



Current Praxis Projects 23/24

Here are details of all our current projects. You will see that we're engaged in activities across a wide range of themes relating to teaching and learning in Higher Education and we'd love the opportunity to tell you more – or even to explore collaborations where your interests overlap with ours. We've included contact details for all the project leads or <mailto:wels-praxis@open.ac.uk>

Project Lead	Project Title	Project Summary
Leigh-Anne Perryman Leigh-anne.perryman@open.ac.uk	Supporting learners with a contextualised Community of Practice (CoP)	This study aims to develop a Community of Practice (CoP) model grounded in and building on the principles of critical, digital, and open pedagogy, and to devise an evaluation framework to assess the efficacy of an online CoP at the individual and collective levels to inform evidence-based ongoing development of the CoP.
Ursula Stickler Ursula.stickler@open.ac.uk	Attention, please! Investigating dynamic reflection as a model for online language teacher training	This project aims to enhance Language Associate Lecturers' teaching skills through investigating whether combining eye-tracking visualisation with reflection can help teachers to develop suitable strategies for online teaching.
Judy Chandler Judy.chandler@open.ac.uk	Student experience of assessment at Postgraduate level	This project will investigate the assessment experiences of taught postgraduate students in the minority demographics of ethnicity, gender and mental. Using a Change Laboratory methodology, the project will identify opportunities for enhancing assessment design, preparation and support.
Eira Patterson Eira.patterson@open.ac.uk	Voices from beyond the walls: An investigation	This study will explore the factors that influence the learning journeys of Students in Secure Environments (SiSE) studying on

	into the education experiences of students studying Open University Access modules from within prisons in England	Access courses within English prisons. The study will adopt a qualitative approach to explore the pedagogical, social, and contextual factors that impact on the learning of these students.
Inma Alvarez Inma.alvarez@open.ac.uk	Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies (WELS) Professional Doctorate Students: Career Aspirations and Support	This study is an exploration of the career aspirations of Professional Doctorate Students in the Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies (WELS). It will investigate the personal and contextual factors affecting these aspirations and how far these are supported by the Professional Doctorate programme.
Nicola Goodall Nicola.goodall@open.ac.uk	Exploring the impact of using Enquiry Based Learning on the experience of nursing students within the four field of practice	An evaluation of the lived learning experiences of pre-registration nursing students in the four nursing Fields of Practice (Adult, Children and Young People, Learning Disability and Mental Health). The study will explore students' experiences of Enquiry Based Learning, using this evaluation to influence the next stage of curriculum review.
Olwyn O'Malley Joanna Mirek-Tooth Lluisa Astruc Olwyn.Omalley@open.ac.uk	Designing effective interventions for improving completion and outcomes on BA (Hons) Business Management and French (R55) and BA (Hons) Law and Spanish Open University R56 joint degrees	The proposed research will undertake an analysis of student progression in two programmes, Business & Languages and Law & Languages, with a focus on understanding factors that contribute to low completion rates and withdrawals. The outcomes of the research will inform the co-creation of a support programme designed to enhance students' experiences and improve retention.
Amanda Shields Amanda.shields@open.ac.uk	"Social work education through a lens: Using 'Photovoice' methodology as	This project involves the use of 'Photovoice' methodology to explore the contribution to student social worker's experience and development of reflective practice, whilst on placement. This study employs a mixed-methods design including surveys, focus groups, semi-structured interviews and photography.

	an aid to support social work students' reflective practice on placement"	Stage 2 and 3 NI social work students (n=50) will be invited to participate in a pre- and post-placement survey, self-assessing reflective practice skills which have been founded on traditional reflection methods. A sample (stage 2, n=5; stage 3, n=5) will participate in Photovoice, capturing photographs to represent feelings, experiences and learning of placement. Photographs will be used as an aid to prompt and support deeper reflection and analysis will explore the efficacy of this tool.
Grace Clifton Grace.clifton@open.ac.uk	Developing professional conversations to enable student learning and mentor professional development	This project looks at the continuing development of the Practice tutor role which is unique to the OU PGCE Wales partnership. Following previous research on the role of the Practice tutor and using technology to enhance lesson reflection (Glover et al. 2023 in preparation) the project aims to provide insights into the 'professional conversations' that Practice tutors have with students and school mentors and understand the impact of these conversations on student learning and mentor professional development. In doing so, the project will make recommendations to inform Practice tutor practice and develop the approach to practice review meetings.
Joanne Josephidou Joanne.josephidou@open.ac.uk	The journey of the Early Childhood Student	The journey of the Early Childhood student: Phase 1 Metrics offer useful information about the student journey through the BA (Hons Early Childhood (Q89) programme, but there is less insight into the 'lived experiences' (Frechette et al., 2020) of students, including the barriers and enablers, as they move through the programme and develop an 'Early Childhood' identity. This identity is important in terms of their work with young children and the impact they can have. The proposed project is the first stage of a longitudinal study which will address issues of underrepresented groups on the programme in terms of achievement, retention and progression. Students will share their experiences of beginning their first Early Childhood module and completing their first academic year.
Joan Simons Joan.simons@open.ac.uk	Student retention and the affective impact of distance learning	In spite of the positive emotional impact, implicit in student satisfaction as a key indicator of student retention 'the affective experiences of education throughout the study journeys of

<p>Linda Plowright-Pepper Linda.plowright-pepper@open.ac.uk</p>		<p>students are rarely acknowledged' (Coughlan, Lister and Lucassen, 2021). This project builds upon a previous Praxis study to investigate a complex entanglement of personal, learning content and design factors which contributed to one student's affective responses to forums and non-linear decisions about participation (Rodrieguez-Leon & Plowright-Pepper, 2023 unpublished). It will explore the affective impact of sections of two modules (experiencing lower retention) in a qualitative participatory study in which students will be asked to diarise their emotional responses to their study journey.</p>
<p>Marina Postlethwaite Bowler Marina.postlethwaite.bowler@open.ac.uk</p>	<p>A project that explores the assessment experiences of students in secure environments (SiSE) studying level 1 sport and fitness modules</p>	<p>This project will investigate the assessment experiences of Students in Secure Environments (SiSE) learners studying Level One modules Introduction to Sport and Fitness (E117) & Working with people in sport and fitness (E119) of the Sports programme. The study will adopt a qualitative approach to explore the pedagogical and contextual factors that impact the learning of these students. The project will focus on learning more about OU Sports programme SiSE learners and tutors' experiences with summative assessment materials (ICMAs and TMAs) within English Prisons.</p>
<p>Naomi Holford Naomi.holford@open.ac.uk</p>	<p>Navigating freedom of speech and inclusive pedagogy: teaching politically charged topics online in Level 1 Childhood and Youth</p>	<p>This project seeks to identify challenges, barriers, and positive routes to supporting Associate Lecturer's (ALs') effective management of online discussion (synchronous and asynchronous) of potentially politically charged and contentious topics, such as race/racism and gender (including transgender experiences), while maintaining anti-discriminatory and inclusive learning environments, in the context of the new Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act. It will explore ALs' concerns, views, and experiences through a qualitatively driven mixed method approach incorporating surveys, focus groups and tutorial observation. It strives to identify in collaboration with ALs a strength-based approach to effectively navigate teaching of potentially contentious topics, enabling open discussion and constructive dialogue while maintaining an inclusive learning environment.</p>
<p>Mel Green Mel.green@open.ac.uk</p>	<p>Creating harmony from Discord™: Using</p>	<p>The proposed project extension seeks to advance the initial research that explored the role of Discord as an educational tool</p>

	<p>innovative technology to create a sense of community in distance education (Associate Lecturer (AL) Perspectives) - Continuation project</p>	<p>within the Open University (OU) and was focused on both student and tutor perspectives. The preliminary study contributed to a nuanced understanding of how Discord can foster community-building, pedagogical engagement, and diverse interactions, especially in a distance learning environment. Despite its comprehensive insights, the study primarily relied on a smaller scale of user experience from the tutor perspectives, not adequately capturing the variability in how different tutors and wider student cohorts could leverage Discord's features.</p> <p>To address this limitation, the extension aims to involve 3-6 associate lecturers (currently 3 signed up) in employing Discord within their respective distance-learning undergraduate modules. By widening the scope of participation among faculty, the project aims to offer a robust assessment of the platform's scalability and adaptability across different pedagogical frameworks and student demographics within the OU.</p>
<p>Amanda O'Shea Amanda.oshea@open.ac.uk</p>	<p>Learner experience of online study with micro-credential courses</p>	<p>This project will investigate the learning experiences of students studying postgraduate micro-credential courses, particularly in the demographics of disabilities. The aim is to explore how all learners can be effectively supported through using online conversational pedagogies.</p> <p>Using an exploratory case study methodology, the project will identify opportunities for enhancing the learning experience for all, focusing particularly on supporting neurodiversity. The project will use qualitative data from learner surveys, micro-credential course reflections and interviews to explore what makes the most effective online learning environment for all learners studying postgraduate micro-credentials. This will support the development of micro credential courses by enhancing their design, preparation and production using effective inclusive pedagogies.</p>
<p>Lucy Henning Lucy.henning@open.ac.uk</p> <p>Sally Hunt Sally.hunt@open.ac.uk</p>	<p>Investigating the effectiveness of module design for engagement and participation in the first year of presentation</p>	<p>This project will investigate the learning experiences of students studying postgraduate micro-credential courses, particularly in the demographics of disabilities. The aim is to explore how all learners can be effectively supported through using online conversational pedagogies.</p>

		<p>Using an exploratory case study methodology, the project will identify opportunities for enhancing the learning experience for all, focusing particularly on supporting neurodiversity. The project will use qualitative data from learner surveys, micro-credential course reflections and interviews to explore what makes the most effective online learning environment for all learners studying postgraduate micro-credentials. This will support the development of micro-credential courses by enhancing their design, preparation and production using effective inclusive pedagogies.</p>
<p>Xaviere Hassan Xaviere.hassan@open.ac.uk</p>	<p>Inclusive community, inclusive activities</p>	<p>The project sets out to explore the extent to which the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics (LAL) learning & teaching materials and activities are representative, accessible, and inclusive, particularly about students with mental health difficulties. Using the lived experiences and reflections of two students with mental health difficulties who are studying two languages, the project will highlight aspects of our teaching and support which are particularly challenging or particularly helpful for these students. It is intended that the insights gained will form a basis for further investigation in the future, involving a wider group of students with mental health difficulties, with a view to developing and implementing their recommendations for change. This wider group of students will include members of the LAL staff-student working group.</p>