

**Open Learning Champions  
Workshop  
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# How I use Open Educational Resources

## **Tutor on Level 1 and Level 2 Arts Modules**

- AA100: The Arts Past & Present
  - Level 1, interdisciplinary Arts & Humanities module, foundation-level module, one of the key entry points to formal OU study, teaches study skills as well as subject specific skills on 8 disciplines
- A230: Reading & Studying Literature
  - Level 2 module, discipline-specific to study of literature, three key genres, continues study & essay-writing skills

## **Outreach and Widening Participation Project Worker**

- Public marketing outreach
- In partnership with third sector, FE, HE, work-based learning
- Training the Trainers

**Outreach, prior to – or  
independent of – formal  
study**

# Outreach, prior to – or independent of – formal study

- Help students decide what they want to study in terms of both **subject** and **level**
- Help students determine if they can work in a distance learning environment
- Help students who want to brush up on study skills or subject-based skills
- Keep students interested if the next intake for their module is some 9 months away

# Two examples

- English

- Am I ready to Study in English?

- <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/education/educational-technology-and-practice/educational-practice/am-i-ready-study-english/content-section-0>

- BOC: English: Skills for Learning

- <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/education/english-skills-learning/content-section-overview>

# Extra Support for Students formally enrolled

1. Reflective learning – independent learners
2. Study skills & core skills like essay writing, grammar & punctuation
3. Subject based skills

# Reflective Learning – Independent Learners

- AA100 and A230 have specific TMAs designed to make students think about their study skills and goals for improvement
- Students are encouraged to think about what they want to improve and to search out & identify sources of assistance to help them achieve their goals

# **Example (AA100)**

## **TMA07 Reflective Assignment: Questions 2-3**

2. Identify one or more ways in which your approach to study or your study skills could be improved.
3. For at least one of these, identify some sources of help.



# Sources of help?

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/english>
- <https://www.futurelearn.com/> (seems to require payment)
- Open Learn <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/>
  - Open Pathways: guide through resources on Open Learn <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/education/open-pathways-higher-education-0>
  - Badged Open Courses, which are a bit more intensive and can give recognition for your work:  
<http://www.open.edu/openlearn/education/badged-open-courses-on-openlearn>
    - English: Skills for Learning: this is a Badged Open Course I have started & find quite useful:  
<http://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/course/view.php?id=1162>

# Study Skills

- Requirements range from study skills such as reading / note-taking and the complex range of skills that go into essay writing
- We tutors don't necessarily have the time to help students improve their grammar, spelling & punctuation
- What can we do?
  - When students ask for help ...
  - When you they need it without their asking ...

# AA100 Student asked for help with style

On our shared forum, I see that [tutor] suggested students might find some use from the **Arts Good Study Guide** and she also drew attention to the **Skills for Study website, particularly the section on Writing for university.**

- <http://www2.open.ac.uk/students/skillsforstudy/writing-for-university.php>

In terms of grammar, I tend to suggest students might make use of **BBC Skillswise** which starts at a very low level, so you can fly through all the things you know & pick up those things you don't know you don't know (if you see what I mean). I think it is quite clear & interactive

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/english>

There is also help within the **OU Skills for study website on developing academic English**, which includes a section on **Grammar, spelling & punctuation:**

- <http://www2.open.ac.uk/students/skillsforstudy/developing-academic-english.php>

# Subject based skills

- Students who are really keen to learn more and read beyond the module materials
- Students who don't quite understand the way the module materials explain a topic
- Previous incarnations of a module might explain things differently – often these previous courses have been put onto OpenLearn

# Example (A230)

How do we learn to do close analysis?

- Online skills tutorials on the 3 major genres
- Resources from A210 Approaching Literature module available on OpenLearn:
  - Approaching prose fiction  
<http://openlearn.open.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=2999> and
  - Approaching poetry  
<http://openlearn.open.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=3007>

# Follow-up / Next-Steps (“exit interview”)

1. Withdraw from module before completing
- 2 Complete module & want to prepare for next module / next level

# Responding to student withdrawal

The OU offers a number of Open Educational Resources (OERs) which are free opportunities for learning online. There is no accreditation, but there can be recognition by means of a "badge". If you're interested in this, I've provided a few links to web-pages under our two key OER websites - OpenLearn and FutureLearn:

OpenLearn: <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/>

\*\*Open Pathways: <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/education/open-pathways-higher-education-0>

Badged Courses on OpenLearn:

<http://www.open.edu/openlearn/about-openlearn/try#Badged%20open%20courses>

FutureLearn: <https://www.futurelearn.com/>

\*\*I might particularly recommend the Open Pathways website as it is specifically designed to help people navigate the 1000s of free educational experiences available on OpenLearn.

# Responding to student withdrawal ct'd

There is absolutely no charge for any of this learning\*. You will be encouraged to "log in" - you can use your existing Student ID. Logging in is helpful so you can keep track of what you've been learning, but it's not obligatory. There's no hard sell. Dip in and out as you see fit. I myself signed up for about three or four FutureLearn courses a couple years ago & then didn't have time to follow through or found I got out of them what I wanted. Other than a few emails reminding me of what was on offer, I've had no hassles. I'm also in the middle of studying for a Badged Open Course on OpenLearn - badged courses are somewhat meaty - and there's no time limit on completing them.

Any way, I hope you will find your interest in learning - which brought you to the OU - will only be whetted by this experience.

***\*FutureLearn now appears to charge***



# A few further thoughts... 1 of 3

- One of the biggest barriers in terms of widening participation is the idea that “I couldn’t possibly do this.” OpenLearn gets people interested and enthusiastic about learning. The short five-minute videos, the nice easy quizzes, the things that involve humour, help break down those barriers and increase learners’ self-confidence. It’s a building step that can help people feel that learning is for them.

## A few further thoughts... 2 of 3

- On a continuum between a five-minute funny video and entering formal learning, I'd put a badged course towards the end of that journey for learners. It requires commitment (24 hours), structure and feedback; it's not just passive learning. It also requires a bit of effort and a willingness to get it wrong and to try again. It's challenging in a good way, the kind of skills, qualities and practices that make for good study. Some people are really excited and want to study but there may be months until the next formal intake. They can make a start on OpenLearn at any time and build the skills they need to succeed.
- It's important to stress the different levels on OpenLearn. You don't want someone to jump in at Level Three (postgraduate) courses and be put off.

## A few further thoughts... 3 of 3

I think this could be used more as a sort of **exit interview** with students who tried a module and find that it's not right for them. It's really useful to be able to send them some links to OpenLearn. Some of them are quite keen, they want to learn, they want to get their brain working again, but 60 credits at Level 1 isn't quite what they're up to at that point. So, that's when I find it really helpful to be able to have OpenLearn to refer them on to and keep them learning. Because they often express being really interested in learning, and they want to improve themselves. They're interested in things, they're always watching documentaries, and they came to the course because it was interesting, but perhaps the discipline required to write essays, to do references, to think critically, is a bit more than they're after just at the moment. And they're interested just in learning content. For students who had done an access module and had not passed, part of my follow-up was to go out and see people. I could show them the Open Educational Resources, and they were really enthusiastic that this was there.

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