



**Faculty of
Education**

Bar-Ilan University

MA Program in ID |
Machado Chair for Research
on Cognitive modifiability |
Empowerment project |
Baker Research Center for
children with DD |



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

**Breaking News! A new study demonstrates:
Postsecondary University Education Increases Verbal and Fluid
Intelligence of Adult Students with Intellectual Disability**

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**Impacting
Tomorrow,
Today.**





Stage 1: Adapted enrichment courses

- Students with ID studied in academic courses in the Faculty of Education (i.e., Introduction to Psychology, Self-Advocacy, Library and Computers) adapted to their level. The lecturers were Master's students in the ID program at the Faculty of Education. **A new adapted college was launched for adults with severe ID who need extensive support**

Stage 2: Adapted enrichment courses with typical students

- Students with ID were included in a Bachelor's level research seminar on Lifelong Learning of Individuals with Disability, and conducted research together with students with typical development. This stage is supported by the Council for Higher Education.

Stage 3: Full inclusion in undergraduate courses in a Bachelor's degree setting

- Six highly capable students with ID were fully integrated into undergraduate courses. They passed the exam, perform class tasks, and completed and received 32 academic credits. As such, Bar-Ilan University has recognized them as Bachelor's degree students in all regards. They will have completed the Bachelor's degree in Multidisciplinary Social Science at the end of 2022-2023 academic year.

Rational of the Empowerment Project:

The theoretical foundation of Empowerment project

- ***The "Compensation Age Theory" (Lifshitz, 2015; 2020).*** 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, 2008): 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, 2012):*** 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.

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