

personnel; for example, teacher's aides are clearly distinguished from attendants.

Current educational philosophy supports the need for interaction and collaboration—not only between students but between students and school personnel as well—in order for meaningful learning to occur. According to Skrtic (1988) the school is seen as an "adhocracy" where collaboration among all staff and students results in students learning facts as well as social skills, problem solving and creative thinking.

## **SUE'S SUPPORT GROUP**

### ***Talking to Sue's Class***

To include Sue as a member of her class required the acceptance and efforts of her homeroom teacher, classmates and school. Sue's teacher voiced the concern that his other students would lose out through their efforts to help Sue. He saw student involvement as something that would take away from their academic and extracurricular time. Also from a more traditional viewpoint, the need for student participation was considered unnecessary because the teacher's aide had been hired to fulfil the school's and Sue's needs.

We held a class meeting as the first step in involving Sue's peers. We began by sensitizing them to what integration is and why it is in everyone's best interest to include students with special needs in our classrooms, schools and communities. We discussed the fact that, only seven years ago, students with needs similar to Sue's were sent away from their families or were educated in separate classrooms or were given no education.

One student spoke up and said that she had "an uncle who was mentally handicapped—he's older now and harder to handle. That's why Sue needs our help now." It quickly became apparent that Sue's classmates already knew why they should include her.

We asked the students if they thought Sue now belonged