

The Agile Edge, Mastering Diverse Learner Engagement I4PL Conference Workshop, 2023

Diversity of Learners: A few Pro Tips for Engagement and Inclusion



- **Vision Loss:** Ensure Alt text in handouts and resources with visuals. Describe the images that are relevant when using slides during facilitation. Describe the speaker as part of the introduction.
- **Hearing Loss:** Add Closed Captions to videos and resources sharing before and after a session. If you have online participants ensure Closed Captions are activated, on the platform you are using. Be aware if some sounds can bother those with hearing aids.
- **Mobility Needs:** Ensure travel paths in a learning room is accessible. Have one of the flip chart papers lower, so that someone in a wheelchair can also participate.
- **Colour Blind:** Don't have red and green beside each other and only rely on colours to distinguish a chart or graph, use labels.
- **Gender Diversity:** Use pronouns and examples that include they/them. Use images that are gender diverse. Also use examples and images that include gender diverse relationships, or not only a married couple who are a man and woman.
- **BIPOC:** Use images that include people that are Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour. Use Images of people that have a variety of cultural backgrounds and religions.
- **English as a Foreign Language:** Caution when using acronyms (for everyone), and culturally specific examples, such as 7-11, if you were providing a presentation in another country, or for people who are new to Canada. Use clear, plain language that anyone can understand, even if English is not their first language.
- **Learning Needs:** Ask people ahead of the learning experience what their additional needs, support and accommodations are.
- **Communication or Learning Preferences:** Multiple Intelligences, layer the learning and engagement experience to include Visual, Auditory, Active (activities), Logical, Solitary, Social, Verbal, and others.
- **Other:** Use images that are of all ages, and body types. (Neurodiversity on the next page.)

[The Online Shift, 101 Pro Tips for Facilitators \(Book\)](#)

- **Neurodiversity:** Neurodiversity refers to the different ways people think, feel and act. Examples are Autism Spectrum, ADHD, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia, Executive Functioning Disorder and Tourette's Syndrome. 10 to 20% of the population are neurodivergent. Our world is often structured for neurotypicals. Not everyone can understand an analogy, it's still OK to use them, for those that benefit from a story and example, however, add on explanations that clarify in plain language. Give people a chance to think and process information. Consider that if there are a lot of distractions, in an auditory or visual way (noise in the environment), this can be difficult for some to pay attention. Don't use blinking items or animations in slides, too often. Welcome fidget resources, or support is someone is using ear plugs to block some distracting noises.



Flexible & Agile Facilitator Pro Tips

- Don't make assumptions and be aware of your bias. You may be a visual learner, but include other ways that people prefer information.
- Consider all the different learning needs.
- Intentionally facilitate a safe and inviting environment, that supports and considers a wide variety of diversity needs and inclusion.
- Ask your group what their needs are, ahead of time, or during the session, to adapt quickly and support the needs in real time.
- Follow-up with additional resources, considering what needs arose during the learning experience, and adapt for next time to include what may have been missed.
- It takes effort, but it's worth it. For example, adding Alt text to images for handouts, and ensuring that the document has gone through an accessibility checker is important. However, don't drop all the images on a slide deck because you need to take this extra step. Don't become boring again – but also give yourself grace, progress over perfection, but keep trying to do more.

Click the image of a QR code to link to a [resource page](#) with more.

