

מכון טראמפ
פיתוח, מחקר והכשרה

Trump Institute
Development, Research & Training

בית איזי שפירא
לשינוי באיכות חייהם של אנשים עם מוגבלויות

Beit Issie Shapiro
Changing the lives of people with disabilities

בקמפוס ווילי וסיליה טראמפ
On the Willie & Celia Trump Campus



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Impact of participation in Academic Friending courses on individuals with disabilities

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האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים
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Background

- **Legislation and policies concerning persons with disabilities advocate for inclusion**
- **The right to education - from segregated schools to an inclusive education system**
- **Lack of inclusion opportunities in higher education**

"Academic Friendings"

- Individuals with disabilities study within an academic course side-by-side to students without disabilities
- Two main aims:
 1. Provide an academic experience for students with disabilities
 2. Allow for mutual contact between students with and students without disabilities

Aims of study

- Part of a larger study
- Examine the impact of participation of students with disabilities in Academic Friending courses.
- And, specifically, on students with disabilities.



Study Methods

- 2016-2017
- Ten Academic Friending courses were conducted within six colleges and universities
- Education or Occupational Therapy Departments
- Bachelors' level program.

The course list

Cinema as a therapeutic tool – looking through the camera

Introduction to music therapy and creative expression

Social entrepreneurship

Theater: the game of life

Diversity: from learning about to the learning together in a Social entrepreneurship context

Cinema use for promotion of communication

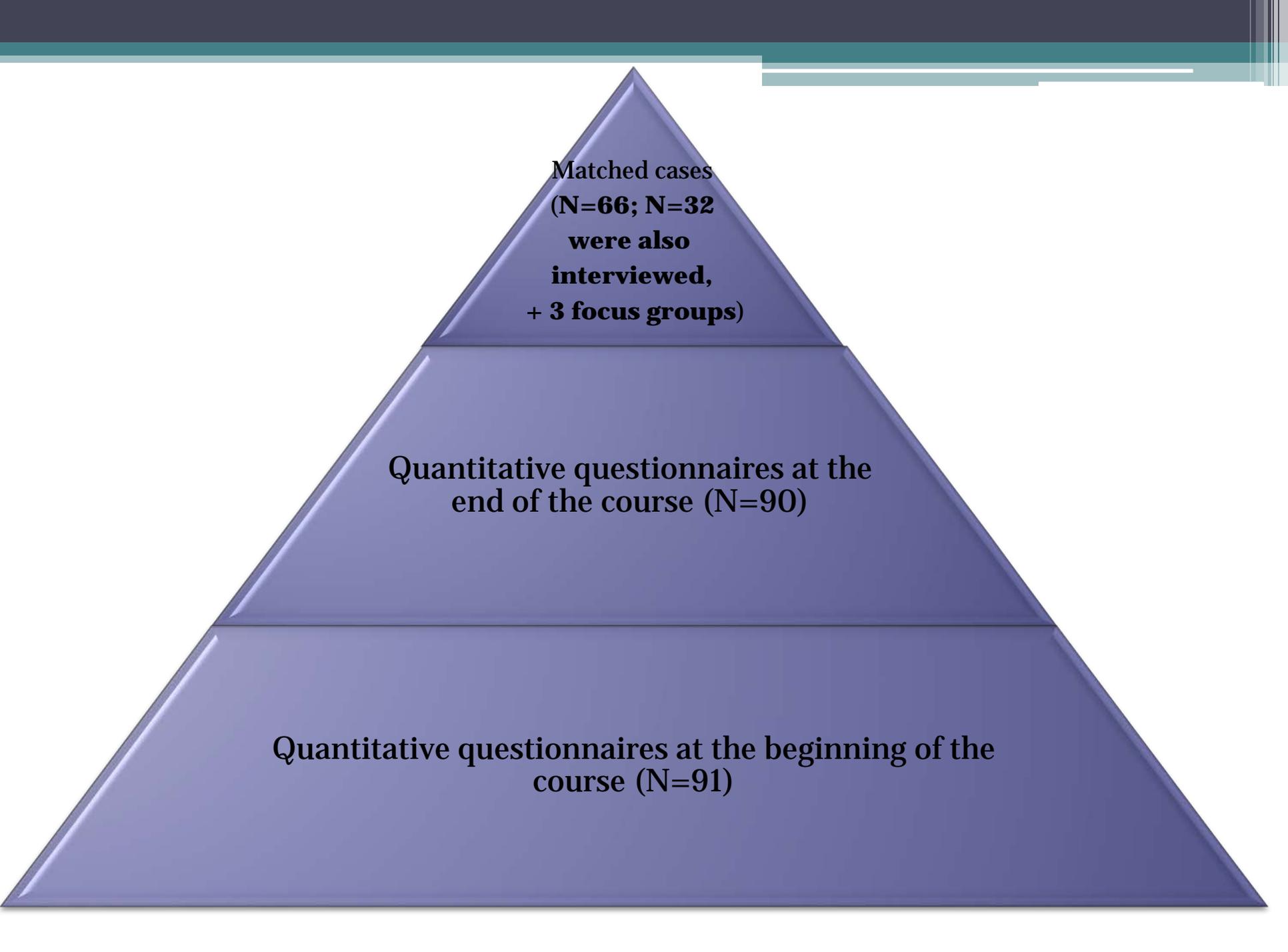
Sign language

The family as a system

Introduction to medical clowning - humor as a way of life

Mixed methods study





Matched cases
(**N=66; N=32**
were also
interviewed,
+ 3 focus groups)

Quantitative questionnaires at the
end of the course (N=90)

Quantitative questionnaires at the beginning of the
course (N=91)

Study Participants

- **66 Non-for credit university students with disabilities who studied within the 2016-2017 school year**
- **30 women and 36 men**
- **Mean age 33.44**
- **Different diagnoses**
- **First Academic Friending course studied by 29 of the participants**

Quantitative questionnaire

- 24 item scale examining perception of academic skills, self-esteem and views on the courses
- Items were rated on a scale from 1 to 4
- The overall reliability of the scale was good ($\alpha=0.89$)

Results

Quantitative questionnaire

No differences were found in ratings between the two time points



Hypothesis I: Students had previous experience with such courses



However, same pattern appeared among students for whom this was their first experience



Hypothesis II: Tendency to provide positive answers and social desirability.

Highest rated items

	Beginning	End
I think I am capable of learning new things	3.74 (.54)	3.64 (.55)
I signed up to the course to enrich my knowledge	3.72 (.57)	3.77 (.43)
The course will enable me to acquire life skills	3.66 (.62)	3.46 (.71)
I think I can fit in well in Academic Friending courses	3.65 (.60)	3.58 (.66)
Its important for me to study at the academy	3.61 (.70)	3.53 (.62)

Lowest rated items

	Beginning	End
I am appreciated	3.29 (.83)	3.34 (.74)
The course will allow me feel equal to others	3.28 (.89)	3.47 (.71)
I am usually pleased with myself	3.26 (.71)	3.31 (.66)
I believe other students have the same abilities as me	3.17 (.91)	3.38 (.84)
I believe I can study for an academic degree	3.11 (.95)	3.19 (.94)
The course will provide me skills to fit in better at work	3.06 (.95)	2.89 (1.06)

Qualitative interview

- **Took place after the completion of the course, over the phone**
- **Each interview lasted between 20-40 min**



Tell me about the course in which you took part?

Why did you choose to take part in this course?

What was it like for you to be a student in the academia?

What were the contributions of this course to you?

Tell me of your relationships with other students in the class.

What things were beneficial to you within the course?

What were the difficulties within the course?

Qualitative Results

The experience of meeting students without disabilities

Feedback regarding the lecturer and the college

4 themes

Gaining experience within academia and its impact on self-perception and self-esteem

Feedback regarding the conditions of the course

The experience of meeting students without disabilities

- The encounter with students without disabilities contributed to their sense of belonging and feeling **'like everyone else'**



"People with disabilities or with special needs are capable of things. This can be seen by us seating here at the academy and bonding with supposedly "normal" students. There, in class, you don't 'get labeled' by your disability... you are just a regular person" (Noa)

“It was really nice to get to know new students, especially because they didn’t judge us. They accepted us the way we are, and wanted to get to know us better” (Galit)



However, some students mentioned the difficulty in meeting students without disability especially when there was no preparation regarding the courses



- *“There should be an introductory meeting between all of the students who signed up for the course. When I first came to class it was really difficult for me. The students without disabilities were surprised by the way we look. If there was a pre-meeting to all of us, I think it would have been easier for both sides...” (Guy)*

“The students without disabilities who host us, they have no idea about the Friending course and about the fact that the university integrated us in it. They were in shock. Sometimes I felt like they don’t want us to be there. I think that even before the course begins, its important to prepare all students” (Omer)

Impact of academia on self-perception and self-esteem

- The experience of learning in academia was perceived as contributing to self-esteem and sense of belonging.
- Both the academic achievement and the interpersonal encounter had an effect on the students' experience



- *“It felt so good to be a student at the academy and to get a diploma. This diploma is proof that I made it. I achieved my goal, and I figured out my disability won’t prevent me from doing things, I can be like everyone else...” (Daniel)*
- *“This course made me feel good and let me find out myself that I am equal.. No one is interested in my disability, I felt like everyone else...” (Tal)*

Feedback regarding the lecturer and the college setting

- The lecturer and the interaction with her\him was significant for the students
- The attitude of the lecturer and the academy had a great influence on the students' experience



- *“At the beginning and at the end of the course the Head of faculty came and talked with us and wished us luck. I felt really good. We felt like any other student at the college. We felt that we are equal, and we don’t take it for granted.....we only come for 12 meeting. They can easily say that’s its not important enough and ignore us, but they didn’t. they helped us get the full experience of studying at the academy, and there is no better feeling than that” (David)*

Feedback regarding the conditions of the course

- **Students were mostly satisfied with the course conditions, hours, geographical location and physical conditions of the class**
- **In specific cases there were students who thought there was room for improvement**



- **Need to improve accessibility:**

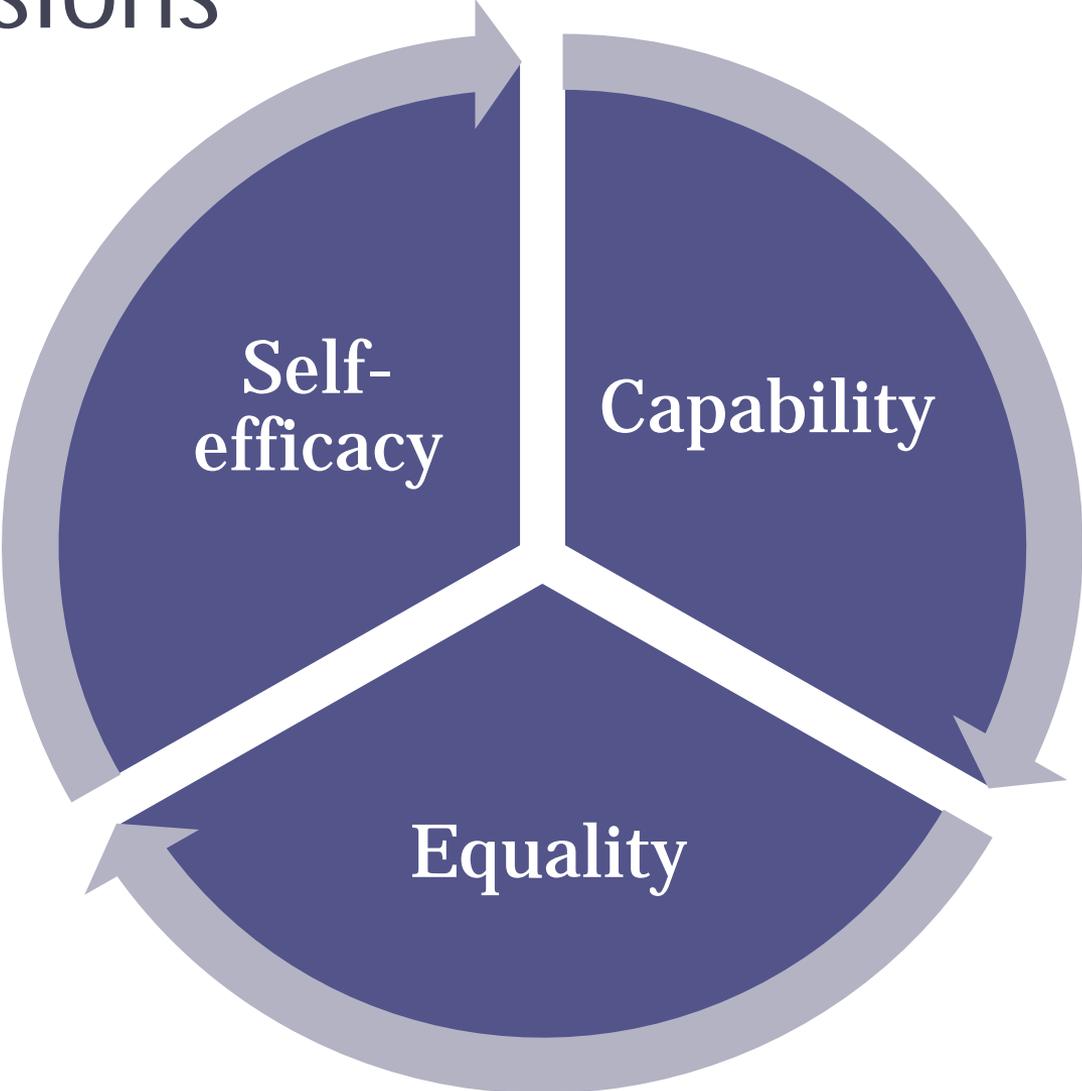
“Most of the time I couldn't see what was written on the blackboard, due to my disability..... And also the hours of the course were difficult. The course ended at 7 pm and if I needed something I had to call my parents to help me” (Nati)

- Most students felt that the courses were too short

• *“I was so disappointed that the course was only 3 months. All of these courses should be carried out for one academic year and not for just one semester...” (Yarden)*

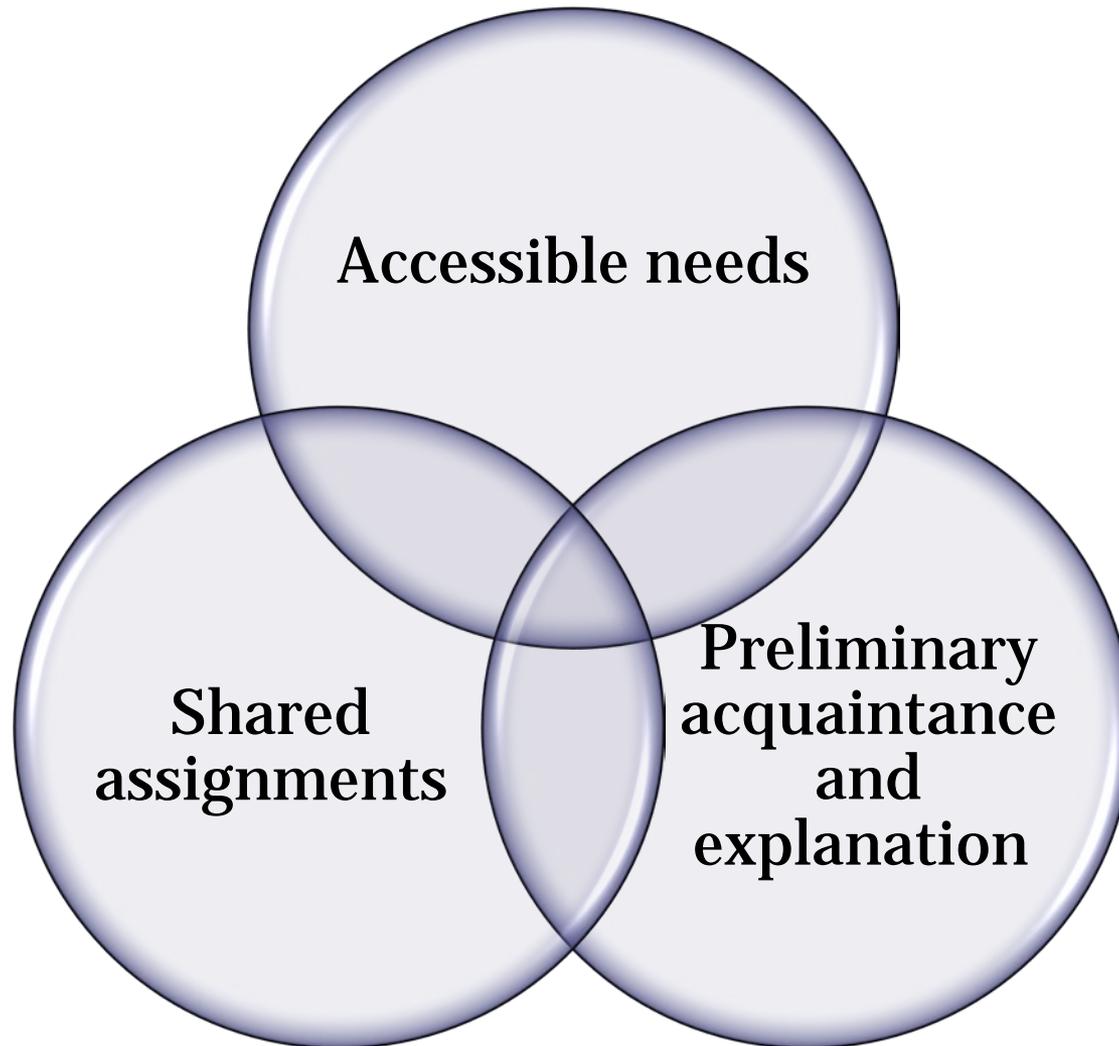


Conclusions



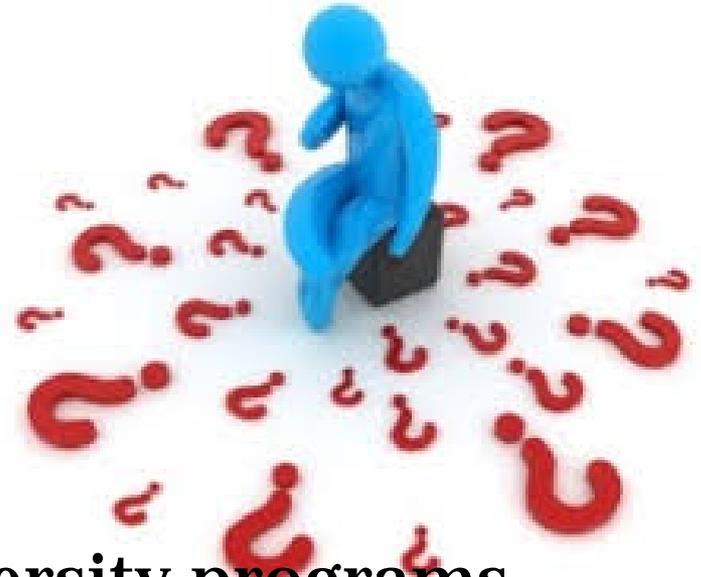
Conclusions

Emphasis



Dilemmas?

- Full university experience
- University resources
- Trained instructors and university programs
- Accessibility for all – Universal Design



Additional thoughts for the future

- What is the impact on students without disabilities?
- Accomplishment of maximum program accessibility
- Finding the correct balance between the two main aims of Academic Friendring



Thank you!

Questions?

