



Learning disability and Educational Inequality: When Diagnosis Becomes a Social Issue

Workshop Chairs:

1. Aya Rharbi, Master student, Grenoble Ecole de Management, Grenoble, France
Aya.rharbi@grenoble-em.com
2. Sirine Bensator, 3rd year bachelor student, Grenoble Ecole de Management, Grenoble, France
Sirine.bensator@grenoble-em.com
3. Wail Makroum, 3rd year bachelor student, Grenoble Ecole de Management, Grenoble, France
Wail.makroum@grenoble-em.com
4. Aya Tir, 1st year Bachelor of Civil Law and Juris Doctor student, McGill University's Faculty of Law, Montreal, Canada Aya.tir@mail.mcgill.ca

Workshop Format

Interactive workshop combining a brief framing with small-group, case-based discussion and collective reflection on inclusive, context-aware practices.

Workshop Rationale

Learning disabilities such as dyslexia and related neurodevelopmental conditions including dyscalculia, dysgraphia, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder are widely recognized as universal. Yet the processes through which they are identified, named, and addressed are deeply shaped by social, linguistic, cultural, and institutional contexts. In low-resource, multilingual, and post-colonial educational systems, diagnostic frameworks and pedagogical responses developed in Western contexts may unintentionally reproduce educational inequalities, either through over-pathologization or through systematic under-detection of vulnerable students.

This Workshop examines the intersection of learning disabilities and educational inequality through an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) lens, with a particular focus on the Moroccan educational context as a case study. The workshop draws on original field-based data collected during the *Prête-moi ta voix* initiative, notably a qualitative survey administered to educational and clinical specialists (including speech therapists and other practitioners) who participated in the learning-disorder screenings organized as part of the project. The survey captures practitioners' observations, professional



judgments, and reflections on diagnostic challenges encountered in multilingual and resource-constrained school environments; the workshop explores how linguistic diversity, socio-economic disadvantage, institutional constraints, and cultural stigma shape access to diagnosis and support for students with learning differences.

The purpose of this workshop is to bring together scholars, educators, and practitioners to answer the following question: **“How can we detect and support learning disabilities in post-colonial educational, low-resource, multilingual, contexts without blindly importing Western diagnostic models?”**

Workshop Objectives

During the session, participants will:

- Examine how learning disabilities intersect with educational inequality through an EDI lens.
- Reflect on the social, linguistic, and institutional factors shaping the identification of learning disabilities in multilingual and resource-constrained contexts.
- Engage in context-aware, ethical approaches to early detection and inclusive support practices.
- Foster dialogue between researchers, educators, students, and practitioners around inclusive and equitable educational responses.

Workshop Structure (75 minutes)

1. Framing the problem

The workshop chairs will provide a brief framing that introduces learning disabilities diagnosis in context.

Morocco as a case study (*Prête-moi ta voix* project):

- Field data from specialists involved in student screenings
- Observed realities: late detection; confusion between learning disabilities, language delay, and socio-economic disadvantage; overwhelmed teachers; strong stigma around “disability”
- Structural context: multilingualism (Darija / Arabic / French / Tamazight), large classroom sizes, institutional constraints

The case study leads to questioning the validity of Western-developed screening tools, rethinking what “learning difficulty” means in multilingual contexts and identifying screening bias at three levels: linguistic, cultural, and institutional.



2. The workshop

Part 1 : Case-Based Analysis

Participants are presented with anonymized, realistic cases inspired by field observations from the *Prête-moi ta voix* initiative. Working in small groups, they analyze each case to identify possible explanations for the observed learning difficulties, reflect on conclusions that should not be drawn prematurely, and discuss minimal pedagogical adaptations that could support the student prior to any formal diagnosis.

Part 2 : Diagnostic humility exercise

This segment introduces the principle of pedagogical hypothesis rather than diagnosis. Participants are invited to reformulate learning difficulties as hypotheses, propose low-cost and low-risk classroom adaptations, and reflect on the importance of observation and adjustment before labeling, particularly in multilingual and resource-constrained contexts.

Part 3 : Designing a context-aware framework

In the final phase, participants collaboratively design a context-sensitive, three-step approach to early detection adapted to the Moroccan educational context. This framework emphasizes classroom observation, pedagogical response, and referral only when necessary, fostering inclusive and equitable practices aligned with EDI principles.

Intended Participants

This workshop is designed for:

- Undergraduate and postgraduate students
- Faculty and educators
- Conference organizers and academic leaders
- Practitioners involved in EDI research and programming

The session intentionally brings together participants across roles and career stages to encourage shared responsibility for inclusion.



Expected Outcomes

- Increased awareness of how learning disabilities practices intersect with educational inequality.
- Improved understanding of diagnostic bias and ethical challenges in multilingual, low-resource contexts.
- Shared insights into inclusive, context-aware approaches to early detection and support.

Contribution to EDI Practice

This workshop promotes inclusive, context-aware approaches to learning disabilities by emphasizing dialogue, reflexivity, and equity over deficit-based labeling, and by valuing practitioner and field-based knowledge in EDI-oriented practice.