

Appendix Q: Guidelines for Summer Study Volunteers and 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 maximize *Scholar* participation and independence.

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 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 electronic mail 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 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 *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.

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.
- Make certain that aisles and work surfaces are clear. *Scholars* who use wheelchairs usually work best when work surfaces are at least 29-32 inches from the floor, and 36 inches wide.
- 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 he/she can do a task but you cannot understand how, ask the student to explain how he/she would do it. If anyone's safety is in question, consult with a DO-IT staff member before allowing him/her to attempt the task to see if other alternatives might be identified.
- 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.

[Note: For the most current version of *Guidelines for DO-IT Summer Study Volunteers and Instructors* consult <http://www.washington.edu/doit/Brochures/Programs/instr.html>.]