The Oasis Enrichment Model: Comprehensive Care for Promising Talents

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It took ten years for The Oasis Enrichment Model for Nurturing the Gifted (OEM) to be designed and developed. During this period of time a great number of experts and scholars in the field of gifted education have participated in its development, assessment, piloting, experimentation and evaluation in public schools. To date, all such experimentation and evaluation efforts have shown evidence of the validity, internal reliability and consistency of the model (Aljughaiman, 2006; MOE, 2004; MOE, 2009).

Due to the pressing and urgent need to ensure the suitability of the model to the nature of education in the Arab states in general and in the Arabic Gulf countries in particular, the model was tested in a group of public schools, both male and female, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Prior to its pilot experimentation, it was revised based upon expert opinion. Training on the model was provided to a group of 75 male and female teachers for a period of an entire semester. This pilot experiment was conducted under the supervision of the developer of this model and 14 male and female administrators who served in support roles. The administrators were personnel of the Saudi Ministry of Education. During the experimentation period, periodic reports written by teachers, administrators and school principals were submitted to the developer of the model. In addition to periodic reports, qualitative as well as quantitative measures were administered in order to ensure the validity, reliability, and efficiency of the model and to modify certain items where necessary (MOE, 2004).

The model in its general construct has benefitted from the most prestigious international as well as local models in the field of gifted education. However, three international models in particular have had a deep effect on the structure of OEM. These three models are Renzulli's Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM), (1998), Feldhusen & Kollof's Model (1979), and Sandra Kaplan's Grid Model (1986). In addition to these three models, the information obtained from field experiments, and the feedback obtained from academic professors and educationalists have contributed

to the further improvement of OEM. The fact that the OEM has benefited from association with local and international constructs does not imply that it is merely a compilation of scattered and unrelated bits of information. On the contrary, it represents a synthesis of the best practices in the field of gifted education molded according to the needs of the Saudi society while reflecting the tenor of international expertise.

Introducing Gifted Education in Saudi Arabia:

The interest in identifying gifted children and nurturing their abilities in KSA and in Arab countries theoretically started in the last quarter of the 20th century. Nevertheless, this interest did not crystallize into a methodological and academic endeavor in KSA until 1990, when the findings of the first study focused on gifted children in KSA entitled "The National Program of Identifying and Nurturing Gifted Children" were published. The study officially adopted and Arabized the *Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R)* and *The Figural Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT).* It also developed the *General Aptitudes Scale – Group Test* - (a scholastic aptitude scale). Since that time, the scales used in identifying gifted children have been limited to the WISC-R, the General Aptitudes Scale and, though infrequently, The Figural Torrance Test of Creative Thinking.

Although the real genesis of gifted education in Saudi Arabia took place in the 1990s Saudi Arabia, like many other developing countries, KSA recognized the importance of nurturing the needs of gifted children much as early as the mid 20th century. In 1968, the educational policy in KSA stated that “Each student has the right to develop his/her talent, and his/her ability”. However, no programs or any kind of real educational services were adopted until 1995, when the Ministry of Education started a program entitled “Talent Search". In 1998, the Ministry of Education in KSA established a number of gifted education centers around the country. At these gifted centers, afternoon (afterschool) and Thursday programs for the gifted are the main task of the during the school academic year, while summer camps are the biggest event for the gifted students each year.

Philosophical and Theoretical Foundation of the Oasis Enrichment Model

The goals of gifted education programs are varied and interrelated. For example, one of the most significant goals is to help gifted and talented students discover their abilities and to realize the fields most suitable to their scientific and professional future. In addition, the programs must provide students with the various experiences necessary to nurture their capabilities and to focus their energies in the domains that will help them to attain their highest possible level of self-assertion and excellence (Feldhusen & Treffinger, 1980). Taking these goals into consideration, The Oasis Enrichment Model asserts the right of the gifted students to benefit from the pedagogical programs, instructional styles and educational opportunities that nurture giftedness and excellence in a comprehensive, progressive and gradually-paced manner.

Due to the superiority of the cognitive abilities of gifted and talented students, they frequently surpass their peers and consequently need special and advanced educational experiences which go beyond the common curricula. In spite of this, teachers devote most of their time inside the classroom focusing on repeatedly teaching the basic skills and the core concepts, which are quickly understood and easily comprehended by the talented students. This phenomenon severely limits the time allocated for nurturing the high cognitive abilities of the gifted students.

In order to overcome such shortcoming, the methodology of our model is based on the pullout approach, where gifted students are gathered together outside the mainstream classes to enroll in systematic enrichment programs either during the academic year or during the summer vacation. During enrichment programs gifted and talented students have better opportunities to be in contact with other gifted students who have similar or different abilities. In this way, gifted students have chances to better identify, challenge, develop and enhance their various abilities and talents and to overcome their points of weakness. Such enrichment experiences help gifted students develop the necessary skills for lifelong learning and positive thinking, enforce positive attitudes towards innovation and development, and to interact with other ordinary students during the mainstream classes. This model seeks to help the student develop his/her educational and learning abilities, such as higher order thinking skills, research skills, and learning through the mastery of rich scientific content. In addition, the OEM model emphasizes accentuating and increasing the internal motivation and personal attitudes which highlight the value of learning.

In molding its philosophy, the model has benefited from three main scientific theories in the area of gifted education, setting its goals, selecting its participants, and tackling pedagogical experiences. A thorough explanation of the model cannot be undertaken without careful explication of these 3 theories.

The first theory is the Constructivism Theory (Bruner, 1966; Dewey, 1938; Piaget, 1932; Vygotsky, 1978). Constructivism Theory provides the major source of influence for the OEM. It constitutes the general framework for the pedagogical attitudes in the model which are reflected in the details of the educational activities within the content of the model. In addition, Constructivism Theory delineates the format of interaction that should be prevalent among all participants (teachers, administrators and students) and during doing all activities. The second theory is the Three Rings Theory developed by Renzulli (1998; 1986). The third theory is Sternberg's Triarchic Theory (2001; 1999; 1996; 1985). Both Renzulli's Three Rings Theory and Sternberg's Triarchic Theory shaped the definition of giftedness and its dimensions in OEM.

The Training Program:

The OEM has a comprehensive program for preparing professionals to better handle and meet the needs of gifted students and to help them improve their gifts, develop their abilities and sharpen their talents. The program was developed and evaluated over various stages (Aljughaiman, 2007; Aljughaiman 2008). Teachers and professionals nominated to look after gifted students within this model undergo a graded and progressive training and preparatory program with the purpose of qualifying them to work at general public schools with gifted students. The training program is divided into three major phases.

The First Phase: The Intensive Training Program:

The Intensive Training Program consists of 4 training levels comprised of 365 progressive stage-phased training hours. The following training topics are considered at each stage:

Table 1

Training Topics Taught Intensively at Each Stage

Levels	Training Programs	Training Hours
First Level	Introduction to Giftedness & Talent	25
	Introduction to Thinking Development & Thinking Conducive Environment	25
	Methods of Nurturing Gifted Students in Ordinary Classrooms	25
	Methods for Identification of Gifted Students in Ordinary Classrooms	25
Second Level	Strategies for Developing Analytic Thinking Skills	25
	Strategies for Developing Creative Thinking Skills	25
	Integrating Thinking Skills in the Curriculum (General Subject for All Participants)	25
	Methods of Curriculum Differentiation	20
Third Level	Designing Questions Targeting High Thinking Skills	20
	Integrating Thinking Skills in the Curriculum (Advanced Subject for Each Specialization)	25
	Social and Emotional needs of Gifted Students	20
	Methods of Curricula Compacting & Acceleration for Gifted Students	25
Fourth Level	Designing Enrichment Programs	25
	Methods of Nurturing Giftedness According to the Theory of Multiple Intelligences	20
	Methods of Strengthening Affective Traits & Motivation	20
	Independent Self-Learning Skills	15

The Second Phase: Parallel Training Program:

This stage involves 36 training hours and 24 hours of discussions. The training program runs in parallel to the semester in which teachers started implementing OEM, and consists of a one day workshop per week to fulfill the needs of field training. Workshops are conducted under the supervision of the program coordinator in the district, province, or region. Workshops focus on designing weekly programs and strengthening some aspects of the intensive training program. The topics covered by these workshops include: formulating weekly, monthly and seasonal plans, designing school calendars with respect to gifted activities, deciding upon methods of developing and directing motivation, building applied enrichment units, formulating

applications related to thinking skills, product design and training pertaining to self-learning.

Weekly discussion seminars focus on a group of vital issues connected with program implementation such as: evaluating implementation of the weekly plan, discussing the next weeks' plans, exchanging ideas and experiences related to implementing daily tasks, and reviewing obstacles and searching for ways to overcome them.

The Third Phase: Consecutive Training Programs:

The third phase includes a group of consecutive training courses which are presented to the teachers participating in implementing OEM within schools. Often, the topics of the training courses are selected during the implementation of the program on a seasonal basis. The main goal behind this phase is to meet the ongoing needs of the trainees which emerge during field reports and from analyzing periodic and final questionnaires.

The Framework of the Oasis Enrichment Model:

Achieving the largest possible interaction between deep scientific content, research and thinking skills and affective traits forms the dynamic core of the Oasis Enrichment Model. By focusing on the interaction between these three axes, the model aims at developing a framework of complex pedagogical experiences that suit gifted students. The framework of the OEM is comprised of four levels, within each level there are three programs (one for each academic semester), within each program there are two to three units. As the students work through each unit they progress through three stages: Exploration, Perfection, and Creativity. The activities of each level require an entire academic year to complete (participation during the summer is optional, but preferable). Thus, a student beginning at the first level of the first stage would require four years to progress through the entire OEM cycle.

In most cases, students work in groups based on their final product. In each year, there is a main topic (theme based-topic) that functions as an umbrella for all of the units included in that year's level. Individual units are designed as enrichment for self-directed learners. The enrichment units emphasize the integration of critical thinking, creative thinking, research skills, social and emotional elements, and multidisciplinary

content. This integrated approach promotes individual gifted students' awareness and interest in a variety of subject areas.

A small group of gifted students will work together on an integrated unit. By exploring the main theme in-depth from different perspectives, the approach enhances student interest and motivation, guarantees deeper learning, and promotes the development of higher-level research and thinking skills.

The units are delivered in a multiple time setting that requires tasks to be open- ended for multiple levels of skill mastery, prior content knowledge and varied product development. Each unit has set evaluative criteria as well as a student self-assessment component. As the student works through each unit, they will progress through three stages; Exploration, Perfectionism, and Creativity. The Exploration stage consumes approximately 15% of time, the Perfection stage consumes a further 60%, and Creativity stage consumes the remaining 25% of time spent on each unit.

At the end of the year, gifted students who participated in the program are required to set up a display of their project, produce a video or PowerPoint display, present documentation of all of their work in a portfolio, and take part in a 30-minute interview. The team for the Oasis Enrichment Model in each school district is responsible for analyzing yearly assessment data related to the application of the model, reviewing needs assessments, and analyzing students and teachers strengths and local resources.

Levels of Enrichment in OEM

First level: The preparation (Tools). When students are assigned to be part of the program, they are enrolled in a year-long intensive program that focuses on helping students to acquire the necessary thinking skills, personal and social skills, and research skills required for full participation. This level, usually, includes from 4 to 6 enrichment units.

Second level: Getting started (Power). In this level, gifted students start to work on more complex tasks using more complicated tools. In this level gifted students use Creative Problem Solving Program (CPS) as a master plan for their effort during each unit. The first two steps in CPS are employed during the Exploration stage; the third, fourth, and fifth steps are utilized in the Perfection stage, and sixth step is used in the Creativity stage. The main task for students in this level is to experience the more

advanced mental processes of creating solutions to a problem. The solutions are independently created by the students rather than learned with assistance.

Third level: Mastering planning (Vision). In this level, enrichment units are designed to help gifted students to develop their research, thinking, and social and personal skills in greater depth with more focus on planning for the future. Gifted students work on identifying a problem that exists or may exist in the future in their community, apply the six-steps of the Future Problem Solving process to come up with a plan of action and then implement this plan. The main task for students in this level is to develop a vision for the future.

Fourth level: Getting ready to go (Scientist). In this level, students are required to use (in a comprehensive manner) all the skills that they have worked on during the last three years. Units are designed to provide advanced-level enrichment experiences under the umbrella of the Independent Investigation Method (IIM). Gifted students use IIM as an organizer and a framework for their efforts toward building up their research skills, problem solving skills, creative thinking, creative productivity, critical thinking, and advanced social and personal skills. The main purpose of this level is to help gifted students to be able to carry out a research plan using all the skills that are necessary by a professional scientist. By the end of this level, gifted students should be ready to work on independent and group studies. Students should be able to identify and develop a focus, use their skills in creative and critical thinking, utilize problem solving and decision-making strategies, evaluate the process and product, share their outcomes with an audience, and be willing to develop their outcomes into marketable products.

The student deals with graded, paced and progressive experiences during the three stages, Exploration, Perfection and Creativity, and each of the four levels. Selection of the student to be enrolled in a certain level depends on the number of experiences he or she possesses and has mastered. Progression from one level to the next occurs based on a pre-determined, precise and flexible timetable.

Program Implementation Timetable

It is preferable to implement every level separately within the span of a whole academic year so as to give each student the opportunity to absorb and master the pedagogical experiences which each level contains. Thus, the optimum duration for

the program is four consecutive years. However an intensive and condensed version of the model can be implemented within only two years.

Basic Principles for Success in Implementing the Model:

1- Learning is an active and dynamic process which necessitates that the learner uses all of his or her senses to build a unique perception of their experiences. Thus, the learner should no longer be considered as a passive receiver of knowledge. On the contrary, he or she should be dealt with as an active builder of knowledge.

2- Students learn by doing and by constructing knowledge. For example, when we study the historic evolution of the definition of giftedness, we construct our understanding of this concept, and build up the historic development of the definition in a way that helps us to make generalizations and to link chronological relationships together. This, in turn, enables us to forecast future developments.

3- The main component for constructing understanding is the intellectual dimension. While it is true that the bodily activity plays an important role during learning (especially for younger pupils), activity it is not enough. Pupils require opportunities to develop their own opinions, perceptions and to have their ideas practiced and challenged.

4- Selecting suitable language is an essential component for the success of the learning process. Therefore, it is important to use the appropriate terminology in order to facilitate understanding and communication among the participants in the model.

5-Learning is a social process connected with the learner's interaction with their peer group, teachers, family and the local community. For the learner to be active and efficacious the social dimension should be taken into consideration and the learning process should be based on dialogue, discussions, and real social and practical applications.

6- Learning is an interconnected, co-dependent and commutable process where knowledge in one field is not isolated from knowledge in other fields or daily life. The learner also has to be active by analyzing such knowledge from different perspectives.

7- Learning is an accumulative and progressive process which does not take place in a vacuum or away from previous experiences. Thus, the learner needs to compare and

link previous knowledge with current knowledge and experiences in order to construct his or her knowledge bases. Consequently, the more previous knowledge a person has, and the better able he or she is to integrate this knowledge with current experience, the better and deeper his/her learning becomes. It is also important to link the different activities and programs with the learner's nature, needs, social setting and reservoir of previous and current knowledge.

8- Learning is a process that requires time to take place. It is not a swift process. On the contrary, true learning requires a lengthy period of time, as well as repetition, discussion, experimentation, individualization of learning, and putting theoretical knowledge into practice in real-life situations.

9- Intrinsic motivation is the key to active learning. Thus, it is important for the learner to know why he or she is learning and how he or she is going to benefit from the experience.

The General Goals of the Model:

The general goals of the model are connected with the gifted student. The goals require designing a general framework for the enrichment program, organizing the pedagogical experiences of the program according to a well-structured, paced and progressive plan, helping teachers in constructing the deep, diversified and challenging scientific and skill components of the program, and nurturing the gifted students. In brief, the Model seeks to help the teachers of the gifted achieve the goals outlined in Table 2.

Table 2

The General Goals of OEM

Developing research and self-learning skills Developing basic skills based upon the students' needs and not age Exploring various fields of knowledge and disciplines Exploring specific scientific and skill fields in-depth	Developing high cognitive thinking skills Encouraging the development of creative behaviors Encouraging personal and social affective traits Developing the intrinsic motivation towards learning

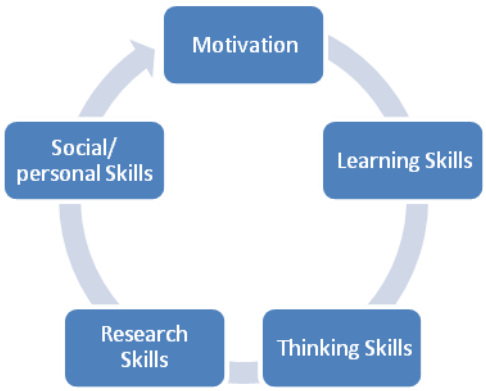
By analyzing the goals in Table Two it becomes clear that The Oasis Enrichment Model puts a heavier weight on learning processes and life skills rather than just providing the gifted student with intensive amounts of knowledge. Any pedagogical approach that does not take this focus into consideration will not achieve the most important goals of enrichment for the student.

The Main Aspects of the Model:

After examination of the general goals of the Model, it becomes clear that the OEM revolves around providing in-depth and specialized instruction in five domains: motivation, thinking skills, learning skills, research skills, and affective traits.

Figure 1

The Main Aspects of the Model



Motivation

The OEM emphasizes the importance of developing and encouraging the intrinsic motivation towards learning in a way that leads to life-long learning. Life-long learning helps the learner achieve the following benefits: acquisition of a positive attitude towards the learning process, active participation in the pedagogical experience, and improved ability and willingness to spend a significant period of time towards implementing a given task. Thus, in order to stimulate intrinsic motivation, learning activities within the model should be purposeful, meaningful, and interesting for students. In addition, the paramount factors which the model emphasizes to improve students' motivation are: self-efficacy and self-regulation.

Thinking Skills

Extensive research in gifted education has shown the importance of the integration of higher order thinking skills into the knowledge content (Davis & Rimm, 2004; Ross & Smith, 1995). Practice and training in advanced thinking skills is one of the key processes through which the gifted student gains his or her intellectual independence, in-depth thinking, experience of using the best methods of searching for knowledge, and testing hypotheses and validating theories. The activities and tasks in the model help students develop the cognitive skills of comparison, classification, analysis, understanding causal relationships, taking good decisions, and formulating sound hypotheses. In order to promote higher order thinking skills, the content of the model is founded upon two bases:

1. Developing higher order cognitive abilities by employing strategies and programs to promote thinking skills. Emphasis is placed on direct practice; presenting real multi-faceted problems related to the local community which require creative solutions.
2. Helping students to develop their own methods and styles of understanding, thinking and learning (thinking how to think).

The OEM in general emphasizes the development of creative and critical thinking skills in a comprehensive and interrelated approach. The key thinking skills which are emphasized in the model are listed in table three:

Table 3

Thinking Skills which the Program Seeks to Develop.

Analytical Skills	Creativity Skills
Contrasting	Fluency
Comparing	Flexibility
Interpretations	Originality
Distinguishing relevant from irrelevant facts	Elaboration
Reasoning	Forecasting
Questioning	Problem finding
Analyzing or evaluating arguments	Imagination
Developing criteria	Connecting ideas
Decision making skills	

Research Skills:

The Model stresses the importance of developing research skills in a paced and gradual way. Such skills are very important for developing the scientific personality from an early age, and acquiring the self-learning skills which help gifted students master the in-depth learning of various topics in a systematic and organized style. The model also takes into consideration the age and mental age of the students, providing the basic research skills in a graded and progressive way and dividing the research skills into basic and advanced levels.

Basic research skills include: problem sensitivity, formulating research questions, formulating research objectives, data collection, classification of data, and coding strategies.

Advanced research skills include: specifying the problem, developing research hypotheses, developing quantitative and qualitative data collection tools, examining hypotheses, data analysis, formulating conclusions, and providing citations.

Learning Skills:

Gifted students are in need of developing their learning skills from an early age (Wellman, 1990). Such skills include the previously mentioned thinking skills and research skills in addition to some other tools which help to develop the scientific personality from an early age. Scientific studies have referred to a group of abilities and tools which help students to develop interactive learning experiences. The National Research Council (2000) mentions the most important skills as follows: library skills, report writing skills, summarizing skills, distinguishing facts from opinions, critical reading, observation skills, note-taking, Internet searching skills, organization skills, and creative writing skills.

Affective Traits

Many studies have concluded that the cognitive abilities of gifted students can be best developed and utilized as a result of possessing a group of particular affective traits (Davis & Rimm, 2004). Thus, the OEM model emphasizes the inculcation of these specific characteristics. The OEM model recognizes the pressing need for developing such traits in order to maximize such cognitive abilities in the optimal manner. The activities and tasks of the enrichment units of the OEM are designed bearing in mind the importance of the relationship between cognitive skills and affective traits. The model divides these affective characteristics into two types: personal skills and social skills (leadership).

Personal Skills: self confidence, self efficacy, self awareness of strengths and weaknesses, coping with failure, acceptance of criticism and suggestions, persistence, willingness to change, coping with stress, individual and societal responsibility, risk taking skills, and leadership skills.

Social Skills: speaking and listening skills, appreciating the needs and concerns of others, appreciating the opinions of others, communication skills, team work skills, debating skills.

Important Notes:

- Different fields in the Model are dealt with in an integrative manner according to the level and the need of students.
- Specifying only the previously-mentioned traits, skills and characteristics does not mean excluding others which were not mentioned. The aforementioned

items are examples of the traits and skills which the teacher should take into consideration along with others that the teacher identifies.

- Pedagogical experiences that help gifted students acquire such traits and skills are graded and progressive according to the needs and mental age of the students enrolled in the program.
- The minimum length of this program is 4 years.
- Academic projects are a means for fusing a diversified number of goals, skills, and traits when building the enrichment units.
- The degree of concentration on certain skills and traits differs from one level to another according to scientific criteria.
- The level of success which a teacher can achieve in helping students develop their abilities, skills and traits depends significantly upon the level of support he or she can have from the school community and parents.

Gifted Student Identification:

The Oasis Enrichment Model uses the Five Guiding Principles of Student Identification that have been developed by the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC):

1. A comprehensive and cohesive process for student nomination must be coordinated in order to determine eligibility for benefitting from gifted education services.
2. Instruments used for student assessment to determine eligibility for gifted education services must measure diverse abilities, talents, strengths, and needs in order to provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate strengths.
3. A student assessment profile of individual strengths and needs must be developed to plan appropriate intervention.
4. All student identification procedures and instruments must be based on current theory and research.
5. Written procedures for student identification must include, at the very least, provisions for informed consent, student retention, student reassessment, student exiting, and appeals procedures.

Students may be nominated for the OEM at any time during the acadamic year, and the gifted education committee at each school has to evaluate information from multiple sources when determining whether nominees are qualified for OEM services. Based on the outcome of the Model Matrix of Identification, a student must meet three of the following five criteria to be qualified for selection and participation in the Program:

- Student Aptitude (IQ test)
- Student Creativity
- Student Behaviors (Observation Tools)
- Student Achievement
- Student Performance (Product/ Proven demonstration of high ability)

The student has the right to benefit from the services of the intensive gifted education programs offered within this model if the scores obtained in one or more of the standardized measures applied in KSA showed that the student possesses high cognitive abilities, distinguished personal traits, or high academic achievement that exceeds his or her peers. Thus, our model implements the following criteria in selecting the gifted students: the students should excel in three out of five scales. These scales are: academic achievement tests, Wechsler Intelligence Scales, abilities scales, the Torrance Scale for Creative Thinking, and teacher nominations using behavioral traits inventories. Our program does not follow the screening or excluding approach in selecting students to be enrolled in the gifted students' services. Thus, our program aims at enrolling as much as 15% of the total population of students at each educational level in the gifted education services. We can also select more than 15% of the total population of students in a limited number of cases in which the student demonstrates distinction or possession of above-average cognitive abilities (as exemplified and embodied in artistic products or performance). Selection can take place throughout the year, and by using both quantitative and qualitative measures (i.e. interviews, observation, etc) for identifying talented candidates.

Evaluation of the model

The model, which is the only model adopted and implemented in Saudi schools, has been evaluated by a large number of studies during the last decade. Aljughaiman

(2004) studied the attitudes of giftedness coordinators and professionals, parents and students towards the model from a number of perspectives such as: general organization, importance, efficacy in the 5 aspects of the model, and influence of the program on the continuity of the students' studies. The sample of the study consisted of 320 male/female students, 55 gifted education specialists, 154 parents, 16 male/female coordinators; all of them exhibited high positive attitude towards the program in all the items of the questionnaire, and explained some of the administrative obstacles hindering the effectiveness of the model.

In 2004 the Saudi Ministry of Education tested the effectiveness of the model in developing students' thinking skills, and personal traits (MOE, 2004). The sample consisted of 54 primary schools. The results demonstrated that the implementation of the OEM model had a positive influence in the educational settings where it was employed. In (2007) Aljughaiman conducted an evaluation of the training program designed and implemented to train teachers on executing the model. The study explored the experts' opinions regarding the main components of the training program. 15 experts responded and their opinions were taken into consideration during the improvement of this training program. In 2009 the Saudi Ministry of Education conducted a comprehensive evaluative study of the model during its implementation in the public schools. 14 experts and researchers participated in the study. The study evaluated the following aspects of the OEM model: the general design of the model, the teachers' training program of the model, the standardized criteria for selecting teachers to participate in the model, the attitudes of all stakeholders, the effectiveness of the model in developing high cognitive thinking skills, research skills, personal traits and attitudes towards learning, motivation, cost-effectiveness of the model, future needs for development, and the quality standards of the model. The sample consisted of 3300 male/female students, 307 male and female teachers, 1350 parents, 55 educational coordinators and 280 school principals. The researchers used qualitative and quantitative approaches and measures in data collection and data analysis. The study concluded that the model has positive effects on developing the students' cognitive abilities, personal traits and skills, and also demonstrates sound internal consistency.

Future applications

From reviewing the evaluative studies of the model and interviewing a large number of teachers who had experience in the implementation of the model (either inside their schools during the academic year or within the summer enrichment programs), it is important to emphasize the precision and caution in selecting the teachers to receive training on this model. It is also important to emphasize that the successful implementation of the model requires teachers who have a high sense of responsibility, a high level of commitment to develop themselves, and are ready to exert their best effort in order to overcome challenges which may arise during implementation. The following are some recommendations for future applications which may lead to further refinement and better administration of the model:

- Teacher selection is the most important issue and requires greater attention.
- Teacher training programs should allocate more time and space to practice developing the enrichment program.
- Administration issues have been mentioned as the main obstacles toward achieving the maximum facility of the OEM.
- Having a full time teacher of the gifted in school made significant differences regarding: meeting gifted students' needs for challenge, solving some of the administrative problems, increasing the awareness of gifted education in schools and families.
- Regular classroom teachers, who worked and cooperated with teachers of the gifted showed significant improvement in practicing thinking skill strategies in their classrooms. Time is always a major problem, so there is a need to train teachers on how to modify the students' timetables, work individually with some students, help other teachers do curriculum compacting, find ways to re-schedule their time to work in the afternoons, weekends, summer, and so forth.
- Planning for the final product at the end of the Exploration Stage helps students maintain focus and remain motivated throughout the program.
- Chain activities require teachers to be flexible as well as focused so as not to lose the main objectives of the level.
- Using the planning forms of OEM helped teachers to be well organized and achieve their objectives in a timely manner.

- The integration process is very hard for the novice teacher of the gifted at the first level with new students. Thus, in order to be successful in this model, he/she needs more help and support from their supervisors.

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