

comfortable routines.

Because a child's special needs may be beyond a teacher's experience, we are forced to throw out some of our traditional methods and find innovative approaches. What we discover is that all our students benefit from this change in practice.

One year I was assigned to teach French to a class which included a blind student. Although it was a language course, the lessons included a lot of visual stimuli. In order for the blind student to participate and be involved, the language had to come alive, which we achieved by physically acting out situations. The students loved not having to sit at their desks doing board work. The results were so much better that I used the same approach in another French class I taught which did not include anyone with special needs.

Over the years I have had students with a wide range of needs. They have opened my eyes to countless new ways of doing things. And because of this creative freedom, I have realized that the child's learning process is every bit as important as what he or she learns.

Common Objectives

For many children with special needs, the regular academic objectives are not appropriate. Programs need to be modified, with much more emphasis placed on helping students to develop into functional, contributing members of their community.

Teachers should have a vision of the desired results and avoid confining themselves to a list of objectives for a particular grade level. Everything a teacher plans for the student should fit into the vision the teacher and the parents, and, in many cases, the student have for his or her future.

Collaboration

Because teachers often view having a student with special needs as a big responsibility, it is wise to embrace the collaborative spirit. Collaboration with other school staff members is