

KAPOW TEACHING TIPS FOR VOLUNTEERS

KAPOW volunteers are not expected to be professional educators, but some simple teaching techniques can help make the classes a success.

Ask questions before giving students the answers. Example: Start a discussion by asking students: "What communication skills do I use in my job?" Have the teacher take down all the answers to the question. Every answer is "right". Add the responses you didn't get to the list, THEN point out the responses that best fit what you are trying to get across. Benefits: All students will be engaged, more will participate, and you will have a better sense of what they don't know.

Circulate in the classroom: It is amazing how the dynamics change when you are standing next to students in the back of the room, vs. talking to them from the front. This also helps with discipline.

Learning by association: Let the kids learn about something new by starting with what they already know. You can do this with ANY job or concept. Example: If you plan meetings, start by asking the students to plan a birthday party. Compare their responses to all the things you have to do to plan the meeting, exchanging their terms for yours. Let them review your "invitation" (memo) and "games" (agenda).

Definitions: Most terms are not too complicated for the students- ask them (FIRST!) what they THINK it means, then explain whatever they didn't give you. Keep a running KAPOW Vocabulary List in the classroom.

Sensitivity: Avoid assumptions ("I'm sure your Mom and Dad...") and judgements ("Being a CEO would be better than a secretary, right?") Listen to yourself as you go through the lessons. You'll get better with this as you go along.

Handling interruptions: Your teacher will always handle major interruptions, but let the students know you are in charge from the first class. Tell them that you have rules in your workplace, and when you come, you "would like this to be OUR workplace."

Steering questions: Students will ask you questions that have nothing to do with the lesson objectives. If you can't steer the question toward the subject at hand, tell them to write down the question and you will try to save some time at the end of the lesson for this.