

KAREN FOLEY: Welcome back to the Student Hub Live Taught Post-Graduate Induction in Education and Childhood and Youth.

This marks the first of four sessions this afternoon where we're going to take a specific look in a lot more detail into each of the pathways. And the first one that we're going to look at is being a successful leadership and management student at OU. And to discuss this, I'm joined by Eric and Jane. Thank you for coming along today.

So we've seen a lot of students who filled in our widgets earlier were from the Leadership and Management Pathway. And we've asked them three words to describe their identity and also about work settings, so what's your work setting. Now, with these word clouds, you've got three things that you can put in there. The results won't submit unless you put three things in. But if can't think of three things, just put one or two and put a full stop in the other boxes so that your results can submit.

We've also asked you a question, are leadership and management the same thing? And your answers can be yes, no, or unsure. So let us know about that.

Right. Tell us about the students then. Who applies for the Leadership and Management Pathway?

ERIC: We get a range of students applying for the Leadership and Management Pathway. Most of them work in an educational setting of some sort. So we'll have students from the school sector. We'll have students from the FE sector. We'll have students from HE. And we'll have students from the non-formal sector as well. So we do often get a broad range of students who are either interested in leadership and management, or practicing leaders themselves within the specific context that they're working in.

JANE: But besides that, then we get what might, at first glance, seem more surprising applicants and entrants. So for example, we have students from the army. We have students from the police force. We have students who are working in organisations where they have some kind of training role, which gives them leadership possibilities, for example, working in PR firms. We've had a student, for example, who was working in a beauticians, but leading a group of other beauticians. So I think these ideas about educational leadership and educational management are very broad-ranging and attract a really wide range of students.

KAREN FOLEY: Can you say something about the words, "leadership" and "management," and what that applies to. You've mentioned a beautician, for example. Do people have to be leaders? I mean, it seems very grand, leaders and managers. What sorts of ways might students contextualise that? And do students have a worry, for example, if they are the beautician, saying, actually, everyone else is in these jobs with nice suits et cetera doing proper leadership and management-type things. How broad do these terms apply? And how do students feel in relation to those terms?

ERIC: I mean, in terms of the terms, I think we see leadership as a relational, very, very relational activity that you will be involved in. So irrespective of setting that you work in, it's very easy to exercise leadership, which is mainly around getting people, working with people through a particular process of some sort to bring about change or bring about improvement.

So what we expect students to be able to do is to be able to enact that for what we draw on in terms of the theory that we pick on. And although we draw a lot on educational leadership literature, a lot of the issues that we unpack are relevant in many, many, many settings. So whether you are in the army or in a training setting, for instance, a lot of the issues that we pick on in terms of distributed leadership, in terms of transformational leadership, will apply. They will apply. It's just that the setting may be slightly different to what you probably may be engaging with in terms of the literature that we'll be using.

JANE: And in terms of what seems sometimes as a dichotomy between leadership and management, I mean, I think that is one of the major issues that is explored through the modules, that in some sense is leadership and management are seen as a binary, that leadership is about, as Eric was saying, relational in terms of people. And very often, management is seen as in relation to, as it were, things, that leadership is about transforming practise, and management is often about maintaining practise.

In practise, actually, then those terms are much more ambiguous and fluid. And I think that that is one of the things, that kind of exploration and that interrogation of those as binary terms, is one of the things that attracts students, and is one of the things that interests such a wide range of students onto this pathway.

KAREN FOLEY: We asked everyone at home, are leadership and management the same thing. And they've been voting. And if you haven't voted on the word cloud, then do let us know three words to

describe your identity, and also three things about your work setting. And remember that if you can't put three things in there, then a full stop will suffice so that you can submit your results. So let's see what people said about are leadership and management the same thing?

Right, 88% of them said no. 13% said yes. Nobody is unsure.

[LAUGHTER]

I would have said unsure.

[LAUGHTER]

OK, so the consensus is that they're not the same thing. And I mean, I think, Jane, that really echoes the point that you're making.

JANE: No, I think that's right. But I think it's actually the exploration of the way that those two terms can be seen as separate, but can overlap. They can meld into each other in certain situations.

And I think many of the practical situations that our students who are also working in organisations find themselves is that they'll find themselves affecting both leadership practises and management practises when it comes to the reality of their work.

KAREN FOLEY: Excellent. We've asked people about their work setting. And people are filling that in at the moment. A lot of people talking about where they're studying in terms of work, or perhaps maybe working from home, kitchen, et cetera. But also, if you are in an applied setting, let us know. So fill in the details on that What's in Your Work Setting widget.

Lee and Claudia, how's everything on the help desk? Are there any questions that people have got right now about the Leadership and Management Pathway?

LEE: We've primarily been talking about the differences between leadership and management as well. And it's been that main question, really, that we've been looking at-- is leadership and management the same thing? And if not, what are the differences? And a lot of our students, quite rightly, have already identified that they are very different things indeed.

And Claudia's even said on the help desk as well that we've both, in fact, met many managers that aren't also necessarily leaders. So they're very different things. And we've all got our own experiences from workplaces that contribute to that as well.

CLAUDIA: Yes, and on the side, we're also learning Japanese.

KAREN FOLEY: All right.

[LAUGHTER]

Very good to multitask. Us So some people here for our Applied Linguistics section a little bit later. It's good to see. Excellent.

If you have any questions, we're going to start talking about each of the key stages now. But if you do have any questions, now's your chance to let us know. And if you're watching on catchup and you do have a question, email us, and we'll pass it on, studenthub@open.ac.uk. Or just pop a question in the chat, remembering that no question is too silly.

OK, now, Eric, we began the day talking about these various three stages. And people can watch that on the catchup if they'd like to. But I'd like to talk specifically about the Leadership and Management Pathway and go through each of the stages in Leadership and Management journey.

Actually, Jane, perhaps I should start asking you first, because you are the chair of Stage 1, what it is.

[LAUGHS]

JANE: No, and that's fine. Yes, and so I've been sharing the Stage 1 in Leadership and Management. Well, first of all, it's that general introduction to the topic of leadership and management. For example, one of the big topics it looks at is what we call leadership and agency. And I think "agency" is one of these terms which has become part of the mainstream of professional life, for example, which is how much and to what extent and in what ways people in their workplace, in their organisation have agency, in other words, can exercise their own choices, and can influence conditions, and can influence change, and can influence things like professional development. So this idea of agency is something which is-- To be agentic, in a sense, is to exercise leadership. But it doesn't necessarily mean that you are or have a formal leadership role if you have agency in a situation. So those are not necessarily the same thing.

Earlier in the day, I was talking about this idea that many of the students who come onto the Leadership and Management Pathway are aspiring leaders, rather than leaders with what is called positional leadership, in other words, something like in a school, a head of department,

or an assistant head teacher. But these are very often people who are exercising leadership in those more informal ways, either in small teams, or in small groups, or for specific projects within their workplace organisation, or in situations and circumstances outside their workplace and organisation.

So this idea of understanding what leadership and agency is partly to start students on that kind of reflective journey about what they do in terms of exercising leadership and how they exercise leadership. So that's one of the big key topics in Stage 1.

The second of the big key topics is leading professional development because one of the ways in which, again, in informal or less formal settings and organisations that students can be involved in leadership is actually leading on change in the people around them, in other words, leading on some kind of professional change, leading on some kind of professional development or professional learning. And that can be quite a short-term thing. But it can be very instructive for them to be thinking about what those characteristics and attributes of leadership are that they apply to that situation, when they're in that potentially short-term or fixed-term situation in which they are the person who is the chair, who is the person who is the team leader, who is the person who is the group organiser.

And then the last of the big topics that we look at in the Stage 1 module is about leading organisational change. And this can be some of the bigger change situations that occur, perhaps stereotypically in a school, where you can have huge changes that occur, curriculum review, or the New Year's coming in, or new pastoral system is being set up. But that kind of endemic, deep change, and how that affects the whole organisation.

So really, part of the journey of the module is starting from small beginnings and then having students, by the end of that module, really thinking about large-scale change, how it affects them, how it affects leadership, how it affects an organisation.

KAREN FOLEY: Can you say anything about the different disciplines and theories that provide frameworks for which you can deal with some of these big topics?

ERIC: Sure.

JANE: Do you want to pick up that?

ERIC: Yeah, I mean, with regards to that, one of the things we look at is distributed leadership, for instance, because we do believe that we're in a post-heroic era where leadership is not just

the truth that's just within just one person, but it's something that has to be distributed within an organisation. Allowing others to lead within your organisation can easily lead to better school improvement or improvement within whichever setting you are in. So that's one of the key things we look at.

But again, as Jane said, one of the key aims of the module is to help you transform your own practise, or help transform the practise of others. So we look at issues around transformational leadership, how it's been enacted, what are some of the debates, how it's worked for people, and how it hasn't worked for people, and so on. So these provide that sort of frame framework for how we talk about educational leadership at Stage 1.

KAREN FOLEY: And there are also very topical current debates that you incorporate within some of this theory and framework, for example. So we were talking about educational leadership and management and distributed leadership as well. Anything to do with power, culture, those bigger, broader things? Do they play a part in this whole dialogue?

ERIC: Yes, we pick on that particularly at Stage 2 of the pathway. And at Stage 2, firstly, we start with, again, understanding educational leadership and management. Because we get quite a number of students coming through credit transfer, so they may not necessarily have studied the Stage 1 with us. So we start off with unpacking what leadership and management is, not in the same way. But this time, we're looking at educational leadership and management beyond your small team, or beyond your own organisation. But we're looking at it much broadly. So that's where issues around culture come in, and issues around context come in, issues around even role come in, in terms of the different roles one could have within a leadership arena. So we can have a middle leader. We can have a senior leader. So we begin to unpack some of these roles that we can have and how that impacts on you, the individual, who is leading all this.

KAREN FOLEY: We asked people about identity and describing identity. And I'd like to get the results from that soon. So if you haven't already let us know three words that describe your identity, then fill those in on the bottom left-hand side of the screen. And we'll take a look in just a minute.

Why is identity so important then, Eric?

ERIC: Its very, very important because as we navigate through our own carriers and as we navigate through our own practise, it's very important that we identify ourself as either leader or not.

Because it comes with rules and responsibilities in terms of what you are expected to do as a leader. So identifying yourself as a leader has a lot of accountability coming with it.

So in terms of Stage 2, we look at that. Because one of the key things about Stage 2 is that we hope that by the end of the module, students will be able to begin to critically engage with their own practise, but also be able to lead change. So the module is all about exploring strategy in how you lead change. So your identity as a leader plays a key role in terms of how you choose to exercise your leadership on others.

So people grow through being a first line leader, manager, into middle leadership, into senior leadership. So as you grow, your identity begins to change. And then as you engage with the literature as well, you begin to see how others have evolved themselves within their own practise, based on what has been reported on. So it's very important that we're able to unpack that for students.

KAREN FOLEY: No, absolutely. But the thing is, I guess leadership and management seem such positive, good, big words. And I think we'd all like to be good leaders and have everyone follow us. But often, when we're asked to describe our identity, often we'll have things that are maybe a little bit more negative. It's very difficult to be as glowing and positive when we take a look at that question.

So I'd like to see what everyone at home said. But we have another birthday as well. It's Lisa's birthday. And Lee is having a Jammie Dodger to celebrate, which I think is very Student Hub Live. So thank you for that.

So let's have a look at the Wordle and see what three words describe your identity. So we have student, motivate, control freak, marketing, thinker, logical.

ERIC: Fired up.

KAREN FOLEY: Fired up.

"Student," what an interesting word that's come out there centrally, because so many people say, I'm doing the OU. And we'll talk a little bit about this later and in fact, this whole idea of student community et cetera.

How do you see this in terms of people saying, well, I'm a student? Is that more important than being a leader or a manager?

JANE: For me, I think it's particularly important. And I think one of the things that-- I mean, I've been working at the Open University for about 10 years now. And I think one of the things that is so important to me is that the Open University celebrates roles in a very good way, in a very positive way.

KAREN FOLEY: Not sausage rolls.

[LAUGHTER]

No, we like them too.

JANE: No, that's right. Of course, it'd be jam rolls in the case of Lee.

But no, I think that idea of roles is that on a Leadership and Management Master's in Education degree course, then we will have students who are in very senior and responsible positions in their own organisation. But the fact that they identify themselves as students is the fact that they are embracing that role of studying. And I think when I am chairing E811, I am embracing that role of chairing the module. But I have also been an Open University student concurrently. And when I am an Open University student, I embrace the role of being a student.

And I think it's this idea-- Eric was talking just now about professional identity. And I think one of the things that we explore through a pathway like Leadership and Management is really interrogating that notion of professional identity. What are the fixed features? And what are those features that are fluid? And what are those features that are changing? And what are those features that are developing?

But I think that idea that you can put the student hat on when do you start a master's degree, that you can accept and embrace that role, that you can celebrate that there are things that you're going to get fired up about and that you're going to learn, I think that's part of the excitement.

KAREN FOLEY: I wanted to ask, before we move on to Stage 2 in more detail, Eric, because you started to mention some exciting things there about some power et cetera that I'd like to go into. But by the end of the first stage, students are expected to be able to have located and critically engaged with a variety of literature. So again, there are different skills coming into play here.

So we've spoken about the theories and the various dimensions and frameworks. Jane,

briefly, what skills would you expect students to have developed at the end of this stage? And therefore, what might they want to look out for right now as they begin their learning journey?

JANE:

Well, I think one of the things that we talked about in an earlier session are these online and digital skills, which are so central to the success of their study. I think in terms of their study at postgraduate level, then we use these words like "critical analysis" and "critical reflection."

And I think if I were to generalise between about the difference between undergraduate study and postgraduate study, then I think that at undergraduate level-- and this is a generalisation, please. But at undergraduate level, then very often, module materials and academic articles are there to support students' study. At postgraduate level, we use words like "interrogate." So in other words, the student is starting to make that journey into interrogating accepted policy, accepted academic articles, accepted literature, and the very fabric of the module itself. And that's part of their individual journey through the master's in education.

I think one of the things that we included in what we think are essential materials for study on the MEd is a notebook and a pen. And that's because there is something called a reflective journal, which we encourage students. But it's actually built into the fabric of their study from the first week of the first module. And that is that they actually reflect actively on their own progress. They reflect in terms of their reaction to particular articles, particular module materials that they see, and that they interrogate them. In other words, that critical analysis is about not acceptance, but about questioning as well as reflection.

KAREN FOLEY:

I want to pick up on this idea of interrogation because I think it's a big word. We did critical thinking this morning. And for all those students who stayed with us this morning, and in particular, Lisa, the birthday girl, yes, of course, you're very, very welcome to come to the session. Everyone's welcome at the Student Hub Live. So please do keep chatting. Please do stay with us. And of course, if you've got any questions, do let us know as well.

So Jane, this morning we talked about critical thinking. And we were trying to get our heads around that concept. Interrogating sounds a little bit seamier at a level. Can you tell us something about how students might start to think about interrogating some of the stuff that they're going to come across?

JANE:

Well, I think one of things to reassure students is that it's completely structured into the fabric of the first module, at the Stage 1 module. In other words, every week, they go through a

series of readings, a series of activities. And each of those activities has within it these opportunities for reflection, for critical engagement, structured very often, and certainly at the beginning of the module, around questions that they're asked, but where they're asked to question some of the premises of, say, an academic article, or a piece of policy, or a piece of literature. And that questioning, that kind of critical thinking, that critical reflection becomes more and more marked and becomes more and more central to their study as they progress through the modules.

So it's small steps at the beginning, and highly structured steps, to the point where in some of the assessment that they're doing from about the midpoint of the course, they are being asked specifically to engage in that in terms of, here's an academic article, which is a point of view on leadership. And what we're asking you to do is we're asking you to judge it in a critical way, not simply to accept it, but actually to look at the gaps in it, but actually to look for what it doesn't do, to think about what it hasn't said, and so on.

KAREN FOLEY: Which takes us very nicely to Stage 2. And Rachel, who's another birthday girl, has just joined us back. Stay with us, Rachel and Lisa, because at the end of the session, at the end of today's programme at 4:30, we're going to be talking about the importance of community and using social media as well. So do stay tuned.

All right, Eric, Stage 2. You say that one of the principles for the qualification is to stimulate critical analysis, debate, and reflection, and not to provide cut-and-dried solutions. So this whole idea of interrogating and things becomes even more vital at Stage 2.

ERIC: At Stage 2, yes. I mean, at Stage 2, we're hoping that they've had that initial introduction at Stage 1. And even if they haven't, they are probably credit transferring, which means they've engaged with postgraduate study, at least at 60 credits from elsewhere. So the expectation is that they're coming in with some knowledge. So at Stage 2, we kind of revamp it a bit to make sure that students are critically engaging, not just describing what they've seen or what they've read.

But a key fundamental bit of the Leadership and Management Pathway at Stage 2 is exploring strategy. One of the key things here is that at Stage 1, they will have been introduced to leadership of a small group of people or a small team. At Stage 2, we're looking at organisational level leadership, or even beyond your own organisation. And that's why I said one of the key things we look at is exploring strategy.

And to be able to do that, we look at issues around conflict and how do you navigate that, and what does the literature say around that. So we're looking at issues around moral leadership. How is that enacted? What does the literature say about moral leadership? We're looking at democratic leadership? What is that? And what does that literature say? Because again, that's one of the key facets that we would want to more or less promote within leadership. But then we need to interrogate that and understand what people are writing about and how that manifests into your own practise.

KAREN FOLEY: Now, writing about things and literature, I'm assuming you're not meaning some of these management books that say, there's a right way to do it, and this is how to be a great leader. You take a very, very different approach so that you see leadership as relational, dynamic, and very much context-bound, as opposed to other approaches that view it as a formula.

ERIC: Exactly. And that's one of the key things that we say all the way from Stage 1, all through. And that's one of the reasons why at Stage 2 and Stage 3, you begin to do some empirical study yourself. Because one of the things we don't want to do is to say, this is how it's done. Because again, as I said, context matters. It's very, very important to understand that. The context where leadership is enacted does really matter. And it impacts on how leadership is exercised. The different rules that you may find yourself in actually has an influence on the way you can actually enact your leadership.

And the model that you'll be working in, in some cases, you'll be working in a metrics model of leadership, for instance, where you probably maybe have to do things and work with the people-- it's a relational activity. You work with people that you may not necessarily manage. So it comes back to the difference between leading and managing because you sometimes find yourself in an organisational setting where you're leading lots of projects or you're leading groups of people that you don't really manage. So getting to understand and unpack some of these things is very, very important for the different types of students that we encounter.

KAREN FOLEY: And in particular, when you've got these other things going on that may be outside your leadership control like centralisation, decentralisation, all these peaks and flows.

I want to cover Section 3. But before I do, just tell us something about moral leadership, because I think this is a really, really important issue and something that perhaps is difficult to teach.

ERIC: Yes, and we draw a lot on social justice and how that relates to what we are more or less describing as moral leadership, doing the right thing. And we draw on a lot of literature on social justice, which is around inequality of opportunity. And by so doing, it helps us provide that framework or model to look at or interrogate the literature to ensure that whatever you're doing can be perceived as moral in the sense that we want whatever you're doing to be for all. You have to be equitable. You have to ensure that you're equally treating everyone that is within that leadership activity that you are enacting.

KAREN FOLEY: I'm sure that has prompted a lot of discussion about leadership, and in particular, some of the key leaders we see in the news and their morality. We'll come to the help desk in just one second. And then we'll talk about Stage 3, which is the dissertation.

But Jane, before I do that, let's just take a quick trip to Lee and Claudia.

LEE: Yeah, lots of conversation among students looking at issues in leadership and management. Vincent has made some interesting points as well and has made a point recently about democracy and how that ties in with leadership as well. So many interesting themes around that that he's looking into. He's currently typing another message on that now. So--

[LAUGHTER]

Yeah, absolutely. There's more coming on on that one.

But otherwise, there's the birthdays that we mentioned out there and lots of just interesting discussion, really, about OU studies.

KAREN FOLEY: Right, we're nearly out of time, Jane. And we need to cover this dissertation, which is the Stage 3 that you mentioned earlier.

Now, with every dissertation comes a research question. So tell us what happens in this last stage.

JANE: Well, what happens is-- and besides all of the leadership content focus that Eric was talking about, then another thing that is covered in the Stage 2 module is the development of research skills. We call them research skills, but actually, it's like a practical inquiry which is the focus of the dissertation at Stage 3. And so the practical inquiry is focused on the student's own context. In general, that will be the student's own workplace organisation and a practically focused question about the leadership of professional change, about the leadership of other

adults within an organisation. But it is around a particular topic.

And I mean, we found, for example, in our Stage 3 dissertation module students so far that it tends to be something which is very much at the heart of what they themselves have wanted to do, sometimes for a long time. And in many cases, this master's degree has given them the opportunity to be able to do it, and very often and very happily, with the support of their organisation so that a particular change practise which is something that the student has wanted to do, or that the organisation itself wants to effect, is something that they take as the practical focus of their inquiry.

So I'm emphasising the practical focus, because it is also a proper piece of research. So the students have been developing all of these research skills. They have been looking at paradigms and all of these words that we talk about when we talk about research, conceptual underpinnings, particular research design, particular research frameworks, particular data-gathering methods that they would use, so that it is taken completely seriously as a piece of research. And it results in a piece of what we call empirical research, which is, in other words, practical data-gathering, for example, through interviews, through focus groups, through questionnaires, and then data analysis, and then a dissertation which ends in conclusions and recommendations.

ERIC: I just wonder. It's very, very important that it's small scale. It's very, very important that it's discrete within your own organisational setting because you have to have a bit of control over that. Because you've only got a set number of weeks to complete that. And we advise the students to bear all that in mind. And one of the key things is-- because it's an applied degree, we want them to always remember that it has to involve critical reflection, very, very, very crucial, because the whole idea is it's an applied degree.

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely. And I know from my own experience, it's often better to get a very tight project that you can manage and you've got more control over. Because once you've got that qualification, you can then go off and do so much more. It's not the end, is it?

Well, thank you very much, Eric and Jane, for coming along.

And if you've joined us recently or you're watching this on catchup, then do look at our earlier videos, where we've talked about what it means to be a successful student, and a little bit about some of the tips and advice that we recommend, including things like time management and critical thinking, in the earlier programme from today.

We're going to have a short video and look at one of the Bob videos, which is from the OU library. So if you haven't already located the library, do you find that from your Student Home website and take a look there. But this is about avoiding plagiarism. We'll be back then to take a look at what we mean by inclusion in a few minutes. See you then.

[MUSIC PLAYING]