



## **The Science and Technology Hotline**

### **Tried and True Presentation Tips (By a Seasoned Science Hotline Volunteer)**

First and foremost, communication with the participating teacher is crucial. You need to find out from them what they are expecting. Some questions you may ask include:

- At what stage in the unit will you be presenting?
- How much background information will the students already have?
- How much space will you have?
- How long are they expecting you to talk for?
- Audiovisual equipment needs you may have.

Remember, the teachers are major participants in this process; they should be open to helping you plan a very exciting and valuable presentation for their class. Under no circumstances are you, as a presenter, in their school to relieve their class.

For all grades, hand-on presentations are best. People learn best by receiving information from a variety of sources, and concepts taught are often best reinforced with an activity and/or relevant objects that can be manipulated.

For lower elementary age levels, expect kids to relate well to concrete concepts. They are very tactile learners, and have short attention spans. Hands-on is a must for this level. Abstract concepts are difficult for the younger children to understand, and must be presented with care.

With older children, (grade 4 and up), some abstract concepts are okay, but try to demonstrate what you do, and be sure to keep it simple! Simple means that you should strive to help the students understand how your work and/or your presentation material applies to the real world. Share your life stories - these are real world stories!

At the high school level, talks tend to focus more on the general topic and/or career presentation. The students really want to know how this information that they are learning can apply to their future lives. Sharing information about educational or life experiences is very valuable - and prospective university students are very curious about what they can expect in upcoming years. For information dissemination, slides, demonstrations and hands on are very effective. High school is great fun - it is incredible to see the amount of information the students are learning today!

Remember, presentations evolve and change! Learn from each presentation and don't be concerned if a presentation does not live up to your expectations. It is always worthwhile to have visited a school. Students really appreciate having scientists in their classroom - it really helps them to see that the information they are learning is being used by real people everyday! Last, but not least, enjoy your visits!

Source: **Calgary Science Network**