



Teaching Neurodivergent Students: Classroom Strategies That Support All Learners

Commons on Campus: Facilitation Guide

Comprehensive resources
to facilitate a Quick Study
workshop

Classroom Strategies That Support All Learners

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Classroom Strategies That Support All Learners

Workshop Planner

Welcome to this Quick Study workshop resource. This guide will help you deliver a clear, practical session on **Teaching Neurodivergent Students: Classroom Strategies That Support All Learners**. The workshop complements ACUE's Quick Study and provides a structured plan to facilitate a 60-minute session.

Planning Considerations

Workshop Duration: 60 minutes

Participants

Faculty who may find the most value in this workshop are those who:

- want practical ways to understand students' learning needs and preferences.
- are looking to make their course structure and communication clearer.
- want ready-to-use strategies that help all students stay organized and engaged.

Facilitator Preparation

- Review the ACUE Quick Study *Teaching Neurodivergent Students: Classroom Strategies That Support All Learners*.
- Familiarize yourself with this agenda and the activity directions.
- Print or provide digital copies of the Skeletal Outline for participants.
- If online, prepare polls or prompts in Zoom or your platform of choice.

Participant Preparation

- None required prior to the session.

Workshop Goals

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Use open communication to support students.
- Use clear routines and structures to reduce stress.



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Workshop Agenda

Time	Activity	Facilitator Notes
0:00–0:04 4 min.	Welcome Participants Slide #1	• Welcome participants and introduce yourself. • Explain that this session focuses on how pragmatic, intentional changes can support neurodivergent students. • Note that these students may experience differences in attention, organization, sensory processing, or communication. • Explain that strategies such as clear expectations, consistent routines, and multiple ways to communicate can reduce confusion and benefit all learners. • Distribute the Skeletal Outline.
0:04–0:07 3 min.	Review Workshop Goals Slide #2	• Review the two goals: (1) Use open communication to support students. (2) Use clear routines and structures to reduce stress. • Explain that participants will leave with specific practices they can apply right away.
0:07–0:12 5 min.	Understanding Student Challenges Slide #3	• Explain that structure refers to how a course is organized (deadlines, routines, instructions), while communication refers to how instructors and students exchange information. • Ask participants: “Think about the types of challenges neurodivergent students may face, such as managing time, staying organized, interpreting instructions, or feeling comfortable asking for help. How confident do you feel supporting students with these needs in your classroom?” • Have participants jot down a quick response and share with a partner.



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Workshop Agenda Cont.

Time	Activity	Facilitator Notes
0:12–0:19 7 min.	Video: Engage Video Slide #4	• Play the Engage video from the Quick Study. • Prompt: “What did you hear that could immediately improve communication or structure in your own class?” • Invite a few short responses.
0:19–0:29 10 min.	Activity 1: Build a 5-Question Student Survey Slide #5	• Participants design a brief survey to understand student needs and preferences. • Refer to the Facilitator’s Activity Guide: Learning Survey Sprint Activity 1 for detailed instructions.
0:29–0:39 10 min.	Expert Talk: Kathryn Welby, EdD Slide #6	• Play the Expert Talk video from the Learn section of the Quick Study. • Prompt: “Which one practice will you try first: survey, weekly routine, rubric-first milestones, or backchannel? How will you collect feedback from students about your use of this practice?” • Have participants discuss in pairs and share examples.
0:39–0:54 15 min.	Activity 2: Structure Sprint Slide #7	• Refer to the Facilitator’s Activity Guide: Structure Sprint for detailed instructions.



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Workshop Agenda Cont.

Time	Activity	Facilitator Notes
0:54–0:58 4 min.	Reflection Slide #8	- Review key takeaways: - Students with neurodivergent needs may experience challenges with organization, time management, or interpreting instructions. Making intentional changes to address these needs can support not only neurodivergent students, but all students. - Open communication, such as student surveys, regular check-ins, or multiple communication channels, helps instructors understand and respond to student needs. - Clear routines and structure like consistent weekly patterns and early rubrics can reduce stress and improve learning for all students. - Prompt participants: “What is one small change you will make this week, and how will you make the change transparent to students?”
0:58–1:00 2 min.	Closing Slide #9	Remind participants to log in and complete the full Quick Study to earn their badge.



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Facilitator's Activity Guide

This section provides detailed guidance for facilitating the key activities in the workshop. These activities help participants apply Quick Study concepts in ways that can be implemented immediately.

Activity 1: Learning Survey Sprint

Purpose: Help instructors learn about students' preferences and needs early in the term to guide clearer communication and support strategies.

Steps:

1. Share two example questions to model simple, student-friendly wording.
2. Ask each participant to draft **1-2 survey questions** of their own.
3. Invite groups to share their questions with the room.
4. Select one representative from each group to email their group's questions to the facilitator.
5. Recommend that the facilitator compiles all submitted questions into a shared question bank after the session.
6. Briefly discuss possible delivery methods (QR code, LMS link, paper form).
7. Remind participants to use their survey results to refine communication or course structure.

Example Questions:

- "What helps you learn best in this course?"
- "What makes it harder for you to stay engaged or understand instructions?"



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Facilitator's Activity Guide Cont.

Activity 2: Structure Sprint

Purpose: Help faculty create predictable routines and transparent assignments that reduce cognitive load and anxiety for all learners, especially those who may struggle with organization, attention, or interpreting expectations.

Steps:

1. Ask participants to choose one quick-start option:
 - Weekly Routine: Outline a consistent class rhythm students can anticipate each week.
 - Example: Each Monday, I'll post a weekly overview. Wednesdays are for application, Fridays for reflection, or a quiz. Post this in the syllabus or LMS.
 - Rubric-First Assignment: Post a major assignment rubric early with 2–3 milestone dates.
 - Example: Research paper milestones: topic due Week 3, bibliography Week 5, draft Week 7. Rubric posted in Week 2.
 - Backchannel: Add a communication option where students can ask questions comfortably.
 - Example: Use a Padlet board, LMS thread, or Google form for quick questions.
2. Ask:
 - “Where will students see this change first?” (syllabus, LMS, assignment instructions)
 - What is one way your new structure could support learning for all students?
3. Allow 5–7 minutes for planning or drafting.
4. Invite a few participants to share examples.



Classroom Strategies That Support All Learners

Facilitator's Activity Guide Cont.

Activity 2: Structure Sprint Cont.

Key Takeaways

- Students with neurodivergent needs may experience challenges with organization, time management, or interpreting instructions. Making intentional changes to address these needs can support not only neurodivergent students, but all students.
- Open communication (surveys, check-ins, or feedback forms) helps identify needs early and builds trust.
- Clear routines and transparent structure (weekly patterns, early rubrics, step-by-step assignments) reduce stress and support all students.
- Encourage faculty to identify one small, visible change they can implement this week.
- Remind faculty to log in and complete the full Quick Study to earn their badge.



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Classroom Strategies That Support All Learners

Skeletal Outline

Teaching Neurodivergent Students: Classroom Strategies That Support All Learners

Use this outline to follow along during the workshop. It highlights key prompts, activities, and examples. Space is provided to capture your notes and reflections.

Workshop Goals

- Use open communication to support students.
- Use clear routines and structures to reduce stress.

Understanding Student Challenges

Quick Write: In your course, do students struggle more with communication or structure? Why?

My response:



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Skeletal Outline Cont.

Activity 1: Build a 5-Question Student Survey

Draft your survey items using ideas from the Question Bank below or your own.

- What helps you learn best (visuals, examples, discussion, quiet time)?
- What makes learning harder (fast pacing, unclear instructions)?
- What is your preferred way to ask questions (email, after class, anonymous form)?
- How do you prefer to receive feedback (written comments, quick meetings)?

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Roll-out Plan:



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Skeletal Outline Cont.

Activity 2: Structure Sprint

Choose one option below to plan your structure improvement.

Examples are provided for each option to guide your thinking.

1. Weekly Routine: Outline your class rhythm.
 - Example: Each Monday post an overview, Wednesday for practice, Friday for reflection.
2. Rubric-First Assignment: Identify an assignment and 2–3 milestone steps.
 - Example: Topic due Week 3, outline Week 5, draft Week 7, rubric posted early.
3. Backchannel: Add a communication option.
 - Example: Create a Padlet board or LMS thread for anonymous questions.

My plan:

Key Takeaways

Reflect on how communication and structure support student success.

What is one small change you will make this week, and how will students see it?

Next Steps: Log into the Quick Study and complete all sections to earn your badge.



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Next Steps



Encourage faculty to complete the course to earn a badge!

Send a follow-up

Thanking your attendees for coming and following up with workshop highlights and next steps is a great way to keep the conversation going and invite faculty to turn their workshop reflections into action.

Here are a few things the follow-up could include:

- Major takeaways from the workshop
- A feedback survey to collect thoughts and suggestions from the attendees
- A link to the Commons where faculty can access the course
- Details on upcoming events

Host your next workshop

Keep the engagement going by hosting your next workshop on an ACUE Quick Study.

Provide feedback

Fill out [this brief survey](#) to provide your feedback on the workshop to the ACUE team.



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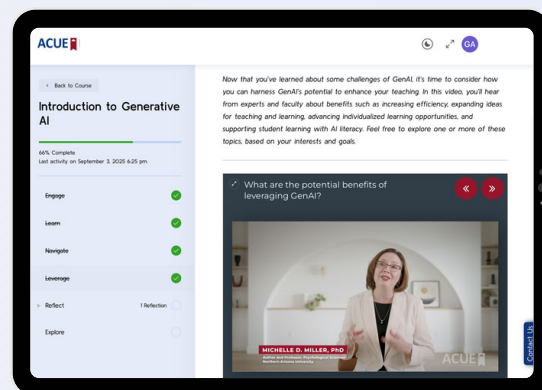
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