WELEARN
LEARNING SERVICES

THE LEARNING PROFESSIONAL'S GUIDE TO INCLUSIVE & ACCESSIBLE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

In the modern corporate world, the way employees learn and develop is becoming increasingly digital. With new technologies and platforms emerging, organizations must keep in mind that an inclusive course design is a must.

> For those unfamiliar with the term, inclusive course design means an eLearning course creation that caters to people of different backgrounds and abilities.

The learning experience should be accessible and enjoyable for everyone, regardless of their learning style, language, literacy skills, disability, and other factors.

Learning is an essential part of personal growth, and it should be accessible and inclusive to everyone regardless of their background, identity, or ability. *Accessibility means providing learners with equal opportunities to access to participate in learning activities, while inclusivity means ensuring that learners feel valued, respected, and supported throughout their learning journey.*

THE 5 WHYS LEARNING NEEDS TO BE INCLUSIVE & ACCESSIBLE

1. **Equity:** Accessible and inclusive learning creates equity by providing learners with equal opportunities to access and participate in learning activities. It helps to reduce the achievement gap and improve academic outcomes for marginalized learners.
2. **Diversity:** Accessible and inclusive learning embraces diversity by recognizing and valuing the unique backgrounds, identities, and perspectives of learners. It helps to create a safe and welcoming learning environment that encourages learners to share their ideas.
3. **Empowerment:** Accessible and inclusive learning empowers learners to take ownership of their learning by providing them with the resources, tools, and support they need to succeed.
4. **Innovation:** Accessible and inclusive learning fosters innovation by encouraging learners to think critically, creatively, and collaboratively. It helps to create a learning culture that values diverse perspectives and ideas.
5. **Social Justice:** Accessible and inclusive learning promotes social justice by challenging systemic barriers and promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion. It helps to create a more just and equitable society by empowering learners to use their knowledge and skills to make a positive impact on their communities.
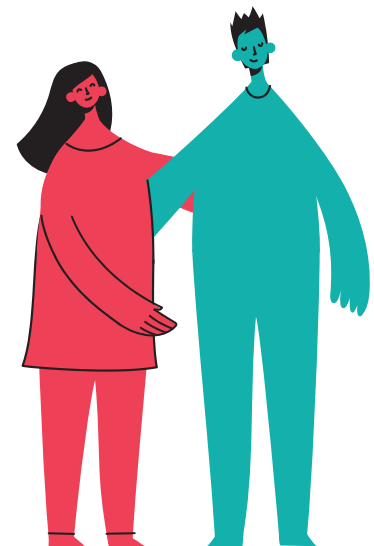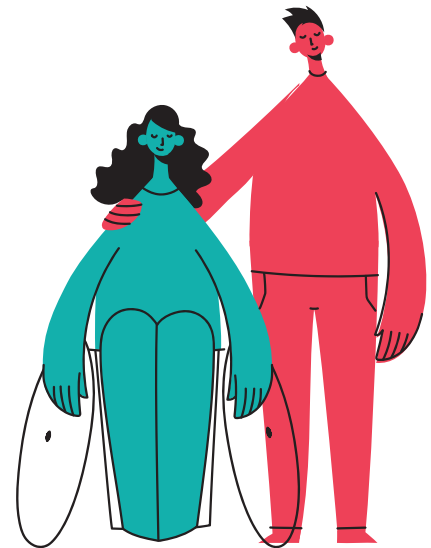
INCLUSIVE COURSE DESIGN

Research suggests that employees with a greater sense of inclusion at work report 167% higher eNPS scores. (eNPS=Employee net promoter score. It refers to the likelihood a current employee would recommend your company as a great place to work.)

Moreover, a strong sense of belonging and inclusion among employees results in a 50% lower risk of turnover. And it all starts with learning.

So, as organizations strive to create equitable learning experiences for all, the importance of understanding and considering the needs of diverse learners and organizational culture is paramount.

KEY BENEFITS OF INCLUSIVE COURSE DESIGN

1. It helps ensure that all employees have access to the same learning materials, regardless of any special requirements or disabilities. This 'level playing field' approach is key to creating an environment of fairness and equality in the workplace, allowing all employees to contribute equally to their learning.
2. An inclusive approach to course design helps foster an organizational culture of inclusivity and acceptance, promoting a sense of belonging and encouraging collaboration and creativity among all employees.
3. An inclusive approach to course design ensures that the eLearning course is engaging and motivating for all learners. Fostering a positive learning experience can help to ensure that employees remain engaged and motivated throughout the training, leading to higher levels of knowledge retention and improved performance.

BEST PRACTICES AND PRINCIPLES FOR INCLUSIVE COURSE DESIGN

Understand Your Learners And Organizational Culture
Corporate learning and development professionals should strive to ensure that the content of the course is relevant to the learners' needs and that the course design takes into consideration different learning styles, backgrounds, and abilities.

**This requires understanding the learners and the organizational culture.**

- Who are your learners?
- What is their experience with learning?
- What do they already know?
- How, when, and where do they access learning?
- What is the organizational context?
- What has been successful in the past regarding course design?
- How does the organization envision the future of elearning and training?
- What values do you want to promote through your course?
- Are there desired cultural changes?

CONSIDER THE RESOURCES AND ASSESSMENTS TO INCLUDE

In addition to the learning experience, it is important to consider the resources and assessments you can include in the program. Providing diverse and varied resources will help ensure that all learners can benefit from the course.

If you're teaching a course about diversity, for example, make sure that you're using images of people from all different backgrounds to demonstrate the importance of inclusion. This can also help to create a more inclusive learning experience for your learners.

When choosing scenarios for your course, it's important to think about the experiences that the learners you're targeting have had. For example, if your course is aimed at Gen Z, they may have different experiences than someone who is older. Make sure that you're including scenarios that are relevant and appropriate to the audience you're targeting
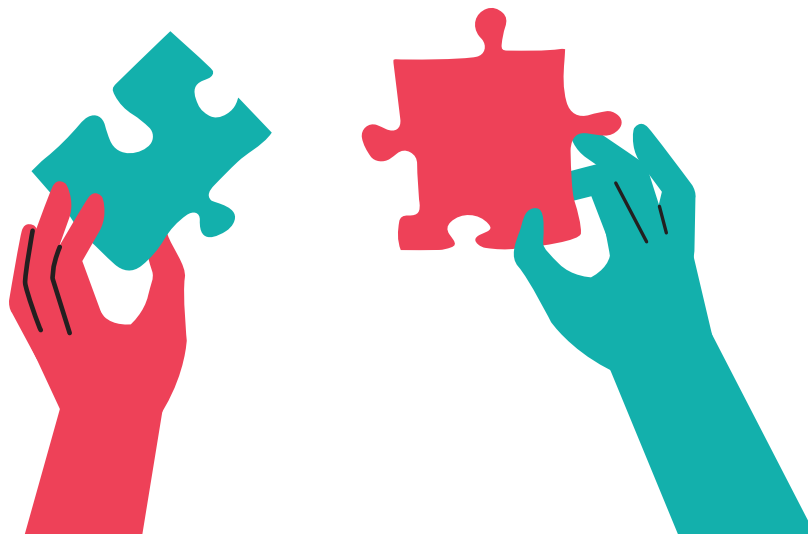
CREATE FLEXIBLE
LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Is important to create a flexible learning experience that caters to the needs of the learners. This can be done by offering courses in different formats, such as self-paced ones, allowing learners to access the course anytime and anywhere they need it.

Make sure that your course design is accessible to all learners. Ensure that the course is easy to navigate, with no technical barriers that could prevent learners from accessing and completing the material.

Include audio, visual, and written content in your course to ensure that learners of all literacy levels can understand the content. Ensure that the course is interactive, with opportunities for learners to ask questions, engage in discussion, and collaborate with other learners in the platform (or otherwise.) Consider the different devices that learners may use to access the course and ensure that the content is optimized for all devices.

Finally, include a variety of assessment options throughout the course to ensure that learners can demonstrate their understanding of the material.

Simple Learning Accessibility Checks For Your Content

When it comes to making online learning accessible, there are a few simple checks that you can use to ensure your content is accessible to all.

Page Titles and Headings

Page titles and headings are important for both search engine optimization and elearning accessibility.

When using headings, make sure they are descriptive and concise and follow a logical hierarchy. This makes it easier for users to quickly navigate and scan the page.

ALT Text

ALT text (alternative text) is an important elearning accessibility tool that helps visually impaired users better understand images. When creating ALT text, use concise, clear language that accurately describes the image for users who can't see it.

Color Contrast

When creating online learning content, make sure the colors used for the text and background provide sufficient contrast. This makes it easier for people with low vision to read the text.

Keyboard Access and Visual Focus

Many people who are blind or with mobility impairments rely on the keyboard commands, such as voice input. Ensure that users can easily navigate your online learning content using only a keyboard or voice search.

Forms, Labels, and Errors

They should be clear, descriptive, and easy to understand. When users make errors, make sure that the error message is as descriptive and helpful as possible.

Moving, Flashing, or Blinking Content

Moving, flashing, or blinking content can be disorienting and distracting for some users. Especially some people with attention deficit disorder or visual processing disorders. If you must use this type of content, make sure that users can easily turn it off or adjust the speed.

Multimedia Alternatives

When creating multimedia content for online learning, make sure to provide alternatives for those who are unable to access it. This includes providing transcripts for audio content and captions for video content. But more on that below.

BOTTOM LINE

By following these strategies, you can create a course that caters to the diverse needs of your learners while also providing a flexible learning experience. By ensuring that the course is well-designed, interactive, and accessible, you can create a course that is both enjoyable and educational for your learners.

Are you ready to make your courses more accessible and inclusive? WeLearn can help...we are all in this together and together we learn.

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