



The Student experience

Finding space and time for studying

Emma

And I saw this one that said 'Open to Change'. And I read the little thing about it, and I'm like 'That's me', because it's like for those people who have never studied before. It could open you up. It could get you into studying and all the rest of it. I've never done it before. And I'm like 'I'm going to do this'. So with that, I gets out my card, pays for it. Does it. And then just sit back and go 'Oh my god what have I done?'

Paul

My fears were 'Could I do it?'

Saiqa

I thought 'Why not. 20 weeks. You know in my own time.'

Mark

Have I done the right thing. Is it going to be too hard.

Saiqa

A box arrived and you know, all my stuff in it, which was I thought, 'Oh what's happening here'.

Wilma

A young chappy there delivered me this big parcel. I thought 'My goodness'.

Mark

You get your pack in a nice little case, and it's like opening a Christmas present.

Yvonne

I was really excited, and you know, put the CD in and watched everything.

Paul

It was a little bit scary. Some of the things I'd never ever heard of.

John

Am I going to look stupid? Is the tutor going to think I'm daft? But you look at it, and you think.. after you've read all the course work and stuff, you think 'well it's not that bad really'.

Paul

I started to read the books, and the more I actually read the books, the more I couldn't put them down.

Music playing in background.

Nicola

I'm thirty two years old. I'm a single mum to three daughters, which I'm dreading when they grow up. I run a Mother and Toddler group, two mornings a week, voluntary, with a friend of mine.

Nicola (*calling out*)

Grubs up! Hi yer! What would you like?

Woman

A tea and a toast please.

Nicola

I am not working at the moment, because my youngest is very little, so. But I would like to get out there and find a job eventually.

Music

Basically I take my older two to school. Come home. As soon as I get in, I have everything set up. I have my computer set up. I have it all laid out ready for myself to make myself do it. I'd rather clean the oven than study sometimes. But I know I have to do it.

If I'm writing my own thoughts and feelings, I have to do it on my own. I have to do it in quiet. So, I either do it when they're all out at school, or sometimes in the evening, when they're all asleep.

The Easter holidays were a little bit difficult, because obviously I've got the children around all the time.

Because I'm on an Open University course, it was actually quite flexible. Whereas I can use my own time. So I studied all the way up until the Easter holidays, and then quit for two weeks. Which was actually nice for me as well as the children.

Nicola

How many fingers do I have?

Child

One, two, three, four, five, six...(laughs)

Nicola

I've really really enjoyed it. And it's given me like a thirst for knowledge, and I want to carry on doing it.

Screen ident: Finding Space

Wilma

Well my daughter was working at the time, so that meant that I had the house to myself. And I used the dining room table. Spread out with all the papers. It was very nice. I enjoyed that.

Paul

The only place where I could really work was in this room, on this table, with all the paperwork and the books to hand.

Saiqu

Upstairs in my bedroom. That was mainly at bed time, just before bed time, when I could do my reading quietly. And the other place was downstairs in the living room. That was during the day when I had some time to myself.

Mark

I get my book. I get my notebook. I get a cup of coffee at the side of me. Telly's off. No other distractions.

Neil

At first my wife was a bit apprehensive, as I even studied. And I said I was going on the 'Openings' course, but once I was studying, my wife was very supportive. She even proof read some of my essays.

Judith

I set myself a little corner. That was my study place. My books were there all week and nobody touched them. I mean it's just me and my husband. He respected that space.

Emma

I spoke to my partner about it. I'm lucky that he's very supportive and the children knew that I wanted to do my nurse training, and they were all quite excited that I'm going to you know going ahead with it.

Neil

I have a family. I work full time and obviously there's other commitments. So, within the family we agreed that when my daughter had gone to bed, then I'd go into my loft, which is where I study, where my computer is, and do two or three hours a night.

Judith

Well at the time, I was working part time in the mornings. Every morning I worked. And my husband works all day so I did most of my studying in the afternoon and I stuck to it.

Yvonne

Sometimes I worked in bed actually, with a notebook and read and made notes. And my husband didn't mind, because he reads as well. So, that went down quite well.

Emma

Basically it's about telling them all when you want to study and just saying it's going to take about an hour of my time, can you go up to your room or can you go out to play.

Saiqa

I used to just pull out the book and start reading it and sometimes it wasn't the right time. The kids were playing, or there was noise, or I had people coming round to the house.

Yvonne

I am very very lucky, in that I don't work. And I don't have children. I just have dogs.

Mike

I actually took the coursework with me in my Openings bag on a train down to London, to watch a football match. And spent a good couple of hours actually studying whilst I was on the train journey. Thankfully without too much annoyance to the other passengers.

John Peters

Let's go and feed the fishes.

June Peters

Yeah, lets go and have a look at the fish and then feed them.

John Peters

My name is John Peters. I live in Hucknall in Nottingham with my wife June. I've been disabled all my life, but I worked as a Draughtsman for forty years but I had to retire through ill health.

When I was a young man I always said to myself when I finish work I want to take a degree, and I thought well, the Open University, let's have a go at that.

Every morning, we usually get up quite early and then I usually get in here, into my office. We work in our office, which is our conservatory, about nine o'clock.

I then stop in there for about two to three hours. I read the course work. I read the books. I do it all in rough and then I go and put it all on to the computer.

When I'm completely happy with it, I then send it off to the course tutor for it to be marked.

Well having done the first couple of courses, I feel I'm on my way. Yes. I love it. It's so good. It's so fulfilling.

Screen ident: Finding Time

Yvonne

I have a terrible lack of discipline. So it always, if there was something good on television that I wanted to watch and didn't want to do my studying, or something like that but I found that if I did it in short sharp little bouts, it meant that I didn't get sick of doing it. It wasn't a chore.

Mark

I'll do so much today and I'll do so much tomorrow, and you've got to give it time to absorb in and so you fully understand what you're doing.

Mike

I could actually work round it, whilst my daughter was in bed for example. Maybe an hour at lunch time, if I was fortunate, a couple of hours in the evening. Thankfully she's quite a good sleeper.

Saiqa

One of the things that I found in the box was a timetable. I found that very useful because it had all the dates in, where we should be in the book and what chapter we should be in. What we should be reading. What date we should be handing in the assignment.

Nicola

I'd say it takes about six to eight hours a week to try and study but trying to pinch those hours here and there can be quite difficult.

John

You've got to be disciplined. If you're not disciplined, you can't do it because there are other distractions. Perhaps the wife might come in and say somebody at the door, somebody on the telephone. Or you have to say well you handle it, I'm busy.

Yvonne

Instead of getting all het up and getting yourself in a flat spin and thinking 'Oh I can't do that'. If you just take it step by step, then it starts to come.

Saiqa

When I knew that there was something to be handed in, I worked harder and better and I could focus more at that stage.

Wagdi

But then you realised I've got to work through all this. And you start flicking through the assignments and looking at the TMA's, the Tutor Marked Assessments and actually realising well this is the work I've got to do, and it became to be or started being a bit daunting.

Mark

Don't rush it. Just take your time with it. Absorb it all.

Saiqa

I was really pleased with how I managed the time throughout the course, with the children, with the housework, with the husband, basically with all the chores.

Judith

Make yourself a time plan, a schedule. When you can study. Don't be over ambitious because you won't be able to stick to it.

Nicola

But I found it quite difficult sometimes trying to keep up with the study and trying to keep motivated with the study. If you hit a hard bit, you just kind of want to give up, and I did, several times.

Mike

My motivation for the studying is really to see what I can actually achieve myself. What's inside me, and what's been there really, you know, since those days at school.

Nicola

But the next day I knew I had to get back with it because if I didn't, I'd quit, and I really was determined not to quit.

Saiqa

There were times on the course when I thought 'this is it'. You know, the kids were playing up. There were things that happened in the household. There was places where I had to go. And I thought 'No, this is not for me. I won't be able to do it', but you have to be determined and you just have to keep on going.