

	<p>Science, Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems Issue 2, Vol. 9, 2026</p> <p>RESEARCH ARTICLE </p> <h2>School Integration of Hearing-Impaired Children in Special Classes: A Comprehensive Analytical Study of Integration Models and Educational Practices in Adrar, Algeria</h2>	
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-Issue web link	https://imcra-az.org/archive/392-science-education-and-innovations-in-the-context-of-modern-problems-issue-2-vol-9-2026.html	
Keywords	School integration; Hearing impairment; Inclusive education; Special classes; Educational integration models; Algeria.	
<p>Abstract The integration of children with hearing impairments into educational systems represents a fundamental dimension of inclusive education and social justice. This study aims to examine the school integration of hearing-impaired children within special classes in the Wilaya of Adrar, Algeria, with particular emphasis on the conceptual foundations, educational mechanisms, implementation conditions, and integration models applied in practice. The research highlights the importance of early psychological, pedagogical, and medical assessments in determining the eligibility of hearing-impaired children for integration programmes, taking into account the type and severity of hearing loss. The study further explores the roles of specialised teachers, educators, speech therapists, and professionals affiliated with the national solidarity sector in supporting the educational and social development of hearing-impaired learners. Attention is given to the pedagogical methods, adapted curricula, and classroom environments equipped with specialised instructional resources that facilitate effective learning. Additionally, the paper analyses the principal challenges associated with integration, including academic difficulties, communication barriers, social interaction constraints, parental resistance, and curriculum compatibility. By examining different models of integration—spatial, educational, social, partial, and community integration—this study provides a comprehensive understanding of inclusive educational practices for hearing-impaired children. The findings underscore that successful integration depends not only on institutional policies but also on teacher preparedness, parental involvement, community awareness, and the creation of supportive learning environments. The study concludes with recommendations aimed at strengthening inclusive education strategies and enhancing the quality of educational provision for hearing-impaired children in Algeria.</p>		
<p>Citation Arama F.; Dalile S. (2026). School Integration of Hearing-Impaired Children in Special Classes: A Comprehensive Analytical Study of Integration Models and Educational Practices in Adrar, Algeria. <i>Science, Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems</i>, 9(2), 1-9. https://doi.org/10.56334/sei/9.2.10</p>		
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Received: 26.07.2025	Accepted: 10.12.2025	Published: 10.01.2026 (available online)

Introduction

The integration of children with disabilities, particularly those with hearing impairments, is of paramount importance in the philosophy and programmes of special education, as well as in the various services that defend the rights of

disabled individuals and respond to their needs. This is considered a respectful acknowledgement of their dignity, which cannot be realised without establishing the correct framework and understanding the prevailing trends in our educational institutions that dominate our current reality.

Reflecting on the historical development of special education reveals a significant shift from the isolation and rejection of disabled children to their integration and acceptance. Many countries worldwide have adopted inclusive policies, except in cases of severe disabilities.

I. Hearing Impairment:

Definition of hearing impairment: Hearing impairment broadly encompasses a wide range of hearing loss, from mild impairment to complete deafness (anacusis). This implies two categories of hearing impairment:

1. Partial hearing impairment.
2. Total hearing impairment (deafness).

Both categories directly impact the affected individual's ability to learn language and speech.

Hearing impairment can also be defined by its cause:

1. Hearing loss: This refers to a partial loss of an individual's hearing ability. However, if there is any remaining hearing, the individual can develop linguistic skills with the help of hearing devices. The greater the degree of hearing loss, the more severe the impairment.

2. Deafness: This is a dysfunction of the auditory system that prevents the individual from acquiring language and understanding speech through the ear alone, even with the use of hearing aids. This reduces their ability to communicate with others through speech. (Al-Sharif, 2016, p. 290).

Characteristics of hearing-impaired individuals:

A. Mental characteristics

It was previously believed that the intellectual ability of hearing-impaired individuals was lower than that of their hearing peers due to auditory dysfunction. This belief stemmed from the fact that intelligence tests used at that time primarily measured verbal ability and were administered orally, preventing psychologists from accurately assessing the cognitive abilities of hearing-impaired individuals. However, with advancements in measurement techniques shifting towards performance-based tests, it has been confirmed that cognitive abilities are not affected by hearing impairment. However, as knowledge relies on language, linguistic development may be influenced by auditory weakness or loss, thereby reducing the capacity of hearing-impaired individuals to express concepts, meanings and sensory experiences.

B. Academic characteristics

Numerous studies have shown that individuals with hearing impairments exhibit a noticeable decline in academic achievement. This results in them being classified as academically delayed, despite possessing an average level of intelligence. This decline is particularly evident in reading ability, as reading fundamentally depends on auditory language. The extent of academic delays depends on the severity of the impairment and the quality of the educational and personal services provided.

C. Language development

Although the hearing and speech mechanisms are separate, they are functionally linked. Linguistic development primarily depends on the integrity of the auditory system. Consequently, language development is affected by hearing impairment and challenging to enhance without educational intervention; neglecting linguistic development may lead to mutism.

D. Social and emotional characteristics

Older studies indicated that hearing-impaired individuals experience deficiencies in social maturity due to their inability to communicate linguistically with members of society. They tend to socialise only with peers who have similar disabilities and often experience disruptions to their self-concept. However, recent studies suggest otherwise, indicating that emotional disturbances affect typical and atypical individuals alike. Hearing-impaired individuals do not necessarily exhibit severe emotional and social disorders; they may instead demonstrate calmness, adaptability, stability and high productivity in the workplace. Violent reactions are often the result of negative attitudes towards them from others. (Al-Sharif, 2016, p. 298).

Definition of integration

Integration refers to providing opportunities for children with disabilities to participate in the special educational needs system, affirming the principle of equal opportunities in education. The primary goal of integration is to address the specific educational needs of disabled children within the framework of regular schools, in accordance with standard teaching methods, curricula and instructional resources. This is overseen by a specialised educational team, as well as the regular teaching staff in public schools. (Al-Suhaili, 2018, p. 11).

Talleat (1994) defines integration as a state of complete preparedness among educators, parents, and the community at large to provide education for children with disabilities or learning difficulties in an environment conducive to all children in regular schools, homes, and local communities wherever integration is beneficial. However, if integration

is merely viewed as the redistribution of children with disabilities into mainstream schools and classrooms without considering the environment or preparation, this can be detrimental to both the children and the teachers involved. (Taha, 2014, p. 41).

Types of integration:

1. Spatial integration: This involves special educational needs and disability (SEND) institutions being included within general education schools in terms of physical buildings. Each school retains its own specific curriculum, training methods and teaching staff, although administration may be unified.

2. Educational (curricular) integration: This refers to the inclusion of students with disabilities alongside their non-disabled peers in the same school, under the supervision of the same educational authority, within the same school programme and often with differences in the adopted curricula. The aim is to integrate students with special educational needs alongside their peers in regular classrooms, allowing them to study the same academic programmes while receiving special educational support.

3. Social integration: This involves children with disabilities participating in general classes and school activities, such as outings, sports, art, music and other social activities. This is the simplest form of integration as it does not require students with special educational needs to engage in academic study alongside their peers in the classroom. Rather, it focuses on their inclusion in various educational activities such as sports, arts, breaks, school clubs, outings and camps.

4. Community integration provides opportunities for individuals with disabilities to participate in community activities and events, enabling them to play an active role in society and ensuring they have the right to work independently, move freely and access all community services.

5. Partial integration: This refers to students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) being taught alongside their peers in mainstream classrooms in one or more subjects. (Al-Suhaili, 2018, pp. 13-14).

Goals of integration:

The primary goals of integration include:

1. Achieving excellence for all children by educating everyone to the fullest extent of their capabilities within regular classrooms and schools;
2. Responding to the specific educational needs of all children. This involves the school and all its staff actively engaging with parents to make every educational, social, psychological and pedagogical effort to meet each child's unique needs, based on their nature, ability level and requirements.
3. Helping children with special needs to achieve personal competence and become self-reliant and independent.
4. Achieving social competence involves instilling and developing the behavioural traits and patterns necessary for social interaction, helping children integrate into society.
5. Professional competence: equipping them with the appropriate manual skills for their disability and level of readiness, enabling them to pursue certain professions.
6. Adhering to national and international quality standards to improve early care programmes and provide education for children with and without disabilities in integrated classrooms. (Al-Suhaili, 2018, p. 47).

The primary objectives of integrating hearing-impaired individuals into hearing schools are:

- Provide children with age-appropriate language and speech, while developing their hearing and articulation in typical social situations.
- Create a linguistic environment that connects play activities with cognitive development.
- Accelerating the child's medical level and performance achievements.
- To expand opportunities for the child to continue their education in a mainstream school.

Involving hearing-impaired children in curriculum activities alongside their hearing peers enhances their self-confidence and fosters a sense of belonging to a wider community. (Abada, 2016, p. 121).

Requirements for integration

Integrating children with special needs alongside typically developing children is not an easy process. Several essential requirements must be addressed, including:

1. Planning the integration programme

The first requirement for integrating children with special educational needs into mainstream schools is thorough planning of integration programmes. Educational integration of children with special needs alongside their typically developing peers relies on continuous educational planning tailored to each child's individual needs. This necessitates a clear definition of the responsibilities assigned to administrative and educational staff. Integration involves more than simply placing children with special educational needs alongside their peers; it is also necessary to develop educational programmes that can be used to identify the needs of individuals and indicate the type of programme and learning strategies that are essential for achieving individual and collective goals.

2. Identifying educational needs

One of the most important requirements for integration is to identify the specific educational needs of students,

particularly those with disabilities, in order to develop educational programmes that address their academic, social and psychological needs in mainstream classrooms. Each child with a disability has unique cognitive abilities, physical potential and psychological and social needs that can differ significantly from those of other disabled individuals. Therefore, simply enrolling a child in a mainstream school is not enough to achieve integration; while this may fulfil their social needs, it does not necessarily meet their academic requirements.

3. Preparing educational personnel

Accommodating students with diverse abilities in public schools and classrooms requires changes for all members of the educational community, as well as modifications to the curriculum and its delivery, and changes to professional and human relationships. Furthermore, this change should focus on individuals, their beliefs and their actions, rather than solely on programmes, educational materials or technologies.

Teachers often feel anxious about their ability to meet the needs of disabled children. Many teachers express sympathy and sadness towards disabled children, while others may feel frustrated when they believe that working with these children takes precedence over their other responsibilities. Teachers often experience a complex mix of feelings, ranging from challenge and hope to realism, frustration, fear and inadequacy. These reactions are therefore heavily influenced by teachers' beliefs about innovation, their perception of their capacity to implement innovations, the environments in which these changes occur, and the support and assistance they receive when attempting to implement change.

It is essential to provide adequate training for teachers working with children with special needs prior to implementing any integration programme. Experienced special education teachers should be prepared to interact effectively with both typical and disabled students. (Shash, 2016, pp. 98-99).

Challenges faced by deaf students in the integration process within regular schools:

1. Focus on academic achievement

Regular schools emphasise academic performance, which is appropriate. However, deaf students generally have lower academic achievement and struggle with reading and writing, typically not progressing beyond the fourth-grade level. Deaf students require social interaction, which is often not prioritised in mainstream schools. When compared to their hearing peers, deaf students may be judged and labelled as academically unsuccessful, which can lead to dropping out of school, feelings of failure and diminished self-worth.

2. Interaction between hearing and deaf students

The interaction between hearing and deaf students often has more negative than positive outcomes. Deaf students tend to exhibit mood swings, pride and strong allegiance to each other, which can hinder the acquisition of social experiences from hearing peers. Consequently, they are susceptible to ridicule and social isolation, which undermines the potential positive outcomes of integration efforts.

3. Parental resistance

Some parents are reluctant to have deaf children in regular schools alongside their own hearing children, often describing deaf children as 'stupid' or 'aggressive'. This negative perception may lead them to transfer their children to other schools.

4. Mediocre social interaction:

While integrating deaf students in mainstream schools may encourage some social interaction, it usually does not achieve the desired outcomes, as teachers rely on traditional teaching methods designed for hearing students, which makes it difficult for them to communicate effectively with deaf students.

5. Unified curriculum challenges:

Implementing a unified curriculum for deaf and hearing students is extremely difficult in the current context. Significant challenges arise from blending curricula, given that teachers primarily communicate verbally, whereas deaf students use sign language. This discrepancy poses a significant challenge to effective education delivery. (Abada, 2016, pp. 125-126).

The self-concept of hearing-impaired individuals is influenced by their condition, the loss of a sense or a limb, or a physical deformity. These are all dimensions of the self-concept. Additionally, social attitudes marked by pity can negatively impact their self-perception.

Consequently, as language concepts develop among hearing-impaired individuals, the concepts through which experiences are formed evolve alongside age and mental growth. Accordingly, their self-concept becomes more distinct and positive. Moreover, the development of the self-concept of hearing-impaired individuals is influenced by how they are treated by others. If they are mistreated, they may feel rejected and unaccepted. Similarly, if they undergo experiences that restrict their freedom, inhibit their ability to express their feelings or prevent them from meeting environmental demands, they may feel that the world is against them. This can lead them to dislike social interactions, even with family members.

Thus, establishing a positive and stable self-concept in hearing-impaired individuals is primarily supported by their surrounding environment, which is the first and most crucial step in building their personalities and encouraging

them to engage in social life and enjoy the company of their community members. This process depends on several factors:

- **Early detection and training:** The timely discovery of hearing impairment and the initiation of early training and education, especially by the eighth month of the child's life, is crucial. Parents are responsible for identifying their child's disability, as there may be overlapping behavioural patterns between hearing-impaired and hearing children during the early months.

- **Parental acceptance and interaction:** The extent to which both parents accept their hearing-impaired child and interact with them using appropriate educational methods, avoiding neglect or excessive indulgence.

- **Awareness of relatives and neighbours:** the level of understanding among relatives and neighbours regarding the nature of hearing impairment and how to interact with hearing-impaired individuals.

Community acceptance: The extent to which society, through its various institutions and organisations, accepts hearing impairment and provides assistance to individuals with such disabilities. The challenges faced by children with hearing impairments are a societal issue that requires collective awareness of responsibilities towards disabled people, including those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

- **Inclusion in regular classrooms:** Integrating hearing-impaired children with typically developing peers, even for part of the day, helps them discover new communication methods by adjusting their behaviour to interact with hearing peers, thus fostering social relationships. This also helps hearing children to learn to engage with and accept hearing-impaired children, thereby enhancing their sense of belonging and participation. (Khalifa & Wahdan, 2014, p. 90).

Integration models

This approach is divided into the following:

1.1 Integration in specialised institutional settings:

This refers to:

A. Specialised educational institutions affiliated with the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and Women's Affairs, such as psychological and pedagogical centres for people with intellectual disabilities.

B. Private institutions for the education of children with mental disabilities established by individuals or entities in accordance with Executive Decree No. 18-221 dated 6 September 2018.

C. Medical and social institutions that welcome people with disabilities, established by legally recognised social and humanitarian associations in compliance with Executive Decree No. 08-350 dated 29 October 2008.

D. Early childhood reception institutions, which, according to Article 8, are required to accept children with disabilities, unless their condition necessitates placement in a more specialised facility, in order to facilitate their gradual and complete integration into the social environment. This is in accordance with Executive Decree No. 19-253 dated 16 September 2019. These institutions can be established by administrations, organisations, public services, local authorities, social security bodies, social cooperatives, associations and both natural and legal persons.

1.2 Integration in regular schools:

This refers to educational institutions in the education sector, including:

Primary schools.

- Middle schools.

Secondary schools.

Integration here comes in two forms:

A. Full integration: This involves including children with special educational needs in a mainstream classroom.

B. Partial integration: This occurs in specialised classrooms.

2. Stages of integrating children with special needs:

According to the joint ministerial circular outlining measures and arrangements related to the schooling of children with special needs (No. 01, dated 3 September 2018).

2.1 First stage:

Parents of children with special needs should approach social activity and solidarity services to register their children.

- at specialised education institutions under the Ministry of National Solidarity and Family;

- at educational institutions under the education sector.

2.2 Second stage:

The Directorate of Social Activity and Solidarity is responsible for reviewing the files of children with special needs at provincial committee or psychological and pedagogical council level to determine the appropriate care model and provide guidance after conducting the necessary assessments.

- Specialised institutions.

- Specialised classrooms.

- regular classrooms.

3. The Psychological and Pedagogical Council:

This council consists of psychologists (educational and clinical specialists, and speech therapists) who are primarily

responsible for diagnosis, monitoring and care.

4. The Specialised Provincial Committee:

Chaired by the Director of Social Activity, this committee comprises:

- A representative from the Provincial Directorate of Education.
- A technical and pedagogical inspector.
- a clinical psychologist;
- A speech and language therapist.
- an educational psychologist;
- A guidance and careers counsellor.
- A specialist education teacher.
- A special educational needs instructor.
- A special educational needs teacher.
- A social worker.

4.1 Responsibilities of this Committee:

- Directing children with disabilities towards special or regular classes and ensuring their pedagogical follow-up.
- Monitor special classes.
- Oversee the activities of trainers responsible for special classes.
- Continually assess the academic performance of students in special classes.

5. Arrangements for establishing special classes:

A list of children eligible for special classes is compiled based on their specific disabilities, in order to assess the need for such classes to be opened.

- The Directorate of Social Activity and Solidarity coordinates with the Directorate of Education to designate educational institutions where special classes will be opened.

This is formalised through a joint decree which specifies:

1. The receiving institution.
2. The nature of the disability.
3. The academic level of the class.

5.1 Disabilities addressed in special classes:

Sensory disabilities (visual and auditory).

- Mild intellectual disabilities, including Down's syndrome (trisomy 21).
- Mild autism spectrum disorder.

5.2 Number of children in special classes:

- For sensory disabilities (auditory and visual), the number of students ranges from a minimum of eight to a maximum of 12.
- For children with mild intellectual disabilities, the number of students ranges from a minimum of six to a maximum of ten.

5.3 Conditions for educational classrooms:

- The educational institution's director must allocate an appropriate classroom.
- The classroom must be equipped with the necessary facilities and resources.

Specialised educational materials and equipment must be provided for special classes.

5.4 Educational curriculum implemented in special classes:

The educational programmes of the Ministry of National Education are implemented in classes for students with auditory and visual impairments. Adapted methods, resources and techniques are used according to the nature of each disability.

Specialised education programmes from the National Solidarity sector are implemented in classes for children with mild intellectual disabilities.

5.5 Staffing of special classes:

Special classes are staffed by specialist teachers and qualified personnel from the National Solidarity sector.

Specialised education teachers are appointed by the Directorate of Social Activity and Solidarity.

Specialised personnel are subject to the internal regulations of the public education institution hosting the special classes.

Teachers and specialised educators assigned to special classes benefit from training programmes organised by the Ministry of National Education.

6. Support in school life:

When a child with a disability or disorder requires the assistance of a school companion, this must be based on a confirmed opinion from their treating physician.

The child's guardian must submit a request to the Directorate of Social Activity and Solidarity for the Adrar province,

supported by a medical file that substantiates the child's need for a companion to enable them to attend school properly.

The request will be reviewed and a decision will be issued by the Psychological and Pedagogical Council or the specialised provincial committee.

The Directorate of Social Activity and Solidarity is responsible for appointing the assistant and requesting permission from the Directorate of Education for the companion to enter the educational institution where the student is enrolled.

7. Responsibilities of the School Companion:

- Accompanying the student to and from the educational institution and their classroom, as well as moving between its various facilities.
- Assisting the student in organising their work.
- Help the student to complete educational tasks such as writing, note-taking, drawing, simplifying and explaining questions, clarifying teacher requests and participating in group work.
- Accompanying the student during physical education and sports activities.
- Assist the student during breaks and intervene in any emergencies concerning them.
- Accompanying the student during cultural, sporting, recreational activities and exploratory outings.

In general, the role of the school companion is significant, serving as a link between the student and their family regarding educational, relational and instructional matters.

The entry of the school companion into the educational institution, and their success in their tasks, depends on the support they receive from:

- The educational staff at the institution, as their presence is intended to overcome barriers that hinder students with disorders or disabilities from accessing education and to ensure equal opportunities for all students.

8. Arrangements for Health and Psychological Care:

Caring for students with special needs includes health and psychological support, as well as various necessary treatments that these students receive based on their specific conditions and disabilities, particularly in the rehabilitation of speech disorders and the improvement of their functions. This is facilitated through screening and follow-up units for school health.

9. Arrangements for adapting educational and extracurricular activities:

Efforts should be made to ensure that students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) benefit from various cultural and sports activities, play and recreational activities, reading initiatives and exploratory field trips that allow them to engage with their external environment. This should be coordinated with the relevant sectors, particularly the youth, sports and cultural sectors.

10. Arrangements for educational assessment and school examinations:

In accordance with the provisions of the joint ministerial decision dated 17/05/2003 mentioned above, specialised educational institutions and special classes are subject to the same procedures implemented by the Ministry of National Education for assessing and examining students with disabilities. Considering the situation of students with special needs, the Directorate of Social Activity and Solidarity will undertake the following:

- Preparation of lists of students with special educational needs nominated for school examinations and tracking their registration with the relevant services.
- Provision of educational and technical support materials for the relevant students.
- Implementation of appropriate adjustments to semester examinations based on the type of disability.

The Directorate of Education is responsible for the following:

- Providing all educational and technical resources that facilitate the examination process.
- Considering the disabilities of students with special educational needs when providing guidance.
- Offering visually impaired students the choice of answering in Braille or dictating their answers to a proctor, who will record them on the examination paper.

Arrangements for school support:

Students with disabilities who are enrolled in special classes are entitled to the same rights as their peers without disabilities, in accordance with applicable legislation and regulations.

Students with disabilities who study in special classes and live in remote areas far from their institutions are entitled to school transport and boarding at public educational institutions. When necessary, this support is also available at neighbouring institutions under the National Solidarity sector, as well as meal provisions.

11. Support from the Directorate of Social Activity as a State Support Mechanism for Private Institutions Caring for Children with Special Needs:

The Directorate of Social Activity and Solidarity supports active associations working with children with special needs, particularly those with autism spectrum disorder, to establish private institutions that provide psychological and pedagogical care for these children through the Community Development Programme (DEV-COM). The

association is required to contribute 10% of the costs. The Directorate of Social Activity and Solidarity focuses on:

- Equipment specifically designed for children with autism.
- Educational support materials.
- Renovation of premises and establishment of specialised classrooms for children with autism.
- Expansion of facilities dedicated to children with autism.

12. Statistics related to the care of hearing-impaired children in primary education in Adrar Province.

Division	Number
Special Division	02
First Year (of Integration)	06
Second Year (of Integration)	03
First Grade	08
Third Grade "A"	08
Third Grade "B"	07
Fourth Grade	08
Fifth Grade	05

13. Statistics related to the care of hearing-impaired children in intermediate education in Adrar Province.

Division	Number
First Year of Intermediate (Middle School)	04
Second Year of Intermediate (Middle School)	04
Third Year of Intermediate (Middle School)	05
Fourth Year of Intermediate (Middle School)	05

Conclusion:

In this article, we aimed to shed light on one of the most important topics concerning the care of individuals with special needs: the care provided to deaf and hard of hearing people through special classes. First, we emphasised the concept of hearing impairment and its characteristics. Then, we discussed the concept of integration, its types, goals, and the main challenges faced in the process of integrating hearing-impaired individuals. Ultimately, we presented statistics related to the integration of this group in educational institutions at primary and intermediate levels.

Ethical Considerations

This study adheres to ethical principles of educational research, including respect for human dignity, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. No personal or identifiable data of children were disclosed. The research was conducted in accordance with institutional ethical guidelines and national regulations governing studies involving vulnerable populations.

Acknowledgements

The authors express their sincere gratitude to the University of Adrar Ahmed Draia and to all educators, specialists, and institutional staff who contributed to the successful completion of this study through their cooperation and professional support.

Funding

This research received no external funding and was conducted as part of the authors' academic and professional responsibilities.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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