cool.

Kat  But you can’t touch your phone in 35 minutes.

Sue  Well, you should be studying anyway. Unless you’re using your phone to study,

Fanni  Which you shouldn’t

Kat  Yeah. So, try grow the best forest.

Fanni  What is it called again?

Kat  It’s called Forest I believe. It’s an app on the app store.

Sue  We’ll try and find a link or something.

Kat  If you look under the productivity section it’s in there.

Sue  Is it?

Kat  Yeah.

Michael And the other question is: would you say there’s a big jump from level one to level two and, if so, how?
Fanni I’m about to find that out.

Ellie I’ll have to let you know, yeah.

Michael I can answer that one.

Fanni Ah, you’re the clever one. Or you could.

Michael Just further along down the track so, yeah, I’ve just finished level two. And there is a jump, like I came probably not like most but I came straight out of A levels into the OU, and level one was pretty much where I left off, and in fact there was a bit of an overlap so I kind of found that quite easy, but level two there was a lot more foreign concepts to me and there was a lot more open-ended questions rather than just determining your knowledge on something; it was more about critical thinking and actually constructing something.

Ellie So, as you’ve said, you’ve already done your first TMA for level three, would you say there’s more of a jump between level one and level two, or level two and level three?

Fanni Or are they both just as bad?

Michael It’s a little bit early but I would say, I don’t know, I found this year relatively straightforward and I don’t feel like I was out of my depth so I didn’t feel the jump that big from level two.

Sue I think I did find a difference in the levels but I also found a difference in the marks; because obviously you’ve gone up a level, your marks may not still remain high because actually the work is harder. And I never particularly used to worry about the mark; I used to just be really thankful that the word ‘pass’ had come up because (a) I didn’t really want to repeat the learning that I’d already done and (b) I wanted to move onto the next TMA and the next lot of study – because I was more of a 50 mark kind of person.

Michael But regardless of what mark you get, it’s an important attitude to have not to focus too much on the actual number because if you put your effort in then…

Sue Yeah, I’d rather read the words ‘pass’ and ‘fail’. And yet I do have to say, having graduated, that yes I’ve got my degree and nobody’s asked me what level of degree, they ask me what my degree is. And I can actually say I’ve got a degree and never thought I’d get a degree. And I just followed my study
calendar, went to my tutorials, which I got an absolute huge amount of information from and found how supportive it was to meet the tutor face to face and ask any of the questions, and actually respond to some of the questions that they asked and then actually think ‘ooh, I actually do know it – how splendid of me!’

Kat And you got to be an honorary life of the OU Students Association.

Sue I did. I am.

Kat That’s not a degree, honorary life membership.

Sue Oh, it’s so close. Both for completely different reasons but I think all of it is the – oh gosh, this is going to sound all sentimental and whatever – no, it’s the whole personal journey. So, I’ve gone on the academic so I’ve got a degree.

Fanni You’ve achieved that.

Sue But I’ve also gone on the personal with my volunteering – a lot behind the scenes because obviously we’re online and distant, and talking like now on this show, I wouldn’t’ve been able to do that in the early days because, strange as it may seem, I actually don’t have that much confidence. No, you can laugh but I don’t. It’s something that I really at time have to dig deep with but I’ve started as a volunteer, like many people do.

Fanni ((?))

Sue Yeah. Then I did various different roles and with each one, confidence grew and it was part of my personal development as well as my academia. And going back to the student who was asking how to do ‘down time’ from study, just volunteering was another way of being a down time but still being a student.

Kat And we’ve got some students trying to be volunteers at the moment so I was wondering if anyone wants to talk about that.

Fanni Yeah. So, we’ve got the bi-elections happening for the Central Executive Committee, which Kat’s on and I am obviously part of at the moment. So, we have three vacancies: weekend administration, faculty association Representative for faculty of Business and Law, and then we’ve also got a Student Trustee position. And the nominations have now closed. Forums and
voting is now open, so I would like to encourage everyone to go in and ask questions in our hustings forums. It will either be in the comments section of this video; if not then you can find it on the website. You can find everything on the website.

Sue  So why is it important to come on board with these elections? What is it about the Student Association and why have we got elections – for people who don’t know what it is we do?

Fanni I think the main priority for it is obviously that the association is led by students and it’s for students as well. And being able to have a say in who you would like to represent you, I think that’s quite a big thing because obviously my Central Executive Committee members will have meetings with the university where they will be acting on your behalf or they will be expressing what students vote.

Sue  It’s taking up the student voice isn’t it, to the OU and to your university.

Fanni  Yeah.

Kat  Yeah. And it’s important to have someone that you think is going to accurately represent your student voice. So, you can kind of go on there and have a look at all their manifestoes and election videos and then ask them further questions in the forums.

Fanni  And then cast your vote.

Kat  Yeah, and then cast your vote definitely. When does the voting close?

Fanni  So voting closes next week, Wednesday at 5pm. And then the election forums close Sunday either 8 or 10pm but Sunday evening. So you’ve still got some time to ask a question.

Kat  So you’ve still got some time.

Michael  And the link for that is in the comments section.

Ellie  So you guys already have roles in that, don’t you?

Kat  We do yes. So, we were both newly elected –
Fanni  This summer.

Kat  this summer, for the next two years – you’re stuck with us now, sorry guys. And so I was elected as VP Community.

Sue  What’s VP?

Kat  Vice President.

Sue  Thank you.

Kat  – as someone completely new to the Students Association as I hadn’t done any volunteering for them before; I just came along and barged my way in. So, I think if you’re nervous about doing any volunteering role within the Students Association, even if it’s a graduation ceremony volunteer or the Central –

Sue  Central Executive Committee.

Kat  Central Executive Committee volunteer, and any role within the Students Association I think that if you’re a bit nervous about it, then just go for it, because you’ll make really good friends and it’ll really help your confidence. And it’s a really good way to gain skills, and they’re skills that you can transfer to jobs, and it’s a good way to meet lots of people as well, meet lots of students.

Fanni  Yeah, that’s why I got involved originally. Obviously I started last year so it wasn’t actually long ago. I sort of got involved in sitting on a few committees first and then I got involved in the Senate Reference Group; I was on the Conference – what was that group? – Conference Steering Committee.

Sue  Oh yeah, the steering committee because as students we have conference every two years don’t you?

Fanni  Yeah.

Sue  You’ve just missed this year’s. The students would plan that?

Fanni  Yeah. So, you get a say in a lot of the things by volunteering. You can host meetups, you can just participate in different ways.

Sue  And societies and clubs.
Fannie  Clubs are new.
Kat    We now have 20. They started in March last year, I believe.
Fanni  This year.
Kat    This year, yeah, March this year, and we now have 29 different clubs. I think we have something like over 3,000 members in different clubs, which is amazing, and there are loads of different interests. We’ve got Geography, we’ve got the Forces Club.

Michael What’s the Forces Club?
Kat    It’s for members of forces or families of people who live in the forces.
Michael Oh, sorry, those forces.
Sue    Yeah, it’s not the dark forces.
Michael Oh right, Hogwarts or something.
Sue    Into the light!
Fanni  Yeah.
Kat    I believe we do have a wizards and witching, a Hogwarts Club, a Harry Potter club. I can’t remember what it’s called. I think it’s called Wizards and Witches or something.
Sue    Is there the Make Club?
Kat    There is the Make Club.
Sue    Which is craft and arty crafty things.
Kat    Yeah.
Sue    That’s good ole Stephanie, a big shout out to Steph.
Kat    A big shout out to Steph. Yeah, she’s got quite a few clubs. The mind, body and soul? Spirit?
Fanni: We’re young students.

Sue: Where will they find these?


Sue: Thanking you. We can’t tell them and then not and then they’re like ‘where am I going to find it?’

Fanni: Everything is on the website.

Kat: Yeah, everything you need is on the website.

Ellie: What are your main responsibilities and your roles?

Kat: So all the freshers’ events that have happened over the last couple of weeks have been organised by the community team here and myself, and so all of the things that’ve been happening, the various chats and meetups. Meetups are a big part of the community team as well. Also, we’re the ones that are telling you to go to meetups.

Fanni: Making up stuff.

Kat: That’s not fluffy, it’s very helpful!

Fanni: People think it’s negative but it’s not.

Kat: No. And so, clubs and societies. And we do do a lot of really fun stuff, but we also run the community dropins, which are every other Thursday. So we’ve just had one this week so it’ll be in two Thursdays time from 6 till 8 pm. And they’re online but if you’re on Facebook or in the forums then you’ll see the links all over. So come along and join us and if you just want to have a chat, socialise, they’re a really really good way.

Fanni: We’ve obviously got all different vice presidents, and we’ve got faculty association representatives for different faculties. We have the area reps who look after different areas. We have ten officers and then 10 faculty reps and area reps. And overall we are the decision makers of the direction of the association. We are obviously supported by a big staff team, who support us in our roles.
Sue A big shoutout to the staff team.

Fanni Yeah (?!).

Kat A big shoutout to the community team.

Fanni 25 of them there? A lot of them, I don't know.

Sue There’s a lot of them.

Fanni A lot of them.

Sue There’s a lot more than when I started.

Fanni But we set the direction of the travel basically.

Michael As an aside to that, but on the note of travel actually, Andrea asks or says ‘all your accents are different – did you all have to travel far to come together to do this for us? If so, a big thank you. See, it did link in with travel.

Fanni That applies to me: I am from Hungary. I’ve only been in the UK for four years so if I do have an accent and I pronounce things dodgy then that’s why. I’m just down in London.

Kat But everyone else is?

Michael I’m down in London as well.

Kat Mine is English but I’ve come from Sheffield, but not from Sheffield but I’ve come from Sheffield today.

Sue North Wales.

Michael That’s probably the furthest that anyone’s travelled.

Fanni Hungary is a bit further.

Sue Yeah but you didn’t come from Hungary today, did you? Or did you?

Kat How about Sheffield? Sheffield’s in the North.
Sue Yeah.

Michael Maybe that's North Wales.

Sue No, I think Sheffield… oh, any geography students out there?

Michael This is your first TMA question: which one’s further, North Wales or Sheffield.

Kat North Wales covers quite a broad area.

Sue And if you get the answer right, it could be like being on University Challenge, couldn’t it really?

Michael Ooh are you leading me into another ting then?

Sue Oh yes, yes yes.

Michael So some of you may or may not know, the Open University is part of University Challenge and runs a team that goes on the programme and plays.

Ellie What is the question?

Michael So I’ve got a question for you.

Sue Oh right.

Michael Open to members of the studio.

Sue But we can’t shout out for it.

Michael No. We’ll give the audience a minute.

Sue Alright.

Michael But, yeah, open to all the audience so please comment your answers and you’ll get – there’s no prize but you’ll get a big congratulations if you get it right.

Fanni We’ll all clap.
Michael: Yeah. So the question is: listen very carefully – which word in this question contains the same number of letters as its immediate predecessor? So, I'll repeat that. Listen very carefully – which word in this question contains the same number of letters as its immediate predecessor?

Fanni: Oh wait, that was the question.

Sue: Oh my word – will I be able to answer?

Michael: Well, give us a minute, Sue.

Fanni: I was waiting for the sentence.

Sue: I'm going to write it down here.

Fanni: That's cheating!

Michael: Well, it's not cheating if she got it right.

Sue: I don't know. I normally only get one question right on University Challenge.

Kat: Right, I think I've got it.

Michael: We've got some entries here. Amena says 'Word is the word in the question.' David Humble says 'predecessor is the word in question.' Richard Duffy says 'immediate'.

Kat: That's what I said. Can I say? I said 'immediate'.

Ellie: Yeah, I've got 'immediate'.

Michael: What did you say Sue?

Fanni: I'm sure it can come out((?)).

Michael: Did you say 'listen', being the first word?

Sue: Oh, I got it so wrong. Just don't put me on the University Challenge team, I won't put myself forward.

Fanni: I didn't realise that the sentence was the question; I was waiting for that.
Sue No, I thought it was the same number of letters. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight… nine. I got it wrong.

Michael Eight letters is the right amount of letters for the answer.

Sue Is it?

Michael Yeah.

Fanni So it’s not ‘immediate.’

Kat Well, is it ‘immediate’ or ‘predecessor’?

Michael Neither.

Sue Question or containing.

Michael Well, ‘containing’ isn’t a word in the sentence.

Sue Oh, isn’t it? Oh handy hint for students studying in freshers: always read the wording.

Michael But that word is the correct one so it’s ‘contains’.

Sue Yes!

Michael ‘contains and ‘question.

Kat It's easier when you're reading it.

Michael Yeah, that’s true. But you don’t actually get to read it in University Challenge.

Sue Oh my goodness. I have no idea how I got that but I’ve done my one question for University Challenge.

Michael Well done, Sue.

Sue But seriously don’t put me on the team. But if you are really good and you enjoy your quizzes and you’ve got your general knowledge and your academic knowledge, please please put yourself forward because over the years if you’ve seen and watched on telly – was it last year we were on the telly or
was it this year? This year’s been so long. A big shoutout to all the students who have made it through to the qualifying rounds and the next rounds and the next rounds actually on the recorded episodes.

Michael I must say, I have watched a bit of one episode and I was blown away by the questions.

Kat The questions are obscenely hard.

Ellie I don’t think anyone got that one right.

Michael Sue got close.

Sue That is pretty good for me.

Michael You got it right even though you got it wrong, fantastic!

Fanni I still don’t understand it.

Sue You never will.

Fanni I’m never applying for this. I’ll be left out, it’s alright. But the applications close on October 19th.

Michael Oh, is that right?

Fanni Yeah.

Sue Yes. I’ve got that written down, 19th October. And that’s for University Challenge, isn’t it?

Fanni University Challenge, to be in the team.

Kat After all that thinking, we’ve got one more prize to give away.

Michael One more prize.

Sue Another prize?

Kat Another prize – aren’t we being generous tonight?
Sue We are.

Michael So, this prize is for – I’m going to do it slightly backwards: I’m going to announce what you win and then I’ll announce the winner.

Sue Ooh, mixing it up, mixing it up.

Michael So this prize is for a grey and navy zoodie – I never thought I’d say that word but there you go – a notebook, an OU Student designed mug, famous Mister Owl soft toy.

Fanni Is that visible? Just move it.

Michael It was visible.

Sue It’s just flown off now.

Michael Demonstrating its capabilities.

Sue It’s on its way to you.

Michael So the winner of all that I mentioned and more for the #newtoOU is Lindsey Hughes, who is @larkeylass1982 and the tweet is ‘I was inspired to do this for my children to show them that no matter what life throws in your direction you’ve got to grab life by the horns and be the creator of your own destiny. Believe in yourself and the rest will follow #newtoOU #learningislife #createyourowndestiny. So, well done for that, Lindsey.

Kat Well done Lindsey, and thank you for that really nice tweet, it was very inspiring.

Sue And I’m going to do a drum roll.

Kat And thank you to everyone that took part in freshers’ competitions, meetups, any of the chats that happened online or even just commenting and getting involved, it’s been really really engaging. We’ve had over 2,000 of you ‘like’ our Facebook page. We’ve had the most hits on our website ever. It’s been really really great, and everyone’s been really involved. And we want to keep hearing from you throughout the year so please don’t go away.
Yeah. Let us know how your studies are going because they all start tomorrow, so hopefully we’ve gone some way to making it a little less daunting, showing you the directions that you can go so you’re not feeling so isolated so that you’ve got the support. And you’ve just got to enjoy your journey. What’s been the best bit of your journey so far, from either your learning or your being an active student, or both?

Can I say two?

Yes.

Submitting a TMA; that’s a great feeling when you’ve got it out of the way. And just meeting other students, as a student rep or just as a student going to different things where you get to meet other students. I think if you can and you want to then it’s really good.

Is that two?

Yes, that was one very long sentence but meeting other students has been the best part.

Alrighty.

Meeting new students as well.

I think achieving my first level last year because before I came to the Open University I tried a couple of brick universities. I’m notorious amongst my friends for swapping and changing universities, so I was really happy that I actually made it to the end of my first level and actually achieved something there. And, also, doing this student radio as well.

Yeah, I really like doing the radio shows but, similar to Fanni, I like connecting with people, whether it’s other students or my tutors or whatever, like now I’ve got some on LinkedIn and all sorts, so you kind of take them with you along in life and it’s nice to build those connections.

Yeah, like Kat we’ll never be able to get rid of now. You’re my friend now.

But, yeah, I think for me as well, partly through doing this role it’s been really great to meet other students and help other students meet each other because it’s really nice when, you know, I think there is absolutely a desire to
go out and meet other students. And sometimes it is difficult, you know, we’re all really really busy people and there’s big location gaps between some of us. But there’s always students looking to meet other students and it’s really nice to help with that and help students come together.

Michael: We do want to hear what your best moments are and favourite bits so leave it in the comments bit.

Fanni: What’s been your favourite, Sue?

Sue: Getting my degree and being an honorary life member.

Fanni: That was two.

Sue: Yeah, that’s because that’s two parts to my learning journey.

Fanni: But you said one.

Sue: No, I think for me it’s been that whole big sort of all the study, all the support I got; and the bits of support as an active student, whether or not it was on the forums, on emails. I don’t know why this is on the forums but this is on the forums. Do you know what because this is so old-fashioned now because of this ((mimes playing with a mobile phone)).

Michael: That looks more like playing the piano.

Sue: So I play the piano with the keyboard. It took me a while to learn to do the split screen, I have to say.

Michael: It’s good though isn’t it?

Sue: Yeah. I did the split screen, just going back thinking about earlier, when I was doing my referencing.

Kat: The split screen!

Michael: Take the screen out of that screen.

Sue: Yeah – when I was doing my reference because then I’d have my blank Word document, and then I’d just cut and paste and then I could edit them afterwards. So that was just one of those handy hints.
Kat: Are we talking about something special?
Sue: I’m just jabbering on now because we can because we’re on we’re on the radio – we’re on Studio.
Elli: I have to say, referencing is my least favourite part of doing an assignment.
Fanni: I think you’re not alone.
Kat: If you do it as you go through, it’s not too bad, but if you leave it all to the end then…
Ellie: I leave it to the end, yeah, I like to get the assignment bit done but then I’m like ‘ugh!’
Michael: That’s why I like maths – the most referencing you have to do is just say someone’s name who made a formula, and that’s pretty much it.
Fanni: In Business they don’t want your thoughts, you have to reference everything you write.
Kat: How do you think I feel as a law student?
Sue: Just thinking about that, there will be different referencing systems with each module – going back to looking at your study guidance materials and stuff if you’re only just opening the boxes.
Fanni: It’s on your study session, in resources.
Sue: Is it?
Fanni: Yeah, it should be in resources. I could be very wrong. I’m assuming someone’ll correct me in the comments but I’m pretty sure it’s in resources.
Kat: And we’d love to hear any more questions or thoughts from anybody else.
Michael: Mm. Whilst we’ve travelled from Hungary and stuff, make use of us.
Kat: Yeah, we’ve come all this way.
Sue: Yes, we’ve come all this way and they’ve fed pizza and –
Fanni gave us tea.
Sue Yes, gave us tea.
Fanni Or a Fanta.
Kat I haven’t had any tea.
Michael Oh, why did you tell her?
Kat I didn’t get any tea.
Michael Well, in the meantime maybe we can do another University Challenge question.
Sue Alright.
Kat Yes.
Michael So since 1954 Galway, which is in Ireland I believe, has held an annual festival celebrating the opening of the season for which marine bivalve molluscs? You see what I mean, like who knows that?
Ellie I’m not even going to attempt to answer that.
Fanni I didn’t understand the question.
Kat Can you repeat the question?
Sue Is a bivalve mollusc like a clam?
Michael Yeah, well, a mollusc is like a shellfish kind of thing.
Kat Have we got any answers?
Sue Please somebody!
Fanni Someone save us.
Michael Oh, we’ve got an answer.
Sue    Ooh!
Kat    No Googling!

Michael    Well, it's not really monitorable from this end but –
Kat    we'll know.
Michael    There’s two answers.
Sue    Are they the same?
Michael    They are the same.
Sue    Wow.
Ellie    Are they correct?
Michael    They are correct. It is oysters, and that’s David Humble and Richard Duffy.
Sue    Yay! So repeat the question again then.

Michael    So the question was: since 1954 Galway has held an annual festival celebrating the opening of the season for which marine bivalve molluscs? And the answer is oysters.
Fanni    I don’t understand that.
Michael    I don’t know what makes them bivalve. It sounds like something you have in your car.
Kat    Or in your heart.
Michael    Yeah, that’s true.
Fanni    I just straight up don’t understand those words. I probably don’t understand 60% of them.
Ellie    Can I just say I caught a comment up there, I think it was by David who said he hates when people use the word ‘like’ as an incomplete simile, and I apologise because I do that all the time.
Like, guys, I heard you earlier.

Sorry.

I think it's a millennial thing.

Sorry from the millennials.

David says ‘Google, how very dare you?’

Hi David! We did to dare.

Shall we go to sleep?

I think that’s about all we have for tonight’s show.

I can’t think of anything else to say, except enjoy your studies.

Yeah.

Yeah, thank you for listening to us.

Apparently there is a question I’ve missed and that’ll probably take us to the line. How do people procrastinate? And Quizzerable – apologies if I don’t pronounce that correctly – says that they knit / crochet whilst watching Netflix. Some serious multitasking going on there.

Yes.

What’s crochet?

Knitting is two needles, crochet is one hook.

Ah. I thought it was going to be three.

I don't know why I’m doing that because those of you are just listening and not watching… My hand is just doing mini waves.

You’ve very in with the visuals.

I am with the visuals.
Fanni I usually have naps, though.
Kat Day naps.
Michael I always find anything to do that I don’t need to do, but I’ll convince myself that I do need to do it.
Fanni Cleaning is a big one probably.
Michael Or eating. I’ll convince myself I’m hungry like to the point where I can have like five meals a day just so I don’t do something that I have to.
Ellie When you need to study suddenly housework like the washing up seems very appealing to do.
Sue Housework, dog walking, ironing. Any generalised cleaning of anything, washing the car, going shopping.
Michael Washing the car’s a good one.
Sue Catching up with friends, having a drink.
Fanni I go and see a horse.
Sue You go to see a horse?
Michael Any particular one or just any one?
Sue Just find a horse: ‘Hello, I’ve come to say hello because I’ve got an assignment to write.’
Fanni There is a horse that I usually go and ride.
Sue And you go horseriding?
Fanni Yeah.
Sue Right, so how long are you on this horse for?
Fanni It depends. Sometimes I can go off at nine and intending to finish at 11 and then at 6pm I’m still there, like chatting to people in the riding centre.
Michael: I was going to say, you must be a bit sore after eight hours on a horse!

Sue: That's serious procrastination that is. If anybody else can beat eight hours on a horse let us know.

Michael: It's very creative as well.

Fanni: You can wash the horse, you can take the horse out on a little walk, you can do all sorts of things.

Sue: Horse washing.

Fanni: Non-horsey people!

Kat: Can you take a horse to an inner city centre because I asked this question the other day and no-one knew the answer.

Michael: The police do it.

Sue: Yeah.

Kat: But could you take your horse for a walk through town?

Fanni: Yeah, as long as you pick up the –

Sue: the droppings.

Fanni: the droppings.

Michael: Can you ride it through town?

Fanni: You could if the horse is trained enough.

Sue: Yeah, but it's possibly scary because of all the noise and the carrier bags.

Michael: I'm not going to lie, if I saw a horse down Oxford Street I'd go into a shop.

Sue: Yes, with the horse.

Michael: No, not with the horse.
Fanni They do horse-riding in the Hyde Park so you can if the horse is trained enough.

Sue Is this going to be your new procrastination that you want to take the horse to a high street? Are you sharing with us?

Kat It was just a question. It was a curious question.

Michael Richard Duffy says ‘Crochet: a handy craft in which yarn is made up into a textured fabric by means of a hooked needle.’ I’ve a sneaky suspicion that came from the same place that the University Challenge answer came from but I’ll leave that one open to the audience.

Fanni No, Richard is just a very clever individual.

Ellie I have to contact him.

Sue Is Richard procasti – oh, say the word!

Fanni Procrastinating.

Michael Procrastinating

Sue procrastinating now then by Googling?

Fanni You can use – what is it called? Alexa

Sue Yeah, a theory((?)) of Alexa would be good.

Ellie Alexa’s creepy, I don’t like her. Just you hear about all these things on Google and stuff, like she picks up parts of your conversations and then starts talking about them, it’s really weird. I was in a weird conversation with someone in my kitchen the other day about a bit of a weird deep subject, and suddenly Alexa started talking to us and started giving us facts about it, and you’re meant to say her name to trigger her to talk to you but we never said her name, we were just talking about this.

Michael Does that get confusing if you have a sister called Alexa? How do you get around that?

Ellie You just turn it off.
‘You go and put some music on.’ ‘No, I’ve just sat down and drinking my tea.’ ‘Just go and put some music on.’

That was a beautiful monologue, thanks Sue.

Speaking of monologues, does Sue have a rap for us tonight?

No, Sue hasn’t got a rap.

Just a one liner?

If I pay a tenner. Money talks.

We’ll do the beat.

We’ve got a rap session from Sue for the end.

No, the thing was when I was first asked to do the radio show I thought I needed a name so I was going to be MC Rapping Rep. But I can’t rap and I was only a bit of a rep so it was like yeah…

I thought you were – what were you calling yourself earlier?

Suegal. No, that was friends because it seemed that when people asked big questions, for some strange reason I answered the answer, so it was like ‘let’s consult Suegal’.

I think Richard Duffy has probably taken your title on that one.

Thank you Richard – finally somebody’s developed the mantel! Please take it forward and use it if you need to procrastinate.

Alright, I think we’re at the end of our programme.

We’re done for another session. Aww!

That’s sad.

Maybe join us next time to see if someone raps.

We’ll try and come up with one.
Fanni We’ll find someone who can rap.

Sue We’ll try and come up with a rap for next time.

Michael Well, I hope the show’s been of use to some of you, and do come next time.

Sue Yeah.

Ellie Thank you for listening and tuning in, and we hope it was helpful in some way.

Sue And if you haven’t started your studies yet in effect, looking at the time, you’ve got three hours till tomorrow.

Ellie Get a head start.

Sue So get a head start. All the insomniacs will probably be starting in three hours time, the rest of you will just drift into it tomorrow. But all the best to you. Thanks for listening to us.

Michael Cool, bye.

Fanni Bye!

Ellie Bye!

Kat Thank you. Bye!