Didactic guide

How to design an inclusive Learning Situation in Primary Education

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Introduction

What is this guide and who is it for?

This guide explains, step by step, how to design a **Learning Situation** that is truly inclusive. In the context of the LOMLOE, a Learning Situation is not just a sequence of activities. It is a competence-based challenge that must be accessible to **all** pupils, regardless of their starting point.

This guide is intended for:

- **Trainee teachers** who need to design their first Learning Situations.
- **Practising teachers** who want to review their designs from an inclusive perspective.
- **PT and AL specialists** who collaborate in curriculum design.
- **Teacher trainers** looking for structured materials for workshops.

Myths vs realities about Learning Situations

Myth	Reality
"A Learning Situation is just a long project"	*It is a competence-based challenge with a final product, evaluation criteria, and real-world connection*
"First I design, then I see how to include pupils with needs"	*Inclusion must be designed from the start (not as an afterthought)*
"If I use UDL, I don't need to adapt for specific pupils"	*UDL reduces barriers, but specific adaptations are still necessary for some pupils*
"Evaluation is the same for everyone"	*Evaluation criteria are the same, but the ways of demonstrating learning can be different*

How to use this guide (methodological proposal)

You can work with this material in three ways:

1. **Sequential reading (for initial training)** – Follow the four blocks in order: diagnosis, design, active methodologies, and evaluation.
2. **Quick reference by component (for practising teachers)** – Jump directly to the section you need (e.g., "How do I evaluate inclusively?").
3. **Practical workshop (for groups or seminars)** – Use the case study at the end to design a complete Learning Situation in small groups.

Quick index by blocks

Block	***Key functions***
I. Diagnosis and activation	*Know the group + detect barriers + activate prior knowledge*
II. Competence-based design + UDL	*Final product + evaluation criteria + multiple means of representation, action and engagement*
III. Active and inclusive methodologies	*Cooperative learning, stations, gamification, structured tutoring*
IV. Formative and inclusive assessment	*Visual rubrics, self-assessment, continuous feedback*

Block I. Diagnosis and activation (the starting point)

Before designing a Learning Situation, you need to know **who you are designing for**. This block brings together the key steps to understand the group's characteristics, detect possible barriers to learning, and activate prior knowledge.

> *"A great Learning Situation applied to the wrong group is a great failure"*

Function	What does it mean?	Example
1. Know the group	Identify interests, home contexts, learning rhythms, and specific needs (including high abilities, TEA, TDAH, sociocultural disadvantage)	Initial questionnaire: "What do you already know about this topic?" + brief interview with PT and tutor
2. Detect barriers	Anticipate what might make learning difficult for some pupils (access, motivation, comprehension, expression)	"In this activity, who might struggle? Why?"
3. Activate prior knowledge	Use strategies that connect new content with what pupils already know	Routine: "I see, I think, I wonder" (visible thinking) or a brainstorm with images

Reflection question:

What would you do if, during diagnosis, you discover that three pupils in your class do not understand written instructions? How would that change your initial design of the Learning Situation?

Block II. Competence-based design and UDL

(the architectural blueprint)

This block turns diagnosis into a curriculum plan. Your Learning Situation must include: a final product (real-world challenge), evaluation criteria (what pupils must demonstrate), and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles (multiple means of representation, action, and engagement).

"Designing for the average pupil is designing for no one."

Function	What does it mean?	Example
4. Define the final product	A meaningful challenge that integrates several competences	"Create an informative poster or audio guide to convince your family to recycle at home"
5. Establish evaluation criteria	What exactly must the pupil demonstrate? (not just "participate" or "behave well")	Criteria: "The poster includes 3 facts about recycling + a persuasive phrase"
6. Apply UDL: representation	Offer multiple ways to access information	Video + text + pictograms + read-aloud option
7. Apply UDL: action and expression	Offer multiple ways to demonstrate learning	Written text, oral presentation with images, audio recording, drawing with labels
8. Apply UDL: engagement	Offer choices and connect to pupils' interests	"You can choose between investigating plastic, paper or glass"

Reflection question:

Look at your last Learning Situation (or one you have seen). How many of the three UDL principles did it include? Which one is missing?

Block III. Active and inclusive methodologies

(the classroom action)

Designing a Learning Situation is not enough. You need to choose methodologies that make learning active, participatory, and accessible. This block brings together four methodologies that work well in inclusive classrooms.

"Methodology is the bridge between design and real learning"

Function	What does it mean?	How to make it inclusive
9. Cooperative learning	Pupils work in small, heterogeneous groups with clear roles (secretary, spokesperson, materials manager, etc.)	Assign roles according to each pupil's strengths. Use visual cards with role descriptions
10. Learning stations or corners	Different activities around the same content that pupils rotate through	One station is manipulatives, another is digital, another is oral. All are accessible
11. Gamification	Use game elements (points, levels, challenges, badges) to increase motivation	Offer alternative ways to earn points (not just speed). Avoid penalising mistakes
12. Structured peer tutoring	A pupil helps another following a script provided by the teacher	Both pupils benefit: the tutor reinforces knowledge; the tutee receives individualised support

Reflection question:

You have a pupil with TEA who struggles with changes in routine. You are about to start a Learning Situation that includes learning stations. Which of these four methodologies would require more prior preparation? What would you do?

Block IV. Formative and inclusive assessment (continuous improvement)

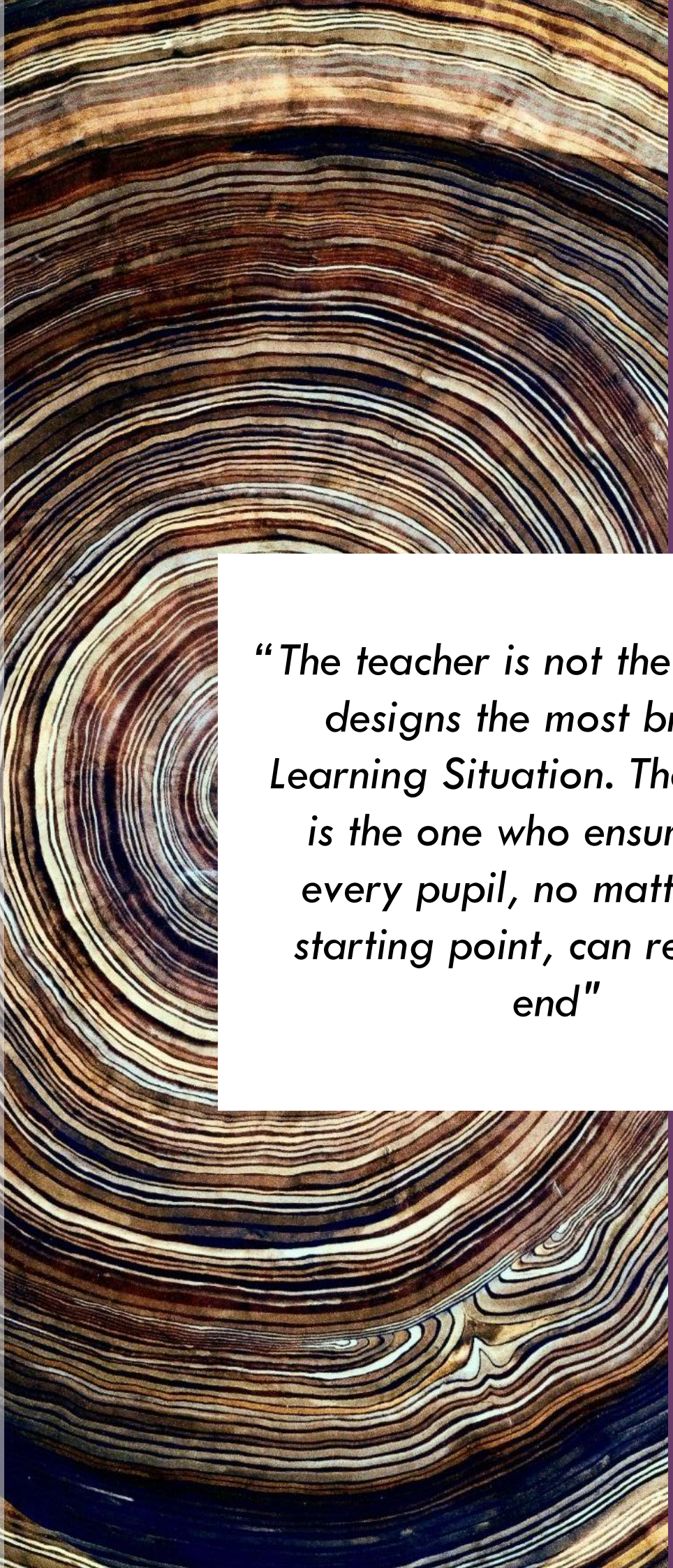
Assessment within a Learning Situation is not a final exam. It is a continuous process that provides feedback to the pupil and information to the teacher to adjust instruction.

"If a pupil cannot show what they know the way the exam asks, change the way, not the pupil"

Function	What does it mean?	Example
13. Use visual rubrics	Show the evaluation criteria with images or icons, not just words	A 3-level rubric: "I can do it alone" / "I need a little help" / "I need a lot of help"
14. Offer multiple ways to demonstrate learning	Same criteria, different formats	To evaluate "explains the water cycle": written description, drawing with labels, oral explanation with images, or short video
15. Include self-assessment and co-assessment	The pupil reflects on their own learning and that of their peers	"My learning diary" with three questions: What did I learn? What was hard? What would I change?
16. Provide continuous feedback	Not just a final grade. Specific, timely, and understandable comments	Instead of "well done": "Your poster has two good facts. To improve, add an image of the recycling bin."

Reflection question:

You have a pupil who takes longer to write. On the final product day of your Learning Situation, they only manage to write half of what others wrote. If their content is good, how would you apply function 14?



"The teacher is not the one who designs the most brilliant Learning Situation. The teacher is the one who ensures that every pupil, no matter their starting point, can reach the end"

"There is no single correct answer. But not acting is always the wrong answer"

Short case study

(for seminars or group work)

Situation:

A Year 4 teacher is designing a Learning Situation on "Healthy eating habits". The final product is: *"Create a weekly menu for the school canteen and present it to the headteacher."*

In the group, there is:

- Alba (TDAH): struggles to finish long tasks and needs frequent breaks.
- Youssef (newly arrived, beginner Spanish): understands very little written language.
- Carlos (high abilities): already knows everything about nutrition and gets bored.

Task for trainees (in groups of 3-4):

Identify at least 5 functions from the four blocks and apply them specifically to this Learning Situation. Then, sequence them logically.

Possible answer (do not show immediately):

1. Function 1 (know the group): Talk to the PT and AL about Youssef's level of Spanish and Alba's attention rhythms.
2. Function 2 (detect barriers): Written instructions will be a barrier for Youssef. Long, uninterrupted time will be a barrier for Alba.
3. Function 7 (UDL action/expression): Youssef can present his menu using images or an audio recording. Alba can complete the task in two parts with a break in between.
4. Function 11 (gamification): Carlos can earn the "expert badge" by adding a fun fact about each food group.
5. Function 14 (multiple ways to demonstrate): All three demonstrate the same criteria, but Youssef does it orally with images, Alba in two sessions, and Carlos in writing with extra information.

How to cite?

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