

## Transcript – Praxis – Renu Bhandari - Neurodivergent study diagnoses

The title of this study is Exploring the transitions of Neurodivergent Access students to Level One study: Narratives of study skills and support. This study was a Praxis funded project for 2022, carried out by me Dr Renu Bhandari and a colleague Dr Jon Rainford in The Open University, UK

The higher education journey of any student in a distance learning university is a challenging one but this is more so for neurodivergent students. Many studies have found that Neurodivergent students require both academic and non-academic support around them to enable them to achieve and reach their academic goals. This study focusses on the Access programs in The Open University which have a widening participation agenda. Among the students that enrol on the Access programs, there are many Neurodivergent students with of autism, ADHD, Dyslexia, Asperger's syndrome, and Dyspraxia. The study focuses on three research questions:

Firstly, what forms of support do neurodivergent students transitioning from Access to Level 1 study value?

Secondly, what barriers to success may the current access curriculum create for neurodivergent students? and

Thirdly, how can neurodivergent students transitioning from Access to level 1 be better supported?

For this study, students from the three Access modules moving to any level 1 module were included in the sample. This study focusses on the findings from five remotely conducted in-depth interviews and an associated photo-elicitation task. Thematic analysis of the interviews was done. The key themes that emerged from the analysis of the interviews were: Neuro divergent students finding their own way, Support given in the transitions, quality of tutor support, wider systems of support, understanding assessment, facing new systems, the jump in transitions, language of learning and referencing issues. The study explores these with examples and highlights how these themes might inform future practice to improve transitions for neurodivergent students. The study also highlights the limitations institutional focused research places upon the scope of this kind of research with Neuro divergent students.

The impact and dissemination of this project continues with staff development events, presentation in journals and dialogue with student support teams and disability support teams. Thank you for listening and do read in detail this article published in one of the journals in the UK. Thank you.