



Neurodiversity in the language classroom – creating inclusive environments

Neurodiversity in the language classroom highlights the unique strengths and challenges of learners with diverse neurological profiles, including ADHD, autism, and other cognitive variations. This presentation will explore the essential aspects of fostering an inclusive and equitable environment that supports the success of all students. We will discuss what neurodiversity looks like in the language classroom, including how neurological differences may manifest in classroom behaviour, emotion, and language acquisition. Some effective strategies and practical tools will be shared to create more inclusive learning environments and optimise learning. This includes integrating Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to provide multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression. Participants will leave with actionable insights and resources to support neurodiverse learners, ensuring they thrive alongside their peers. This session is designed for educators seeking to embrace the full spectrum of student diversity and foster a classroom culture that values every learner's unique potential.

Presented by Tanja Hafenstein & Adrian Cohen, UQ College

Tanja Hafenstein has a passion for teaching and learning (and banging on drums). Recently, she's been delving into the world of neurodiversity in schools, exploring inclusive and equitable ways to empower students to achieve their full potential. As a TESOL Language Teacher, Learning Advisor, and Professional Development Committee member at UQ College, Tanja combines her expertise with her love for fostering growth. She has presented and taught across the globe, which has enriched her experiences with diverse learners.

Adrian Cohen is currently a TESOL teacher at UQ College with an interest in linguistics, music and education holding degrees in each with an eye toward a future PhD. More recently, Adrian has turned his focus toward neurodiversity and inclusivity within the education space. He is passionate about student engagement and establishing a strong, positive, and supportive classroom culture with equal opportunities to learn. Outside of work, Adrian can be found either with his head in a book or playing guitar.