



## The Hallel Clinic: Teaching Students How to Teach

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### Abstract

Oranim Academic College runs a unique training program for student teachers studying special education. During their work in the Hallel clinic, 3rd year students teach math and reading children who have difficulties in coping with their school studies. The work in the clinic is based on an integrative model that draws from educational theories that relate not only to proficiency skills, required for creating professionalism in teaching (D'Amato et al, 2005) [1], Jimerson et al, 2007) [2], but also to issues regarding effective teacher education (Darling-Hammond, 2006) [3].

Many resources are invested in the clinic in order to create skilled and professional teachers. a) Two courses, one in language/reading and the other in math in which the students are taught general learning strategies in these areas and learn ways to teach these strategies to their pupils. b). Each student is accompanied by two professional supervisors, experts in the area of learning disabilities (one who specializes in language/reading and one in math). The supervisors observe the students' lessons and meet each student at least once every two weeks for a personal meeting. These meetings have several goals: fine-tuning the learning strategies acquired in the course to the personal needs of the students' pupils, supervision of the lesson plans (goals, ways for attaining them and feedback on the lessons after they have been taught). In addition the students raise professional questions that arise during the process. Moreover, the supervisors view a portion of each lesson the student teaches and refer to this during their feedback. If needed, during the visit to the lesson the supervisor "step in" and teach the pupil, serving as a model for the student.

The work process in the clinic starts with an evaluation of the pupil's learning level and of learning processes that can explain the pupil's difficulties. This evaluation is based on knowledge and skills that the students acquired in the former years of their studies. Based on this evaluation an intervention program is built. This program has two goals: getting the pupil to improve his own level of mastery and decreasing the gap relative to the norm in the pupil's class. In order to achieve these goals the student keeps a close contact with the home class teacher. The communication is maintained via e-mail and mutual visits. At the end of the year a repeat evaluation is conducted in order to evaluate the pupil's progress.

The Hallel clinic is considered, both by the students and the lecturers in the special education department, as the highlight of the studies. This is a consequence of the programs structure that combines many components that are defined in the literature as features of outstanding teacher education programs.

### References

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