



What this Module is about

In language classrooms around the world, more and more learners show signs of **neurodiversity** — including dyslexia, ADHD, and autism.

In this Module you will cover the following:

- Understand what neurodiversity really means
- Recognize common signs of Specific Learning Differences (SLDs)
- Reflect on how these differences impact language learning
- Create more inclusive, effective learning environments
- Apply practical strategies that benefit all learners

As a teacher, it's not about doing more work, it's about being more effective

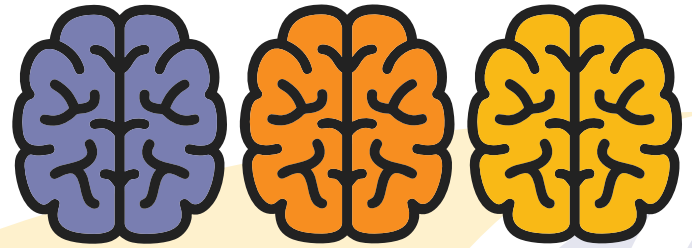


Key concepts at a glance

1

Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity is the idea that there is no single “normal” brain. Differences like dyslexia, ADHD, and autism are **natural variations**, not deficits.



2

Specific Learning Differences (SLDs)

Common SLDs in language classrooms include:

- **Dyslexia** → challenges with reading, spelling, and processing written language
- **ADHD** → differences in attention, focus, and self-regulation
- **Autism (ASD)** → differences in communication, social interaction, and sensory processing

These often **overlap (comorbidity)** and are frequently **underdiagnosed**.

3

Underdiagnosis & Misinterpretation

Many students are never identified. Instead, they are labelled as lazy, unmotivated or disruptive
In reality, they may be working twice as hard just to keep up.

4

Impact on Language Learning

Language learning highlights many challenges:

- Reading, spelling, and vocabulary retention (dyslexia)
- Focus, memory, and task completion (ADHD)
- Communication, interaction, and flexibility (autism)

But it also reveals **strengths**:

- Creativity
- Problem-solving
- Pattern recognition
- Communication skills

5

Why Accommodations Matter

Accommodation is not about making things easier, it's about making learning **accessible**.

- **Equality** → same for everyone
- **Equity** → what each learner needs
- **Justice** → removing barriers altogether

Without support, we risk the **Matthew Effect**: Students who struggle fall further behind, while others move ahead.



Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

UDL means designing lessons that work for everyone from the start.

It is based on three principles:

- **Representation** → different ways to present information
- **Action & Expression** → different ways to show learning
- **Engagement** → different ways to motivate learners

UDL benefits:

- Students with SLDs
- Multilingual learners
- And ultimately, the whole class

What this means for teachers

You don't need to diagnose or redesign everything.
But you *can*:

- Observe patterns instead of judging behavior
- Offer flexibility in how students learn and respond
- Reduce unnecessary barriers
- Focus on strengths, not just challenges
- Create a classroom where students feel safe to try

Small changes in teaching can have a massive impact on learning.



Reflection & Action

Some final questions after taking the MOOC to reflect on your own teaching practice:

1

Understanding your students

- Which students in your class might be struggling for reasons you haven't fully understood yet?
- Have you ever labelled a student as "lazy" or "unmotivated"? What might be behind that behavior?

2

Your current practice

- In your lessons, where do you see a focus on **equality** rather than **equity**?
- What barriers might exist in your classroom that you hadn't noticed before?

3

Language learning & SLDs

- Which aspects of language learning (reading, writing, listening, speaking) might be hardest for your neurodiverse students?
- Where might their **strengths** lie instead?

4

Accommodations & mindset

- How do you currently feel about accommodations? Has this changed?
- What is one small adjustment you could introduce immediately?



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5

Applying UDL

How could you offer:

- More than one way to present content?
- More than one way for students to respond?
- More than one way to engage learners?



6

Looking forward

- What is one thing you will stop doing after this course?
- What is one thing you will start doing?



A final thought

Inclusive teaching is not about doing more.
It's about doing things differently –
so more students can succeed.