

exceptions, showing that everyone is valued and accepted. At assemblies, plays, concerts or sports days, the teacher should insist that all students are included. The pupil who has a mental handicap should be included in activities in the cafeteria and library, and in fire drills or on field trips. By modelling normal interaction and promoting it in the classroom, the teacher gives students something they will carry into their adult lives in the community.

Learning Through Observation

It is now a common belief that teachers learn as much about their students through observation as through formal testing. The teacher can use keen observation in an integrated classroom to prevent problems. In a class including students with behavioural problems, the cooperative spirit will take a while to build. In any class there will be bullies and people who make fun of others. Through careful observation by the teacher, negative situations can be minimized and the teacher can develop strategies which allow everyone to be more comfortable in the classroom.

Some interactions may seem harmless in the eyes of the instigators — like teaching the child with a mental handicap to say "bad" words. But, since the long term goal is to help this child develop into a social member of a community, setbacks are not appreciated. Students must be educated to understand this. Observant teachers will also pick up on things they can work on to help the child socialize: table manners, conduct when eating, personal hygiene.

The teacher's role in the classroom stretches well beyond the narrow limits of "instructor" to include: time manager, social coordinator, motivator, model, observer and more. Again, most teachers will have read much here that is familiar to their daily routine.