

Transcript for Not a Checklist: Designing Assessments for Neurodivergent Learners
BCcampus FLO Friday session on February 27, 2026
Facilitator: Ann Gagné
Host: Kelsey Kilbey

ANN GAGNÉ:

Hi, everyone. It's so nice to see everyone. I see a couple of names and faces that I recognize. So this is lovely and it's nice to see folk and that you wanted to spend your Friday here having conversations with me and having conversations about how we can support neurodivergent learners and their assessment needs as well. And so as Kelsey mentioned,

I'm sharing the slides. There's also a link to the slides that is available here. Kelsey just put in this slide, there's a link there. There's also a QR code that will take you directly to the slides as well in case you are the kind of human that likes to do things on a mobile device. And so, therefore, the QR code would be more helpful to you. And so the slides will be there, and they will always be available for you to go through and refer to even after the session. So do feel free to go through those. And if, you know, you have any questions you can always ask.

I do have the chat open as well, and so if there's anything that comes during our session and you want to pop that in the chat, then I'd be happy to reference that and speak to that, as well. So I do want to start with a land acknowledgment and a bit of a positionality statement. So I'm joining you from the traditional land of the Haudenosaunee and the Anishinaabe. This is land that's covered by the Upper Canada Treaties, and it's land that's protected by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Agreement. And for me, when I do a land acknowledgment, I think that it's really important for us to think about how our land acknowledgments are not so much just about acknowledging the land of where we happen to be at that moment, but also acknowledging the lands that are where we grew up and maybe that you've moved through, because I think that that does a lot of things in terms of who you are as people, what you have learned, and so on. And so for me, it's really important for me to let folk know that I was born and raised on the traditional land of the Abitibiwini Aki, that it's land that's covered by the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement. And I lived in that area for quite some time until, I was trying to remember how old I was until 18 or 19, and then I moved to Toronto, where that is the land of the Mississaugas. And I lived in Toronto for quite some time over 30 years, and I've recently relocated to St. Catherine's about 2 years ago, 2.5 years ago. And this is really important because the Brock Land acknowledgment talks about how our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous people. And I mentioned this because I think that it's really important for us to think about how the spaces that, as I say, we've occupied and that we continue to occupy and the resources that we've gained from those places, the conversations that we've had with folk, inform who we are as people. And so if you know the traditional territory of where you're joining us from today, please feel free. I know there's about 26 people in this room right now, please feel free to use the chat to share that because it would be really nice to know where folk are joining us from today. Again, no pressure.

The other thing that I'd like to do when I do workshops or have any conversations at all with folk is to acknowledge the need for an access check. And one of the things that is important for me about this access check is that it gives you an opportunity to think about your own access needs in relation to where we are right now. And also acknowledging that those access needs as someone who identifies as having dynamic disabilities, that those access needs are also equally dynamic, therefore, something that you may need today might be different than something that you may need tomorrow or the day after and so on. And so I offer this slide, this access check slide as something that actually you may want to put into your own practice. It doesn't have to be framed exactly like this. You might find different wording that's more meaningful to you. But I offer this as an opportunity for you to think about how to position accessibility in the spaces that you're in. So if you are teaching asynchronously or if you're teaching synchronously or if you're teaching in person on campus, that you can use this kind of access check disclaimer as a space to welcome people in a similar way that we've, you know, having a conversation about land acknowledgments, to welcome people in to the conversation around accessibility. So as the slide says there, I encourage you to check, identify, and question your learning environment for any of the following that I've listed below, and I welcome comments if there's elements that I can support or that maybe Kelsey and I can support to help reduce the barriers to your participation today. So you can message in the chat at any time. So if there's anything about the technology, so if you notice a choppy sound, if there's anything about the virtual space, if there's anything about any resources that you feel you may need for some of the things that we're talking about today, supplementary resources to the things that I've talked about, feel free to use the chat to mention that or the pace. So another thing that I want to note is that as someone who has tinnitus, I use the captions in whatever platform that I'm using depending on the day. Sometimes I need them more than others. Today is an okay day for that, but I do still have the captions running. I also use the captions as a way to judge my pace. So that if the captions are keeping up with the way that I'm speaking, then I know that my pace is probably in an okay range. But then when I get really excited about a thing, as I tend to do when I talk about accessibility because I'm an accessibility nerd, then I know that I tend to speed up a little bit about things. And so I use the pacing of the captions to kind of slow myself down or to judge that. I learned this great trick from my pal, Hannah McGregor, which some of you may know, especially if you're out in the West Coast. And I mentioned this because citational justice is also a thing. And so if you learn a cool tip from a peer, it's also really great to remember where the cool tip came from and to acknowledge your peers in teaching you cool tips. So that's my cool tip that I'm passing on from Hannah.

All right, here's the agenda for today. Again, at any time, if there's anything from an accessibility point of view that you need, just feel free to pop it in the chat and Kelsey and I can see what we can do to make that happen. So we have about 50 minutes together today, and so I want to cover a couple of things. So one is just talking about neurodivergent learners and neurodivergent awareness. And then I'm going to go into assessment design. And one of the things that I really want to emphasize today in the session around assessment design is maybe some pieces that we don't think about in relation to assessment, which is, we design an

assessment, we have the instructions. We have some expectations in terms of what the learners are going to do in relation to what we want them to learn. We have learning outcomes, objectives, and so on. But oftentimes we don't think about that in context. And what I mean by that is we don't think about it in context in relation to where the assessment is going to happen, right? So we don't think about how we may have designed this great assignment that we love or this great activity that we love, and how that assignment and the way that it gets played out in that space might be different than if you're teaching it in an asynchronous course where you don't have a lot of live interactions or synchronous interactions with your learners. It may be different than if you are having conversations with folk in an active learning classroom, which we will talk about today. And so I want us to really think about assessment design not only for the sake of assessment design, but the assessment design in context. So where is this happening? Is it happening synchronously? Is it happening on campus? Is it happening online? Or is it happening in a hybrid space? Because that really has an impact on some of the neurodivergent learner needs that we have and things that we want to take into account. Then I'm going to give you a little bit of a case, which goes to what Kelsey was talking about in terms of having an optional breakout room. Maybe some of you want to meet with your peers to have this conversation about the case that I'm providing. And if you do feel like meeting people and chatting with folk, then we're going to have some optional breakout rooms there for you to join and maybe have a conversation with other people. But if you don't, it's a low spoons kind of day, and it's Friday, and you don't want to. You've done too much people-ing already, because this is a session about supporting neurodivergent, that is absolutely okay as well. And so whatever feels like what you need is good. And then I'll give you some time to do a little bit of reflection and next steps and some time for questions. Okay? Fantastic. All right.

So what do we mean when we talk about neurodivergent learners and being neurodivergent? So Kelsey is going to pop a link in the chat from Sonny Jane Wise, we'll talk about in a second where this umbrella comes from because again, citational justice, it's important. So one of the things that we talk about a lot is that you'll hear this term neurodivergent in a lot of higher education spaces now. And before—which is great. This is fantastic. But before we would barely hear this kind of even just the language around neurodivergence and so on. And so I wanted us to actually have an opportunity to talk about this because oftentimes when we have conversations with folk around what it means to have neurodivergent learners in your classroom and so on, oftentimes the conversation rests solely in conversations about autism. Or more commonly conversations about ADHD. And that kind of is where it starts and ends. And so I offer this umbrella that Sonny Jane Wise has created and to suggest that you follow their work as well to get us to realize that it's not just about ADHD and it's not just about autism is that there are many things that kind of fall under that neurodivergent umbrella. And so there are many lived experiences of neurodivergence and neurodivergent space. And so I offer this umbrella to get you to think about this, but also an opportunity maybe in the chat to be like, Are there some things in this umbrella that are new to you? Have you recognized some of these acronyms and different things? Or are there some of these where you're just like, Wow, I didn't realize there were so many things that could kind of fall under neurodivergent. And you'll

notice that in the blurb that I created for this workshop, one of the things that I made sure to mention was conversations maybe around dysgraphia. We were just talking to folk about this on LinkedIn this morning, conversations about dysgraphia and conversations about dyscalculia, right? And so, hi, Josephine. So Josephine's asking a great question in the chat. And I know Josephine. It's nice to see you. Josephine's question is, What is FASD? That's fetal alcohol syndrome. And again, so when we're talking about different things that don't fall under the, you know, conversations that we have, this is certainly one of those that we don't HPD has to do with histrionic personality disorder, which, again, when we say these words out loud and we talk about these things, excellent question, Josephine, oftentimes, we realize that a lot of that language even just the languaging around disorders and disordering can be problematic in some ways, as well, right? Because, of course, that all comes from the DSM and we want to, you know, make sure that we're trying to be open and understanding. But we also do come across a lot of these. I mean, academe loves these acronyms, right? And so it's very important, right? Dave's putting in the chat. I teach using this slide in case it's helpful, but thanks so much. So there are all the acronyms, right? And then the question is, most of these are in the DSM? Yes, absolutely. So when we have these kinds of conversations about that, we want to talk about how this fits into our learning space. Because, again, as I say, we end up talking about ADHD a lot because it's kind of out there in the discourse. We tend to talk about autism because it's also out there in the discourse, but we don't talk about all of the other things. I will mention that in the work that I do, for those of you who don't know me, and so the work that I do, I end up having a lot of conversations. Steven, if you go to Sonny J Wise's website, there's a link to their Instagram and you'll find the umbrella in the Instagram as well, if you're looking for the actual umbrella. And so I have a lot of conversations with folk around dysgraphia, for example, because there tends to be a lot of movement now towards folk wanting to do everything in handwriting in class, like no screens or screenless conversations. And often those kinds of conversations about being screenless means that folk that have support for fine motor support needs get excluded in those conversations. Or this dyscalculia, for example, where there's an assumption that everybody has the same sort of understanding around numbers and using numbers and numeracy. And, you know, we just assume these kinds of things. And I have a great example of that around dyscalculia, which is something simple like when we go to buy a thing, and now, I mean, they've made it a lot easier so that when we buy something, when we tap, we don't necessarily always have to put in our pin. But in the olden days, when we used to go buy things, you always have to put in your pin. And when you would put in your pin, that requires you to actually have an understanding of the numbers that you're putting in and remember those numbers. And oftentimes what'll happen is that there's some pattern recognition there. So you remember you had a pin on a door in one of your offices on campus, you kind of remember the pattern and you kind of stop forgetting you stop remembering the numbers. And so sometimes depending on the field that you're in, you might end up having conversations with folk where you assume that they would remember certain numbers, and that's certainly not the case, right? So I think these kinds of things are also incredibly important for us to think about so that we kind of just move away from just thinking about any conversation about ND or neurodivergence as just something that has to do with ADHD or autism. Does that help? I think I've responded to all of the questions that were in the chat

already. But if you have any other questions, please feel free. What would be also really helpful for me if you feel comfortable. Again, if you don't, please do not. If you can let me know what area, what discipline you're joining from. I know that some of you are in teaching and learning centres, but some of you are probably joining from a certain field or area like education, psychology, maybe math, maybe science. It would be nice for me to know what your umbrella is as well. All right. We got some education folk, we got some employment supports, we got accessibility services, humans, hi, accessibility services. Humans, editors, instructional designers. Amazing. This is a really nice mix of folk. Amazing. Hi, Adina. My goodness. Alright. So there's some names and faces and things that I'm recognizing here, which is great. So thank you so much for sharing. This is really good. So we got a lot of accessibility services folk. We got some education folks, some people in instructional design land, which is also my background and different other areas as well. So thank you so much for sharing that because that gives me a good idea, especially if I want to use examples about where you're coming from so that you feel like what I'm referring to is not doesn't apply to where you're at right now.

All right, some important things to be aware of before we get to more of a conversation about design that's space specific, right? So one thing that's really important to remember, which I'm sure you've heard in different spaces, especially those of you who are in accessibility services, is that if you've met one neurodivergent person, you have met one neurodivergent person. The work that I do, I'm in a really interesting role that I love where I have part of my role is in a teaching and learning centre. And the other half of my role is in accessibility services and, and so it's in a faculty-facing role where my responsibility is to have conversations with faculty about accommodations that the students may have and how those accommodations will apply to their course design and their assessment design and their activities and those kinds of things. And I love everything about what I do and the conversations that I have because I really see the work that I do in a faculty facing role as being sort of supplemental to the really important work that accessibility services folk and case managers do with the students, which is that the case managers know their students and the folk in their case load really well in the specifics that they need. And what my role is to kind of look more holistically at the course itself and how that design gets to happen and what can be put into place in terms of different options and so on, that will still allow all of the learners to kind of meet the learning outcomes of the course. So that's the kind of space and role that I'm joining in from. And so this is why this thing at the beginning here about if you've met one person with neurodivergence that you've met one neurodivergent person because I think it's really important for us to remember that there's a tendency sometimes in higher education space to kind of checklist a thing, which is why I called this talk "Not a checklist," and to think that if you've met one student with this dyscalculia that the strategies that you've put into the course could work for that one student with that with a dyscalculia diagnosis, but it might not work for another student that you might end up having in your course, right? And I know that that can be problematic, and I know that that also ends up creating some tension because the faculty have a finite amount of time. Like, we all have a finite amount of time. There are 24 hours in a day and there's a finite amount of time in the work that needs to get done. But if you go into this work, kind of assuming that the one thing that worked for one person is going to work for everyone, you know, in perpetuity, this is kind

of where we get into problems sometimes, right? So that's why I'm saying there. Like generalizing needs tends to be really harmful. And so that's why I try to move away from sort of a checklist discourse, right? And to think about how do we not generalize those needs and to think about things a little bit more specifically, but also recognize that there might be some high-level formative reflection questions and those kinds of things that people can think about to make their learning space a little bit more inclusive, right? And so as I mentioned about myself, most disabilities and neurodivergent support needs are dynamic, and so, you know, maybe some days I really could not function without the captions, and some days, if there are no captions, I could still function, but I still would not like it. I don't like it when there's no captions. But I think it's important for us to think about those kinds of things as well and the dynamic nature of humans, right? Because as I say often, for those of you who know me, because we're not robots, at least not yet, and so we need to be able to think about that a little bit more. So when we're, you know, assigning assignments or designing assignments to support divergent learners, it means being open to choice, being open to flexibility. It means having more scaffolding. And scaffolding, that's meaningful and not just scaffolding for the sake of scaffolding. And so what I mean by that is if there's a larger assignment that can be broken up into pieces, are you breaking that up into pieces because it's meaningful for them for it to be broken up into pieces, so like outlines or doing annotated bibliographies, for example, or some kind of research part of that. Is it meaningful to have those be separate things? Or are you just breaking it up because you feel like that's what needs to happen? Because, there's a meaningfulness that needs to happen as well around the work, right? So that if we're scaffolding something, why, So that we have the why kind of part of it, it's like, why are we scaffolding this? How helpful can this be? Would this be helpful? Or if it's too scaffolded and if there are too many steps, that also can be overwhelming, right? And so we want to make sure that we're kind of having that fine balance of a meaningful scaffold that will help people get to the objectives and the outcomes and so on, as opposed to too many steps that can be incredibly overwhelming, especially around executive functions and those kinds of things, right? So there's a lot of these sort of fluctuating impacts when it comes to the learning spaces as well. And so this idea of choice, flexibility, scaffolding, fluctuating impacts, and so on, we're going to talk a little bit about that today. And so all of this to say, it cannot be a checklist as much as we love checklists. In higher education, I want us to move away from this idea of which I hear a lot sometimes in different spaces: just tell me what to do. I mean, I can appreciate where that is coming from. And oftentimes that comes from I really don't know, so I need you to tell me what to do. But I would love us to get to a space where we move. Just tell me what to do to like, Hey, let's have a conversation about things, you know? Alright.

So, activities, because activities are important, but also recognizing that maybe some of you don't have the spoons to do activities today. So one of the things that I wanted to start with is I wanted you to take a moment and to think about recognizing that some of you are in service areas that actually might ask these kinds of questions and not an area where you're being asked this question, right? So I want you to take a moment and think about one area or areas of your assessment design where students or case managers, especially if you're in accessibility services, have asked you to put in more flexibility, right? So think about assessment strategies

that you've encountered. Think about where there's been an ask around a need for more flexibility, whatever that looks like in terms of time, in terms of design ,or so on and put that into the Padlet. I want you to put in areas that there's more flexibility that's needed in assessments, but also to put in some barriers that you felt impacted your ability to be flexible.

If you go to the Padlet, it should look something like so, and then you'll see here there's a space that says assessment needs that need flexibility, and then there's a space there that says barrier flexibility. And you'll also notice that there's an extra space there that says resource sharing. I do this with every workshop that I run because I know that some of you are here because you're just like, Well, Ann will tell you all of the things. But I also recognize, especially knowing the list of the folk that are in this room, that there are some folk in this room that have some resources that would be incredibly helpful, some of which have already been shared in the chat. So if you have resources to share with folk around this idea, please feel free to use that. How do you add things? You can click on things and add things underneath each area. I see there's about four or five of you that are in there already. So areas that need more flexibility, things where somebody has asked you, and then also some hard stop type barriers to your ability to be more flexible in your assessment strategies. So there's a great one in there right now about mandated timelines that the semester starts and ends at a certain time. It's easy to identify the barriers, Access frictions, absolutely. Timelines within courses. For example, as a contract ending exactly as someone who did sessional work for 13-plus years, I completely understand that. There's a hard stop for some things. There's nobody to grade things if it's out of contract, absolutely. Don't want to compromise learning outcomes. That's an excellent point, whoever put that in there. And I know that I end up having conversations with faculty all the time around the essential course requirements. I see someone's from nursing. That happens a lot. We have a lot of conversations and nursing spaces about that and especially I'm in Ontario, so around the CNO, the nursing folk in terms of what skills and things that the students will need when they graduate in their practice. And oftentimes that comes out of conversations around essential learning outcomes as well. Somebody's controversial take for a Friday. Accessibility resources at post-secondary require diagnosis? Yes, I need a piece of paper, I need proof. And that actually can be a barrier because some folks tend to not want to be flexible unless they have the piece of paper. Thank you so much. Whoever shared that. I made this anonymous because I wanted you to be able to do that. Somebody's talking about Swifts, you know, someone who was in the Ontario College system for a while. That's also an important... So there's some really great barriers here. So in terms of needs, some folk are talking about deadlines that there's already like a 48-hour window in that, which is great. But then sometimes there's a lack of communication. And so there's some extra that needs to happen. And so then this is where maybe that scaffolding piece ends up being more important in terms of well, if you've missed the deadline, like what are other scaffolds that can be put into place? Like, can I take that thing that you've missed and then tack it onto the next thing without you kind of missing out on the learning outcomes? As well. I think that's good. Group presentations, that is that. So there's a lot of students I know that have group presentation, especially neurodivergent students who have group presentations, accessibility support needs, and sometimes they will ask to do their presentations either in a smaller group or to the instructor

or to the TAs in-office hours instead, so that they're still doing the presentation, but the presentation needs to happen in a different area. Some of you have some high stakes practical assessments. I can see that also in nursing. There's some need for representation that sometimes this is also a great point that sometimes a thing needs to be done in a certain modality and it's harder to have it in a separate modality, otherwise. And so that's also important as well. And placement. Yeah. So nursing seems to be one of those things, right? That is also there, but also some of you are in skill trades, like I saw someone who was in another skill trade like hairstylist esthetics. That's also something where placement would be important. So thank you for that. So you see, there's a lot of things, and I think we have a lot of points of commonality there where a lot of you are thinking about this.

So a lot of this is about how we build flexibility in our systems or rigidity. And one of the things that I like to remind instructors when we have this conversation is to remember that rigidity is not rigour, right? So sometimes there's a lot of discourse around Well, this is how I learned it, so therefore the people that I'm teaching have to learn it in this way, and that is not necessarily the most inclusive way because, you know, things change, right? So an inclusive and accessible assessment design is also knowing your limits. So somebody mentioned access friction. So knowing that you as the person who's part of the teaching team or part of the support team, if you're in accessibility services, also have some limits in terms of what you can do. Contract limits, time limits, capabilities, maybe you just had a concussion and you can't use screens, right? So how are you grading the things, right? So we need to make sure that we are aware of the different areas of access friction, not just in supporting neurodivergent learners, but also supporting you who is part of the teaching team. And that knowing that you can't do this alone, right? So, I know that this is kind of like, you know, try to say, find the helpers, but really, find the helpers, right? So if you are lucky enough to have a teaching and learning centre, and I know as I roll my eyes that now is this time where a lot of teaching and learning centres are getting cutbacks and things like that, but teaching and learning centres are so crucial. Educational developers, folk that are in roles like mine, instructional designers as well. All of these people can kind of help you so that you don't necessarily have to do this alone. I noticed that somebody here in terms of a barrier had put things like exposure to UDL and understanding diversity, that that could be a barrier to the flexibility is that if you don't know about those things, if you don't know about UDL, if you don't know about how you're not being flexible, it's harder to put that in.

Okay. So in the following slides, I'm going to talk about different scenarios in terms of the assessments on campus, online, hybrid situations, and some things that we want to think about. Right? Again, if there are things that kind of resonate with you, please feel free to share in the chat. If you have any questions, please let me know. So one big thing, especially about on-campus assessments, and I'm not saying that group work doesn't happen online, it does, but I think group work tends to happen more often in on-campus situations is group work, when we're supporting our divergent learners, we want to think about how group work works. So things like, how do we form the groups? And how did the groups work? So what are the expectations, right? Because I have had conversations with faculty about, you know, again, if

we have somebody in the class that has generalized anxiety disorder and they cannot do presentations in front of the course, but they are more than happy to be participants in the group in terms of organizing and designing the slide decks or doing the research or any of those kinds of things, that doesn't mean that they're not doing the group work. They're just doing, you know, part of that. Now, if you're teaching a course where maybe the course is public speaking, one of the essential learning outcomes is to speak in public. Then we need to have a more nuanced conversation about how we support a neurodivergent student who happens to take a public speaking course if anxiety is part of the profile and we want to support their needs as well. That's one thing. And if you people do group work in different ways. So people do groups, they decide on the group and then other people assign groups. Studies have shown that especially in groups when you want to support neurodivergent learners that it's nice to start with peers, pair and then move to bigger. If two people, then you move to a group of four, for example, so that the person has their one peer that they get used to and then they follow that peer along into larger groups. That's a nice strategy that could work. Sound and noise. Now, I know that we often have no control over the kinds of sound and noise that happen in our classroom environments, but I just want to be aware. I want you to be aware of that. Just like lighting. Sound and noise can be a trigger for some folk, it can be activating for some folk. And so, especially if you are showing videos and so on, flagging before those videos get shown that is like, Okay, I'm going to just use a YouTube video right now. It's going to be about 3 minutes so that people can kind of be prepared for different kinds of sound or different kinds of noise. One of the things that I put there is trying to avoid this cult of immediacy. And what do I mean by that is that there's this tendency to think that the things that we do need to happen right then and there. I know that in the Padlet some of you were mentioning things like, We have to do things at a certain time, they have to be specific and so on. And sure, there might be some things like if you're in a lab assessment, that has to be done in a lab environment. But there are some things where there's an expectation of immediacy, like think quick, do this now, where that is not how everyone's brain works. And so having an opportunity to kind of step back a bit. This is why having recordings for things like this is so great because you're here. We're having conversations, but maybe there's something that you want to revisit later. You can go to the recording and you can revisit it because there's no expectation of you to kind of process all of this stuff right away, right? The thing that I was talking about today, which is trying to avoid this sort of writing by hand is the only way type assessment. I'm seeing this a lot more in different spaces, and this actually excludes a whole bunch of learners. Then just in general, modelling some real good sort of inclusive designs. So do you have different options in the course? Do you have different choices? Do you support the kind of choices that the students may need? Are there opportunities for the students to actually give a little bit of feedback about those choices or about how the assessment is done? Are there other things in this on campus assessment, especially some of you who may be in accessibility space or so on that you feel are real considerations when it comes to on campus. I mean, I know it's hard to be incredibly exhaustive in one slide, but are there other things that you've seen in terms of supporting the divergent learners, especially with on campus assessments beyond the group work, the sensory, the immediacy, you have to write this out by pencil and pen, and you can't use a device? And if so, feel free to share. Otherwise, we can go to some online assessment considerations.

So for online, I think engagement is one of the important things. You know, I recognize that we have 30-some odd folk in this room and that some of you have chosen to not have your camera on, and that is absolutely okay. I know that there are some professors that are all like, Hey, I need you to have your camera on, and one of the things that I talk about is that nobody owes you their camera on, right? And I have been used to teaching courses of 40, 50 students where basically nobody has their camera on except me, and that is absolutely fine. I've had some students say to me, Prof, I don't understand how you can teach to blank screens for 3 hours. I'm like, Well, because I know you're there. They're like, Well, how do you know I'm here? I'm like, 'cause you're typing in the chat, right? So if your camera's not on, but you're participating in different ways, right, like what Barb was saying about being explicit about things, no surprises. Absolutely, right? Like, no surprises, right? So, I am not going to be the person to say, everybody needs to have their camera on. It's Friday. No way. I mean, even if it wasn't Friday. But, there has to be ways for people to participate in different ways, both synchronously and asynchronously, right? So, if this is happening on Teams, if this is happening on Zoom, it doesn't necessarily have to have the camera on, but there might be other things that people put in. Right? So like putting it in a chat, sharing of resources. Maybe you have a Microsoft Forms that's anonymous that people add in resources that get added to the core shell or whatever. Like, those kinds of things are great, right? The other thing we want to think about, especially online, is the accessibility of the resources that we're sharing, right? So are you sharing accessible slide decks? Are you sharing accessible resources? How accessible are your Word documents? For example, how accessible are your course shells? Now, I know that not every teaching and learning space does this, but something that I offer is that I have conversations with faculty about their core shells, and if they want to show me what their core shell looks like, we talk about it. We talk about chunking things. We talk about modules and building those kinds of things in so that there's more clarity, what Barb was saying, be explicit, no surprises, right? This has to do with the online piece too, how clear is it? How easy is it to find that information? And many of the conversations that I have with folk, faculty will say, Well, I put this in this folder. I don't know why they never find it. And I say, Well, maybe it's because it shouldn't be in that folder. Maybe it needs to be in another folder, or maybe it needs to be in two different places. Like, sometimes redundancy is better, right? So put it in a different place so people will find it because there's an assumption of how, there's a linearity in the assumption in the way that we teach things that we feel like everybody is just going to go through things in a certain way. And neurodivergent folk are not necessarily going to do that in a linear way or in the way that you assume that they will, right? Josephine's noting that another thing about online is that the materials are easy to find on the learning management system. While using lots of engagement tools is good, sometimes too many options can be overwhelming. Exactly. So, you don't want to go from like a Padlet to a Quizlet to, you know, different kinds of things. And this kind of goes to what Barb was saying about the no surprises, right? The clarity around choice and options. Choice and options are great, but as Josephine is saying, too many choices and options might be problematic. Again, with everything, there's good, inclusive design can be supported in that as well.

Then going to the hybrid model, if anyone there's nobody in IT, so I don't feel so bad for saying this, but maybe if there were folk in IT, I would say this. The first point is that look, just because your institution says that the course that you're teaching is in a hybrid delivery room, don't believe them. Like, actually test it because I've been in plenty of rooms in classrooms where people are like, We designed this specifically to be for hybrid modality, and then you get there, and the mics don't work or it's actually not really built to do that kind of thing. So that's why I'm saying test the tech. I'm sure that some of you have been in hybrid situations where there was a lack of clarity of voice. There's a lack of, you know, you can't hear what's happening on one end or another. And so I want us to really think about that because it creates power differentials. And so what tends to happen, especially if you have folk like kind of zooming in, is that if you are in person as opposed to online as well, facilitating, is that you'll tend to prioritize the people that are in this classroom space with you and forget about the folk that are joining online. And so then the folk that are joining online end up feeling like they're kind of like the afterthought and they've been forgotten about these things. And so we want to bring in and make sure that, there's no power differentials between those modalities, because chances are the folk that are joining are folk that can't be in person for various reasons, some of which are disability, and so you're excluding those folk as well. And so modelling inclusive design in that way is kind of making sure that those power differentials are there. And if you have ideas for people to share across modality. So if you want the people in the room to have conversations with the folk online, you need to test that out to make sure that that actually works. Because otherwise, you're creating an assignment that some people or an assessment or an activity that some people will have no desire to want to participate in because they feel like they've been excluded.

All right. This is where I want us to think a little bit more holistically. I've provided here, in this case scenario a picture of a room in one of the universities that I used to work at, not my current university. We can only wish to have a room such as this. This is an active learning classroom that fits about 180 some odd folk in it. The case that I'm providing you, again, is up to you if you want to go into a breakout room to talk about this a little bit further or if you just want some quiet time. You're teaching in this active learning classroom in a classroom that looks something like this. The course that you're teaching isn't hybrid or blended, however you call it at your institution. So you have folk in the room sitting at the desk, but then you also have folk that are joining via Zoom and then the Zoom is being shown on the screens here. What are some areas of design of assessment that you feel that you would traditionally use that could impact students, especially neurodivergent students, as we've talked about different things here in this scenario. Some things that you would make sure to design in or to design out if you were teaching in a classroom like this. So cognizant that we have about 13 minutes left, I want to give you at least 7 minutes to talk about this. So Kelsey will create some breakout rooms if you want to join one. No pressure, or if you just want to take these few minutes to reflect on your own, then feel free to do that, as well.

Fantastic. Thanks so much, folks. So I wanted to debrief a little bit about that because I know that, you know, oftentimes when we think about accessible design, we talk about the

assignment and not about the space. So before I get to this slide, I want to see, does anyone feel like they want to share, again, no pressure, either in the chat or maybe they want to unmute their mic? Maybe. Is that a lot to ask for Friday? And talk about some things that you were thinking about either if you were in a breakout room or something, things that you occurred, if you've ever taught in a room like this, some things that you're thinking about before I get to the next slide. What are some things that occur to you in a space like this? Because I know that this space in particular was one that ended up having a lot of conversations about because there's a lot of assumptions that are being put into who the student is in this classroom. Yeah, exactly. Sandra, totally overstimulating, 150 people buzzing, and then there's the tech that's also buzzing, and the lights that are buzzing. And the lucky thing about this is that the lights could actually be dim to a medium or low here. But I know that so many of you are in spaces where that is not even a possibility, right? So Christina was curious about how many people are in person, that there's so much space. My worry is that there would be people spacing themselves out too much. They wouldn't be able to project their voice. Oh, my God, Christina, that's a great thing, right? And so then you're straining to understand. You're trying to hear, and then you don't know how that's going to include things. One thing, Christina, to note is that if you see this little circle thing on the desks, those are microphones, actually. And so if you hit it, it'll actually use the speakers to amplify the sound. So that's a help in that way. But, Karen saying, there's not a lot of individual workspace, and then you have to think about the people online as well. It's a lot, right? So I bring this up because, yeah, very Star Trek. I bring this up because it's hard, right? Like, when we think about assessment design, we often think about, okay, the instructions. What am I asking them to do? What are my learning outcomes? But we very rarely think about the space that we're in. And some of you, especially if you're teaching computer science or even a larger science course, you might end up teaching in a space like this, in a world like this to get Star Trek. And so how do we make that design more inclusive, right?

So here are some things that you may want to think about, right? So, even the most insightfully designed assessment or activity can be impacted by modality. That's kind of what I'm trying to emphasize here. So, it's about the space, and it's about the contacts, right? So, have you thought about the sensory things, the overwhelm? Have you thought about the time constructs, right? Like, are you expecting that instantaneousness? Have you thought about how you might be reinforcing a modality when there is no need to reinforce it or force it? So, yes, if you're teaching in nursing or if you're teaching in a trade, there's going to be some hands-on stuff that needs to be hands-on, and that needs to be done. But there are a lot of things where we feel like this is a thing that has to happen in person that might not necessarily need to happen in person. And so sometimes when you're forcing an in person thing, when an online thing just would allow someone to still meet those learning outcomes? Let's think about that, right? Like, how are we going to support our learners that have anxiety, have different support needs and so on. And then the clarity, right? And when I say clarity, it's that the instructions are clear on the piece of paper, but also are they clear in the ways that you're giving those instructions, right? So you're verbally giving those instructions. Is there another place for them

to look at that? I know that this is a lot to go over in such a short amount of time, like an hour is not a lot of time, especially if we want to have these kinds of conversations.

But one thing that I really want to emphasize here is that I love that I love that this exists as a resource now. I only because people can see that it's not just something that is happening to you, that it's like everywhere. But I want to take a few moments at least to, you know, get you to reflect or if you have any questions, and I will stop sharing so that maybe we can see the screen better. Yens is saying It's interesting to see this discussion in the context of active learning classrooms that were specifically designed to support active learning over old school traditional learning, and I think it's such an improvement accessibility wise, but there's still some access things that need intention. Absolutely, Yens. Love that. So we still need to be intentional in the ways that we do this stuff. So the active learning classrooms can be more accessible, but there's also some things that are part of that, as well. Any other things that occur to you? Have you ever, I know that this is probably not the traditional assessment conversations that you were looking for? I'm hoping that by thinking about the space that the assessments are happening in, whether they be synchronous, asynchronous or so on, that you get to have a little bit more thinking about the design piece. We'll see. Questions, comments.

Thanks. Thanks so much, everyone. Have a great weekend. It's nice that you spent time.