KAREN FOLEY: Welcome back to the Student Hub Live. Well, today it's our Taught Postgraduate induction in Education and Childhood and Youth.

Well, Sharon's just joined us and wonders what she's missed. A lot. We've had our boot camp session this morning, where we've taken a look at assessment. And then this afternoon, we've talked about the postgraduate pathways, what it means to be a postgraduate student. Your journey starts here on all the essential things you need to know in the first three weeks of study. And we've just had the first of our four sessions about the specific pathways that students might be doing if they're doing a Taught Postgraduate qualification in Education and Childhood and Youth.

Well, in this session we're taking a look at Inclusion. And I'm joined by Janet Soler and Felicity Fletcher-Campbell.

Now inclusion, big word. We like our definitions at first. So I wonder if I could ask each of you about what you understand by the concept of inclusion.

FELICITY FLETCHER-CAMPBELL: Well, inclusion is what we call a contested concept, in that there's no agreement about what it actually means. But that doesn't mean that it's what anybody thinks it is. And you can have your own version of it. It's contested and there isn't agreement. And that is inevitable, simply because it rests on and is dependent on other prior values and decisions that you're making about how the world is or how you want the world to be.

So inevitably, as things like justice and mercy can't happily co-exist without interfering with each other, so different versions and understandings of inclusion coexist, but they can't necessarily be reconciled. And what we take, we take students in this pathway looking at some of these versions. We're not selling a particular one. We present the evidence and the different ways of looking at it, and it's for students ultimately to make up their mind what they favour. And that will relate to their own experience and to what they see as the important things in life. We're not dictating any of that.

JANET SOLER: I'd like to stress that what Felicity is saying is that there are multiple views of inclusion. And I've had lived experience of this, because I've worked in different education systems, in Australasia and around the world. And definitions, even within areas like special needs, actually vary from place to place. So it can be very varied. And as students and we ourselves can be working in

different contexts where inclusion can mean, in terms of the policy and in terms of people's understandings, can mean totally different things.

So within this module, we actually interrogate that and we look at it from different perspectives. We will present different readings, different literature, different viewpoints. And as Felicity is saying, and I think it's really, really crucial, and it's really important again at the Master's stage, that we are encouraging students to engage with the issue and to reach their own view and make their own standpoint in what inclusion means and what it means in terms of the context or the particular problems or issues they want to investigate, and then be able to take that and apply it to what that might mean for their own practise, their own pedagogy, their own teaching, or their own ways of working.

KAREN FOLEY: That sounds quite a challenging sort of task, to have all of these various different definitions and parameters. You mentioned that you've been involved in a lot of practical settings. For you, has the way that you viewed inclusion shifted over time? Have certain approaches or definitions been more helpful for you at certain times than others?

JANET SOLER: Yes, I think it is. And it's really interesting, because I see, engaging with the students in our learning events, I see this happening for them, too. And I think that's part of the process and part of the interrogation. And of course, it leads-- I've taken that from my practise into my own research, which is part of the learning journey that we are encouraging students to go through in inclusive practise pathways world.

I'm thinking about some specific examples. I think when I first started teaching, and I was in my 20s and in New Zealand, it was very much at the stage where inclusion meant simply any child with special needs should be included in every classroom. But then of course, when I came to London and I was doing a lot of supply teaching in London, I was in classrooms with very, with eight or nine pupils with severe learning difficulties. And I found it actually quite heart wrenching and very difficult for me as a practitioner, because including those children, just putting those children into normal classrooms, no matter how much the classroom teacher wanted to support me working with those children, was actually, created whole lots of other difficulties.

And there were also instances, for example, when I was teaching in one school, again, I was in the role of being a classroom teacher rather than a special needs person, I actually had a child come into my classroom. The children in the classroom loved it. And we felt, the staff and the

principal I was working with, or the head of school I was working with, felt very strongly it was good for these children to actually have the diversity and have a child like this in the classroom, because they were all quite able kids in the class I was working with.

But what was interesting is I came out of that classroom on the first day this child had been introduced into the classroom, and there were four parents standing outside the door who were saying to me, look, we're very sorry, Ms.Soler, they said, we know you had good intentions, we know the school had good intentions of including this pupil, but we are concerned about our children. I mean, we're concerned-- we're wanting our children to really succeed. We're wanting them to go to X, Y and A. Some of them even mentioned they wanted them to go to university. These are nine-year-olds. And I think that was the first time it really dawned on me that actually dealing with this issue is quite contentious, because who do I look at? Do I look at the perspective of the students? And as the professionals I was working with felt that it was really good to have the child there. Do I look at from the parents' perspective? From their perspective, it was a hindrance to the advancement of their children.

So I think that's what I mean by from different-- and I think Felicity would have examples, as well-- from different perspectives, from different positions and in different contexts, what inclusion is and how we implement-- it's particularly how we implement and how we address it-- can be very different.

FELICITY FLETCHER-CAMPBELL: Well, I think the shift that Janet's been talking about is inevitable, given what I said earlier about this, the importance of one's own experience of things and of different scenarios, such as Janet's illustrated, that is bound, then to make one see inclusion in a different way. And there are very different understandings in different cultures, because there are different priorities.

And there's also been a move, I think. I've, again, like Janet, I've been following involved in this sort of area for some time, as it were, and I think there's increasingly the movement now towards actually not imposing on others a view of inclusion. I think in the early days when everybody was talking about inclusion, which in the UK was at the end of the 1970s, there was, as Janet said, this idea that it meant that all children of a particular age group in a particular area would be educated in the same classroom. But that actually is imposing that experience on people. And increasingly, there's been a movement to think, well, actually what do people want themselves and what people is this going to affect, and what is other people's versions of inclusion, and are we trying to facilitate something which they feel makes their life

worthwhile. And that, I think, has become more of a consideration in the whole inclusion debate.

JANET SOLER: I'd like to add to that, because I think it's really important, and I think Felicity and I have enjoyed working together so much because we have both had a very active hand in co-writing these modules and in conceptualising the inclusion stream. One of the things I think we feel quite strongly about-- don't we, Felicity-- is that we've had this background with this special needs and inclusion traditionally in education has really applied to special needs, special needs children. But one of the changes that we are encountering, and I'm sure a lot of the students watching will also be aware of, is that actually the issues of inclusion now are moving beyond just children with special needs or individual children and with needs.

What I'm seeing and in working with students, working with professionals, my own, when I get a chance to get into classrooms these days-- when I get a chance, as I said, I've been to the parliamentary select committee recently working with politicians-- has been that inclusion is now moving out and people are becoming concerned about wider issues. For instance, with the election of Donald Trump and misogyny, sexism, people like Naomi Kline are writing issues about the problems of we're becoming more diverse and not only becoming more diverse, we're becoming more separated, and the issues of who has access to things is becoming a lot more fraught, maybe than it was--

FELICITY FLETCHER-CAMPBELL: A generation of difference, isn't it? Because difference can emerge in very many ways. And that's really the core of it. I think we're particularly seeing that there's an increasing intolerance of difference. And that leads to isolationism, which is the very opposite, I suppose, of what we mean by inclusion and participation.

KAREN FOLEY: Well, you came on and you said it's a very contested issue. And I can see why. Can you tell us then about what stage students might start to arrive at some sort of understanding of their own definition of what they mean by inclusion? I mean, is it the aim to get to the end of the Masters and think, this is it for me, or is it something that's continuously dynamic depending on your context?

FELICITY FLETCHER-CAMPBELL: Yes, I think It's the latter. It's dynamic. And it as, I think, our colleagues earlier talked about a learning journey. And I think as more and more aspects of inclusion are sort of added on through looking at social justice and looking through literacy to then students pursuing their own interests at stage 3, they're continually adding new experiences, new readings, new

thoughts. And, in fact, we do, at the end of each module, students do what's called an end of module assignment, which is a much longer piece of work than they do in the course of the module. And part of that is always for them to reflect on how things have changed. Now they may not have changed. They may start at the beginning of stage 1 with a certain view of inclusion social justice, and they may not wish to change that. But in which case that's absolutely fine, but we want to know why. We want them to be able to justify themselves, which is actually for their benefit, as well, because then they will be confident in advocating that particular view out in the, amongst their colleagues or whatever.

But otherwise, I don't think-- thinking of my own life, I haven't come to any point where I've thought I've nailed inclusion. And things emerge in in the news and I think, oh, that's interesting, do I want to--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

-- but it's not the end point in your journey to take it forward in their professional lives.

JANET SOLER: I think the point is-- and the whole point of the Masters, and this came through in the previous session-- is we're taking students on a journey in this Masters from-- and ultimately, students will be doing a dissertation. And this is the exciting part of doing a Masters, I think, is actually getting out there to try and see and to actually being engaged in an inquiry, no matter how small, or you know, OK, it's not a huge government based inquiry. Students are doing--

KAREN FOLEY: It's managable.

JANET SOLER: It's manageable. It's a manageable inquiry and we do really support students. And I think it is interesting and I think it's exciting to have a go at it at Masters. So the reason that we're really talking about these concepts and the reason that we get into looking at this quite early on, I think, in the module pathways is because to ask questions, to start an inquiry, you've really got to know what you're looking at. And with something like inclusion-- and I think it was similar with leadership and management-- but particularly something like inclusion, if you're going to ask questions about it, you've got to set the parameters around what you're looking at and be able to be clear about your questions.

So I know it sounds confusing because we're talking about a complex concept and we're talking about taking multiple perspectives. But what really anchors you as a student, I think, is that you work through the first two modules towards very clearly being able to articulate a

question that you are going to be have to ask for your dissertation in the third module. So that kind of anchors you, but you wouldn't be able to do that if you didn't kind of engage with the messiness of something like inclusion, and the accompanying concepts. Because we also look at social justice and equity and inequity. And unless you really think in your mind, what do you mean by these, you can't ask the questions that can be the basis of an inquiry, of a research project.

KAREN FOLEY: Absolutely. So it's very important to look at your definitions and work through those in the first two stages before you get to this dissertation. And I'd like to ask you about each of those two stages initially. And on the chat, Lee, thank you for answering the question about library services, as well. And if there's anything else that people want to ask, do ask us on the hot desk and we will try and get back to you on any questions, or indeed put them to our panel.

So you've mentioned the dissertation, how exciting that is to work on this manageable project. What happens at stage one and two, then?

FELICITY FLETCHER-CAMPBELL: Shall I talk about stage one? Well, at stage one, we introduce a lot of these terms. We get students to-- we always sort of start from where students are. And it'd be very interesting to know what people who are perhaps listening to us now think that, well, what does inclusion mean for them? And so we start with looking at terms which we all use but perhaps a little bit in our everyday life a little bit vaguely, equality and equity and the difference between them. And we are always relating it to where students are. Because as our colleague said earlier with the leadership and management, we have students from a very, very wide range of contexts, both this country and in a lot of countries abroad, in all stages of education, from early years right through to higher education, and also in informal settings, people who are volunteers in community groups and whatever. And that's really, really exciting.

And interestingly, we find some of the best work comes from those people who aren't in traditional education settings, because they really have to work quite hard to apply the concepts. And some of them do very, very well. And certainly, Janet and I really enjoy reading the end of module assignments, which are substantial pieces of work, because they're just so interesting. We learn such a lot from our students.

So at stage one, yes, we do it a lot by example. Because obviously, when one's doing something like inclusion or looking to equity or quality in education, one can't cover all scenarios. We can't cover all the stages and give examples. So we give examples from a

range of settings with a focus on the ideas and what this is an example of. So students can then take away those ideas and think, well, what would it be like, then, in my setting?

So that's really what we do in stage one. And we begin to introduce the idea of doing an inquiry. Students don't have to do anything, but they look at the way that the writers whose work they're reading, how they undertake their inquiry, and they start thinking about how they would frame research questions. And what is a research question as opposed to an ordinary question? You know, if I say what's the weather like where you are, that's just a plain question. But it's when I start trying to what we call problematise, and think, there's something funny going on here, I don't quite know what it is, there's a dilemma, I can't actually, with all my knowledge to date, I can't quite address it, it's then you begin to get as a research question. So we begin that stage. That's the beginning of their journey as a researcher, as well the beginning of their journey in inclusion.

And then they change focus and they go into stage two, which-- Jan, do you want to talk [INAUDIBLE]?

JANET SOLER: Stage two, we start off looking at literacy. But we could have chosen numerous areas, but we've chose literacy because what does inclusion mean in literacy, because it is something that encompasses such a broad spectrum. So we knew a lot of students would be interested or would have to deal with that. And then we do get them to actually look at specific ideas about how we can look literacy.

And do we look at literacy from just the-- including just the individual, who maybe is adult person or a young child, or could be anybody who has actual literacy problems. Do we just look at addressing that? Or do we look at literacy from the-- so that's the individual perspective-- or do we look at an issue like, in an area like literacy, from the social perspective, i.e., do we look at the fact that the individual, it might not just be that they have a cognitive problem, it might not be that they have short-term memory or they have movement problems in terms of writing, it might be actually, like many children I've worked with in New Zealand and in Samoan and Maori communities, they actually come from, often the home environments-- and the research has borne this out, although it might be changing, because I haven't been in New Zealand for the last 10 years-- but when I was teaching in New Zealand, Maori children didn't have a very print rich literacy in their home background, which means they didn't have huge numbers of books. They didn't have, like a lot of middle class New Zealand homes have pictures around the walls, parents taking them to the library, parents and grandparents giving

them lots of books.

So we've got these children, we're either dealing them with them as a teacher or a support, or even a parent, or in some, or an adult. It might be in prison, because illiteracy is very high in prisons. Then why is this person having problems? Is it just because it's something individual? Is it something psychological? Or is it something that's social? So we're kind of looking and getting people to interrogate what is inclusion in terms of-- if it's the individual, there would be a different sort of inclusive practise that we would be highlighting, and different questions we would be asking if that's the kind of things we want to investigate. If we're interested in, say, social class and how does impact on literacy, cultural things, like quite a few of my students have been interested in traveller groups, for instance, and traveller culture and how that impacts on literacy, then we'd look at something different.

KAREN FOLEY: More of a social context.

JANET SOLER: Yeah. We'd look at, again. So we would ask different questions. That's--

FELICITY FLETCHER-CAMPBELL: [INAUDIBLE] assessment. Actually the way you assess literacy can actually suggest that different groups and different learners have difficulties, whatever. And so we actually interrogate the whole notion of assessment, as well.

JANET SOLER: But it's not a-- literacy's part of it. But it's not a literacy course per se. It's a vehicle-- literacy's a sort of vehicle, if you like, as a way for us to start to give a concrete kind of context and example that the wide range of our students can experiment with. So once people kind of get the idea that you can look and you can look at inclusive practise, this is a practical example of how the complexity and how it can be enacted and how we can ask different questions about it, then we move on to look more specifically at groups and what do we mean by groups of people, because we're talking about the social. And we look at theorists who look at individuals versus theorists who look at, and look at inclusion in terms of groups.

And then finally, in the final stage of the second module, we actually then we've factored in a lot of support to help students move towards asking their research questions and developing the very beginnings of a proposal. So that when they go onto their dissertation, if they want to use these particular areas, they can. And they're not tied to literacy. In the last part of the course, they're encouraged to really, really have a go at asking research questions, to have a go at framing what might be the problem that they are really interested in. And it could be any problem, anything that particularly interests them and in their context. So there's a lot of

freedom within there.

KAREN FOLEY: Now I wonder if I could pick up on this point. Because some students out there watching right now might not be studying the inclusive pathway. But with your experience dealing with this very contested area, and now that you've mentioned research questions, which, from my own experience, I bitterly regretted not having set questions once I started writing research questions. I wonder if you can shed some light for students on the various complexities about thinking what they are actually asking, what they are looking at, either from the perspective of their dissertation a bit later on, or perhaps very early doors, when they're starting to think about what does inclusion mean to me right now, what advice could you give students about trying to frame some of those things? And I guess thinking critically, what sort of questions might any student studying at postgraduate level be bearing in mind as they're starting out?

FELICITY FLETCHER-CAMPBELL: I think one of the main things we find is that most students, their questions apply to the great, big wide world rather than their classroom. So the first thing I think I would say was really focus on one thing that you're worried about in your classroom. It could be just one learner, or whatever the context is. I use the word classroom, but it can be whatever the context. And then think, well, what could it be? This child appears to be not interested in learning, shall we say. What are the possible things that could be? Because it's very easy to say, oh, that child's just lazy, that child's got behavioural problems, that child comes from a poor home and they don't appreciate school. You can say all these things, which are sort of out there and which are things which immediately occur to you, which could you think, well, actually, is the way I'm teaching not actually engaging that young person? Is it how I organise my classroom? And what could I do as a practitioner perhaps to engage that child?

Now I think it's we-- say it's a focus on one's self to thinking that one's self might-- I might be doing everything OK. Well, then I need to know that. I need have that confirmed so I can go on doing it. I might be doing things-- I might have completely misunderstood the situation. And then, so that would be really focus and think, well, put it onto you. Because I can do something about my practise. And this is only what they have to do, it's very small scale piece of work in a limited time.

So I can't reorganise the whole school. I can't reorganise the whole of the education system, much as we might want to or have ideas. And I couldn't gather the data for that, anyway. So focus on what actually assists you, something very small, focus on yourself, and then think, well, actually, what would-- and this is where the background in the module it would help them-

- what sort of evidence do I need to have to help me address my question? Where do I need to go? Do I need to observe the young person? Do I need to talk to the young person? Because very often, our learners hold the key to a lot of our research questions, but we don't bother to-- we think we can do things and we don't talk to them. But what would count as telling evidence and data to address my questions? So decide that.

And then you have to obviously design the way of getting at those data. But the whole time, think small, and what could I do? Because again, you may have ideas about that if you'll observe a child for two hours every day will give you wonderful data, but you haven't got time to do it. These, our students are usually very, very busy professionals, have got their own personal lives, things go wrong in personal lives, they go wrong in professional lives. They've got enormous amount to cope with as they're studying. So think small think, think viable.

JANET SOLER: And I think that's the advantage for me, because my own Masters, I did a dissertation. But I've worked on lots of Masters' programmes that didn't have dissertations. And I'm actually very grateful that I had a chance to do a Masters dissertation. Then I did an [INAUDIBLE] and then I did a PhD. And I find it-- because I supervise PhD students, both of us supervise PhD students, as well-- I find students who've actually been able to go through those steps, it's actually, to some extent, I think it's an easier journey to gradually get into being involved in research than to suddenly be faced with a big project. So I think this pathway, in our pathway we're really trying to-- and I know the other pathways working maybe on a similar thing but in different ways.

The thing I would like to add to what Felicity's saying is that it sounds so easy to do research questions. And I'm sure lots of our listeners out there will be saying, but I can ask questions, I ask questions every day.

KAREN FOLEY: Oh, they have been. Lee says he's interested in studying the correlational relationship between societal offenders and the link to criminality. And Layla-- I think, is it Layla-- Leila has said she wants to study second language acquisition. So stay tuned for our next session, which is on applied linguistics.

Bu yes, of course, the research questions, they seem phenomenally simple, but--

JANET SOLER: But it's very difficult. And that's the other reason, I think, to participate. And on our pathway we really stress it, and I'm sure in the other pathways, it gives you an experience. It's a chance to

actually-- it's much more difficult than you think. And it takes a lot more refining than you think. And I think the difference in what, just pulling out a bit more of what Felicity's saying is that Felicity mentioned problematisation. So when you're doing a research inquiry, you're actually, particularly we're doing qualitative inquiry, we're focusing on in our pathway, it's very, very important to have a problem, to have an issue.

And where students often get confused its they, because so many of the government activities, not just for teachers but for for civil servants generally, is to do a survey or to just gather data. Now there's quite a difference between doing a survey and doing a descriptive piece of just bringing in or summarising some information to actually doing an inquiry where you're trying to find out something, you're trying to, like we're encouraging you to do in our pathway, which is to research your own professional practise and to problematise your practise and actually start to think of it from different dimensions.

So that's why you have to think, you're not just going to maybe look at one, should I use this programme or should I use that programme. It's more about if I want to, and we're talking in our pathway about transforming and changing practise, if you're interested in, and I know a lot of people do our pathway because they want to bring about changes. And that, I would say, is one of the advantages and the biggest advantage of doing is engaging with the in our pathway, is that you want to see ways to change your practise. So if you just do a straight survey, it won't necessarily give your answers, this programme or that programme. But if you're looking at how can I do this better? Where are these students coming from? As Felicity was giving that example, why is this happening? That's different than saying, should I teach Reading Recovery or should I teach Phonics, or should I take--

FELICITY FLETCHER-CAMPBELL: It's challenging. And I think colleagues in the previous session talked about challenging assumptions in the leadership and management. And I think that's again is what's at the heart of problematisation is saying, look, need things be like this? Am I just going to take answers that are already out there, or am I going to seek different answers and actually challenge some of the things that I've been told are a good idea and whatever?

And it's quite hard for busy teachers, busy practitioners, anything, they said they were such-- busy professional women. But actually to take time back to step and say, need things be like this? Go back to sort of basics and fundamentals and not just take things off the shelf. And it can be quite personally challenging for some students, as well. I think there's an emotional aspect to doing some things like this. Because you suddenly realise, you thought you'd got

everything all packaged up and all neat and tidy. And you suddenly have to take a step back and realise you haven't.

KAREN FOLEY: Final word, Janet. Because we're out of time and we need to go to our applied linguistics, but I know there's something you wanted to add.

JANET SOLER: Oh, I was just going to say, that's where the criticality comes in. Because I know you were talking about criticality and I know that's a key theme. I think that's where the criticality-- I mean, you can have a technical solution, you can put in programme A or programme B with your prisoners, with your children, or whoever. But to actually go beneath that and see what is causing, how you can change it in terms, and why you can change it in reaction to what's actually going on is another level below it. And that's what we'd like, that's what I think we're trying to do in the Masters pathways is actually encourage people, and that's why criticality is important.

KAREN FOLEY: Yeah, absolutely. Felicity and Janet, thank you so much. That's given us a really amazing insight into some of the complexities. But also, you've given a really good grounding for students about research questions and about that critical level of thought that is different from doing an undergraduate qualification. So thank you very much for that.

Right. We've now got a very short video, but we're going to show you a pop video which is about what to trust. And then we will be back with applied linguistics. See you in a minute.

[MUSIC PLAYING]