



Bar-Ilan
University



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Machado Chair for Research on Cognitive and Human Development

School of Education Bar Ilan University, Israel

Head: Hefziba Lifshitz

Associate Professor, Head of ID track, Special Education Department,



Empowerment Project - Three stages of Inclusion in the Academic World for Adults with ID

*The Machado chair for research and Human
development launches three stages of academic
program for adults with ID*

Stage 1: inclusion as a group: Head Dr. Shoshana Nissim

- Students with intellectual disability (ID), study six academic courses at the School of Education, Bar-Ilan University: Psychology, Self-Advocacy, Library and Computers. The lecturers are MA students in the ID program at the special education department, the School of Education.

Stage 2: Inclusion as a group with regular students: Head Dr. Shoshana Nissim

- Students with ID are included in BA research seminar on Lifelong Learning of Individuals with Disability, and conduct a research together with regular students. This section is a part of the **Friending project** operated by the Israel JDC, Ruderman foundation, Keren Salem and the Division of ID in the Welfare Ministry.

Stage 3: Full inclusion in regular undergraduate courses

- Six highly capable students with ID are fully integrated into five undergraduate courses as auditors. They passed the exam, perform class's tasks and received academic credits. In this year, they will study English and Judism in the BIU, Midrasha.
- It is estimated that 10% persons with mild ID can participate in this program. The Empowerment project was among Five Global Winners of Ruderman Family Foundation Award Recognizing Inclusion in Disability Innovators.

Rational of the Empowerment Project:

The Empowerment project is anchored on several theories:

The "Compensation Age Theory" (Lifshitz, 2011; 2015).

Chronological age plays an important role in determining the cognitive ability of individuals with ID, beyond their mental age. In later years there is compensation for the developmental delays experienced by individuals with ID in their early years

The ***Structural Cognitive Modifiability (SCM) theory and the Active Modifying (AM) approach*** (Feuerstein and Rand, 1974; Feuerstein, 2003): The human organism is a system open to its environment and accessible to change, even in the presence of three formidable obstacles usually believed to prevent change: (a) age, (b) etiology, (c) severity of limitation.

The Cognitive Reserve theory (Stern et al., (2005): Surviving into old age in terms of cognitive functioning depends on the degree or quality of 'reserve' or remaining resources in the brain. Individuals with ID exhibit cognitive reserve in their adulthood despite their ID.