Beyond Neurotypical Norms
## A Student-led Workshop Towards Intersectional Inclusion at LCC

A Critical Participatory Action Research project documenting the first cycle of designing and refining a student-led only, care-centred dialogic space

Rationale & Context: Purpose

CPAR Cycle 1: Plan (Diagnostic)

- Persistent power asymmetries in HE marginalise student voice

- Neurodivergent, queer, disabled, racially minorities students disproportionally affected

- Mixed staff-students spaces risk silencing in moments of institutional tensions
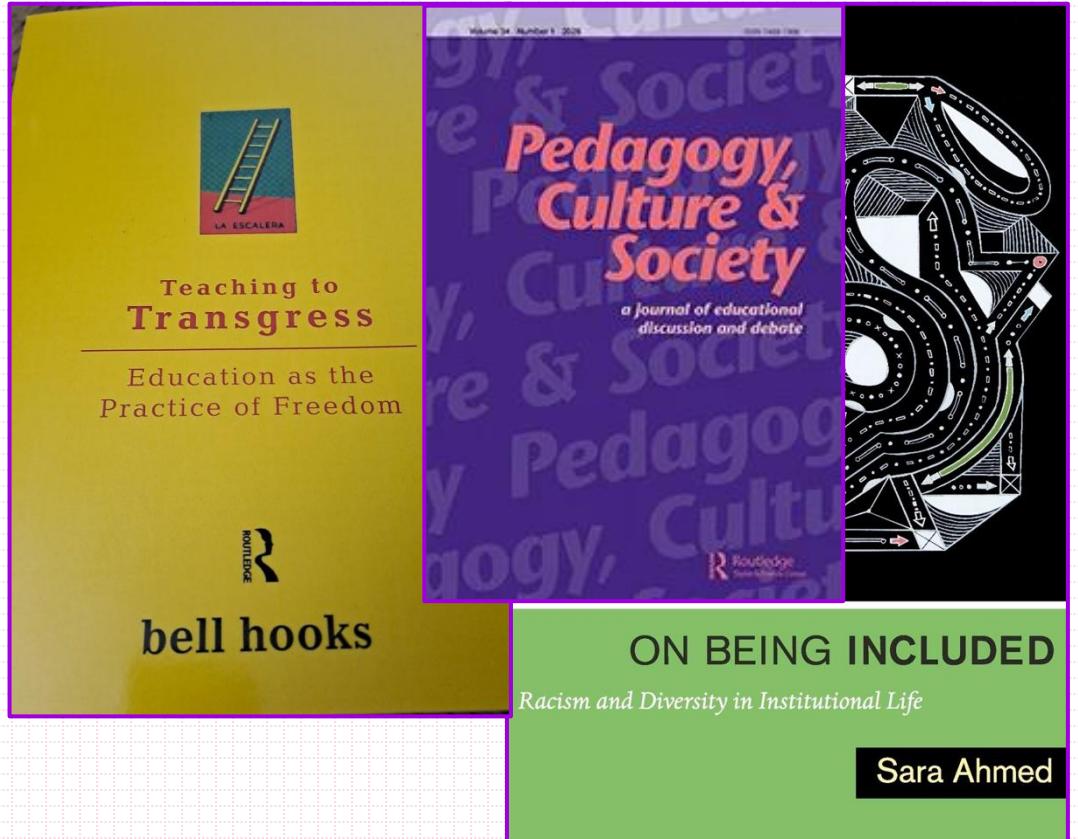
Ahmed (2012); hooks (1994); Taylor & Robinson (2009); Crenshaw (2013)

Rationale & Context: Positionality

I locate myself as:

White Italian woman, lecturer with a PhD, researcher and educator working in **HCI, accessibility, and inclusive design**

First-generation academic (first in my family to have an MA; only one with a PhD)

From a **working-class background**, raised on a council estate

Later-life recognition of likely **ADHD**

My role in this research:

Both **institutional insider** (lecturer, PhD-holder)

And **relational outsider** to dominant academic norms

Acting as an **ally/facilitator**, not spokesperson, for student experience

Oswald, (2024); Gani, and Khan, (2024)

Research Questions

Initial RQ
Now Cycle 2 RQ

Refined Cycle 1 RQ

How do marginalised students experience inclusion at LCC?

How can formative feedback from students and staff inform the iterative design of a student-only workshop fostering inclusive, care centred dialogue?

Braun et al. (2023); Mountz et al. (2015)

What I did: Initial Cycle 1

Now Cycle 2

CPAR Cycle 1: Plan + Early Action

- Ethics and tutor consultation
- Poster + Info & Consent design (iterated)
- Online forms (MS Forms)
- Designed workshop event & activities
- Recruitment planning (poster, email, informal outreach)
- Funding attempted (EDI Small Grant)
- Vouchers & Refreshments
- Padlet + Mentimeter

Friedman & Hendry (2019); Wæraas (2022); Ahmed (2012)

What I did: Cycle 1 Refined

CPAR Cycle 1: RePlan + Early Action

- Funding secured (EDI Small Grant)

- Shared resources with colleagues and BA UXD students, asked for feedback

- Analysed feedback

- Reflected on implications of findings

- Booked Room at LCC

- Implemented feedback received

- Informal outreach Design, Screen Media Schools staff+BA UXD students
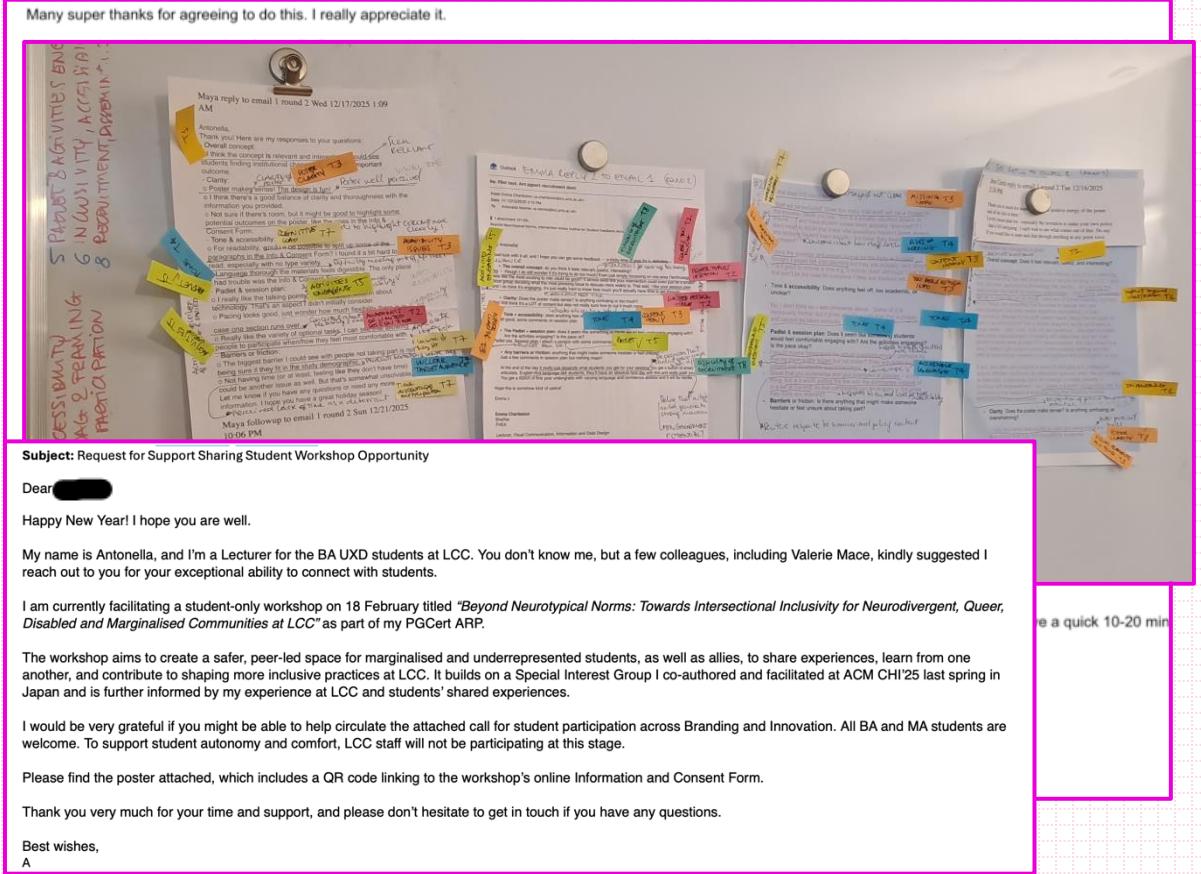
Friedman & Hendry (2019); Wæraas (2022); Ahmed (2012)

Research Methods

- Critical Participatory Action Research (Cycle 1 and 2)

- Formative qualitative content analysis

- Data:

  - 1 staff transcript

  - 3 written feedback responses

- Analytic approach:

  - Reflexive Thematic Analysis-lite

  - Values-aware coding

Action Research Spiral taken from Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon p.19, 2014.

Braun et al. (2023); Wæraas (2022); Ahmed et al. (2024)

Research Methods

CPAR Cycle 1: Action + Observation

Questions asked
Categories **guiding** initial **codes** generation

I'm sending everything with this email (📄 poster, info sheet + consent, Padlet link, and the plan for the session). If you're up for it, I'd appreciate any thoughts you have, big or small. The workshop is designed as an **open discussion** around three main topics, to encourage participation, share lived experiences, and guide conversation through **open, accessible** (but still critical) **prompts and activities**. These include visuals, drawings, short notes, journey maps, scenarios, and storyboarding (see session plan). **I'd especially love your thoughts on:**

- Overall **concept**: Does it feel relevant, useful, and interesting?

- **Clarity**: Does the poster make sense? Is anything confusing or overwhelming?

- Tone & **accessibility**: Does anything feel off, too academic, or unclear?

- **Padlet** & session plan: Does it seem like something students would feel comfortable engaging with? Are the activities engaging? Is the pace okay?

- **Barriers** or friction: Is there anything that might make someone hesitate or feel unsure about taking part?

Findings: Raw Data Theme Extraction CPAR Cycle 1: Observation
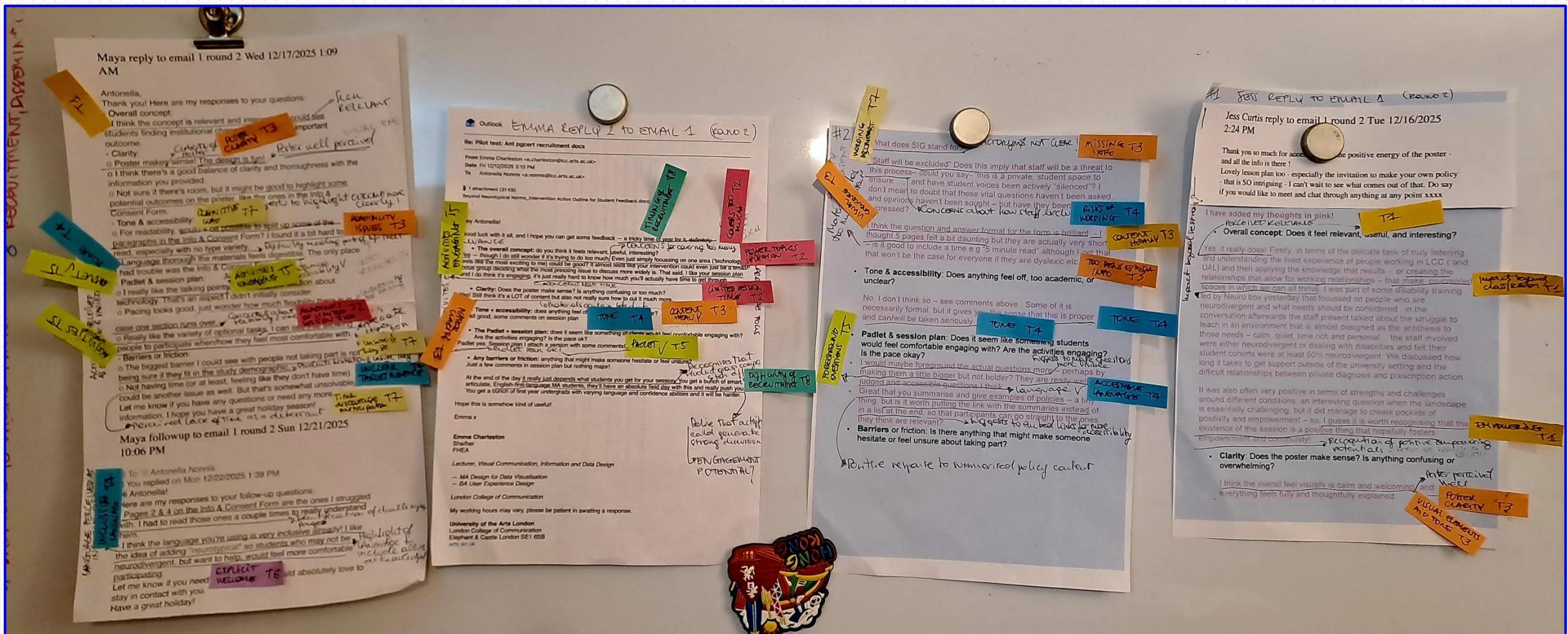
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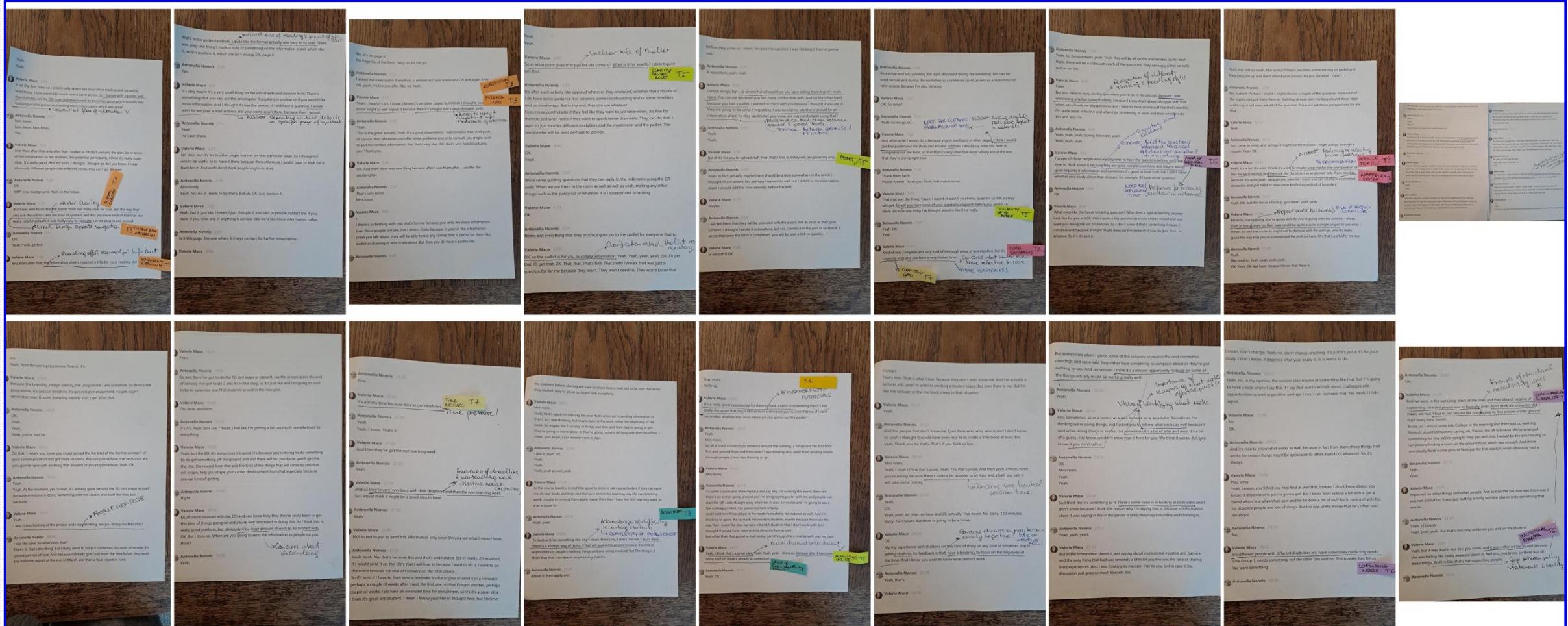
Findings: 8 Themes

T1 Relevance & Value

Strong affirmation of purpose (staff + student

"relevant and interesting" Maya

"useful for the university" Valerie

T2 Scope & Feasibility (staff (mainly))

Concerns about density, pacing, manageability

"very limited time" Valerie

"trying to do too much" Emma

"wonder how much flexibility there is" Maya

T3 Clarity (student + staff)

Uncertainty about eligibility

Readability

"5 pages felt a bit daunting" Jess

"poster itself was really clear" Valerie

"hard to read" Maya

T4 Belonging & tone (student + staff)

Emotional a11y

"can be taken seriously" Jess

"feels digestible" Maya

"language... inclusive.." Maya

"if they fit the.. demographic" Maya

Macfarlane, Bolden & Watermeyer (2024); Burke (2013); Harris(2022)

Findings: 8 Themes

T5 Participation Design

Padlet and multimodal activities valued (staff + student)

"I think it's a great idea" Valerie

"really like the talking points" Maya

"really like the variety of tasks" Maya

"Padlet yes" "engaging" Emma

T6 Inclusivity & lived experiences

Policy practice gap

Systemic accessibility

Belonging and allies

"different people .. conflicting needs" Valerie

" 'neurotypical' would help" Maya

T7 Barriers to participation

Time

Language

Belonging

"they've got deadlines" Valeire

"not sure if they fit" Maya

"staff will be excluded" Jess

"feeling like they don't have time" Maya

T8 Recruitment & sustainability

Multichannel recruit

Time sensitivity

Recruitment complexity

"depends what students you get" Emma

"tricky time of year" Emma

"no magic way" Valerie

What Does it all Mean?

Key tensions

- Feasibility **!=** care

- Institutional pragmatism **!=** lived experience

- Invitation **!=** protection

The intervention as *a site of values work*
Wæraas (2022)

Ahmed (2012); Boler, (1999); Burke (2013); Lynch (2010); hooks (1994); Taylor & Robinson (2009).

What Changed: Implemented Cycle1 Refinements

CPAR Cycle 2: RePlan + Early Action

- Info sheet & Consent form redesigned (spacing, repetition, clarity, structure)

- Explicit inclusion language on poster, info & consent ("not participate at this point", "neurotypical")

- Workshop reframed as Cycle 2

- Sent revised Call for participation
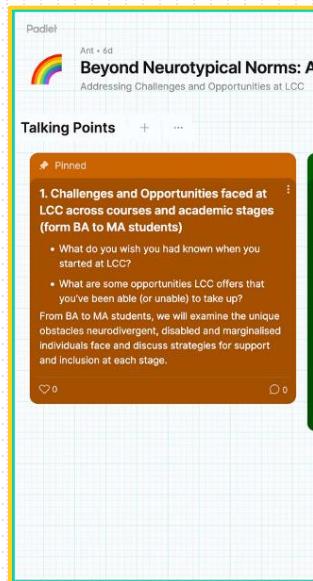
- Some students registered
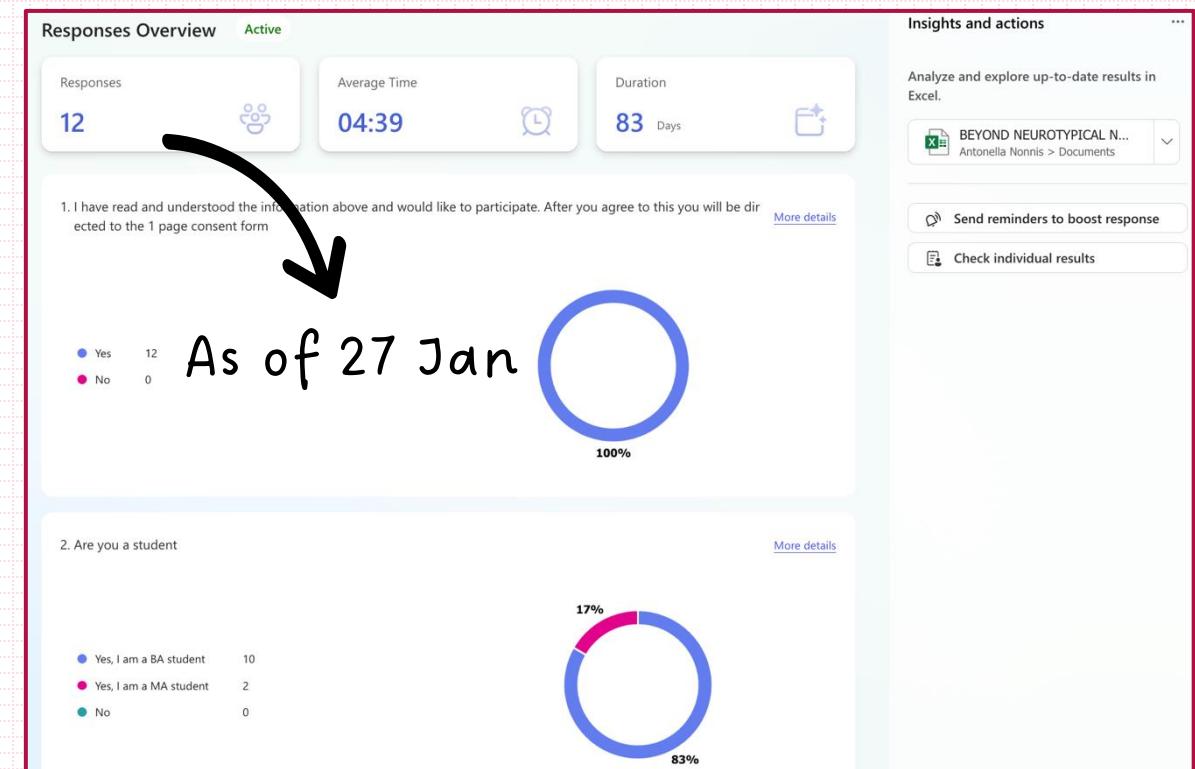
Redman-MacLaren et al. (2014); McTaggart et al. (2016);

What Next: Cycle 2

CPAR Cycle 2: Planning and Action

- Workshop delivery: Feb 18, 2026

- Data:
  - Padlet, Mentimeter
  - Visual Artefacts
  - Optional audio (with consent)
- Outputs
  - Zine/visual map, digital repository
  - Sharing with EDI

Kara (2015); Wolgemuth et al. (2024)

Closing note

"To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential..." - hooks, 1994, p. 13

Thank you!

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