

The Reality of Adaptive Education Classes and Special Classes in Primary Schools in the Wilaya of Tlemcen

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Abstract:

This study aims to: investigate the reality of adapted education departments and special needs integration classes in the state of Tlemcen. To achieve the study's objectives, we relied on a descriptive approach, as the study was conducted on a sample of (100) educational and vocational counseling advisors in the state. We also used recent statistics on the number of these classes, which we obtained from the Directorate of Education in the state of Tlemcen. The results of the study revealed the number of classes dedicated to adapted education according to the administrative districts of the state, as well as the number of special classes concerned with the integration of people with special needs. We also clarified the selection criteria for identifying this group of academically delayed students and children with special needs. Finally, we presented a set of proposals made by educational and vocational counseling advisors to improve and develop the integration process.

Keywords: Adapted Education, Special Classes.

Introduction:

The educational system has witnessed significant efforts to develop the sector and advance development by establishing numerous strategies that include training policies and the planning of educational facility infrastructure, as well as pedagogical strategies. This is reflected in adaptive education and special classes, as outlined in ministerial circulars containing information and instructions. Ministerial Circular No. 1194, dated October 10, 1982, specifies the procedures and conditions for opening these classes for students with learning delays. Subsequently, Circular No. 1061, dated October 8, 1996, addressed the shortcomings in the sector regarding the integration conditions for other categories, including those with special needs, chronic diseases, disabilities, and minor academic delays. Despite ongoing efforts within the educational system regarding the issue of integration and its conditions—evidenced by the issuance of the latest ministerial circular in 2018 concerning the integration of children with special needs, which stipulates the opening of special classes for them—and despite these endeavors and initiatives, as well as the arrangements related to the schooling of this group within the sector, a significant deficiency remains. This deficiency is evident in the specialized staffing for teachers and in the number of classes, which do not cover all special categories.

Currently on the global sphere, integration is considered one of the modern trends in special education, allowing some children with special needs to study in regular classrooms, providing them with equal learning opportunities to their peers. In the United States, the American Congress approved Law No. 142/94 in 1985, which stipulates:

* Conducting a comprehensive assessment of the nature and extent of the disability of all children suffering from disabilities.

* All disabled children have the right to receive a free and appropriate education to their potential.

* Disabled children should be placed in an environment that covers all their needs.

In Britain, a special law was introduced in 1981, approved in 1983, and named the Special Education Law, which focused on the new designation for children with special needs and granted them the right to education in regular schools unless their disability prevents them from benefiting from education in these schools, such as cases of very severe disability (Othman Abdou Issa, 1998).

Local studies that have addressed the integration of individuals with special needs in primary schools we find the study of (Hadadou Fatima, Qiraa Fethi, 2022), which aimed to identify the reality of integrating individuals with special needs in regular classes in the city of Djelfa. Through data obtained from questionnaires applied to (40) teachers, the study found that there are strategies followed for the integration of this group in regular classrooms, which are to follow and implement regular programs. However, these programs do not align with the abilities of the students, especially those suffering from mental retardation or autism, and there is also a lack of training and trained teachers in this field.

Another study conducted by (Badi Nouara, Biqa Saliha, 2023) aimed to study the experimental experience in integrating individuals with special needs in educational institutions. The study was applied to a sample of (10) individuals representing those in charge of the integrated classes in Algiers, and the results concluded that the project of integrating children with special needs in regular schools is a recent endeavor in Algeria and requires material and moral support from the responsible authorities. It also has a positive impact on the psychological

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and social levels for the integrated children and their families, as well as for the community. However, there remain some shortcomings that must be addressed and supported, such as training teachers in charge of the integration process and providing tools and activities suitable for this group, ... and other points mentioned by the two researchers.

In the same context, we find the study of (Soulaf Bouabdellah, 2023) entitled "Successful school integration of people with special needs between the visions of theorists and the regulating laws." highlighted the necessity to control and adapt the range of direct and indirect material and human factors and in various applied aspects in order to ensure the success of the school integration process for individuals with special needs.

Regarding adaptive education, researcher (Belarbi Fouzia, 2016) conducted a study on the reality of adaptive education, which concluded that adaptive education is effective in improving students' basic skills (reading, writing, calculation).

Based on the above, this paper aims to reveal the reality of adaptive education classes and special classes for integrating individuals with special needs in the Wilaya of Tlemcen by answering the following questions:

- * What is the number and distribution of these classrooms in the schools and districts of the Wilaya?
- * What are the criteria on the basis of which these two categories (students with learning delays and students with special needs) are selected for integration?
- * What are the suggestions for improving and developing the integration process from the perspective of those involved in it?

Importance of the Study:

The importance of this study lies in providing insights into the reality of school integration for children with learning delays and children with special needs in the Wilaya of Tlemcen, to raise awareness among those involved in the educational process regarding the differences between adaptive education classrooms and special classes. There is often confusion about the role of each, leading parents to reject the idea of integrating their children into adaptive education classes, mistakenly believing that these classes are specifically for individuals with special needs. Furthermore, we aim to provide solutions and suggestions to address the shortcomings of this process.

Objectives of the Study:

The current study aims to:

- * Reveal the reality of adaptive education classrooms and special classes for integrating individuals with special needs.
- * Provide statistics on the number of classes (adaptive education classes and special classes) and the number of integrated students in them.
- * Clarify the selection criteria for identifying students with learning delays and students with special needs.
- * Offer suggestions to improve and develop the integration process from the perspective of those involved in it.

Study Terminology:

Adaptive Education:

A type of remedial education directed to students who show a general deficiency in academic achievement due to psychological or social circumstances that have affected their academic performance.

Special Classes:

Taking care of schooling children with special needs according to two methods:

- **Care in specialized institutional settings:** These are educational institutions affiliated with the Ministry of National Solidarity and the Family, which are managed by associations and private individuals.
- **Care in regular school settings:** These are educational institutions affiliated with the Ministry of Education (primary schools, middle schools, high schools), as well as private educational institutions, through which the child is either fully integrated into regular classes or partially integrated into special classes.

Methods and Tools:

Methodology Used in the Study:

The descriptive analytical method was used in the current study as it is suitable for the purposes of the study, which aims to reveal the reality of adaptive education classes and special classes in the Wilaya of Tlemcen.

Study Sample:

The study was applied to a sample of school and vocational guidance counsellors assigned to the process of exploration and integration of students with learning delays and students with special needs, consisting of (100) advisors in the Wilaya of Tlemcen, who were selected intentionally because they are members of the psychological, medical, and pedagogical committees and responsible for the integration process.

Study Tools:

In the current study, we relied on interviews with school and vocational guidance counsellors, through direct questions related to the selection criteria for students for adaptive education classes and about the suggestions for improving the integration process for students who are mentally retarded.

We also relied on statistics from the Directorate of Education in the Wilaya of Tlemcen regarding the number of adaptive education classrooms, special education classes and the number of students in each one of them, according to the administrative districts of the Wilaya.

Presentation and Discussion of Study Results:

1- Presentation of the results of the first question regarding statistics related to adaptive education classes:

Number	Elementary School	The Municipality	Number of pupils in the adapted class	
			Males	Females
1	Ahmed Al Abili	Tlemcen	4	1
2	Al Hassan Al Rashdi	Tlemcen	8	2
3	Hasnaoui Ahmed	Mansourah	5	2
4	Ben Boubaker Ali 2	Beni Mester	3	2
5	Mamache Nadir	Chetouane	3	3
6	Sekal Mourad	Mansourah	4	2
7	Ledrane Chikh	Sidi Abdelli	3	2
8	Abd al-Ḥamid Ibn Badis	Sebdou	9	3
9	Bencharef Houcine	Hennaya	8	3
10	Boucharef Benaissa	Hennaya	6	3
11	Benissa Abdelkarim	Ouled Riah	6	0
12	Sayem Mamoun Mohamed	Ain Youcef	0	5
13	Belhadj Benammar	El Fehoul	3	1
14	Chaqaf Draoui	Remchi	10	1
15	EL Akid Abbas	Maghnia	6	4
16	Emir Abdelkader	Maghnia	6	5
17	El Akid Abbas	Nedrouma	4	1
18	Aidouni Amrou	Fellaoucene	8	2
19	Houcini Abdellah	Ghazaouet	1	6
20	Bahlil Boufeldja	Bab El Assa	5	2
21	Boujnan Hamza	Souahlia	6	4
Total			108	54
			162	

From the table obtained from the Directorate of Education in the Wilaya of Tlemcen, we note that there are 21 primary schools, each with an adaptive education classe, i.e., 21 adaptive education classes opened and appointed by psychological, medical, and pedagogical committees consisting of:

- The primary education inspector for the district (Chairman).
- The director of the guidance and counseling center (Member).
- The director of the primary school in which the adaptive education classe is open (Member).
- The teacher of the adaptive education classe (Member).
- The guidance counselor for the exploration process for the district to which he belongs (Member).
- A psychologist for school health (Member).
- A school health doctor (Member).

We also note that the number of students integrated into the adaptive education classe after the diagnosis process and passing through the aforementioned committee reached 162 students, including 108 males and 54 females.

After reviewing the statistics presented in the table, the researchers noted that some administrative districts are considered large in terms of area (such as Sidi Abdelli, Sebdou, Chetouane, Ghazaouet and Nedrouma), the number of students, and the presence of one adaptive education class in them does not cover the number of students concerned with integration in these classes, which forces parents to keep their children in schools close to their homes due to the distance to the school where the adaptive education class is located. Consequently, the

student may repeat the school year for several times and not remedy the delay he suffers, ending up with an inevitable academic failure.

We also noted that the number of students in these classes does not exceed 10, which obeys what is stipulated in the ministerial circulars that set the number of students in the adaptive education class between 10 and 15 students (Gharib Mokhtar, 2014, p. 121).

2- Result of the second question regarding statistics related to special classes:

- Number of special Classes opened by the Directorate of Solidarity and the number of students integrated into them:

Number	Name of the educational institution receiving the special class	Province	Nature of intellectual disabilities.	Number of special classes	Number of students integrated
01	Laissouf Boumediene	Tlemcen	Autism	02	08
02	El Arbi Tebessi	Tlemcen	Autism	01	10
03	Zouad Moḥammad	Tlemcen	Trisomy (21)	01	12
04	Abou el-Abbas Tlemsani	Tlemcen	Mild Intellectual disability	01	04
05	Ibn Arisha Mohammed	Ouled Mimoun	Mild Intellectual disability	01	05
06	Uthman Ibn Affan	Nedrouma	Mild Intellectual disability	01	06
07	Ouahrani Kheira	Sabra	Mild Intellectual disability	01	10

08	Ben Zouzou Lakhdar	Hammam Boughrara	Mild Intellectual disability	01	05
09	Moufidi Zakaria	Souani	Mild Intellectual disability	01	06
10	Hanafi Mohammed	Sidi Djilali	Mild Intellectual disability	01	08
11	Bouanani succeeds	Remchi	Mild Intellectual disability	01	04
			Autism	01	
12	Akid Abbas	Maghnia	Trisomy (21)	02	18
Total				15	96

- Number of special Classes opened by associations and the number of students integrated into them:

Number	Name of the educational institution receiving the special class	Province	The name of the association	Nature of intellectual disabilities	Number of special classes	Number of students integrated		Total
						Male	Female	
01	Al-Khatib Ibn Marzouq	Tlemcen	Ahmed for the care for	Autism	02	15	7	22

			generatio ns					
02	Pasteur Girls	Tlemcen	ANT	Trisomy (21)	01	01	04	5
03	Kedrouss i Mohamm ed	Tlemcen	The Challeng e Associati on	Autism	01	13	05	18
04	El Abili Ahmed	Tlemcen	Await	Trisomy (21)	02	08	11	19
05	Khalil Abdessa m	Tlemcen	Await	Autism	02	18	05	23
				Trisomy (21)	02	04	17	21
06	Mehdi Mokhtar	Ghazaou et	Autistic children	Autism	01	14	07	18
TOTAL					11	83	56	139

It is clear from the previous two tables that the number of special classes opened by the Directorate of Solidarity reached (15) classes, and the number of students integrated into them reached (96) students. In contrast, we find that the number of classes opened by associations reached (11) classes, and the total number of integrated students reached (139), including (83) males and (56) females. We note that the number of students integrated by associations exceeds the number of students integrated by the Directorate of Solidarity, especially since the number of classes opened by associations is less than the number of classes opened by the Directorate of Solidarity.

Recently, during the academic year 2024/2025, two classes were added by the Directorate of Social Activity at the middle school level, including a special class for intellectual disabilities and a special class for deaf and mute children.

We also noted that the most common disabilities integrated by the Directorate of Solidarity are mild intellectual disabilities, where 08 special classes have been opened for them in various districts of the Wilaya, followed by autism, for which 04 classes have been opened, and then Trisomy 21, for which two classes have been inaugurated.

As for the special needs classes run by associations, they were divided almost equally between autism (4 classes opened) and Trisomy 21 (5 classes). However, what caught the attention of the two researchers was the large number of autistic children in each class. For example, Khalil Abdesslam School has 23 autistic children, and Kedroussi Mohamed School has 18. These numbers match the number of normal students in regular classes. However, autistic children should ideally be kept in smaller groups within specialized classes, especially since this group is challenging to manage and requires a unique approach to teaching and learning.

Ministerial Circular No. 27, issued by the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family Affairs on July 27, 2014, also stipulates that the number of students in the special classes is determined from 08 to 12 students as a maximum.

3- Result of the third question:

What are the criteria adopted in selecting students for integrated classes?

*Through interviews conducted in guidance centers in the Wilaya of Tlemcen (Tlemcen, Remchi, Maghnia) with guidance counselors involved in screening academically delayed students, they stated that the identification process takes

place at the end of each academic year. This is done through the preparation of lists by primary school principals to carry out the examination of the students concerned with these lists, using a set of tests represented by (the Goodenough Draw-a-Man test, a special information card for the student which includes a set of questions relating to the mental, cognitive, and academic aspects, in addition to the teacher's referral regarding the student's situation). After the completion of the identification process, psychological, medical, and pedagogical committees are convened at the beginning of each academic year, consisting of (the teacher, the school principal, the guidance counselor, the school health doctor, the school health psychologist) to approve the final lists of students diagnosed for integration into adaptive education classes.

Adaptive education is primarily aimed at students who suffer from academic delays that noticeably affect various academic subjects, despite remedial education efforts (Salah Naima, Ouraghi Fouzia, 2021, p. 78).

*As for students concerned with integration in special classes, which include students with special needs represented by (mild intellectual disability, autism, Trisomy 21), guidance counselors indicated that the integration and diagnostic processes are carried out by the Directorate of Social Activity for the Wilaya of Tlemcen. This category of students is diagnosed by the psychologist affiliated with the Directorate of Social Activity, and then the reports prepared by them are sent to the Directorate of Education, which distributes the students from this category to the classes according to the administrative districts in the Wilaya.

In conclusion, based on the information provided by the guidance counselors involved in the identification and integration process for individuals with special needs, we find that the criteria adopted in the selection process for those with learning delays rely on non-standardized and outdated measures. Another

observation that caught the researchers' attention is the lack of differentiation between students with learning delays and students with learning difficulties, both by teachers and by those in charge of the diagnostic process. This is due to the academic qualifications of some guidance counselors, who hold licenses in educational sociology, sociology of work and organization, and psychology of work and organization. This may hinder the accurate diagnosis of this group and the distinction between these two terms (learning delay and learning difficulties).

Learning delay is a delay in academic achievement in two or more subjects, with psychological, social, or economic causes. It is of two types:

- General learning delay: This is a delay that includes all subjects.
- Partial learning delay: This includes only one or two subjects, such as arithmetic or reading (Salah Naima, Ouraghi Fouzia, 2021, p. 77).

4- Result of the fourth question: What are the suggestions for improving and developing the integration process from the perspective of those involved in it?

- Rely on standardized and updated measures and tests, prepared by specialists in the field, such as involving university researchers in the design of these measures.
- Raise awareness among parents about the importance of adaptive education classes, and inform them that they are special classes for learning delays only and for one academic year to address the deficiency suffered by the student, and then they are reintegrated into the regular class.
- Ensure the training of teachers facilitating adaptive education classes, and prepare intervention and teaching programs specifically tailored to the needs of the students concerned.

- Exclude individuals with other disabilities from these classes, for the reason that the supervisory ministry emphasizes in its ministerial circulars that the category concerned with these classes is only for students with learning delays.

As for the special classes, we suggest the following:

- Open a larger number of these classes to cover the number of students, and so that they are close to their residential areas.
- Train teachers specialized in teaching this category, preferably graduates with a specialization in special education psychology, or even school psychology, as confirmed by the results of a study (Badi Nouara, Biqaa Saliha, 2023).
- Ensure the preparation of special intervention and educational programs for each type of these disabilities (mild intellectual disability, autism, Trisomy 21).
- Prepare the special classes with all the necessary modern educational tools to facilitate the teaching and learning process. The researchers (Badi Nouara, Biqaa Saliha, 2023) indicated this in their study, where they mentioned that special education rooms should be designed for individuals with special needs, equipped and suitable in several respects, such as the nature of the construction and the location within the educational institution.
- Establish follow-up committees to evaluate the learning path of this category, and determine the requirements and needs that increase the success of the integration process.

- Establish classes for the intermediate and secondary levels, as these classes are currently limited to the primary level, leaving the educational future of students beyond this stage uncertain.

Conclusion:

This study highlighted the reality of adaptive education classes and special classes, providing statistics on their numbers and the primary schools where they were established, as well as the number of students integrated into them. It also provided an accurate count of special classes opened by the Directorate of Social Activity and those opened by associations. The data revealed a need to open more classes—whether adaptive education or special—to address deficits and needs in some districts within the Wilaya. The study concluded by addressing several suggestions that contribute to enhancing the integration process for this category of students. The vision presented in this study will guide decision-makers toward improving the quality of adaptive education and special classes to better meet student needs.

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