



Designing for Experience: Meeting the Needs of Mature Learners

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Abstract

While it is recognised that mature students often engage with university differently to younger students, data is limited in relation to their actual lived experience, making it difficult to design meaningful, targeted pedagogy and support. Our study responded to that challenge by using the Listening Rooms method to capture honest, peer-to-peer conversations, offering insight into how mature learners experience teaching, engagement, and belonging.

This workshop is intended to bring that thinking back into our own context, creating space to reflect on what the work might mean in practice. After a short overview of the study and emerging themes, participants will be invited to explore how these insights relate to their own practice. Through small-group discussion and practical activities, the workshop will focus on identifying realistic ways to adapt teaching, curriculum, and support, with mature learners in mind.

The emphasis is on working together to move from insight to action. The session will create an opportunity to share ideas, discuss challenges, and think collectively about what change might look like in different areas of practice. Participants will leave with a set of practical, context-specific ideas to take forward, contributing to a more inclusive and responsive learning environment.

Keywords

Mature learners, student experience, pedagogy, higher education, Listening Rooms

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