Preparing Students with Disabilities for Successful College Transition: Skills and Knowledge Students Need

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Note

*Views are my own, not Columbia U’s & I do not represent Columbia here
*Nothing in presentation should be construed as legal or medical
*"We" = college DS providers generally
*I don’t know everything (don’t let it get around!)

College vocabulary

• Disability services (DS) - the name of the office at a college that coordinates students’ accommodations
• Letter (Email) of Accommodation (LOA/EOA) – message from DS that students transmit to professors to tell them about their approved accommodations
• Coordinator – title of students’ liaison at DS who coordinates their accommodations
• Documentation – paperwork that shows students have a disability
• Family Education Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) – covers colleges and means we can’t talk to parents without students’ permission

College disability services basics

• Disability accommodations are free
• May not be a department (e.g. responsibility might be part of a dean’s job)
• May be a one person office
• No requirements for certification
• No limit on caseload
• Disability services offices coordinate services, don’t provide instruction or coaching
• Schools may have writing, math, tutoring centers/help rooms – staff doesn’t typically have special training

Make sure your students and their families know:

IDEA doesn’t cover colleges - students’ plans “expire”

High school = Section 504 Subpart D
Colleges = Subpart E
So...504 plans “expire”

Bottom line – colleges don’t have to provide same accommodations, but might choose to do so

Not reasonable

• undue financial or administrative burden
• pose a direct threat to safety of others
• fundamentally alter the nature of a course or program (admission, graduation – math and foreign language, course of study) = no modification to standards*
• personal service (e.g., tutoring) or device (e.g., software)

**this may be why colleges call their adjustments “accommodations”

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The way colleges view accommodations vs. modifications

- **Accommodation** – support or services that allow students to "fully access" the curriculum or subject matter – does not change content taught or expectation that students will meet performance standard set for all students*

- **Modification** – change to curriculum or material being taught that alters standards or expectations for students with disabilities*


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Some Commonly Approved Accommodations

For exams:

- Extended time for exams (not untimed or unlimited time) – 1.5 or 2.0 (150% or 200%)
- Reduced-distraction site (not distraction-free)
- Permission to use laptop with spellchecker for exams* (sub for no penalty for spelling errors)
- Calculator for exams*

*may not be available if spelling or calculation are being measured by the exam

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More Commonly Approved Accommodations

For the classroom:

- Note-taker
- Permission to record
- Permission to use laptop for notetaking
- Priority seating

For studying:

- Class texts in alternative format/text-to-speech software

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Accommodations that may be more difficult to get

- Extended time to complete papers/projects
- Special tutoring, e.g., with a learning disabilities specialist, one-on-one, or more frequently than other students can have
  - Copies of professors' lecture notes
  - PowerPoint sides ahead of class
  - Study guides

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<tr>
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<table>
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<tr>
<td>Modified grading standards</td>
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How effective are accommodations?
Study looked at how the grades of students who had more accommodations compared with those who had fewer.
Found that mean grades were highest with one accommodation, decreased with additional accommodations.
Students with ADD — significant grade improvement
Students with LD and ADD — significant grade improvement
Students with just LD — grades dropped.
Theory — students are not choosing the right accommodations for themselves.

Take-aways
- Students’ IEPs and 504 plans have no legal bearing once students graduate from high school.
- Colleges have to provide accommodations, but they do not have to provide what students have received before.
- Students need to be ready to work without certain accommodations or with different ones.

Questions???

Personal qualities of successful students
- motivation
- confidence
- persistence/perseverance
- resilience
- self-discipline

Our students already have these!

Skills of successful students that we can help them to develop
- coping skills to handle juggling academic responsibilities and other aspects of their lives (encourage participation in clubs/activities/sports and encourage parents to assign chores/responsibilities)
- awareness of their learning strengths and the weaknesses that constitute their disability and knowledge of strategies to bypass weaknesses
- self-determination
- self-advocacy

Self-determination skills
- making decisions (e.g., major)
- setting goals and planning how to achieve them (e.g., course completion)
- adjusting the plan when appropriate given any obstacles (course not available in semester they plan to take it)
- knowing whether goal was reached and realistically relating outcome to effort extended (e.g., all necessary classes taken?)


Why do students need self-determination skills?
- Make decisions throughout high school that affect post-secondary options (accommodations used, classes taken, outside activities)
- Choose a college
- Choose a major
- Choose course loads each semester (must complete college’s and major’s requirements)
How can we teach/develop self-determination

- Involving students in IEP meetings – coach, rehearse ahead of time, provide scaffolding over the years
- Make sure planning for 9th grade IEP (and subsequent ones) makes clear to students how class choices can affect their post high school choices
- Have students complete interest inventories & job searches (built into high school’s college application system or try O*NET (https://www.mymentmove.org/explore/lp)
- Use published curricula (http://www.ou.edu/content/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow/choicemaker-curriculum.html)

Self-advocacy skills

- State what disability is and explain how it affects academic functioning
- State what accommodations they want and how they relate to the effects of their disability on their academic functioning
- Know how to recognize when they need help and seek it out
- ****establish support networks
- Understand their rights as a person with a disability

Why do students need self-advocacy skills?

- Have to register with disability services (DS) in order to receive accommodations
- DS will ask them what their disability is and ask them to explain what accommodations they need and why they need them
- Students will have to seek help on their own since professors and DS don’t monitor them
- Students should know what their rights are in case anyone violates them

Responsibilities

Students must register with DS (or other office or person) in order to receive accommodations, even if they said something in their application

Typically, they have to:
- Complete a basic form (may also have to meet with someone at DS)
- Submit disability documentation

Only need to do this once

Can happen at any time

Additional responsibilities

Each semester (maybe not)

- Ask for letters
- Give letters to professors
- Complete paperwork related to services and accommodations
- Tell coordinator if accommodations aren’t working / professor refuses accommodation (should get advice on this when they register with DS)

How can we teach self-advocacy?

- Review students’ profiles with them each year; ask whether they think they truly reflect their skills
- Gradually give students more responsibility for talking to their teachers about their accommodations
- Make sure they know how the disability services system will work when they get to college & know what they can expect (or not)
Disability Disclosure at College
NIT52 school - parent/student report
Of those enrolled who ever enrolled in any kind of postsecondary school
Students who thought that they didn’t have a disability:
• 68.9% of those with LD
• 64.9% of those with OHI (ADHD typically falls under this)
Range for the entire sample of students was 19% (orthopedic) to 73% (speech/language)

What happens when students wait to register?
42 students – data collected in middle of sophomore year
Primary reason for seeking services later – academic failure or ability to participate in activities

GPA end of first semester sophomore year

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<td>Late group</td>
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Credits earned

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Lightner – comments from students
No one used term “learning disability” with some students or told them how it would affect them in college
Thought disclosing in application was enough – no one told some students they have to send information themselves

The majority of students who registered first semester remembered being told about college disability services while they were in high school and remembered meetings where they learned about nature of disability & impact on some aspect of college

Readiness – time management
Surprise – so much free time & no idea how much to study

What students can do – start by planning to spend 5 hours each week outside of class to study/complete work for each class they take (and add or subtract time as needed)

Surprise – so much free time & no idea how much to study

What students can do – use the 5-hours-per-class-per-week idea as a foundation for creating a weekly study schedule (see handout for tool for this)

Readiness – coping with classes
Surprise – classes don’t meet as frequently – may move quickly through information and do little (or no) review of readings

What students can do
• Bring questions to office hours and/or study groups/ask professor to check their notes
• Review notes frequently to keep information fresh for exams
• Attend every class

Surprise – entire grade may be based on two exams or papers
What students can do – use good time management to make sure that they don’t have to catch up on readings before exams and/or start papers early enough to seek help

Surprise – classes may be large and held in distracting lecture halls
What students can do – sit close enough to the front to feel engaged with professors and feel concerned about getting caught off-task

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Readiness – readings

Surprise – professors don’t give comprehension questions, making it hard to check reading comprehension

What students can do – use strategies like SQ3R, discuss readings with classmates (make up questions to ask each other), or bring questions to office hours

Surprise – readings may be very abstract (e.g., Philosophy or classics)

What students can do – look up summaries on the Internet or use Sparknotes or Schmoo.com to get the gist before reading

Surprise – professors don’t always check to see whether students are keeping up with readings, making it easy to get behind and then run into trouble at exam time

What students can do – make completion of readings part of that study schedule and add reading hours to the next week of they get behind

Readiness – papers

Surprise – professors typically don’t help with the writing process or want to see drafts as students work

What students can do – use outlines, graphic organizers, and make appointments at the writing center, ask willing professors for help at office hours

Surprise – students will be expected to use primary sources

What students can do – ask for help at library if they’re not sure how to identify and cite these properly

Surprise – students may have to sign an honor code

What students can do – run paper drafts through turnitin.com to check for accidental plagiarism

Additional skills of successful students that we can help them to develop

Organizing materials (keeping track of paper & electronic files, regroup 2-3x/week)

Effective highlighting & what to with highlights (e.g. summarize, important into notes for later study note 5 main points)

Notetaking (e.g., use of abbreviations & symbols, leaving space to fill in notes later, listening for key words & tone change, drawing – see site like https://www.teachstarter.com/lesson-plan/research-skills-note-taking-2/)

Test preparation – effective ways to use flashcards, summarizing, self-testing

-See “Strengthening the Student Toolbox” for research on effective study strategies - http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1021069.pdf

One way to measure study skills

Scales! The Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) or see Handout*

-Use for pre- and post-testing

(*downloaded from http://www.natickps.org/NatickHigh/Transitions/Ques tionnaires.cfm)

Research on study skills and self-knowledge – Reis, McGuire & Neu

Students in university LD program – used multiple compensation strategies

Study skills utilized
• Various study methods – mnemonics, rehearsal, flash cards, chunking
• Notetaking
• Identifying key points when reading & preparing for tests
• Reading strategies – SQ3R, reading abstracts or chapter summaries, planning lots of reading time
• Library skills
• Use of daily, weekly, and monthly calendars

*LD programs in which they participated in elementary & secondary school focused on remediating content-related deficits or opportunity to do homework or catch up on work missed in class instead of instruction in compensation strategies they needed


“It takes time, effort, & energy for students to learn about techniques, strategies, & technological supports to which they are entitled on basis of their learning disability, particularly in face of an already demanding curriculum. It would make far greater sense for students to begin their postsecondary academic careers having already learned this skill set prior to their arrival at university, fully prepared to learn at their potential.”


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Technology — ways to "scale" help & replace personal services

- **text-to-speech** (such as Kurzweil, Read & Write, fies from Learning Ally or Bookshare) — see a R&W demo at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5BuGm3271cc

- **LiveScribe SMARTpens** see demo at http://www.livescribe.com/en-us/smartpen/ls3/

- **speech-to-text** (such as Dragon Naturally Speaking & built-in dictation/speech recognition features of computer operating systems (such as in Microsoft), Read & Write also has this feature — see Dragon demo at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImK0d1M4hi

- **spelling software** (Ginger, SpellIt) — see Ginger demo at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zi5is/IzE4w

- **word-prediction software** (Co-Writer) or feature of word processing programs (R&W also has this feature) — see demo at https://demos.com/104430154

Where can you get more information and training about technology?

- Every state has Tech Act program, which is federally funded through the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Check for funding resources [http://www.atconnects.com/at-act-programs/state-at-act-programs] and technology loans [http://www.atconnects.com/at-act-programs/funding]

- Get on Twitter — use #AT chat to find leaders in field & get ideas

- Look online for "ecamp" in your state to see whether one is covering technology

Takeaways

- Personal qualities such as perseverance and motivation are the ones correlated with college success

- Self-determination and self-advocacy skills need to be developed throughout high school because they are so important in college

- Students are likely to find college work more rigorous and receive less support in completing it

- Students who are successful seek out help

- Technology can be helpful — students will benefit from learning to use tools while still in high school

Service Basics

- All colleges provide at least minimal services, and the decision to provide more is based on each school’s administration’s willingness to go beyond the minimum (not based on public vs. private, highly-selective or not, etc.)

- Students who are using basic accommodations do not need to attend a school with a special LD program; they will do fine with accommodations only

Researching Disability Services

Three-levels of disability services

1. **Compliance only** (free)

2. **Enhanced** (typically free)

3. **Fee-for-service**
   
   K&W guide to college for students with learning disabilities

Terms to use when searching for a college’s disability services office

Start with the school’s website (Disability Services link unlikely to be on homepage — use the Search feature)

If Disability Services does not appear,

- **Equity** — Learning Center
- **Access** — Academic Center
- **Access & Equity** — Learning Support
- **Diversity** — Academic Support
- **Learning Disabilities** — Special Programs
- **Student Support Services** — Resource Center
- **Learning Resource Center** — Academic Success Center

Office of Accommodative Services and Instructional Support (OASIS)

If all else fails, call main number.

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Researching schools' disability services
Check the Disability Services website:
@staff biographies
@links to other offices or services
@assistive technology
Take notes to refer to once students get their acceptances
Students should look at core & major requirements, too

Students who have questions should feel very comfortable calling DS (not admissions) and be assured that DS will NOT call admission to report anything about their conversation.

How can you educate students and parents about the importance of developing students' skills?

• Host a college transition night every year
  • Have current college students come back to speak
  • Ask local DS representative to speak
• Take students for tour of local DS office
• Provide handouts at 8th grade IEP meeting – review each year at meeting

For more information
Read my book, From High School to College: Steps to Success for Students with Disabilities (available on Amazon: http://www.ldadvisory.com/7_steps_for_success/)

See Resources page in handouts

Explore my website – www.LDadvisory.com – info for parents & college students, helpful links, free downloads/links to published work & interviews

Follow me on Facebook – Facebook.com/LDadvisory or on Twitter @echamblet

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This tool will help you to structure your time, something that can be hard to do in the unstructured college environment.

The idea is to create a master schedule that you can follow every week to help ensure that you have allowed enough time to complete everything you need to do. This master schedule will serve as a template - each week you'll add in whatever appointments, meetings, and social events you have. To make this easier, you can download the template on Page 2, save your work, and each week you can simply add in your other commitments and print a new schedule.

Start by entering everything you do in a typical week – class, sleep, and meal times, rehearsals, sports practice – whatever you do on a regular basis. Once this is done, you'll add in designated time blocks to complete your work.

Tips to keep in mind as you create your schedule:

1. You initial plan should allow 6 hours of studying/assignment completion for each class you’re taking. Adjust this after the first week of using the schedule if you find this is too much or too little for each course.
2. If you have at least an hour between classes, “capture” this time by getting some work done. If you have less than an hour, use that time to return emails, run errands, or just relax or get something to eat.
3. Think about what hours of the day you do your best studying, and schedule work for your most difficult subject at that time. For example, if you’re a night person, schedule your hardest subjects for after dinner.
4. Set a specific goal for each study block you schedule (e.g. plan complete Monday’s calculus problem set on Friday between 1:00 and 2:00).
5. Set realistic goals. Make sure that the goal you set can be completed in the time allotted. If you can’t read the Economics chapter in an hour, then don’t schedule it into a half-hour block between classes, because it’s easy to talk yourself out of doing something when you know you won’t have enough time in which to do it.
6. Schedule your time in a way that avoids burnout. If you want to study for a few hours in a row, start with a two-hour study block for one class, then schedule a half-hour break, then another two-hour study block for a different class with a longer break afterward. After you try this in the first week, adjust the schedule to reflect how long you can realistically work.

In the spaces below, list your courses. As you put an hour-long study block on your master schedule (see page 2), put a check next to that class on this page. You should have six checks next to each class.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Hour allotted in chart (make a check each time you put down an hour)</th>
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As you go through the week, take notes on the copy of the schedule you made and how it worked out.

- Put a check on the blocks where you accomplished what you set out to do.
- Make a note if you needed more or less time to do something.
- Make a note if you found that you were too tired or burned out to complete a given task at a given time.

Keep this information in mind the next week, and adjust your master schedule accordingly.
In this grid, fill in all of your weekly commitments, including classes, labs, mealtimes, exercise or team practice, rehearsals, club meetings, tutoring appointments, etc. Then fill in your typical sleep time.

When you’re done, make a copy of this master schedule (you can download this template. Each week, take a copy of the master and fill in study blocks for all of your classes. See the hints on Page 1 before you fill in your study blocks.

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**STUDY SKILLS SELF-EXAMINATION**

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<th>SO</th>
<th>JR</th>
<th>SR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I always carry a notebook to class</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always have a pen/pencil with me.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always have an assignment pad.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always have an assignment pad.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I keep different sections in my notebook for each subject area.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I keep a section in my notebook where I keep handouts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I keep a section in my notebook where I keep returned work, quizzes, and tests.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I arrange/clean my notebook each week.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I date all notes taken in class.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I always remember to go to my locker at the end of the day to get the proper materials for study at home.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I keep a monthly calendar of activities and long term school assignments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I plan in advance to complete long term school work</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**II. Study Habits**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>II. Study Habits</strong></th>
<th>FR</th>
<th>SO</th>
<th>JR</th>
<th>SR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I set aside a specific time every night for homework.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I study sitting at a table or desk.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I study in a quiet environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>I study in 30-40 minute sessions without a break.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My breaks are only 10-15 minutes long.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I always remember to bring my assignment sheet home.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I always remember to bring the necessary books, workbooks, compasses, rulers, etc., home</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Developed by Karen Decker and Susan Spector, South Windsor High School, South Windsor, Ct.
### III. Report Writing

*I can write a report based on my outline using:*

| A. An introductory paragraph |   |   |   |
| B. Supporting paragraphs    |   |   |   |
| C. A concluding paragraph   |   |   |   |

*I am able to self-correct and revise my final draft:*

| A. check for spelling errors |   |   |   |
| B. correctly punctuate sentences |   |   |   |
| C. check for capital letters |   |   |   |
| D. indent for each paragraph |   |   |   |
| E. use consistent verb tense |   |   |   |
| F. ask for help whenever necessary. |   |   |   |

I know how to write footnotes and a bibliography.

### Personal Assessment

I establish realistic goals for all classes.

I chart goals on a weekly basis without constant reminders.

I maintain a daily record of assignments.

I am responsible for turning in all homework on time.

I have a clear understanding of expected academic performance in all classes.

*I prepare for tests and quizzes by:*

| A. re-reading all class notes |   |   |   |
| B. reviewing past homework assignments |   |   |   |
| C. reviewing/learning past tests and quizzes |   |   |   |
| D. making up practice tests |   |   |   |

I keep my parents informed of my progress.

I am learning not to avoid difficult assignments or situations.

I keep resource room teachers informed of my progress.

I apply test taking techniques.

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### Resources

**http://www.nsttac.org/**
National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center

**http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/parent-20070316.html**
Letter to Parents from the Assistant Secretary of the Office for Civil Rights that discusses changes they will find when their child moves from high school to college

**http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/auxaids.html**
*Auxiliary Aids and Services for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities* - This guide from the US Department of Education answers questions about what kinds of aids and supports colleges are required to provide to students with disabilities

**http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html**
*Students with disabilities preparing for postsecondary education: Know your rights and responsibilities* - This guide from the U.S. Department of Education offers a basic view of what students should expect from their services, and what they have to do in order to access them.

**https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transitionguide.html**
Transition of Students With Disabilities To Postsecondary Education: *A Guide for High School Educators – this guide from U.S. Department of Education answers commonly asked questions teachers have about the postsecondary disability services system*

**https://www.heath.gwu.edu/awareness-postsecondary-options**
The HEATH center at George Washington University, which is a helpful resource for information on transition, provides this great piece on a variety of post-secondary options for students. It also includes a list of questions students can ask themselves to get them thinking about what they really want to do.