Bridging the Social Mobility Gap for Working Adult Students with Learning Disabilities

Guild Education in partnership with the National Center for Learning Disabilities

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An Opportunity for Inclusive Advancement

All too often in America, our education system labels students as having learning disabilities and related disorders of attention as a first step toward providing needed services and supports. Unfortunately, this often triggers the unintended presumption of low expectations, resulting in missed opportunities, or worse, the fueling of stigma and potential discrimination. After graduating high school, the majority of these students do not pursue higher education, often missing out on fulfilling their full potential.

But with the right employer behind them and the right set of learning and behavioral supports, these individuals’ stories can have a different ending, one that can translate into improved social mobility.

The key to postsecondary success in school and at work is “access” - to high quality instruction, to equal opportunities for advancement, and to needed services and support. While Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 offer individuals with disabilities protections under law, implementation varies across settings and compliance often results in outcomes that are less than optimal. As reported in Inside Higher Ed, “... college presidents and administrations make it clear they understand disability to be a part of diversity...” but scholars and activists say they still don’t feel that higher education has accepted that disability is an axis of identity that can be celebrated.¹

Increasing the number of students with disabilities on campus, and providing them with the services and supports they need to succeed, is one way to increase diversity, destigmatize learning disabilities and related disorders, and recognize neurodiversity as part of a student’s layered identity.

With that in mind, we have identified core obstacles that are common for nearly all working adult students, but which tend to be amplified for working adults with learning disabilities and attention issues, and offer reflections about how employers and higher education institutions can bolster support.

¹ Inside Higher Ed, Disability as Diversity, November 12, 2020.
Meet Andrew

“Students like me didn’t have success stories.”

Andrew, an employee at Chipotle, was diagnosed with learning disabilities as a child. "I was told at six years old that I would never live independently or even talk... There were struggles with bullying and some kids didn’t understand why I came on a different bus. Elementary school was twice as hard for me as it was for others, and it wasn’t until my early teens that I started changing. I became mindful of the conduct expected of me and I focused myself more.

The counselors and school psychologist were happy I made it through to graduation, but said college was unlikely.”

The story ends there for many students like Andrew. According to the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD), students with learning disabilities enroll in four-year colleges at half the rate of their peers, often due to low self-esteem and experiences of stigma like those Andrew describes. Fortunately, Andrew had a fierce supporter in his mother, whom he defines as a “stubborn fighter for my ability to succeed.” Her belief in him, combined with his successful high school completion, fostered a greater confidence in his own abilities.

Andrew didn’t immediately go to college after graduating high school. But when he learned about Chipotle’s debt-free degree offering, he decided to explore the programs available to him. He learned about Brandman University’s MyPath program, a competency-based education (CBE) approach that empowers students to learn at their own pace online and leverage their prior work experience to move quickly through certain competencies. He decided to apply for a bachelor’s degree in organizational leadership and was accepted. And he’s already seeing a positive impact: “Just taking this class helped me nail my recent promotion without question,” he said. “It’s amazing to have such wonderful support to literally map out the next year or two.” He credits participating in Chipotle’s debt-free degree program with helping him regain a sense of self worth and accomplishment.

2 Andrew is a Guild Education student. Student names and certain details have been changed to protect individuals’ identities as a condition of Guild Education’s research protocol.
Understanding the Obstacles

Andrew’s story is a compelling example of an employer and a higher education institution working together to both nurture employee talent and advance economic mobility. As that happens, and as working adult learners increasingly come to be defined as the new ‘traditional student’, it is important to view them not as a monolithic group, but as an amalgam of many backgrounds, communities, and identities. One of those facets of identity for many students is learning disability status.

And while learner journeys may share common features, the experiences and outcomes for students with learning disabilities are shaped by a variety of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Some will have received specialized instruction and support during their secondary school years, and others might have been overlooked, underserved or even denied needed support. Some will enter the workforce having benefited from classifications such as specific learning disability, dyslexia, ADHD or autism spectrum disorder during their school years, and others will have slipped through the cracks and not had their struggles with learning and attention identified until adulthood.

Sometimes referred to by disability-specific labels as having “differences,” or as being “neurodivergent,” this community comprises many millions of hard working, creative, and capable adults who face obstacles associated with having a diverse profile of learning needs. Members of these neurodiverse and disability communities face many obstacles associated with unemployment and underemployment.

1 in 5 Americans has a learning or attention differences, including specific learning disabilities and Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

46% of adults with learning disabilities are employed as opposed to nearly 77% of adults without learning disabilities who are employed


Source: National Center for Learning Disabilities, Snapshot of Learning and Attention Issues in the US, 2017. “Compared with adults who do not have learning disabilities, adults with these issues are twice as likely to be jobless.”
Additionally, employees with disabilities, including LD and ADHD, often have less opportunity to use their unique skills to drive positive change compared with their counterparts who do not have learning disabilities. According to the Harvard Business Review, “Nearly half (48%) of employees with disabilities who have ideas that would drive value for their companies fail to win endorsement for those ideas” and “more than half (57%) feel stalled in their careers,” compared to 38% and 44% for peers without disabilities, respectively.4

Post-secondary support, whether in 4-year colleges and universities, community colleges, or technical training and certification programs, is critical to ensure that individuals with learning disabilities are well-prepared to enter and succeed in the workplace. Those most likely to prosper in their studies and in their chosen professions will have a clear understanding of their strengths, a well-honed sense of their needed accommodations and technology supports, and the ability and willingness to articulate how they can circumvent or overcome specific challenges to their instructors and employers. These post-secondary challenges can be daunting for even the most well-intentioned, complicated by stigma, anxiety (often resulting from prior experiences), communication barriers on the part of the individual, and misinformation and low expectations on the part of adult educators and employers. The unfortunate result is all too often reflected in underemployment and unemployment rates for individuals with disabilities and neurodiverse profiles.

There is a strong correlation between education level and income. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), full-time working adults with bachelor’s degrees earn roughly 57% more per year than those with only a high school degree.\(^5\) However, the cost of obtaining a degree can be extremely prohibitive, with full-time tuition for the 2020-2021 school year averaging $10,560 for in-state and $27,020 for out-of-state tuition at public four-year schools.\(^6\)

Working adults often have a variety of financial pressures that fall outside of the typical purview of what is expected of “traditional” full-time undergraduate students, such as rent or mortgages and caregiving costs. These pressures, combined with climbing (and, for many, already untenable) tuition fees, make the cost of a credential a significant barrier to educational attainment.

Among working adult students with disabilities, financial pressure tends to be worse: on the whole, individuals with disabilities tend to earn less than those without disabilities.\(^7\) Furthermore, there is a marked disparity in educational attainment: according to the latest US Census data, roughly 18% of people with disabilities have a bachelor’s degree, compared to nearly 37% of adults without disabilities. Lower educational attainment is not only affiliated with lower income, but higher risk: low-paying jobs, particularly frontline roles, are at greater risk for automation\(^8\) and lack opportunities for upward mobility within a company. Fortunately, companies are taking notice, and more are electing to invest in education

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7 United States Census Bureau, *Selected Economic Characteristics for the Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population by Disability Status*, 2019. ~75% of the population with disabilities makes less than $50,000 per year, compared to ~62% of the population without disabilities.
benefits that can unlock critical internal economic mobility for employees by enabling them to earn credentials that many could not otherwise afford.

Time constraints go hand-in-hand with financial pressures and represent a significant potential barrier to academic success. In fact, 63% of working adult students surveyed by Guild stopped out for time-related reasons.

Not all working adults with learning disabilities and attention issues already know, or can successfully articulate, the learning supports and strategies that work best for them. This makes flexibility to both self-pace and access the resources necessary for success at the individual level all the more critical.

Beyond the typical time challenges virtually every working adult student faces, many students with learning disabilities and attention differences experience challenges related to executive function (EF). EF refers to the set of cognitive processes that help regulate goal-directed behavior. It is a limited resource for everyone. According to Dr. Rick Bryck, Dean of the School of Educational Research and Innovation at Landmark College, three related, yet independent, “building blocks” abilities are commonly involved in EF difficulties:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working Memory</th>
<th>Inhibitory Control</th>
<th>Cognitive Flexibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EF difficulties related to working memory can make it hard to hold on to one bit of information while doing something else. This can include difficulty with: remembering directions while working on a task or assignment, hindsight and foresight, remembering sequence of ideas, and group discussion or individual conversation.</td>
<td>Refers to difficulty in holding back an action or engaging in a given action, and can include difficulty acting effectively in a group or executing an appropriate action when needed.</td>
<td>Includes challenges related to switching between different contexts or components of a problem. Cognitive flexibility related difficulties can induce: Perseveration, over- or under-focusing on a task, the ability to switch thinking or focus between the “forest and the trees” (either direction), and symbolic thinking, such as that required in math or foreign languages.</td>
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The above EF difficulties are not uniformly ubiquitous among all students with learning disabilities. Rather, these examples are included to illustrate potential areas in which an individual with LD who already has very limited discretionary time in which to learn may encounter increased time-related challenges that result from executive function-related difficulties.
Employers

- **Create internal upward mobility**
  Guild data on working adult students who participate in their employers’ education benefits shows that working adult students who use their education benefit are 2.7 times more likely to stay with their employer than their peers. This isn’t due to the benefit alone, but exemplifies the desire and ambition of the employee to unlock mobility. The return on investment that comes with offering education benefits to all employees ranges from improved retention to attracting a stronger, more diverse and inclusive talent pool, but much of the direct impact comes from practices that champion hiring from within.

  As was the case with Andrew, his pursuit of a skill set that would qualify him for a leadership position was a decisive factor in the decision to promote him. Employers would be wise to embrace inclusive pathways to advancement for frontline employees.

Academic Institutions

- **Provide support to address executive function difficulties**
  Dr. Bryck points out that while there is no silver bullet, adopting the following general principles and guiding practices have shown a positive impact:

  - **Break larger tasks/assignments into manageable sections**
    This can be scaffolded and/or taught with worksheets/instructions that purposely focus on only one component of a task/assignment at a time. A great general approach for this is the Pomodoro method.

  - **Be mindful of the “cognitive load” of an assignment**
    Focus on intrinsic load (task relevant processing) and reduce components of tasks that may require complex processing/attention but aren’t as relevant to the learning outcome.

  - **Provide executive function coaching & tech tools**
    Give students access to an individual specifically trained to guide and scaffold EF difficulties. Time management and organization tools, along with teaching, modelling, and explaining the purpose of strategies / tools, can be effective in increasing students’ self efficacy.

Landmark College offers a [five-course program focused on understanding and supporting EF skills](#) for educators interested in better supporting students with learning differences.
Financial support is a big piece of the puzzle for all working adults. The idea of going back to school can be daunting for anyone, but individuals with learning disabilities may experience higher levels of self doubt and anxiety than their peers who do not have a disability.

To start, it’s important to acknowledge that learning during a pandemic and socially turbulent time has not been easy for anyone. For working adult learners, there has been an almost universal uptick in stressors stemming from uncertainty about job security, increased caregiving responsibilities, changes to work hours and expectations, and isolation from peer workers, friends and loved ones. The impact of these sudden and pervasive changes carry serious mental health and academic performance implications. Guild has seen an almost universal rise in students self-reporting stress and anxiety stemming from the pandemic: nearly 80% of active students reported an increase in feelings of stress since March, 2020.

These feelings could be exacerbated for working adult students with learning disabilities who may have experienced stigma and discrimination in school or at the workplace. Adults with disabilities may also have assimilated some of the most common misconceptions about their disability into their own thought processes. For example, a common and damaging misconception about learning disabilities is that they are synonymous with low intelligence, laziness or too much screen time. This, of course, is a fallacy: people with learning disabilities are just as smart as people without learning disabilities. This type of misinformation can lead to feelings of low self-worth and feed unfortunate public biases that put enormous strain on students’ emotional wellbeing.

People with learning disabilities are at greater risk of developing depression than people without learning disabilities.⁹

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Learning Disability Stigma & Disinformation by the Numbers

NCLD breaks down some of the most common stigmas students with learning disabilities face. Many adults with learning disabilities may be reticent to disclose their disability due to social and institutional stigma they were exposed to earlier:

- **33% of educators say that sometimes what people refer to as a learning disability is actually laziness.**
- **78% of parents believe that any child can succeed in school if they try hard enough.**
- **69% of students do not disclose their learning disability in college because they believe they have “outgrown” it, despite the fact that no one grows out of a learning disability.**

The stigma that many people with learning disabilities face can have a substantial negative impact on their willingness to disclose, and sometimes even negatively impact their understanding of what their own learning needs might be.

**SOLUTIONS**

- **Dismantle stigma and foster a sense of belonging**
  Targeted professional development to identify and dismantle bias, whether overt or unconscious, can help employers, administrators, and faculty undercut stigma and improve culture, hiring and promotion practices, and learning experiences.

  Providing learning and working environments in which students and employees can be authentically and fully themselves is important for all working adult learners. While disclosing learning disabilities is discretionary and may not always be necessary to achieve success in the workplace, having a safe place to be open about challenges and triumphs is important to building community and preparing students for success in both academic and employment settings.

  Employee resource groups, also known as employee inclusion groups or affinity groups, can have a positive impact in building community in a corporate setting and can be effective drivers of disability awareness and inclusion, including disclosure campaigns.
In academia, engagement can be challenging in the online learning environment that has become the norm during the pandemic. However, engaging in discussion online can provide a sense of belonging and shares a high correlation with student success: students who participate in online conversations through their programs are 25% more likely to graduate than those who do not.\(^9\)

**Student Case Study:**

**Inspiring Persistence Through Peer-to-peer Support**

Brandon, a Chipotle employee and Brandman MyPath student, made a connection with a co-worker and Guild student who helped him navigate personal roadblocks to persistence related to ADHD that he didn’t feel comfortable disclosing elsewhere. “I jump between things. That’s kind of how my brain works,” he explains. "I ended up dropping out of school again, and it wasn’t until this past summer, summer 2020, Danielle and I were talking. She had graduated from Brandman, and she was telling me that she had gotten a job with this company based in Harrisburg that I’ve always wanted to work for, and I was just floored for her. I was so excited. And she was like, ‘Why do you keep dropping out of school? It’s something that you can do. You can even just take one class at a time.’”

Danielle’s encouragement inspired Brandon to pursue a degree in information technology through a competency-based program that he knew would work better for his specific learning needs. The combination of Brandon’s awareness of his learning needs and encouragement from a peer helped him persist. “What [Danielle] told me is what I keep having to tell myself. She said that she would have to sometimes just close her eyes and imagine what her life would be like after she has the degree, to keep focusing on what it looks like in the future. Because realistically, there is no magic thing that allows you to be able to manage really difficult things all at the same time. Instead you just have to picture, ‘what could life be like after I have this degree?’ And you’ll also learn that you’re a lot stronger than you think. And it’s important to remember that as well.”

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In general, it can be difficult for prospective students to map program options against career goals. Thousands of short-form learning programs, community colleges, 2- and 4-year higher education institutions, and the hundreds of majors or concentrations to choose from further complicates decision-making. According to a Guild survey of working adults with education benefits, nearly 15% of all prospective students who don’t use their job-related education benefit say it’s because they do not know what program is right for them.\textsuperscript{11}

Some employee education benefit programs are open-ended in that there are few or no restrictions on which programs employees can pursue. While open-ended choice may seem like a good thing, it also puts the onus on employees to navigate program selection, often without adequate support to map the skills they will gain through programs to the roles they aspire to access. Companies that do offer a catalog of options are not necessarily vetting programs to determine which have proven track records of successfully accommodating students with diverse learning needs.

Moreover, the process of matching employees with program options is often compromised by the unfortunate reality that many working adults with disabilities are unlikely to disclose their disability to employers and schools, fearing stigma and discrimination.\textsuperscript{12}

Non-disclosure can negatively impact academic and workplace outcomes when it means working adult learners lack access to accommodations and support that would foster success.

**SOLUTIONS**

**Employers**

- Provide clarity about how competencies translate to upward mobility within an organization

Employers that are clear about the skills and competencies that can enable upward mobility within the company will be better positioned to determine which program options are valuable from

\textsuperscript{11} Guild data. n=14,113.

\textsuperscript{12} Horowitz, S.H, Rawe, J., and Whitaker, M.C. National Center for Learning Disabilities, The State of Learning Disabilities: Understanding the 1 in 5, 2017. Fewer than one-fifth (19%) of working young adults with learning disabilities reported employer awareness of their disability. Roughly a quarter of students (24%) informed their college or university of their learning disability.
an upskilling standpoint. Working with a benefits provider to offer a versatile catalog of vetted programs from academic institutions is a great way that companies can support employees with program choice that extends beyond immediate skills gaps and into competencies with long-term value. For example, Guild offers coaching services directed at helping students who are navigating the program selection process, barriers affiliated with applying, and ongoing one-on-one support. Part of that support includes keeping track of the disability resources available to students at partner academic and learning institutions.

**Academic Providers**

- **Design learning for both flexibility and agility**

  From an academic partner perspective, a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities is key to meeting students’ schedules and learning needs. For example, a student may be comfortable with learning at her own pace in an online program, but require one-to-one support to determine the learning strategies that work best for her. Teaching and learning built upon the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), an equity-focused framework that guides the design of instructional goals, assessments, methods and materials and can be customized and adjusted to the needs of individual learners, is particularly effective in meeting the needs of students with learning disabilities and attention issues. Additionally, providing clear, accessible information online (i.e. through institutional websites, awareness campaigns with storytelling, and online communications) to prospective students is critical in helping students determine whether an academic institution will meet their needs in terms of accommodations, services, and community.

**OBSTACLE 4:**

**Access To Services**

The growing number of working adults in higher education and training programs may present an unintended benefit for students with learning disabilities through normalizing calls for better accommodation. Demands for programs that accommodate constrained schedules and recognize previous work experience have resulted in increasing popularity of online learning programs, many of which offer asynchronous and self-paced learning opportunities that, when designed equitably, can support individuals with diverse learning profiles. This is especially true of some UDL and competency-based learning programs that allow students to move quickly through the competencies they have already gained through work or related educational experiences.

Although academic institutions are required by law to provide reasonable accommodation, it can be difficult for prospective students with LD to parse out how robust the supports and services offered

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really are. This is for two primary reasons: 1) many institutions do not provide detailed information about the learning disability accommodations and services available to students on their websites (which is often the first port of call for prospective students seeking information about a degree program) and 2) the services that may be available to students with learning disabilities can vary to an extraordinary degree institution by institution. Students experiencing time poverty need to be able to access this information quickly and easily.

It’s also worth noting that some working adult students do not have previous college experience, or have been in the workforce for longer than they were ever in school. Equipping them with the foundational skills necessary to be successful, such as those that Digital Promise outlines in the adult learner segment of its Learner Variability Model, in particular supporting digital literacy to ensure students are prepared to learn in an online environment, is essential.14

From a workplace perspective, it is important for companies to make disability inclusion part of their DE&I (diversity, equity, and inclusion) strategies. Reasonable accommodation is required under Title I of the ADA, but companies are remiss to stop there. Creating a disability-friendly workplace requires companies to be proactive in recruiting and supporting employees with disabilities.

Employees are far more likely to disclose disabilities in a culture and working environment where representation demonstrably matters, and that goes for both “visible” and “invisible” disabilities.

A major part of inclusion for working adults with learning disabilities involves normalizing disclosure and representation. For example, supporting the creation of specialized employee inclusion groups, sometimes called affinity groups or employee resource groups, creates community and provides a safe space for those with LD to connect and share experiences. Inclusion groups can be particularly useful as working adults use their education benefits and want to seek out peer advice. These groups can also be leveraged to create a culture that encourages open discussion and is non-threatening regarding disclosure, continuous feedback, and raises awareness of the accommodation process.

The positive impact of transparent inclusion efforts between employees vs employees with disabilities

| 65% | 27% |

The impact of transparent inclusion efforts can be extraordinary: as reported in the Harvard Business Review, a recent study conducted by the Center for Talent Innovation found that 65% of employees who disclose report feeling happy or content at work, whereas only 27% of employees with disabilities who do not disclose could say the same. Furthermore, employees who do not disclose their disability were more than twice as likely to feel nervous or anxious and nearly five times more likely to feel isolated than those who do disclose. Better satisfaction with a working environment doesn’t just come from the act of disclosing, however. It’s important to remember that contentment at work reported by those who disclosed is predicated on a culture that values and encourages disclosure and accommodates accordingly.

14 Digital Promise, Learner Variability Navigator, Adult Learner; accessed February, 2020.
Academic Providers

- **Provide access to robust and dynamic academic services and resources**
  From education technology, to learning support services, to one-on-one guidance, institutions that invest in a robust suite of resources and services are likely to help generate the best outcomes for students with learning disabilities. It is critical in particular that working adult students have access to these resources as ways to support efficacy, self advocacy, and the adoption of strategies that enable them to better succeed in their places of work.

What supports work best for students with learning disabilities? In response to the ADA (1990) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, colleges and universities have created disability services and resource centers to support success for students with learning disabilities. These services vary broadly from institution to institution, but, unsurprisingly, the best support tends to be individualized in nature: helping students obtain accommodations and understand the learning strategies that work best for them.

- **Accommodation:** Broadly, accommodations for students with learning disabilities take the form of making adjustments to delivery and individual instruction, as well as the learning environment itself. However, accommodations that institutions may be able to provide learners vary both by institutional resources available and student by need.

  - **Delivery & Individual Instruction**
    Faculty may tailor delivery to make information more accessible to a student without changing the core content of a course, or provide coursework in alternative formats. Providing additional time for coursework and exams may also improve learning outcomes and provide a more accurate assessment of competencies gained during a course of instruction.

  - **Learning Environment**
    For in-person learning, classroom accommodations may include an in-class note-taker, access to a quiet room for exams, and in-class assistance. Adaptive or assistive technology and software such as recording devices or programs that help students access printed text or generate written narrative are also common.

- **Services:** Support for students with learning disabilities is often offered through an institution’s office of student disability or support services. These programs tend to be individualized and focus on helping students understand and articulate the specific strategies and supports that best suit them, as well as coaching and modeling self advocacy skills—a critical skill for accessing reasonable accommodations both inside and outside of a collegiate environment. Many on-campus disability services also offer opportunities for students to build community and learn from one another.
Case Study: SALT Center at University of Arizona

Providing Individualized Support or Students with Learning Disabilities

Since 1980, the University of Arizona’s SALT Center has been a leader in supporting students who have learning and attention differences. SALT is an acronym for Strategic Alternative Learning Techniques, and the Center offers an array of services, workshops, and individualized assistance to support the success of more than 700 students.

University of Arizona students who enroll in the SALT Center typically struggle with “invisible” challenges, most often related to learning and attention. These differences can add significantly to the complexity of persisting and succeeding in a large research university. By providing the specific support each student needs to understand their unique learning characteristics, access the support they need, and independently manage their needs, the SALT Center leads the nation in helping university students excel. Currently, more than 85% of UArizona students who participate in the SALT Center maintain good academic standing.

The SALT Center Approach

The SALT Center’s nationally and internationally recognized model includes weekly meetings with specialists who build critical relationships with students and remain connected throughout their time at UArizona. Academic support is provided through access to unlimited tutoring support, (drop-in labs or 1:1 appointments) for any of the many classes offered by UArizona complimented by educational technology. Lastly, the SALT Center services are not only available to students who attend the ‘brick and mortar’ university but are now fully available to students world-wide through UArizona Online.

Perhaps most gratifying is that nearly 80% of the students who enter the SALT Center as First Year students feel they no longer need the support by the end of their Sophomore year. These students understand that they may still seek assistance, if needed, while other students who opt to remain in the program until they receive their degrees.

Executive Director Gabrielle Miller explains, “What matters most is meta-cognition, or the ability to ‘think about thinking’. That is, when an individual understands their personal learning characteristics, no matter what the situation, they are far more likely to independently develop the supports they need for success.”

The challenges of a rapidly changing world drive the SALT Center’s strategic efforts. Whether students opt for an in-person or remote experience, the University of Arizona’s SALT Center remains focused on building confidence and success of individuals who learn and think differently—in college and career.
Employers

- **Normalize disclosure and prioritize representation in the workplace**
  Ensure that employees with LD can access an internal community of peers in addition to reasonable accommodation. Incorporating a disability inclusion and recruitment strategy into broader diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies will translate to better representation and outcomes for individuals with disabilities on the whole. Finally, accessing both internal and external (subject matter expert) input in the form of an advisory council is ideal. SHRM’s (Society for Human Resource Management) suite of resources to build an inclusive workforce offers comprehensive guidance.\(^\text{15}\)

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Conclusion

Like all students and employees, working adult learners with learning disabilities want to succeed in school and in the workplace. Too often, conversations about serving students with learning disabilities and related disorders of attention are an afterthought, or acknowledged as important under federal law but devoid of the intentional planning, vision and commitment needed to impact meaningful outcomes. Employers and academic institutions that prioritize greater equity and inclusion, pursue responsible representation of individuals with disabilities, and are committed to a culture that celebrates success for all learners are well-positioned to ensure that employees with learning disabilities can achieve success.

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\(^{15}\) SHRM, *Creating a Disability Friendly Workplace*. 
Authors

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At Guild, we are working to make education more equitable, accessible, and valuable for working adults. Are you interested in joining us on our mission to educate America’s workforce? Please get in touch!