[MUSIC PLAYING]

ROB MOORE: Hello, everyone, and welcome to Student Hub Live this morning. You're here with Rob Moore. And I'm here in a rather soggy study shack in Leicestershire. I've noticed from the chat, a few of you are already talking about the weather and the way it's changed recently. So today, we're going to be talking with some of our colleagues from the Open Programme. And we're going to be focusing on playfulness practises and perspectives.

You've got the chat option. And obviously, you can send us messages. You can talk to us. And we've got Jay Rixon and Mark Cameron in the chat. You'll identify them because they'll have SHL in front of their names. And they'll be answering your questions and giving you some pointers and some links.

And of course, we've got Heidi with this morning. So Heidi is going to be telling us about what you're saying and things that are being discussed. Heidi, what's being said at the moment?

HEIDI: of people in the chat. So I'll just do some hellos, this morning, Rob. So we've got Nina in South Wales joining us this morning. Andy is joining us from Telford. We've got Michelle and Eileen in Glasgow this morning. And Sean is just back from a dog walk in the rain, got very wet. Sean's studying youth and childhood studies.

Sarah is joining us from Manchester and is studying design thinking. Good morning to you, Sarah. We've got Isabel joining us from Dublin. Pam is in Worcestershire. Alex is joining us in a holiday cottage in Wales, which sounds lovely, hopefully not too damp over there. And Sally is joining us from Somerset. And Vittalia has written to say that they're doing a computer science degree, and it is just awesome.

And then some other hellos to Rebecca, Andy, Jean, and Suzy, Lorna, Isabel, and Melissa. So do say hello in the chat. Let us know where you're joining us from and what you're studying so I can say hello to you.

ROB MOORE: Excellent, thank you, Heidi. And we've got a question that we want you to answer today. We want to talk about your toys. And what is your favourite toy? And tell us why it's your favourite. And we'll come back and get some of your thoughts later. So joining me today, we are very happy to have some of our student reps with us.

So we've got Kaz Murphy and Dan Sarkozi. So it's always great when we get students to come and join us in Student Hub Live. And they're going to start off talking with Lorna Sibbert. And Lorna is a staff tutor in the Centre for Access Open and Cross-Curricular Innovation. And we also have Heather with us who will be joining us later on.

So we're going to start by listening to Lorna and Kaz discussing playfulness and play and how we learn through play and what that means in terms of your learning and your study. So over to you, Lorna.

LORNA SIBBERT: [AUDIO OUT] Rob. We'll not be exclusionary here. No, Cas, you're an actual expert on playful learning here because you're the mother of a 2 and 1/2 year old. And I wonder if you could share with us a little bit about how you use play to help him understand the world around him.

KAZ MURPHY: Yes, so just this morning, it was hammering it down with rain. And he was saying, mummy, it's raining. So I got him to jump in puddles. I explained the rain process to him, the whole water cycle and stuff. And he found it really enjoyable. And he actually picked up on some things that I said.

LORNA SIBBERT: That's quite a lot for a 2 and 1/2 year old, water cycle? I think that's key stage three years or something like that, strictly. No barriers when you do something playfully. You shared with me before that you spent quite a bit of time observing and play with water. So water is something he does a lot of investigating with, is it? Has he got his own sort of way of playing with it and finding out its properties and how it works?

KAZ MURPHY: Yes, so he does a lot of splashing around, transferring water from one place to another, finding different items to hold water in and to see how much he can transfer with them. Sometimes he finds things on purpose with holes in so he can watch it fall. He finds some of his toys to see if they sink or float. He's really smart for his age. And I enjoy playing with him.

LORNA SIBBERT: Sink or float, we're onto by key stage two by that point in time. I'm asking really because-- because I come from a science background. I have to-- No, we've got other scientists in the room. Where OK. We're in safe territory together.

And this exploratory play that children engage with through the natural curiosity it's a bit sad it disappears in us as we get older because do you still find that you have a bit of that yourself, that you've still got a bit of a curiosity to find out more? Is that what's brought you to us as a student?

KAZ MURPHY: Sometimes, before I took the university path, I just called it a little bit of intrusive thought. So you're doing something, for example, I'm walking through the forest by my house. And we have a river that runs through.

And sometimes, I will just find a random object and go, I wonder if this sinks or floats. And I will just drop it into the river. And I'll watch it for a little while. There's still some flowers that are growing that I don't know the names of. So I look them up. And then obviously, with my son, when I learn it, I teach him.

So he knows the different flowers, because the only flowers that he confidently knows are daisies and dandelions. So everything is either a daisy or a dandelion with him. So I'm trying to educate him in other flowers, even if it's one every few weeks or something.

LORNA SIBBERT: So I think what you're getting at there is that the playfulness can include extending vocabulary within an area so that you're more aware of-- that's more knowledge base by extending the vocabulary, extending the language of a discipline, maybe, satisfying the curiosity, having that it's something that we can continue to engage with as adults. But I think you're also highlighting that there's a social dimension to playful learning then for us as well. Is that what you perceive with your son perceived maybe in your own studies with us?

KAZ MURPHY: Yes, so you can always learn things from other people. I mean, or you can share your knowledge. I don't know about everyone else. But when I learn something new, I get really excited about it, and I want to share with people. I mean, sometimes, it can be a little offputting when somebody goes, oh, yeah. I knew that already.

But you will always get people that also didn't know, or they knew but they're still willing to listen. And you can learn from each other if they already knew and they're willing to listen to you because then if you've made a little mistake or there's something that you can't remember or something you haven't quite got to learning yet, they can help you out. So it's a great way to connect with people and find mutual interests find new friends.

LORNA SIBBERT: That's interesting, so that play as a means of connection to develop a sort of sense of belonging, a sense of voice within this new exploration of learning and the new and learning environment that you're in is what your experience has been so far.

Thus far, but I also think there's maybe something there by how many of the learning environments that we create here, if you turn to tutorial, we try to put in an icebreaker, which is usually some sort of fun activity, actually, arguably, that the toy question that's coming across the ticker tape is partly that, getting us to think together and share something of ourselves that helps to break down barriers so that we can then engage with one another. It might be more challenging endeavour is because we know we've got support of one another to carry out these more challenging explorations.

ROB MOORE: Lorna, so shall we see what people have been responding to the ticker? So I know we've had a lot of response. So Heidi, what are people's favourite toys? And why are they the favourites?

HEIDI: This has sparked some great conversations that I don't think I've ever seen the chat so busy, lots of people feeling very passionately about their toys. So I've got lots and lots. I'll just pick out some of my favourites. And so Martin, my favourite-- this is the thing you didn't warn me about, Rob. Some of these are really hard to pronounce. So Martin, I'm going to pronounce this wrong. I know I am. So I'm really sorry in advance.

My favourite toy for the last part of STU 15 chemistry was a tetrahedral molecule. I'm sure I pronounced that wrong. So I do apologise. Chemistry was not my strong point. So yeah, do you know that one, Rob? Do how that's properly pronounced? Tetrahedral, is that right?

ROB MOORE: I don't. But you've given me-- anybody who posts a name of a toy now, make it really difficult to pronounce because that's part of the fun.

HEIDI: No.

ROB MOORE: Because this is part of Heidi's learning, learning how to pronounce new words.

HEIDI: It's too cruel. OK, I've got some others as well. Mikaela studying psychology with counselling, love the Hungry Hippos game. Helen said her sewing machine is her grown-up toy. Loads and loads of people loving crafts. So Melissa's favourite toy is her iPad. I can definitely relate to that.

Andrea, Barbie and her house, which her dad made for her and even wallpapered, which is lovely. Michelle, either her iPhone or yoga mat. Nina loves playing LEGO with her granddaughter. Sian says her bike. Isabel, another crafty one, paper and glue, upcycling things, and making cards. Sally, Sylvanian Families, that was my favourite when I was younger. I had their canal boat, loved playing with that. And then Batina, knitting needles.

And I do just want to say, so Abby says that her study buddy is awake, 10-week-old baby. So saying, hopefully, I'll get to take notes and learn. Just to say, the video will be available again to watch again afterwards. So if your study buddy starts distracting you, then you can watch it again afterwards.

ROB MOORE: Absolutely, so Lorna, some of the playfulness we've talked about there, how do we bring that into learning? How do we bring that into the academic context?

LORNA SIBBERT: Do you know what's occurred to me? Some people have said the tetrahedron, that was raised at the very beginning, very important. I'm a biochemist originally. So everything's right. And with all this talk about COVID and viral molecules are these most amazing structures, including tetrahedrons.

Those people that I've mentioned that they like crafts, knitting, and sewing, there is actually a movement within the sciences in terms of knitting of molecules and knitting of viruses, knitting of microorganisms, as a way to understand the three-dimensional nature of a molecule or of a virus.

So I think those people have got toys in that area might, if they're not already interested in virology and chemistry and biochemistry, might want to nip over there and investigate that. I haven't previously given students a knitting pattern. We've discussed it.

ROB MOORE: Excellent, no, no, I think that's a really interesting concept. And so I must admit, I wasn't sitting there thinking of the relationship between knitting and science. So that's great.

So I do know that a lot of our modules are starting to bring elements of games in. And I really liked Kaz's description about taking every opportunity to expand and explore the world and explain it to her son. So that's definitely what we like to do as a tutor. I like students to identify the real world around them.

And I'm from the business school. And we like them to apply all these concepts in the real world, get the newspaper or get your news feed and start to look at which ideas which models fit. So Lorna, what would you say is your favourite bit of play in the modules that you've been involved with? What's the bit of fun that you've really enjoyed the most?

LORNA SIBBERT: Scienes, there's lots and lots of fun. So the access module Y033, students build a bridge of pasta will sign your sheets and cans, and then stress it to the point of breaking. So that's great for yourself if you like a bit of building and demolition. It is serious. It's about how you go about doing an experiment, following a method, being able to write up a report.

And then an S-11, which is the level one entry science module, there's a whole series of kitchen experiments. One of the simply is just bouncing a ping pong ball. So that's something that many of us have done before. But you do it in a very structured way. So you're dropping the ball, seeing how high the rebound is, dropping it from different heights, seeing how high the rebound is. Hiding the cats and dogs and so on at that point in time, otherwise, I try to help.

But in S-111, there's quite a series of kitchen experiments. We do, tutors, encourage that if you've got any little ones in the house, that might be interested that you view it as a sort of family enterprise because practicing and doing it playfully with one another and having someone to chat things through with is a way of-- even little ones can have really provocative questions.

I mean, one of the experiments in S-111 is simply turn on your tap and get a comb and rub it. And if it's plastic-- I'm sure you've done this before-- a comb or a plastic ruler, and hold it near the tap, and see how it bends. And you might have a little play at different flow rates, different types of plastic. And so we started talking about water there.

But one of the things I've taught a lot of the years is the physiology of the cardiovascular system, which is really about how blood flows and the pipe network that is your cardiovascular system. So for anybody that's had a good old play with water, even if it's just turning on the tap and hearing that rumble as the water hits the base of the sink, which is really like your heart squeezing nigh and forcing the blood out onto high pressure into the main arteries that you feel as a pulse because the rumble is a vibration in your cardiovascular system, the same rumble you experience as a pulse. So these sorts of physical play roundabout us are great for analogies with how more hidden systems might operate.

ROB MOORE: So you can really turn any experience, any play, into a learning experience. It's really good to see how we look at these different approaches, different contexts. So I'm going to move on and talk to Dan now. So Kaz, thank you for that. That was great. And we'll see you again for the next session. But Dan, this is your opportunity to get a bit of revenge. We're going to get you to ask Lorna a few questions now about perspectives.

And while then Lorna and Dan are chatting, we've changed the ticker question now, just a simple question, what is AI? So answer that one with chatting. And we're going to come back to look at your answers in a moment. So Dan, what is it you want to ask Lorna about?

DAN SARKOZI: Yes, well, as you mentioned, we're talking about the term perspective. And that's a nice question indeed you've got along the ticker there. So I guess we could start somewhat lighter-hearted with a bit of fun.

And maybe the viewers can answer this question to themselves as well. And the meaning behind the answer will come out more as our little quiz with Lorna goes on. So my first question to you Lorna is, in general life, academics aside, what is the first thing that comes into your mind when you hear the term perspective?

HEIDI: I'm sitting in front of a window so it's literally the view out my window, if I'm honest.

DAN SARKOZI: Brilliant, lovely.

HEIDI: It's official answer.

DAN SARKOZI: No, it's brilliant answer, no right or wrong. Yeah, lovely. I wonder what entered the viewers' minds when they answer that question. Yeah, so now bringing it to a more academic context, in terms of the academic field, what would come to your mind with the term perspective?

HEIDI: Everything depends on context, isn't it, Dan? So here at the moment, engaging with yourself, who I know is a student, Kaz, who I is a student, my perspective of what is thinking, as a tutor, I need to the perspective of each of my students if I'm going to do the best job I can in terms of supporting them.

So it's the first thing that comes to mind in my academic capacity is that the absolute need that I have as a tutor to understand the motivations of each of the students that I work with in direct partnership, to understand where their personal barriers might be for their success and of the constraints that they're working with so that I can give them appropriate signposting to SST or other particular support within the institution.

And knowing my students well and understanding their perspectives means that if there's a stumble along the way and motivation might slump a little bit, then I can hopefully find the right thing to help that particular student's to find their vibe again, find their motivation, and keep them on track. So that's the first thing that will come to mind. Also, I'm in an academic community.

So for myself, perspective also leans in to the different disciplines that people have And that we can't assume any word that we say, including the AI that's flashing across the screen at the moment for people. But that being said, means the same thing to each person that's in a room. And what you can have is people talking across purposes with one another if you've got different understandings of a same term.

Or that if people are constantly shifting between disciplines or different environments, they're constantly mentally switching between those areas. So as someone who's responsible for students in the Open Programme, what we're mindful of is that students who use Open in a very rich way to dance across the different disciplines are each time they start a new module with maybe in a different discipline are actually trying to pick up a new language or language that's being used in a different way than it was within the previous studies they were doing. That was a bit long-winded, Dan, maybe.

DAN SARKOZI: That was fascinating and interesting. You've kind of covered my whole chain of questioning there in one answer. So I'm just going to pick apart your answer a bit by bit and we'll go through that.

So the first thing you mentioned, which I felt was the real meaning behind your answer and why I wanted to start, what entered your head when you think of the term perspective, you mentioned context. So you said for you, context, being a tutor, is important to understand your students motivations and maybe your students' meaning of the term perspective. So just on that note of your students' motivations. What reasons have you observed that students tend to study at the Open University? What various motivations have you come across?

HEIDI: Oh, huge and varied. So we have some people who are here because it's the next step in their career or they want a change in career. If I know that, then that means from that, so even if they're an access student or level one student, I would recommend careers and employability service because it's never too early, if you're here for career aspirations, to engage with our careers and employability service.

So it might be career. It might be the curiosity that we've already touched upon. It might be that it's that route never travelled. And you decided this is the time for you, and I'm curious about investigating this path that is higher education. Or it might be that it's a particular discipline subject area within higher education that you're curious about finding out more about and so you've joined us.

It might be-- and this is the case for quite a few students who are in an Open Programme-- that you started your educational journey elsewhere-- your higher educational journey elsewhere and for many reasons. This may be changing caring responsibilities, some other sort of challenge. You've left that brick university and joined us as a distance learning provider because it meets where you're at at present.

So we recognise our importance within the sector and making sure that there's a path open to students who are transferring credit from another institution across. That's also an opportunity to maybe do something a little bit different. So I heard quite a few people there in the computing end of things. It might be that you've done most of your credits within computing previously, but you want to see, well, how might that integrate with business, which is Rob's area, I think. And do a wee bit of mixing now that you've joined us.

We have some students who have had mental health challenge or have mental health challenge or physical challenge for whom the noisy-- the physical environment of a full-time education in a brick institution is not something that they can do at that particular time. And so they join us-- other than very thankful that they've got the one-to-one support of a tutor here. So I think I've covered quite a few reasons. Did I cover yours? What is your reason? That's personal. Yeah, I've turned on you.

DAN SARKOZI: You have covered a lot of reasons. Yeah, thank you very much, very in-depth answer indeed.

ROB MOORE: Did we want to look at some answers, Dan? So we've had some thoughts on what AI stands for. So should we get Heidi to give us some of the answers we've got? And you can explain why we ask that question. So Heidi, what sort of things do people associate with the letters AI?

HEIDI: Some very varied responses, actually, I've been quite surprised. It's really interesting. So Tina immediately says, AI is very scary. Michelle, AI is something to be avoided. Michaela, AI, highly complicated programming to mimic a human brain.

Ian said AI is here to stay. We need to find a way to use it ethically and productively. It also depends what we mean by AI. We're not at Skynet yet. That is the media doomsday message used to grab attention and clicks.

Jill, AI is being bombarded with personalised adverts on my mobile phone. I can definitely relate to that. Antony, AI is potentially the next extinction-level event, a bit concerning. Sean, AI designed to make human life easier.

Helen, AI is a machine learning algorithm which scrapes the internet. And Tracey said, AI makes us all redundant. So there we go, just end on that cheerful note.

ROB MOORE: So Dan, were those the types of responses you were expecting there?

DAN SARKOZI: No, I have to say I'm rather surprised because there seem to be quite a lot of fear coming back there, extinction-level event, end of the world. And I've always viewed academic integrity as a good thing.

[LAUGHTER]

ROB MOORE: So AI didn't stand for Artificial Intelligence then?

DAN SARKOZI: No, we didn't specify the perspective from which we came, did we?

ROB MOORE: But everybody seems to have taken that one. And I wonder whether that would have been the same answer we would have got a few months ago before all the discussion about ChatGPT, et cetera. We do have another question. And this back to you, Lorna. This is from Antony. He wants to know, what's the connection between playfulness, practises, and perspectives? So why have we joined them together for this?

LORNA SIBBERT: Because they all start with P, Antony.

[LAUGHING]

If it's [INAUDIBLE] Antony was in the other room. If you were wanting a deep answer, you're not getting it, OK? So I hope sincerely that answer-- I think with what we're trying to do over this couple of days as this one of a series of events that's happening within the institution at the moment, what we're trying to do is really blur the boundaries of a healthy disrespect for people putting out artificial boundaries.

And playfulness is a way that we can break the boundaries of how we interact with one another so that we feel that we're respected and trusted, maybe, and seen as an individual within a situation within a particular environment. So play can do that. Perspectives is the recognition that you're going to have some extroverts in the room, some introverts in the room. But we're also coming with very different stories, very different backgrounds.

And it might seem that there's a common context that we're in, unless that context is defined properly each time so that we're all clear on what the context is for when we get together. And unless we recognise that there's a diversity of perspective in the room, we're impoverishing the interaction that we've got. And in terms of the practises bit, it's because we want this to be part of normal practise. And we want to take a little bit of a pause and think of, how can we do things better? How can we do the things that matter?

So it's powerful practise. It's working across disciplines, transdisciplinary, interdisciplinary. People will use those words in different ways, and they will understand different things from different disciplines. So, OK, they're all Ps. But there was another reason.

ROB MOORE: Thank you. And you've just brought us really nicely into the next session. So we're just about to go into a short video. And when we come back, we're going to be talking about interdisciplinary practises and the broader Open Programme.

So have a think about any questions you might have for the team. And we're going to be trying to answer some of your questions and have a broader discussion about interdisciplinary practises after this short break. So we'll see you all in five minutes, and enjoy yourselves. Enjoy the video.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

NARRATOR: Whenever you're writing something such as an Open University assignment, it's easy to make mistakes. This video looks at seven common writing mistakes, which can lose you marks when you're being assessed. First up, "your" versus "you're." This mark here is called an apostrophe. And it's worth working out when to use it. "Your" and "you're" sound the same. But your without an apostrophe means something belonging to you, your dinner.

And in the case of "you're" with an apostrophe, the apostrophe is used to show that some letters are missing. "You're" means the same as you are. So if a dog is enjoying its dinner, you'd say "you're a happy dog enjoying your dinner."

Understanding the apostrophe also helps with another mistake, number two, the difference between "it's" and "its." The apostrophe shows that two words "it" and "is" have been smooshed together. "It is" becomes "it's." If not short for "it is," then there's no apostrophe, and it's just "its." So if you want to write, "it's great my cat has its milk," think if you mean "it is great," in which case, there's an apostrophe. Otherwise, there isn't.

And it's similar with the words "they're," "their," and "there." If "they're" is a shortened version of "they are," you use an apostrophe. "They are" becomes "they're." If "their" means something that belongs to them, then it's "their" with an I.

And if "there" refers to a place or position, then it's "there" with two E's. So if you're looking for two dogs, each with a bowl, you'd say, "they're over there with their dinner."

Next up, is "should have" and not "should of." "Should've" is a quick way of saying "should have." "Should have" becomes "should've." The letter H and A are missing, so you can see there's an apostrophe. But if you're writing an assignment, it's usually best to write words out in full. So if you're writing "should've," you probably should have written out the words in full and not "should of," which, although it sounds similar, is never right.

There are times when an apostrophe isn't taking the place of missing letters. Let's look at "dog's" and "dogs'" and whether the apostrophe comes before or after the S. When it comes to feeding your pet, this is the dog's dinner with an apostrophe S, belonging to one dog. When the dinner belongs to more than one dog, the correct thing to do is to put the apostrophe after the letter S. The dogs' dinner is a dinner belonging to more than one dog.

Another common muddle is between "effect" and "affect." They sound similar, but they are not the same. And effect is a thing or a noun, something you can make. To affect something is to do or change something, a verb. So if someone is doing some exercise, you could say, "the effects of the exercise affects their mood."

Finally, let's look at the difference between "fewer" and "less." They sound like they mean the same thing, but "fewer" is for things that can be counted, like bottles, while "less" is for something that can't be counted, like milk. So when it comes to a lack of milk, for example, you would have less milk and fewer bottles of milk.

It's very easy to get these things wrong. The key is to learn to spot your mistakes and correct them before your marks are affected. This can also help with written communication in other areas of life and give you confidence that you're expressing yourself in the best way you can.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

ROB MOORE: Welcome back. We hope you enjoyed that short video. It's one of the resources on our OpenLearn platform. And we'll be talking more about some of the resources available if you join us in our session on Thursday. So we come now to our second session, interdisciplinary practise. And we welcome Heather Montgomery, who's professor of anthropology and childhood at the Open University.

And we're going to have a bit of a group discussion now talking about what interdisciplinary practise means. And you have the opportunity to give us your thoughts. What does it mean to you? Or maybe you've got some questions you might want to put to the panel about the Open Programme and how it works and how the different practises come together. So Lorna, I'm going to start with you. My first question is, can you define-- and I'm going to try-- I haven't managed to say this once yet-- interdisciplinarity.

[LAUGHING]

LORNA SIBBERT:	I should do this. Look, after two modules, Y-7130, Y-13, actually, within the module materials, define this. Can I, for the life of me, remember exactly the definition we've got within those, no. So I'd feel the EMA on that.
	OK, what does interdisciplinarity mean-- just about managed to say. I personally consider the disciplines a bit of an artificial, man-made construct, that they are born of the societies that very noble man made up so that they could get around with a nice little glass of whiskey of an evening and sit and talk about the planets or about economics or whatever.
	So let's recognise that disciplines can be a bit of artificial construct. But having said that, over the intervening a few hundred years, each area of intellectual endeavour has developed its own language. So a discipline ends up being bound by what terms we can expect people to be familiar with.
	So within cell biology, it's going to be about the molecules that are found there, the cellular structure and so on, different for physics, different for Heather's area of anthropology. What interdisciplinarity is is when people cross the boundaries of the discipline and begin to share a language with one another so that they can talk to one another effectively.
	For example, in public health, if you want to address cardiovascular disease, you need to understand it from a genetics perspective, from a physiological perspective, from a social perspective as to what social factors would affect a population and trigger more cardiovascular events. But those areas have their own language. So interdisciplinarity is about breaking down the language barriers in order to solve problems and finding ways of generating new understandings that you wouldn't have if you didn't come together in that way. It's hard thing to do individually.
ROB MOORE:	Absolutely. Heather, welcome. And can you tell us some examples of interdisciplinary practise in your area, in anthropology or childhood studies?
HEATHER MONTGOMERY:	Yes, well, for me, interdisciplinarity has been my whole career. I started off, I did a degree in English literature. I then moved into I did a master's in development. And I then went into anthropology. But what I found is I then joined the Open University. My PhD was on an anthropological study of childhood.
	I joined the Open University 20 years ago now in childhood studies. And this was an absolute eye-opener for me because I'd been looking at children from a very specific perspective. And suddenly, I was surrounded by psychologists, educationalists, criminologists, all sorts of people. As Lorna said, some have all of their different languages. But what was very obvious was just how much we had in common, how much we were all talking about the same thing.
	And now my title is professor of anthropology and childhood. I very much wish it was just professor of childhood because I feel that childhood, as much as anything, is the subject which needs to be interdisciplinary and should be interdisciplinary. And I suppose for me, interdisciplinarity means being holistic, means studying things holistically, drawing in the insights, the benefits from all these other disciplines.
	And I think I would add to that as well, on a personal note, that I have a 9-year-old son. And so I started being an expert in childhood long before I was a parent. And that is a different perspective. It's almost a different discipline. And we tend to downplay the knowledge that students and that we all bring to our subject area.

And I think for me, one of the great joys of working in childhood studies, and then more broadly now in the Open Programme, is just this increasing realisation that people's personal experience is also a form of expertise. So when Lorna was talking about the old white men in their studies drinking their whiskey and studying the planets, I very much agree with that. I mean, it's something that we call in anthropology, priestly knowledge, something that you keep to yourself.

You have these little arcane rituals, these little bits of language and things to exclude the layperson from. And for me, interdisciplinarity is about breaking down those barriers through playfulness, sometimes, but through practise, and also through our own experience because we heard so brilliantly from Kaz there earlier that being a parent, being a child, remembering your own childhood is also a form of expertise.

And so for me, I would say that the second half of my career has been about trying to bring the personal experience, personal practise into studies of childhood, recognising other peoples' expertise, and it not being academics teaching people things. We've got the knowledge. We've got to pour it into you like you're some sort of empty vessel.

So you can tell that I'm quite passionate about this. I can talk about it at great length. I probably need to give somebody else a chance now. But any questions, please let me know because I will be very happy to answer them.

ROB MOORE: Absolutely. So we're all here today from the Open Programme. So a question for you, Dan, just to prepare you, I'm interested to know how you are putting together your Open Degree because the Open Degree is really designed to bring these different disciplines and to allow students to see different perspectives and make connections that perhaps we don't necessarily design in. We allow the students to design their own experience. So Dan, what does your degree look like? What subject areas are you focusing on?

DAN SARKOZI: Well, that's a really poignant question, actually, because it touches on what the two ladies just said about the different topics being somewhat of a fabrication. They're the different subjects being made up. And then because for my own degree, I actually come from somewhat of a science background, being an athlete and a personal trainer. I had various qualifications in anatomy, physiology, nutrition. So I started my own degree in health sciences, SDK 100.

And then I realised it wasn't so much learning more about the science that I needed. It was being able to communicate it to who didn't know. And now I've end up a literature student. So that's in a quick sense of how I put my degree together. And yeah, I'll go back go back to those old white men who we like to slate nowadays and later, being one of them, actually.

There's actually an example of, I think, what the two ladies were saying. I would believe he would be one of the guilty people of segregating the topics back in the day over a whiskey. But he also actually-- as Sir Philip Sidney said, in *The Defence of Poesy*-- he actually used, shall we say, for want of a better term, layman's or everyday language, by communicating his ideas in dialogues.

And sadly, as Lorna touched on, I feel that's something that's lost today where every subject seems to have their own terminology. So unless one is familiar with scientific terminology, for example, they may struggle or misunderstand scientific terms in reading relevant studies. But there was once upon a time when the likes of these old men, Plato, did use everyday English to get their ideas across. And wouldn't it be lovely if we still had those times?

ROB MOORE: Absolutely. As an old white male, I'm starting to feel a bit persecuted today. So Heidi, have we got any questions coming through in the chat for the panel?

HEIDI: We have, yeah, a few comments and then a question as well. So just to give an outline of how people are defining this, so Tina, to me, it means giving a taste of different subjects before moving forward to maybe studying them in more detail. Kit says, working with different disciplines. Michaela, interdisciplinarity for me is how science also uses maths and English, for example. Michelle, applying learning across disciplines. Nina, it's like my module A113 where we're learning history, religion, philosophy, and music.

And Helen says, I'm doing criminology in year one, followed by anything to do with the Victorian era, so an example there of interdisciplinary study. So we do have a question for Heather. This is coming from Antony. So do separate disciplines correspond to Gardner's multiple intelligences? If yes, then is interdisciplinarity really multidisciplinary?

ROB MOORE: Wow, over to you, Heather.

HEATHER MONTGOMERY: I think, again, I have had many debates about this with my colleagues, particularly because I am from a more psychological-- I mean, I'm from a more sociological-anthropological background. I work with colleagues in psychology. We've actually written a paper with one of them about how our disciplines need to be in dialogue.

And we use the phrase disciplines in dialogue because we couldn't actually agree on whether or not we were interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary. And to me, I feel that, again, arguing about the terminology slightly misses the broader point of it, which is about working together. It's about being in dialogue.

I mean, there are going to be cases where maybe I won't agree with a scientist or a psychologist. And I think that we'd like to think that interdisciplinarity or multidisciplinary means that we all agree and we all get on and we all think exactly the same thing. And it doesn't always mean that. There are difficulties. There are tensions. And they haven't been resolved. And there's still many, many discussions to keep going by.

I think for me-- and I didn't mean to talk about old white men or disparage them in any way-- what, for me, I would like the Open Degree to do is to create a whole new generation of Renaissance men and Renaissance women who can speak, just as Dan said, can speak across the arts, the sciences, across the disciplines.

They may well be more anchored in one than another. But they can understand and they can relate to and they can be in dialogue with the other disciplines. So you can say, well, actually, my child-- I'm interested in, for example-- and this is a discussion we have a lot in childhood studies-- I'm interested in my child's experience of neurodiversity.

And that's when you can say, oh, well psychologically or scientifically, we think these drugs might help. This way of treating the child might help. This way of understanding the child psychologically might help. But that can be in dialogue with sociologists who say, well, we actually think neurodiversity is a much more of a social construction than anything else. And that's the best way to understand it.

And to me, all these different ways are really, really important to understand. We might not always agree. But we need to be able to talk in the same way and use some of the same language to really enter into dialogue with each other.

Sorry, I told you I could talk.

ROB MOORE: That's fine.

HEATHER MONTGOMERY: Shut me out, Rob.

ROB MOORE: I'm going to pop back to Lorna for a second. So Lorna, it's not just about interdisciplinary practises in study. We also have the way organisations work. So I know we were talking before the session about the Open University is interdisciplinary. So would you like to expand on how the practises at the OU can demonstrate these practises?

LORNA SIBBERT: Do you mean in terms of research or in terms of how we operate to support student learning?

ROB MOORE: A little bit of both or whichever you think is the most significant.

LORNA SIBBERT: I think what I'd choose to talk about is that how anybody learns-- I think everyone in the room has already touched upon this-- how anybody learns is not just via a particular pedagogy. You're made of all the interactions that you ever encountered. Was it Walt Whitman's poem, "There Was a Boy Went Forth," that sums up all the interactions, were shaped by the animals that we meet, our physical environment, the people that are in our environment.

So within the context of the OU, the student relationship is only one of the relationships that the student has access to. There are personnel within the library who shaped the experience that you have. When you go in to do the library searches, they're there to run sessions for you, to support referencing, or just how to use the databases. We've got our wonderful SST. You've got people who can advise you as to what your next module might be and what your options are to keep you on a particular path, who can direct you to particular support areas.

So I think in terms-- if you could consider that those different professional activities are discipline areas, then there's a sort of interdisciplinarity there. I'm not entirely sure that I regard them as disciplines. But it leans into that area of thinking, maybe, maybe.

ROB MOORE: Area of expertise, so I'm trying to bring this together. So if I was looking at this from a business point of view, which is where I always end up, because that's what I do in the same way you always go to science, it's the difference between an organisation or a business that operates in silos with all the different functions operating separately and one that brings them all together to actually deliver something holistic and different and more effective overall.

So I don't know if that's close. If I've understood it correctly, that's great. So hopefully, that's the sort of area we're going through. So while we've got some experts on the Open Programme-- so I know we've got some of our audience who perhaps don't know what the Open Programme is.

So Lorna, do you want to give us a quick two-minute pitch of what the Open Programme is and why it's unique to the OU and actually, why it's a really intriguing offering. I'll put a time limit on that, two minutes.

LORNA SIBBERT: OK I wasn't expecting an elevator pitch.

ROB MOORE: No, I know.

HEIDI: Open Programme is a degree Programme that gives you freedom to pick the-- sorry, I was going to say any mix of modules that you might want across the institution. You need to get some in at level one, some in at level-- 120 at level one, 120 at level two, 120 at level three, as any degree course. You can move across sciences. You can move across-- sciences and arts. You can move across some different disciplines.

It does place the responsibility on you as a student to identify a path that you're going to maintain a motivation for, that you recognise that in maybe sometimes in shifting discipline, you'll have that shift of language that quite a few of us have been talking about. And it might mean that when you begin a new module at maybe level two, having not studied what most people study from level one to follow through into that, you've got a bit of extra work in order to prepare yourself for it.

In terms of what you get out of it, some people have heard before that maybe it's not so marketable from employability perspective, it is. What employers want to know is your story about why you followed that path, what you have gained from that path. So so long as you can articulate your gains and knowledge and skills and what you've discovered about yourself, then Open Programme provides a very good path.

It does give amazing flexibility. So sometimes, people do it because they don't want to do a formal exam, and they want to pick modules that only have coursework, for example. That happens, and you can understand why it would happen, yeah.

DAN SARKOZI: I actually never knew that. I actually never knew that happened in Open Degree. So great.

LORNA SIBBERT: You didn't do that?

DAN SARKOZI: No. I, for one, am a huge advocate for Open Degree, huge advocate.

ROB MOORE: Absolutely, it's that ability to look for what you're interested in and make your own links and make your own choices. Hopefully, the choices aren't just about the exams, it's about finding those areas that interest you the most. And again, I'll say on my programmes, I've got a lot of Open students coming in, dip in and out. And there are a few rules because there are some elements where you have to have studied a certain module at level two to take it further at level three. But there's an awful lot of flexibility.

So Kaz, we've been quite quiet during this session. So I know that you're thinking about your next module. So what are you going to pick? And how are you going to make that decision, do you think?

KAZ MURPHY: Well, I've just come off of access Access Y-032. So it's People, Work, and Society. So that's very interdisciplinary. And I came to the OU thinking I was going to do a health and social care degree and then doing the business element of the access module. I actually got interested in business.

And I wanted to do the health and social care degree to manage a care home one day. So I think if of merge those together into an Open Degree, then I could get the relevant knowledge from both sides of things, so from the business side, running things and learning whatever I need to know, and also more educated on the health and social care side of things so I'm not completely out of my depth with the subject area.

ROB MOORE: Brilliant, and it means then that you can tailor your degree to suit exactly what you want it to do. So Lorna, I am going to come back to you just to finish up. We've just got two minutes left. So I'll let you make your final comments before we have a last look at the chat box.

[LAUGHING]

LORNA SIBBERT: I'm an introvert. They just [INAUDIBLE].

ROB MOORE: Introvert, my foot.

LORNA SIBBERT: I cover it really, really well. No, I think what we're trying to get-- If I haven't said it clear enough, student voice within all this is the key thing that we need to make sure we've got. So student perspective, understanding our students and your perspectives, is essential for the Open University to continue. We are open to all. We are here for you. We need to hear from you in terms of what you want, what will make things better for us and better for everybody.

So I'm going to use this opportunity to have a quick callout, for any student consultation that comes up, don't leave it to all the extroverts. I used those terms a few times recently. Don't leave it to all of them to pipe up. Come forward. Say what you want to say because we want to hear from everybody and the very diverse students that we have got so that we can do better for each of you.

ROB MOORE: Thank you, Lorna.

LORNA SIBBERT: How I choose my time.

ROB MOORE: That's brilliant. That's brilliant. Thank you. So Heidi, any last comments from the chat? Anything that people are saying as we come towards the end?

HEIDI: Yeah, if we've got time, I've got a very, very quick question, actually, which I'd love to put to you all. So Sian says, if we've started on a fixed degree Programme, are we able to change to Open now?

ROB MOORE: I'm pretty sure you can. As long as there are no prerequisites that you've passed, you should be able to change your degree to an Open degree at any point. If you just like to confirm I'm right with that, Lorna or Heather.

I'm sure Jay would help out. She's around as well. But talk to SST. Talk to SST. Go and talk to an advisor. And they will look at your case specifically and talk you through what your options are and explore your interests and where you want to go with it. So absolutely, talk to an advisor.

ROB MOORE: I think the only issue is--

HEATHER MONTGOMERY: Also just to say-- sorry, well, just to say as well, we're very open-- we are very open to credit transfer from other universities as well. So if you have got any previous studies at all, we on the Open Programme allow up to 240 points credit transfer, which is two years worth-- two years worth of study. So if you have got previous experience, let us know, and we can take that into account.

ROB MOORE: Which could be really interesting if you are one of the students impacted by the COVID problems as well. So it could be a really nice way to complete your degree. So thank you, everyone. That's been a fantastic session. I've really enjoyed talking to you all today.

I just want to remind everybody that there are feedback forms. And as Lorna said, we really do need your input. We need to know that these sessions are meeting your needs. And we want to know what you want to talk about. So if you fill out the feedback form, then you'll let us know what subjects are of interest to you, and we could do more of them.

And talking about subjects coming up, on Thursday, we've got a session called Summertime Brain Food, where we're going to be looking at some of the things that can keep your brain busy between your modules. So if some of you have just finished your exams or your end-of-module assessments, and you're waiting for more work to do, this is something to consider.

And then on the 27th, we have some of our colleagues from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. And they're going to be talking about their new modules. So we've got some of the module teams to come in introduce their new modules and talk about those with us.

And then on the 29th, I've got some of my colleagues from the Faculty of Business and Law. And they're going to tell us how they create modules. How do they come up with the ideas and bring them together? So those are our next three Student Hub Live sessions. So get your tickets booked and join us for those.

So I'd just like to say thank you once again to everyone who's joined us on the panel and for supporting the chat. And I look forward to seeing you all again soon. Thank you and enjoy the rest of your day. Bye bye.

[MUSIC PLAYING]