

# Teaching and Supporting Online Learners 2

## Help to build their confidence

	Strategies	Some Student Comments
1	Understand that online students form a very diverse cohort. Many are mature age, juggling other responsibilities and/or lacking confidence in their abilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>During assessment period, essays particularly, not so much exams, there's a lot more stress in the house because I'm worried having the time to get things in. With kids it's unpredictable; I might plan for 2-3 hours in the day but I might get 30 minutes.</i></li><li>• <i>I think one of the major obstacles for me was having the confidence to write, to actually get my thoughts down on paper. I think that's been the biggest hurdle for me, knowing that I can write and that it's also just a learned process that you can get better and improve.</i></li><li>• <i>I think that the only thing I lacked was confidence in my own ability and the tutors and the help that's available certainly gives you the confidence to keep going.</i></li></ul>
2	Set tasks that encourage students to get to know you and each other – to engage as a group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>I did find a very good 'study buddy' [online system to connect with other students] and that was [because of] one of our previous tutors; she recommended that everyone try to find a study buddy. That was very, very helpful.</i></li><li>• <i>If tutors would recommend and actually realise the value of 'study buddies', I think it would be promoted more.</i></li></ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I've really only had good experiences. I've had a group assignment and we all got on so well and worked so well together.</i></li> <li><i>I think we probably know just by talking about it we sort of encourage each other, how they're going and talk about exams and different bits and pieces or how we're going so yes, in a funny sort of a way it's sort of like a bit of encouragement, you know.</i></li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Ask them about their goals, expectations of study and their study styles &amp; habits</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>I've always wanted to be a teacher ever since I was a little kid. I had this romantic idea about teachers being older and fabulous so I thought I'd do it at one stage.</i></li> <li><i>In my adult life I've done a lot of travel to developing countries so I wanted to make a difference and this course seemed to allow me to do that.</i></li> <li><i>I think I've always aspired to something, working with children and midwifery has always been something that I've wanted to do.</i></li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Start out quite 'easy' and make assessments progressively harder – ensuring feedback before next assessment is due</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The first units I did, the tutors were fantastic at introducing you to uni and teaching you about it and being really supportive so that was really good.</i></li> <li><i>My very first university paper; you know, you're not used to the academic world and you're not used to the academic way of writing and I got some really good advice.</i></li> <li><i>The first one has got to be the easiest because as you progress you would think it would be more difficult.</i></li> </ul>