

## Teaching Teachers in the Planetarium

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Many people do not know what a planetarium is. Since this disappointing fact is even true for well-educated people, including students and teachers, many pupils will never hear about planetariums. In order to spread knowledge about planetariums, universities can play a major role. One of the best ways is to visit a planetarium with students, especially those who will become teachers. Such a visit is a very efficient multiplying factor.

But in order to make a planetarium visit efficient, one should not go unprepared. We therefore go with education students who are enrolled in an astronomy course. Before their visit, we inform them about what a planetarium is and about how it is used. We teach them, for example, specific terms of the rotating sky, its coordinates, and the significance of the ecliptic and of retrograde loops. And of course, we teach the students how the sky appears from different latitudes, including the equator and the southern hemisphere. We also teach the technical aspects of how the projector works.

Students visits take place by special arrangement, without any other audience, so all technical details can be discussed individually. The operator can run the machine to answer specific questions that arise. And some of the students can even put their own hands onto the buttons of the control panel to run the machine. After the exclusive technical visit, we usually attend a normal public performance. We see teachers and their classes, so we can observe how children behave and react to the phenomena projected onto the dome.

Students are very motivated by their visit to the planetarium. As a result, they come back with their own classes later on. Such cooperation between university and planetarium is highly recommended. It will help in getting more knowledge about astronomy into schools, promoting a more profound understanding of nature.

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## Astronomy for the Visually Handicapped

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It is important to add that in addition to the general public and all the students and teachers involved in school systems, the planetarium community in general tries also to reach some special groups of the public. The groups could be those with hearing problems, those who have never seen any stars (the visually handicapped),