

Navigating Neurodiversity:

How to Address Different Learning Preferences and Needs

In the ever-evolving field of corporate training, embracing diversity in learning preferences and needs is paramount. But what does this look like when done effectively?

Picture entering a corporate training session where participants bring a wealth of diverse backgrounds and preferred ways of learning to the table. Adopting a one-size-fits-all approach to learning would force learners to consume and leverage information in a way that's cumbersome, tedious, or burdensome. Conversely, when everyone's learning preferences and needs are met, learning would feel seamless, enjoyable, and enriching. This is when authentic and long-term engagement and retention happen.

“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.”

—Benjamin Franklin

Diverse learning preferences and needs, including visual, hands-on, and auditory, arise from a combination of factors, including unique cognitive preferences, sensory modalities, and consumption preferences.

For example, some people might enjoy learning through podcasts or interviews or digging through chart data, while others excel when they get their hands dirty in real-world, practical activities. Some prefer reading over watching videos and a few may choose to watch a video demonstration, while others prefer watching and listening to a live speaker in front of them. Some love having long conversations while others love making long lists. In short, we all have unique ways of learning.

This rich tapestry of diversity forms the foundation upon which inclusive and high-impact learning environments are constructed. In essence, there is no singular “right” or “wrong” way to learn, as diverse preferences contribute to the richness and depth of the greater learning experience.

On the pages to follow, we explore what some learning preferences and needs, such as experiential learning and neurodiversity, look like and how they influence the development of corporate training experiences. We'll also discuss Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as an inclusive approach to accommodate the abilities and needs of all learners and to eliminate unnecessary obstacles in the learning process.



What Are Some Different Learning Preferences?

Aural Learners

Enjoy Hearing Sounds, Music, and Speaking

Individuals with a strong aural preference excel in environments where discussions, stories, and verbal explanations dominate. They thrive in settings that emphasize listening and speaking as key components of the learning process.

Visual Learners

Enjoy Reading and Analyzing Charts, Tables, and Maps

Those with a visual learning preference find understanding easier through visual aids such as graphs, charts, and maps. These learners benefit from information presented in a visually engaging format.

Read/Write Learners

Enjoy Note Taking, Reading Articles, Perusing Handouts

Learners who prefer reading and writing are drawn to textual information. Lists, notes, and written explanations resonate deeply with their learning preference, making fully online formats particularly effective for them.

Kinesthetic Learners

Enjoy Being an Active Participant, Physical Movement

Kinesthetic learners favor a hands-on approach. They learn best through practical exercises, real-life examples, and learning by doing, often benefiting from a hybrid learning environment that combines theoretical and practical elements.

Experiential Learners

Enjoy Investigating, Problem Solving, Posing Questions to Solve

Experiential learning emphasizes the immediate applicability of knowledge in real-world scenarios, fostering a direct connection between classroom learning and workplace application. This approach is instrumental in closing the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills, ensuring that learners are well-equipped for real-world challenges.

What Is Neurodiversity?

The term “neurodiversity” refers to the spectrum of brain differences among people, encompassing both neurodivergent and neurotypical individuals. Up to one in five people, reports the National Cancer Institute, are neurodivergent.

Neurodivergent individuals—with conditions including Attention Deficit Disorders, Autism, and Dyslexia—often face unique challenges in traditional learning environments. For example, it may be challenging for neurodivergent learners to effectively and efficiently process written information or various kinds of multisensory information being presented at once.

What Is the Universal Design for Learning?

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) advocates for creating learning experiences that are highly accessible to all by providing multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement.

This includes offering customizable display options, alternative formats for auditory and visual information, and varied methods for response and navigation.

Based on This Concept, What Are Some Good Checkpoints to Follow?

- Implement a learning approach that accommodates all preferences: aural, visual, read/write, and kinesthetic
- Design content and courses with neurodiversity in mind
- Adopt UDL principles to ensure inclusivity
- Utilize technology and resources effectively to enhance learning experiences for diverse learners
- Provide learners with alternative ways to showcase what they've learned
- Tie lessons into what people are interested in
- Offer a variety of ways to acquire information
- Ensure content is highly accessible and easy to navigate
- Consider text size, contrast colors, volume or rate of speech, and visual layouts and how elements such as these can be best presented
- Offer speech-to-text, written transcriptions, visual or emotional descriptions of musical interpretations, and so forth where available so people can read and listen concurrently
- Leverage simple visuals like emoticons or symbols to represent emphasis

What Is SAI360's Approach to Supporting Neurodivergent Learners?

To create inclusive learning experiences, it's essential to steer clear of dense text blocks, minimize on-page distractions, and present content in smaller, more digestible portions. This ensures that all learners—regardless of their neurodiversity—can engage and benefit from the material.

SAI360 stands at the forefront of this endeavor, with software and learning resources that integrate ethics, governance, risk, and compliance.

Bringing together Governance, Risk, Compliance (GRC) and Ethics & Compliance (E&C) Learning supports neurodiversity by ensuring educational programs are designed and delivered in a way that acknowledges and caters to neurodiverse individuals' unique needs.

Here are some examples of how this integration can prove beneficial:

Compliance with Accessibility Standards: GRC integration ensures learning materials and platforms comply with legal and ethical standards for accessibility. This means creating content that's accessible to learners with various neurological conditions, such as dyslexia, ADHD, and autism, by incorporating features like text-to-speech, adjustable text sizes, and color contrast options.

Risk Management: By considering the needs of neurodiverse learners, GRC practices help identify and mitigate risks associated with exclusion or ineffectiveness of learning content. This proactive approach ensures all learners have equal opportunities to engage with and benefit from educational materials, reducing the risk of leaving neurodiverse individuals behind.

Governance and Oversight: Through governance, organizations can establish policies and frameworks that prioritize inclusivity and diversity in learning. This includes setting standards for how content is created, ensuring it is designed with neurodiverse learners in mind from the outset.

Customized Learning Paths: GRC integration supports the creation of learning environments that offer choices in how information is presented and interacted with. This flexibility allows neurodiverse learners to engage with content in ways that suit their individual learning styles and needs, such as choosing between video, text, or interactive activities.

Support Systems: GRC/Learning integration promotes the development of support systems within educational programs, such as mentorship, peer support, and access to resources that help neurodiverse learners navigate challenges and leverage their strengths.

4 Ways to Optimize Content for Neurodivergent Learners



Simplify Text

Break large text into smaller sections with clear headings and use white space effectively



Visual Aids

Enhance concepts with graphics and illustrations



Highlight Key Elements

Use bold text for main points and introduce lessons with key questions



Audio Support

Implement audio narration, but avoid overloading with simultaneous text and graphics

Taken together, these strategies create a more inclusive and effective learning environment for all.

SAI360 creates content that uses a variety of page formats and interactions to accommodate diverse learning needs and leverages strategies to provide learners with as much autonomy as possible. This includes adjusting video playback speed, utilizing closed captioning, or providing a text and graphics option for easier comprehension.

SAI360's strategy also focuses on creating content that is simple, clear, and free of jargon. This involves chunking content, using high-contrast colors, and providing visual cues for navigation. The goal is simple—to ensure learning experiences are accessible and engaging for all learners, regardless of their preference or neurodiversity.

Summary

It is important to consider your organization's Ethics & Compliance training strategy through the lens of GRC.

- Are you inclusive of the needs of your neurodiverse workforce?
- Are the needs of your neurodiverse learners addressed in your policies?
- Are you in compliance with legal and ethical standards for learning?

These are important questions to ask that can ultimately increase the effectiveness of your program.

Interested in learning more about how SAI360 supports neurodiverse learners? [Let's start a conversation.](#)

Our unified approach to risk sets us apart

Today's complex risk landscape demands more. SAI360 leads the way with an integrated GRC platform and Learning solution that spans the entire risk spectrum.

Risk Management Solutions

- Enterprise & Operational Risk Management
- Regulatory Change Management
- Policy Management
- Third-Party Risk Management
- Internal Control
- Internal Audit
- Incident Management
- Conflicts of Interest (COI) Disclosure Management
- IT & Cybersecurity
- Business Continuity Management

Ethics & Compliance Learning Solutions

- Anti-Bribery & Anti-Corruption
- Competition & Anti-Trust
- Conflicts of Interest
- Data Protection & Privacy
- Information Security
- Exports, Imports & Trade Compliance
- Harassment & Discrimination