

themselves and how they were perceived by others. For many people, the overriding image of individuals with intellectual disabilities had been as consumers of services. Their recognition in the *Charter* changed the image to one of citizenship.

While people within the advocacy movement were expanding their vision of possibilities, influenced by human rights advances and normalization concepts, the field of education was also undergoing major changes. There was a recognition of experiential learning — that children learn by doing, not by sitting in straight rows listening to a teacher. There was a growing appreciation of different learning styles, of individualized approaches to teaching. Experiments in creating open spaces and regrouping children were carried out. These changes made classrooms more easily adaptable to children who were previously outside the narrow definition of "average".

In fact, early demonstrations of integration occurred in settings which were designed to meet the individual needs of a wide range of students using alternative educational models (Forest, 1984 and 1987). These early programs exceeded the expectations of the advocates for children with intellectual disabilities. Their success demonstrated not only that disabled students could be educated beside their non-disabled peers, but that in the process all the children benefitted and the overall quality of the education improved!

## **NEW COALITIONS**

The convergence of the normalization and human rights experiences with the fresh approach to teaching methods created a new environment and new alliances. Previously, many advocates for persons who had been labelled mentally handicapped had identified allies only within their existing networks. Parents and other volunteers had collaborated with progressive service providers to improve services and increase