

# Action research project: Making Moodle more inclusive

Amy Urry, Senior Digital Learning Coordinator, CSM

The screenshot shows the Moodle course page for '23/24 BA (Hons) Product and Industrial Design'. At the top, there's a header image with a dark overlay containing the course title. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: 'Dashboard / Courses / 23/24 BA (Hons) Product and Industrial Design'. A button labeled 'Open course menu' is visible. A navigation bar contains tabs for 'BAPID', 'Stage 1', 'Stage 2', and 'Stage 3'. Below these are three boxes labeled 'Technical studies', 'Contextual studies', and 'Sustainable design studies'. A banner image credit reads: 'Banner image: Georgina Heaton, BA PID, UAL Image library'. The main content area is titled 'Course noticeboard' with a sub-header: 'Please use this space to share resources across the whole course. If you need any help, contact pci'. There are three columns: 'Notices', 'Design Transforms', and 'Exhibitions'. The 'Notices' column features a post by Paul De'Ath about the 'International Train Design Competition 2024'. The 'Design Transforms' column features a post by an anonymous user about a 'Design Transforms - Theo Williams' event. The 'Exhibitions' column features a post by an anonymous user about an 'MA Design for Industry 5.0 Mini Show!' and a 'FUNCTIONAL FABRIC EXHIBITION'.

23/24 BA (Hons) Product and Industrial Design

[Dashboard](#) / [Courses](#) / [23/24 BA \(Hons\) Product and Industrial Design](#)

Open course menu

BAPID Stage 1 Stage 2 Stage 3

Technical studies Contextual studies Sustainable design studies

Banner image: Georgina Heaton, BA PID, UAL Image library

Amy Urry + 8 8h

### Course noticeboard

Please use this space to share resources across the whole course. If you need any help, contact [pci](#)

Notices Design Transforms Exhibitions

Paul De'Ath 8h

#### International Train Design Competition 2024

Call for Entries  
**International Train Design Competition 2024**  
Sustainable Future Rail Transit Systems

**Design Competition Themes:**  
Innovative Urban Rail designs that solve the transportation issues of today.  
**Environment and sustainability:** Carbon-conscious, encouraging people to use train transport to minimise traffic congestion, design for longevity.  
**Industry:** Tools for all ages and abilities, flexible seating solutions, convenient base for growth of businesses, sustainable and low-cost travel.  
**Interconnectivity:** Transferring from one mode of transport to another, multimodal experiences, boosting the convenience of rail travel, first and last mile.  
**Safety:** All aspects of passenger and staff safety, cleanliness, safe evacuation, communication, fire safety.

Anonymous 21d

#### Design Transforms - Theo Williams

uol: **DESIGN TRANSFORMS**  
Theo Williams  
21st November 2023, 18:00 K101

Product Design and Embedded Design Programme

MA Design for Industry 5.0 Mini Show!

#### FUNCTIONAL FABRIC EXHIBITION

# Research question:

To what extent does our **Moodle design template** support inclusive practice in relation to neurodiverse and disabled students?

- Headings, spacers, bullet points
  - Contextual information
  - Organisation and consistency
  - Colour and images
- 
- Training for staff and guidance for students

► Your course

▼ Part 1



## Part 1 Teaching area

In this section, you will find your curriculum area content. The information and teaching resources you will need for your session are in this area. During part 1, you will need to check this area regularly to accomplish.

# Why does it matter?

- 21% students at CSM declare a disability (nationally 17% population)\*
- Social model of disability at UAL.
- Legal requirement: Anticipatory adjustments and WCAG 2.1 AA
- Improved functionality and design will benefit everyone.

## For me:

Unit 1 – Identified need to hear the voices of disabled staff and students directly.

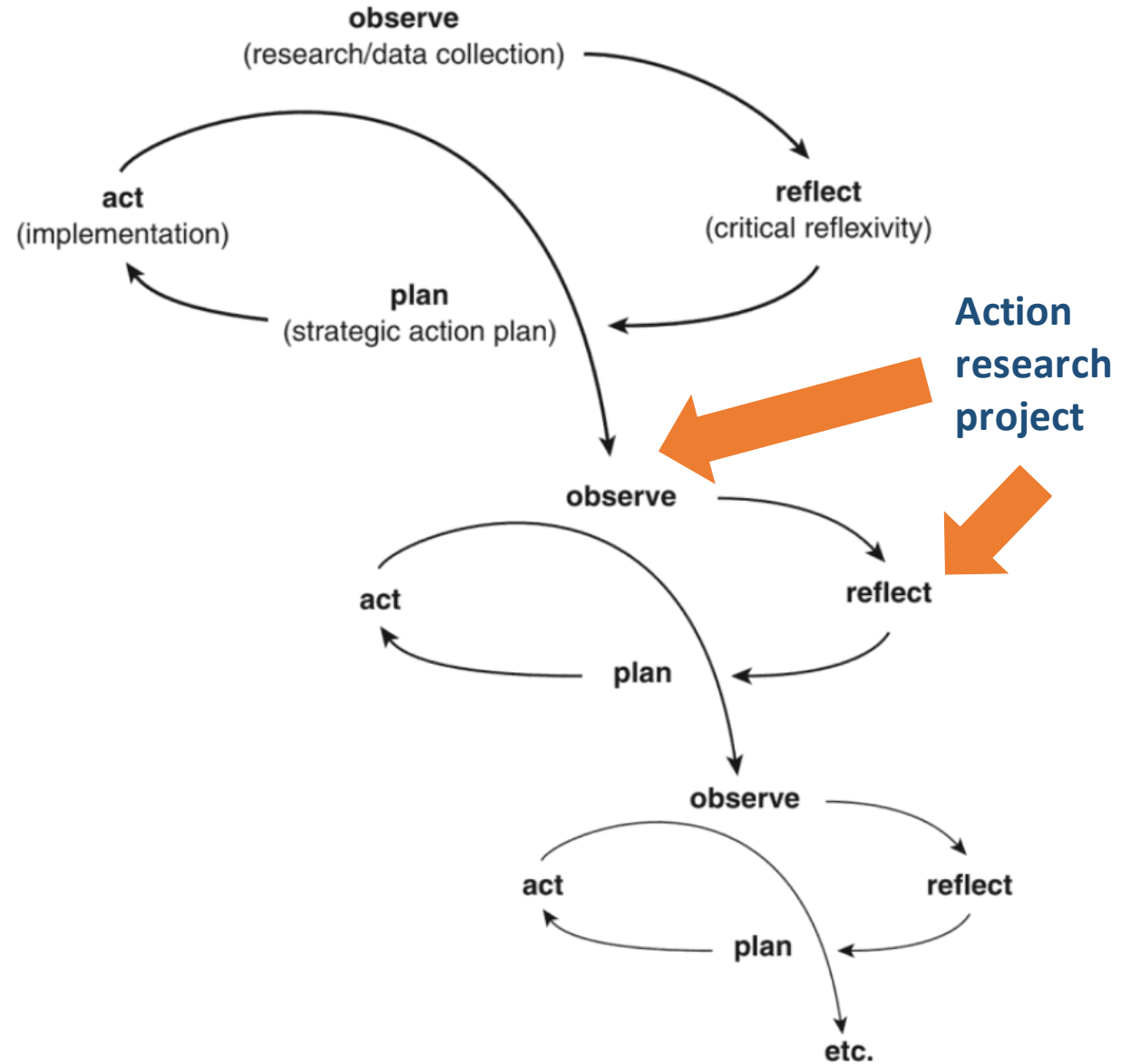
\*UAL Dashboards 2023 and Office for National Statistics 2021



**Blog:** more detail on rationale and context.

# Action research cycle:

Development of Moodle pages  
during past two years



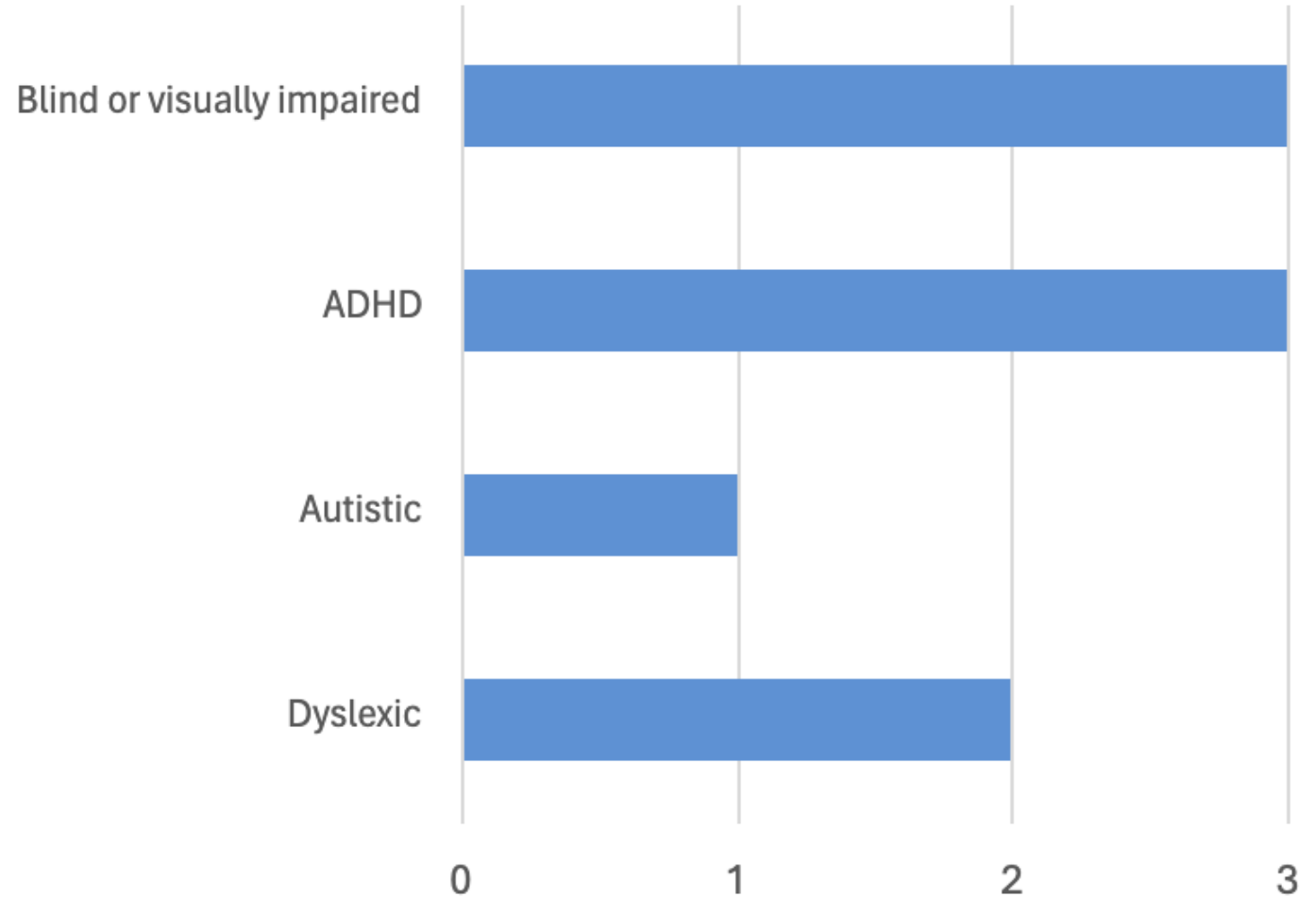
O'Leary's cycles of research cited in Koshy, Koshy, and Waterman, (2011) *Action Research in Healthcare*

# Participants:

Volunteered their time to help.

- 2 members of staff
- 4 students
- 2 different courses – one Foundation, one BA

The chart shows how they identified, but I was very aware they don't represent these groups and they will also identify in many other ways.



**Blog:** more detail on recruiting participants.

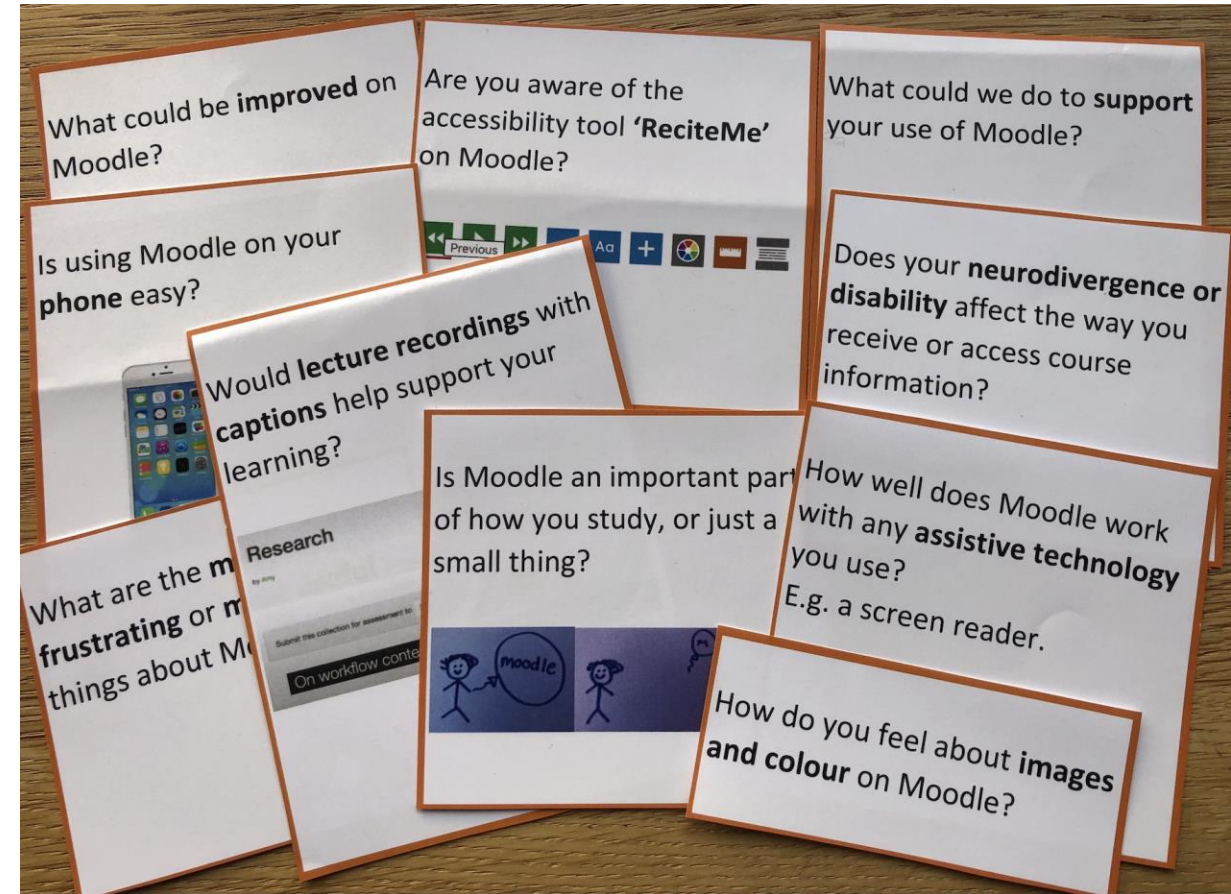


# What happened?

- **Methods:** Online questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, drawings.
- **Approach:** participant-centred – Standpoint Theory and Intentional Equitable Hospitality.

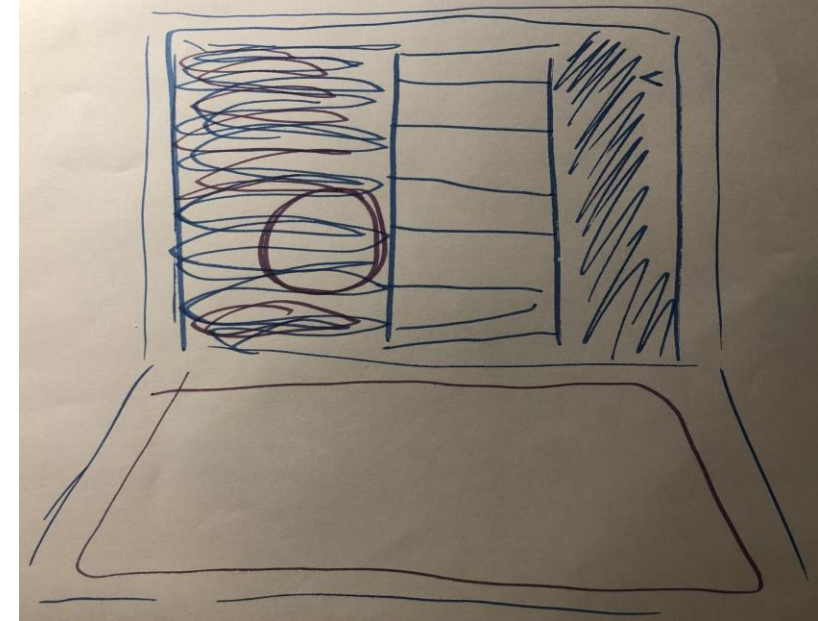
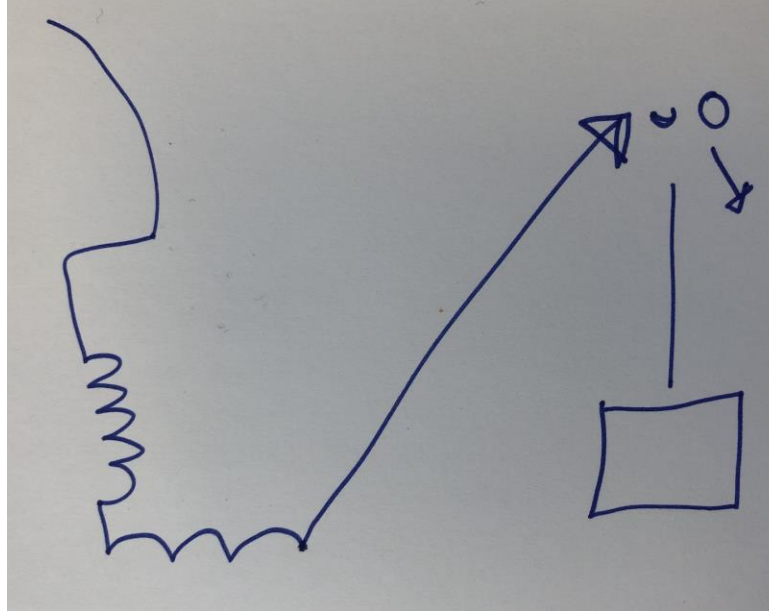
4. Thinking about your course Moodle page(s), to what extent do you agree with these statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Moodle is a helpful tool on my course.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can find what I need fairly quickly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**Blog:** more detail on research methods choices and design.

# Can you draw your experience of Moodle?



‘It's like walking through like a kind of cloudy park like a misty park during like those crappy fall days where it's like sometimes there's a little bit of visibility and I sort of know where I'm going and sometimes I'm trying to find something but I don't really know what it is, and everything is kind of foggy, so it'll take me like 15 mins or so but the park is only so big so I'll get to it at some point.’ Excerpt from voice drawing

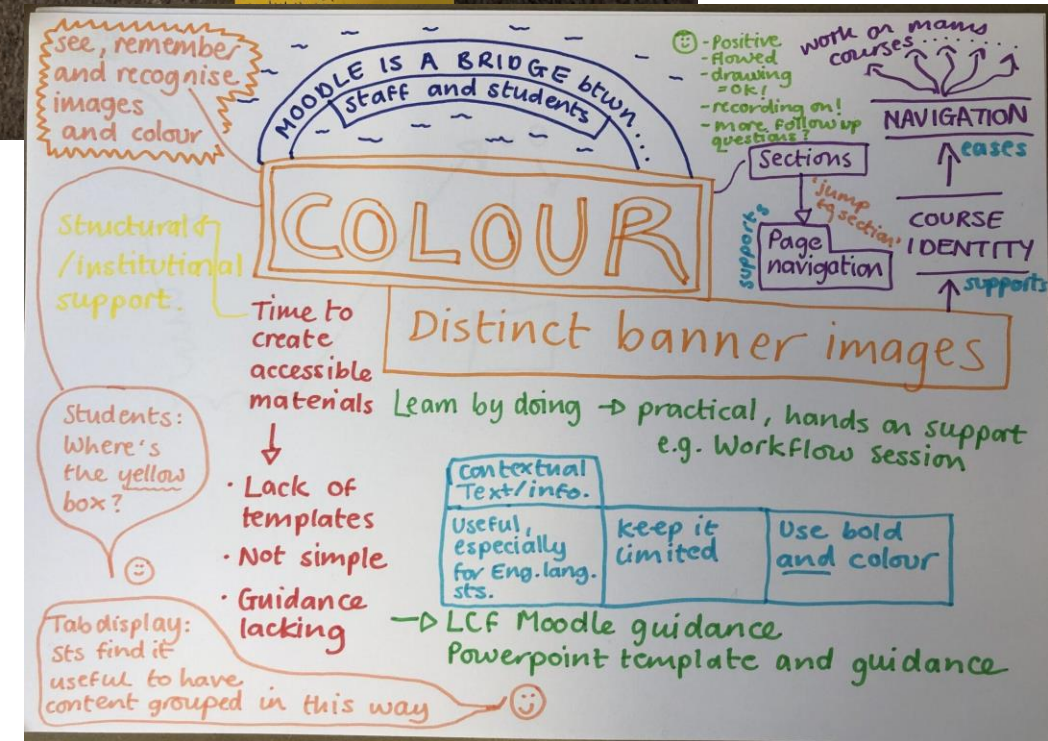
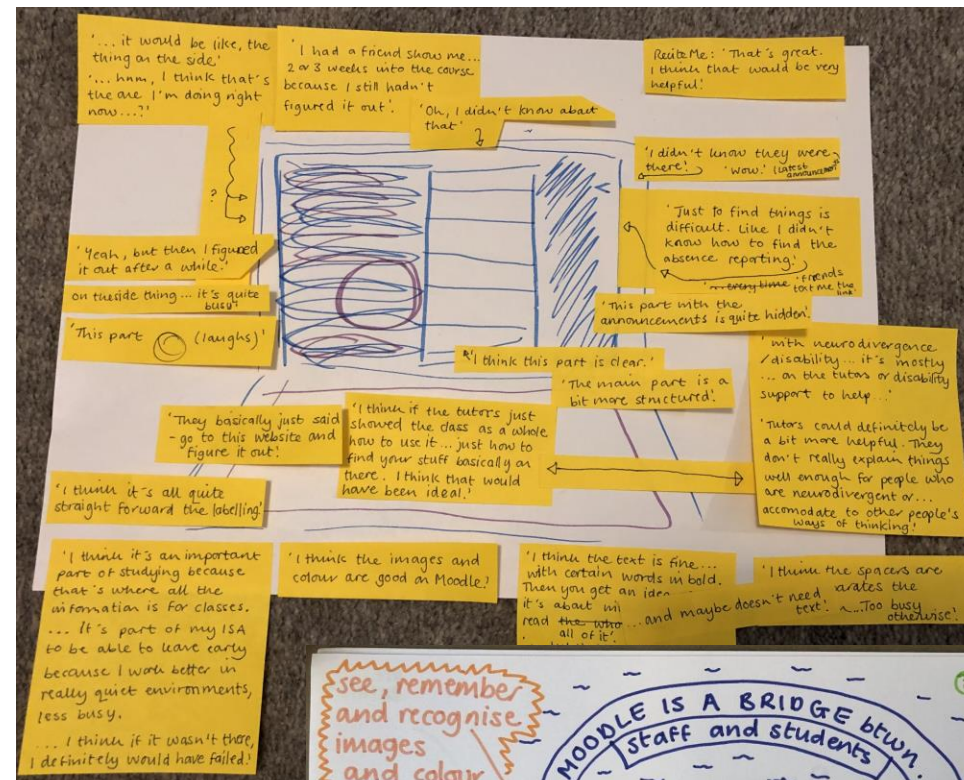


# Thematic analysis

'The purpose of TA is to develop patterns of meaning ('themes') across a dataset that address a research question.

Patterns are generated by the researcher through a rigorous process of data familiarisation, data coding, and theme development and revision.'

(Braun and Clarke, no date)







Things that staff could do:

## Support from staff

Support feedback for Moodle for each unit at all times and not just at the end of the course. Moodle is a complex system and it's not always clear how to use it.

Never showed us how to use Moodle or like where everything is on there.

Showing information on Moodle would be a bit helpful, being it regularly through the course, not just at the start.

Hard to make a meeting with disability support.

The course could be more accessible for people with disabilities. For example, having a meeting with a person who is deaf or has a hearing aid, it's not always clear how to make it accessible.

Eye problem - it's been hard to get support with disability team.

Never seen right hand side bar.

Didn't know about academic support online.

Bombarded with emails. Emails re Moodle updates.

PDFs not opening in a new tab is annoying.

Get the schedule because had a learning disability. Not for everyone.

Notes are often asked to be made and then make it hard to access. With lots of time or knowledge to be lost.

Apologies of resources should be at our fingertips e.g. Bombed during the 1st in, short time, some videos to compare.

Staff can not navigate the system that well.

English language courses - optional so people didn't go. Not clear.

## ReciteMe

Translations available. Tell people more!

Used: ReciteMe - changing the font.

dyslexia friendly font would be really useful.

Need to be told about ReciteMe - video.

ReciteMe - 'there's a lot of buttons and I'm not going to touch it!'

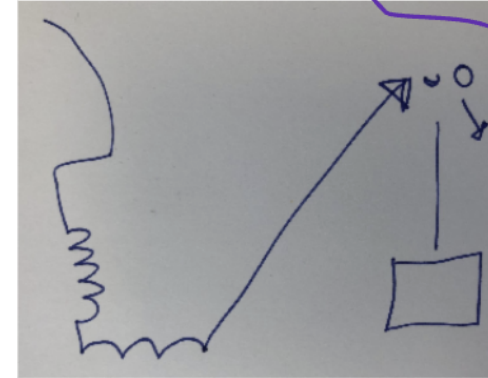
If I want it translated, I use my screen reader. (uses ReciteMe reader)

ReciteMe - colour wheel and fonts useful. Didn't know about it before.

ReciteMe: 'That's great, that would be very helpful.'

Sepia tint - don't know if that would work on PDFs.

ReciteMe: 'That's great, that would be very helpful.'



Things that would improve Moodle:

## Captions and re...

Needs live captions on videos.

Have to cancel shifts at last minute because of a lecture at the last minute.

It's good to be able to watch the lectures because that helps with the learning. It's not always clear how to make it accessible. With lots of time or knowledge to be lost.

Asks a mate or a tutor if lost.

Friend will go to all lectures but will go back and watch when she's studying for exams.

It's nice to be able to get exactly what the lecturers are saying because... often doesn't have as much insight as the lecturers do.

## Suggestio...

Posters around building with who to ask would be good.

Library books recommended actually in Moodle.

Search bar would be good.

Want a specific learning outcome for the day. What am I meant to be getting out of this?

## Use on phone

Presentations and videos don't display properly on phone.

We don't have the Moodle app at UAL.

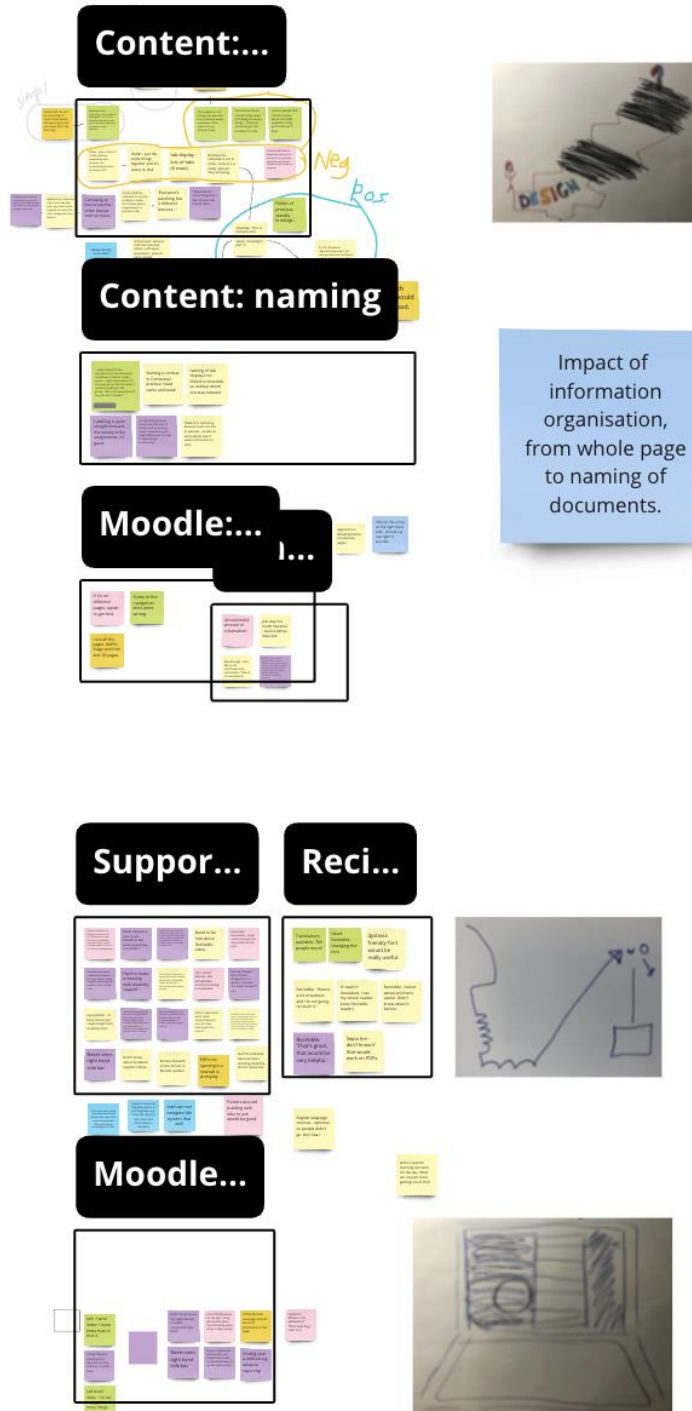
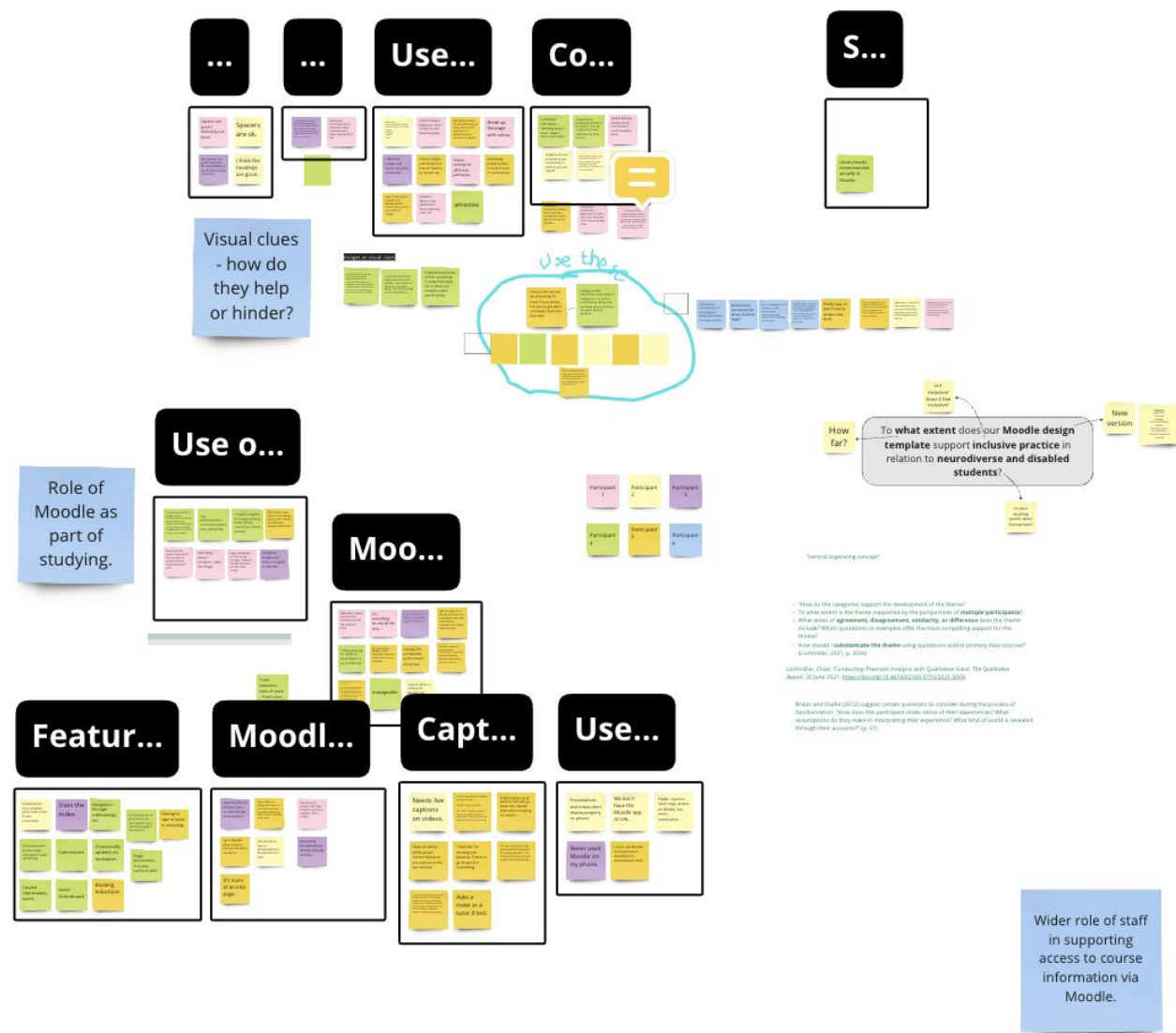
Padlet - hard to read, copy, access on mobile, too much information.

Never used Moodle on my phone.

I never use Moodle on my phone. It would be too compressed I think.

Thematic analysis:  
Categorising and generating themes

# Deciding on themes



**Blog: Trying out thematic analysis**



# Project findings: 4 Themes

1. Moodle plays an important role in learning and teaching.

**'I think if that wasn't there I definitely would have failed.'**

Participant 3

**'Moodle is the platform that links students and tutors together... like a bridge'.** Participant 1

2. Organisation of content has a critical impact on the user experience.

**'Sometimes it just feels like you're overloaded with information.'**

Participant 2

**'...the title doesn't relate to anything in the group... That is the document, but you just don't realise that.'**

Participant 4

# Project findings continued:

3. Presentation matters: clean, clear and simple is best.

**'I think to have it bare bones, but like you've got what you need, I think that's the best way'**

Participant 5

**'I personally like it where the bold and the colour is introduced because I compute that more than a big chunk of text'.**

Participant 1

4. Staff guidance, or lack of, makes a significant difference.



**Blog: full analysis and report**

**Research question:** To what extent does our Moodle design template support inclusive practice in relation to neurodiverse and disabled students? **Partially...**

## **Positive features:**

- Moodle is important for participants and provides flexibility.
- Content is reliably available.
- Headings, spacers, bullet points, colour reduce cognitive load.
- Personalisation may be beneficial.
- Usable via a screen reader.

## **Areas for improvement:**

- Clarity and consistency in the naming of documents/signposting.
- Provide lecture recordings.
- Reduce the amount of text.
- Better training and support for staff: ReciteMe, orientation, confidence.
- More use of colour-coding.

**Blog:** full analysis and report



# Next steps:

Development of Moodle pages  
during past two years



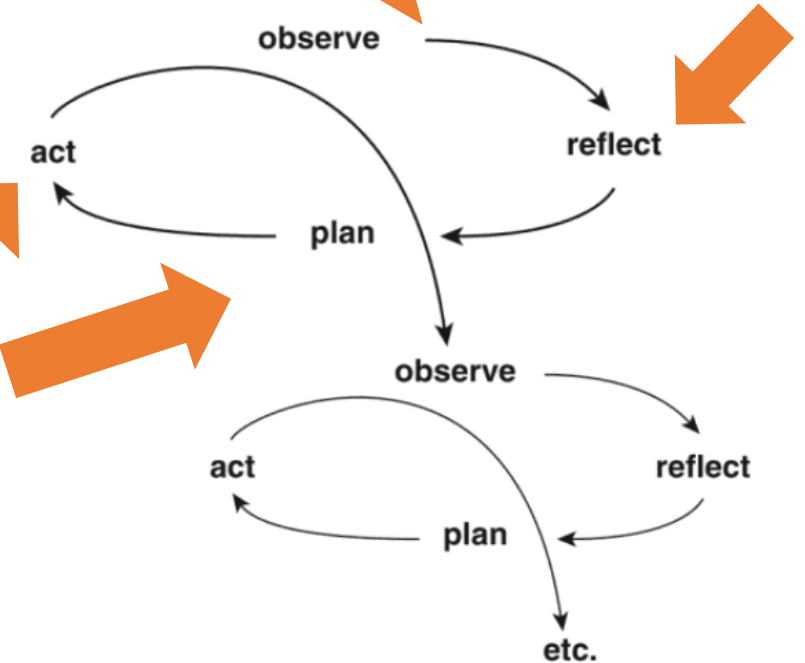
Action  
research  
project



Development of CSM  
Moodle template.



Changemaker project



O'Leary's cycles of research cited in Koshy, Koshy, and  
Waterman, (2017) *Action Research in Healthcare*

# References:

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Adams, W. 'Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews' In *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation*, edited by Kathryn E. Newcomer, Harry P. Hatry, and Joseph S. Wholey, 1st ed., 492–505. Wiley, 2015. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119171386.ch19>. (Accessed 22 November 2023)

Parson, L (2019) 'Chapter 2: Considering Positionality: The Ethics of Conducting Research with Marginalized Groups' in Strunk and Locke, eds. *Research Methods for Social Justice and Equity in Education*. Cham: Springer International Publishing pp. 15-32