



DO-IT

Guidelines for DO-IT Summer Study Volunteers & Instructors

DO-IT Scholars are capable and motivated high school students who are preparing for college. They are participants in project DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology), which is directed by the University of Washington (UW). A wide range of disabilities are represented in each group of *Scholars*, including blindness, low vision, hearing impairments, mobility impairments, health impairments, attention deficit disorder, specific learning disabilities, and psychiatric disabilities.

Instructors and other volunteers are important members of the DO-IT team while *Scholars* participate in Summer Study programs on the University of Washington campus. Most have little, if any, previous experience working with students who have disabilities.

This publication includes basic communication, lecture, discussion, field trip, and laboratory suggestions. Following these guidelines helps to maximize *Scholar* participation and independence.

Teaching Guidelines

Presentation

- Produce handouts in Braille, large print, or electronic format as needed.
- Speak clearly and naturally.
- Try to incorporate as many senses as possible in your instruction: visual, auditory, and tactile. For example, consider using visual aids, verbal descriptions, and object manipulation in your presentation.
- Work in advance with DO-IT staff to determine needs and arrange production.
- Face *Scholars* when you speak and keep your face, particularly your mouth, visible.
- Describe visual aids and demonstrations verbally. For example, say “the 3 inch steel rod” instead of “this”.
- Feel free to use terms like “watch the dial” and “walk over to”. Many people with disabilities use such terms even if they cannot see or walk.
- Use language that is easily understood. If you introduce an unusual or difficult word, spell and define it orally and write it on the blackboard or overhead projector. Use analogies that *Scholars* will understand to explain a term or process.
- Ask *DO-IT Scholars* to help you distribute handouts, set up, or demonstrate a concept. They enjoy being actively involved.
- Share personal and/or humorous anecdotes or stories about your life or work experiences.
- Convey passion for your work.
- Consider creating a project in class that *Scholars* can take home with them and/or describe a project, such as collecting data, that *Scholars* can do after the program is over.
- Invite *Scholars* to send you email with their results, questions, or comments.
- Include time for discussion. *DO-IT Scholars* are inquisitive and enjoy sharing their ideas.



Discussion

- Before calling on a *Scholar*, allow time for the group to think about a question and formulate responses.
- Allow *Scholars* with speech impairments to participate in group discussions. If you do not understand what is being said, repeat what you understood and then ask the person to repeat the rest. Often, other *Scholars* can help you understand what the student is saying.
- Call on *Scholars* both verbally and with gestures so that students with visual or hearing impairments know that they are being addressed.
- Repeat all questions and comments from the audience to ensure that all of the *Scholars* have heard them. This is also very important if a *Scholar* is using an FM amplification system.
- If there is an interpreter in the room, direct comments to the *Scholar*, not the interpreter. The interpreter performs only the function(s) of a *Scholar's* ears and /or voice.
- Make certain that aisles and work surfaces are clear. Aisles should be between 42 and 48 inches wide, to allow a wheelchair to maneuver easily. *Scholars* who use wheelchairs usually work best when work surfaces are at least 29 inches high, but no higher than 30-32 inches from the floor, 36 inches wide, and at least 20 inches deep.
- When appropriate, organize your activities so that students are paired up or working in small groups. Matching *Scholars* with different abilities can maximize participation. For example, in an activity where knobs need to be turned and gauges monitored, a *Scholar* who is blind can perform the manipulations while someone who cannot use his hands can provide directions and feedback. DO-IT staff can assign groups in advance as appropriate.
- If a *Scholar* feels she can do a task but you cannot understand how, ask the student to explain how she would do it. If anyone's safety is in question, consult with a DO-IT staff member before allowing her to attempt the task to see if other alternatives might be identified.

Laboratory

- Make requests in advance for Braille and large print labels and instructions for lab equipment.
- Give the *Scholars* a tour of your lab before beginning an activity. Show where the exits, showers, extinguishers, and other safety equipment are located. Make sure that shower chains and wash hoses can be reached by *Scholars* who use wheelchairs in case of emergency.
- Explain safety practices and make sure that *Scholars* follow them.

Thank you for contributing to the successful transition of *DO-IT Scholars* into postsecondary education and careers. Please contact DO-IT if you have questions or concerns.



About DO-IT

DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology) serves to increase the successful participation of individuals with disabilities in challenging academic programs such as those in science, engineering, mathematics, and technology. Primary funding for the DO-IT program is provided by the National Science Foundation, the State of Washington, and the U.S. Department of Education. Additional grants have been received from the AOL Foundation, the Jeld-Wen Foundation, Microsoft, Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation, NEC Foundation of America, the Samuel S. Johnson Foundation, the Seattle Foundation, the Telecommunications Funding Partnership, US WEST Communications, Visio Corporation, and the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. The University of Washington also contributes substantial resources to this project.

For further information, to be placed on the DO-IT mailing list, or to request materials in an alternate format, contact:

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Grants and gifts fund DO-IT publications, videos, and programs to support the academic and career success of people with disabilities. Contribute today by sending a check to DO-IT, Box 355670, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195-5670.

Your gift is tax deductible as specified in IRS regulations. Pursuant to RCW 19.09, the University of Washington is registered as a charitable organization with the Secretary of State, State of Washington. For more information, call the Office of the Secretary of State, 800-322-4483.



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Communication Hints

Treat people with disabilities with the same respect and consideration with which you treat others. There are no strict rules when it comes to relating to people with disabilities. However, here are some helpful hints.

General

- Ask a person with a disability if he or she needs help before providing assistance.
- Talk directly to the person with a disability, not through the person's companion or interpreter.
- Refer to a person's disability only if it is relevant to the conversation. If so, mention the person first and then the disability. "A man who is blind" is better than "a blind man" because it puts the person first.
- Avoid negative descriptions of a person's disability. For example, "a person who uses a wheelchair" is more appropriate than "a person *confined* to a wheelchair." A wheelchair is not confining— it's liberating!
- Do not interact with a person's guide dog or service dog unless you have received permission to do so.

Blind or Low Vision

- Be descriptive. Say, "The computer is about three feet to your left," rather than "The computer is over there."
- Speak all of the content presented with overhead projections and other visuals.
- When guiding people with visual impairments, offer them your arm rather than grabbing or pushing them.

Learning Disabilities

- Offer directions or instructions both orally and in writing. If asked, read instructions to individuals who have specific learning disabilities.

Mobility Impairments

- Sit or otherwise position yourself at the approximate height of people sitting in wheelchairs when you interact.

Speech Impairments

- Listen carefully. Repeat what you think you understand and then ask the person with a speech impairment to clarify or repeat the portion that you did not understand.

Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- Face people with hearing impairments so they can see your lips. Avoid talking while chewing gum or eating.
- Speak clearly at a normal volume. Speak louder only if requested.
- Use paper and pencil if the person who is deaf does not read lips or if more accurate communication is needed.
- In groups raise hands to be recognized so the person who is deaf knows who is speaking. Repeat questions from audience members.
- When using an interpreter, speak directly to the person who is deaf; when an interpreter voices what a person who is deaf signs, look at the person who is deaf, not the interpreter.

Psychiatric Impairments

- Provide information in clear, calm, respectful tones.
- Allow opportunities for addressing specific questions.