



A Professional Collaboration: Inclusive Pedagogy to Maximise Participation for all Students

Lauren Rembach and Warwick Von Hagen

STADIO Higher Education, South Africa

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Keywords

Inclusive pedagogy; access; online higher education; digital equity; professional collaboration; student participation

Abstract

As online learning within higher education continues to expand, it raises important questions related to epistemological access, participation, and inclusion within the online learning environment. While online education is often associated with flexibility and widening access, unequal access to technology, varying levels of digital fluency, and diverse student learning experiences may unintentionally reproduce forms of exclusion within online spaces. Within the South African higher education context, these questions call for ongoing reflection on how online teaching and learning environments are designed to support diverse students.

This paper is a conceptual and reflective discussion emerging from a collaborative pedagogical engagement between lecturers in the fields of Information and Communication Technology and Inclusive Education during the transition to a new learning management system at STADIO Higher Education. Drawing on Florian's Inclusive Pedagogical Approach in Action, the paper reflects how collaborative pedagogical engagement created opportunities to reconsider existing course design practices and incorporate inclusive practices in online learning contexts.

Through reflective engagement with online course redesign, the authors considered how inclusive teaching approaches may contribute towards more responsive teaching and learning strategies to strengthen participation and epistemological access for diverse students. The paper further argues that professional collaboration creates an important space to discuss pedagogical choices, challenge assumptions about student participation, and capability.

Corresponding Author: Lauren Rembach and Warwick Von Hagen, STADIO, Emails: lauren@stadio.ac.za; warwickv@stadio.ac.za

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1. Introduction

Distance online learning has expanded within higher education, this has intensified debates related to epistemological access, participation and equity within digitally mediated learning environments. Even though online learning is frequently positioned as an accessible and flexible mode of teaching and learning, these assumptions require a critical interrogation within the context characterised by inequality, diverse student learning experiences, and uneven access to technology. Within the context of South African Higher education, varying levels of digital literacy and digital inequities are persistent, this continues to shape students' engagement with online learning. Research therefore cautions that without careful pedagogical consideration; the online learning environment may reproduce forms of exclusion that constrain access to learning and meaningful engagement.

Following Tripp's (2011) conception of critical incidents as an event that acquires meaning through reflection on practice. The transition to Canvas as a new Learning Management System (LMS) represented a critical incident due to disrupting the established pedagogical routines and it highlighted challenges related to institutional support, digital literacy, and adaptation to technological change. The introduction of Canvas raised concerns related to accessing the learning materials, course navigation, and the students' understanding of assessment expectations. Although these challenges initially appeared to be technical in nature, critical reflection revealed a broader pedagogical and epistemological concerns regarding how online course design may enable or constrain learning and access within a digitally mediated learning environment. Emerging through an interdisciplinary collaboration between Information and Communication Technology and Inclusive Education, the paper demonstrates how dialogic cross-disciplinary praxis created a reflexive space for interrogating normative assumptions underpinning online teaching and learning.

Framed conceptually through Florian and Spratt's (2013) Inclusive Pedagogical Approach in Action, the paper reflects on how collaborative course redesign may support more inclusive forms of online participation by extending what is ordinarily available to all students rather than positioning

support as individual accommodation. The paper contributes a conceptual and reflective discussion of professional collaboration as pedagogical praxis and considers how inclusive pedagogical thinking may strengthen access to knowledge practices within online higher education. Positioned as reflective and conceptual scholarship grounded in professional practice rather than an empirical qualitative study, the paper seeks to critically examine the pedagogical implications of collaborative reflection for inclusive online teaching and learning.

Additionally, the paper contributes to emerging conversations on inclusive online higher education by conceptualising professional collaboration as a form of pedagogical reflexivity through which lecturers may critically reconsider assumptions underpinning digitally mediated support for learning, epistemological access which refers to students’ meaningful access to knowledge, ways of thinking, and disciplinary practices, rather than simply access to educational institutions (Morrow 2009), and inclusive course design. In doing so, the paper extends discussions on inclusive pedagogy beyond accommodation-based approaches toward a more relational and design-oriented understanding of student engagement within online higher education contexts.

2. Literature review

Online Learning in Higher Education

The expansion of online learning in higher education has been driven by increasing demands for flexibility, accessibility, and alternative modes of educational participation (Daymont/Blau/Campbell 2011). While online learning may widen access to higher education, its implementation is not without complexity. Thaanyane and Jita (2026: 5) suggest that inequalities are deeply rooted, specifically in communities that were previously disadvantaged and need to be addressed to allow access to online learning. From an inclusive education perspective, digitally mediated learning environments may either support or constrain equitable participation depending on how they are pedagogically designed. Unequal access to digital

learning for all is in opposition to the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) which aims to develop equitable and inclusive education for all (Tang 2015). Carrim and Bekker (2022) cautioned that if digital education is not intentionally designed for inclusion, it can risk reproducing barriers to learning and engagement with the course content. Similarly, Lomellini et al. (2022) argue that if online learning environments are poorly designed it may marginalise students with diverse learning needs, particularly within contexts that are characterised by persistent digital inequalities related to connectivity, access, and digital literacy (Praveen et al. 2025).

Experiences that occurred during the COVID-19 emergency remote teaching period in South Africa, further revealed that educational equity is not only achieved through technological provision alone (Moosa/Bekker 2022). Tate and Warschauer (2022) therefore contend that equitable online learning requires deliberate structural, pedagogical, and institutional responsiveness. Without such intentionality, online learning may reinforce existing inequalities rather than disrupt them. Within this context, inclusive pedagogy becomes an important framework for reconsidering how online higher education environments are designed to support successful online learning and access to the course content and resources.

Inclusive Pedagogy and Inclusive Practice

Inclusive pedagogy extends beyond individualised support practices by foregrounding how educators respond to student diversity through pedagogical choices that support learning for all students (Florian 2015). Central to this position is the understanding that learner difference is an ordinary and essential aspect of human development rather than a problem requiring remediation (Florian/Black-Hawkins 2011). Inclusive pedagogy therefore challenges deficit-oriented approaches that position support as additional provision for some students and instead emphasises extending what is ordinarily available within the learning environment to everybody (Florian/Spratt 2013).

This shift foregrounds questions of social justice and pedagogical responsibility within higher education. Moving beyond normative “bell-

curve” approaches to teaching (see Figure 1), inclusive pedagogy seeks to disrupt practices that marginalise students whose learning needs fall outside dominant assumptions about ability and participation (Florian 2012). Within online learning environments, this requires critical consideration of how course structures, communication practices, and digital resources may either widen or constrain students’ learning. Such considerations resonate with aspects of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (Gryshchenko/Kovalchuk 2025), which similarly emphasise flexible pathways for engagement, representation, and access within learning environments. However, within this paper, Florian’s inclusive pedagogical framework remains central in foregrounding participation and pedagogical responsibility in relation to student difference.

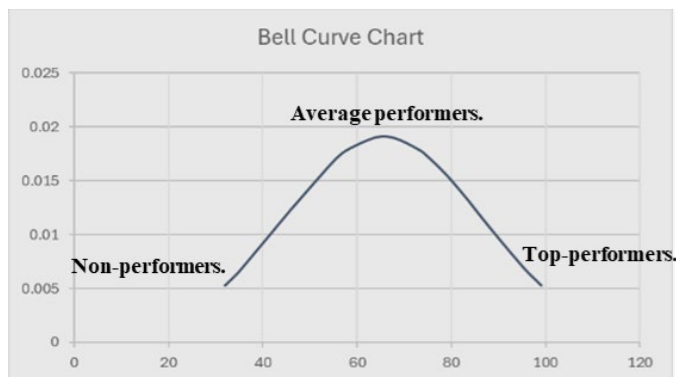


Figure 1: Example of a Bell Curve – Adapted from Florian (2012), this illustrates how normative “bell-curve” approaches to teaching may privilege assumptions of standardised ability and participation.

Responding to Difference through Collaborative Pedagogical Engagement

The transition to a new LMS revealed tensions between navigating institutional technological demands and designing pedagogically responsive online learning environments. A recurring challenge within inclusive online teaching relates to the assumptions about lecturer preparedness to be able to support increasingly diverse student cohorts. Florian and Spratt (2013) argue that lecturers must believe they can teach all students whilst resisting

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deterministic assumption about ability and difference. Similarly, the framework proposed by Rouse (2006) of knowing, doing, and believing highlights how lecturers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices help shape inclusive pedagogical development (see Figure 2).

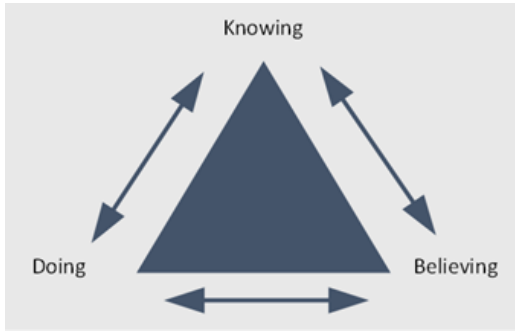


Figure 2: Rouse's Model - Adapted from Rouse (2006) foregrounds the interconnected relationship between the lecturer's knowledge, beliefs, and pedagogical practices.

This professional collaboration emerged as a catalyst for supporting pedagogical responsiveness within this context. We shared different perspectives regarding pedagogical choices and how to structure the online courses. This compelled us to rethink our own practice to support students successfully. Through a series of critical dialogues and reflections, the lecturers interrogated the assumptions underpinning online teaching practices and reconsidered how access and participation were structured within the course environment. This critical dialogue changed the way in which the course design was conceptualised using our interdisciplinary experiences and expertise. Aligned with Andrew, Tolson and Ferguson (2008); and Holmqvist and Lelling (2021), who emphasised the importance of shared expertise, collaboration, and pedagogical experimentation in supporting inclusive teaching practices.

Our engagement with inclusive pedagogy undergirded what Norwich (2007; 2013) conceptualises as the dilemma of difference — the tension between responding to individual learning needs while avoiding processes of marginalisation and categorisation. Recognising difference may enable support for students experiencing barriers to learning, yet it may also reinforce

exclusion through labelling. Conversely, approaches that prioritise commonality may lead to obscuring the specific forms of support some students require. Florian and Spratt’s (2013) notion of full inclusion attempts to move beyond this binary by balancing responsiveness to individual needs within the collective learning community. Within this study, these tensions became central to reconsidering how online course design could support learning without reproducing deficit-based understandings of student difference.

Applying Inclusive Pedagogy: Conceptual Framing of the Redesign Process

This paper draws on critical narrative reflection situated within reflexive and practice-based scholarship to examine collaborative inclusive pedagogical practice within online higher education. Positioned within the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), the study adopts a reflective and design-oriented perspective rather than a formal empirical qualitative approach. The focus therefore rests on how collaborative engagement with course artefacts informed iterative module redesign and pedagogical decision-making.

Florian’s Inclusive Pedagogical Approach in Action (Florian/Spratt 2013) provided the conceptual framework underpinning the inquiry. The framework foregrounds three assumptions: that learner difference is an ordinary aspect of human development, that lecturers must believe they can teach all students, and that lecturers continually develop new ways of working with others. These assumptions informed critical reflection on pedagogical choices, course design practices, and inclusive participation within the online module (see Figure 3).

Assumptions 1	Essential Aspects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difference is accounted for as an essential aspect of human development in any conceptualization of learning 	
Assumptions 2	Qualified and Capable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That teachers must believe that they are qualified to and capable of teaching all. 	
Assumptions 3	Continual Professional Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers continually develop creative and new ways of working with others 	

Figure 3: Florian’s Three Assumptions - Adapted from (Florian/Spratt 2013: 124) this illustrates the three interconnected assumptions underpinning Florian’s Inclusive Pedagogical Approach in Action, which informed the lecturers’ reflective engagement with participation, learner difference, and responsive online course design.

The course that required redesign is an online End User Computing module, Computer Practice for Teachers, where challenges related to navigation, participation, and access emerged during the transition to the new LMS. Insights into inclusive online pedagogy emerged through shared pedagogical inquiry and engagement with course artefacts, including assessment tasks, learning activities, multimodal resources, and navigational structures. These artefacts became sites for evaluating how online course design may enable or constrain epistemological access and successful acquisition of the skills and knowledge required to succeed

Constructive alignment (Biggs/Tang 2011) informed the redesign process by foregrounding coherence between learning outcomes, teaching activities, and assessment practices. Reflexivity remained central throughout, as assumptions regarding digital competence, and access were critically reconsidered. Rather than positioning barriers as student deficits, the redesign process underscored pedagogical responsibility in creating learning environments that acknowledge diversity and support meaningful participation within online higher education contexts.

3. Pedagogical insights: Inclusive Pedagogical Approach in Action

The following insights were derived from the collaborative engagement and restructuring of the course design to ensure that more support was provided to the students. Florian and Spratt’s (2013: 124) assumptions as concepts were used to interpret our design decisions, tensions, revisions, and pedagogical reflections, was considered when redesigning aspects of the course

Assumption 1: Difference is accounted for as an essential aspect of human development in any conceptualisation of learning

A key insight emerging from this study was that recognising student difference as an ordinary aspect of learning required critical reconsideration of how course information, expectations, and learning pathways were communicated. Mindful of the dilemma of difference (Norwich 2007; 2013), we adopted an approach that acknowledged cohort diversity without positioning students as deficient or separate from the mainstream learning experience. Initially, the institutionally prescribed course blueprint reflected normative assumptions regarding students’ digital fluency, confidence, and access to technology. These assumptions created barriers for students engaging with the course from differing educational, linguistic, socio-economic, and technological contexts.

Engaging with Florian’s (2015: 12) inclusive pedagogical principle of extending what is ordinarily available to everybody prompted critical reflection on how course activities, assessments, and communication practices either constrained or widened participation. This demonstrated the importance of pedagogically responsive design that anticipated learner diversity from the outset through more intentional alignment between course content, learning activities, and assessment practices.

In response, course instructions and learning pathways were deliberately scaffolded to provide multiple points of access and engagement. The redesign of the welcome video emerged as a critical pedagogical intervention. Rather

than performing as a static introduction, the video was embedded within the architecture of the course to help orientate students to the structure, expectations, and navigation of the module. In addition, the integration of an interactive multimodal SCORM (Shareable Content Object Reference Model) package enabled students to engage with information at their own pace, revisit key explanations, and check their understanding through embedded activities and prompts (see Figures 4–8). These revisions also aligned with principles associated with Universal Design for Learning (UDL), particularly through providing multiple means of representation and engagement that sought to support variability in how students accessed, navigated, and engaged with course information (Gryshchenko/Kovalchuk 2025). Rather than positioning support as additional provision for selected students, the redesign attempted to embed flexibility and accessibility within the ordinary architecture of the learning environment.

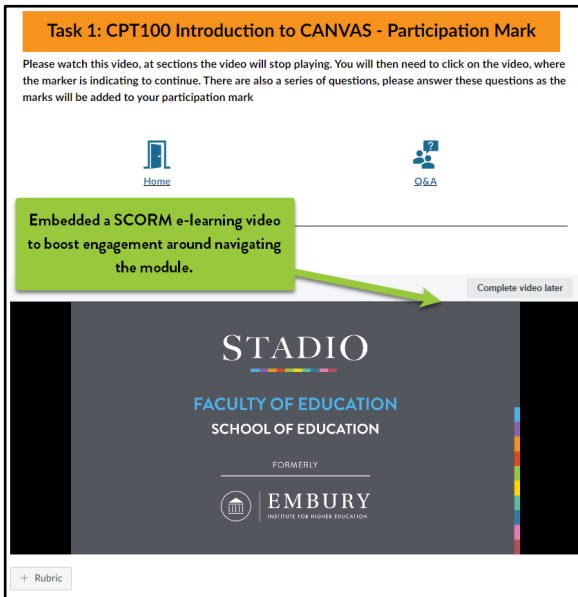


Figure 4: Addition of a SCORM package. Scaffolding orientation to the online course.

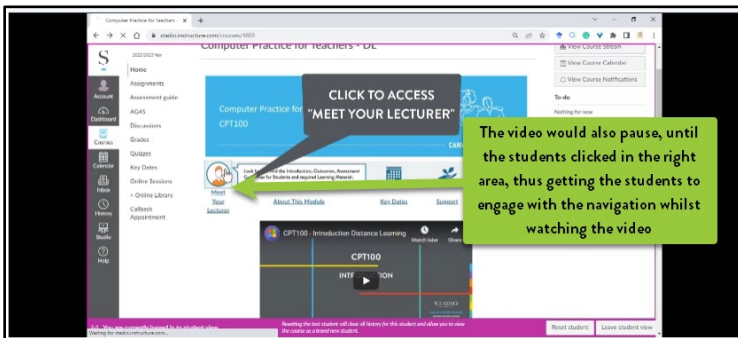


Figure 5: Addition of clickable hotspots in the SCORM Package. Clickable hotspots reduced navigational ambiguity by foregrounding key course information visually and interactively.

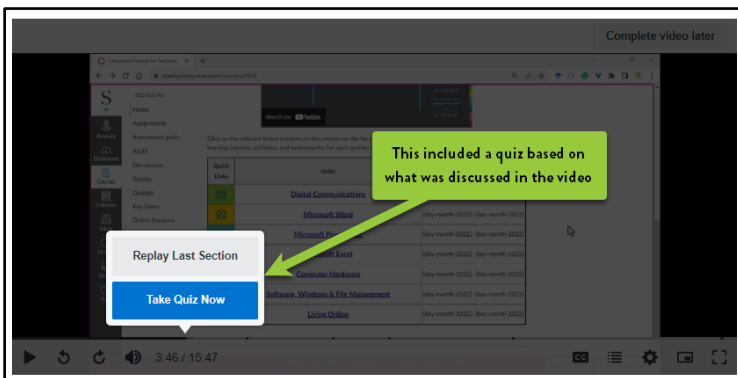


Figure 6: Addition of short questions inside the SCORM Package. Embedded questions supported scaffolded engagement by enabling students to check and consolidate their understanding throughout the course orientation process.

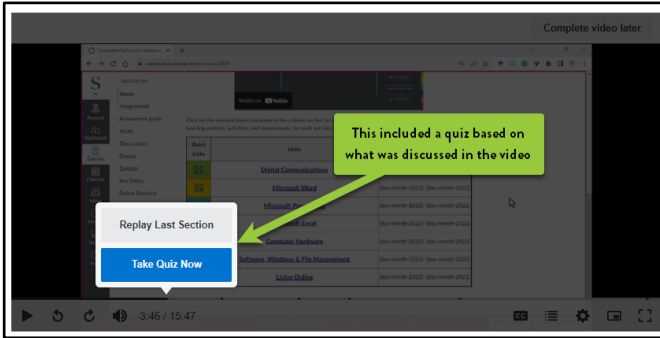


Figure 7: Example of a question inside the SCORM Package. Embedded questions created opportunities for formative engagement and self-monitoring throughout the learning process

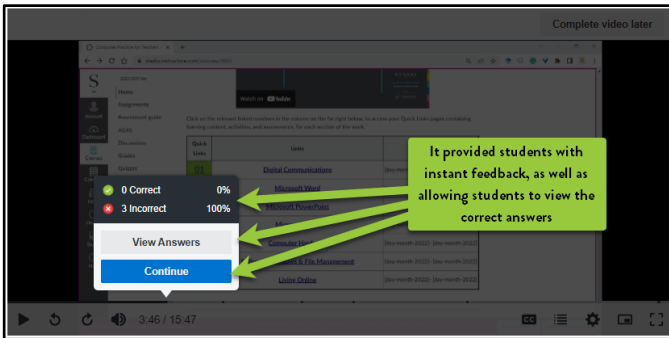


Figure 8: Example of feedback provided inside the SCORM Package. The students could engage with the feedback to better improve their outcome, or they could continue through the video.

These revisions acknowledged differences in digital confidence, learning pace, language proficiency, and familiarity with the online learning environments whilst supporting engagement.

The process of the redesign also foregrounded tensions between the institutional standardisation, and inclusive pedagogical responsiveness. Institutionally prescribed course structures often reflected implicit assumptions regarding engagement, participation, and digital confidence. However, the incorporation of scaffolded and multimodal approaches aided

in contributing to a noticeable reduction in student queries that were related to the navigation of the course and assessment expectations, suggesting that more accessible and clearer communication strengthened students' engagement with the course.

Consistent with Florian and Spratt's (2013) first assumption that learner differences should be understood as an ordinary aspect of human development, the assumptions regarding students' proficiency with technology requires critical reconsideration. Although many students had access to digital devices, this did not necessarily translate into confidence in navigating the LMS, particularly for students relying primarily on mobile devices. These experiences brought into sharper focus on how online course structures may unintentionally reflect homogenising assumptions about digital participation and engagement.

Engagement with the framework proposed by Florian and Spratt (2013) therefore foregrounded the importance of designing for learner variability through scaffolded navigation, multimodal communication, and flexible pathways for participation. This shifted the course design approach away from assumptions of uniform participation towards widening opportunities for engagement and access. At the same time, tensions remained between inclusive pedagogical responsiveness and the standardised requirements of institutionally prescribed online course structures. The collaborative dialogue created opportunities to interrogate tensions between institutional course standardisation and the need for more flexible and responsive pathways for engagement. Through this process, seemingly technical design decisions became sites for critically reconsidering how assumptions regarding digital participation and learner capability were embedded within the course structure. Nevertheless, the redesign process demonstrated the importance of online learning environments that acknowledge difference as ordinary within teaching and learning while seeking to minimise exclusion and widen participation.

Assumption 2: Teachers must believe that they are qualified to and capable of teaching all students.

The second assumption helped to foreground the significance of lecturer belief systems in helping shape pedagogically responsive practices within digitally mediated learning environments. The transition to Canvas disrupted the established pedagogical routines and initially destabilised the confidence of the lecturers in their capacity to support increasingly diverse cohort of students within a fully online environment. The dialogic engagement created a space for the lecturers to critically interrogate how routine online teaching practices may normalise assumptions regarding participation, digital competence, and independent navigation within online learning environments. The insights reveal that technological transitions are not experienced merely as technical adjustments, but as pedagogical disruptions that require lecturers to reconsider how teaching practices mediate participation, access, and inclusion. This resonates with Carrim and Bekker's (2022) argument that institutional transformation frequently exposes tensions between a lecturers' preparedness to enact inclusive pedagogical practices and technological change.

The reflective process clarified that the challenges associated with the transition to Canvas extended beyond issues of digital competence or functionality. Rather, the transition raised deeper epistemological concerns regarding how access to learning is structured and experienced within online environments. Engagement with inclusive pedagogy prompted a shift away from deficit-oriented assumptions about students' digital capabilities toward a reconceptualisation of pedagogical responsibility. Instead of locating barriers to learning within students themselves, the reflexive dialogue and shared pedagogical engagement reflected, the lecturer's responsibility to design learning environments that anticipate learner diversity from the outset. This aligns with Florian and Black-Hawkins' (2011) inclusive pedagogical position that inclusion is strengthened through extending what is ordinarily available to all students, rather than through reactive accommodations targeted at individuals.

An important pedagogical insight emerging from the collaboration was that inclusive online pedagogy is enacted not solely through technological tools, but through lecturers’ epistemic beliefs about who can participate meaningfully within digitally mediated learning spaces. The enquiry reinforced that developing inclusive practices required lecturers to embrace the belief that diverse student cohorts could participate successfully within the online environment when pedagogical design intentionally reduced unnecessary barriers to engagement. In this context, lecturer agency became central to ensuring that the course content was accessible to support the students and rethinking how online learning environments may inadvertently privilege certain forms of navigation, participation, and digital competence over others.

Consequently, the process of redesigning involved simplifying course architecture, embedding scaffolded multimodal support throughout the module, and reducing unnecessary navigational complexity. These insights indicate that the interventions functioned not merely as technical elements, but also as a deliberate pedagogical response to the dilemma of differences (Norwich 2007; 2013). Rather than differentiating support for a selected group of students, the redesign sought to normalise accessibility by embedding a support structure within the ordinary learning experience for all students. Inclusivity was therefore repositioned from an individual accommodation model towards a universally responsive pedagogical orientation which was grounded in anticipation rather than remediation.

The reflective process was further informed by the importance of multimodal design in supporting inclusive participation within online learning environments. Drawing on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2020) multimodal theory, meaning making was understood as occurring through the interaction of textual, auditory, visual, and spatial modes, each contributing differently to how students engage with knowledge constructions. Kress and van Leeuwen (2020) argue that representing information through a range of modes enhances diversity of learning and meaning making by enabling students to engage with content in ways that are more accessible and cognitively responsive to their learning needs. Within this study, the use of annotated instructions, visual signposting, embedded guidance videos, and

structured navigational cues therefore operated as pedagogical mediators that supported students’ orientation within the course environment. These multimodal supports reduced ambiguity, clarified expectations, and strengthened students’ capacity to engage more independently with course content. Annotated instructions and visual cues were intentionally embedded within the course design to support student navigation and understanding (see Figures 9 and 10). In this way, multimodal design became central to reducing barriers associated with digitally mediated participation and widening epistemological access. In this sense, the redesign also reflected aspects associated with Universal Design for Learning through the provision of multiple pathways for engagement and representation (Gryshchenko/Kovalchuk 2025), although UDL, was not adopted as the primary conceptual framework guiding the study.

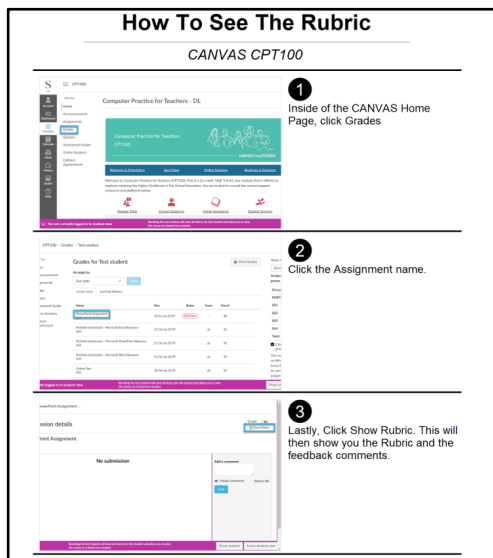


Figure 9: How to Find the Rubric in Canvas. This was a handout students received to help them gain access to their Rubric and feedback within Canvas.

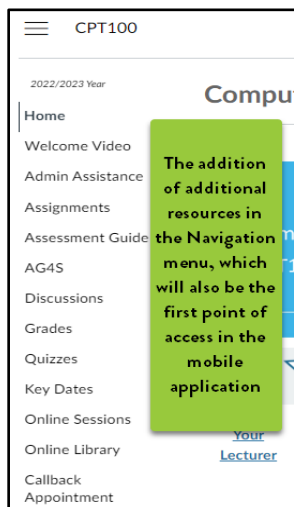


Figure 10: Example of an annotated note containing information for students. Helping them find the necessary information through signposting.

Importantly, the insights suggest that pedagogical responsiveness online learning environments need to extend beyond content delivery and towards the intentional design of accessible learning pathways. The collaborative redesign process created a reflective space in which assumptions about accessibility, digital participation, and competence which are normally taken-for-granted could be interrogated critically. Therefore, inclusive pedagogy emerged not as a fixed set of strategies or technical interventions, but rather as an ongoing process of pedagogical reflexivity in which lecturers continuously reconsider how learning environments might enable or constrain participation.

Ultimately, the analysis underscored that inclusive online pedagogy is fundamentally design-orientated, relational, and ethically grounded. The interventions significance did not lie solely in the inclusion of multimodal resources, or simplified navigational structures, but in how these pedagogical choices reflected the broader commitment to widening epistemological access and rethinking the responsibilities of the lecturer within the digitally mediated higher education contexts.

The reworking of instructional materials, course design and content demonstrated that inclusive pedagogy is enacted through everyday pedagogical decisions. By making implicit expectations explicit and designing resources that were designed to support more inclusive participation for all students, the lecturers were able to extend opportunities for support without resorting to individualised accommodations. This approach reflects Florian and Spratt's (2013) assertion that inclusive pedagogy involves providing rich learning opportunities that are sufficiently made available to everyone.

Assumption 3: Teachers continually develop creative and new ways of working with others.

A central pedagogical insight emerging from the collaborative process was that professional collaboration functioned not merely as collegial support, but as a critical mechanism for interrogating and reshaping pedagogical practice within digitally mediated higher education contexts. The insights point toward the redesign of the course that was strengthened through sustained reflective engagement between the two lecturers, enabling pedagogical challenges to be critically examined collectively rather than individually. In this way, collaboration became a condition by enabling a reconsideration of how online course design might facilitate or constrain a student's success, participation, and epistemological access.

The reflective engagement revealed that inclusive online pedagogy cannot solely be understood as the responsibility of an individual lecturer, particularly within the contexts which are characterised by the rapid change in technology, institutional LMS transitions, and the increasing student diversity. Rather, the collaborative partnership helped to create a dialogical and reflexive space in which pedagogical assumptions, disciplinary expertise, and design decisions could be critically interrogated and reworked. The analysis helped to reveal that this process of shared reflexivity enabled the lecturers to identify aspects of the navigation, course structure, and communication practices that may inadvertently reproduce exclusion within the online learning environments. Consequently, the process for the redesign

became less concerned with merely adapting content for online delivery and became more focused on critically rethinking how pedagogical choices shape digitally mediated participation and epistemological access.

Importantly, the insights gained suggest that collaboration contributed to the development of a more critically responsive pedagogical orientation. Through ongoing dialogue and shared pedagogical engagement, the lecturers moved beyond the procedural understanding of inclusion towards a deeper engagement with the relational and structural dimensions of inclusive pedagogy. This aligns with framework by Florian (2015), which emphasises extending what is ordinarily available to all students, rather than relying on individualised accommodations after barriers to participation has already emerged. Within this study, the collaborative redesign therefore reflected an intentional attempt to normalise support structures within the ordinary architecture of the online course, rather than positioning inclusion as an additional or compensatory intervention for selected students.

An important pedagogical insight that emerged from the collaboration was that the professional dialogue helped to support the development of pedagogical reflexivity. Through this reflective engagement it enabled the lecturers to question assumptions regarding students' independence, digital competence, and participation within online learning environments which are usually taken-for-granted. The analysis drew on the notion that many barriers to participation were not always inherent to students themselves, but were embedded within communication practices, the organisation, and the navigational design of the course environment. This collaboration therefore became a mechanism for making these often-invisible barriers to become visible and for collectively reimagining more accessible and pedagogical responsive approaches towards online teaching and learning.

Through the reflective engagement it was further demonstrated that collaborative pedagogical work contributed to not only the course redesign, but also to the learning and professional growth of the lecturer. The sustained engagement with inclusive pedagogy, the lecturers developed a more nuanced understanding of how the online learning environments may privilege forms of communication, navigation, and engagement whilst

marginalising others. The insights suggest that professional collaboration, as a form of ongoing pedagogical learning, through which lecturers critically negotiate tensions between inclusive teaching commitments, institutional technological demands, and the realities of students' diversity within the higher education contexts.

What emerges from the analysis is that collaboration extended beyond collegial support and became a critical site of pedagogical reflexivity through which assumptions about participation, accessibility, and inclusive online teaching could be collectively interrogated and reimagined. The collaborative process therefore situated inclusion as a relational, ethical, and design-oriented practice rather than a technical or procedural response to student difference. Collectively, these insights highlight that the significance of the collaboration lay not only in the redesign of the module itself, but in how the process fostered collective pedagogical responsibility and deeper critical engagement with the ethical, relational, and epistemological dimensions of inclusive online education. This process also involved negotiating differing disciplinary perspectives and pedagogical assumptions, which became important in challenging taken-for-granted understandings of participation, support, and online engagement.

4. Concluding Insights and Pedagogical Implications

This paper has demonstrated the importance of professional collaboration in supporting the development of inclusive pedagogical practices within online higher education contexts. Through reflexive dialogue and course redesign, the paper demonstrated how inclusive pedagogy can inform more responsive approaches to digitally mediated teaching and learning that seek to widen epistemological access and support participation for diverse student cohorts.

A key insight that emerged from the analysis is that the Inclusive Pedagogical Approach in Action (Florian/Spratt 2013) should not be understood as a prescriptive set of strategies for teaching and learning, but rather as a framework for critically reconsidering pedagogical responsibilities within

online learning environments. This reflective engagement enabled the lecturers to interrogate the assumptions regarding participation, student ability, and digital competencies, whilst foregrounding differences as an expected and ordinary dimension of learning. In doing so, the paper highlighted how inclusive pedagogy provides a means of challenging practices that promote exclusion that may become embedded within digital course design.

The inquiry further suggests that professional collaboration can function as a critical site for pedagogical reflexivity in which lecturers could collectively interrogate and reimagine their pedagogical choices, justifications, and actions. Rather than positioning inclusion as an individual responsibility, this collaborative process alludes to the importance of a shared pedagogical learning in navigating the complexities of online teaching and learning.

Within a broader conceptual level, the paper suggests the need for higher education institutions to promote and support collaborative professional interdisciplinary learning, and inclusive course design within the rapidly evolving online learning environments. Although situated within a particular institutional context, the insights generated through this reflective collaboration may contribute to broader conversations regarding inclusive pedagogy, lecturer agency, and epistemological access within digitally mediated higher education. Inclusive online pedagogy is therefore more than a technical response to student diversity; it is a call to action to ensure ongoing ethical and relational practice underpinned by collaboration and a commitment to widening access for all students.

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6. Short biographies

Lauren Rembach has an HDE (SP), (JCE) BEd Honours (Wits) and a Master's (Wits). Her current position is Senior Lecturer and Honours Programme Co-Ordinator with experience in both public and private higher education institutions. She has published on the SOLO Taxonomy and Teaching experience. Research interests include inclusive education, humane education, and social justice

Email: laurenr@studio.ac.za

Warwick Von Hagen: Warwick is a forward-thinking Learning Technologist reimagining how technology shapes learning, teaching, and inclusion in higher education. At STADIO Higher Education, he blends research-driven insight with hands-on innovation to design learning ecosystems where accessibility and engagement go hand in hand. As a core member of the Learning Technology Unit, Warwick builds digital learning environments that combine creativity with rigour, from Canvas-based escape rooms and immersive training modules to ethical AI use. His approach is rooted in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and guided by the belief that technology should humanise education, not mechanise it. With research interests spanning inclusive pedagogy, digital transformation, and large language models in education, Warwick's work explores how emerging technologies can foster equity, curiosity, and critical thinking.

Email: warwickv@studio.ac.za ; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-3362-1853>