

nity. This is an increasingly challenging role as children from different backgrounds are brought together.

Sometimes, the teacher is forced to become a social coordinator, creating a cooperative rather than a competitive environment by designing activities, both academic and social, which support cooperative values. Since social development is critical to successful functioning within a community, the teacher's role as coordinator is important to all students in the class. Individual children are not lost in the cooperative structure; instead, they are shown that they each have something to offer which is of equal value to everyone else's contribution.

In a classroom which includes a child with a mental handicap, the teacher includes this child in most activities and quietly encourages interaction without drawing special attention to it. The other children soon assume responsibility for any extra needs the child might have. It has been my experience that they develop strong bonds with the child and may need only to be cautioned against doing too much for him or her.

Monitoring the social development of all students provides teachers with opportunities to assess the growth and maturing of individual students.

Motivation

In a classroom where teachers need time to work closely with children with special needs, the teachers need to be motivators. They must encourage students to do their best, think problems through and develop self-discipline. This develops independence and permits the teacher to have quality time with an individual student without having to continually break away to quiet or direct the other students.

From my observation, smoothly running classrooms have teachers who are motivators. They have regular discussions with their students on the benefits of sharing ideas, on problem solving techniques, and on responsibility. These discussions are ongoing and are rarely reactive in nature.