

## INNOVATION

In many parts of North America, the expansion of special education has resulted in the creation of parallel systems for regular and special education. Many jurisdictions with the most mature and comprehensive special education services have evolved to the point where the regular and special education systems exist separately and relate to each other only in the most theoretical way. Many who promote special education have developed a mentality of compartmentalizing: rather than restructure a system that is inadequate, "gaps in service" are filled with new special education programs (Porter, 1990).

The goal, indeed the mission, of an effective school is to assure success in learning for all students. The development of a parallel special education system has been harmful, not only because it has excluded exceptional students and prevented their contact with non-disabled peers, but also because of the effect it has had on the regular education program (Gartner and Lipsky, 1987; Reynolds, Wang and Walburg, 1987; Stainback and Stainback, 1984; Will, 1986). A school that passes over all the students with learning problems to a separate special education system undermines its capacity to be a holistic unit that serves all students well. The Director of Education of a Roman Catholic school board in western Canada describes his rationale for dismantling such a separate structure:

*In 1982 ... I took the Student Services Department out of the organizational chart and said there will be one department, and it will be Instructional Services. Until then there were two heads of two departments. I said if Student Services is part of Instruction then it has to be part of that department, right at the board level too. We didn't wipe out the staff, but we [incorporated] Student Services [into] Instructional Services ... People [often] want to keep the functions separate. My contention is*