



Although the number of people with disabilities entering and completing post-secondary education programs has increased dramatically in the past ten years, they are still underrepresented in the employment arena. In 1994, the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) reported that 73.9% of people with severe disabilities were unemployed.

In a world where technology is a necessary aspect of almost every business, physical ability is seldom a limitation. The prominence of technology in the business world translates into more career opportunities for people with disabilities.

It is difficult for talented young people with disabilities to succeed, or even imagine success, in higher education and employment. Obstacles include lack of adequate support systems; little access to successful role models; lack of access to technology that can increase independence and productivity; and, most significantly, low expectations on the part of the people with whom they interact. These barriers result in fewer capable high school students with disabilities attending colleges and universities and subsequently entering professional employment. To overcome these barriers there is a need for transition support for individuals who are intellectually capable of handling post-secondary education and/or employment, yet who encounter difficulties because of their disabilities.



The University of Washington (UW), with primary funding from the National Science Foundation, established project DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology). In 1992 DO-IT began its efforts to recruit high school students with disabilities into post-secondary education programs and careers. DO-IT provides students with electronic communication tools, mentors, and training; a live-in summer study program at the UW; and other activities to encourage and facilitate the pursuit of careers where people with disabilities

have been traditionally underrepresented. DO-IT motivates students to fully exercise their intellectual and career potentials. The philosophy of the program is that talented students with disabilities can accomplish as much as their non-disabled peers, given encouragement, preparation, appropriate technology, and accommodations.

One challenge for individuals with disabilities is to make a successful transition from college to career. Gaining work-based learning experiences before graduation can make this step a success. Work experience can provide motivation for study and work, career clarification and confidence in career choice, increased maturity and self-esteem, financial resources to fund a college education, and a chance to prove their worth to potential employers. Yet, students with disabilities are less likely to access college work-based learning and career develop-



ment programs than their non-disabled peers.

The DO-IT CAREERS (Careers, Academics, Research, Experiential Education and Relevant Skills) project was undertaken in 1996 with funding from the U.S. Department of Education. Its purpose is to increase the participation of college students with disabilities in work experiences that will help them meet their ultimate goal of full-time employment in a challenging and rewarding career. The goal for each DO-IT participant is not simply job placement, but the pursuit of a meaningful career that matches the student's goals, interests, and abilities.

The purpose of the enclosed videotape and written materials is to help career development professionals become more aware of:

- the rights, responsibilities and potential contributions of students with disabilities;
- legal rights and responsibilities of institutions and programs for ensuring equal access to all students;
- strategies for recruiting, placing, and accommodating students with disabilities in work-based learning programs; and
- access to computing resources for students with disabilities.

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DO-IT serves to increase the success of people with disabilities, especially in fields where they have been underrepresented such as science, engineering, and mathematics. DO-IT uses technology to maximize the independence, productivity, and participation of students with disabilities in academic programs and careers.

DO-IT activities help individuals with disabilities successfully:

- use computers, adaptive technology, and the Internet for academics and careers;
- pursue challenging fields such as science, engineering, mathematics, and technology;
- transition from high school to college, from two- to four-year colleges, from undergraduate work to advanced studies;
- transition from school to work; and
- gain access to libraries, labs, and information resources.



- Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring; and
- being showcased at the 1996 National Science Foundation Dynamic Partnerships invitational conference and the 1997 Presidents' Summit on the American Future.

Primary funding for DO-IT is provided by the National Science Foundation and the State of Washington. Additional grants have been received from the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation, the NEC Foundation of America, the Seattle Foundation, the Samuel S. Johnson Foundation, the Telecommunication Funding Partnership, the U.S. Department of Education, U.S. West Communications, the Dwight D. Eisenhower Foundation, and Visio Corporation.

DO-IT's efforts have been acknowledged with many awards and honors. These include:

- receiving the National Information Infrastructure award for its creative use of the Internet to support education;
- being honored with the 1997 Presidential



## HOW TO USE THESE MATERIALS

The purpose of this notebook is to offer career development professionals, students with disabilities, and employers information and strategies for including students with disabilities in internship, cooperative education, and other work-based learning experiences. Information provided includes an overview of key legal and accommodation issues; background and general strategies; a Four – Step Accommodation Model; sample Abilities Profiles; information on computer facility access, adaptive technology, and access to electronic resources; presentations; and resources.

The materials in this notebook can be used for individual study by career development professionals and employers.

They can also be included with other career center resource materials. The presentations are ideal for individual meetings, pre-conference and conference sessions, staff and service club meetings, and student orientations.

The *Presentations* section includes three presentations – for students with disabilities, career development staff, and employers. Each presentation can be modified to fit the needs of a specific audience.

The *Student Presentation* can be used informally with individual students as well as in group meetings such as orientations and career fairs. Its purpose is to encourage students to participate in campus work-based

learning opportunities while providing them with strategies and information regarding self-advocacy, adaptive technology, disability-related employment situations, and accommodations.



The *Career Development Staff Presentation* provides useful information and approaches for accommodating, placing, and fully including students with disabilities in campus work experience programs. It is appropriate for large or small meetings, including groups of administrators, career counselors, placement specialists, cooperative education coordinators, and disabled student services officers.

The *Employer Presentation* alerts employers to the potential advantages of hiring students with disabilities as interns and cooperative education students as well as provides information on recruiting and accommodating them on-the-job. Like the *Student Presentation*, the *Employer Presentation* can be delivered informally, one-on-one, or to groups during conferences or professional meetings.

Handouts, overhead transparencies, and videotape presentations are provided to accompany the presentations. All you need to do is designate a presenter to review the materials, decide on a format, schedule the presentation, and DO-IT!



The *Strategies* section of this notebook covers general issues related to access to work-based learning programs for students with disabilities – legal and attitudinal issues, accommodation strategies, and information from the student’s and the employer’s perspectives.

The *Access to Computing for People with Disabilities* section covers three essential areas regarding full access to computing resources by people with disabilities – computer facility access, adaptive technology, and access to electronic resources.

The *Presentations* section includes three presentations – for students with disabilities, career development staff, and employers. Each presentation can be modified to fit the needs of a specific audience.

*General References* and a *Glossary* relevant to disabilities, work-based learning and employment can be found in the *Resources* section of this notebook. Additional references can be found at DO-IT’s World Wide Web site at <http://weber.u.washington.edu/~doit>.

Reproducible handout and overhead transparency templates and videotape presentations are included in the *Tools* section for self study as well as for use in presentations. They are described below.

## Overhead Transparency Templates

A large number of black and white templates that can be used as references or copied onto transparencies for use during presentations are included. You can pick and choose from the templates to customize your presentation for your specific audience.

## Videotape Presentations

Five videotape presentations are included on the enclosed videotape.

- A thirteen-minute videotape, *It’s Your Career*, discusses reasons why students with disabilities should participate in campus work-based learning opportunities. The videotape describes internships and other work experience programs as well as outlines ways students can become involved.
- A seven-minute videotape, *Finding Gold: Hiring the Best and the Brightest*, describes how employers can benefit from including students with disabilities in their internship and cooperative education programs.
- An eleven-minute videotape, *Equal Access: Computer Labs*, shows how computer labs can be designed in such a way to be accessible to people with disabilities.
- A fourteen-minute videotape presentation, *Working Together: People with Disabilities and Computer Technology*, introduces individuals with disabilities who demonstrate adaptive technology and computer applications for people with mobility impairments, low vision, blindness, hearing and/or speech impairments, health impairments, and learning disabilities.
- An eleven-minute videotape, *World Wide Access: Accessible Web Design*, introduces viewers to people with disabilities who describe the roadblocks they encounter on the World Wide Web. The videotape provides an overview of principles of accessible Web design. Following these principals ensures that people with a



broad range of abilities and disabilities are able to obtain information from Web pages.

## Handout Templates

Black and white templates of the following handouts can be copied and distributed to staff and faculty in your institution, students with disabilities, and employers participating in your programs. They can also be used for delivering presentations at conferences and regional consortia meetings. The handout templates can be found in the back pocket of this notebook.

- *It's Your Career: Work-Based Learning Opportunities for Students with Disabilities*
- *Finding Gold: Hiring the Best and the Brightest*
- *Equal Access: Computer Labs*
- *Working Together: People with Disabilities and Computer Technology*
- *World Wide Access: Accessible Web Design*



<http://www.washington.edu/doi/>. Here you will find many of the materials included in this packet, as well as additional information and links to other resources. With a live Internet connection, you can use the site during a presentation. Or, you may prefer to download files for an offline presentation utilizing one of many offline browser capture programs (e.g., Browser Buddy, WebWhacker). If you choose this presentation method, be sure to have the traditional overhead transparencies ready as a backup in case of Internet connection or computer failure.

Permission is granted to reproduce printed materials and videotape presentations for non-commercial, educational purposes as long as proper credit is given to the source.

## Electronic Presentation

Materials in electronic form are available at