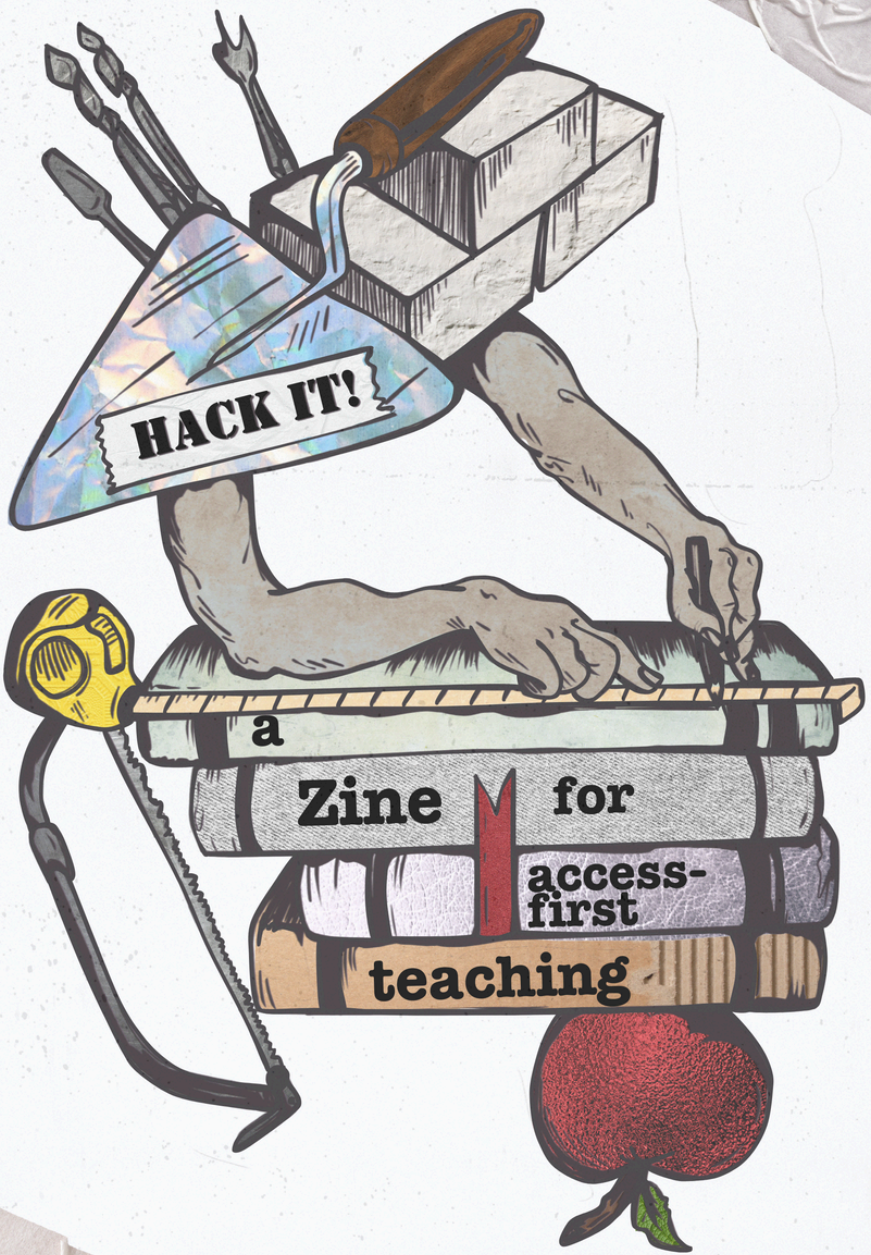
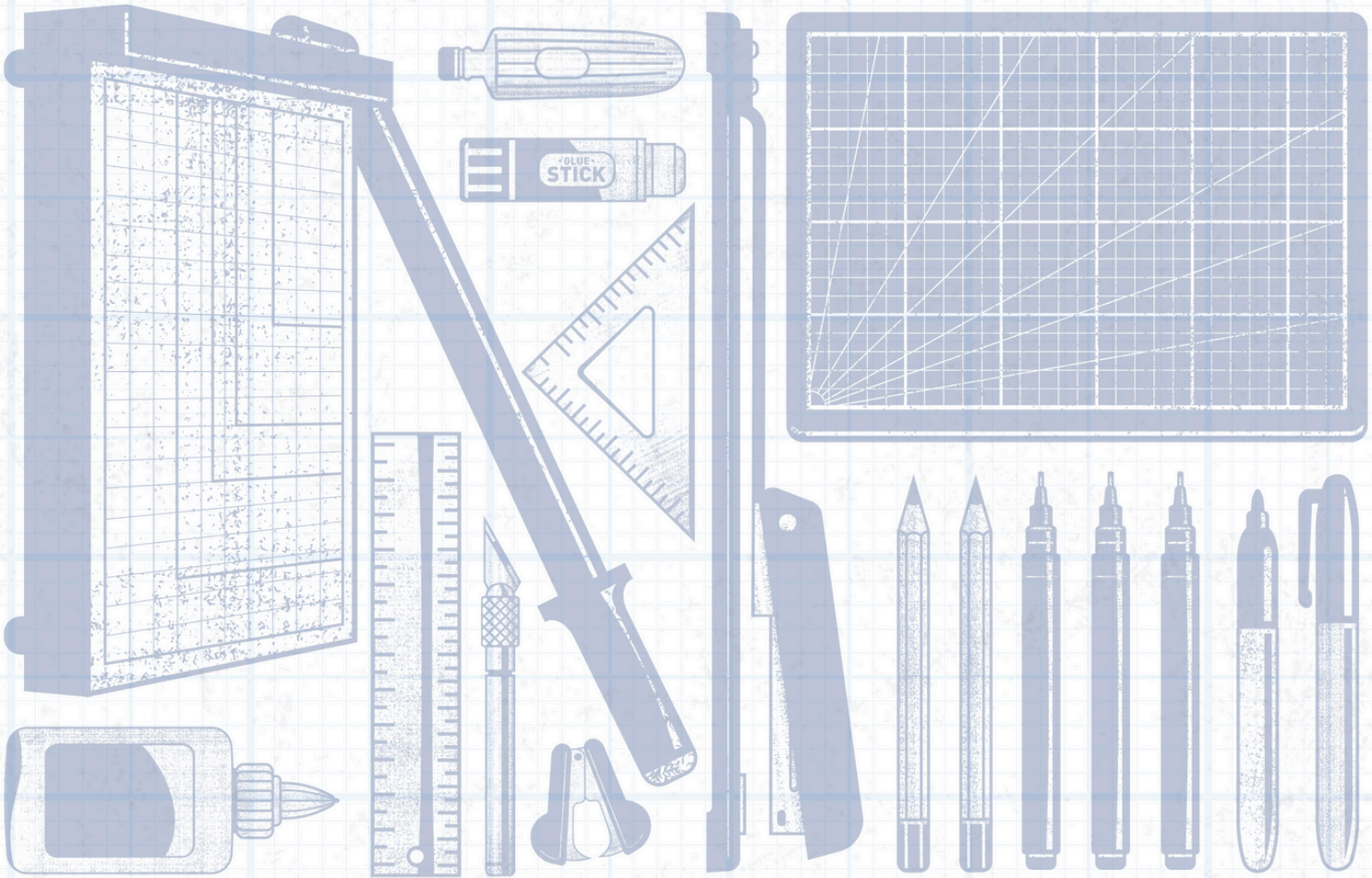
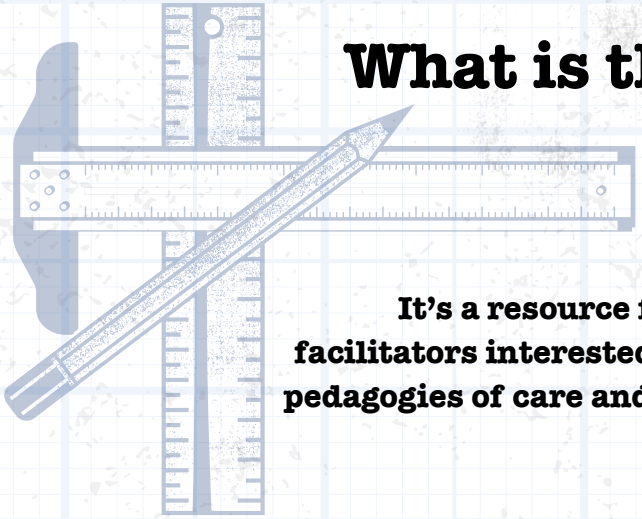

HACK IT!
a
Zine
for
access-
first
teaching


GLUE
STICK

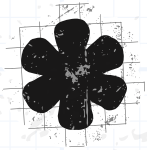


What is this zine?

It's a resource for teachers and facilitators interested in asking what pedagogies of care and access mean in practice.

This zine was compiled by Emery Roberts with generous support from Dr. Rachael Gabriel and funding from the UConn Hartford campus. While the writing, editing, and design were led by Emery, the ideas and images inside reflect many hands.

This project grew out of both an online call for submissions and a one-day workshop where we invited people to reflect, write, sketch, collage, or make with whatever felt good. Some submissions are meticulously crafted. Others are messy, intuitive, and anonymous. As part of this patchwork project, they remind us that care is already happening: quietly, creatively, and constantly.



Thank you to the contributors whose care practices and hacks shape this zine!

Why "Access-First" Teaching?

by Emery Roberts

Access is a mode of inquiry. It's about recognizing that education happens ***between*** people and environments, and that how we relate to one another shapes what becomes possible in a classroom. It's a lens we can use to critically examine what our classrooms assume, exclude, and enable.

Too often, access is framed as something done ***for*** students rather than **with** them. As students and teachers, we often hear that our classrooms are already "inclusive" or "accessible." But those claims don't always hold up. The rhetoric of inclusion can mask environments that still demand conformity to normative modes of embodied learning, behaving, and communicating.

Embodiment includes the cultural, linguistic, sensory, cognitive, emotional, and physical realities of how we exist in the world. The classroom is already shaped by embodiment: by how we ask people to sit, speak, write, move, and respond. Some bodyminds fit that mold more easily than others. Recognizing this isn't about finding individual solutions for a few students—it's about rethinking who the space was built for in the first place.

Access is best when it's iterative and relational; when it emerges from how people and spaces interact. In this way, access is also a care practice. Following scholars like Currie & Hubrig (2022) and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha (2018), we can understand care as a form of shared labor that resists the individualizing logics of accommodation that frequently accompany conversations about access.

In access-first teaching, care is a means to co-create the conditions under which learning can happen for everyone, not just those who fit the mold; Sins Invalid (2016) describe care as resistance: a refusal of disposability, a collective commitment to interdependence, and a belief that we all deserve not just access, but connection and dignity.

An access-first approach that centers care asks:

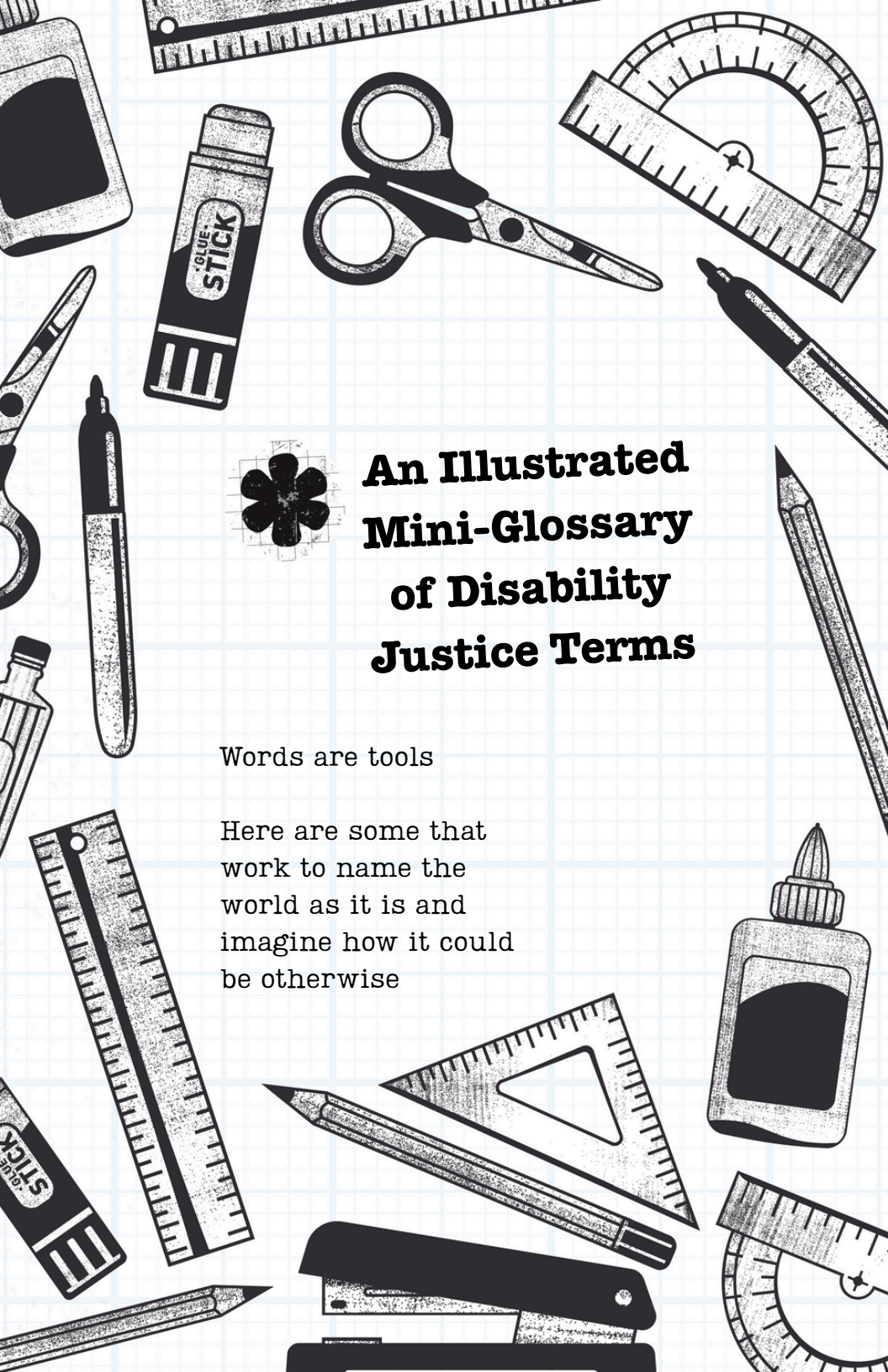
- Who is expected to adapt to our classrooms—and who is supported in doing so?
- What ways of learning, thinking, or showing understanding are treated as "real" or "rigorous"?
- How might our classrooms change if we approach access as an ongoing process rather than as a series of retrofits?
- And what do we, as instructors, need in order to offer care without burning out or disappearing our own needs?

This zine doesn't pretend to answer all of those questions. But we believe asking them is part of the practice.

Some ways to invite alternatives

- Model access as a shared practice. Say what ***you*** need and why.
- Make your classroom adjustable. Plan for flexibility.
- Invite students to co-create their learning experience. Students have expertise about how they think and learn.
- Options for participation, formats, and timelines should be stated clearly—not buried in fine print or "available upon request." Transparency is trust-building.
- Keep offering options, even if nobody uses them. Options show that we expect differences.
- Pause before interpreting. If a student seems disengaged, slow to respond, or upset—wait and observe. Sometimes what looks like resistance is a different way of processing or participating.
- Invite critique. Make it possible for students to challenge what's not working.

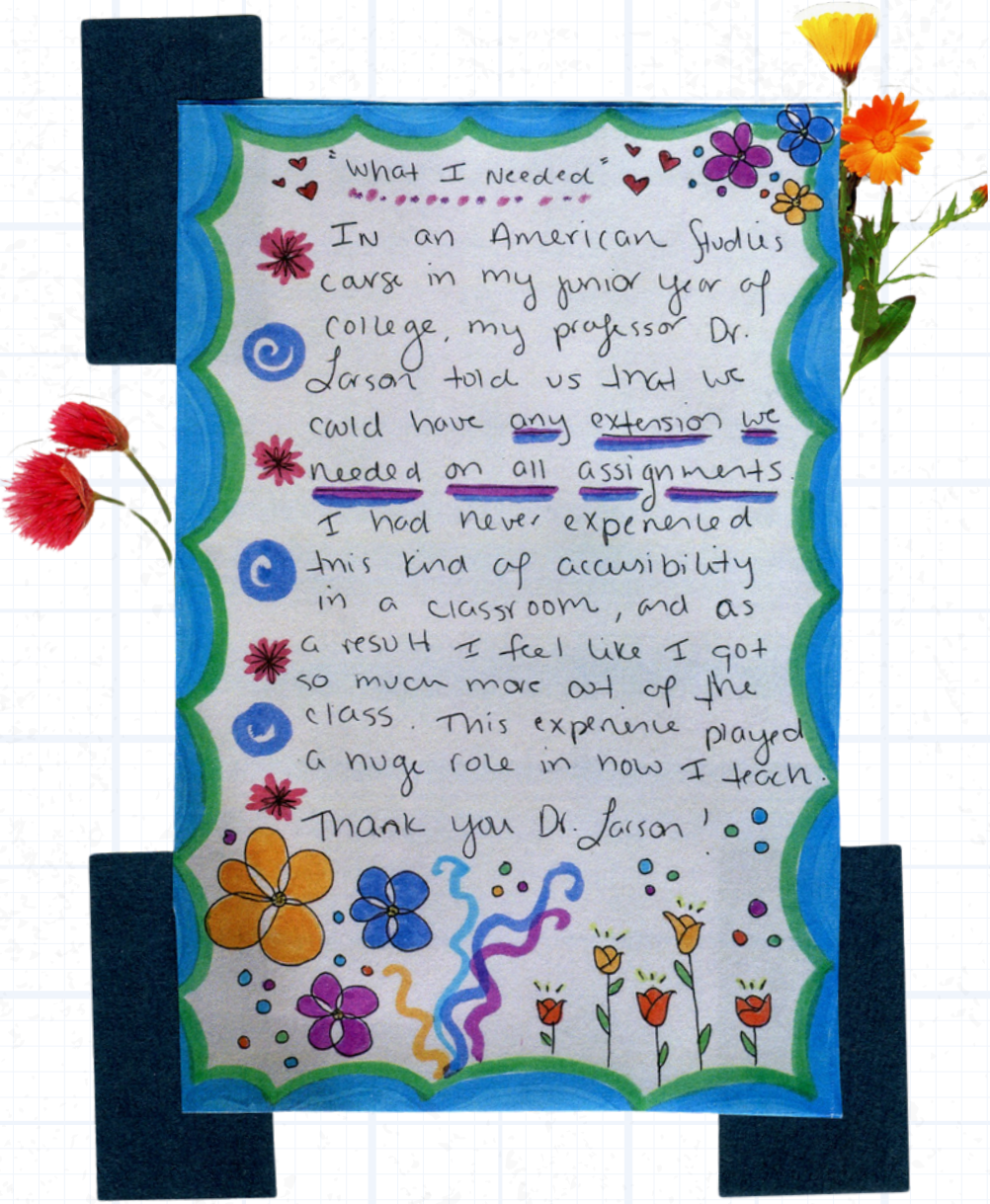
and listen when they do.



An Illustrated Mini-Glossary of Disability Justice Terms

Words are tools

Here are some that work to name the world as it is and imagine how it could be otherwise



"What I Needed"
by Lauren D

Access Intimacy

is that felt sense of connection and belonging that comes with an intuitive understanding of access needs; being understood –when someone sees your needs not as burdens but as facts of your life.

Mingus, 2011



Access Labor

is the behind-the-scenes work disabled people do to participate in spaces that weren't designed for them. It's planning, explaining, negotiating, emailing, adapting, re-adapting—and doing it all again tomorrow.

Valentine, 2020

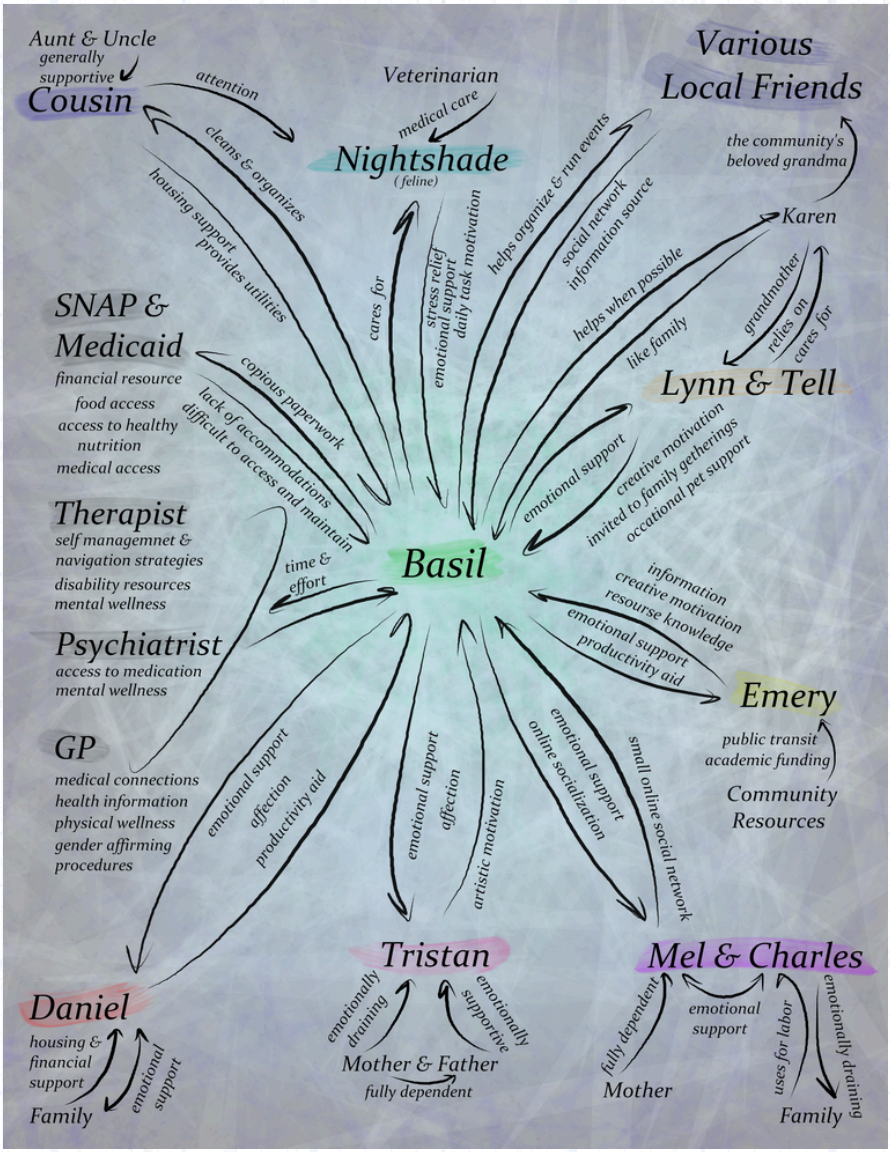


"I love my flesh prison"
by anonymous

Bodymind

resists the split between body and mind imposed by Western, ableist thought. Combining these words affirms the deep interdependence between mental and physical processes– not just in how we experience the world, but in how we're categorized and disciplined by institutions.

Price, 2011; Schalk, 2018

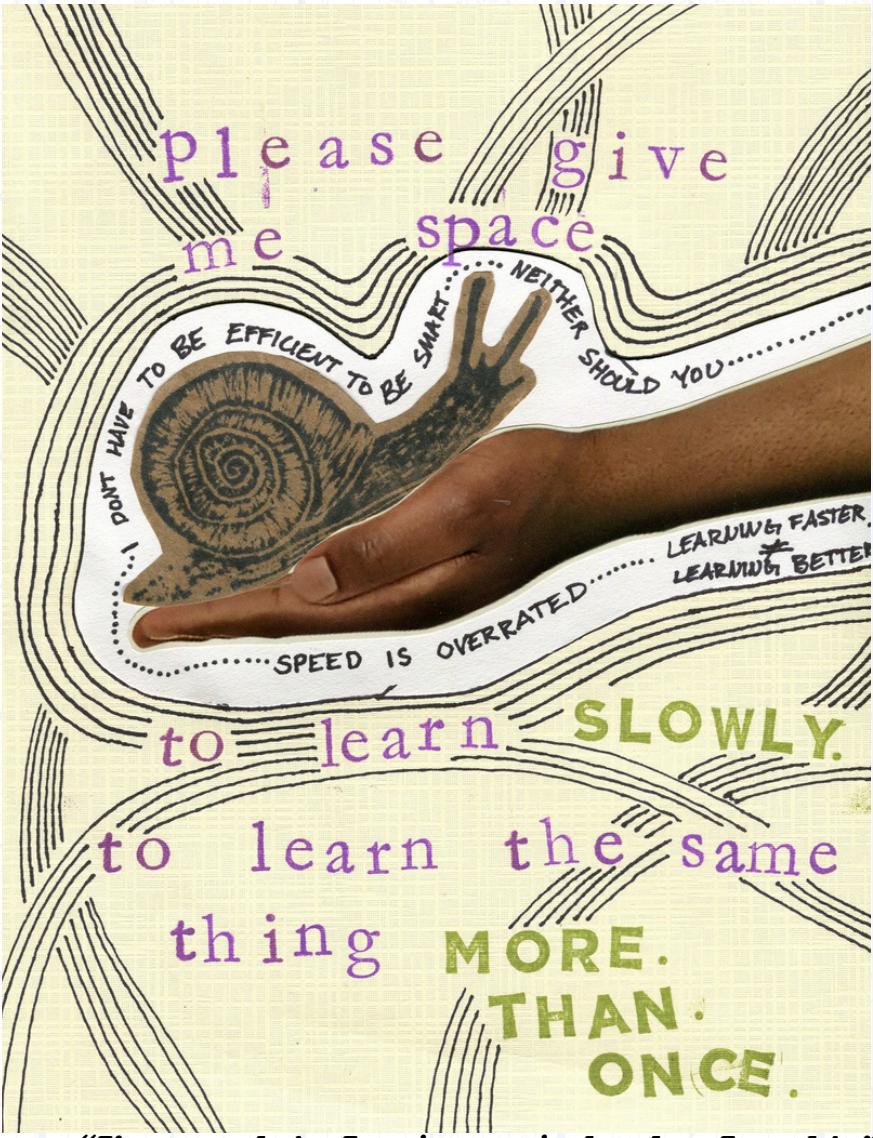


"Flower Map"
by Basil N.

Interdependence

is the idea that we survive–and thrive–with and through one another. It pushes back against myths of independence, self-sufficiency, and "doing it alone." Interdependence means recognizing how much we already rely on each other and refusing to pretend otherwise.

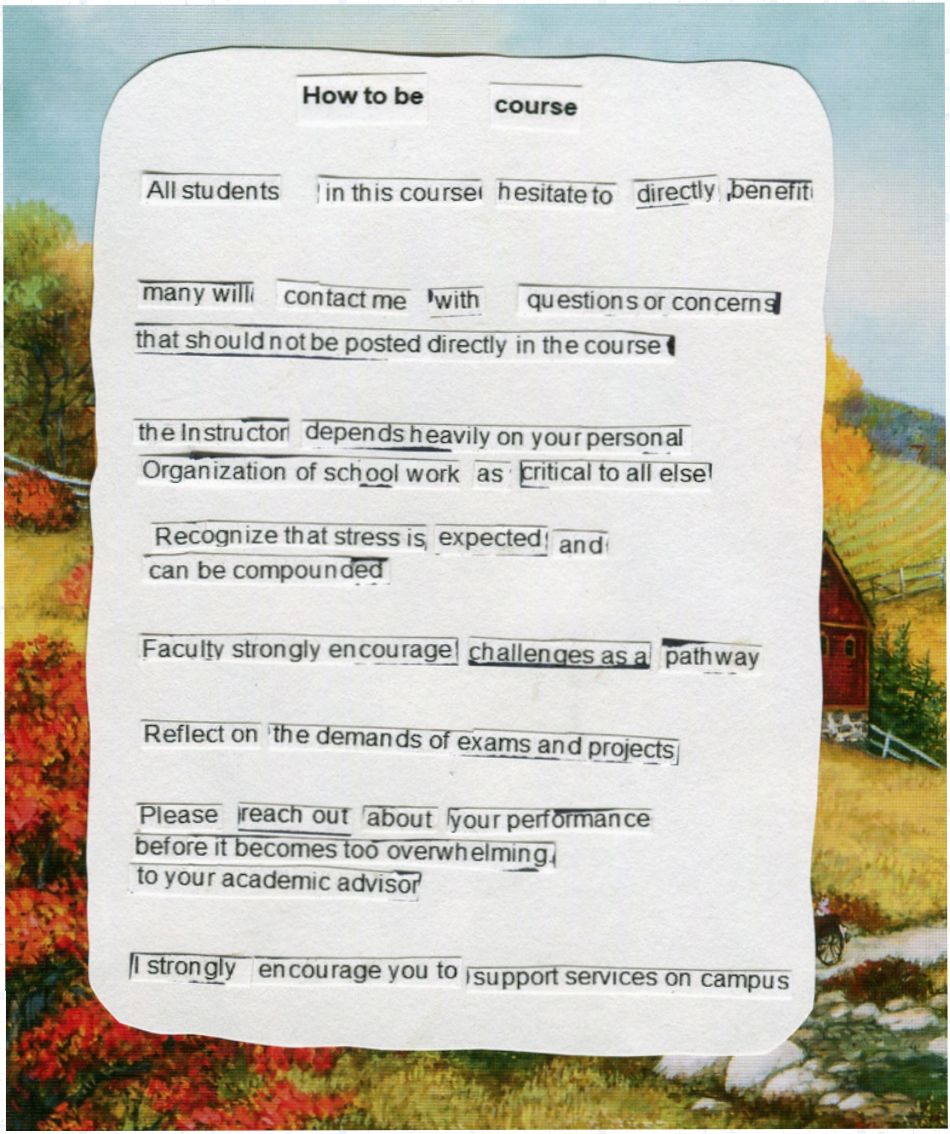
Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018; Sins Invalid, 2016



"I'm never late: I arrive precisely when I need to"
by anonymous

Crip time

recognizes all the ways our lives don't cater to normative time. We live at a pace that is unpredictable, nonlinear, and attentive to need. By learning to live in crip time, we recognize and value moments of pause, rerouting, breakdown, recovery, stagnancy, and change.
Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018



"Syllabus Poem"
by Anna's Roommate

Resilience Discourse
shifts responsibility for collective survival away from systems and onto individuals. Needs are framed through a meritocratic assessment of student effort (Support is something you earn by rarely needing support) and "Resilience" becomes a moral imperative.
Currie & Hubrig, 2022

WHAT IT SAYS:

How to be successful in this course

All students can succeed in this course and we are here to help you along the way. Please do not hesitate to ask questions directly in the course site so all can benefit as many will have the same question/s. All questions are important here. Please feel free to contact me by email with questions or concerns you may have that should not be posted directly in the course site under "Question for the Instructor". Success in this course program depends heavily on your personal health and well-being. Organization of school work first as your priority is critical to all else in work life balance. Recognize that stress is an expected part of the graduate college experience, and it often can be compounded by unexpected setbacks or life changes outside the classroom.Faculty strongly encourage you to reframe challenges as an unavoidable pathway to success. Reflect on your role in taking care of yourself throughout the semester, before the demands of exams and projects reach their peak. Please feel free to reach out to me about any difficulty you may be having that may impact your performance in your course work before it becomes too overwhelming. In addition to your academic advisor, I strongly encourage you to contact the many other support services on campus that stand ready to assist you.

A SUGGESTION:

How to be successful in this course

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"a suggestion"
by Anna



"I measure out my life with [coffee] spoons"
by anonymous

Some prompts for reflection

These pages are for reflecting on the way care and access work relationally. This isn't about "optimizing" your teaching or solving access problems alone.

These also aren't homework, but just questions to consider. Take what resonates. Leave what doesn't.

Nothing here has to be shared or completed.

What have you done to survive in spaces that weren't built for you?

What forms of access or support do you offer your students?

What forms of access or support do your students offer you?

How do you define care in the context of a classroom?

What kind of relationship do you want to have with your students' access needs? With your own?

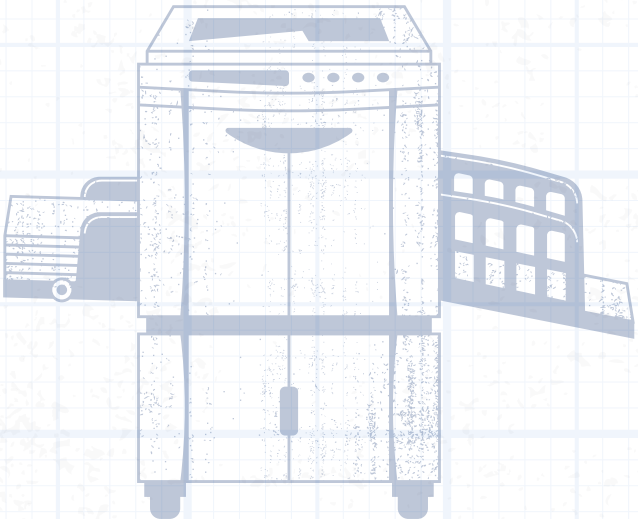
Why a Zine?

Zines are **a messy, low-budget, low-barrier way to share knowledge. They don't require technical expertise, and they resist the idea that knowledge has to be polished to be valuable.**

In disability and neurodivergent communities, zines are part of a long tradition of mutual aid and counter-narrative. They offer a way to circulate stories, strategies, and survival tools within specific communities.

As a teaching tool, zines:

- Center student voices and let students own the means of narration
- Offer alternatives to traditional ways of sharing and representing knowledge
- **Provide** avenues for embodied, sensory, or visual ways of reflecting and learning
- Make room for nonlinear, multimodal thinking



Here's a few places to find resources on disabled and neurodivergent zines:

Barnard Zine Library
One of the largest academic zine libraries. Their catalog tags zines on chronic illness, accessibility, neurodivergence, and mental health.
zines.barnard.edu

Mad Zine Research
An ongoing research project and curated collection of zines by and for people with lived experience of madness, psychiatric services, and mental health difference.
madzines.org/

QZAP – Queer Zine Archive Project
An extensive digital archive of queer zines. Includes a tag search feature to find intersecting work.
gittings.qzap.org

Wellcome Collection
A UK-based medical humanities museum with a large collection of disability, mental health, and neurodivergent zines. Searchable online.
wellcomecollection.org/

Zineopolis
An online archive of visual and art zines sponsored by the University of Portsmouth. Includes work on disability, identity, and care.
zineopolis.blogspot.com

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