

[INTRO MUSIC PLAYING]

**KAREN FOLEY:** Hello, and welcome to the *Student Hub Live* event for Primary Studies. And I'm afraid we're a little bit late today. And I am very sorry. Someone put our computer technology in the wash or something, and it's not working quite as we'd expected. However, we're on our live stream account, so you can still chat and tell us what you're thinking if you would like to do so.

My name is Karen Foley, and I'll be presenting the next two hours of content which we have from Primary Studies. We've got a great line up to support you in your studies and talk about some of the key issues that you will be beginning to get to grips with as you progress. So this event is a live interactive event. And what makes it really unique is that you have the chance to talk and ask questions in our chat box.

Now on the live stream, this can sometimes be a little bit hidden, but you can open it up and see where the comments are. And HJ is there talking to people in the chat, and he's going to take a lot of our questions and put those to our panellists in the studio. HJ, how is it all working, then, on the live stream? It's a little bit different, isn't it?

**HJ:** Yes, it's slightly different. You may need a live stream account. But I can see that Paige has joined us quite well. And she's excited, ready to go. And we've got other people popping in. So do use the chat box for your thoughts, comments, questions, and we'll put to our guests in the studio.

Remember, you can use our Twitter as well. So I'm watching Twitter as well while we're doing in this event @StudentHubLive. So if you can't post on live stream, post it on Twitter, and we'll make sure to put all your thoughts and questions to our lovely guest who are joining us today.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Excellent. So how does it work then? Do you have to open the side box on the live stream? Because I can see you've got a lovely panel of chats here. But when I logged into the live stream the other day, there was just a video.

**HJ:** Yes, well, if you look to your right-hand side, there's a little speech bubble. If you click on that, then you'll get all the chat box up, and you can see what's going on, and posting it yourself as well. So remember, just press that button. As I said, any troubles then you can hop over to Twitter as well, or email us [StudentHub@open.ac.uk](mailto:StudentHub@open.ac.uk).

**KAREN FOLEY:** Thank you very much, lovely. Well, tell us what you're studying, what level you're at, and maybe where you are in the country right now. But let me tell you what we have in store for you today.

So first, I have Ian Eyres, who's going to give us an outline to the session and a broad overview of the qualification. We're then going to talk to Lynda Culley about supporting disability. Disability and diversity are key themes within today's programme.

Then Cherry Day will be giving us a student perspective from the Open University Students Association. And then Kim Walker's going to be talking to us about diversity in primary. Then Jill is going to give us AL tutor perspective. And then we're going to play you a video about a student stories project that John Parry and Kim are taking part in. So a very, very good lineup in store for you today.

But Ian, thank you for joining us. And you're going to give us an introduction to the qualification. Now, you're a senior lecturer in primary education. And you've worked as a teacher, and a researcher, and a writer since the 1970s. Can you give us a brief history of your experience of primary education at the OU?

**IAN EYRES:** Right. Yeah, it goes back a long way. I started when the OU had a primary teacher training programme, the PGC in the closing years of the 20th century. And a lot of the current module material, not directly, but it owes a debt to that teacher training stuff.

And the first substantive outcome of that was a module course, as we called them in those days, for teaching assistants, which we called STAC, which it was the specialist teacher assistant certificate. And that was very much modelled on teacher training. But it was focused on the needs of teaching assistants.

And it gave them an introduction to good practise as teaching assistants. So it looked at the ways schools worked. It looks at principles of teaching and learning, some of the theoretical underpinning of teaching and learning, and how to support students, and core subjects knowledge in areas of English and math and science. And a lot of that underpins the content of the newly developed degree in primary education.

**KAREN FOLEY:** So what do the degrees look like now, then?

**IAN EYRES:** Well, is it time for me to turn to my diagram?

**KAREN FOLEY:** You can turn to your diagram when you're like. I think it's a fabulous diagram and very helpful, actually, for students to see the different levels.

**IAN EYRES:** OK, well we now have an honours degree, which means we're operating on three levels. And it begins with two level 1 modules. One is learning and teaching in the primary years. And that's very much the air of the tradition of STAC, if you like. It still covers the basic things that people working in primary schools and wanting to understand primary education need to know.

So it looks at those basic subjects and areas. It looks at how schools work. It looks at the curriculum. It looks at effective ways of teaching and learning, what are the best ways of speaking to children, that sort of thing. And then alongside it, at level one, there's an introduction to childhood studies and child psychology, which is a more-- it's a more theoretical module. It's a more academic module in that it doesn't have so much of a practise focus.

But it is very-- I think the title is well-chosen, Childhood Studies and Child Psychology because there's a tendency to look at child psychology as a kind of almost robotics. What's the mechanism that goes on in children to make them work, and understand, and learn? But this very much contextualises children's learning in their culture, their society, all kinds of different things like that which really contextualise and look at children as people, not simply as some sort of learning mechanism.

**KAREN FOLEY:** And then we move over to level 2 where there's a lot more choice.

**IAN EYRES:** Yeah, well, there is some choice. Well, yeah.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Depending, I guess, on which pathway, yeah.

**IAN EYRES:** Yeah. So there is a core module in level 2, which is developing subject knowledge for primary years. That began actually back-- back to history-- that began as the training that we did in subject knowledge for primary teacher trainees. And that developed in the first Early Years Foundation degree as a standalone subject knowledge course. And it's evolved in different ways since then.

Well, that is now focusing on the kind of knowledge that people need if they're thinking of becoming primary teachers. And it's the sort of thing which teacher trainee institutions look for in people who are applying to become primary teachers. So it's focuses on English-- or language-- math, science, and ICT. And it gives students a grounding in the knowledge that

they need to have in order to understand what children are doing in primary schools, and in order to support them properly.

And it also very much contextualises that knowledge. So it looks that not just here's what you need to know as someone supporting learners, but how do children make sense of it? And what's the context needed?

So that's E209. And then as you say, there is some choice.

**KAREN FOLEY:** So these are both 60 credits. Obviously, so so two at level 1, E209, 60 credits, and then you get this choice as you say.

**IAN EYRES:** That's right. Yes, all modules are 60 points. And yes, there's-- in a level two, there is a choice between a module on childhood, which is very much in keeping with the Childhood Studies and Child Psychology module at level 1.

There's a module on equality and inclusion, which has kind of links in its heritage to the more practiced-based modules. And then there's a module, which is a bit of a departure really, because the age range is not to 18, which is about working with children and young people. So there are those three choices.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Wonderful. Then you get to level three, where there is, again, no choice.

**IAN EYRES:** No choice whatsoever. That's right. Yes, well, whoop it up at level 2.

**KAREN FOLEY:** But to some extent, having some optionality is a really nice thing. But equally, like anyone with a big menu, sometimes too much choice isn't a good thing. And there is an awful lot that's packed into these. And again, you can see by the titles, that they are quite broad to give a good undergraduate understanding.

**IAN EYRES:** That's true, yes. So that level three, the bottom right-hand rectangle on the diagram is the module we expect students to do last, which is issues in research with children and young people, which is an introduction to doing research. And it's divided between looking at theoretically at approaches to research, looking at case studies, and so on, and then equipping students to do their own research. And obviously the assessment on that module is substantively their own piece of research.

And the other module at level 3 is one that I'm currently involved in. And it's an exciting

module. I think it brings together an awful lot of things that people within the School of Education are doing. And it's focused on comparative studies in primary education.

So I didn't know if students know, but we do an awful lot of work around the world. A lot of the people who work here on this team have works in countries in Asia, Africa, South America, all over. And I'm drawing on the expertise to look at some fundamental questions about education, but looking at them from the point of view of how they manifest themselves in different countries around the world, so that students are able then to draw their conclusions about what all those fundamentals.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Now, who are the students who might be studying? Because you can see, obviously, that people would be learning a lot about children, and child studies, psychology, et cetera, often with a view to working in this sort of setting, and also then leading students to maybe post-graduate research as well. But who are the students that you would say are in your current cohorts of Primary Studies students? You just got, and then I'm going to ask HJ to tell us who's in the chat.

**IAN EYRES:** Yeah, that would be interesting, too. Because the thing that we do know is that things are changing. And this actually-- when I thought about who our students are, that was what made me first think, well, I want to say something about the history.

Because our original students studying primary education were teaching assistants. Our student body was entirely people working in schools alongside students. And there was a lot of interest in those early days from-- it was the Department for Education in those days. Because they saw this as a way of boosting teacher numbers because people would follow this course, they thought, and go into teaching.

In fact, at the time what we found was that the majority of our students didn't want to be teachers. They just wanted to be better at what they did. But that's something which has changed over time. And I think we have many more of our students now who do aspire to be teachers. And it will be interesting to see what people who are actually listening now have got to say about that.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Well, who is here today?

**HJ:** Well, we've got quite a few people starting off and have done a few more modules. So Vicky started off with E103. We've got Paige in the chat, Tom, Candice. Everyone's saying hello. So

hello. It's good to see. Any thoughts, comments and questions, as always.

We have a really good one from Candice, though, saying it looks a bit scary having to choose between different modules and pathways. So do you have any advice perhaps on what to choose, or maybe the modules that level 1 may give an idea or a sense of what you might want to go into?

**IAN EYRES:**

Yeah, I would think-- well, the first thing I would say is that there isn't actually that much choice. There's only one part of the framework where you do have to make a choice. And I think by the time students get that far, they'll have a good-- because the level 1 modules are very wide ranging, and you'll begin to see what are the things that you're interested in.

And some of it will be down to what your academic study has been so far. And some of it will be done to what your personal experience is. If you're a youth worker, you're likely to want to be working on making a difference with children and young people because that stretches up into their age bound

But I mean, I don't think by the time students get to the point when they're making a choice, they're going to have very much difficulty to be honest. It'll be-- I mean, I would think the only difficulty is going to be seeing two things or three things that you really want to do and having to narrow it down to one.

**KAREN FOLEY:**

And we heard earlier today about how Student Support Team can help with that.

**HJ:**

Yes. So all the Student Support Team-- it was good that we chatted earlier because Zach is really friendly. I'm sure everyone just wants to bring up the Student Support Team to Zach. But he said earlier that you can call them up, ask any questions about pathways, module choice. Tutors are always a good source as well because they'll be aware of all the modules.

**KAREN FOLEY:**

And there are some reviews on some of the websites as well from other students that can be really helpful.

**HJ:**

And all the information about TMAs and what you'll be studying, which is really good. I'm sure Candice finds that quite reassuring. Lucy is studying E102 E103 at the same time. So she's doing a full-time year. And Hazel is just saying-- and Paige, they're both aspiring to be primary teachers after doing this degree as well. So that's really good,

**KAREN FOLEY:**

Excellent.

**HJ:** Good to hear that.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Well, thank you for chatting. And if you've just joined us, and you haven't seen the chat tab, just click on the little speech bubble on the right-hand side of your live stream screen, and you should be able to talk to us there. So Ian, tell us briefly then how does the learning work? We can't obviously cover comprehensively all of this. But broadly speaking, for our new students out there, what do they need to know about things like TMAs, tutor marked assignments, and finding their assessment early on?

**IAN EYRES:** Right, OK. The first thing I'd say is talk to your tutor because they are the person who will know all things that you need to know about your assignments. And you will be scaffolded quite robustly in your first TMA. Once you've done your first TMA, I think you'll see it will all fall into place.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Now, many students haven't been allocated their tutor. So don't worry if you haven't. That will all come into play over the next few weeks. And you'll have all of your learning events, tutorials, and then various things popping up on your student home page in the not too distant future.

Ian, we don't have much time because we're a little bit late today, but I wonder if you could end by telling us about diversity in the programme, which is the key theme of discussion today. And why that is so theoretically important.

**IAN EYRES:** Right, OK. It's-- first of all, diversity's everywhere in the whole module structure, and the whole-- sorry, the whole degree structure, almost-- well, yes, almost all because the research one is a bit more open. But all the other modules have got very specific focuses on diversity and often focusing on children learning in a diverse context, in a diverse world. And lots of-- and the practice-focused modules I've got a lot about how to support different kinds of children in different ways.

But there's also a very strong sociocultural approach which puts the learner at the centre of learning. And so the first thing that you need to do, if you're supporting learning, is understand when that child is coming from. And so for that reason, understanding every child's background, context, heritage is really important. And you'll find it loud and clear and in all of the modules.

**KAREN FOLEY:** Excellent. Well Ian Eyres, that's been a very brief, but comprehensive overview. You've given

us a really clear indication of the qualification structure and also allayed fears about where the optionality and choice are, really encouraging students, I guess, to make that decision based on their first two years of study, which is a long time to get to grips with some of the things that may be of more or less interest to them. So don't worry, there's a long time to make your mind up. But as we said, there are various ways that you can find out about which of the options are right for you as you progress through your qualification.

Ian, thank you very much for your time today. We're now going to have a very short video break where I'm going to show you one of the buildings on campus. And this one is the Jenny Lee Building. And then we're going to be talking about supporting disability with Lynda Culley. So I'll see you in a minute. Stay with us.

[OUTRO MUSIC PLAYING]