

3. There should be a facilitator (generally a teacher) who helps coach students along. In building intentional communities, another term for support groups, John McNight (cited in O'Connell, 1988) calls this person a guide. This is the key person who helps pull things together. The guide is not a director and is not more important than other group members but is someone to help the group put their ideas into practice.
4. The group may need to meet regularly. This can be at lunch or at a special outing. The purpose of the meetings is to structure the group enough, at the beginning, to encourage a sense of unity and a spirit of interaction. The meetings are a forum where people get to know one another better; the group then provides an opportunity to break the rigidity of existing peer cliques and to form new relationships. When people become accustomed to meeting they will continue, generally with little encouragement or direction.

## **GENTLE TEACHING IN THE CLASSROOM**

Total inclusion in Sue's school meant that, at some level, everyone in her school interacted with her. Students, through the peer group, were developing friendships with Sue, but most adults were uncomfortable working directly with Sue because of her challenging behaviour. As a result, only a few people who had "ways of dealing with her" had developed a relationship with her. Given her challenging behaviour, they were perceived as having some special ability. We needed to give adults a way to develop good relationships with her.

We chose Gentle Teaching (McGee et al, 1987), which presented a set of common strategies to facilitate meaningful dialogue between Sue and those who worked with her in the school. It enabled people to work with Sue to control and redirect her challenging behaviour, which in turn improved their relationships with her.