

THE INFLUENCE OF ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS IN THE ARABIC LANGUAGE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CREATIVITY THINKING SKILLS AMONG POTENTIALLY GIFTED ARAB STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The current study aimed to examine the influence of enrichment programs in the Arabic language on development of Creativity Thinking Skills among Potentially Gifted Arabic Students in elementary schools within the Green Line from the perspective of Arabic language teachers. Six teachers were interviewed, then the results were analyzed according to thematic analysis. The results showed that the enrichment program in the Arabic language contributes positively to enabling potentially gifted primary school students to possess creative thinking skills. This is due to the nature of the designed enrichment activities and educational experiences in the Arabic language enrichment program, which develops creative thinking skills, namely: originality, innovation, imagination and problem solving. The researcher recommended the necessity of training teachers to use accurate global diagnostic tools such as the (EPoC) battery, to help them accurately identify the characteristics of gifted students, and then take care of them carefully by employing the procedures of the enrichment program, which includes several activities that serve creative thinking skills according to the integrative cognitive approach.

KEYWORDS: Enrichment, Creative Thinking, Potentially Gifted.

INTRODUCTION

Creativity has received an increasing attention in different societies, especially in the fields of psychology and education since the fifties, as it is considered as a pillar that helps individuals solve their problems and develop their cultural, social, and personal aspects (Besançon, Lubart, and Barbot 2013; Lubart, Zenasni, and Barbot 2013). Creativity of the gifted is one of the six major frameworks of thinking in the twenty-first century along with critical thinking, creative problem solving; future problem solving, collaboration, and communication (Yamin, 2019; Lubart, Zenasni and Barbot, 2013). Potential creativity is the ability to create an original product that is appropriate for the context in which it appears (Runco and Jaeger, 2012; Yamin, 2012; Sternberg and Lubart, 1995; Barbot, Besançon and Lubart, 2016). Therefore, interest in early discovery and care for the gifted and creative pupils in order to develop their distinct preparedness, and to invest their maximum energies has become an urgent necessity imposed by the civilizational progress and the accelerating technological revolution in international societies in general and Arab societies in particular (Al-Buhairi, Jais, 2018).

Providing students with different thinking skills in different thinking frameworks requires the teacher to employ enrichment programs and modern teaching strategies (Hou,

2015). Amara (2010) and Abu Asba (2009) have emphasized, based on the data of the social structure and the cultural environment in the Arab community within the Green Line, that developing thinking skills is not easy; Because the prevailing teaching strategies in the Arab education system depend to a large extent on indoctrination and face-to-face teaching, which necessitate changing these strategies in line with the requirements and needs of the age, through the development of enrichment programs aimed at developing thinking skills. Those programs are mainly based on rapid survey programs and accurate diagnosis to diagnose creativity and potential talent among students. One of these metrics is the EPoC (Evaluation of Potential Creativity) battery proposed by Lubart, Zenasni and Barbot (Lubart, Zenasni and Barbot, 2011), and which was arabized by Yamin (2012), where new versions of EPoC were developed by The International Center for Innovative Education (ICIE). This battery defines creativity as the potential resulting from the convergence of many distinct skills, which are related to the genetic psychological resources of the individual. These resources include specific aspects of intelligence, knowledge, mental patterns, personality, motivation Impact, physical, social and cultural contexts (Yamin, 2017).

Hence, the importance of this study lies in examining the impact of enrichment programs in the Arabic language subject in developing the creative thinking skills among Potentially Gifted Students in elementary schools.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The studies point to the influences of enrichment programs in developing educational learning skills, improving the school academic performance of all potentially gifted students, and fostering their creativity. They also emphasize the positive effects of those programs on caring of this category of students (Lubart et al., 2013; Hou, 2015; Renzulli, 1997).

Several Psychological-educational research and applications have been conducted, in order to provide services and programs that seek to organize the thinking of learners, and benefit from their giftedness and creative energies, Studies have also confirmed that the appropriate enrichment programs that are consistent with the definition and concept of the gifted (Renzulli and Reis, 2016), improve giftedness and creative abilities, and are capable of developing and increasing the creative production of those with giftedness and creative abilities (Barbot et al., 2015).

The universally accepted definition of a gifted person, as pointed out by Yamin (2019), is: someone who has high mental abilities as measured by mental ability scales; a degree of potential creativity measured by tests measuring potential creativity or inferred by the characteristics of potential creativity; high- academic level inferred from school achievement or as measured by standardized achievement tests; In addition to a number of distinctive behavioral characteristics of gifted students.

Studies have also shown that the social and economic environment, gender, and the cultural level of parents play an important role in determining and developing the level of talent and potential creativity of individuals with different forms of creative expression (Lau, Cheung, Lubart, Tong, and Chu, 2013; Cheung, Lau, Lubart, Chu and Storme, 2016). So, researchers point out that the Arab community within the Green Line is constantly developing in all fields: socially, economically and educationally (Abu Bakr, 2012), since their engagement with the Jewish community greatly affected the lifestyle in the Arab community in its all aspects; educationally, socially, intellectually, psychologically and culturally. However, despite these developments that the Arab community is witnessing at the academic and social level, individuals, especially talented individuals, still need to raise the level of responsibility and self-discipline and develop their creative thinking skills in order to face life's difficulties and crises (Haj Yahya, 2006). From this point of view, the Follow-up Committee of Arab Education Issues within the Green Line (2010) recommends educating and providing individuals with the necessary thinking skills, especially in the elementary early stages to be able to face the future, through innovation, creativity, planning and organization, which develops the level of Arab education and helps with its crises. Therefore, the investment in developing appropriate enrichment programs for the gifted, can contribute to developing their capabilities to be a societal wealth that advances the society and brings it out of its crises.

Through her work as a teacher and educational supervisor for 15 years in primary schools, the researcher believes that the Arab education system within the Green Line does not develop students' creative thinking skills (Abu Asba, 2009), and there is a significant weakness among students in the creative thinking skills in the Arabic language and practicing it in general. This is reflected in making use of reading comprehension skills, employing knowledge and linking it to their daily lives, and accessing creative reading, which is represented in finding innovative solutions to problems or the production of work that fits the context. Therefore, the study aims to study the impact of enrichment programs in the Arabic language on the development of creativity thinking skills among potentially gifted Arab Students in elementary schools within the Green Line. Hence, the main question of the study is:

To what extent do enrichment programs in the Arabic language enable potentially gifted Arab students to possess creative thinking skills in primary schools within the Green Line?

METHODOLOGY

A phenomenological approach was adopted for the study as it aims to explore how teachers understand the influence of enrichment programs in Arabic Language on the development of creativity thinking skills among potentially gifted Arabic students in elementary school. This approach could lead to categorizing the creativity thinking skills

among potentially gifted Arabic students that were influenced by the enrichment programs in Arabic Language.

Research Design

As mentioned above, the study is framed by social constructivism context. Teachers are interacting with students, classroom teachers, to construct knowledge, and develop attitudes and practices related to the use of creativity thinking skills in the classroom through this social interaction.

The study was carried out in the first semester of the 2021-2022 year with a total of 6 teachers participating from 4 elementary schools for 10 weeks. Purposeful sampling was used in this study as it enables researchers to select participants who are providing data more relevant to the studied phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). According to (Creswell, 2007), a phenomenological study should include between 3 and 10 subjects. Following Creswell's recommendation, our target sample for this study would include about 6 teachers that were selected to participate in this phenomenological study. The participants were chosen semi-randomly to complete this study.

Sample and Data Collection

The research population consisted of 6 Arabic language teachers from the Arab sector in Israel who were teaching in 4 elementary Arab schools: (Al- Qasemi, Ber Al- Ameer, Al-Razi, Al-Gazali). Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The interview was conducted by Zoom application and recorded for quality purposes. The interviews lasted between 40 and 50 minutes. The interview started with open questions and advanced into leading ones. The questions aimed to explore the influence of Enrichment programs in Arabic Language on the development of creativity thinking skills among gifted Arabic students in elementary schools. Examples of these questions are: 1) how does the enrichment program in the Arabic language contribute to enabling students with giftedness to possess creative thinking skills in primary school? 2) Describe the definition of creativity from your point of view?

6) Describe the educational activities that enrich creativity from your point of view? 7) Describe the appropriate teaching strategies for developing creativity among students in schools? 8) Describe the ways to activate the interaction between the gifted student and the teacher in the classroom?

The participants agreed to be recorded during the interviews. A consent form was signed by the participants. The questions were repeated or, if necessary, reworded until the interviewer was convinced that the interviewee had fully expressed the thought he had shared. Consideration was given to the fact that the interviewees might

not understand the wording of the questions. The interviewees were, therefore, encouraged to ask questions

Analyzing of Data

This research presents a phenomenology study as a type of qualitative research that analyses the implementation influence of the Enrichment programs in Arabic language on the development of creativity thinking skills among gifted Arabic students in elementary schools. The interpreter is well qualified to interpret the results. The interpreter is a lecturer and supervises intern students in practicum and a teacher of Arabic language in the primary school.

After interviewing the participants, the researcher transcribed the interviews and observations. We used thematic analysis to code, categorize and find patterns related to the development of creativity thinking Skills. In order to guarantee the trustworthiness of the research analysis, the agreement between judges was used (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Two persons separately transcribed 25% of the transcription and identified the connections between categories and sub-categories. The agreement between judges was .87 which is considered a fair value for educational research. The interviewees were given the interview results and asked to make proposals or comment on the texts.

Ethical Considerations

It includes choosing a suitable methodology for the research, a good relationship with participants and keeping the data just for scientific research. Some experts pointed out the fundamental of ethical research involving human participants. Thereupon, we have taken this into account during carrying out this study.

Finding/Results

The contribution of the enrichment program to enabling gifted students to possess creative thinking skills

The participants in the interviews agreed that the enrichment program in the Arabic language contributed to enabling gifted students to acquire creativity thinking skills in the primary school, according to the following: 1) the program helped in increasing the learner's responsibility and support his independence. 2) Promoting the elements of attraction, suspense and interaction. 3) Serving the pace of learning in line with the pace of teaching. 4) It takes into account the learner's interests, abilities, learning style and thinking. 5) It helped in meeting the cognitive and educational needs of gifted students. 6) It includes activities and planned trainings according to a scientific basis, so that it is solid, built in an appropriate time and manner, and of a high level, and serves the educational content, 6) it addresses problems derived from the real life. 7) Helped in building competencies and develop critical and creativity thinking skills. 8)

Pairing the characteristics of enrichment programs with the characteristics of the gifted student. The teacher Enas added: *"The enrichment program takes into account the students' interests, abilities, learning and thinking style, and others. In our school, we have absolute faith in enrichment programs for the gifted because they develop their thinking levels, especially in deep and higher thinking skills. Students interact and enjoy enrichment activities, and we believe that every student has potential creativity abilities that need training in order to increase the motivation, responsibility and independence of each student."* Teacher Ghada said: *"The enrichment program intensifies and focuses on critical and creative thinking skills in an appropriate period of time. While, In Regular lessons, we don't care much for these skills. The enrichment activities increased the fun among students, and matched their learning pace in the learning process. I notice as a teacher the difference in students' progress at the beginning and end of the program, where there is a difference and a positive educational and cognitive impact on students later in the Arabic language and literature classes.* Wael added: *"The gifted students' love for the Arabic language multiplies, different thinking skills are developed, and they participate in expanded discussion sessions, which enhance the gifted students' fluency in expression. What distinguishes the enrichment program is that it examines the critical and creative thinking skills that each student possesses before the procedural plan, then examines the impact of the program on the students after the procedural plan.*

Therefore, the participants agreed that the enrichment program in the Arabic language enhances the following creative skills for potentially gifted students:

Originality and innovation

The participants agreed that creativity is a potential thinking ability and a mental process characterized by fluency, flexibility and originality, through the creation of new, creative, and unconventional ideas that require training and stimulation. Teacher Heba added: *"Creativity is considered a departure from the ordinary and the traditional monotony of regular education, as creativity is every new idea and method that get the student out of the cycle of boredom, repetition and awakens him to ignite enthusiasm and desire to learn."*

Teacher Enas defined it: *"Creativity is non-typical and divergent thinking through the employment of unconventional and unconventional methods of analysis. It is the ability to innovate and do something new, tangible or intangible in one way or another."*

Imagination and problem solving

The participants added that creative skills are capable of solving problems in society in different ways. These solutions may be imaginary and out of the ordinary, as the teacher Amna said: *"Creativity is a mental process characterized by fluency, authenticity, the ability to solve a problem by employing previous mental requirements*

such as understanding, analysis ceation and application". Wael also said: "Creativity is potential capabilities that require motivation and training to solve societal problems through imagination and in new ways through available resources or resources that can be developed and provided".

Enrichment activities that develop creativity among gifted students

The participants indicated that the educational activities that enrich the creativity of gifted students are the activities that depend on a careful diagnosis for the gifted student. They are challenging, stimulating thinking and curiosity, and engaging, to enable the gifted to solve the problem in a creative way. These activities include initiatives, projects and competitions in the following fields: social, artistic, technological, intellectual and kinetic. Teacher Ghada said: *"The enrichment program should include activities based on the method of diagnosis and accurate survey, as in the EPoC diagnosing measure of potential creative abilities that we employed in our school. The activities should also include the following: drama and theater, musical arts, school projects and initiatives such as reading and studying (a story hour in the library), activities outside the school through participation with certain associations, scientific research and student presentations, and competitions in various topics, and activities that integrate educational topics with each other such as Arabic language with music ".* Teacher Sehrab added: *"The educational activities that enhance creativity are of two types: Classroom and extracurricular activities. Class activities: represented by what the student does in the classroom and under the direct supervision of the teacher, implemented by students individually or in groups, such as: solving some exercises, or Class assignments, dictionary lookup or mapping. As for the second type: extra-curricular activities carried out by students outside the classroom, such as games, competitions, university trips or educational tours, games and conducting scientific research".*

Appropriate teaching strategies for the development of creativity in gifted students

The participants in the interviews agreed that the appropriate teaching strategies for the development of creativity in students are the strategies based on the students-teacher interaction, or based on the interaction between the students themselves, or based on the student himself, and not only based on the teacher. One of these strategies is: self-learning through research and discovery and the educational blog, cooperative learning and working in groups, computerized electronic learning, project-based active learning, story learning, learning through acting, drama, simulation and playing, problem solving strategy and questioning strategy.

Teacher Sehrab added: *"There are several teaching strategies that support creativity, including: the role-playing and simulation strategy, the self-learning strategy through the educational blog through which the student acquires skills, knowledge, concepts*

and values independently, the problem-solving strategy that stimulates creative thinking, and the e-learning strategy, which relies on the interactive technology of information and communication that presents the educational or training programs to students at all times and in all places."

As teacher Heba said: *"One of the most important teaching strategies that promote students' creativity is learning through playing, computing, discovery."*

Teacher Enas pointed out: *"Narrating the story with an open ending and giving the student the opportunity to formulate its ending enhances his creativity, in addition to employing the strategy of asking questions, cooperative learning, learning by playing, and e-learning."* Teacher Ghada said: *"Learning through research contributes to making the student independent, discovers, criticizes, concludes, adds, researches and expresses his opinion. As a teacher, I like learning through technology and project. I use them constantly because students enjoy these strategies."* Wael added: *"We try in our school to provide various strategies that consider the individuals' differences and the different learning styles of learners to increase their level of motivation to learn the Arabic language, including: the integration of drama in Arabic with a theater director helps in planning Arabic language lessons. In addition to providing tools for employing e-learning strategies, research strategies and cooperative learning".* The teacher Amna added: *"Strategies shouldn't be taught, and since creativity is a superior mental skill which requires the employment of many skills and knowledge; cooperative and active learning, project-based learning, asking questions, and solving problems may be among the most suitable strategies for developing creativity."*

Methods of stimulating interaction between gifted students and the teacher in the classroom.

The participants agreed that there are appropriate ways and methods to activate the interaction between the gifted student and his teacher in the classroom. These methods include: diversifying stimuli in the educational environment, employing modern and interactive teaching strategies, appreciating and honoring gifted students for the high achievements, competitions and creativity projects that are implemented inside and outside the school. In addition, giving students partnership and leadership of the educational process by assigning them non-traditional activities, projects, presentations, tasks and managing the morning queue, teacher's employment of professional and personal high-level skills, respectful attitude toward students and acceptance of criticism, adapting the enrichment educational activities to the characteristics of the gifted student, designing educational situations that trigger student's imagination to come up with innovative solutions to specific problems, placing the student in a competitive educational environment and student's participation in enrichment programs that promote creativity.

The teacher Amna suggested mechanisms to stimulate interaction, where she said: *"The contents and activities must be appropriate to the level of creativity of gifted students in the classroom, and these students must be motivated by designing educational situations that trigger their thinking to solve a problem."* The teacher Heba added: *"The creative student should be given the opportunity to present a presentation, work in a group, and assign students to special, unusual tasks, such as building a model for a story or writing a play."* Teacher Sehrab said: *"It is necessary to diversify the stimuli in the educational environment, such as gestures, moving in the classroom, displaying interesting teaching methods that stimulate student interaction, or asking questions that require thinking, diversifying the teaching strategies, linking topics to student's everyday lives, using positive reinforcement; moralistic or materialistic."* The teacher, Enas, added: *"The student must be given the opportunity to manage the morning queue, and perform teachers' role during the week (managing the learning process)."* The teacher, Ghada, pointed out: *"The most motivating factor for the interaction of the gifted student is to place him in a competitive environment with other students. The teacher's style and personality should be characterized with calmness, openness, creativity, respect, education and acceptance of criticism."*

DISCUSSION

The study aimed to examine the influence of the enrichment program in the Arabic language on the development of creativity thinking skills among potentially gifted Arab students in elementary schools within the Green Line in Israel, from the perspective of Arabic language teachers, by conducting 6 interviews with them, and then analyzing them according to thematic analysis. The results indicated that enrichment programs in the Arabic language contribute positively to enabling potentially gifted students in elementary schools to possess creative thinking skills.

This is due to the nature of the designed enrichment activities and the educational experiences that are included in the enrichment program in the Arabic language, which develop creative thinking skills, namely: (originality, innovation, imagination and problem solving). This feature makes these activities presented in a high-level and different way in terms of addressing the content and objectives, the teaching style, interactive learning environments and learning outcomes. Although training gifted students to acquire the creative skills, is new to them due to the lack of integration and instruction of these skills in the traditional Arabic language, students have reached the creative and professional level when completing enrichment activities appropriate to the level of their giftedness as diagnosed based on an accurate diagnosis and a quick survey that is universally approved (Yamin, 2019). This can also be attributed to the pattern of the enrichment program procedures and strategies which are based on the student-teacher interaction, or based on the interaction between the students themselves. Or dependent on the student himself. The strategies such as dialogue

strategies, stimulating creative and critical thinking, and encouraging discussion in the classroom (Zulkifli & Hashim, 2020) make students feel more fun, interested, independent, leaders, responsible, cooperated and creative to accomplish and self-actualize these activities, and which attracts the attention of potentially gifted students and raises their creative thinking skills, directed towards analyzing and evaluating the information and problems in the educational unit that are presented to them in a different way than the textbooks (Heard & Other, 2020). In addition to employing technical tools such as: computers, inverters and non-technical ones such as worksheets, cards, and group work in order to display the enrichment activities effectively, which contributes to arousing students' curiosity to do them, and enhance their creativity level to accomplish them.

The results also showed that the program and the enrichment material based on scientific theories controlled by the study methodology, and which are consistent with each other along the program, starting from the diagnostic stage of diagnosing potential creative abilities (EPoC), and ending with the development of enrichment activities, contribute effectively to the development of creativity thinking skills among gifted students.

The development of enrichment activities requires the use of appropriate approaches that enrich the educational content, not for the purpose of replacing the activities with the traditional educational material, but rather enhancing the mastering level and giving the student the opportunity to move to the creative level, where the content has been enriched according to the following theories:

The first theory

The theory related to mental processes, so that the (EPoC) was based on thinking frameworks and thinking skills. This test assumes that the human brain works based on two mental processes: exploratory divergent thinking, and convergent integrative thinking.

The second theory

it refers to enrichment based on the integrative cognitive approach developed by the American researcher (Ambrose, 2016), this theory deals with the different cognitive fields, and connects them with each other to strengthen the frameworks of the 21st century thinking skills; and more precisely, they are called frameworks of thinking and not 21st century skills.

The third theory

The theory related to the instruction of thinking skills. This theory works to develop the educational skills for productive thinking - Teaching for Productive Thinking, and was based on by the international researchers in education (Newton, 2012; Newton, 2014)

in the British "Darm University" (Durham University). This theory provides for raising the level of proficiency, the responsibility and response of the gifted student to the enrichment activities. These activities take into account three main elements of enrichment: 1) **interesting and enjoyable activities**: activities are prepared in consistent with the interests of the gifted student, 2) **Responsibility**: The activity contributes to raising the learner's level of responsibility towards his learning to reach the mastery level. 3) **Interactive activities**: the student engages and participates in the activity, he is not a recipient, but interactive and performs activities that go beyond the framework of the traditional subject, that is, the indoctrination time in the enrichment activities is much less than the indoctrination time in the traditional educational classes.

The fourth theory

The model and method of enrichment and its design were adopted based on the "Renzulli" theory of enrichment, with some contemporary modification (Renzulli, 1997) "*School-wide Enrichment Model*".

In the current study, participants agreed that introducing enrichment activities in the Arabic language to the gifted Arabic students in the elementary school, during the regular school day, had a positive effect on them.

The purpose and method of enrichment activities according to this theory does not focus on internalizing the familiar content for the gifted student, as much as it focuses on encouraging the student to recognize a thinking skill and apply it in a content that is familiar to him, then this skill can be applied later in unfamiliar content. This result is consistent with studies (Renzulli, 2016; Radulovic& Stancic, 2017; Zulkifli& Hashim, 2020; Margaret& Other, 2017) which showed the positive effects of the enrichment programs in which the instruction related to creative and critical thinking is carried out according to a specific educational content. Therefore, the current study employed a combination of perceptions and theories adopted in the field of gifted education, including enrichment mechanisms, mental processes, thinking skills and thinking frameworks.

Recommendations

Following the results of this study, the researcher provides educators and decision makers in the ministry of education a number of recommendations, to develop the creativity thinking skills among gifted students in elementary schools, which are as follows:

Selecting the diagnosis of the poetical talent and determining the target group precisely: where a universally approved method of a rapid survey and an accurate diagnosis is used. This method is based on a set of scientific standards and is called battery (EPoC). It refers to divergent exploratory thinking and convergent integrative

thinking. This diagnosis is used as an additional tool for selecting the gifted Arab pupils in the third grade of elementary schools inside the Green Line in Israel.

Preparing and qualifying the teachers and developing them professionally to use a battery (EPoC) in schools, and equipping teachers with tools and skills to be able to identify the gifted students accurately, and then take care of them carefully.

- Employing the effective program procedures which include several activities that serve creative thinking skills according to the Interdisciplinary Approach.

In addition, the researcher recommends conducting future studies on potential talent and creativity and their relationship with critical thinking, due to the scarcity of Arabic studies in this field. The study should be conducted on students at different age groups. In addition, another study can be conducted to examine the relationship of the potential talent with other variables, such as: the religion, sector, economic condition, school stage, and also conducting a study related to the extent to which teachers have the skills to diagnose gifted students, and the degree to which teachers practice these skills to prepare enrichment programs to develop the thinking skills within the framework of critical thinking among gifted students in the Arabic language or in other subjects such as mathematics and science.

Limitations

The limitations of this study are the limitations of the population and sample, and the limitations of the dependent variable studied. Thus, further research is expected to study a larger population, and measure other variables related to creativity thinking skills among potentially gifted Arab students.

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