GABRIELLE O’BRIEN: Good afternoon, everyone. For those that don't know, my name is Gabrielle O'Brien. My pronouns are she and her. I am the Senior Project Officer at ADCET. I want to welcome you all to this session called Creating Innovative Assessments Through a UDL Lens with our presenter Dr Andy Smidt.

For this presentation, please note it's being recorded. If you require captioning, just press the CC button at the bottom or there is an access to captions through the browser. Please turn off your camera and mic sessions so that there's not a lot of distraction. We're going to have you put your hands up if you have any questions or put it into the chat function. Make sure your surrounding environment is quiet and don't forget to tag us on the socials with #UDLSymposium2023. Over to you Andy.

ANDY SMIDT: Hi everybody. My name is Andy Smidt. I'm a senior lecture at the University of Sydney. One of my roles is that I am the Faculty Disability Liaison Officer which means I am supporting the staff for students in the faculty of medicine and health where students have an academic plan which contains reasonable adjustments. My role is not supporting the students, but supporting the staff to manage those academic plans. We've started to do more and more work around UDL supporting staff to modify their learning and teaching materials so that what we're looking at is that the number of plans go down, the number of adjustments go down because we're implementing more UDL.

Several months ago I did a workshop for people which was about assessments, and the idea was that I was going to be helping people to think through the assessments they've got in their courses and the extent to which those could be modified to be in line with UDL and to be more inclusive. The feedback we got is that, actually, the students like it and that the number of plans and adjustments goes down.

I'm going to start off by ‑ before we begin today ‑ acknowledging the traditional owners of the lands of Australia and recognising their continued connection to land, water and culture. I am currently on the land of the Birrabirigal people of the Eora Nation and I pay my respects to their elders’ past, present and emerging. I further acknowledge the traditional owners of the country on which you are on and pay respects to their elders’ past, present and future.

So what we’re going to be covering today is what are the challenges in designing assessments for inclusion; we're going to talk about UDL perspectives on assessment looking at multiple means of engagement, multiple means of representation and multiple means of action and expression. I'm going to give you two examples of assessments that were modified so you can look at those. We're going to be thinking about how you redesign assessments with UDL in mind. When I planned this, I planned this as a workshop where there would be breakout rooms and small groups and you would have time to really focus on your own teaching and discussing that in groups. We can't do that within this framework because off issues of having captions and being able to record all the breakout rooms. So I'm going to try to make it interactive whilst acknowledging it is probably not quite as interactive as I would have liked.

If we start off by thinking about designing inclusive assessments, what I want to do - this is the engaging part - is I want to get you to type into a Menti. You can either use your phone and do the QR code on here and it will bring up on your phone the questions you can type into, or you can click on the link. I will take us across to my browser where I have the Menti. Let me know if you can't see it or it's not working.

At the moment I've got that QR code up on the screen. You can click on the link that's been put in the chat, or you can go into Menti.com and type in these numbers: 28546010, if that's easier. I can see three people have some hearts happening down the bottom, some thumbs up. I know there are a few people in. That looks like it's working so I will go to the first question. I can see a handful of people coming in.

First question, what are the challenges to inclusive assessment? I love these scale ones because I like to see it moving on the screen. What it's doing is it’s giving us a score out of five based on how many people strongly agree, and so on, with each of those statements. I will wait till it's settled down a little bit and I will talk through what are the things that are coming up. About half of you, 2.6 out of the 5, have said “I worry about fairness to other students if we're designing inclusive assessments. I worry about having time for the assessments and the marking” - and I think that is really, really a feature that comes up regularly, is how am I going to have time to both develop this and is it going to be more complex to mark? I will talk about that a little bit. Having the technical ability to create innovative assessments is not something that is leaping out at me as something you are hugely worried about. So maybe you all do have technical ability. “I have too much content to teach and assessment just needs to fit in.” I have to say that's one of my things. I'm like, “Oh my goodness, how am I going to cover all my content?” And “my institution has policies that prohibit alternative styles of assessment”. Again, that is sort of in the middle there.

So we are not having anything leaping out at us. Other than the time for assessments and marking, we're not getting anything hugely jumping out as a bigger concern than any of the others. I think you can understand that, yes, there are challenges to creating assessments because we have to balance all of these other things.

Next one. That's not what I want to do. Pause. I'm going back to my slides. That's the next question that I'm going to ask when we come back to Menti. We're back to my slides. I'm going to read on the chat. I've got “when I dictate the content” – yeah, I have that problem too. “Not just prohibiting inclusive assessment as a challenge but policies that allow it, expect or encourage it while separate policies only fund marking support for traditional” ‑ I think all of those things are challenges and I think we work in organisations that are very bureaucratic, there are lots of rules, there are lots of requirements that we have to adhere to. So getting in there and really thinking about how do I change my assessments is challenging.

I'm just going to tell you a little bit about the literature. In terms of assessment and diversity we know that assessment practices can discriminate against people from different backgrounds. Assessments may be set up to favour students with specific backgrounds or skills, and they may require skills that are not relevant to the topic being assessed. If what we're doing is we are assessing ‑ I'm going to give you a random example ‑ we’re assessing something in a nursing student, where actually being able to write an essay is not a key part of the job, but being able to write concise notes in a medical file, or whatever, is a key part of the job, we know that our exams and our assessments may rely on skills that actually aren't essential for the student to acquire. And what we're doing is we’re adding additional burden to the assessment, whereas in fact it may not be ‑ I'm all for adding burden to the assessment if it's a key skill that is part of our learning objectives, it's something that students in this particular discipline or this particular course need. But if we can move away from everybody having to write essays, et cetera, I think that's really important.

A lot of what I am taking from here comes from a paper about re‑imagining exams and how do assessment adjustments impact on inclusion. It comes from Perth and from the NCSEHE organisation. I'm really just summarising some of that. What they said is, “Exams and other high-stake assessments that are time limited can act as barriers to success for some students in education. Although required by Australian law, adjustments do not necessarily lead to equitable academic outcomes, nor do they always address students’ actual access requirements.”

Thanks, Joanna, for putting that link in. “A system which focuses only on making reactive accommodations is likely to become overwhelmed as diverse students increasingly participate.” So what we know is if we have 10 per cent of the cohort that need an adjustment, that starts to become really time consuming. Then we are wanting to say could we actually design from an inclusive perspective at the outset so that that burden is balanced out? Rather than continuing to view disability as a problem to address at an individual level, a shift to focus on inclusive assessment design may also hold promise for a broader range of diverse students.

This was a word cloud that they brought out of “how have assessments made you feel?” And I think when we look at that word cloud, we can see that in the middle students find assessments stressful. It makes them anxious and frustrated as well as overwhelmed, fearful, angry and challenged. Inspired is good and excited, but many of those other words are the things that aren't conducive to doing your best and demonstrating that you have actually acquired the learning objectives of this particular course.

What I want to ‑ I really like the fact that the theme here is what, why and how, and I have added a couple. I have who, what, where, how, why, et cetera. So I want to start off with what. What is the UDL perspective on assessment? I'm starting off by looking at providing multiple means of engagement. Students do well when they are motivated and enjoy learning. Material clearly needs to be engaging but also linked to why they are learning this material. Some learners thrive on spontaneity and novelty while others are disengaged and scared by those aspects and prefer a predictable routine. Some enjoy working alone while others prefer to work with peers.

If what we're looking at is to say we want our learning material and, therefore, our assessment material to be engaging, we have to provide it in ways that will be engaging for different types of students, and that means we need to provide material in multiple ways because our students are individuals and they have multiple different ways of valuing learning.

How do we apply this to an assessment specifically? What we can do in terms of multiple means of engagement is we can make the goals and the purpose clear and authentic. We want to design for choice and for agency when possible. We want to foster collaboration. So getting our students to work in teams but not necessarily assessing them in teams. We want to support students' self‑assessment and reflection. When we move on to multiple means of representation -I'm just looking at this image over here. I have a very nice image on this screen which is a keyboard and it has a blue key on it with a wheelchair image and it says “. It's blue. My image of multiple means of representation, as per the rubric that you all know, is purple. I'm looking at that and thinking there's something not quite right about those colour choices. I think that kind of illustrates – it just struck me just now, but it kind of illustrates how the images that we use, the colours that we use can be challenging for students. If a student spends 20 seconds processing what that image is and why it's a different colour from another part of the page, that's cognitive load that is not necessarily helpful to them. We might think ‑ it's very easy to go, “Yes, we need to be accessible.” And we had a fantastic keynote that was all about accessibility and it's very easy to say, yes, we can make things accessible. We can spend lots of time making sure that our PowerPoints and our handouts and the captions work, the sort of mechanics, if you like, of accessibility.

But a key aspect of assessment is to ensure that all students understand what's required of them. Instead of just focusing on those mechanics, if you like, of the learning and teaching material, we need to find ways to underline for students and to allow them to understand what is required of them in this task; is X, Y, Z tool accessible? Well, it depends what you're doing with it, yes, absolutely. But if what we do is we spend the time to do the things we know are important ‑ and that's great, it's the captioning and the accessibility tools ‑ all good. What I'm suggesting in terms of multiple means of representation is we need to apply that to the instructions for assessment. I do things like I make a video where I talk about what it is that's going to be involved in this assessment, and I work through the rubric doing that visually as well as giving them the written rubric, and finding ways to represent that in different ways, so creating a range of resources that illustrate for students. Giving them exemplars, giving them those good and less good exemplars to we can critique them. Becoming familiar with the rubric. It could be we make a video, it could be that we use an annotated exemplar paper, a list of frequently asked questions.

One of the things I do with my students is I give them a Padlet for each assessment item and I give them all of the questions, because Padlet can be anonymous, from last year as well as this year. I say start off by reading the questions last year students had and let's talk about those questions and whether or not I have changed the assessment to improve on some of those and do those questions still apply? That sense of allowing them to ask questions but also to reflect on the questions from the previous cohort, and so on.

One of the things we want to do is reduce cognitive effort, and I talked about that a moment ago in terms of engagement but it also applies to multiple means of representation. Sometimes it takes students more time and more stress in understanding what's required of them in this assessment than they do actually writing the assessment task. I think if we can reduce cognitive load about understanding assessments, that will reduce stress.

Moving on to action and expression, we know ‑ and this is the one that most obviously for all of us jumps out and says, okay, if we're designing assessments, we need to have multiple ways that students can demonstrate they have understood the learning content. What do we want them to do? Do we want them to do a presentation? Do we want them to do a written assignment, a video or illustration? Could we give them more than one option for demonstrating the learning objectives and provide them with choice in how they do that? For this to be successful your rubrics need to focus on the achievement of the learning objectives rather than things like grammar, spelling and language unless these are learning objectives. If they are learning objectives, I am a speech pathologist, I am teaching speech pathologists, and they need to have excellent spelling and grammar and language. That is a learning objective. Therefore, there are some marks in my rubrics that measure those things. But if I wasn't a speech pathologist - and I do teach other units of study where this is not something I particularly focus on - it may not be a learning objective. We need to be really clear about that.

I'm going to play you a YouTube video. So I'm going to swap screens again. This is from Mohawk College. What I like about this video ‑ let me make it bigger screen but not full screen, hoping you can see that. Have a listen. Mohawk's in Canada.

VIDEO PLAYED

ANDY: It's a very short video but she says it very nicely and really illustrates you're setting up why we do it, we're giving the students autonomy, and so on, in their learning, and that the whole focus on how we make assignments I really liked. We've got this idea, we know there are reasons for modifying our assessments in terms of UDL, that we can think in terms of multiple means of engagement, multiple means of representation, as well as multiple means of action and expression, but where do we start?

And I think for educators this is often a really big problem with UDL. They feel like they have to start somewhere. They have to start and it has to be perfect from the very beginning. I liked this idea of saying where do we start? We can start with one small thing. If we have students where they don't understand what it is that they're doing when they're doing assignments, there's a quiz, they do the quiz. There's a quiz, they do that quiz. There's an essay, they do that essay. There’s an exam, we’re going to prepare that exam. What that feels like ‑ I'm watching this young man on the screen treading water ‑ that feels exhausting to me. It feels like I'm busy and I’m doing things but I don't have understanding of where it’s going and why I’m doing it. There is this sense of just keep swimming and our courses sometimes feel like we just keep swimming. Whereas if our students know what it is they have to do, where it is they're going, what the goal is, then that feeling of swimming towards something I think is more manageable.

So the key points, if we're thinking about where do we start, I would say the very first thing you want to do is provide students with choices. That needs to apply at both formative and summative level. Before you start to choose the assessment methods for your course, you need to start by considering that assessment is not just a measure of what students know. It has the capacity to shape a student's attitude, goal setting and engagement. I'm asking you and I can't see your faces to get answers, but that feeling of in week 1 you've got a full room, there are 180 students in the room. By week 3 you're down to about half and by week 6 or 7 you're down to about a third, and I find that really frustrating. It doesn't matter for me whether it is online, in person or on Zoom, it's that sense they stop coming, and they stop coming partly because of their engagement, their attitude, their goal setting. I think that sense of - one of the units that I teach, there were a core group of students like this year who came every single week. One week I wasn't well and I didn't see them. They came back and they said, “We needed our Andy stabilising moment. The week felt really out of” – and it’s that sense of you're coming to the class, you're coming to be grounded, to ask those questions, to feel motivated, to know what your goals are, and that my role is to keep you on that track.

I think assessment is part of that. I think it's not just about testing what they've learnt. I think we have to understand that the power that assessment has. The first thing you have to understand is who your students are. I apologise that you may not all have this. At my university one of the things that we have is this. I don't know if you can see it. It's a bit small and I don't know exactly how it is generated. I can find out if anybody is interested. We have something called knowing your students, and it tells us for each class the gender, the age, domestic/international, their home language, where they were born, their age, and so on. Understanding your cohort, however you do that, however you manage to find out that information about your cohort and understanding who your students are is really important. That sense of - I do something in my first week of semester where I ask students to find a picture that represents themselves. I invariably find one of me looking tired or frantic. I ask them and we get dolphins and we get frazzled hair and happy puppies and all sorts of things, images that represent them, and then sharing that, discussing, getting students to identify who they are as learners and what they bring to the course and really understanding your students is vital, I think, in terms of really thinking about where you want to start with assessment.

So step 2 - we thought about who are our students – step 2 is to stop and say why am I assessing this at this point? This is my why. We're going to go back to Menti. The same Menti you had a moment ago, but I now get to go on to the next slide. I can go on to the next one. I want to say what purpose might an assessment serve? We've got assessment for learning, we’ve got assessment to check knowledge and practice, assessment for or as learning, scaffolding, progress check, not simply hard measure of skill or knowledge acquisition, opportunity for feedback. I see that both ways. I see that as me giving feedback to the students but students also giving feedback to me on what they know and what they understand so far.

Assessment in UDL serves various purposes, including measuring student process, identifying learning barriers, and informing instructional adjustments - that’s very formal - learn by doing, applying knowledge and skills to a new situation, scaffolding progress and using learning for future improvements, having a point of focus ‑ all of those things. And I think sometimes assessment for me is making sure they are keeping up with the content because if we are doing a little bit every two or three weeks and I'm checking where they are, even if those carry very small marks, it means when we get to the bigger assignment later, they're not having to go all the way back to material we talked about in week 1, making sure they've understood that content early because we're going to build on it. Confidence in knowing depth of what we want them to know, developing skills to apply in future roles. There's a whole load of different things we do as purposes that assessments serve.

I'm coming back to my slides. How do we then map ‑ we have to map our assessments. We're thinking about constructive alignment. We have to map our assessments to the learning outcomes, to what those learning activities will be and to the assessment task. Of course what we're thinking about this at point is the assessment tasks and how they map through. We need to not just have tasks that we say, okay, universities who say we should have a mid-semester exam and you can't see my slides ‑ thank you very much – that’s something strange going on – is that better? What we have here is this idea of mapping. We know about constructive alignment. That's something that we get taught as educators, I think, that we're mapping our learning outcomes with our learning activities and then our assessment tasks. We need to think about the fact that our assessment tasks need to link to our learning outcomes, but they also need to serve all those other purposes we just typed into the Menti.

This comes from a really interesting paper, and I went to a session earlier about mental health. I don't know if Jacqui is here, but this paper that comes out of advanced HE, I found was really interesting around thinking about curriculum design for mental health and wellbeing. We do have all these different types. We said some of these things. The purpose, to support learning towards summative assessment, to evaluate and formally record levels of attainment, to guide learning effort and focus. We want to actually see students are putting in the effort into the assignments they're creating. There's a whole list of them. The idea we have all these different types of assessment and we can describe them but what we really need to know is their purpose. Because if we don't know that, we can't support the students to know that, and then we end up a bit like Dory from Finding Nemo where we're just treading water, where we’re saying, “Just keep swimming, just keep swimming”, rather than having an understanding of where it is we're going and what the purpose of the assessment is.

The one thing I asked you on that slide thing that went back and forth was about marking load. We have to think about how am I going to mark this work? My university has a formula. I suspect yours do too. Mine has a one hour of marking per semester per student. If I have 100 students in my course, I get 100 hours of time that is allocated to marking in the workload formula. When we have things that are more engaged and we want to give really good quality feedback, it's challenging to do that. I'm going to give you these two examples. I've got two examples of things that I changed in my units of study and I want to talk about why I did that, what I did, but also the impact on marking.

Our weekly quizzes, this unit of study I took over had a weekly quiz which was to read an article and answer five questions on it. The purpose of the assessment was purely to make sure that the students were doing the readings. The students were fairly unengaged with it. They didn't particularly like it. They did it but there was a whole load of article on one side of the screen, quiz on the other side of the screen. Therefore they weren't reading it. They were doing a word search.

I'm going to come back to the Menti. We're going to talk about weekly quizzes and why we might do those. I'm coming back to my Menti. Why do you or might you use weekly quizzes? Do you use weekly quizzes? You're not a teacher. When you were a student, did you have weekly quizzes? What did you think they were about? Check understanding, diagnostic, attendance check, practice, recall, enforcing reading, motivating students. There are some really good solid reasons why we use those weekly quizzes. The question for me ‑ and again, it hasn't come up in there ‑ one of the things that comes up when I usually discuss this with people is that they're multiple choice, they can be self‑marking and actually I need the students to be on top of this learning material, and the reason I'm using these is because it's a zero hour in terms of marking.

I'm going to ask you ‑ you can type into the chat if you want to on that one ‑ I'm interested is that something you've come across? Yep. For me that's a kind of that's not the best reason. Yes, I get that it's doing all those other things. It is checking engagement, and it is checking that they have understood, and so on. But for me the major reason ‑ this is what I wanted to show you - I'm coming back to my slides. I have a slide where I was asking people about doing quizzes and I asked them these things? What was the purpose of doing it? Is it to demonstrate understanding of key material? Is it to encourage students to keep up with the material? Is it to ensure that students have done the prereading? They scale well in our math classes, absolutely. Is it linked to workload for staff? Does feedback on quizzes support ongoing learning and self‑monitoring? Do they add up to a significant number of marks? Are they timed or untimed? I also found them annoying as a student but it did keep me engaged and reminded me to keep up.

Now, for me, Gabrielle, I kept up. I didn't feel engaged. I didn't like them. I have three young adult children, only one of whom is currently at university but the others have been through university, and they go, “I've got a compulsory quiz, mum. I have to go upstairs and I’ve got to do this quiz.” It’s like it's annoying, it’s irritating. It's not motivating and for them it's not about learning; it's about ticking the box. It's about the teacher ticking the box that I've done what they've asked me to do.

We think about the purpose of quizzes, it could be of learning, so we're measuring their learning. The quiz could be summative. It could be for learning. It could be formative or it could be as learning, not so much quizzes. I agree. Easy marks, they cause a lot of stress. This unit of study I took over had five marks a week for 12 quizzes. When I worked out how much of a percentage of the mark that was, I was really unhappy with that because I felt it was easy marks for them but it was also somehow disengaged learning for them. I wanted them to be engaged. What did I do? Some of these examples actually the Mohawk video covered. I'm going to skip past these and I will come back if you want me to in a minute.

So what I did is I actually took one quiz ‑ I took eight weeks and four of them I kept the quizzes but I made the quizzes harder. Four of them I made them activities. I said - this was an entirely online course and I said you would be doing these activities anyway because the activities are the activities of learning. The activities were the things they needed to do each week as learning because it was an entirely online course and there was very little didactic teaching from me. I said to them you get to choose. I want you to go away and I want you to make something that explains the concept of person-first language, which was one of the things I was teaching them. I said to them you can make anything you like. Some of them made a postcard. Some of them made a children's drawing. There were all kinds of different things. Some of them made a cartoon video. This student, who gave me permission to share, made a TikTok video. At this point, I have to confess I did not know what a TikTok video was. I had to ask one of my children. Have a look at what she did.

VIDEO PLAYED

ANDY: I think the whole video was two minutes long. How long did it take me ‑ it wasn't me, it was somebody else ‑ to mark that? Two minutes. I have got a rubric on the screen, I have got the video on the other half of the screen. I can watch it, I can tick. The rubric was really straightforward. Do you demonstrate you have understood the concept? Have you used accessible whatever. It was really engaging and they loved it. Instead of spending an hour and a half reading and preparing for some multiple-choice questions or writing a post in a discussion forum, they actually got to make something. They all made really different things. They are amazing. The person who marks this course for me, every time she marks she goes, “Oh my god, they're so wonderful, your students are so fantastic.” We see their faces. We connect with them. We see their ideas. It does not take any longer, probably, than setting up the multiple-choice quiz.

If you're going to be giving quizzes that are for marks, then at a key point in the semester, after they've had a period of time to learn and understand the concepts, we want to build competence beforehand from previous formative assessments, and we want to reward those who've completed all the formative quizzes. If you're going to use formative quizzes throughout the semester, my advice is that the students who complete them all, some of those questions are actually repeated in the one that's summative, so that they are rewarded for having done the early ones and that the formative ones don't have to be marked. Those self‑assessment multiple choice quizzes don't have to carry marks, but they are rewards in different places. The reward here is if you have done them all, particularly done them all a couple of times, when you get to the marked quiz you will have already thought about those answers. If my goal in teaching is the students think about and understand these concepts, repeating the quizzes until they get 100 per cent but it carries no marks is learning, it is thinking about the concepts. Therefore, I am happy that I’m going to give them that when I get to those marked quizzes for higher marks.

Students in my feedback, they love this activity. There's a question here did they have any trouble with the open‑endedness? They didn't. I gave them loads and loads of feedback and scaffolds and descriptions and explanations. I also ran a drop‑in every single week where they could come and talk to me about what the task involved. They loved it.

One of the things they wrote about this unit the reason they loved it was there were no surprises. Students like to know what's coming and they like to know that what you say you're going to be looking for are the things you are looking for. That was my first example which was I changed weekly quizzes for weekly activities that were marked. So they got four quizzes and four weekly activities that were marked. I have just shown you one of them which was to explain person-first language in some way or another. They could choose to write or whatever.

Assessment task 2 was an essay. Writing an essay involves a range of skills that may not be key learning objectives, such as formulating an argument, grammar and spelling, essay writing style and so on. They might be learning objectives and that’s fine. If essay writing style is a learning objective, then of course you're going to teach or provide links to materials to the teach the skills you're assessing, which is the essay writing. If you're examining the content, and essay writing is not a skill you're measuring in this unit of study, what alternative ways could you use to assess their understanding of content?

So we looked at things like authentic writing examples. I am from a healthcare background. So we looked at writing notes in a clinical note writing style rather than writing an essay. Preparing a presentation that you would deliver in the workplace. So my students get asked to prepare a presentation they would get to teachers in a school about a particular topic and they have to imagine what it is that they would be doing and keep it authentic. Create a flyer or a product about information or create a website consumers might access. I'm going to show you one more thing I got them to do and then there's a few questions I will answer in the chat. This replaced an essay, which was about intervention. What this group were asked to do was – again, different group of students but they were asked to make a resource. Some made a whole website, some made a video. This is a video she made and I want you to look at how untechnological it was and yet how effective. Have a look.

VIDEO: A child in a class is seeing a speech pathologist. The speechy has recommended a pictorial exchange communication system to help them to communicate and you have been delegated a communication partner. But what does it mean to be a communication partner? How does the system work and is it really going to help your student? Before we talk about PEx let's remind ourselves about AAC, alternative aural - - -

ANDY: Have a look at this.

VIDEO: - - - you will need at least three to get started. The reinforcers should be things the student spends a lot of time with, things you know that exert effort to get. The next step is to create labelled pictures ... Phase 1 requires two adults. One acts as the communication partner and the other is the prompter. The goal of this phase is for the student to learn how to make a request. The communication partner entices the student by playing with the reinforcer in front of them.

ANDY: So you can see what she’s done is she has created a video. It is an explanation for a teacher. I think she is trying to show what she would do live with a teacher, not that she would send the video to the teacher. But she has managed to demonstrate she has understood it, that she could explain it in accessible language to the teacher. For me again, and the students absolutely loved doing these rather than writing an essay about one particular intervention approach that they might have learnt about. Gabby, shall I go to the Q&A now?

GABRIELLE: We might ask a couple because there's some relevant questions. Mimi asked about an essay which needs 4,000 written words. Will it mean that a submitted audio assessment will need the same number of words to be valid? If not, what would be the equivalent basis?

ANDY: For me ‑ again, for my students, I do things like say you can make a YouTube video, you can make a podcast, and I give them a word limit that feels like it's authentic, if you like. If the task is to explain something to a parent, I say you would normally explain this in about 10 minutes. If you're going to make a recording of you explaining something to a parent, it would be about 10 minutes long. I don't have 4,000 word anythings. I tend to use those much shorter things so that what they're doing is synthesising down to shorter arguments rather than those very long‑winded responses. If you wanted to translate 4,000 words, I think it would end up being a 45-minute recording, and that would be overwhelming for them and overwhelming to mark.

So for me, what I have learnt about the person-first one, for example, is that a two-minute or three-minute activity ‑ if they can explain it in two or three minutes, I know they have really understood it. There is a lot of work that gets to two coherent minutes. It might have started off with 10 less coherent minutes, but tightening it up and making it shorter. I get them to share them within the class, give feedback to each other, so they have an opportunity. They can give it to me for early feedback if they want to. They say, “It's now five minutes long and I need to cut. What can I cut?” We do a lot of that sharing and talking as well.

GABRIELLE: Another question we have is how can we ensure that different modes of representation offer students genuine and equitable options? I've noticed that in some courses students are allowed to submit an audio file on the grounds that `this is inclusive'. But if the assessment is an essay, this is essentially a written genre so it is different and inauthentic to user spoken text. For me, a more genuine choice would be equivalent oral or visual genre like a presentation or a speech.

ANDY: It depends on the task and what your learning objective is. If this was students who were law students perhaps or English students, where writing and forming coherent written arguments, I would be saying absolutely we need to keep it as the genre that is about the way in which this material is important. What I am saying is we need to think about what is the purpose of the assessment. What I've discovered is that some students will far prefer to write and then I read what they've written as a written format and it is harder for me to understand what it is they're actually saying, forcing them to get it to a verbal argument actually makes them clearer about what it is they want to say.

Academic integrity. Academic integrity and AI is the big thing. We don't ‑ audio recordings, absolutely somebody else could have written it for them and absolutely they could be reading it ‑ somehow I got muted. I apologise. Academic integrity and AI is going to continue to be an issue. The only way you can do it is if they do it live. They could make the audio recording, play it live and then you could ask them questions to make sure they have at least understood it. I don't know how else you're going to manage that. That's an ongoing issue.

GABRIELLE: And I think one more question we have - and I will let you go back to the session - is did students have similar options for courses which followed in the program so that they could develop the same information and academic literacies throughout the student lifecycle?

ANDY: I'm coming from a perspective of universal design for learning, not about modifications for students with a disability at this point. I'm talking about the fact that for the whole cohort what I'm wanting to do is create assessments that they enjoy, that are easy to mark, that are meaningful and authentic, that maintain academic integrity and aren't written versions of something. The number of times I sit there and read a paragraph and I think “I actually need to read that again”, and I think I still don't understand the point the student is making, because it is written in flowery language. They've kind of grasped the idea that if we write academically it's got to have this formal language. But when you tease it apart ‑ and the academic integrity thing here too, they don't just copy, they copy one sentence and then another sentence and put them together in something that doesn't quite make sense.

I think there are real issues in determining whether students have understood the content. I think we have to find ways that allow students to show the best that's right for them. By offering choice, we say which mode for you would allow you to demonstrate your learning? That's what I think we need to be doing.

I am going to move us along because we are close to time.

Okay. Writing a rubric - I'm not going to put my slide up on the screen for this one, but your rubric does need to focus. What I’ve done here is this is one of my rubrics. What we have got down this side is the content ‑ this was make a resource. The content of the resource, does it contain incorrect information, right through to its thorough coverage, it is synthesised ‑ so this is the content. The resource you've created, does it demonstrate you understood the thing you made the resource about? Then length or duration, was it over the word limit, too long, too short, was it recordings of videos and podcasts, often they speak very, very fast. So I want to capture some of that.

Accessibility, parent-friendly language, spelling, grammar, plain English, free of jargon. Then they get two marks for their presentation. If they've presented it beautifully and they've put in a lot of effort, I want to give them marks for that. They are only getting two marks for it but we want to reward the effort that students have put in to creating something. In my profession, that's the thing that's going to help them the most, is creating materials that are engaging for their clients to work with or for the parents of the children that they're working with.

I think I'm going to stop at that point. I did have some Padlets for us to think about your own assessments. What I might do, if you can paste the links for me into the chat, but feel free to go away and type into those Padlets. There's three of them. Pick a colour, do you want to be blue, green or purple? It was really how are you feeling today. I do this with students. Go into each one of them. Pick whichever one you like and there are some questions in there about what do you do? If you want to use that space to play with some ideas, and I will comment on some of the things in there. I am really happy to do that. I think I might finish at that point because I think we are just about on time. I don't know if there are any other questions. There were some things - - -

GABRIELLE: No, we've answered all the questions in the Q&A. We have two or three minutes now if anyone else has some burning questions? Maybe it's the time of the afternoon, Andy.

ANDY: There's a few people saying they liked it. This late in the afternoon you're still awake and listening. I tried to make it engaging, but it was really hard without putting you in breakout rooms.

GABRIELLE: Yes. Our apologies for that.

ANDY: That’s alright.

GABRIELLE: We're trialling this new system, and the fact that people could actually engage today and we didn't lose anybody, as far as I know, is a feat of amazement for us. Thank you so much, Andy, for presenting today. I think it has given people a lot of food for thought. As I have said before, we will have all Andy's materials and the recording available after the symposium. We encourage you to come on Thursday as well as there will be more fantastic sessions, and our keynote, Dr Thomas Tobin. Thank you so much for those who came today. We hope you have really gained a lot of knowledge and improvements in your practice. We look forward to seeing you on Thursday. Thank you, everyone.

ANDY: Thank you.