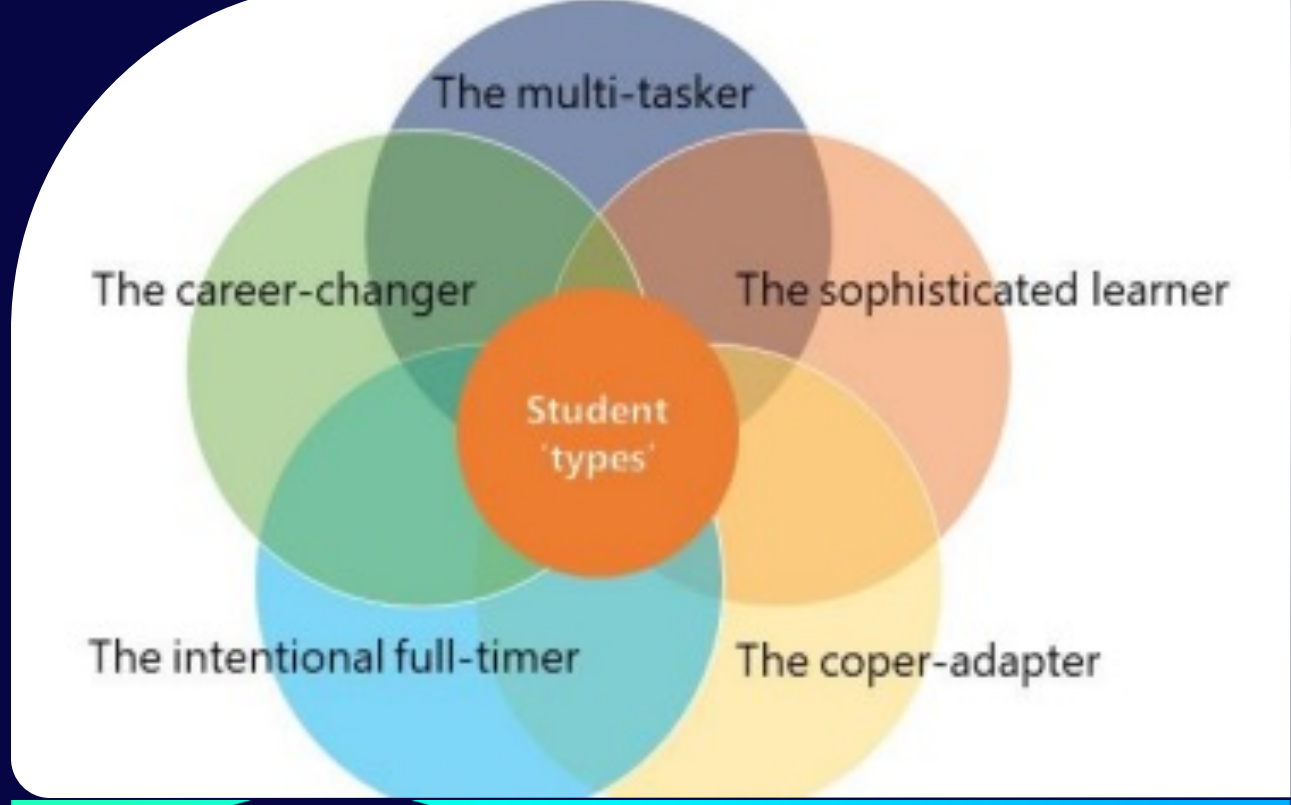
Concurrent students in Education studies (Primary)

Connecting and belonging: ‘stretching’ study with changing contexts



Dr Lore Gallastegi and Dr Carolyn Cooke

February 2024

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Education Studies (Primary) Concurrent Study at the OU

Concurrent study Vs Full-time study

	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
OU			2 X 60 credits concurrently									
		Semester 1: 60 credits					Semester 2: 60 credits					

Course type
Degree

Credits
360

How long it takes
Part-time study – 6 years
Full-time study – 3 years
Time limit – 10 years

OU BA (Honours) Education studies (Primary)

Stage 1	E103 + another	2 x 60 credits	October - May
Stage 2	E209 + another	2 x 60 credits	October - May
Stage 3	E309 + another	2 x 60 Credits	October - May

Academic year	% Concurrent students – Education Studies (Primary)	% Concurrent students – Faculty Average
2020/21	44.2%	34.6%
2021/22	46.4%	38.7%
2022/23	47%	40.2%
2023/24	48.1%	40.9%

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OU Research on Concurrent study in Education Studies (Primary)

Who are our Education Studies (Primary) concurrent students? (open.ac.uk)

- 2021-22
- Students who studied 2 modules in 2021-22.
- Research team: Academics
- Mixed methods: Student and Associate Lecturers questionnaires and interviews

Understanding Study Intensity Change among Q94 students

- 2022-2024
- Students who started 2 modules but deferred one module during 2022/23.
- Research team: Academics, students, Student Support Advisers
- Mixed methods: Student interviews; and Advisors and Associate Lecturers Focus Groups

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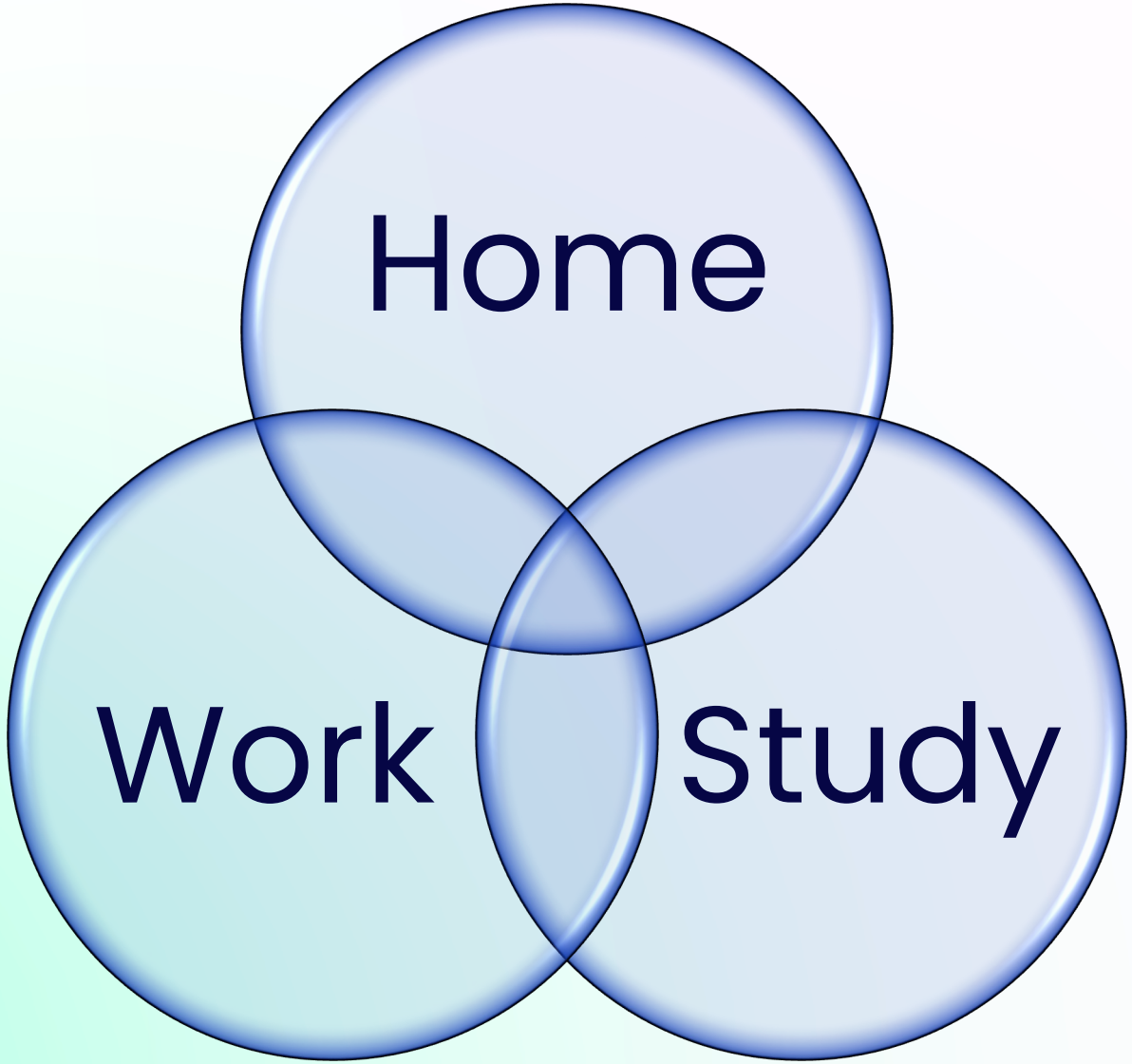
Connecting and Belonging

Reasons for concurrent study:

- Comparable experience to peers.
- Financial / Career drivers
- Time / Age drivers



"It's a lovely Venn diagram, the study, because...it's helping my work... And my work is helping the study...So it's got all of this lovely... mix going on. And I just want to enjoy that."

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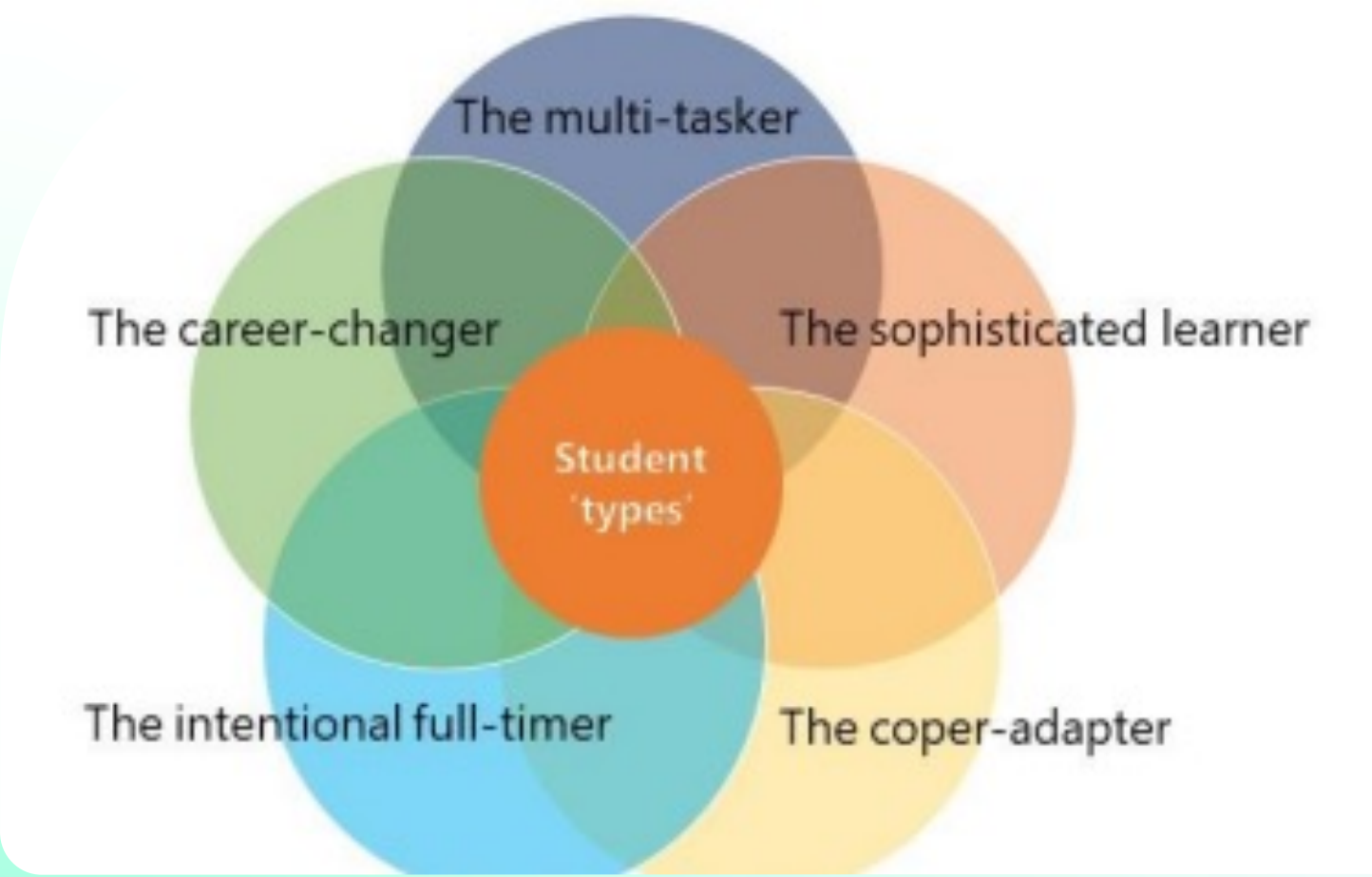
Our Concurrent Students:



Managing concurrent study;

- Strategic studying
- Using flexibility and affordances
- Concurrent pedagogies
- Maximising workplace/homeplace experiences

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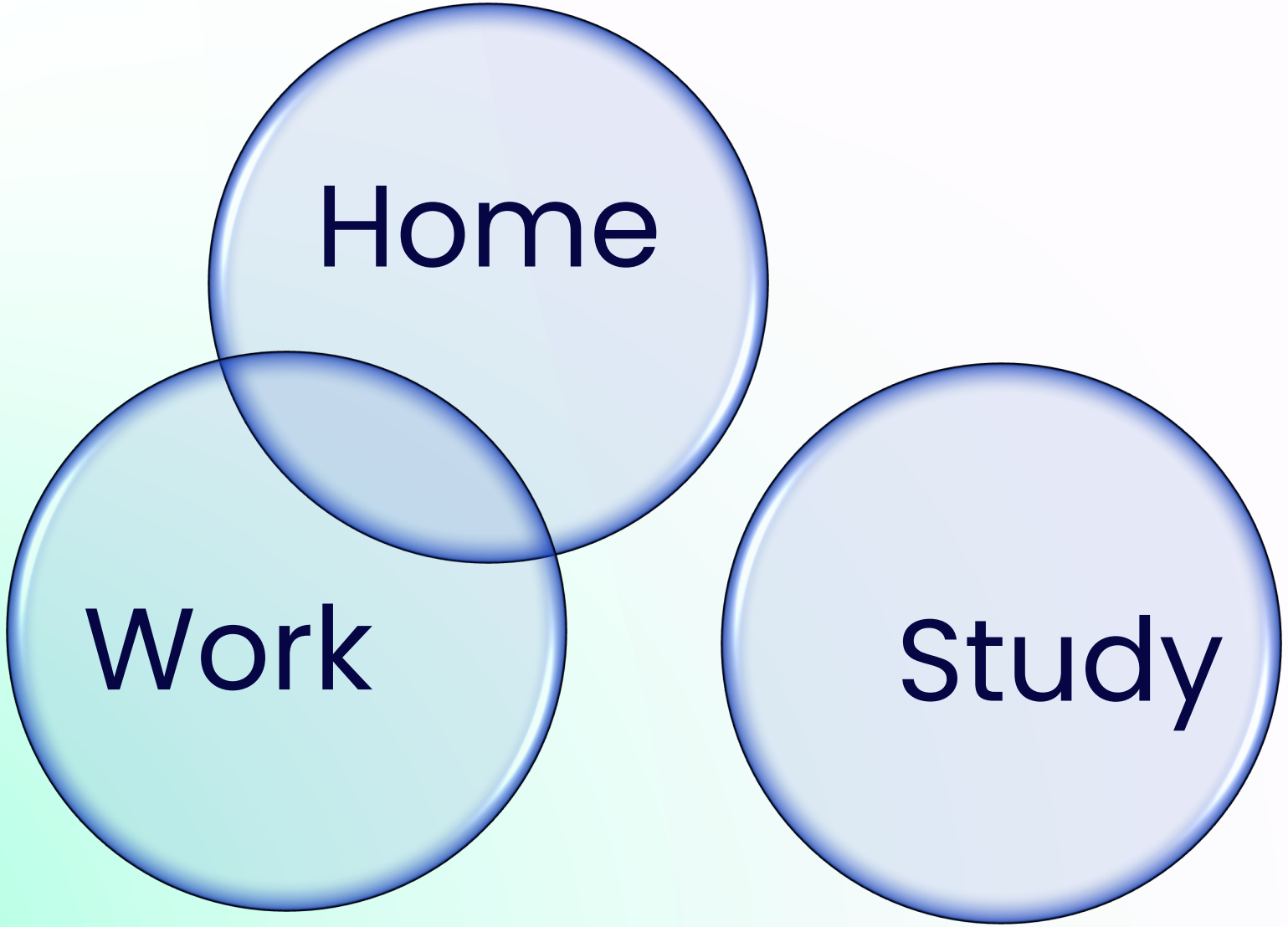
Connecting and Belonging



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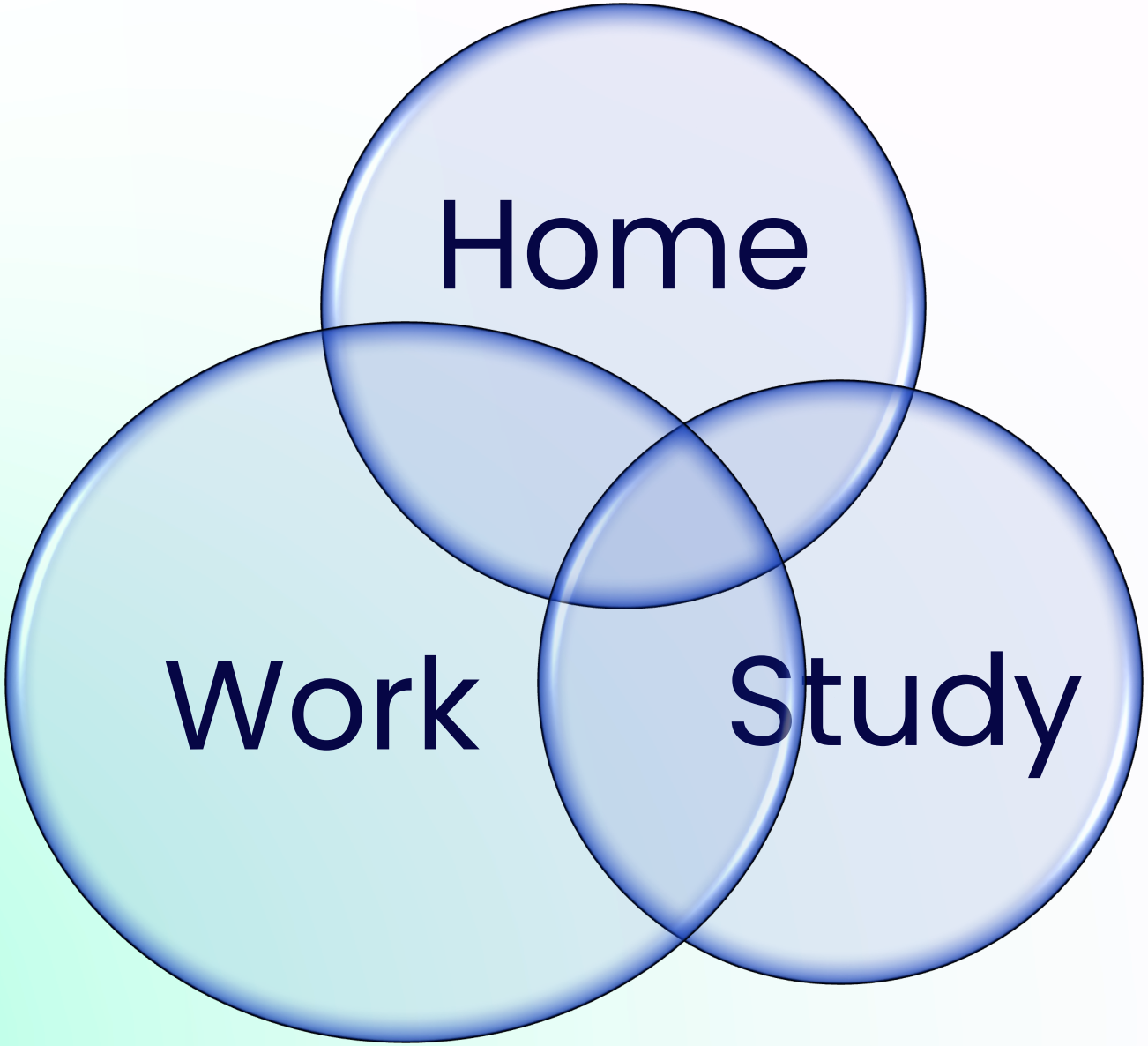
Connecting and Belonging

- Greater responsibility at work
- Changes of school



"I was getting snowed under because it was a new school and new environment"

"It was school. It was my job and it affected me… all I wanted to do was just sit on the sofa…It was just draining"

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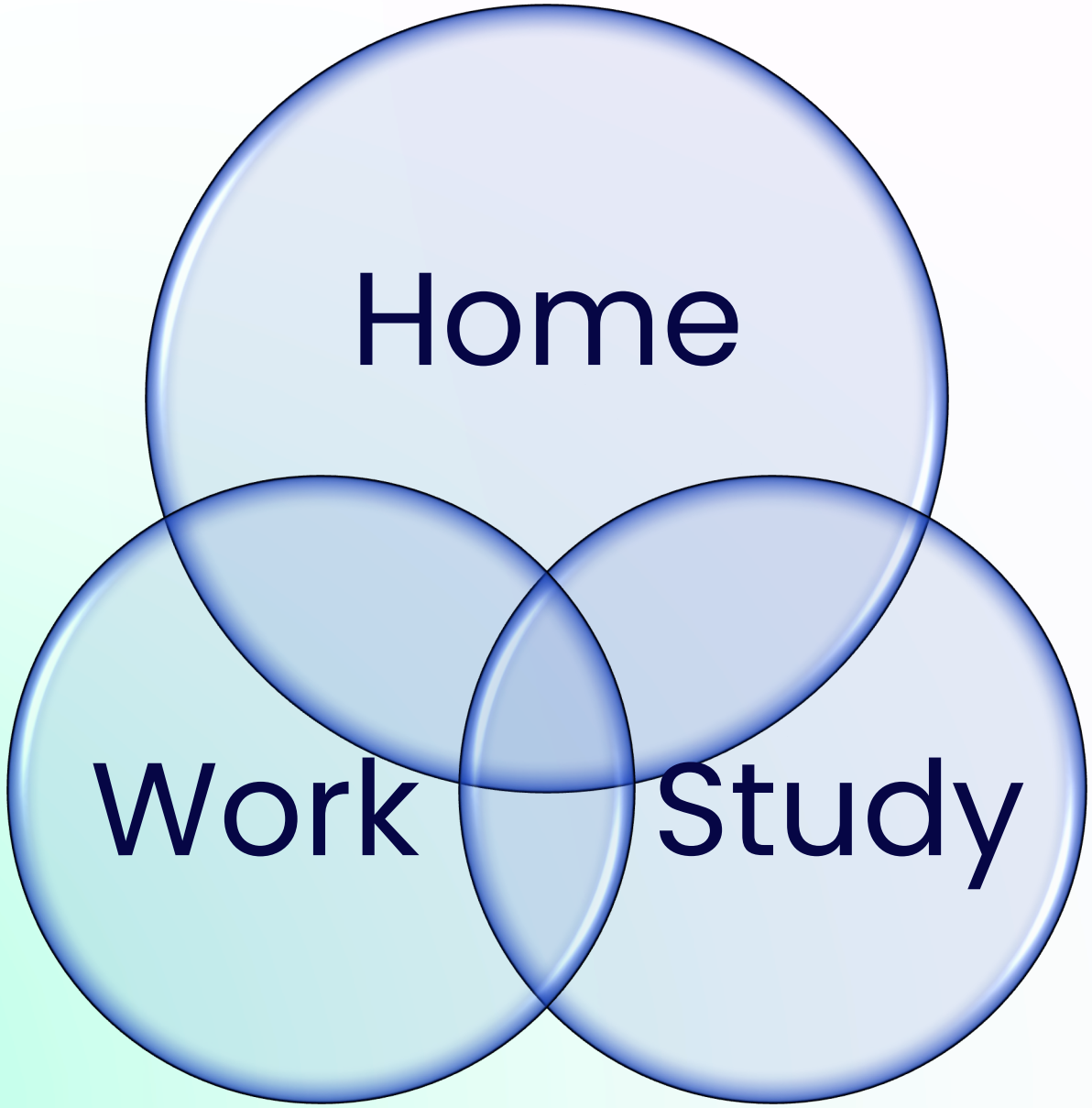
Connecting and Belonging

Changing caring responsibilities

Changes in mental wellbeing



"Getting all the cleaning done, making sure the kids had their homework done, and then I'd stop and I'd start my studying and I'd still be studying around 3:00 in the morning"

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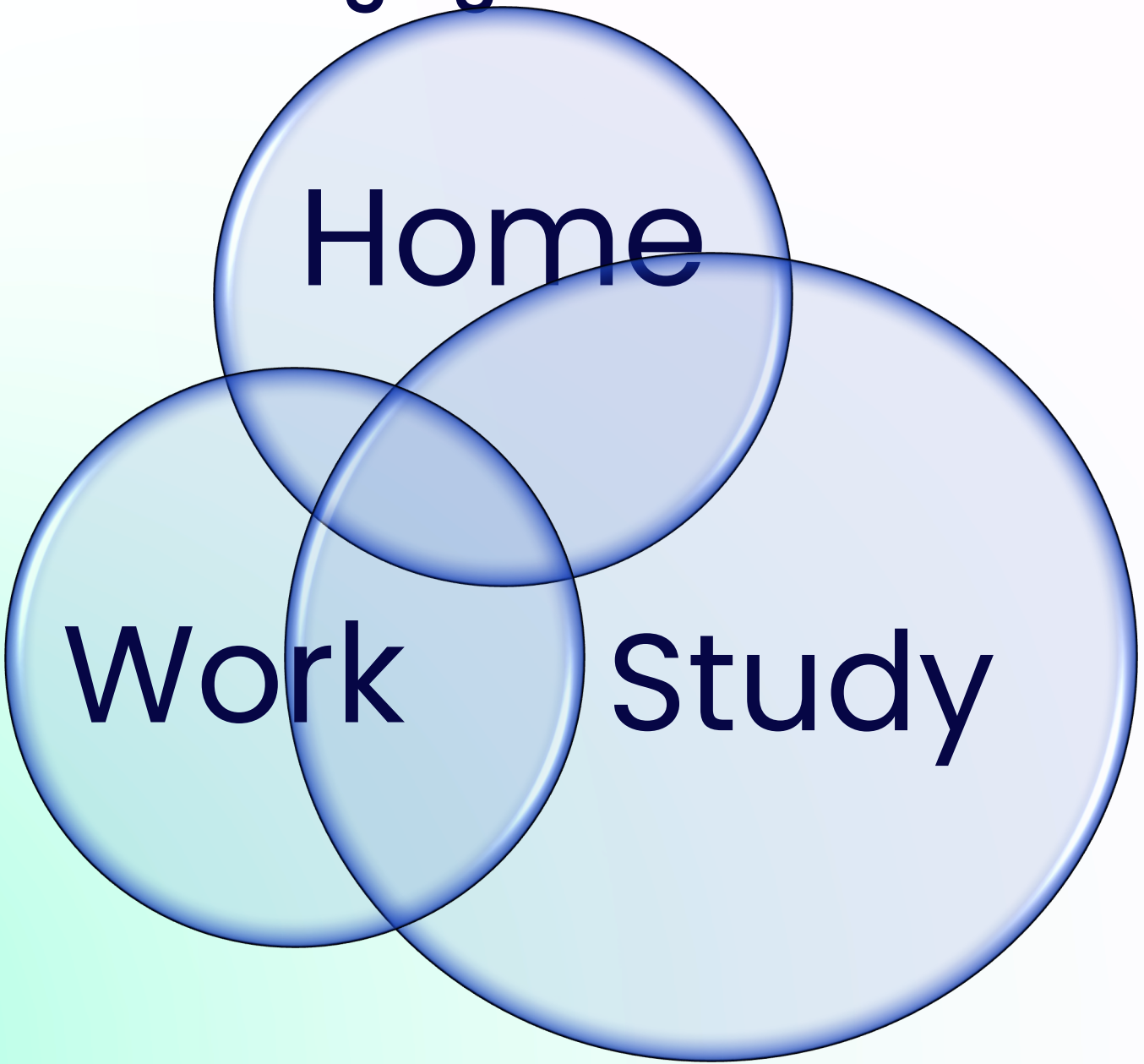
Connecting and Belonging

Pedagogic shock

Level 2ness

Ability to make explicit connections with work and home.



"It was very apparent from early tutorials and reviewing the module materials…that the work was much more in depth and would require much more of my time than I had needed previously. The main challenge for me was the amount of reading that was required. This was a real shock compared to the level 1 modules…"

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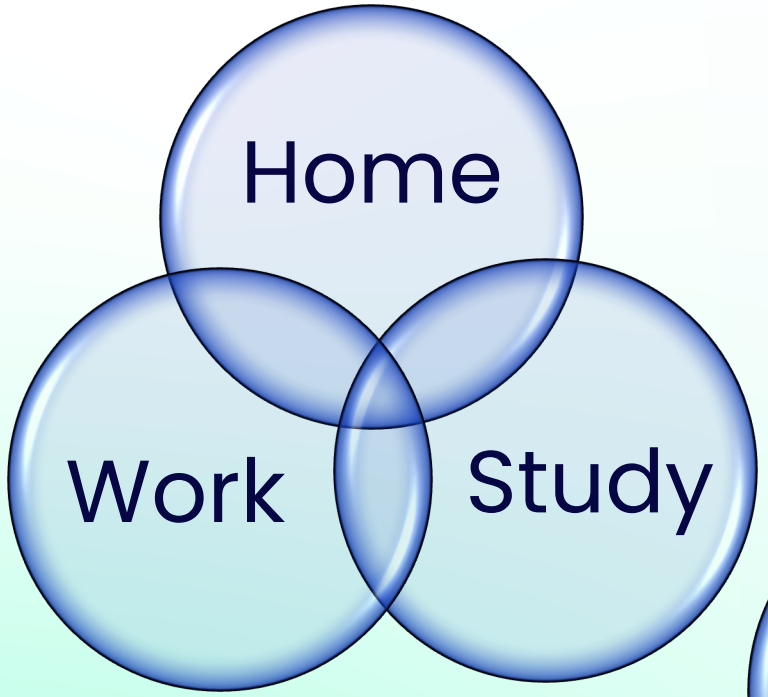
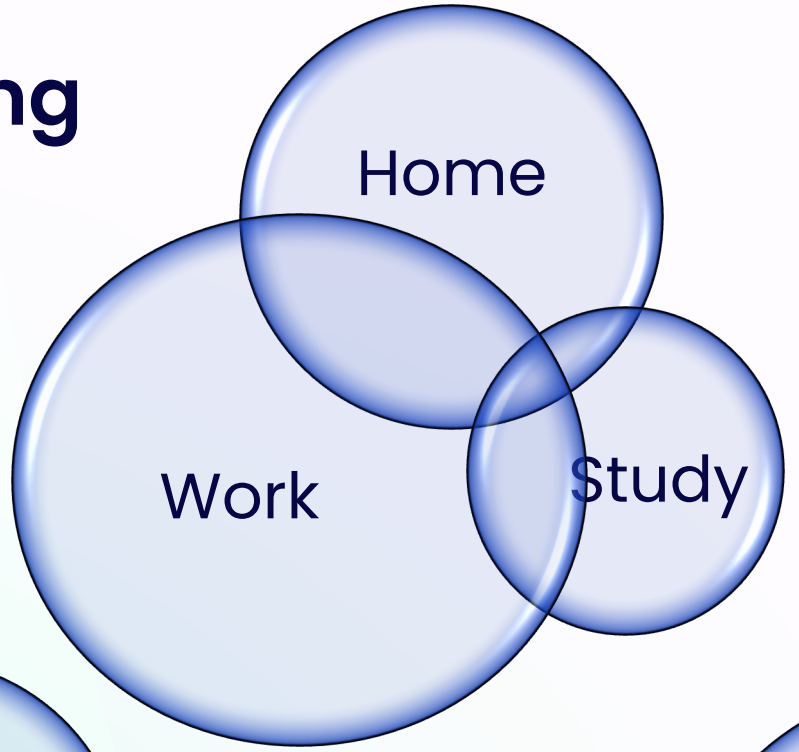
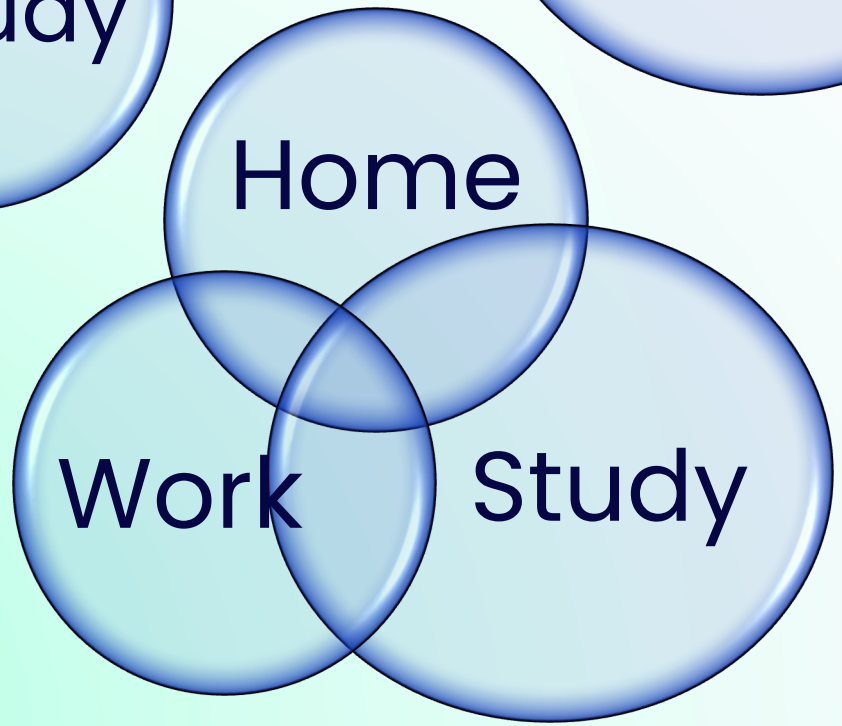
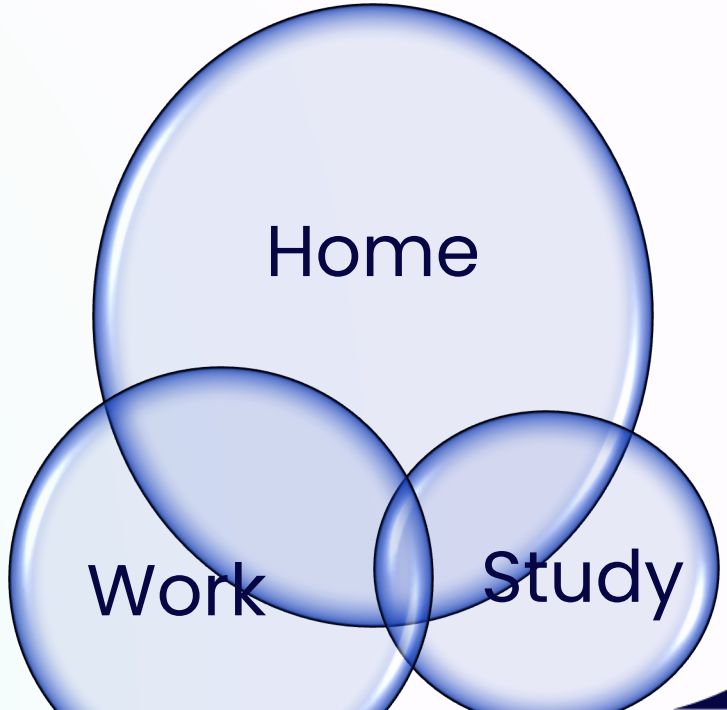
Connecting and Belonging









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Connecting and belonging: the ‘stretch’ of study

- **Concurrent pedagogies: connections between modules are valued and valuable**

Challenge: ‘write in’ connectivity between modules and experiences in a more explicit way.

- **Connectivity and belonging differs between modules**

Challenge: consider deeper shared communications / support between tutors on two different modules around 1 student’s needs.

- **Ways in which we facilitate students to ‘stretch’ study**

Challenge: make more explicit how concurrent students (and their tutors) can manage their study, including assignment deadlines, study patterns etc.

- **Maintaining connectivity when deferring**

Challenge: how else can we maintain connectivity with students who do defer both modules and then restart studying a year later?

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Connecting and Belonging: concurrent students

- **Comparable university experiences: a sense of belonging at a distance**

Challenge: for us to 'see beyond the module' to the qualification, but also to the broader student experience of study at the OU including cross module peer relationships.

- **Critical role of tutors and student support staff**

Challenge: to enable tutors on one module to take a broader perspective at times to best support the student.

- **Role of professional identity: connectivity with developing self**

Challenge: Continue to offer deep level reflective activities and opportunities to use work-based experiences as part of module assignments and activities.

- **Deficit retention narratives – deferral as a maintenance of connection and belonging**

Challenge: to consider how retention data is reported from individual modules and to challenge deficit views of single module deferral.

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Any Questions?

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