

# Chapter 3

## Education: A System of Social Disempowerment

*by Marcia H. Rioux*

### **ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT EDUCATION: DEBUNKING THE MYTHS**

When myths masquerade as reality, fact and fiction become inseparable. It becomes difficult for most people to know what to believe and what not to believe. In addition, any serious analysis of problems becomes confusing, at best. This is the position we find ourselves in when we look at the issue of integrated education for children with mental handicaps. We have been led to believe in certain so called "truths" about education in Canada. Because these have been presented as facts, they are often used to obscure or discredit any serious discussion or argument for integration in our public school system. In making a clear and convincing case for education integration, the fallacy of these "facts" must be addressed.

Popular debate over integrating children with mental handicaps into the school system has been frequently couched in terms of four myths. The first is that education is universal, that it is available to every child in Canada without restriction. The second is that the available education is equitable and