



A Guide to Successfully Working with Students

Creating Expectations

- Arrive early, but don't interrupt an activity that's in progress.
- Wear appropriate attire; look like an "expert."
- Greet students in a friendly, yet professional, manner.
- Smile, shake hands (if appropriate), and maintain eye contact. Be enthusiastic and friendly – your attitude is contagious!
- Guide your students behavior by providing an inviting environment, treating each young person with respect, and meeting her or his needs.
- Introduce yourself and ask each student her or his name. Remember, reusable table tents are provided to help you learn students' names.
- Be yourself. Talk about your early aspirations, your current job, and how you were hired.
- At the beginning of the session, state the behavior you expect from students (for example, raising their hands before speaking). Reinforce this by recognizing examples of good behavior.
- Let students know what the topic is for the lesson and determine what students already know about the concept or topic. What knowledge and experiences do they bring to the session?

Teaching Strategies

Although the teacher is responsible for all instruction and discipline within the classroom, the following suggestions can help you work with students:

- Tailor your presentation to meet the needs of the teacher and the student. Use language, examples, and analogies that students can understand, but don't talk down to them. Avoid any use of gender, racial, or ethnic stereotypes.
- Discuss with the teacher the best way to work with students with special needs, those who have limited English language skills, or those who have difficulty reading.
- Limit lectures to no more than 5 to 10 minutes; lecture usually is the least effective of all teaching strategies.
- Define or review main points or key terms listed on the board or an overhead transparency. Keep terms posted as reminders for students. Remember to print!
- Wait at least 5 to 10 seconds for an answer after calling on a student. Use as many open-ended questions as possible. For example, "Can you think of an example of . . . ?"
- Don't answer your own questions. Give clues if the students don't respond, instead wait and avoid criticizing or rejecting wrong answers from students.
- Work with all students. Use a system for including all students and implement it during every visit. Occasionally call on students who have not raised their hands.
- Use examples the students are familiar with to illustrate a point.
- When particular skills are required, such as mathematical calculations, provide an example or demonstration of the process before asking students to solve a problem.
- Frequently check for understanding by asking relevant questions.

Managing the Class

- Speak in a quiet voice that requires students to quiet down and listen carefully. Stop speaking if students become talkative and inattentive; they usually will settle down quickly.

- Ask the teacher for suggestions on grouping students. Pairs require both students to participate. Groups of three or more should have prior experience working in groups.
- Give general directions before separating the class into small groups.
- Assign roles in a group. It often is effective to immediately ask students to number off, beginning with one, and to remember their numbers. Use the numbers to assign roles. After an activity, call on students in each group who have a particular number to report on their group's activity.
- Save time by using the same groups for each session. However, it sometimes becomes necessary to change group membership. Ask the teacher to assist in assigning group work. Circulate among small groups to answer questions and to help keep students on task. Encourage students to help one another.
- Distinguish between active learning and genuine engagement and disruptive/inattentive behavior. A quiet class isn't necessarily good, nor is a talkative class necessarily bad. Rigorous discussions or active simulations often are noisy indicators that students are learning.
- Move around the classroom during activities and discussions. If side-talking occurs, walk to the noisy students and stand by them. If you are trying to start a discussion, walk over to the group of students you plan to address.
- Be flexible! Expect the conversation to occasionally diverge from the topic of discussion.

After-School or Alternative Setting

If you deliver a program in an after-school or alternative setting, talk to the classroom teacher, site coordinator, or JA staff member about program differences, such as program setting, class length, available equipment, and number of students.