

Helping Youth with Learning Disabilities Chart the Course: A Guide for Youth Service Professionals

The transition from adolescence to adulthood is a challenging time. Youth and young adults must make complex decisions about education, work, finances, and personal relationships. For the 2.4 million youth diagnosed with learning disabilities (LD), this phase of life poses even greater challenges.

Youth with LD often do not do as well as their peers in traditional classrooms and in work and social settings. Adding to these challenges, these youth often experience social isolation and lowered self-expectations. Statistics show that individuals with LD have the highest school dropout incidence, face higher rates of unemployment, and are overrepresented in government-supported programs, such as vocational rehabilitation and corrections. For instance, students with LD are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system and account for 38.6 percent of students with disabilities in these settings.

The implications of LD vary depending on the environment or setting, the supports provided, and the developmental stage of the individual. Some individuals with LD may do well in elementary school, only to struggle in secondary or postsecondary schools, the workplace, or in interpersonal

relationships. While today there is a greater understanding of LD than in the past, in practical terms, significant issues remain as individuals with LD:

- are often undiagnosed, misdiagnosed, or diagnosed late in childhood, in adolescence, or even in adulthood;
- are often wrongly perceived as being lazy, dumb, anti-social, or purposely immature;
- may be treated as though they have other cognitive disabilities such as developmental disabilities, autism, or traumatic brain injury;
- often hide their disability; and
- may have other co-occurring conditions that interfere with school, work, and social interactions, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, emotional and mental health disorders, or physical disabilities.

This InfoBrief describes challenges faced by youth and young adults with learning disabilities as they reach adulthood, while highlighting strategies youth service professionals can implement to help youth to transition successfully into the workplace. This InfoBrief is based on a rich body of research about transition-age youth with learning disabilities, including publications produced by the National Collaborative on Workforce & Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth).

When provided with support, youth with LD are capable of being successful like their peers without disabilities in any environment—academic, work, and social. That is where you come in. Youth service professionals play a critical role in providing guidance and representation for youth to ensure they are able to reach their potential in school and in the workplace.

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This means that youth service professionals wear many hats, including advocate, teacher, coach, mentor, and expert source.

A major component during this critical transition time for youth is preparing for life beyond school: the working world. For youth with LD, career readiness can be a daunting and discouraging thought. Many of the accommodations and learning methods youth find in a school environment will be different or nonexistent in a work environment. As a youth service professional, you play a major role in helping these youth take control of their own learning, develop compensatory strategies, which can help them to utilize their own strengths to navigate decisions about accommodations and disclosure, and discover the self-determination and leadership skills needed to meet the demands of the world of work confidently and effectively.

This InfoBrief presents key strategies to help youth and young adults with LD successfully transition to employment and lead independent, productive lives. The accompanying resources (Tables I-VI) serve as helpful tools to assist you in carrying out these strategies.

Focus on Workforce

Keeping in mind the *Guideposts* framework, what strategies are most effective in ensuring that youth with LD acquire the academic, functional, applied, and social skills they will need in the workplace? All youth must develop key skills through career readiness

education and hands-on experience in the workplace. For some, this skill development happens quickly; for others, it is a gradual process that may take years.

The nature of what employers demand in the 21st century workplace is also changing. High school and college graduates must not only master basic academic skills, but must also master “soft skills” such as teamwork, critical thinking, and communication.

To equip youth with these skills and abilities, it is suggested that you address three main areas when working with youth with LD:

- **Strategic Learning for the Workplace:** Through strategic learning, youth with disabilities “learn how to learn.” Youth are ultimately able to better understand new material and then apply those skills to new situations in a manner which best utilizes their strengths. These techniques go beyond remediation and, instead, instill youth with the critical thinking skills necessary for the demands of today’s workplace.
- **A Focus on Self-Determination and Leadership Skills:** These strategies address aspects of identity (sense of belonging, self-awareness, perception of responsibility and autonomy) as well as areas of ability (health, employability, civic and social involvement). Strategies also help youth to become self-determined individuals in charge of their own lives by building skills in self-awareness, goal-setting, and self-advocacy.

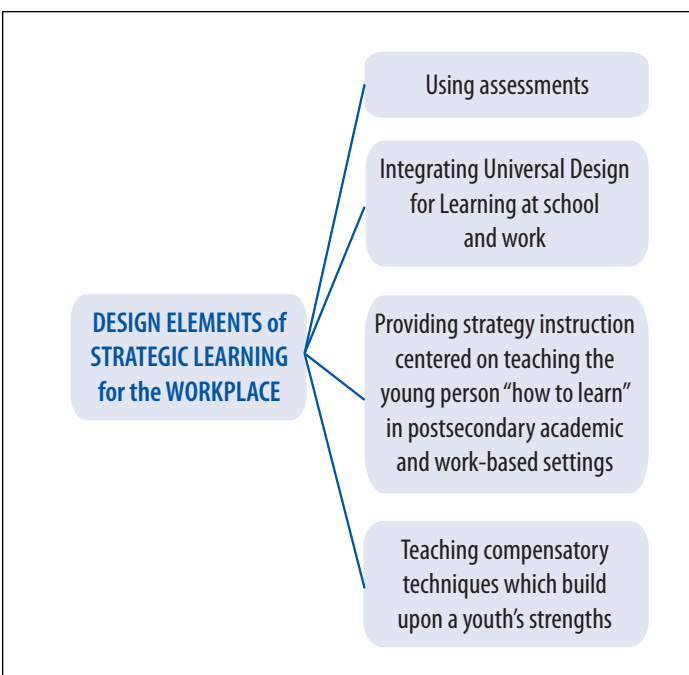
- **Disclosure and Accommodation Strategies:** Disclosure refers to the process of discussing one’s disability with others for the specific purpose of garnering understanding in school, work, and social settings. Accommodations are physical, environmental, or procedural changes made in a classroom, work site, or assessment activity that help people with disabilities learn, work, or receive services.

This InfoBrief discusses these three strategies, providing specific design elements for each to demonstrate how you can help youth with disabilities develop the skills they need to achieve in the workplace.

Exploring the Strategies

Strategic Learning for the Workplace

Learning to learn and engaging in lifelong learning are particularly important components of employment success, since the nature of work is changing at an ever-increasing pace. The first strategy, **Strategic Learning for the Workplace**, helps youth with disabilities develop useful, individualized long-term learning habits they can apply in the employment context and beyond.



Rather than focusing on remedial approaches to processing difficulties, professionals who work with transition-age youth with LD can position them for success in the work world by equipping them with strategic learning techniques to master work-related skills. By “learning how to learn”—determining how they learn best in any setting, and practicing those methods—youth will be prepared for long-term success in environments beyond school. Strategic learning can also change a young person’s perspective about his or her own abilities and the best “job fit.”

When working with youth on developing strategic learning techniques for the workplace, cover the following four design elements:

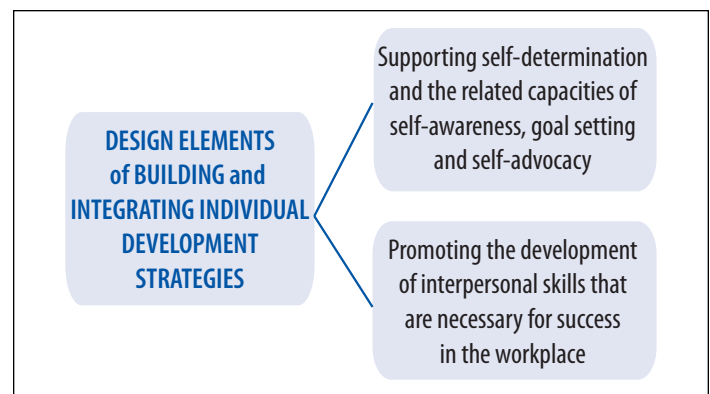
- **Assessment Domains and Testing:** Providing youth with assessments can lead to an understanding about their skills, abilities, and interests as they relate to employment. In the course of transition, it’s beneficial for all youth to have access to a variety of vocational assessments such as interest inventories, aptitude testing, and functional capacities testing, as well as general work experiences that provide feedback on performance. Formal assessment for transition-age youth may occur across four domains—academic, vocational, psychological, and medical—and may include interviews, observations, review of records, and testing or performance reviews. *See Tables I and II for a helpful breakdown of assessments.*
- **Integrating Universal Design for Learning in school and at work:** Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an approach that addresses the needs of all kinds of learners and all kinds of learning styles. Remember that many youth with LD who participate in job training programs and/or enter the workplace may never have been diagnosed or may choose not to disclose their disability. UDL is a key strategy to keep in mind as you develop programs for youth, just as employers utilize UDL in any employment-related training they provide. *See Table III for tips on using Universal Design.*

It is crucial that youth service professionals help youth with LD build their own sense of identity and potential.

- **Applying learning strategies to work settings:** Youth need to be able to apply strategic learning lessons to their experiences in the workplace by examining a situation and determining what prior knowledge they have that relates. *You can use the activities outlined in Table IV to work with youth on addressing work-related challenges, using the strategic learning strategies addressed earlier.* If the youth is ready, encourage him or her to explore these opportunities and assist their search process.
- **Teaching compensatory techniques that build upon a youth's strengths:** One way to think of compensatory techniques is as a set of tools the young person can use to self-accommodate his or her own disability. It would be beneficial to help youth become self-aware of their strengths and weaknesses, as well as which types of modifications and accommodations work best for them in a particular setting. While some learners naturally develop compensatory strategies, others will need to be taught.

In addition to developing key long-term learning strategies, youth with disabilities need guidance to become self-determined individuals in charge of their own lives. Therefore, it is suggested that you integrate individual development strategies to help youth build skills in self-awareness, goal setting, and self-advocacy.

Building and Integrating Individual Development Strategies



Successful adults—with or without disabilities—tend to be self-aware and self-determined. They can make decisions about where they are headed, can self-advocate and engage in conflict resolution effectively, and can set realistic short-term and long-term goals. Successful adults also know their limits, have a plan for overcoming surmountable barriers, and have confidence that they can be successful in academic, social, and vocational settings.

Developing self-determination can be especially tough for some youth. In school, youth with LD commonly experience social isolation, bullying, and frustration with academics. These experiences often lead to disengagement with extracurricular activities and damaged self-esteem that can result in a life of dependency and passivity.

It is crucial that youth service professionals help youth with LD build their own sense of identity and potential. There are strategies you can use with youth that

address aspects of identity (sense of belonging, self-awareness, perception of responsibility and autonomy) as well as areas of ability (health, employability, civic and social involvement).

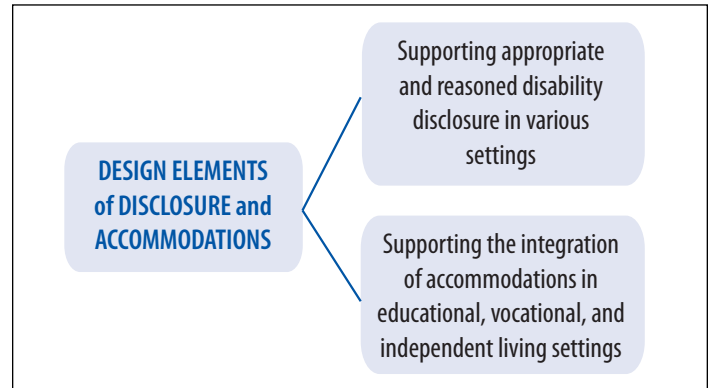
There are two main approaches you can use to assist youth, both of which highlight how reinforcing functional or “soft” skills can lead to improved real-life outcomes for all youth:

- **Supporting self-determination and the related capacities of self-awareness, goal setting, and self-advocacy:** Here is where your many hats become most important. As you work with youth with LD, help them develop self-awareness, goal setting, and self-advocacy. This means youth need to understand what it means to have LD, feel motivated to set and achieve goals, and know when and how to speak out on behalf of their own needs and desires. These abilities are critical to succeeding in the workplace and maintaining healthy adult relationships. *Table V outlines activities you can explore with youth to help them strengthen these three qualities.*
- **Promoting the development of interpersonal skills necessary for success in the workplace:** The same information processing difficulties that affect acquisition of technical skills can also cause difficulties with interpersonal skills. Although interpersonal skills can be taught as a stand-alone class, you may choose to encourage youth service professionals to integrate interpersonal skills development into other curricula already being used. Also help connect youth to extracurricular activities, clubs, athletics, and/or volunteer programs that could strengthen his or her interpersonal skills instruction.

Many youth with LD, with or without the benefit of having learned these strategies, will also need to access accommodations to maximize their potential in postsecondary education and the workplace. The third and final area discussed in this InfoBrief helps youth

carry out strategies for making decisions about disclosure and acquiring accommodations in these settings.

Disclosure and Accommodation Strategies



Disclosure and requesting accommodation strategies are particularly difficult because youth and young adults need to determine whether or not it would be beneficial to disclose their disability status with peers, educators, and employers.

Disclosure is a personal decision. Youth must make individual decisions about when, how, and what, if anything, they want to reveal. Disclosing a disability has elements of risk and loss of privacy that are very important for youth and young adults to be aware of. It would be helpful to provide guidance and opportunities for youth to engage in role playing that will help them understand these issues. It’s important to keep in mind that your role is to empower youth by offering information and guidance; it is not your role to make these decisions on behalf of youth.

As for accommodations, regardless of whether the youth has received or benefited from strategy instruction and/or instruction in the use of compensatory techniques in an educational setting, youth must be able to communicate what accommodations they need, if any, to be successful in the workplace.

Accommodations are used specifically in these areas:

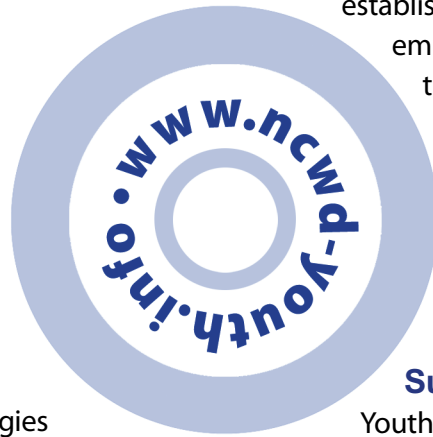
- Presenting information to individuals with LD—

You have the opportunity to mentor, inspire, and advocate for youth with LD to ensure they have access to the services and learning strategies they need to succeed in school and the workplace.

such as providing materials in audio files instead of print.

- Generating responses from individuals with LD—such as inputting materials into a computer using voice recognition software instead of keyboarding.
- Adjusting settings or the environment—such as providing quiet work areas with fewer distractions.
- Allowing for time flexibility—such as allowing extra time to study training materials.

others, such as testing accommodations, will likely not. Discuss these details with youth and inform them what options they may have in different kinds of work environments, including how to adapt, rely on their strengths, and establish clear communication with their employer. Use role playing to walk through the process of when and how to inform employers of the assistive technologies or accommodations they need. You will also serve as an expert source who informs youth of their legal rights, specifically what your state guarantees.



Disclosure and accommodations strategies consist of two key design elements:

- **Supporting appropriate and reasoned disability disclosure in various settings:** It would be helpful to review the advantages and disadvantages of disclosure with youth and help them “fine tune” how to disclose when talking with others about their disability. You may also help youth learn more about the lawful rights and protections they have in disclosing their disability to an employer. *See Table VI for advantages and disadvantages of disclosure.*
- **Supporting the integration of accommodations in educational, vocational, and independent living settings:** Some of the accommodations you may have helped youth feel secure with in school will carry over into the work world, but

Summary

Youth and young adults with LD face major challenges as they attempt to make their way into the world of work. These challenges include low self-expectations, academic frustration, and complicated decisions regarding disclosure and accommodations. Meanwhile, services aimed at helping these youth have been short-sighted, failing to equip youth with LD with the skills and lifelong learning tools they need to succeed in the workplace. As a youth service professional, you have the opportunity to mentor, inspire, and advocate for youth with LD to ensure they have access to the services and learning strategies they need to succeed in school and the workplace. Through thoughtful service implementations in school and vocational settings based on a series of proven design elements—and through the collaboration of decision leaders and professionals—more youth with LD can become self-sufficient adults who experience personal and employment success.

TABLE I
ASSESSMENT DOMAINS AND TESTING

Assessment Domain	Major Area of Testing	What is Being Measured or Ascertained	Assessment Instrument Types
Educational	Academic performance or achievement	Reading skills Writing skills Mathematics skills Spelling skills	Academic testing
			Achievement testing
			Curriculum-based assessment
			Tests of General Educational Development (GED) (writing, reading, math, science, and social studies)
			ACT or SAT
Cognitive abilities	Intelligence	Intelligence testing (IQ)	
Psychological	Cognitive abilities	Neuropsychological involvement	Neuropsychological testing
		LD	Diagnostic testing
	Behavioral Social Emotional	Behavior	Behavioral analysis
		Social skills	Social adaptation and work-related behaviors
		Mental health	Mental health screening and assessments
		Chemical health	Screening for drug and alcohol usage Chemical dependency assessment
	Vocational	Vocational and career interests	Interests, preferences, values, and temperaments
Personality inventory			
Career exploration experiences			
Work values assessment			
Job aptitudes and skills		Aptitudes Work behaviors Skills	Assessing potential to learn and occupational abilities
			Situational work assessment Job-seeking and -keeping skills assessment
			Work samples Community-based or on-the-job assessment
Occupation-specific certification		Mastery of knowledge, skills, and abilities in specific occupations	Tests or assessments given at the end of apprenticeships, college programs, and other job training programs focused on one specific job or career area, and based on industry-validated skill standards
Physical and functional capacities		Work capacities	Work tolerance
			Physical capacities scales, work samples, and community-based assessments
			Assistive technology
			Work accommodations
Medical	Physical and functional capacities	The need for diagnoses and medical therapies	Occupational therapy assessment
			Physical therapy assessment
			Speech and language assessment
			Hearing assessment
			Vision assessment

This table is adapted from the NCWD/Youth publication, *Charting the Course: Supporting the Career Development of Youth with Learning Disabilities* (NCWD/Youth, 2009).

TABLE II

SELECTED FORMAL ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS USED TO DIAGNOSE LEARNING DISABILITIES

When selecting a battery of tests, it is critical to consider the technical adequacy of instruments, including their reliability, validity, and standardization on an appropriate norm group. The professional judgment of an evaluator in choosing tests is important. Whenever feasible, the most recent version of the test should be used. The following list includes a variety of popular standardized measures for diagnosing LD and/or LD/ADHD. It is meant to be a helpful resource to evaluators but not a definitive or exhaustive listing.

Tests of Intellectual Functioning

- Kaufman Adolescent and Adult Intelligence Test
- Reynolds Intellectual Assessment Scales
- Stanford-Binet 5
- Test of Non-Verbal Intelligence
- Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale – III
- Woodcock-Johnson III – Tests of Cognitive Ability

Attention, Memory, Learning

- Brown Attention Deficit Disorder Scale
- California Verbal Learning Test II
- Conners' Adult ADHD Rating Scale – Self Report
- Conners' Continuous Performance Test II
- Detroit Test of Adult Learning Aptitude
- Detroit Test of Learning Aptitude 3
- Halstead-Reitan Neuropsychological Test Battery
- Integrated Visual and Auditory Continuous Performance Test
- Test of Variable Attention
- WAIS-III Working Memory Index
- Wide Range Assessment of Memory and Learning – Second Edition
- Wechsler Memory Scales III
- Wender Utah Rating Scale (for ADHD)

Executive Functioning

- Delis-Kaplan Executive Function System
- Stroop Color and Word Test
- Trail Making Test Parts A and B
- Wisconsin Card Sorting Test

Visual, Perceptual, Motor

- Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test
- Brief Visual-Spatial Memory Test
- Finger Tapping Test
- Grooved Pegboard Test
- Purdue Pegboard Test
- Rey-Osterrieth Complex Figure Drawing Test

Language Skills

- Boston Naming Test
- Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing
- Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test III
- Test of Adolescent and Adult Language 3

Tests of Achievement

- Gray Oral Reading Test
- Nelson-Denny Reading Test
- Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults
- Stanford Diagnostic Mathematics Test
- Stanford Test of Academic Skills
- Test of Adolescent and Adult Word Finding
- Test of Written Language 3
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test II
- Woodcock-Johnson III – Tests of Achievement
- Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests– Revised

Specific achievement tests are useful instruments when administered under standardized conditions and when the results are interpreted within the context of other diagnostic information.

This table is adapted from the NCWD/Youth publication, *Career Planning Begins with Assessment: A Guide for Professionals Serving Youth with Educational and Career Development Challenges* (NCWD/Youth, 2005).

TABLE III
POINTS TO CONSIDER FOR USING UNIVERSAL DESIGN

<p>Class Climate <i>Adopt practices that reflect strong values with respect to both diversity and inclusiveness.</i></p>	
<i>Demand and demonstrate mutual respect</i>	Create a welcoming environment for all students. Encourage the sharing of multiple perspectives.
<i>Be approachable and available</i>	Learn students’ names. Maintain regular office hours. Consider making a student-instructor meeting a course requirement. Be available for online communication as well. Recent studies also show youth respond well to text messages.
<p>Interaction <i>Encourage regular and effective interactions between students and the instructor and ensure that communication methods are accessible to all participants.</i></p>	
<i>Encourage cooperative learning</i>	Assign group work for which learners must support each other and employ different skills and roles. Encourage different ways for students to interact with each other (e.g., in-class discussion, group work, Web-based communications). Also, require that small groups communicate in ways that are accessible to all group members.
<p>Physical Environments and Product <i>Ensure that facilities, activities, materials, and equipment are physically accessible to and usable by all students, and that all potential student characteristics are addressed in safety considerations.</i></p>	
<i>Ensure physical access to facilities</i>	Use classrooms, labs, workspaces, and fieldwork sites that are accessible to individuals with a wide range of physical abilities.
<i>Ensure that everyone can use equipment and materials</i>	Minimize nonessential physical effort and provide options for operation of equipment, handles, locks, cabinets, and drawers. Use large print to clearly label educational aids, using symbols as well as words.
<p>Delivery Methods <i>Use multiple, accessible instructional methods that are accessible to all learners.</i></p>	
<i>Select flexible curriculum</i>	Choose textbooks and other curriculum materials that address the needs of students with diverse abilities, interests, learning styles, preferences, and other characteristics. Consider technology-based materials that provide prompting and feedback opportunities.
<i>Provide cognitive supports</i>	Summarize major points, give background and contextual information, deliver effective prompting, and provide scaffolding tools (e.g., outlines, class notes, summaries, study guides, copies of projected materials with room for note-taking) and other cognitive supports. Deliver these materials in printed form and in a text-based electronic format. Encourage and support students to develop their own scaffolding materials.
<i>Provide multiple ways to gain knowledge</i>	Use multiple modes to deliver content, when possible allow students to choose from multiple options for learning, and motivate and engage students—consider lectures, collaborative learning options, small group discussions, hands-on activities, Web-based communications, online review materials, educational software, fieldwork, etc.

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TABLE III—CONTINUED
POINTS TO CONSIDER FOR USING UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Delivery Methods — continued <i>Use multiple, accessible instructional methods that are accessible to all learners.</i>	
<i>Use large visual and tactile aids</i>	Use manipulatives to demonstrate content. Make visual aids as large as reasonable (e.g., use large, bold fonts on uncluttered overhead displays; use a computer to enlarge microscope images).
Information Resources and Technology <i>If your course uses computers as information resources, ensure that these systems use an accessible design, that you are aware of accessibility options, and that systems are in place to make accommodations.</i>	
<i>Select materials early</i>	Choose printed materials and prepare a syllabus early to allow students the option of beginning to read materials and work on assignments before the course begins. Allow adequate time to arrange for alternate formats, such as books in audio format or in Braille (note that it can take more than a month to render a book in Braille). Also email materials in advance so students can access materials in multiple formats.
<i>Provide all materials in accessible formats</i>	Use textbooks that are available in a digital, accessible format with flexible features. Provide the syllabus and other teacher-created materials in a text-based, accessible electronic format. Use captioned videos and provide transcriptions for audio presentations. Apply accessibility standards to Web sites.
Feedback <i>Provide specific feedback on a regular basis.</i>	
<i>Provide regular feedback and corrective opportunities</i>	Allow students to turn in parts of large projects for feedback before the final project is due. Give students resubmission options to correct errors in assignments or exams. Arrange for peer feedback when appropriate. Solicit feedback from students regarding course effectiveness.
Assessment <i>Regularly assess student progress using multiple accessible methods and tools, and adjust instruction accordingly.</i>	
<i>Set clear expectations</i>	Keep academic standards consistent for all students, including those who require accommodations. Provide a syllabus with clear statements of course expectations, assignment descriptions, and deadlines, as well as assessment methods and dates. Include a straightforward grading rubric.
<i>Provide multiple ways to demonstrate knowledge</i>	Assess group and cooperative performance, as well as individual achievement. Consider using traditional tests with a variety of formats (e.g., multiple choice, essay, short answer), papers, group work, demonstrations, portfolios, and presentations as options for demonstrating knowledge. Provide students choices in assessment methods when appropriate.
Accommodation <i>Plan for accommodations for students whose needs are not met by the instructional design.</i>	
<i>Know how to arrange for accommodations</i>	Know protocols for getting materials in alternate formats, rescheduling classroom locations, and arranging for other accommodations for students with disabilities.

(Adapted from Burgstahler, 2007).

TABLE IV
WORK-RELATED PROCESSING CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THEM

Processing Challenges in Work Experiences or Training Settings	Long-Term Instructional Goals	How Trainers, Coaches, and Managers Can Facilitate Learning	Strategies Youth Can Use
<i>Job tasks and training materials that require substantial abstract reasoning</i>	Learners are expected to learn how to seek more examples, explanations, and interpretations through questioning and research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide concrete examples • Provide analogies • Provide alternate interpretations • Provide hands-on experiences 	Graph, draw, or build physical representations of abstract concepts using <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • photographs • models • alternate media
<i>Complex job tasks or training materials that are not clearly organized</i>	Learners are expected to learn how to survey materials and identify text organization, read to confirm organization of ideas, and reorganize information for personal understanding and use. Learners are expected to learn how to chunk tasks, graphically represent complex information, ask clarifying questions, and work collaboratively in teams to attack complex tasks.	Break down information or tasks and present them more explicitly and in ways that facilitate remembering	Organize and transform information by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outlining • summarizing • rearranging materials • high lighting • using flashcards/index cards • drawing pictures, diagrams, charts • making webs or maps Structure environmental components by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • selecting or arranging the physical setting • isolating/eliminating or minimizing distractions • breaking up study periods and spreading them over time

TABLE IV—CONTINUED
WORK-RELATED PROCESSING CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THEM

Processing Challenges in Work Experiences or Training Settings	Long-Term Instructional Goals	How Trainers, Coaches, and Managers Can Facilitate Learning	Strategies Youth Can Use
<p><i>Job tasks or training materials that require basic academic skills or cognitive strategies beyond those of the individual</i></p>	<p>Learners are expected to have intensive instruction required for mastery of specific content; this should be presented in small, manageable chunks and applied to the specific content.</p> <p>Learners who do not know how to approach and complete tasks are expected to have intensive instruction in learning strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide instruction in the prerequisite basic skills • Learn to develop accommodations • Provide cues and guidance about how to approach and complete learning and performance tasks 	<p>Rehearse and memorize (written or verbal; overt or covert) by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using mnemonic devices • teaching someone else the material • making sample questions • using mental imagery • using repetition <p>Set goals and plan by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sequencing, timing • using time management and pacing strategies
<p><i>Job tasks and training materials that may not have a connection with an individual's previous experiences, do not connect with current life activities, or are not initially interesting</i></p>	<p>Learners are expected to be able to gather relevant materials from a variety of information sources and to ask questions of these sources to gain knowledge and insights. They are expected to learn how to search for personal connections and explore other ways to make content relevant. They are also expected to be taught self-management strategies for maintaining attention in boring situations and how to take advantage of options and choices provided in assignments to make work more interesting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make connections between information and life situations more explicit • Provide information and assignments in ways that build on an individual's attention span, participation, strengths, and interests 	<p>Do "homework" and learn about work outside of work by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conducting and performing informational interviews • conducting library or internet research <p>Participate in workplace mentoring</p>

TABLE IV—CONTINUED
WORK-RELATED PROCESSING CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THEM

Processing Challenges in Work Experiences or Training Settings	Long-Term Instructional Goals	How Trainers, Coaches, and Managers Can Facilitate Learning	Strategies Youth Can Use
<p><i>Job tasks and training materials that may seek responses and look for outcomes that are unfamiliar to youth and young adults</i></p>	<p>Learners are expected to learn how to independently check and redo work, review information, seek help, ask clarifying questions, and inform others when they need more or different types of instruction before instruction in more content begins. They are expected to learn how to identify expectations and goals embedded in materials or to create and adjust goals based on previous experiences. They are expected to be taught how to demonstrate competence, identify and take advantage of performance options offered, and request appropriate accommodations on evaluations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide additional or alternative instructional activities, activity sequences, or practice experiences to ensure mastery at each level of learning • Provide information concerning expectations for learning and performance • Provide opportunities to demonstrate what they know in different ways 	<p>Seek social assistance by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • soliciting help from peers • soliciting help from teachers or other adults • emulating exemplary models <p>Self-evaluate (checking quality or progress) by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyzing the task (What does the instructor or my manager want me to do? What do I want out of it?)

This table is adapted from the NCWD/Youth publication, *Charting the Course: Supporting the Career Development of Youth with Learning Disabilities* (NCWD/Youth, 2009).

TABLE V**STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES THAT ENCOURAGE INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT SKILLS**

Self-Awareness	
Strategies for Practitioners	Activities for Youth
<i>Facilitate group discussions about individual hobbies, interests, volunteer work, community involvement, and social activities (such as sports).</i>	<p>Have youth consider how their strengths may match with potential job opportunities that interest them.</p> <p>Have youth with LD consider if they have developed any techniques to self-accommodate their disability in their interest area. For example, do they plan what they are going to say to a new coach before meeting him or her?</p>
<i>Facilitate opportunities for youth to learn how accessing accommodations can help them succeed in the workplace.</i>	<p>Have youth practice applying different learning strategies to discover what techniques work best for them on the job.</p> <p>Have youth with LD describe how they can use the strategies that helped them succeed in the classroom in the workplace. For example, in school when the teacher provided directions orally and in writing, the young person tended to perform better. Therefore in the workplace, the youth might request that his/her supervisor provide written and oral directions for new tasks.</p>
<i>Promote understanding and value of the use of accommodations and use of assistive technologies.</i>	<p>Help youth become comfortable with describing and communicating their disability to others. Also, assist them in thinking about academic-related accommodations and how they may translate into the workplace. For youth with LD role-playing may aid in understanding this concept.</p>
<i>Explore choice-making by using real-life examples and gauging their consequences.</i>	<p>Have youth discuss situations they may have experienced at school, work, or home that have undesirable consequences and how to plan to avoid such situations.</p> <p>Provide youth with LD with a pre-discussion graphic organizer to help them organize their thoughts and to facilitate the discussion.</p>
<i>Facilitate the interaction of youth with successful role models with disabilities to enhance their disability-related knowledge and self-confidence.</i>	<p>Have speakers with a variety of characteristics, including those with LD, do presentations centered on strategies they used to overcome challenges as well as attain success in the workplace and in social settings.</p>
<i>Structure opportunities for youth to learn about national organizations and resources which provide support to students with LD, parents, and professionals, as well.</i>	<p>Have youth conduct research about LD organizations online. For youth with LD who have a hard time reading, this exercise could be conducted using software that reads text.</p>

TABLE V—CONTINUED
STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES THAT ENCOURAGE INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT SKILLS

Goal Setting	
Strategies for Practitioners	Activities for Youth
<i>Provide a financial literacy program of study to help youth learn to set goals related to saving money and purchasing desired items.</i>	<p>Select a community partner (e.g., Junior Achievement) or curriculum that assists youth in developing a financial management plan and budget.</p> <p>Consider teaching students with LD how to organize a budget using a spreadsheet to keep information stored and organized.</p>
<i>Promote active involvement in educational and vocational planning and decision-making, including structuring opportunities to identify career interests.</i>	<p>Have youth set up tours of colleges, apprenticeship programs, corporations, and government agencies. Use the Web or other information sources (i.e., visit to a One-Stop) to explore careers and identify the educational skill requirements and earning potential of jobs within particular industry sectors.</p> <p>Have youth with LD locate the appropriate office that provides support, accommodation, and assistive technology such as the Student Support Office on campus or the personnel office in the workplace. Also, have them explore services available through career services at the postsecondary level.</p>
<i>Facilitate the development of social activities and recreational opportunities.</i>	<p>Provide community-based social activities that make connections between youth, their peers, and caring adults in safe and supportive environments.</p> <p>Youth with LD may need to set personal goals for the ways they want to create and enlarge their social circle and networking opportunities to practice interpersonal skills.</p>
<i>Facilitate a series of reflection exercises to build the analytical skills necessary to make progressively more complex decisions.</i>	<p>Have each youth identify a short-term goal and prepare a plan for achieving it. Revisit the goal within a mutually agreed upon timeframe. Have the youth evaluate the pros and cons of the decisions made. Repeat the exercise with progressively more complex goals, including examination of past decisions to determine if the consequences were anticipated or desired.</p> <p>Teach youth with LD a goal-setting strategy and provide a checklist so students can begin to self-regulate the goal-setting process.</p>
<i>Facilitate linkages between the goals set by the youth and the daily decisions and choices they make, and teach them to break long-term goals into short-term objectives.</i>	<p>Have youth identify a well-known individual and analyze that person's accomplishments by hypothesizing about the short-term goals that person may have used which contributed to their long-term success.</p> <p>Provide youth with LD instruction on backwards planning and how it can be used in their life.</p>

TABLE V—CONTINUED
STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES THAT ENCOURAGE INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT SKILLS

Goal Setting (continued)	
Strategies for Practitioners	Activities for Youth
<p><i>Revisit goals periodically for the purpose of instilling the importance of following through and reworking the goals. Engage the family in the review process.</i></p>	<p>Have both youth and family review the youth’s goal statements to evaluate progress made and revise if necessary.</p> <p>Help youth with LD who are receiving special education services understand the role of their service coordinator/case manager and the importance of maintaining communication with that individual.</p> <p>Discuss how this technique can be applied to the work setting by keeping your supervisor informed of your work-related goals and the progress you are making in achieving them.</p>
<p><i>Structure a decision-making exercise that requires gathering information, identifying options, predicting consequences, and taking action to implement the decision.</i></p>	<p>For example, have groups plan a job-shadowing day/week including selecting types of businesses, contacting them, organizing logistics, and reporting on results.</p> <p>Help youth with LD develop a script for calling a business and role-play the calls</p>
Self Advocacy	
Strategies for Practitioners	Activities for Youth
<p><i>Promote self-reflection and provide specific feedback to help youth understand how they learn best.</i></p>	<p>Use a range of individual and group activities to involve youth in evaluating their own performance and increase their self-monitoring and personal responsibility for learning.</p> <p>Provide youth with LD explicit instruction in learning styles and have the youth practice requesting the type of assistance they need to do their best work.</p>
<p><i>Provide opportunities for youth to express concerns, preferences, and conclusions about their future options.</i></p>	<p>Structure opportunities for both groups and individuals to practice communicating their concerns and preferences about the work world.</p> <p>Have youth with LD take a leadership role in planning how to manage their concerns.</p>
<p><i>Promote peer networking that encourages self-advocacy.</i></p>	<p>Provide students with opportunities to meet others with LD so they can learn from these individuals and understand how self-advocacy can take many forms.</p> <p>Have youth meet others with LD that represent an array of background experiences, racial and ethnic groups, and employment areas.</p>

TABLE V—CONTINUED
STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES THAT ENCOURAGE INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT SKILLS

Self Advocacy (continued)	
Strategies for Practitioners	Activities for Youth
<i>Facilitate understanding of disability disclosure in work and education settings.</i>	<p>Familiarize youth with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act and help youth identify accommodation strategies and technologies that will help them perform at work.</p> <p>Have youth practice ways to disclose their LD and accommodation needs.</p>
<i>Promote active participation in extracurricular programs in school, work, and the community.</i>	<p>Structure learning sessions to expose youth to leadership roles (both personal and group) and provide role playing or other forms of practice.</p> <p>Help youth with LD connect with Youth Leadership Forums or community-based leadership programs.</p>
<i>Structure problem-solving exercises so that an individual or a group identifies common work or social problems and works through possible solutions.</i>	<p>Have the group/individual identify a problem in their school or larger community; gather information; list and consider options; consider advantages and disadvantages; identify potential conflicts; suggest or, if possible, implement a solution; and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution.</p> <p>Teach youth with LD a problem-solving strategy and provide a checklist so students can begin to self-regulate the problem-solving process.</p>

This table is adapted from the NCWD/Youth publication, *Charting the Course: Supporting the Career Development of Youth with Learning Disabilities* (NCWD/Youth, 2009)

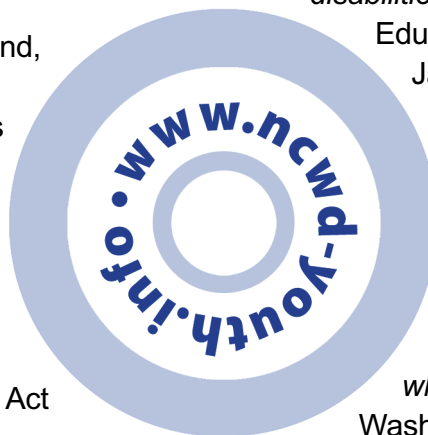
TABLE VI
FACTORS TO WEIGH BEFORE DISCLOSURE

ADVANTAGES: Disclosure...	DISADVANTAGES: Disclosure...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allows an individual to begin a dialogue with employers, educators, or others with regard to accommodations and to pursue work, school, or community activities more effectively • provides legal protection against discrimination (as specified in the Americans with Disabilities Act) • reduces stress, since protecting a “secret” can take a lot of energy • gives an individual a clearer impression of what kinds of expectations people may have of them and their abilities • ensures that an individual is getting what they need (e.g., accommodation or assistive technology) in order to be successful • provides full freedom to examine and question health insurance and other benefits • provides greater freedom for the individual to communicate his/her needs • improves self-image through self-advocacy • allows an individual to involve other professionals (for example, educators and employment service providers) to help him/her learn skills and develop accommodations • increases one’s comfort level • may help other people with LD if the young person is a role model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may cause an individual to feel excluded • may cause an individual to become an object of unwanted curiosity • may lead to blame of the individual if something doesn’t go right • may cause others to treat the individual differently • may bring up conflicting feelings about self-image • may lead to an individual being viewed as needy, not self-sufficient, or unable to perform on par with his/her peers • may cause an individual to be legally or illegally rejected or overlooked for a job, team, group, or organization
<p>In conversations about disclosure, an individual needs to be prepared to discuss the following:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • his/her strengths • the characteristics of the learning disability • how the learning disability affects academic or vocational performance • the accommodations or modifications needed to be successful on the job • examples of past successes using accommodations 	

This table is adapted from the NCWD/Youth publication, *Charting the Course: Supporting the Career Development of Youth with Learning Disabilities* (NCWD/Youth, 2009)

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The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) is composed of partners with expertise in disability, education, employment, and workforce development issues. NCWD/Youth is housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, DC. The Collaborative is charged with assisting state and local workforce development systems to integrate youth with disabilities into their service strategies. This Information Brief was written by Amy Katzel. To obtain this publication in an alternate format please contact the Collaborative at 877-871-0744 toll free or email

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