

THE HEARING-IMPAIRED CHILD IN "INTEGRATED" CLASSES

Ima Clevenger, Ph. D.

In 1948 Louis M. DiCarlo * wrote: "If hearing-impaired children are expected to make contributions to social life, they must be allowed to live and grow, work and play in a normal world. They must be unsegregated and unprotected".* I am aware of the opposition to integrated classes for the hearing-impaired child. However, integration of hearing-impaired children with hearing children in the regular classroom is one segment of our present educational philosophy. Oral language and day schools for the deaf are forerunners in the thinking that the way to learn to live in a hearing world is to start living in it as early as possible. Modern developments in acoustics, electronics and educational methods have increased the possibility of integrating educationally.

This report presents such integrated systems as practiced in ten pre- and elementary schools of the United States. It includes their procedures, problems, results, and recommendations.

These schools include two from Texas; five from Indiana; one, California; one, Florida; and one, New York. Integration was initiated as early as 1948 and as late as 1957. The age limits of the children admitted to these programs ranged from two years six months to 17 years. In two of these programs the deaf children or hard of hearing children were admitted without screening. In the others, the children were selected from Schools for the Deaf. One of the programs stated that its primary purpose was to prepare deaf children to attend their neighborhood schools. All of the deaf children received assistance as needed by a teacher of the deaf. The number of children with impaired-hearing assigned to each classroom varied from two to more than half of the children. The larger the group of deaf children, the more they depended upon each other. Two deaf children to a room was considered the best arrangement by most of the teachers involved.

The results of these programs indicated that the hearing children were not hindered in their academic progress. In fact, in one instance, the hearing children improved more than expected in reading and in arithmetic. The hearing children had a better understanding of non-hearing people. A few of the hearing-impaired children excelled academically; many more moved at an average and below average rate of progress. The hearing-impaired children

* Louis M. DiCarlo, "An Education Program for Children with Impaired-Hearing," *Elementary School Journal* 49 : 163, November, 1948.

were not fully accepted by the hearing children according to the sociometric tests. The reaction was neither positive nor negative. The observers and teachers reported more favorable relations between the two groups. Only one child in all of these programs returned to the School for the Deaf after participating in the integrated program, and that was at the request of his mother. After two years in the integrated program the children tended to move into their neighborhood schools with special help supplied by itinerant teachers from the School for the Deaf.

Administration problems involve the provision of appropriate rooms and equipment for these children; the selection of understanding, cooperative teachers; the implementing of conferences and team-work of all concerned for the benefit of the children; and constant evaluations of the best methods for placing these children and the possibilities of improving the program. The classroom teacher should be oriented to the needs of the deaf, to a realization of their slow language development, to the limitations imposed by lip reading, and to the acceptance of possible lower academic achievement. The child should be free to ask the assistance of the special teacher as he feels a need for it.

The degree and type of hearing loss, the ability to read lips, to talk, and to use language and any residual hearing, the mental capacity, the personality, and potentials for social adjustment—such factors are frequently the criteria for evaluating a deaf child and making a prognosis regarding his success in a hearing school. That he had these characteristics is of less significance than when he did acquire them. The pre-school period is the optimum time for acquiring these very essential tools to be used in an integrated school program and throughout experiences in this hearing world.

Some progress has been made in solving the problems of the hearing-impaired child in integrated classes. Many variants need further evaluation for improving the successful implementation of such programs.

L'ENFANT À L'OUÏE AFFAIBLIE DANS LES CLASSES INTÉGRÉES

L'intégration des enfants à l'ouïe affaiblie avec les autres enfants dans la même classe régulière fait partie de notre philosophie actuelle d'éducation. Pour apprendre à vivre normalement dans le monde, le mieux est de commencer à y vivre aussitôt que possible. Les développements modernes dans l'acoustique, l'électronique, et les méthodes ont augmenté, la possibilité d'une éducation intégrée.

Ce compte-rendu décrit les systèmes d'intégration que l'on suit dans des écoles maternelles et des écoles élémentaires des Etats-Unis. Il fait mention de leurs procédés, leurs problèmes, leurs résultats, et leurs recommandations. Le nombre d'enfants intégrés varie de deux jusqu'à plus de la moitié de toute une classe. Après deux ans dans le programme intégré, les enfants vont dans leurs écoles de quartier, où une aide spéciale leur est apportée par des maîtres itinérants de l'Ecole pour Les Sourds.

Les problèmes administratifs comprennent la provision de salles convenables et de l'équipement pour ces enfants; le choix de maîtres habiles et coopérants;

la combinaison des conférences et collaboration de tous ceux qui agissent pour le profit des enfants; enfin l'évaluation des meilleures méthodes pour classer ces enfants et des possibilités d'amélioration des programmes.

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DISCUSSION:

Green:

We have heard children in "integrated" classes referred to as "deaf", „hard of hearing" and "hearing impaired" children.

I would like to know:

1. The actual hearing losses of the children
 - a. on admission to school, and
 - b. after a period of auditory training.
2. Since we expect, and do in fact find a slower rate of learning in most deaf children, what effect does the presence of two or more such children have upon the rate of learning of the normal children in the group.
3. What degree of social and psychological disturbance is experienced by the handicapped pupils due to the frequent changes of class and social relationships as described.

Ima Clevenger:

1. "Integrated" classes for the impaired-hearing in the United States may include hard of hearing children; however, in my report 8 of the 10 schools comprised children selected from schools for the deaf, or having profound hearing loss, that is 75 dB or greater bilaterally. I do not have available the audiometric records to answer the remainder of this question, sorry.

2. The normal children of the integrated classes in New York City, Public School 47, have been objectively observed and tested for the past five years. These results indicate that the hearing children have not been hindered in their academic progress. In fact, they have made unexpected progress in reading and arithmetic.

3. The results of such tests in New York City were neither positive nor negative for the first year. Gradual improvement has been experienced with constant evaluation of the program. Early entrance of a deaf child in an integrated program before he has set himself apart from the normal world is important.