

Strategies for One-on-One Attention

The following strategies call on various resources and tactics to enable the teacher to focus more time on each student.

The first resource is the para-professionals in the education system: teacher's aides, assistants, and trained volunteers. The teacher can ask this other adult to handle the class, which may be working on an assignment prepared by the teacher, while the teacher works with an individual student. Or the teacher may ask the aide to work with the individual student on a task again prepared by the teacher.

The second source of help is the children themselves. It is a wise teacher who realizes he or she is not the only instructor in the classroom. Peer tutoring is a growing practice not only within a class but across grade levels as well. One of the wonderful things about children is that they do not see the limitations of other children. They are compassionate and passionate at the same time. The most unmotivated student turns into a zealot when asked to help another student. A word of caution: monitor the tutoring so that the time spent is meaningful to both parties.

Another strategy is to design activities for the whole class which free the teacher for short blocks of time to work with an individual student. Again, the activity should be worthwhile for students, but one which requires only minimal interaction with the teacher.

A fourth strategy is parental support. It is important to choose parents who have a strong commitment to their involvement. Working with small groups in the classroom, a parent can add a warm and caring touch that all children enjoy and many children need.

Creating a Community Atmosphere

To work well, a class has to be a cohesive unit which pulls together for the benefit of all students. It is the teacher's responsibility to promote a feeling of community and an appreciation of the differences which make up that commu-