The Implementation of Change in a Teacher Training College and Its Impact on the Academic Environment

A Case Study of the Establishment of the Matot Center (Care and Support Center for Students with Learning Disabilities) in a Teacher Training College in Israel

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of setting up a care and support center for students with learning disabilities (Matot Center) in a teacher training college, its influence on the institution itself and how this change would affect the different levels within the college.

The study, conducted at a teacher training college in the center of Israel was a three-year longitudinal study from 2011 to 2013 that combined quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative research tools included attitude questionnaires of teachers and students participating in the program. The qualitative research tools included semi-structured interviews with students and mentors at the Matot Center, and a content analysis of documents and the minutes of the Center's Steering Committee meetings.

The findings of the study indicate that following the establishment of the Support Center in the college, changes took place at several levels: administrative and academic changes; changes in the lecturers' attitudes regarding the purpose of the Matot Center; changes in the college's mentoring project; and changes in the level of satisfaction among students at the Center with how the center operates and the extent of its contribution to them.

Keywords: learning disabilities, implementing change, teacher training college

1. Literary Review

1.1. Implementing Change

The Implementation process is commonly known as the end of the change process. The concern is that in the absence of a structured and organized process of implementation, the change will not materialize, and the organization will return to its organizational conduct prior to the change. Sensitivity to grounded theory, "quiet" imposition, a personal example of persuasion, advocacy and lack of compromise - are important factors in implementing the change. The key to the success or failure in implementation lies in the cooperation and participation of the teams involved in the change,

which creates commitment and connection to the process, and enhances the perceived benefit (both on a personal and organizational level). The perceived cost is measured by its impact on the entire organization and on the individual in the organization (Fuchs, 1995).

Fuchs (1998) clarifies the definition of change and presents four criteria, all of which are a prerequisite for a process to be defined as change: 1.The new situation is not a natural and gradual consequence resulting from the passage of time. 2. The new situation is not common and routine in the recent past. 3. There is a significant and instinctively recognizable difference between the situation that previously existed and the new situation that has been created. 4. The new situation directly affects the individual and he can characterize it as being important and meaningful. Samuel (1996) and Babad (1985) describe systemic change as a process that disturbs the system's equilibrium, since the change actually cancels out the existing situation and introduces a new situation, different from the former one, and involves replacing existing behavior patterns with new and different behavior patterns (Samuel, 1996).

When a change is systemic, it is generally dynamic and ongoing, and manifests itself in the physical, professional and human domains. It may therefore affect and be reflected in the behaviors of individuals, groups or institutions and also impact the cognitive and emotional spheres of individuals (Gaziel & Zweiger, 1987; Fuchs, 1995). The impact of change may be swift and noticeable within a relatively short time, or alternatively, it may be noticeable only once the organization has undergone the processes of implementation and adapted to the change.

According to Levy (2000) systemic change falls into four main groups according to fields of content: **Purpose of the change** - changes in the organization's activity, changes in goals and the designation in the nature of customers, products and services. **Structural change** - changes in the nature of relations and authority within the organization, changes in the nature of the relations between the organization and other organizations in its environment. **Technological change** - changes in work procedures and the introduction of new technologies and work methods. The technology can be physical or procedural. **Change in people** – a change in attitudes, values and beliefs, a change in the skill sets and competencies of members of the organization or a change in the composition of staff employed in the organization.

The process of change is a complex process. In the Administration Sciences, the accepted view is that the introduction of changes in organizations is built in various stages that begin with taking renewal, change or improvement initiatives, their adoption among the organization's staff, and finally their implementation in working life (Cohen, 2002).

Various researchers present different models for the development of change (Passig, 2010; Sharan, 1990, 1981). Fuchs (1995) proposes a model that includes four phases:

A. Preparation stage – the initial stage, part of which takes place before the change is introduced, and part of which constitutes the opening stage. At this stage during it is essential to identify the source of the change – whether it is internal, external, meets the needs, is imposed from above, and so forth.

B. Implementation stage – in which clarification and mutual adaptation apply. It involves gaining experience and a lot of activity, such as learning, inquiry, clarification and understanding of the change content.

C. Stage of further implementation and its institutionalization – characterized by a continuation of the implementation processes while deepening understanding and improving the skills needed to activate the change.

D. Results stage – testing and evaluation processes of the results of change of all disciplines and their components, in light of which conclusions are drawn and decisions are made for further action.

The Five-Stage Model (Rogers, 1962, 1983)

This model presents a five-stage process to the diffusion of innovation in a given social system that characterizes the acceptance or the rejection of an innovation.

Stage one is the period of "awareness", which Rogers (ibid.) explains as the extent to which individuals is aware of the existence of the innovation and the extent to which they are motivated to broaden their knowledge of it. In this context, the introduction of changes in the education system is perceived as an external process for the school, a process in which the teacher plays a key role. In the field of introducing changes, very little attention is given to the degree to which teachers are aware of various technological innovations and the extent to which they can benefit from him. At a later stage, Rogers (1983) calls this stage the "knowledge stage", in which the individual is exposed to the very existence of innovation and creates an initial infrastructure for it.

The **second stage** is characterized by "interest" in the innovation and an active search for information related to it. Compared to the previous stage, this stage involves more psychological involvement with the innovation. Various studies indicate that the personality characteristics of teachers, and other motivational factors, play an important part in everything related to creating the right motivation in this context. Rogers later develops this stage to incorporate processes related to the formulation of an initial position regarding the innovation on the part of the individual. Rogers calls this the "persuasion stage", meaning the initial processing of the individual's exposure to the innovation.

The **third stage** is characterized by "evaluation", during which the exposed individual seeks to clarify the inherent potential of the innovation in terms of his work and current activities, and consider the feasibility of its usefulness and benefits.

The **fourth stage** is the period of "trial" in which the individual tries out the innovation on a probationary basis as a small-scale trial in order to determine its usefulness to their own situation. At this point, the individual looks for more specific information about the innovation, and will examine its technical advantages and how to use it. A more updated version of this stage is a kind of limited implementation, designed to test the various aspects of the innovation.

The **fifth and final stage** is the stage of "acceptance", in which the individual decides to continue using the innovation on a regular basis in the future. In the extended model, this stage includes a sub-stage called the "confirmation" stage, during which the individual seeks support for the decision made regarding the innovation. At this point, it is possible to reverse the earlier decision made, should there be exposure to conflicting and different messages about the innovation in question.

Kotter (2003) presents a model called the "Eight- Step Change Model" which includes the most necessary and essential steps for successfully implementing change.

Eight-Step Change Model

1. **Increasing the sense of urgency:** The essence of this step is to present the need for change and the urgency of its implementation. Possible courses of action are a demonstration of cost-effectiveness of the current situation versus the future situation; competitive position in the market; negative results, and so forth. The goal is to cause the leadership to feel the need and urgency to change, not only to understand the underlying logic.

2. **Building guiding teams:** The establishment of a project and leadership team with the necessary skills, influence and motivation to be an example and lead the change. This is the most important step for no matter how clear and necessary change may be, it will not be done properly without the proper leadership.

3. **Formulation of an appropriate vision:** clarity and consensus among the leadership team regarding the desired future situation which the leadership not only understands but is also committed to the vision.

4. **Communication:** Structured communication, creating a connection between the right people at the right time, and through the appropriate channels of communication for achieving the desired change.

5. **Broad-based action:** Preparing the ground for action. Leaders and managers implement the change after they have acquired the necessary knowledge and skills based on adapted organizational infrastructure. The introduction of change should empower, and create appropriate conditions for change among all concerned.

6. **Generate immediate gains:** The taste of success resulting from small immediate gains is motivating and strengthens the commitment to change. The change leadership should create conditions for achieving immediate goals and communicate these achievements in order to recruit more people who will support and act in favor of organizational change.

7. **Continuity:** The leadership and staff should remain committed and determined to implement the general goals of the change. Continuity must be created by not halting the process after achieving a number of immediate gains.

8. **Implementation:** Once a targeted change has been achieved and new behaviors have been embedded, it is necessary to develop tools for ensuring that the change is implemented over time. Without an implementation and monitoring process, there is the risk that at the end of the project, things will go back to how they were before.

Many analyze the special significance of educational change, the innovation, and the factors that influence the success or failure in implementing educational change (Oz, 2000; Chen, 2010; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991).

Resistance to change is natural for every individual and every framework. There is an ongoing conflict between the desire for change and the need to retain continuity and stability, the desire to preserve what exists is widespread in many living systems and characterizes most human beings. This mechanism is not unusual and is part of other coping patterns that help one overcome difficulties and adapt to reality. Every change entails loss, mainly due to detachment from a familiar situation which an individual knows how to cope with (Fuchs, 1998).

In every process of change a number of characteristics can be identified. Familiarity with these characteristics, understanding their implications for the process and its participants and accepting them, may make it easier to introduce the change (Fuchs, 1995; Passig, 2010; Sharan, 1990, 1981).

The literature dealing with the introduction of change in the educational system examines the process of innovation from different perspectives, such as: **the organizational perspective** – how the organization prepares to implement the change in terms of its structure and action plan (Sharan & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 1978); **the perspective of the teaching staff** – how the staff deal with the requirement to change, and the patterns of response to this demand (Lacey, 1977; Katz & Stotland, 1959); **the perspective of the leadership of the academic institution** – how the leadership prepares to work toward assimilating the concept among employees in the organization (Chen, 2010); **the perspective of interpersonal relations** – What are the dynamics between members of staff of various ranks within the staff hierarchy that may lead to the success or failure of the change (Sharan & Shachar, 1990). The literature also distinguishes between external factors (outside the institution) and internal factors (within the institution) that affect the implementation of the change (Oz, 2000; Fox, 1995).

In this article, we will present the implementation of change following the establishment of a support center for students with learning disabilities in a teacher teaching college, organizational, administrative, academic, and human.

1.2. Student Care and Support Center (Matot) for Improving the Processes of Learning and Acclimation

In recent decades there has been a significant increase in awareness of the existence of the phenomena of learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder among adults and their implications for the individual and society at large. These phenomena interest many professionals from the fields of education, psychology, criminology and social work throughout the Western world, especially since the legislation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990. As social awareness of the issue increases, so does the number of people who each year proclaim their learning disability and request and receive learning adjustments.

Until a few years ago, few students with learning disabilities were accepted to academia, and even less completed their undergraduate studies. As greater consideration was given to this issue, a change began to take place in the attitude towards students with learning disabilities in academia. This change was reflected in the transition from minimal support that was given as part of the services of the Dean of Students (Leyser, 2011) to extensive and targeted support given in support centers that were established in academies around the world, especially in North America, England and Australia. In these countries a number of care and support models have been implemented that are influenced by worldviews, knowledge on the subject, available professionals and reliable funding, while the basic assumption shared by all involved is based on the belief that society has a responsibility to develop learning environments that are adjusted to enable students with learning disabilities to integrate into academia. In light of all this the support center staff sees the main function in identifying students who need help in the academy, and well as accompanying them during their student years, with the aim to optimize the inherent academic potential. Following the global interest, were also established academic support centers in the country for students with learning disabilities, in the wake of the successful activities significantly increased the volume of students with learning disabilities who are turning to higher education (Margalit, Breznitz, & Aharoni, 1998).

In the last decade, teacher training colleges have set up support centers for students with learning disabilities. The services given in the support centers include: 1) counseling and support services 2) teaching and examination adjustments 3) administrative adjustments 4) related services.

Counseling and support services include a range of diagnostic methods in different areas: personal and / or academic assessment, counseling and support in educational, social, emotional, technological and occupational issues. Assistance with these issues greatly improves students' learning (Dahan, Meltzer & Hadas-Lidor, 2010; Einat, 2000; Kozminsky, 2004; Dahan, 2003).

With the establishment of the centers two main objectives were set for the support centers for students with learning disabilities:

a. To enable students to get accepted to academic study programs, and to successfully complete their studies through realizing their full potential.

b. To raise awareness of the subject among lecturers and administrative staff, as well as train professionals who work with students with learning disabilities in various frameworks (Meltzer, 2006).

There are colleges that have chosen to establish a multi-handicap center that provided services to students with different handicaps and is supported by funding from the National Insurance Institute which allocates specific resources to students with various handicaps and complex learning disabilities. It is debatable whether or not to include the learning-disabled in the handicapped group

out of fear of their being labeled and the desire to give them the feeling that they are not perceived as "different" in the academic landscape, which can often prevent them from asking for help for fear of being labeled (Dahan, 2003).

Since the early nineties when the country's first support centers were set up, there has been a rising trend in the number of students integrating into academia. Today, most adults with learning disabilities are aware that the support centers are what enable them to pursue academic studies, and therefore, most of them choose institutions of higher education that run support centers. Some even choose an academic institution based on the quality and scope of the assistance the support center offers them.

A comprehensive study that tracks graduating students has not yet been conducted in most of the support centers. In a study conducted at Tel Hai College in northern Israel, it was found that only one percent of students with learning disabilities did not complete their academic studies, while around the world and in Israel first degree graduates constitute 50% of all new students (Vogel, Murray, Sligar, Meltzer, & Sarid, 2007). Data from the same study revealed that the average final grades of students with learning disabilities were higher than that of all graduating students. All the students with learning disabilities who were examined in the study had received support during the years of their studies, and many of them continued on to receive postgraduate studies as a result of their feeling of success.

Another study found that many fear the world of employment because they know that they will not receive the same support in the work force as they received in academia: there are no adjustments, no guidance and support, and so on. As a result, they are afraid that they will fail to integrate and maintain employment in the future (Einat, 2009).

In recent years, a number of academic support centers have expanded their target population to address the needs not only of students with learning disabilities, but also the needs of the population of students with various other disabilities. In addition, they have also begun preparing students for the world of employment, such as building employment integration and support programs in preparation for graduation and thereafter (Meltzer, Zadok, & Dahan, 2011).

1.3. Academic Adjustments

It is currently acceptable to allow two types of academic adjustments: teaching and examination adjustments and administrative adjustments (Margalit *et al*., 1998).

1. Teaching and examination adjustments include support services such as mentoring; basic skills workshops; writing, reading, learning strategies and learning skills (vocabulary, listening, reading, exam preparation, computer skills and library skills); lectures and literature on voice recording; and printing services. Lecturers give adjustments for examinations (extra time, alternative test), a wider syllabus and alternative assignments.

2. Administrative adjustments include: special enrolment procedures for students who don't meet the minimum requirements; open enrolment (on an audit basis), waiver of a course or discipline (e.g. exempt from foreign language regulations); option to take special courses; reduced course load and option to spread out their study program over more years. These adjustments are made vis á vis the student and the academic and administrative staff.

Support on the matter is given by the professional staff at the centers, or alternatively by external entities whose services the support centers pay for. The staff includes professionals who specialize in a particular field such as learning disabilities, special education, social work, diagnosis or psychology. In addition, support is also provided by student mentors and faculty members from various disciplines (Heiman & Precel, 2003).

1.4. Teachers Training in Israel

In Israel, teacher training at colleges of education is a four-year program combining education and professional studies. In the education field, the teacher training program encompasses theoretical education studies and practical training. The program also offers students a number of educational tracks that include training for different school levels (preschool, primary or middle school) and training in different school subjects (math, science, English, special education etc). Colleges of education provide teachers with a Bacholor's degree in education (B.Ed) and a teaching diploma. In recent years, the Council for Higher Education has allowed leading colleges of education to develop second degree programs for a Master's degree in education (M.Ed).

The Establishment of Support Centers and Their Impact on Academic Institutions:

Support centers for students with learning disabilities have existed in academic institutions and in teacher training colleges for the past two decades. Following their successful activity, there has been a significant increase in the number of students with learning disabilities who go on to higher education and expect to receive as much assistance as possible from the institutions to successfully complete their degree (Margalit *et al*., 1998). In the last decade, the support centers have widened their activity to provide assistance to students in post-graduate programs for an examined the effectiveness of these support centers (Englert, Raphael, Fear, & Anderson, 1988; Dahan *et al*., 2010; Dahan, Meltzer, & Finkelstein, 2011). The studies mostly focused on examining how effectively the student support services helped to improve the students' academic abilities (Dahan *et al*., 2010; Dahan *et al*., 2011), the issue of labeling and the fear of being labeled, and the debate on whether to report a disability or to hide it (Getzel & Thoma, 2008; Hall & Webster, 2008; Denhart, 2008; Murray, Wren, & Keys, 2008).

The studies also examined the quality of work in the centers, the effectiveness of mentoring projects, the relationship with the faculty and the change that took place following the establishment of the center in the position of lecturers and administrative staff. Recent studies have even examined the efficacy of the assistance provided at the support center to integrate students into the workforce in the first few years after graduation, and the attempt on the part of students to integrate into the work force in civil life (Tzadok & Meltzer, 2005; Gerber, Ginsberg, & Reiff, 1992; Shessel & Reiff, 1999).

Despite the importance of the subject, there are relatively few studies on the considerable impact of the establishment of the support center for students with learning disabilities on the entire academic institution at all levels, and inadequate attention has been given to teacher training colleges in particular. Even though the aforementioned studies hint at various influences such as a change in the positions of lecturers, administrative staff and students, the fear of labeling, raising awareness of the subject at the institutional level and promoting accessibility to and inclusion in the academic institution following the establishment of the centers (Margalit *et al*., 1998; Givon, 2015). However, a study of qualitative depth, immersed in the field, that examines how the establishment of a support center for students with learning disabilities in a teaching training college impacts the entire institution, and how such a change, introduced and implemented at the college, has pushed through the cracks and opened the way for change at different levels, over time, and in all circles that interface with the center, has not been published to date. Hence the importance of this study.

1.5. The Purpose of the Study

In the last decade, teacher training colleges have set up support centers for students with learning disabilities. A small number of support centers have conducted a comprehensive study that tracks graduating students. In 1996-2005 Tel Hai College in Israel conducted a study that tracked the progress of 315 graduates with learning disabilities who used the center's services. The study found that only one percent of these students did not complete their academic studies (Meltzer, 2007; Vogel *et al*., 2007).

The pedagogical and administrative impact on the college itself as a result of the establishment of the support center has not yet been examined.

The purpose of the study was to examine how the establishment of a support center for students with learning disabilities affects the college climate, students and faculty. It further examines how a change, once introduced and implemented, affects the different levels at the college; if and how a change in the institution's educational system permeates its organizational culture.

2. Method

The research study was conducted using the mixed-model approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative research method included position questionnaires of teachers and students participating in the study. The qualitative research method included semi-structured interviews with students and mentors within the framework of the Matot Center, as well as a content analysis of documents and minutes of meetings of the Center's Steering Committee.

The position questionnaires of lecturers related to the following: students with learning disabilities; the purpose of the support center (Matot) and its activity; the actual activity that takes place at the Center and the lecturers' involvement in supporting students with learning disabilities.

Position questionnaires of students related to the level of their satisfaction with the support center. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with students associated with the support center and with tutors from the college. The student interviewees were asked about their expectations of the mentoring, the content of their meetings with mentors and how the mentors contributed to them.

The study was conducted at a teacher training college located in the center of Israel over a three year period from 2011-2013.

Profile of Subjects

Lecturers - 50% of the college's lecturers responded to the position questionnaire. 30% have teaching experience of between 1-10 years, 39% have between 11-20 years experience and 21% of lecturers between 21-35 years of experience in teaching.

35% of lecturers teach in the field of humanities, 24% teach in the field of science and mathematics and 41% teach in the Department of Education.

About 50% of students belonging to the Matot Center answered the questionnaire.

Reliability and Validity

A pilot was conducted whereby questionnaires were distributed to faculty and the research questionnaires were formulated according to their answers.

In addition, faculty and student questionnaires were checked by experts before being transferred to subjects. The rest of the research tools were qualitative and they were judged by two experts.

3. Results

The results were based on an analysis of the quantitative data and the qualitative data.

3.1. Administrative Changes at the College

3.1.1. *Admission Requirements*

An analysis of the minutes of the Steering Committee meetings, indicate that the college's admissions requirements have changed from uniform differential. The aim of this is to identify, by way of a

preliminary questionnaire and interview (at which is present a representative from the Matot Center) those students with learning disabilities, in order to build them a study program that includes adjustments and support for when they start at the college.

3.1.2. *Exam Regulations*

An analysis of the Steering Committee minutes indicated that exam regulations have changed from uniform to differential, and are adjusted for learning disabilities as part of the preliminary preparations of the learning administrator who builds the exam system. The preparations include personal adjustments such as automated computers, separate rooms, separate examiners and others.

3.2. Academic Changes in the College:

3.2.1. *Remedial Academic Course in English*

An analysis of the Steering Committee meeting minutes revealed a decision of the college management to add a remedial academic course in English for the college students at large. Further, a detection system was built into the online screening tests to detect remedial students and / or have learning disabilities, with the aim of building them a unique group with teaching adjustments. This is In addition to the use of technological aids at all levels. The college purchased the aids for the support center and students and faculty are trained to use them during the course and exams.

3.2.2. *Learning Strategies Course for All Students*

An analysis of interviews with students of the Matot center indicates that all students stated that they would recommend a course on learning strategies for all students at the college. The following are a few of the quotes:

"Every new student needs this course as it will help streamline the learning process...", "…contribute to every aspect of life", "…the course provides essential tools for understanding the demands of the academic world".

As can be seen, the students believe that learning strategies can benefit all students because it provides learning tools and the ability to work in the the academic world.

All the students who were interviewed (10 in all) indicated that the course should be mandatory for all students as it prepares the student for work in an academic setting.

3.3. A Change in the Position of Lecturers Regarding the Purpose of the Matot Center

The lecturers were given a Likert scale questionnaire which presented them with statements relating to the activities of the Matot Center. The lecturers had to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with the statements on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 indicated "completely agree", 4 indicated "mostly agree", 3 indicated "moderately agree", 2 indicated "slightly agree", and 1 indicated "disagree".

Table 1 shows that in both years the statement that received the highest average was "Determine and implement various adjustments that student are entitled to." Most of the statements received a higher average in 2011 than in 2010.

The lecturers were asked about the actual activity at the Matot Center in 2011.

Table 1. A comparison between the positions of lecturers
regarding the activity at the Matot Center in 2010 and 2011

	2010		2011	
	Average	SD	Average	SD
Provide clinical and diagnostic services to students.	3.75	1.30	3.79	1.15
Advise faculty in a specific discipline with reference to students with learning disabilities.	4.28	0.96	4.46	0.68
Provide students with learning disabilities mentoring in the area of content.	4.16	0.72	4.26	1.07
Provide students with learning disabilities assistive technology.	4.31	0.64	4.33	0.81
Teach learning strategies to groups of students with learning disabilities	3.97	0.72	4.29	0.93
Teach learning strategies on a one-on-one basis to students with learning disabilities	4.18	0.86	4.38	0.83
Provide emotional support to students with learning disabilities.	4.07	0.96	3.9	1.14
Provide lecturers with information about the students who get support from the Matot Center.	4.03	1.10	4.38	0.81
Hold seminars for lecturers.	3.82	1.16	4.1	1.1
Determine and implement various adjustments that student are entitled to (exams and papers).	4.31	0.85	4.66	0.75

N = 42

5 indicates "completely agree", 4 indicates "mostly agree", 3 indicates "moderately agree", 2 indicates "slightly agree", and 1 indicates "disagree".

Table 2. Positions of lecturers regarding the activity in practice at the Matot Center

	Average	SD
Provides clinical and diagnostic services to students.	3.87	1.18
Advise faculty in a specific discipline with reference to students with learning disabilities.	3.68	1.31
Provides students with learning disabilities mentoring in the area of content.	4.0	1.23
Provides students with learning disabilities assistive technology.	3.42	1.36
Teaches learning strategies to groups of students with learning disabilities.	3.88	1.2
Teaches learning strategies on a one-on-one basis to students with learning disabilities.	4.08	1.15
Provides emotional support to students with learning disabilities.	3.8	1.08
Provides lecturers with information about the students who get support from the Matot Center.	3.61	1.2
Holds seminars for lecturers.	3.26	1.32
Determines and implements various adjustments that student are entitled to (exams and papers).	4.43	0.96

5 indicates "completely agree", 4 indicates "mostly agree", 3 indicates "moderately agree", 2 indicates "slightly agree", and 1 indicates "disagree".

Table 2 shows that the average ranges between 3.26 to 4.43 and most of the averages are moderate. The statements that received the highest average are that the Center "determines and implements various adjustments that student are entitled to" (average 4.43, SD 0.96) and "teaches learning strategies on a one-on-one basis to students with learning disabilities" (average 4.08, SD 1.15).

The lecturers were asked about their involvement in supporting students with learning disabilities.

Table 3. Positions of lecturers regarding their involvement
in supporting students with learning disabilities

	Average	SD
I adjust my teaching methods for students with learning disabilities.	3.39	0.97
I provide assistive technology to students with learning disabilities.	2.61	0.93
I teach learning strategies to groups of students with learning disabilities.	2.59	1.12
I teach learning strategies on a one-on-one basis to students with learning disabilities.	2.76	1.32

5 indicates "completely agree", 4 indicates "mostly agree", 3 indicates "moderately agree", 2 indicates "slightly agree", and 1 indicates "disagree".

Table 3 shows that in general the lecturers are not involved in supporting students with learning disabilities, as can be seen in the average that ranges from 2.61 to 3.39 and most of which are moderate. The statement that received the highest average is: "I adjust my teaching methods for students with learning disabilities" (average 3.39, SD 0.97).

3.4. Mentoring at the College

The college assists students diagnosed by the care and support center as students with learning disabilities, by assigning them a mentor – a college student – who assists and supports them with difficulties they encounter during their academic studies at the college. In return, the mentors can choose to be exempt from participating in an education course or receive a stipend. Seven mentors and nine students participated in interviews. The following is a summary of the interviews.

The interviews with students and mentors focused on four key issues: 1) the mentors, 2) expectations of students and mentors from the mentoring project, 3) the sessions between mentors and students and 4) difficulties.

Mentors - Most mentors indicated that they have agreed to be mentors because of the "benefit" that accompanied the role – a stipend or exemption from an education course.

Expectations of students and mentors from the mentoring project – The responses of mentors and students shows that the interviewees had two main expectations from the mentoring project: Acquisition of educational tools and academic success. It is important to note that there is a difference between the mentors' and the students' expectations. While most mentors wanted to provide the students with tools, most of the students expected goal-focused assistance.

Sessions between mentors and students – Management turned to the mentors and students to decide on a mentoring model. No one specific model was adopted for all sessions between mentors and students.

Two types of mentoring models are employed at the Center: Assistance in all areas as well as targeted and predetermined assistance. All the students and most of the mentors stressed that the contribution is academic.

Difficulties – Both the mentors and students agreed that the mentor should be at least one year above his/her students and that mentors should not mentor students with whom they are friendly. Motivation to participate in the mentoring program: Most of the mentors preferred to be exempt from participating in the education course than to receive a stipend.

3.5. Change in the Level of Satisfaction of Students at the Matot Center

Table 4. A comparison between the average response of students in 2011 and 2013

	2011		2013	
	Average	SD	Average	SD
The Center helps me to realize my academic potential.	3.64	1.15	3.42	1.16
The Center helps me with learning difficulties.	3.64	1.45	3.42	1.51
The solutions for learning difficulties offered by the staff at the Center are helpful to me.	3.5	1.16	2.92	1.38
The Center is attentive to my learning needs.	4.14	1.03	2.92	1.68
The staff at the Center is available when I need it.	4.36	0.74	3.75	0.87
I feel that with the help the Center gives me, I will successfully complete my studies.	3.79	1.19	3.42	1.16
The Center provides me with assistive technology.	3.36	1.34	2.50	1.24
I am satisfied with the learning assistance and solutions the Center offers me.	3.71	1.27	2.92	1.31
A human response is available at the Center.	4.25	0.62	3.92	0.67
The Center takes care of my requests/inquiries in a timely manner.	4.25	0.87	3.42	1.31
The Center gives me emotional support when I request it.	4.38	0.87	3.00	1.48
The Center determines and implements various adjustments I am entitled to (for exams and papers).	4.23	1.01	3.17	1.53
The exams administrator is aware of my learning adjustments.	3.85	1.46	3.50	1.73
The course lecturer is aware of my learning adjustments.	**1.85**	**0.99**	**2.33**	**1.37**
The head of department is aware of my learning adjustments.	**2.79**	**1.53**	**2.91**	**1.45**
I have received adequate information about the services the Center offers.	**2.86**	**1.29**	**2.91**	**1.45**
I have used all the services the Center offers.	3.38	1.19	2.45	1.37

5 indicates "completely agree", 4 indicates "mostly agree", 3 indicates "moderately agree", 2 indicates "slightly agree", and 1 indicates "disagree".

Table 4 shows that the average for all the statements is lower in 2013 than in 2011, except for three statements:

1. **The course lecturer is aware of my learning adjustments** (2011 - average 1.85, SD 0.99; 2013 - average 2.33, SD 1.37).

2. **The head of department is aware of my learning adjustments** (2011 - average 2.79, SD 1.53; 2013 - 2.91, SD 1.45).

3. **I have received adequate information about the services the Center offers** (2011 - average 2.86, SD 1.29; 2013 - average 2.91, SD 1.45).

Students were asked questions about their expectations of the Matot Center in the future. The responses are presented in the following below:

Table 5. A comparison between the average response of students in 2011 and 2013

	2011		2013	
	Average	SD	Average	SD
I would like the Center to help me receive academic material (photocopied material, audio tapes, sound software, etc.) in an accessible manner.	4.71	0.61	4.67	0.49
I would like the Center to provide me with an examinee card that specifies my academic adjustments.	4.50	0.65	4.50	0.67
More courses should be added in learning strategies.	4.29	1.07	4.42	0.67
I would like the Center to provide mentoring that will help me better cope with the learning material and reading articles.	4.0	1.24	4.00	1.28
More individual help to students should be provided.	4.57	0.76	4.42	0.67
Students should be given more academic adjustments.	4.5	0.65	4.58	0.79
A greater staff presence is required at the Center.	3.29	1.14	4.45	0.69
I would like there to be greater collaboration between the faculty and head of department and the support staff at the Center.	**4.64**	**0.5**	4.67	0.49
I would like my lecturers and tutors to know more about the process I am going through at the Center.	4.0	1.18	3.83	1.03

5 indicates "completely agree", 4 indicates "mostly agree", 3 indicates "moderately agree", 2 indicates "slightly agree", and 1 indicates "disagree".

In Table 5 it can be seen that the students, in general, express a desire to receive a lot of support from the Center with the average ranging from 3.29 to 4.71.

It can further be seen that the students would like to receive educational materials in an accessible manner (average 4.71, SD 0.61); would prefer greater collaboration between the faculty and department head and the support staff at the Center (average 4.67, SD 0.49); would like to be given more academic adjustments (average 4.58, SD 1.14); and would like the center will provide them with an examinee card specifying their academic adjustments (average 4.5, SD 0.67).

4. Discussion

Once the Matot Center's activity was implemented, a change began to take place at the teacher training college, a change that created waves and affected different systems and levels that could not have been predicted. The following are the changes:

Academic changes at the college – the addition of a preliminary English course for all students (not necessarily for students with learning disabilities), and a learning strategies course for all students. Out of the need that arose for an academically-focused orientation to significantly enhance the learning of students with learning disabilities, it was discovered that the rest of the student population had the same need (Levy, Wubbels, den Brok, & Brekelmans, 2003; Epstein, 1998).

Administrative changes in the college - two notable changes were found:

1. A change from uniform admission requirements to differential requirements for all students in order to identify students with learning disabilities and build them a study program that includes adjustments and support during their studies at the college.

2. A change from uniform to differential examination procedures that are adjusted for learning difficulties as part of the initial preparation of the learning administrator who builds the examination system.

Babad (1985) defines the concept of change as a process that throws a system off equilibrium, since the change in effect cancels out the existing situation and introduces a new state which replaces the regular behavior patterns with new and different behavior patterns (Samuel, 1996). As can be seen in the present study, new administrative patterns in the college have been set in motion following the integration of the Matot Center.

Changes in the position of lecturers regarding the purpose of the Matot Center – Most lecturers have a positive opinion about the inclusion of students with learning disabilities at the college. In their view, a teacher training college should support and promote students who have difficulty learning, and lecturers need to be aware of this and identify students with learning disabilities and help them.

In both 2010 and 2011, the statement in the Likert questionnaire that received the highest average was to "determine and implement various adjustments that students are entitled to". Most of the statements received a higher average in 2011 than in 2010 which can be explained by the fact that the more time passes the more exposed lecturers become to the Matot Center and its activity. Similar data in the research of Meltzer *et al*. (2011), showed that as the academic environment becomes more aware of support centers and their role in advancing students with difficulties, the level of resistance drops since it is aware of a role that is not imposed on it.

Similar Data Came from Studies Dealing with the Changing Position of Teachers in the Context of Mainstreaming Special Needs Students.

A study that examined the positions of teachers towards mainstreaming over a period of 37 years, from 1958 to 1995 (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996), shows that teachers' responses did not significantly change over the years, and throughout the period the teachers expressed concern about the heavy workload that was imposed on them in the mainstream class with special needs children, and that they needed support. Alongside concerns, frustration and reluctance, teachers noted their belief in educational and social goals that advocate mainstreaming.

Vaughn and colleagues (Vaughn, Schumm, Jallad, Slusher, & Saumell, 1996) examined positions of teachers in primary school to high school levels, and found the teachers to be unanimous regarding the educational importance of mainstreaming. However, some teachers expressed fear, uncertainty and concern for the safety of the mainstreamed students from their peers. Similarly, another study conducted in the United States (Everington, Stevens, & Winters, 1999), found a positive correlation between the positions of teachers and their involvement and willingness to integrate students with special needs into their classrooms, and similarly found a positive correlation between the positions of teachers and how they perceived their ability to succeed with integration and the feeling that not all the work will be imposed on them. This implies that the more positive the teachers' positions toward integration, the more capable they are of seeing themselves successfully integrate special education

students into their classes, and the stronger their sense of self-efficacy and external support from the system, so their positive position toward integration is reinforced.

Generally, negative positions of teachers toward integration are not directed against integration and its educational importance per se, but rather relate to their central arguments with regard to how it is implemented. For example, not involving teachers in decisions made about students, a lack of knowledge about the students' background, and a lack of knowledge on how to deal with problems in a heterogeneous class which has a large number of students who need special attention (Grider, 1995; Heiman, 1998; Shechterman, 1991). Reiter (1990) mentions five key elements, based on various studies and surveys, which affect the changes in approach and position of teachers in mainstream education with regard to integration: prior knowledge of the students and their difficulties, the professional self-image of teachers, the kind of help and assistance provided as part of the school's support. Naturally, this position of the teacher to the integration process will affect the process itself and optimize it. Hence, providing initial information, cooperation and external support has the power to change teachers' positions toward integrating children with disabilities into a normal environment.

This study, too, shows that the lecturers undoubtedly attach great importance to the goal of the Matot Center, particularly in the ability to realize the academic potential and develop the self-esteem of students with learning disabilities. It should be noted that no inconsistency was found on this issue between 2010 and 2011.

A change in mentoring at the college – The Matot program at the college has raised awareness of learning disabilities and has increased the number of student mentors at the college. It also raised the students' and mentors' expectations from the mentoring project; they expect to acquire new learning tools and benefit from success-oriented learning. It is important to note that there is a difference between the mentors' and the students' expectations. While most of the mentors do want to provide the students with learning tools, it should be emphasized that what primarily motivates the mentors to participate in the program is there preference to be granted exemption from participating in a course over receiving a stipend.

Similar data came from studies on the subject of mentoring students with learning disabilities in academia. An evaluation of the "Perach-Leshem" mentoring project conducted by Rinat Michael in 2013 (Michael, 2013) at Beit Berl College in Israel, showed the following data:

- According to both the students and he mentors the greatest difficulty of the students was learning skills in general, while they had least difficulty with respect to non-academic skills (social and emotional). Students reported greater difficulty in general learning skills and language skills, compared to mentors.

- Students reported lower academic efficacy compared to mentors.

- Students and mentors similarly rated the extent to which they engaged in various activities. However, significant differences were found in the reports of the two groups: students reported a relatively low degree of engagement in activities involving learning skills compared to mentors, and a relatively high degree of reading articles and engaging in discussions on other issues, compared to mentors.

- Both students and mentors reported a relatively low degree of difficulties that arose during mentoring. However, the mentors reported greater difficulty compared to students with regard to three aspects: 1) A lack of knowledge to deal with their students' difficulties. 2) The inability of the students to explain to them their needs. 3) A lack of time on the part of the mentors.

- Both groups (students and mentors) reported that the extent to which mentoring contributed to the students was above average. However, the students reported a greater contribution in improving their grades and preparing exercises and papers, compared to the mentors.

- A correlation was found between the students' difficulties and their learning capabilities. When the students perceived themselves and were perceived by the mentors as experiencing less difficulty in various skills, their academic competence was higher. In addition, activities that focused on learning skills and discussions on other issues were significant predictors of students' academic competence.

- In general, it was found that when there was a variety of activities during mentoring and fewer difficulties arose, students reported that the extent to which   it contributed to them was higher. There were similar findings in the mentors' reports, but the correlations were lower.

- Most of the items that measured the difficulties of students, as well as their academic competence, were not found to be significantly related to the contribution of the mentoring, according to the mentors' reports.

These findings indicate similarities – as well as differences – in some of the perceptions of students and tutors in relation to "Perach-Leshem" mentoring. In addition, the mentoring was generally perceived, both by students and by mentors, as contributing to students to some extent. In addition, while dynamic aspects that are more likely to change, such as mentoring activities and difficulties that arose during the mentoring were associated with the contribution of the mentoring, more stable variables, such as the students' difficulties and self-efficacy, were not found to be associated with it. Following the findings a number of recommendations were provided for implementation and for research (Michael, 2013).

A change among students –There was a significant decline in student satisfaction with the activity at the Matot Center. On the other hand, student expectations from the Center in the future were high and there has been change in this regard since 2011. They indicate a desire to receive educational materials in an accessible manner, a desire for greater collaboration between the faculty and head of department and the staff at the Center, and a desire to receive more academic adjustments. This can be explained according to the Fuchs's theory (1995) that the implementation of change requires four stages: preparation, implementation, institutionalization and results. While in the third year the program reached the institutionalization stage, the college administration found itself in a period that required reorganizing and redirecting resources to other places, which impeded the process of implementing the change the Center had brought to the college, and the students felt it. Thus, on the one hand, student expectations and awareness were greater, yet on the other hand, these expectations were not met which led to a drop in satisfaction.

4.1. Limitations of the Study

The study began at the onset of the establishment of the support center and continued for about three years. This was a short period in which to draw conclusions that require more time for change to take shape. In addition, due the small number of students that participated in the study, on account of to the fact that the study began with the establishment of the Center, they cannot be included in the study.

5. Recommendations

The establishment of every new center should be accompanied by a research unit that will examine the center's activity and services and adapt them in accordance with any issues raised from within the center. This was carried out in the first year of the Matot Center and contributed to the success in implementing change. It is clear that without ongoing research, it is impossible to identify the benefits and contribution of the support center that trickle down organizational and educational norms to the entire institution and to the students in particular, and helps to apply a universal design that strives to build an academic space suitable for all, without the need to create special adjustments for individuals with special needs, as is the case in the world today (Avissar, 2010; McGuire, Scott, & Shaw, 2006).

Hence, the present research helped the Center adapt to the existing situation and expose its influence on other circles in the organizational environment and on the college as a whole. It would be fitting to conduct similar studies at additional centers that are set up in colleges, including those in non-Jewish sectors, both secular and religious.

The main conclusion from the study is that when we implement a change without accompanying research, we run the risk of missing the reverberations that can occur in places we did not imagine, and thus miss the purpose for which the Center was established – changing the organizational structure in the college to the level of universal design.

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