

# Beyond performance: Zines, accessibility and reimagining engagement

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# Activities

1. Welcome and expectations [5 min].
2. Prompts [5 min].
3. Zine intro [5 min].
4. Zine page creation [30 min].
5. Collective noticing [10 min].
6. Next steps [5 min].

# Welcome and expectations

- This workshop invites you to reflect on how academic conferences may be designed to foster accessible and inclusive engagement.
- You can take part in whatever way works for you - writing, speaking, arranging, or working with someone else. There is no pressure to participate. No right or wrong way to express your thoughts and ideas.

\* A zine (pronounced "zeen" like magazine) is a small, self-published booklet.

\* They're typically handmade, with personal content which reflects niche interests or sub-cultures.



\* Zines are an accessible way to share your art to a wider audience, and often sold for low prices or traded at art fairs.

\* They can be made up of anything: essays, illustrations, stories, collages, comics, photography...



Zine-making became popular in the 20<sup>th</sup> century amongst groups like sci-fi fandoms, the punk rock scene, feminist movements and activists, as a way to share common interests and ideas amongst their community.

Zines thrived in sub-cultures as they provided a platform for voices that were often excluded from mainstream media. Intersectional zine culture = safe spaces.

# Examples

- no right way
- messy is fine.
- focus on ideas, not polish.

Lewis, R., Henner, G., Brook, L. and Crawford, N. (eds.) (2026) *Reimagining academia and the humanities from a neurodivergent perspective: a collaborative zine*. Neurodivergent Humanities Network. Institute for Medical Humanities, Durham University.



# making Meetings work

## camera

FOR EVERYONE

### Questions

Enabling people the time and space to answer questions. Can questions be shared in advance if people have been able to read papers/see presentations in advance? Anything the reduces the number of times people feel like they are put 'on the spot'.

On or off - it can be both! Make sure people feel comfortable and included if they choose to have their camera off. But also recognise that for some people, this makes it difficult to talk and so enable presenters to ask people to turn cameras on if they feel able to.

### chat

Are we using chat? Or not? It can be really difficult to keep up with reading chat if you're also talking. It is also confusing when people have entirely separate conversations that don't seem to link to the meeting topic or discussion.

### Timing

Ensuring meetings finish on time, and start on time. Ensuring people feel comfortable to step away from the meeting if they need to. Building in planned breaks so people know when they are happening - and sticking to it.

### Preparation

Sharing the agenda and, if applicable, presentation slides, in advance so people can be prepared. This also enables people to prepare questions and to share questions in advance, so people can be prepared.



15 working days



# Prompt Question

**How might academic conferences be designed to foster accessible, inclusive engagement, collective thinking, and shared learning - rather than talk-based performance?**

# Prompts

## **What doesn't work now?**

- What feels difficult, exhausting or excluding?
- What gets in the way of participating?

## **What does accessible engagement feel like?**

- What helps you take part, think, or contribute?
- What do you need more of?

# More prompts

## What could be different?

- What would you change about conference spaces or formats?
- What would a more accessible and inclusive conference look like?

# Creative Expression Ideas

- Don't overthink it – start with whatever comes to mind.
- Use collage, drawings, or found text.
- Use whatever feels comfortable.
- Write short reflections, poems, or visual metaphors. Start with one sentence.
- Before and after illustrations of positive change.
- Create lists or visual guides - “Five things that help me engage with a conference.”
- Share humour, irony, or “things I’ve experienced.”
- Create a “how-to” guide for others.

# Collective noticing (no pressure sharing)

- What stands out?
- Any patterns?
- What do these pages suggest about engagement beyond performance?
- What might you take into your own (institutional) practice?

## Next steps

- If you'd like to stay connected after the session, you can **leave your details** on the sheet provided or talk to me after the session.
- Contributions welcome until **31 July** - I'll then bring these together into a collaborative zine.
- You are welcome to contact me with submissions or updates: [Rachel.Heyes@Manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Rachel.Heyes@Manchester.ac.uk)