

Often in these classrooms there is greater freedom of movement and a mutually agreed upon noise level.

Part of providing motivation includes designing activities which children find interesting and challenging. As in any classroom, this requires activities covering a wide range of abilities. Cooperative activities and learning centres lend themselves well to multi-level lesson plans (see Chapter 11).

The physical layout of the classroom can also be structured to promote independence. All materials are organized and visible. Instructions for centres and activities are posted. Specific places for completed assignments are established, as are procedures for leaving the classroom, late arrivals, and free time. At all times, students know what they are supposed to be doing. While the teacher is responsible for designing, initiating and monitoring all activities, everyone benefits as students become more independent.

Providing Role Models

Probably one of the most important roles a teacher can play in an integrated classroom is that of a model for his or her students. The teacher should treat every member of the class with equal respect and show that he or she values every student, including the special needs child.

This approach may feel unnatural, however, as teachers are in the business of teaching, and are in the habit of constantly rewarding those who learn well. It is understandable to have more respect for successful students and to pay more attention to their ideas. In an integrated setting, however, these teacher distinctions can be detrimental. Less successful students will find someone who they consider to be worse off than themselves to bear the brunt of their frustration — and that may well be the student with a mental handicap. As mentioned earlier, a sense of community is needed in the classroom, and the teacher models the way community members should treat each other.

The teacher should include all children and make no