TIPS FOR WORKING WITH STUDENTS

For the most part, students will be eager to hear what you have to say and to contribute to the discussion. Your appearance in their classroom or assembly already marks a break in their “normal” schedule. The following suggestions will help you to have a successful visit:

1. Try to be yourself. Don’t spend time trying to impress the students.

2. Be relaxed and friendly. You may be nervous about presenting a lesson, try not to worry about it. You might even want to share your feeling with the students. They will understand and will accept you anyway.

3. Know your subject. You are the expert. Prepare an outline of your presentation in advance. Don’t just go in and “wing it.” You may have some last minute adjustments or even some wholesale changes to make, but if you know your material that shouldn’t be a problem.

4. Know your audience. The teacher contact can help you with this. Know what grade(s), how many students, their level of experience with topic, etc. in advance and prepare yourself accordingly.

5. Use participatory activities if possible to get students involved. Obviously with larger groups full participation may be difficult. Try not to just lecture. Ask questions, engage students in discussion, have them DO something.

6. Don’t try to “cover” everything. Instead, help students to “discover” and “uncover.”

7. It is more important to introduce one or two main concepts and explain them fully rather than to introduce a large number of concepts without making all of them understandable.

8. Speak clearly and slowly, using simple language that the students can understand. If you plan to use technical terms or abstract concepts, stop and ask students if they understand. If not, define the term for them and give them a straightforward example.

9. Try to involve as many students as possible.

10. Be sure that all students can see and hear you. If possible, move around the room.

11. Use concrete examples – the more concrete the better.

12. Encourage questions as you go along.

13. When in doubt, ask the teacher for assistance. S/he may have an especially helpful activity or idea but may not volunteer it unless asked.

14. Be flexible. You may have prepared very carefully. However, when you get to the school you may have to make impromptu adjustments to ensure a quality experience for the students.

15. Remember, you are a role model. The students will pay attention to you because of who you are and they will also remember your attitude toward them and the subject matter.

16. Have fun!