



— A 4-part LinkedIn series

Inclusive learning design, with **almost no** extra time.

20 practical, low-cost strategies — across content, engagement, environment and culture — to make learning work for the room that's actually in front of you.

Part 1 · Content

Part 2 · Engagement

Part 3 · Environment

Part 4 · Culture

Busting the “accessibility is hard” myth

Most of the extra time people blame on “accessibility” is actually the cost of **retrofitting** — adding fixes after the fact. Bake these in as you design, and most of it disappears.



Check your contrast

WebAIM found 83% of webpages tested had low contrast. Run a contrast checker before you ship a slide deck.

No extra time



Add alt text as you go

Add it while you write, not after — especially for tables or graphs that carry meaning. Skip only truly decorative images.

Minimum extra time



Use real headings

Bolded text isn't a heading. Screen readers navigate by H1/H2/H3 — label levels properly and don't skip any.

No extra time (once you know it)



Write links that say where they go

Ditch “click here.” Screen readers announce “link” before each one — 17 identical links all read the same.

No extra time



Make lists real lists

Use numbers when order matters, bullets when it doesn't — not typed numbers or line breaks a screen reader can't detect.

No extra time

Making virtual trainings work for everyone

L&D teams run virtual sessions constantly. A few structural habits make them dramatically more accessible — without adding a minute to your prep.



Start with why

Open every workshop — and every topic inside it — with why it matters. Connect learning to context and engagement rises multi-fold.

No extra time



Keep structure consistent

A predictable shape (context → content → reflection → application) lowers cognitive load so people can focus on the content itself.

No extra time



Caption every video

Always use closed captions. For e-learning, add a transcript too, so people can scan instead of re-watching.

Minimum extra time



Send the agenda beforehand

A short “pre-game” email — agenda, breaks, what’s expected — does outsized work for cognitive load and psychological safety.

Minimum extra time



Offer more ways to speak

Default trainings reward confident extroverts. Add chat, breakouts, or think-pair-share so good ideas that don’t arrive in neat sentences get heard too.

No extra time

The most underrated lever: the room itself

If basic needs aren't met, learning doesn't happen. Two things to watch for: what's over-stimulating the nervous system, and what's adding unnecessary cognitive load.



Regulate nervous systems

Watch for bright lights, loud printers, uncomfortable chairs — anything quietly arousing the room.



Manage cognitive load

Busy slide backgrounds and “jazzed up” visuals compete with the content itself. Simplify.



Accessibility-check your tools

Run accessibility checks on your LMS and authoring tools so the virtual environment works for everyone too.

Min extra time



Normalise fidgeting

Offer fidget toys or paper to doodle on in person. Online, normalise fidgeting — we're not a 1970s classroom.

No extra time



Change the room, not just the content

For longer programs, mix it up: a walk-and-talk, a circle instead of a boardroom, a session away from the desks.

No extra time



Bring a bland room to life

Stuck with a boardroom? A few small, intentional touches change how a space feels to be in.

Min extra time



Feed the room well

Pastries and pizza spike and crash blood sugar. Try fruit, yoghurt and protein — with a little something nice too.

No extra time

Recognising who the learning is built for

Our systems are often designed for one learner: neurotypical, confident, Western-systems-educated. A few questions to flip that quietly, wherever you already teach.



Who's in your case studies?

Our case studies are full of Johns and Marys — our rooms are full of Aislings and Rajs, living at the intersection of several identities. Swap one out.

Min extra time



Whose theories are you teaching?

Drucker and Sinek — or Gregory Cajete's work, or the Māori concept of kaitiakitanga? There's wisdom beyond Europe and North America.

No extra time



Can people share their own experience?

Invite “what does this look like in your culture?” conversations. It builds psychological safety and broadens the room's perspective.

No extra time



Is your language actually plain?

Idioms don't translate and cultural context doesn't carry. Ask: who might we be alienating with this example?

No extra time



Notice who speaks first

It's usually the most confident, or the most powerful, person in the room. Notice the quiet hierarchies — and design for the quiet person.

No extra time



— 20 strategies · 4 parts · almost #NoExtraTime

Diversity isn't an edge case. It's the default.

Every room we design for — every training, every workshop, every classroom — is already diverse. Design for the fringe, and it tends to work for more of the room. Inclusive learning isn't an add-on. It's an ongoing design choice.

“Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.”

Want to talk inclusive learning design?

Ta'leem Consulting · free discovery call, a few spots open

[Book a discovery call →](#)