

One of the most meaningful changes has been the perspective brought by the teachers themselves. Changes that occurred during the last decade, particularly the move to integration, have altered our assumptions of educational practice and made teachers much more open to working cooperatively with their peers. It has become understood that teachers can no longer work in isolation and still meet the needs of every student. They increasingly accept the philosophy of collaborative consultation, "an interactive process which enables people with diverse expertise and experiences to generate creative solutions to mutually defined problems. The outcome is enhanced, altered, and different from the original solutions that any team member would produce independently" (Nevin et al., 1990).

FEATURES OF THE COLLABORATIVE MODEL

Collaborative Partnership

There are several important features of problem solving in a collaborative environment. The first is that team members work together to solve problems in a partnership that emphasizes trust, openness, and cooperation. Being collaborative implies that they work jointly on an equal basis, and partnership suggests that they have specified and mutually agreed-upon responsibilities. This equality ensures that collaboration is effective, deriving the maximum benefit from the consultation process (Villa et al., 1990). Out of these balanced relationships come "people and systems that are more self-help oriented, more self-sustaining, and more pro-social". The process also helps increase people's confidence in their ability to solve problems.

Members of the teams make different contributions based on their expertise and varying responsibilities; they work together in a complementary and interdependent fashion. The teachers bringing problems to the team must provide information on context and ecological factors affecting the situation which will help in developing interventions. They must also help in deciding what interventions will be most useful in their