

ID# 20040004

Educating the Gifted and Talented in the UAE: Status and Recommendations

EDUCATING THE GIFTED AND  
TALENTED IN GOVERNMENT  
SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED ARAB  
EMIRATES (UAE): STATUS AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS

By

Amna Ibrahim Ali Al Obaidli

ID #: 20040004

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters in Education

The British University in Dubai

Institute of Education

2006

Dissertation Supervisor:

Dr. Eman Gaad

## ABSTRACT

Educating the Gifted and Talented In the Government Schools in the United Arab Emirates: Status and Recommendations

By Amna Ibrahim Ali Al Obaidli

The United Arab Emirates is a recently founded country which has made an impressive progress in most of the areas concerning economy, industry, finance and education. However, gifted education seems not yet developed. Gifted and talented are considered to be the future of the nation. They have the right to be educated appropriately as any other children. Educating gifted and talented seems to earn huge concern around the world as these children with exceptional abilities and skills need specific education to meet their needs and promote their skills.

This study aims to investigate the status of gifted education in the UAE's government schools in order to give the appropriate recommendations. The study was conducted using a number of methods including a questionnaire survey, interviews, observation and documents review. The findings of the study show that educating the gifted and talented in the UAE's government schools needs improvement and more attention as the current gifted provisions are not meeting the needs of the gifted in the UAE. Most school teachers are not trained to teach the gifted and the curriculum does not offer differentiations for them.

The study concludes that a policy is needed to organize the appropriate programs and provisions offered to the gifted in government schools. The means of identifications need to be varied and the provisions need to be more comprehensive and efficient. The study also offers a number of recommendations which are based on the findings of the research and the literature of gifted education to enhance and improve the status of gifted education in the UAE.

DEDICATION

To Aisha  
*Spirit and soul*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Eman Gaad, my supervisor and friend for her continuous encouragement and wise advice. I would like to express my gratitude to the Emirates Group for granting me the scholarship and giving me this life opportunity to pursue my higher education. I want also to express my special thanks to my tutors at the British University in Dubai for their constant help and support. Finally I owe additional thanks to my husband Mohammad Al Nazwani for his support and patience especially during the process of writing this paper.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures-----v

List of Tables-----vi

Chapter I: Introduction-----1

- Statement of the Problem-----3
- Background of the Research-----3
  - ◆ The United Arab Emirates (UAE)-----3
  - ◆ Education in the UAE-----4
  - ◆ The Philosophy of Education in the UAE-----6
  - ◆ Educating the Gifted and Talented in the UAE-----6
- Significance and Rationale of the Study-----6
- Description of the Study-----8
- Limitations of the Study-----8
- Research Questions-----10
- Definitions of Terms as used in the study-----10

Chapter II: Literature Review-----13

- Introduction to Gifted Education-----13
- History of Gifted Education-----14
- Today’s interest in Gifted Education-----16
- Gifted Education Worldwide-----17
- Definition of Gifted and Talented-----18
- Identification of Gifted and Talented-----22
- Characteristics of Gifted students-----25
- Policy of Gifted Education-----26

Chapter III: Methodology-----30

- Methods of Data Collection-----30
  - I. Questionnaire Survey-----31
    - Type of Questionnaire Survey used in the study -----32
    - Sampling frame -----32
    - Designing the questionnaire -----33
    - Role of the Researcher -----33
    - Ethics and Barriers -----34
  - II. Interview-----36
    - Types of Interviews-----36
    - Role of the Researcher-----37
    - Ethics and Barriers-----39
  - III. Observation-----40
    - Role of the Researcher-----40
    - Ethics and Barriers-----40
  - IV. Document Analysis-----41
    - Ethics and Barriers-----41

Chapter IV: Presentation of the Data-----43

- I. Results from the questionnaire survey-----43
  - Participants-----43

- Provisions-----46
- Identification methods in schools-----48
- Definitions of Gifted and Talented-----50
- Gifted Plans-----51
- Opinions and beliefs-----52
- Barriers of educating gifted and talented-----53
- II. Results from interviews-----55
  - Semi- structured interviews-----55
  - Structured interviews-----56
  - Unstructured interviews-----57
- III. Results from the Observation-----58
  - Regular Schools-----58
  - Model Schools-----59
  - Lessons-----60
  - Awards-----60
- IV. Results from the Document Analysis-----62
  - The education of Gifted and Talented in the UAE-----62
  - The Gifted Education Policy in the UAE-----63
  - The Definitions of gifted and Talented in the UAE-----65
  - The Identification Procedures for gifted students in the UAE-----65
  - The Provisions and Programs of the gifted in the UAE-----66
  - The Assessment of Gifted and talented in the UAE-----67
- Chapter V: Discussion of Findings-----69
- Chapter VI: Recommendations-----76
  - Policy-----76
  - Definitions of Gifted and Talented-----79
  - Identification-----80
  - Provisions and Programs-----81
  - Recommendations for further Research-----86
- Chapter VII: Conclusion-----87
- Chapter VIII: Reference-----89
- Chapter: IX: Appendices-----97

## LIST OF FIGURES

| <b>Figure</b> | <b>Title of Figure</b>  | <b>p.</b> |
|---------------|---|-----------|
| Figure 1      | Have you ever worked in educating gifted and talented?                                      | 45        |
| Figure 2      | Have you received any training in gifted education before working in the educational field? | 45        |
| Figure 3      | Have you received any training in gifted education while in job?                            | 45        |
| Figure 4      | Types of Training in Gifted Education Received During Working                               | 46        |
| Figure 5      | Does your institution offer any special programs for gifted and talented?                   | 46        |
| Figure 6      | Provisions Provided For the Gifted In Participants' Schools                                 | 47        |
| Figure 7      | Programs offered for the gifted in participants' districts                                  | 47        |
| Figure 8      | Who carry out gifted programs in participants' schools?                                     | 48        |
| Figure 9      | Does your institution offer any type of identification methods for the gifted?              | 49        |
| Figure 10     | Identification methods used in participants' schools-                                       | 49        |
| Figure 11     | Gifted students according to achievement test scores as seen b participants-                | 50        |
| Figure 12     | Is your institution provided with a certified definition for the gifted?                    | 50        |
| Figure 13     | Percentages of gifted programs within the overall schools' plan                             | 51        |
| Figure 14     | Do you believe in the importance of providing the gifted with special provisions?           | 52        |
| Figure 15     | Do you think neglecting the gifted in the education system will Affect them negatively?     | 53        |

## LIST OF TABLES

| <b>Table</b> | <b>Title of Table</b>   | <b>p.</b> |
|--------------|---|-----------|
| Table1       | Professions of participants   | 43        |
| Table 2      | Professions' Groups of participants   | 43        |
| Table 3      | Stages of School levels   | 44        |
| Table 4      | Participants' Years of Experience   | 44        |
| Table 5      | Distribution of participants who provided definitions for the gifted                            | 51        |
| Table 6      | Does your institution have a plan for the gifted?   | 51        |
| Table 7      | Reasons why participants believe in the importance of gifted education                          | 53        |
| Table 8      | Barriers of gifted education as given by participants   | 54        |
| Table 9      | Recommendations given by participants to improve the provisions for the gifted in their schools | 54        |



## *Chapter 1*

### INTRODUCTION

Educating gifted and talented has been the concern of many educators nowadays. As education becomes highly important for any nation and its youth, each and every individual of them needs to be met with his or her needs and abilities to develop their knowledge and skills in order for the nation to prosper (Renzulli, 2001).

Thus, gifted and talented learners, as all learners, have the right to be provided with a proper educational environment and provisions that help fulfill their potential and meet their needs. The problems of unmet needs of the gifted and talented are often hidden; although they affect both the individuals themselves and their society (Gallagher, 1988, Renzulli, 2001). Most people think that children with a gifted mind are able to succeed without help or support. Unfortunately, most of these gifted children may not excel without the appropriate provisions and designed care and support (Davis & Rimm, 2004).

Although the education of gifted and talented has been researched world wide intensively, little has been written about the gifted and talented education in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The status of gifted education is still vague and unclear even for educators themselves.

It is a fact that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a recently developed country with virtually no existence of any educational system before the 1970s but education has achieved a significant growth in the last three decades (Gaad et al, 2006). It is significant to indicate that since establishing the education system in 1970s, which was accompanying the formation of the country itself in 1971, numbers of schools and students have increased rapidly showing a major development (UAE Report on Sustainable development, 2002). It is noteworthy to say that the UAE strategy concedes education a vital key for progress and encourages younger generations to play a productive role in the development of the country. (UAE Report on Sustainable development, 2002).

However, from an individual experience as a citizen of the UAE who had received her education in the government schools and have been working in the field of Education

for ten years, and after being exposed to the literature on education in general and the education of gifted and talented in particular as a MEd student, it is significant to indicate that the education system in the UAE needs many improvements especially in the field of educating the gifted and talented.

As it is noticed by the researcher, most teachers are unaware of the methods and strategies to teach and deal with gifted students. School administrators are confused when it comes to policies regarding the gifted and talented students in their schools and the type of programs and provisions that are available for them. In addition, gifted students suffer from frustration and boredom due to the neglecting of their needs and interests in classes. Yet, the actual status of gifted education is still vague to most of decision makers and legislators. This study intends to investigate and examine the status of gifted education in the government schools in the UAE to indicate the problems issues related to the education of gifted and talented in the country.

It is often argued that the needs of these gifted learners are neglected and overlooked (Gallagher, 1988, Renzulli, 2001). This may affect them academically and emotionally as individuals and affect their society as well because they are its potential future. Gifted students are the society potential future strength in many areas like business, industry, arts and science. However, they are often unnoticed, misunderstood and underestimated. Providing the gifted with the appropriate programs is essential for the good of the individuals and the nation (Gallagher, 1988, Yewchuk, 1999, Davis & Rimm, 2004). Sternberg (1996 as cited in Davis & Rimm, 2004) named the problem of neglecting gifted needs “sounds of silence”, he itemized dismal ways in which society reacts to the needs of the gifted, for instance, the absence of government funding, and laws to provide them with appropriate programs and protect their rights and avoid their frustration and failure(Davis & Rimm 2004)

Further more, Renzulli (1991 as cited in Davis & Rimm, 2004) states that most of the provisions for the gifted youth, which exist in some schools world wide, are indeed worthless. This will not most likely happen if educators and policy-makers truly understand the importance of educating the gifted and talented and the characteristics of these special children to use the appropriate identification strategies in providing them with programs that match their needs (Cramond, 2004). Renzulli (2001) argued

that if these legislators believe that standards are good for all learners, then, there should be “standard plus” for the gifted (Renzulli, 2001, p.10). He argued that no one could be against high standards for the nation and super standards for the gifted as many educators who support gifted education believe that there is a need for special programs for these students with high abilities (Renzulli, 2001). All kinds of excellence; intellectual, moral, scientific, technological, artistic, academic and commercial will increase when efforts are made to create more access to a wider range of outstanding opportunities for the gifted. When opportunities are made available, results will become a function of the ways in which learners make use of them (Renzulli, 2001).

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Very little has been written on the education of gifted and talented in the Arabian Gulf region, and it is particularly non-existent concerning the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In addition, less is written about the status of gifted education in the UAE let alone the provisions and programs designated for the gifted and talented in schools and educational districts.

This research intends to fill the gap in research based literature by studying the education system in the UAE, examining the status of gifted and talented education, and investigating the implementations and provisions that are offered by the Ministry of Education in the government schools. By investigating the status of gifted and talented education, consequently, appropriate recommendations are provided depending on the findings and based on the literature review. This helps develop and improve the education of gifted and talented and the quality of provisions and implementation existing in schools to meet the needs and interests of these individuals and benefit the society of their high and exceptional abilities and talents.

#### BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

##### **The United Arab Emirates (UAE)**

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is an Arab and Muslim country on the eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula. It is bordered by Saudi Arabia, Oman and the Arabian Gulf. The UAE is formed of seven emirates: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al

Quwain, Ras al Khaimah and Fujairah (Gaad et al, 2006). These seven emirates are governed by a federal system founded on the 2nd of December 1971. The highest Authority of the state is represented by the Supreme Council which is formed collectively of The President of the UAE and the rulers of the other emirates. The Legislative Authority is represented by the Federal National Council and The Executive Body which is represented by the Cabinet of Ministers (United Arab Emirates Report on Sustainable Development, 2002).

The country has a continuous record of human development in all fields such as economic, education, health care systems, housing and environment (Gaad et al, 2006). Since the discovery of oil, The United Arab Emirates (UAE) , as many of the other Gulf Corporation Council countries established in 1981(GCC)<sup>1</sup>, has been transformed tremendously from being a desert sheikhdom into a modern state. Using oil revenues, especially when oil prices increased in the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, a huge development and social changes as well as economic growth had been achieved rapidly (Kapiszewski, 2000).

A significant change in population has occurred as the population increased almost 40 times in less than 50 years. Due to the increase in population and economic growth, considerable funds have been devoted to improving all sectors and public services areas including health and education (Kapiszewski, 2000, Gaad et al, 2006).

### **Education in the UAE**

A substantial progress has been achieved in education in the last few decades. The education system is divided into two groups: government schools and private sector (Gaad et al, 2006). Education is free for UAE nationals at all levels and compulsory in the basic cycles (G 1-9). Educational ladder starts with the basic education through (5-4-3) years. The Education system in the UAE follows the educational cycles as follows: KG, basic education (1st and 2nd cycles) and then secondary, in addition to private education including national and foreign schools that are operated under the supervision of the Ministry of Education(Gaad et al, 2006).

---

<sup>1</sup> The Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, formerly named and still commonly called Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is a regional organization which was formed in 1981 involving the six Arab States in the Persian Gulf; Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE (Wikipedia, 2006).

It is noticeable to mention that adult literacy reached 75 per cent in 1998 comparing to 21 per cent in 1968 (United Nation, 2002). Although illiteracy rates are still high by international standards, their decrease is significant as new schools, colleges and universities have been opened and women have been enrolled in all of them (Kapiszewski, 2000).

As stated in the National Report presented in the International Conference on Education in Geneva (1996), , the UAE gives a special interest to the improvement of the quality of education system. Specific policies, plans and programs are carried out to develop the status of education in the UAE and to give equal opportunities for all students to allow their talents to be recognized (The UAE national report on education, 1996).

The education system is still in need of improvement to adapt well to the needs of modern economic development (Gaad et al, 2006). Public schools do not adhere yet to the international standards. Many teachers in public school still use obsolete approaches relying mainly on memorization instead of new techniques that help develop innovation and build thinking skills. In addition, access to computer, Internet and technology is relatively limited in most of the schools, especially in remote areas. Other problems in the education system occurred in school management, teachers' qualification, large classes and lack of parents' co-operation (Kapiszewski, 2000).

However, the situation of the education system is being on process of improvement. As recently as the nineties, UAE started to apply changes to its educational system but these efforts are frequently hindered. This is most likely because of the financial restrictions of the federal budget and because of the controversy in plans and policies when it comes to new Ministers (Kapiszewski, 2000).

Despite that, big changes have been achieved. New modern curricula have been introduced stressing on the use of computer and the emphasis on English language as the basic means of communication. Further more, standardized nation-wide exams have been introduced and many technical and vocational schools have been opened. New universities and colleges, public and private ones, have been opened with programs based on English as a medium of teaching providing their students with better programs and enhanced education system (Kapiszewski, 2000).

Yet, more improvement in education is needed. Such dilemmas in education and other aspects are not easy to be solved in a short period of time as they require a lot of commitment and efforts. Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President of the UAE and the Ruler of Dubai stated clearly that correcting such kind of a problem may take at least 20 years and that it is not a wise act to do it in haste (Kapiszewski, 2000).

### **The Philosophy of Education in the UAE**

The philosophy of the education in the UAE emphasizes on Educating youth as an essential part for the development of the country. The UAE government believes that meeting the youth needs is important in a world full of challenges and changes. They need to be provided with the basic knowledge and skills that help them live a sustainable productive life and to enable them to contribute to their country's development. As a matter of fact, the UAE respects the Human rights provided by the United Nations and believes in 'Education for All' as it is clearly stated in Article 1 of the declaration of 'Education for All', that all children have the right to meet their learning needs by the education system. They have the right to develop their values, attitudes and skill to reach their capabilities and become active members of their society (cited in the World Education Forum Drafting committee, 2000).The philosophy of education in the UAE is discussed further in appendix 5 (p. 111).

### **Educating the Gifted and Talented in the UAE**

Since educating gifted and talented is considered an essential part of the educational system world wide, it is starting to attract some attention in the UAE recently. The goal of this study is to investigate the status of gifted education in the country to see what has been achieved and what is further needed. Gifted education in the UAE is going to be discussed in coming chapters of this research.

## SIGNIFICANCE AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

It is significant to note that that gifted and talented children like any other children; need to be catered for their needs and provided with the appropriate help and support. In order to do so, they should be first identified through an appropriate identification system and their giftedness should be acknowledged and nurtured. .If these children are not identified and provided with appropriate education, they are at a threat of

being underestimated and neglected and their special capabilities might be wasted (Davis & Rimm, 2004, Porter, 2005).

Thus, the study investigates the existing educational settings to see if an appropriate education is being provided for the gifted and talented. Educators and schools are sought for opinions on gifted education. Educators' beliefs and practices are investigated to measure their understanding and awareness of the definitions, identifications and provisions of gifted and talented in government schools in the UAE.

Therefore, since little has been written on the subject of gifted education in the UAE, this study can be a significant addition as it intends to bridge the gap in literature addressing many issues related to gifted and talented education in the UAE.

The study investigates the definitions of gifted and talented in the UAE and compares them to the definitions provided by well recognized scholars and educational associations. This can help teachers and school administrators recognize the gifted and talented learners in their schools and provide them with the necessary support and care. The study also investigates the identification methods of the gifted and talented in the UAE and compares them to methods used and introduced by different scholars. This can help educators in the country avoid overlooking the gifted and talented because the lack of identification, in addition to plan and use comprehensive methods to identify them in their schools.

Furthermore, policy and legislation regarding the education system in the UAE are examined in this study in order to develop more intensive policies regarding gifted and talented education and provide educators with clear instructions, plans and provisions to educate the gifted.

In addition to that, the educational programs and provisions in government schools are studied to see if gifted and talented students are provided with necessary care and support. Based on the findings, recommendations and suggestions will be offered to schools and educational districts to guide them in designing realistic programs and provisions.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

The study presents a review of the education system in the United Arab Emirates emphasizing on the education of gifted and talented, its related policies and what is on offer for students who are gifted and talented.

A review of the literature is carried out to understand the importance of the education of gifted and talented and its history. The different theories and definitions of the gifted and talented and other terms that are related to educating the gifted and talented are also investigated to help understand the situation worldwide in addition to the characteristics of the gifted and talented listed by known scholars. The literature review helps indicate the gap in the research based literature related to the United Arab Emirates in the case of educating gifted and talented. It is used to compare the identification procedures done the UAE and various other countries.

The study uses different qualitative methods to reinforce the findings of the study. Interviews, observation, document analysis and a nation wide survey are conducted to examine the status of gifted education, investigate educators' beliefs and attitudes towards educating the gifted and talented, and inspect the current provisions in the field of the gifted and talented education. Results and data are analyzed and studied and related recommendations are given in the different areas concerning gifted education.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following limitations apply to this study:

1. The absence of UAE-based research regarding the education of gifted and talented. In spite of the significant interest in the gifted and talented that has grown rapidly in recent years in the UAE, little has been written on the gifted and talented education. Many international journal articles, research reports, websites, books and other references were reviewed, but little has been found regarding the UAE. A study has been carried out in New Zealand (Riley, 2004) indicated such limitation when it comes to studies regarding a certain country such as New Zealand. Accordingly, this may be applied to the UAE.



2. That lack of research in the field of study becomes a problem when developing and implementing programs or analyzing data and findings. As Riley (2004) indicated, much can be gained from overseas research and studies. Still, care and caution must be taken in making generalizations or applying recommendations as it must be made sure that those are appropriate and relevant within the context and culture of the country (Riley, 2004).
3. The study was limited to a specific geographic area as survey, observations and interviews were conducted in the area including three emirates only: Dubai, Sharjah, and Ajman due to the following:
4. The whole education system in the UAE is observed by the Ministry of Education, so policies, curriculum and programs are the same across the country.
5. The similarity in culture, social and economic status shared by the seven emirates that are forming the country of the United Arab Emirates. Data collected and found are generalized to take in account the rest of the emirates
6. Seeing that objectivity can be difficult, much rather, impossible (Farley, 2002); having been born, raised, educated and currently working in the field of education in the UAE in addition to being trained in special education, the researcher recognizes that her bias may have influenced the interpretations of the findings.
7. Due to the cultural beliefs and possibly the conservative nature of the people in the UAE, some responses when it comes to research methods were more tending to show the positive side of the situation. It was also noticed that some respondents were conservative in giving opinions to avoid offending any authority. This was taken in consideration when analyzing the data. In addition, various methods of research were conducted to ensure the reliability of findings.
8. Due to ethical issues, taping, photographing and video recording were avoided. Note-taking was the only replacement in recording events and responses. When revisiting notes after duration of time, occasionally, some responses were difficult to comprehend out of context.
9. Since the subject of gifted education in the UAE is important to the researcher and there was a large number of information to be said, some information which was causing more length to the paper and thought important to the study were omitted from the body of the paper to several appendices to maintain the word limit.

10. Limitations; ethics and barriers of each method of research used in this study are discussed separately in chapter 3. [Please refer to pp. 34, 39, 40, 41].

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions which are investigated in the study are as follows:

1. Does the current education system in the UAE meet the needs of the gifted and talented students?
2. What is the status of the education of gifted and talented in the government schools in the UAE?
3. How do legislation and policies regarding educating the gifted and talented in the U.AE cater for the gifted and talented education and needs?
4. What are the recommendations and provisions that are in need for educating the gifted and talented in the UAE?

#### DEFINITION OF TERMS AS USED IN THE STUDY

Looking at the literature review and within the context of the UAE use and culture, terms used in the research were defined accordingly as follows:

Government schools: Public schools supervised by the Ministry of Education offering free admission for the citizens of the UAE starting from grade 1 to grade 12.

Educators: All personnel working in the field of education either in schools such as school principals, administrators, teachers, social workers, educational psychologists, teaching supervisors; or working in the field of education such as university professors , ministry administrators , researchers and evaluators.

Decision-makers: The authority that has the right to issue and change decrees, assign laws and legislations including the president of the UAE, ruler Sheikhs of the seven emirates, members of Federal National Council, in addition to the Executive of the Cabinet of Ministers, ministers and politicians.

The gifted and talented: Children /students in regular schools who possess or show one or more of the different characteristics of exceptional abilities, talents in arts and music, high performance in school, high achievement scores above 90 %, and high IQ scores.

IQ tests: Intelligence Quotient tests which are considered standardized tests and used to measure intellectual giftedness of children providing a profile of their relative strengths and needs, usually administered by a psychologist. These tests are usually conducted after parents or educators have observed the child's skills and are uncertain of the child's abilities or confirmation of giftedness (Porter, 2005). There are many examples of these tests such as: Wechsler Scale of Intelligence and the Stanford-Binet Test. IQ tests are thought to be a reliable measures of giftedness, however, scoring high in one of them ( such as 100-160) is one form of giftedness and not necessary is the only form (Porter, 2005). See appendix 24 for more understanding of the IQ curve.

Identification of gifted students: Means and methods that are used to identify a child with a form of giftedness and talents. They involve multiple types of information such as academic achievement, performance in various settings, interests, creativity, motivation and learning characteristics and behaviors, as well as multiple time periods taking into account factors such as ethnicity, language, or the presence of disability to avoid overlooking potential students (Coleman, 2003).

Gifted schools: Schools specified for the gifted and talented children which give admission to students with exceptional abilities after applying appropriate identification methods, providing them with special care and support presented in designed programs and provisions that meet and promote their needs and interests.

Special gifted classes/pull out programs: Placing gifted children with others of similar abilities for the whole school day or at least some of it; where they are provided with different instructions in order to improve their achievement , attitude to learning, social skills and self- esteem.(Porter, 2005)

Curriculum differentiation: Adjustment and modification of all relevant elements of the curriculum such as environment, content, teaching / learning process, products and outcomes; in response to children's differing learning needs and preferences offering more able children with a curriculum that is not already available to everyone (Porter, 2005).

Enrichment: Giving the students the opportunity to expand their study upon general curricular requirement providing them with alternative activities, self guided activities that add depth to the regular curriculum (Glass, 2004). They are also provided with differentiation of inputs as they are offered activities sharing a common theme with their classmates but with various levels of difficulty that they can self-select, differentiation of outcomes where a common task is set that children enter at their own level and speed (Porter, 2005).

Acceleration: The process when students who satisfactory demonstrate mastery of education objectives are allowed to progress deeper into the subject area by moving above and beyond general competencies toward higher grade-level standards (Glass, 2004).

## *Chapter 2*

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This study investigates the status of gifted education in the UAE in order to give appropriate recommendations depending on the findings. To achieve this goal, a literature review is conducted to reach a better understanding of the gifted education and to find out what is being offered and done regarding the subject of the study.

#### **Introduction to Gifted Education**

Educating gifted and talented children is important. It is the responsibility of the society to care for these children with exceptional abilities and unique interests as they are the future of the nation. In most cultures nowadays, special educational programs for young learners with special needs have been well accepted by the public as an important part of the education system since the sixties of the twentieth century. A complex system of special education that helps children with different disabilities is established in most developed countries in America and Europe (Gallagher, 1994).

In case of educating the gifted and talented, however, some believes that it is not an educational issue as they are supposed to be able to progress by themselves without specific help. It is contradicting to say that when children have disabilities, the access to special education services is determined on the basis of needs. If they need the service, they are generally regarded as having a right to one or at least this is what is supposed to happen but when it comes to gifted children, access to special provisions is often based on the determination if they deserve them or not as they must behave in a certain way or have certain characteristics (Porter, 2005). It is significant to say that whether gifted children fit under the definition of those with special needs or not, it is a social responsibility that these students are taken into consideration to ensure that they get a strong education.

Evidence have been found that many of these students with high abilities will become the leaders of the future in many areas such as medicine, law , the sciences, business and arts (Terman & Oden, 1959 and Bloom, 1985 as cited in Gallagher, 1994). Nonetheless, these gifted children need additional support and have the right for these

needs to be met regardless of how they later develop or whatever they choose to be in the future (Porter, 2005). Corrigan (1994 as cited in Porter, 2005) indicated that these children with gifts and talents have rights and needs while they are young and deserve to have them met. They must be treasured for what they are not for what they might become. Furthermore, Eyre (1997, as cited in Porter 2005) stated that research proved that when educators increased their provisions for the gifted children, as a matter of fact, overall provisions advanced; which is a powerful reason to gain competence in providing for these children as every one will benefit.

The way gifted students are defined, the way they are educated and the way they are received by society varies significantly across time and across different cultures (Gallagher, 1994). Educating gifted students today depends to some extent upon values and conceptualizations that are carried by generations and still alive in the minds of educators and decision makers (Gallagher, 1994). Thus, to understand the programs of nowadays, a reflection must be made on the values of the past.

#### HISTORY OF GIFTED EDUCATION

In order to understand the status of gifted education and the related affairs faced by gifted students nowadays, it is important to understand the history that have made it through. Before the twentieth century, giftedness was a mystery to most educators. A child being genius was looked at as a “freak of nature” by many people (Glass, 2004). Many educators looked at students with high intelligence as abnormal and their exceptional abilities as a burden rather than assets (Jost, 1997 as cited in Glass, 2004).

However, there have been occurrences of cultures paying special attention to children who showed exceptional abilities throughout recorded world history (Gallagher, 1994, Colangelo & Davis, 2003). The early Greeks, Romans, Chinese, and Japanese showed efforts to care for outstanding talents for the good of their own societies (Gallagher, 1994). In ancient Sparta, ‘giftedness’ was defined by exceptional skills in fight, warfare and leadership while in Athens, upper class boys went to private schools where they were taught mathematics, logics, politics and culture (Colangelo & Davis, 2003) . Plato when planned for his ideal state, wished to place its leadership in the hands of philosopher- kings who would possess high measures of rational intelligence (Tannenbaum, 1983 as cited in Gallagher, 1994). His Academy was open for young

men and women based on intelligence and physical strength rather than social position (Colangelo & Davis, 2003).

In the Renaissance and post-Renaissance period, some earlier approaches to nurturing talents occurred in the shape of trainee model which was widely used in art, music and dance. Gifted artists, architects and writers were sought out and rewarded with wealth and respect. Some talents were sponsored by the crown or by noblemen. This sponsorship was a standard source of support and encouragement for many talented artists and musicians such as Michelangelo, Leonardo de Vinci, Dante and Mozart (Gallagher, 1994, Colangelo & Davis, 2003).

In China, gifted children were brought to the imperial court where they were fostered and nurtured. The Chinese accepted different principles for gifted education as they accepted a multiple-talent conception of giftedness. They valued literary ability, leadership, imagination, reading speed, reasoning and other talents. They also recognized that children would show gifts and talents throughout their lives and realized that these abilities would not fully develop without special support and training. In addition, they believed that education should be offered to all children according to their abilities and despite their social classes (Colangelo & Davis, 2003). In Japan ( 1604-1868), children of the samurai received training in history, Confucian classics, composition, calligraphy, moral values, etiquette, and martial arts while children from poor families were taught loyalty, obedience, and diligence (Colangelo & Davis, 2003).

Nonetheless, gifted students due to their high potential and abilities stand out in a culture that is cautious of differences all through history. They demand differential treatment because of their special needs. To provide these learners with their needs, schools and educators have described the conditions under which provisions can be justified. Some educators have relied on the classic psychometric dimensions of verbal and mathematical aptitude; classified for more than seventy years by intelligence tests while others such as Gardner (1983 as cited in Resnick & Goodman, 1994) have tried other ways to recognize and encourage different kinds of intelligence such as musical, visual and kinesthetic. More on gifted education in modern history can be found in appendix 6, p.112.

## TODAY'S INTEREST IN GIFTED EDUCATION

Today's interest in giftedness started in the early seventies as the first special school for gifted children was opened in Massachusetts in the United States (Colangelo & Davis, 2003). In these years, gifted education has been heavily influenced by the publication of three national reports. The first one was published in 1972 by the Congress of the United States and was known as the "Marland report" in recognition of the U.S. commissioner of education S. P. Marland. This report brought gifted education to the national forefront. It indicated, among other things, that three to five percent of the nation's students could be considered gifted. Most gifted students as stated by the report were not having their educational needs met. It also warned that without a suitable support and education, gifted students could suffer psychological damage and permanent impairment of their abilities. An important outcome of this report was enrolling the Federal government seriously in promoting and financially supporting programs for gifted and talented as well as introducing the Federal definition of gifted and talented.

In 1983, the second report was introduced by the National Commission on Excellence in Education and was called the "A Nation at Risk" report. This report, a brief but critical, held up an unforgiving mirror to the nation as many of its commands appointed on the neglect of high academic standards and abandonment of top academic students. The result of this report was a positive attention to gifted education, at least briefly.

The third report was in 1993 by the U.S. Department of Education and was entitled "National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's talent". This report stated that America had a "quite crisis" neglecting its talented students. It pointed to the limited role of the Federal government since the years immediately following the Marland report as well as highlighting a number of other issues related to gifted education (Colangelo & Davis, 2003).

In the second half of the seventy decade, the federal government started again to become interested in supporting the gifted programs. The Education Amendments of 1974 included provisions for the establishment of an Office of Gifted and Talented in the U.S. Office of Education. Grants were also provided for training, research, and



demonstration projects related to the gifted as well as grants to local and state education agencies for gifted education programs. This was also followed by the establishment of a national clearinghouse of information for gifted.

Nevertheless, with all these efforts, still, many of the states did not mention gifted and talented children in their state codes or constitutional language and only an estimated four out of every one hundred gifted students had access to enrichment programs at their schools (Davis & Rimm, 2004, Colangelo & Davis, 2004).

By the early eighties, the Office of Gifted and Talented had been closed and gifted programs funds had been merged to be used at the appropriate judgment of individual states. In the late of the same decade, hopes were raised again as an office of Gifted and Talented Students Education was re-established and federal grants of gifted programs were increased (Davis & Rimm, 2004, Colangelo & Davis, 2004).

#### GIFTED EDUCATION WORLDWIDE

The gifted movement is worldwide but it varies from country to country. The educational systems in England and Europe have long used tracking. Some European countries allow only grade skipping without permitting enrichment programs or special classes. Other European countries offer sponsor competitions in math, computing, physics and the arts while they do not offer any other gifted education programs. Yet, some countries are just starting to offer options for gifted students in education. Some countries offer special schools only for music, arts, and sports while others only offer differentiation in classroom instruction or adopt Gardner' multiple-intelligences model to accommodate students in regular classrooms. Others leave the education of gifted students to discretion of individual schools. Some, which is the worst of all, simply depends on the gifted students themselves to be resilient and manage whatever their circumstances (Davis & Rimm, 2004).

Davis and Rimm (2004) counted 44 countries that provide gifted programs for their young learners with exceptional abilities. These programs are offered in various types and with different levels of support and training for the teachers and administrators. Three only of these countries are Arab countries which are Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iraq (Davis & Rimm, 2004).

## DEFINITIONS OF GIFTED AND TALENTED

It is difficult to describe gifted education because it is compounded by problems of generality and definition. Giftedness itself has neither tight definition nor single agreement on meaning. The definition is argued to be a flexible construct and it has been a part of the debate over culture and policy for years (Daniel & Goodman, 1994). In addition, it is difficult to agree on the definitions of intelligence, creativity and talent which are the components of giftedness so it is not expected to agree on a definition of giftedness itself (Cramond, 2004). Thus, after more than 70 years of research in the field of gifted education, no consensus occurred on an operational definition of neither giftedness nor the most reliable method for identifying gifted students (Bines, 1991 cited in Glass, 2004). Cramond (2004) argues that dissatisfaction with knowledge is the way that leads to further research which means agreeing to one definition to be true is to stop searching for the truth. He also (2004) argues that such agreement on one definition of the giftedness is unnecessary as different cultural aspects are defined differently around the world, why should giftedness be defined the same way.

Therefore, as there is no one definition of “gifted” and “talented” that is accepted university, common use of the terms even by experts is vague and contradictory. Davis and Rimm( 2004 ) as well as other writers use the single word “gifted” to refer to “gifted” and “talented”, however some writers see talent and giftedness on a continuum with giftedness at the upper end. As no accepted label distinguishes between these two visible groups, “extremely gifted” or “low incidence gifted” are used along with the “severely gifted”, “profoundly gifted” or “exotically gifted” (Davis & Rimm, 2004).

Some writers avoid the term gifted preferring to call them “able learners”, for instance, Renzulli ( 1994 as cited in Davis & Rimm 2004) prefers the phrase “ gifted behaviors” which can be developed in some students at certain times and in certain circumstances. However, other writers argue that the term “gifted” should not be bestowed on children as a result of the identification process so they prefer the phrase “potentially gifted” (Davis & Rimm, 2004). However, since serving the gifted is

challenging enough of its recourses, educators may opt to define gifted more narrowly (Cramond, 2004)

On the other hand it is the concept of giftedness which is the basis of all assessment, curricular, and administrative decisions that is made about gifted individuals. The conceptualization of who is gifted determines how controversial issues (such as grouping) are viewed. It is difficult to say if a single definition would result in positive progress in the field of educating gifted and talented or lead to further arguing (Cramond, 2004).

David & Rimm (2004) state that when defining gifted and talented, the definition must begin with the original definition by the U.S. department of education or as also known as Marland's definition. This definition identified gifted and talented children as those who are professionally quantified persons who due to outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. These children required differentiated educational programs and services different than what normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society (Marland, 1972 as cited in David and Rimm, 2004).

In addition, many identification strategies are based on the categories of this definition as it included children who demonstrate achievement and/or potential in general intellectual ability, specific academic achievement, creative or productive thinking, leadership ability, visual and performing arts, psychomotor ability. Davis and Rimm (2004) believe this definition is thoughtful and appealing because it recognizes high general intelligence as well as gifts in specific academy areas and in the arts too in addition to bringing attention to creativity, leadership and psychomotor gifts and talents. Furthermore, this definition indicates that gifted and talented students require differentiation in education and services which justifies the development of gifted programs. It also recognizes the two fundamental objectives of gifted programs; helping individuals get out of their high potential and providing society with educated professionals who are creative as leaders and problem solvers. In addition to that, it includes underachieving students by taking high performance achievement and/or potential ability into consideration (David & Rimm, 2004).

This definition has gone through many changes and modification during time. Appendix 1 (p. 99) gives an idea on how this definition was adapted and modified by other researchers.

Renzulli's Three-Ring Model is another famous theory on giftedness. Renzulli (2003) suggests that gifted behavior reflects an interaction among three basic clusters of human qualities. These clusters include the general and/or specific ability of being above average however not necessarily high, high levels of task commitment (motivation), and high levels of creativity. He identified gifted students as those possessing or capable of developing this compound set of qualities and applying them to any potentially valuable area of human performance (Renzulli, 1986 as cited in Davis & Rimm, 2004, Renzulli, 2003).

Gagne introduced another theory about giftedness and talent in which is known as the Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (Gagne, 2000, 2003 as cited in Davis & Rimm, 2004). This model introduces a specific distinction between gifts and talents as it indicates that gifts, representing general aptitudes, are "untaught natural abilities"; while talents, representing specific skills, are "learned capabilities". He also introduces four types of inborn gifts which include intellectual (such as reasoning, judgment), creative (such as inventiveness, managing nation), socio-affective (such as perceptiveness, empathy, tact), and sensorimotor (such as auditory, coordination). Gagne also identifies seven categories of talents that include academics, arts, business, leisure, social action, sports and technology.

Gagne further indicates that there are some personal factors that influence talent development. These factors are as follows: physical characteristics, motivation such as needs and values, volition such as will-power and effort, self management such as work habits, and personality. There are also environment influences which include one's surrounding or background (such as physical, cultural), persons (such as teachers, parents, peers), provisions (such as services and activities), and events (such as encounters, awards). He states that the development of talent is also affected by chance factors, such as one's family environment, a school gifted program, or a bad accident (Davis & Rimm, 2004).

The problem of the definition of giftedness was also addressed by Tannenbaum (2003) who introduces a taxonomy that answers who, what, and how questions. He noted that gifted and talented students are short advanced learning and creative, however, high level creativity and productivity is most likely always an adult phenomenon (cited in Davis & Rimm, 2004). Tannenbaum listed five interweaving factors that add to ultimate demonstrated giftedness which include: a superior general intellect, strong special aptitudes, supportive non-intellective such as personality, traits, a challenging and supportive environment, and, like Gagne, chance or good fortune at critical periods of life( Davis & Rimm, 2004).

Calvin Taylor (1978, 1986, 1988 as cited in Davis & Rimm, 2004) introduces “Multiple Talents Totem Pole” concept. Although it does not define “gifts and talents”, his concept raises awareness that the majority of students will have special skills or talents of some type. Taylor first introduced six talents including academic, creative, planning, communicating, forecasting, and decision-making. They were later expanded into nine talents in which he added implementing, human relations, and discerning opportunities. The first original six talents were called thinking talents and the other three were added as for being essential for getting ideas into action as defining and selecting gifted and talented to participate in education program would be based upon which talent is emphasized (Davis & Rimm, 2004).

Another famous theory in the area of giftedness and talents is Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences. Gardner( 1999 as cited in Davis & Rimm, 2004), in this theory, draws attention to individual differences in the creative domains of musical, spatial, and bodily-kinesthetic intelligence as well as social and intrapersonal intelligence. He criticizes the severe limitation of single I. Q. scores stating that intelligence is far important to be left to intelligence testers. In his original theory (1983, 1993, 1999 as cited in Davis & Rimm, 2004), Gardner describes seven types of intelligence and one more has been added recently. A critical point in Gardner’s theory is that schools traditionally recognize only linguistic and logical-mathematical types of intelligence which are represented in I. Q. scores. Thus, educators sometimes underestimate or pay no attention to students with strengths in other forms of intelligence.

Gardner (1999 as cited in (Davis & Rimm, 2004) indicates that these intelligences may be seen as intellectual gifts that have no reasonable relations with one another. However, a person may be gifted in one (or more) of these intelligence areas, but not in others. These eight intelligences introduced by Gardner include the following intelligences: linguistic/verbal, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalist (Davis & Rimm, 2004).

To conclude this dilemma about the definition of gifted and talented, it is worth to indicate that Manning (2006) states that, currently, the label “gifted” is used for the high intellectual or academic ability and “gifted education” is identified as ‘the educational field devoted to the study of this student population’ (p. 65). She also stresses that whatever the definition of gifted and talented is; whether giftedness is inherited, developed, apparent in the ability to work life situations, or a result of some combination of these ideas, it is crucial for the educators to be aware of these children in the classroom, be attentive to their needs and create a learning environment that can promote their high abilities (Manning, 2006). Thus, these gifted and talented need to be identified and acknowledged by those who should take care of their education ;using the appropriate definition that is suitable to the surroundings and within the values of the culture and society.

#### IDENTIFICATION OF GIFTED AND TALENTED

Identifying gifted and talented children is very important to their education. The identification process is like searching for “hints and clues” of giftedness in all of the learners (CEC, 2001 as cited in Coleman, 2003). The information collected during identification process of the students help guide instructions and programs designed for each one of them. In addition, identification should not be an end in itself but a means which secures appropriate services and support to meet the students’ needs (Coleman, 2003).

The identification of gifted and talented is controversial and critical as it involves many controversies such as labeling children and various political issues. Yet, it remains important as it ensures these gifted children receive appropriate services and support to succeed in education (Coleman, 2003). Gifted and talented students require special services and programs within the education system to meet their needs. In

order to provide them with the essential programs and services, they need to be identified and assessed. Assessment is important to identify the ways in which their academic, social, emotional and psychological needs can be met and promoted (Davis & Rimm, 2004). The Dakar framework for Action, submitted to the World education Forum in 2000, insists on the need to adopt affective strategies to identify students with special needs and create a learning environment for all students where education content and practice leads to knowledge, attitudes, values and life skills needed. It also emphasizes the need for an assessment that includes an evaluation of the learning processes and outcomes that are specifically defined, integrated within the educational process and continually assessed (The Dakar Framework of Action, p.27).

The problems of unmet needs of the gifted are often hidden; although they affect both the individuals and the society. Gifted students are the society potential future strength in many areas like business, industry, arts and science (Gallagher, 1988). However, they are often unnoticed, misunderstood and underestimated.

Sternberg (1996 as cited in Davis & Rimm, 2004) named the problem of neglecting gifted needs “sounds of silence”, he listed dismal ways in which society reacts to the needs of the gifted, for instance, the absence of government funding, and laws to provide them with appropriate programs and protect their rights. In addition, grade inflation and regular pass-fail courses reward minimal work which lead the gifted to frustration and boredom (Davis & Rimm 2004)

For the past years, children who score high in their achievement tests or in one of the IQ tests such as scoring 136 or higher using the Stanford-Binet IQ instrument are being selected as gifted. However, the validity of any of these instruments as a criterion for identification gifted individuals is questionable as it is thought to exclude other methods in which giftedness can be noticeable. Thus, educators call for alternative identification methods (Glass, 2004).

Identifying children as “gifted” based on their IQ scores and/or their high achievement test scores has been a longstanding tradition in the field of gifted education assuming that they are feasible and advantageous. This process was developed based on a notion of universal and fixed intelligence and most likely produced an exclusive one-size-fits-all programs of education that takes no notice of

the strengths and potential of the individual gifted (Feldhusen, 2001) However, this practice was contrasted by the work of Sternberg (1991) and Gardner (1983) which led to a diagnostic approach to ability whereas specific talents or abilities were focused for identification and services (Feldhusen, 2001). Thus, IQ and achievement tests have already been altered by more inclusive alternative identification methods (Frasier, 1991 cited in Glass, 2004). Multiple criteria in identification gifted students are being in request in many countries.

Sternberg's theory (as cited in Feldhusen 2001) suggested a number of components of intelligence in three broad categories: metacomponents which included planning, monitoring and evaluation, performance components including skills and abilities, and knowledge-acquisition components including processing and encoding.

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (as cited in Feldhusen, 2001) expanded more on the view of human abilities as multidimensional when they were identified as follows: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal.

Another research done by Gagne (1985,1993 as cited in Feldhusen, 2001) focused on talents as he suggested an underlying set of abilities or gifts that are intellectual, creative, socio-affective, perceptual-motor, and other unspecified abilities. Children use these basic abilities to interact with catalysts such as teachers or parents and participate in learning, training and practicing experiences.

Some supporters of gifted education have jumped on conclusion about standards of gifted education without much thought of the practical implication of this current trend. These imposed regulations on learning did not have any improvement in schools and rarely last for long. Renzulli argued that if these legislators believe that standards are good for all learners, then, there should be "standard plus" for the gifted. (Renzulli, 2001, p.10). He argued that no one could be against high standards for the nation and super standards for the gifted. Many educators who support gifted education believe that there is a need for special programs for these students with high abilities (Renzulli, 2001).



The only thing that can be legislating is equality of opportunity. All kinds of excellence; intellectual, moral, scientific, technological, artistic, academic and commercial will increase when efforts are made to create more access to a wider range of outstanding opportunities for the gifted. When opportunities are made available, results will become a function of the ways in which learners make use of them (Renzulli, 2001).

Coleman (2003) summaries the best identification methods to find students with gifts and talents that depend on multiple criteria which should involve the following:

- Multiple types of information such as indicators of student's cognitive abilities, academic achievement, and performance in various settings, interests, creativity, motivation, and learning characteristics/behaviors.
- Various sources of information such as test scores, school grades, comments by people involved in students education (parents, teachers, counselors, peers) in addition to the students themselves.
- Different time lengths to make sure that those students are not missed by one procedure of identification only.

It is important to make sure that standardized measures use appropriate normative samples to the students who are tested taking in consideration any factor that may affect the identification such as ethnicity, language or the presence of a disability (Coleman, 2003).

Appendix 7 explains the problems facing the identification of gifted and talented.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED STUDENTS

Gifted children are different from normal children in many ways. They have unique and different characteristics than their peers which mean that they have unique and different needs as well. Although gifted children share similar characteristics, they differ from one another as each child has his or her unique characteristics, interests, learning styles, energy levels and needs as well as other areas such as personalities, habits, mental health and motivation( Davis & Rimm, 2004). Parents, teachers and educators need to recognize these characteristics so they can support and nurture them. The characteristics of gifted children are discussed more in appendix 2.

## POLICY OF GIFTED EDUCATION

Policies regarding education vary widely world wide. Most education systems internationally support national programs and projects that facilitate and organize the learning process in schools by designing and implementing certain policies. These policies tackle different issues, programs and provisions for schools, teachers and students in different areas.

While certain policies and mandates regarding Education in general do exist, policies related to gifted and talented seem to be missing or limited (Passow & Rudnitski (1993), Irby & Lara-Alicio, 2002). Zirkel (2004) indicates that the issues of eligibility and services for gifted students are often a matter of law; yet, the professional literature only provides limited looks at the law of gifted education.

There are different Acts and policies for free and appropriate public education for students with other types of exceptionalities and special needs. However, specific mandated policies that require action to implement educational programming at the local level for gifted and talented students are highly needed (Irby & Lara-Alicio, 2002). It is worth to say that the absence or presence of strict controls and jurisdictions decide on the nature of programs for the gifted despite how structured the rules and regulations appear to be (Passow & Rudnitski, 1993)

The educational policy of the gifted and talented was brought to attention in the 1970s and 1980s in the United States through the development of policies referred to as capacity-building policies. These policies were meant to provide for additional funding to improve provisions for gifted and talented. Although these policies gave particular possibilities and significant aids to support the education of children considered as gifted and talented, they were not mandates themselves and did not lead to general systemic educational reform. Difficulties remained in many areas including curriculum, instruction and leadership in addition to policy as well (Irby & Lara-Alicio, 2002). Certain public laws continue today in its capacity-building mode, supporting gifted students economically by granting funds (Irby & Lara-Alicio, 2002). However, mandated policies for gifted and talented students do not exist, nor have they ever existed at the federal level, so it is referred to the states to mandate policies to their best interest of their students.

During the 1990s, the political issues in the field of gifted education was first highlighted by Joseph Renzulli and Sally Reis (1991 as cited in Baker, 1995) as they pointed to the particular conflict between what they perceived to be the noble goals of the reform movement. One of these noble goals was to provide the best possible education to the gifted and talented students (Baker, 1995). Theorists and practitioners were being suggested to adopt such ‘political correct’ responding to these noble goals. As a result, some programs promoting students intellectual abilities became perceived as ‘elitist’. Another conflict was related to the curriculum as they pointed to minimizing the group differences which was dragging the entire school achievement level down so low. This required improving education for these students to achieve ‘academic equity’ and by providing financial equity as well to narrow the gap between different abilities, economic or social groups.

Policy must be designed within a context that affects all gifted and talented students and that requires that context to be translated into policy. Policy development also requires, among other components, consideration of background information related to the issue as well as ideas used to stimulate further discussion of different dimensions. Policy must be established and initiated in an appropriate emotional atmosphere and in an environment that acknowledges the policy and is agreeable to it (Hocktor & Kaplan, 1989 as cited in Irby & Lara-Alicio, 2002, p. 269).

Changes of existing policies need to be done through the passage of time and through reform movements in general education policies. Clearly written policies are needed to mandate identification and provisions to the gifted and talented students. A better understanding to the needs of gifted and talented is also needed by those who administer and endorse the policies. Policies should be sensitive to the demographics and cultural needs of the children that are served in public schools (Irby & Lara-Alicio, 2002). Policies must be clear, sensitive and able to be interpreted and implemented appropriately. A policy should have the impact on those who are intended to derive benefits from (Irby & Lara-Alicio, 2002).

Policy makers should be provided with a definition of “giftedness”. Renzulli, Reis and others have placed the blames on political factors rather than economic factors

which remain unclear although frequent reference to their role was mentioned in the early 1990s (Baker, 1995)

A wider school policy is needed to promote the requirements of the gifted and talented students to provide a secure learning context that encourage all students to build their personalities and social relationship in addition to their academic needs (Beveridge, 1999). The form of this policy will vary according to the needs of the school and the students; however, it is recommended that students be involved in developing such policies and their parents as well. The major goal of such policy should be creating a 'positive atmosphere based on a sense of community and a shared sense of values (Ibid as cited in Beveridge, 1999 p. 104). Rules should be clearly agreed and explicit consideration should be given in the school curriculum to the development of mutual respect, responsibility and self discipline. This policy should not neglect to monitor the different aspects of the learning process such as the personal, social and academic needs.

Thus, policies should acknowledge these students with high abilities and provide appropriate educational settings for them. It is important that certain policies are issued to ensure that these children reach their full potential. These policies should address certain issues such as social and cultural prejudice, stereotyped assumptions determining which talents or gifts are valued, the need of access to appropriately challenging educational experiences, failure to identify their exceptional potential specially when there are special needs in other areas, or due to certain disability, poverty, isolation, gender, underachievement, non-English speaking background, lack of motivation, or behavior difficulties (Department for Education and Children's Services (1996).

Practitioners, researchers, and other individuals interested in gifted education need clearer and more complete understanding of the laws regarding the education of gifted and talented. This understanding should start with the definition of gifted and talented and the related identification process.

When policies become clear, the legal boundaries for the education of gifted students that have been established by way of constitutional interpretation and 'common law', or judge made law will be clarified. A clearer understanding of legal boundaries will

help individuals interested in gifted education make more informed decisions about whether to pursue legislation/ regulations, litigation, or alternative avenues of policy reform and dispute resolution (Zirkel ,2004).

To summarize this, it is true that there has been a long argument by advocates that there is a need for a state mandate if programs for the gifted are to thrive, but the situation does not appear to be that simple. Many policy statements dealing with gifted and talented do exist in some countries but seem to collapse as soon as there were pressure to place educational priorities and resources elsewhere. In other countries, there is an urgent need for policies dealing with gifted education. Different states and societies can learn from each other's legislation and regulations, borrowing language, concepts, provisions and ideas from one another (Passow & Rudnitski, 1993). However, these borrowed items should not be used as a fixed template as each culture has its own values, needs and concepts and their policies need to reflect that. Legislators and decision makers should comprehend the issues about gifted education appropriately before establishing any related policies. Educators, parents, and other community members should make efforts to strengthening the policies of local district and advocating the design for stronger or more meaningful state policies (Passow & Rudnitski, 1993).

*Chapter 3*

## METHODOLOGY

This study aims to investigate the status of gifted education in the United Arab Emirates in order to give the appropriate recommendations to improve and develop an efficient educational system for the gifted and talented. Chapter 3 of the study identifies the methods and procedures used to conduct this study. To investigate, examine and study the status of gifted education in the UAE, a qualitative research was conducted.

Mertens and Mclaughlin (2004) stated that qualitative research can provide a rich, contextualized picture of an educational or social phenomenon. In addition, qualitative research, develops theory as it proceeds, being open to new avenues of enquire according to what comes out from the data. It compares findings to existing theory after the active process of researching (Hill, Le Grange & Newmark, 2003). Thus, the researcher found it more beneficial to use qualitative methods such as interviews, observation and documents review than using quantitative methods. The questionnaire survey was conducted in a form which is designed to gather descriptive information, and was not intended to be used as a quantitative method. The numbers resulted from the data collected by the survey was solely used to support the results found by the rest of the research methods.

## METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The research was conducted using a number of qualitative data collecting methods. These qualitative methods were thought to be best to use as the research aimed to elicit possible status, issues, and opinions through data comparisons across participants and between these different methods, (Hill, Le Grange & Newmark, 2003).

The study was conducted in the second semester of the year 2006 which lasted from February to May. The questionnaire, interviews and observation were carried out during this period. The reason to conduct the research during this period was because school administrators and teachers were most likely more comfortable to be sought

for opinions as half of the school year has already passed and school activities often carried out more widely. There was also the opportunity to look at various programs and projects carried out by schools, which usually took place in this semester, in order to investigate what was on offer for the gifted and talented. In addition to have more chance to meet educators and people interested in educational issues. Document analysis was carried out later.

Several methods were used in this study. In a process of triangulation, a questionnaire survey, interviews, observation and a documents review were conducted to ensure the reliability of the study and support the findings. Using a variety of data sources or methods in triangulation to examine a specific status is presumably helpful in producing more accurate account of the status or phenomenon under investigation (Research Methods Glossary, 2000).

A more detailed discussion of the methods conducted follows later in this chapter. A presentation of the findings will follow later in chapter 4.

### **I. QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY**

Since there was little known about the subject of the research and practically no previous studies or researches were found by the researcher on the gifted education in the UAE, a survey based questionnaire was used to collect information about the provisions offered in government schools for the gifted and talented as well as investigating educators opinions and beliefs about the subject matter.

A survey based questionnaire, as a method of descriptive information, can be of value in its own right in helping to measure public opinion, most likely as a precursor to introducing or changing legislation (Robson, 2002). As Robson (2002) indicated, it can also be used to answer research questions or test hypotheses derived from theories. The questionnaire survey can also provide information about people characteristics, relationships between such characteristics, opinions, values and the description of the current status of a phenomenon. Robson further added that it is possible to go beyond the descriptiveness of the data produced by the questionnaire to interpreting them in order to provide explanations of the phenomena studied and the patterns of results obtained (Robson, 2002).

Surveys have been common for a long time. They include the collection of a small amount of data and standardized form from a relatively large number of individuals (Robson, 2002). Tonkiss (1998, as cited in Robson, 2002) gives emphasis to their importance in developing a science of society in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Much current use of surveys is highly instrumental, undertaken in the interests of the better marketing and increased sales of some service or product. A considerable amount is academic in the sense of seeking to find out something about what is going on in society today. In either case, there is a high premium on getting an accurate and unbiased assessment of whatever it is that is being measured (Robson, 2002).

A period of four months was taken for the survey to be completed. The surveys were sent by mail, fax, and email. Responses were sought from individuals who represented their institutions. A copy of the original survey (in Arabic) and a translated copy of this questionnaire are available in appendices 10, 11.

#### **Type of Questionnaire Survey Used In the Study:**

Based on resource factors indicated by Robson (2002) the questionnaire was self-completion. Following the steps in conducting survey research mentioned by Mertens & Mclaughlin (2004), the survey design was decided as cross –sectional design which involves examining the responses of different group of participants at one point in time. This has the advantage of collecting information in a shorter time frame.

#### **Sampling frame:**

As the sampling frame is the source of the eligible population from which the survey sample is drawn (Robson, 2002), a reasonable sampling frame were obtained, where all members of the population of interest have an equal chance of being selected for the sample (Robson, 2002). The survey was sent to almost 70% of schools from different educational stages (primary, middle and secondary) within the largest three emirates; Dubai, Sharjah and Ajman. In addition, it was sent to individuals representing the seven districts that administer the government schools in the seven emirates under the supervision of the ministry of education, along with representatives from the Ministry of Education itself. Around 300 copies were sent to participants all



over the Emirates, only 120 copies were received. Unfinished surveys were eliminated and 100 copies were selected to be analyzed.

### **Designing the questionnaire**

As indicated by Robson (2002), the survey questions should be designed carefully to help achieve the goals of the research and, in particular, to answer the research questions of the study. Thus, the research questions were put in consideration when designing the questionnaire. The questions used in the survey were thought to complete and support the data collected by interviews and document analysis in order to give a realistic picture of the status of the education of gifted and talented in the UAE. Refer to appendix 3 (p. 105) for the procedures undertaken by the researcher to design the questionnaire.

### **Role of the researcher**

The researcher was in charge of the various activities involved in designing, piloting, modifying and carrying out the questionnaire survey. The process of making the questionnaire was divided into six main stages (referring to Robson, 2002):

1. Initial design and Planning: the questionnaire was designed. The main context of the survey was set. The context is the general purpose of the study. The most straightforward task for a survey is to answer questions of the ‘how many?’, ‘how much?’, ‘who?’, ‘where?’, and ‘when’ types. It can provide an estimate of the number or proportion of people who had a certain belief or engage in a particular behavior. This kind of descriptive information can be of value. The research questions which are sought to be answered this leads to non-experimental fixed design. (Robson, 2002) Designing the questionnaire: The different components of the survey were thoroughly planned. A set of questions were written and revised. The objectives of the questions were divided into four: collecting relative information on the respondents, investigating the current status of gifted education in their institutions and schools, investigating their opinions on certain issues related to gifted educations such as the values and barriers regarding educating gifted and talented in the UAE, and finally eliciting recommendations and suggestions to enhance and improve the current status

from their own point of view. The questionnaire was designed after outlining the topics to be covered, deciding on the degree of structure in the questions (open or closed ended) avoiding psychologically threatening questions, double negative, jargon and biased questions. The format for the questionnaire was decided.

2. Pre testing: An evaluation was sought from specialists and experts in the field of research and in the field of special needs education. A pilot test of the questionnaire took place with representatives of target participant group. After the light design was finished, the questionnaire was sent to five experts in research and evaluation in addition to the supervisor instructor of the dissertation in order to be evaluated. After the survey was evaluated and edited, a new modified copy of the survey was sent to twenty different individuals whom are specialized in special education as a pilot test. Their comments on the survey were considered and used to improve its quality. A final design was agreed upon before sending copies to the participants.
3. Final design and planning: The final design was set. The sample of respondents was also planned and set. Then the survey was sent.
4. Data collection: the surveys were collected. Duplicated surveys (representing the same school) and uncompleted ones were omitted.
5. Analysis and reporting: Analysis of data will be discussed later in chapter 4.

### **Ethics and Barriers**

- Robson (2002) indicated that the reliability and validity of surveyed data depend to a considerable extent on the technical proficiency of those running a survey. Efforts were made to ensure the reliability of the survey by piloting and evaluating the survey before applying it. However, if the questions are incomprehensible or ambiguous, the exercise is obviously a waste of time (Robson, 2002). Thus, simple sentences were used and the questions were made sure to be comprehensible and clear.
- Securing a high degree of involvement by respondents to the survey was another problem. Securing involvement is in part also a technical matter if the questionnaire is poorly designed (Robson, 2002). Thus, the survey was designed and written in

Arabic [see appendix 10 for the original copy in Arabic]. This was intended to ensure a better involvement of the respondents as most of teachers do not speak or understand English. Writing the survey in the respondents' native language was thought to make the questions more comprehended and give the educators a better access to express their opinions and thoughts.

- Surveys work best when questions mean the same thing to all the respondents (Robson, 2002), thus, a pilot survey was designed and the opinion of experts was sought.
- Time could be a problem, as Robson (2002) indicates; the questionnaire administered in the wrong time is unlikely to get good response. Thus, it was highly important to choose the right time to send the survey to schools and individuals to ensure a response. The survey was sent at the beginning of the second semester, after the spring break and before the beginning of the first evaluation tests. Teachers and school administrators were most likely more comfortable after the holidays and not yet engaged with the heavy load of school work, so, fortunately, an appropriate number of the questionnaire was returned finished.
- Permission from the Ministry of Education was sought before sending the survey to schools. As people in the UAE seem to be conservative when coming to giving opinions or judgment, an approval of the ministry was highly needed. A letter from the University where the researcher studied was issued to confirm the research purpose of the study. It was then sent to the Minister's office along with a letter asking the approval and assistance of completing the research [see appendix 25]. An approval letter was issued from the ministry office and was attached to the survey before sending it to schools; so people would feel comfortable giving their opinions. A brief summary of the research and the researcher was also attached. More over, to make the respondents more secure, names of individuals, schools, and organizations were made optional.
- A thanking note with the contact details of the researcher were attached at the end of the survey. All suggestions and ideas on the subject were welcomed.
- To ensure a response from schools and individuals, a help from friends from different schools, districts were sought to secure the return of completed copies of surveys. Since one response was sufficient to represent the whole school or

institution, it was easier for these friends to make sure that most of the copies were returned.

- An important consideration was made to the geographical area to which the study wished to generalize the results (Robson, 2002). Since the seven emirates share similar geographic and socioeconomic features and the government schools are supervised by one authority that are responsible of all aspects of the education system in the UAE; which is the ministry of education, geographical area was not a noticeable issue. Nevertheless, efforts were made in order to make the survey feasible within the resources available.
- Since it was difficult as well as useless to analyze a huge number of responses especially if the respondents came from the same school, or the same geographical areas that shared the same circumstances of culture and socio-economic status, only 100 copies of the completed survey were selected to be analyzed. Duplicated surveys and partially completed surveys were discarded. It was made sure that selected surveys represented various schools from different levels and areas.

## **II. INTERVIEW**

Using interviews was intended to complement the data obtained from the questionnaire and from the other methods as well. As it was indicated by many researchers, interviews are conducted to process understanding of related issues through the use of considered questions and careful assessment of the answers (Hill, Le Grange & Newmark, 2003).

### **Types of interviews conducted in the study**

Different types of interviews were conducted in this study. Mertens and Mclaughlin (2004) stated that interviews in a qualitative study are usually done with an unstructured or minimally structured format. Interviewing can be conducted as a part of participant observation or even as informal conversation where the questions emerge as the researcher reaches for the meanings that the participants bring to the situation (Mertens & Mclaughlin (2004). Thus, in this study, three types of interviews were conducted:

- Structured interviews where the interviewer asked the respondents the same questions using a formal instrument with specific wording and ordering were used (The Research Methods Glossary, 2000).
- Semi-structured interviewed where predetermined questions were also used but with modification in order and wording depending on what becomes appropriate. Some questions can be omitted or exchanged and explanations can be given (Robson, 2002).
- Unstructured interviews which can be completely informal where the interviewer has a general area of interest and concern but lets the conversation develop depending on the situation of the interviews (Mertens and Mclaughlin, 2004).

Structured and semi-structured interviews were conducted on educators and gifted students in upper stages, while unstructured interviews were conducted on gifted children in primary stages.

### **Role of the Researcher**

When structuring the interviews and designing the questions for the structured and semi-structured interviews, literature on research and methodology were reviewed in addition to the literature on gifted and talented. The questions designed for the interviews were thought to be completing and supporting the questions used in the questionnaire survey. Information gathering during the interview process was used to define, support and describe the data collected by the questionnaires. Following the interview design structured and used by Farley (2002) in his study on barriers and supports affecting the inclusion of special education issues, the questions of the interviews were divided into themes.[see appendix 13 for the questions used in the semi- structured interviews]. The wording of the questions was taken in consideration as the researcher was cautious when forming questions because the respondents needed first to understand the question in order to give an appropriate answer (Robson, 2002).

The interviews were carried out in several visits throughout the period from February to May, 2006. Individual interview schedules were designed to guide the interview process. Appointments with individuals were made and necessary permissions from

the ministry of education, school principals, parents and teachers were sought. The interviews were not audio-taped to avoid any ethical issues. Only notes were taken. Bogdan and Biklen (1982:74 as cited in Hill, Le Grange & Newmark, 2003) define field notes as *a written account of the researcher's sensory and cognitive experiences*. Field notes taken during the interviews included some observations of non-verbal behaviours too such as body language.

Most of the interviews were in Arabic as the interviewees did not speak proper English. This was to help the interviewees express their thoughts using their native language. The interviews conducted with two of the gifted students were in English and were recorder as well. The rest of the interviews were only transcribed using note taking. Length of interviews varied. Some interviews took an hour while most of other interviews were approximately a half an hour long.

The interviews were conducted on three separate groups. Semi-structured interviews were conducted on the first group of 15 educators; 4 males and 11 female educators working in the ministry of education. Their field of education varied from executive administrators to specialists in Special needs education, supervisors of teachers, school principals, and government school teachers. 12 of the interviewees were UAE nationals and the other 3 were Arab expatriates. All the participant interviewees had an experience of 15 years and more in the field of education in the UAE.

Structured interviews were conducted on the gifted students. All of the students were female UAE nationals. Two of the students have already finished school and started the first year in college and one was still in school in grade 12 [see appendix 15 for the questions designed for the structured interviews, appendices 16,17,18 for transcriptions of the interviews].

The unstructured interviews were conducted on the third group. Four different groups of two to three gifted children from several primary boys and girls schools were interviewed. These children were selected based on their high achievement scores and the nomination of their teachers [see appendix 19 for a transcription of the structured interviews].

The interviews took place in different places based on the interviewee's choices. Some interviews were conducted in the office of the Department of Special Abilities Program in the Ministry of Education main building. Principals, teachers, and students were interviewed in their schools and two of the gifted students were visited at home.

### **Ethics and Barriers:**

Since many of the interviewees were female UAE national, video tapping and voice recording were avoided taking in mind the traditions and religious beliefs of the UAE. Only two of the interviews were recorded after obtaining permission.

- Interviewees were insured secrecy as names were confidential.
- The researcher explained the purpose of the study which was exclusively academic to assure the interviewees that their opinions or whatever they contributed in the research will not be misused.
- Since tapping was avoided, it was partially difficult to write answers and reply in details. Note taking was first hard as the researcher tried to balance listening, corresponding, probing and note taking at the same time. Finally, short notes, symbols and outlines were used. A transcription was tried to be conducted immediately after the interview to avoid overlooking important details. However, sometimes it was hard to interpret some of the symbols used especially if a period of time had passed.
- Some of the interviewees were in high positions in the ministry of education. Giving opinions and real facts seemed to be sensitive. Some of the answers seemed to be generalized and most likely positive point of views and opinions were given. To overcome this, the interviewees were assured total confidentiality and were promised a copy of the study to be used to improve current programs.
- Since the researcher is a female, conducting an interview in boys' secondary schools was not an option as it is unacceptable in UAE culture. Thus, it was rather difficult to conduct an interview with male gifted students in upper classes. Meeting the students outside the school was also avoided due to the culture issue as well. Boys' primary schools do not have the same problem because all the teachers are female. However, since the main aim of the research is to investigate the status of

schools' provisions regarding gifted education, male teachers were already being contacted through the questionnaire, along with male school principals. In addition to that, all government schools, boys and girls, have almost the same circumstances and condition as they are supervised and managed by the same authority and have the same socio-economic status as well. Still the issue of gender was not researched or investigated appropriately in this study and needs further investigation.

- Unstructured interviews with young male and female children in primary schools were conducted in the presence of their teachers. While this may be an appropriate procedure from an ethical point of view, it might have its influence on authenticity of the interviews.

### **III. OBSERVATION**

Observation was another method of collecting data in this study. Observation identified by Robson (2002) as watching actions and behavior of people and recording them in some way and then describing, analyzing and interpreting what was observed. Robson further stated that data collected from observation can usefully complement information obtained by any other method as it can be used as a supportive or supplementary method. Observation also seems to be 'the appropriate technique to get at real life in the real world' as quoted by Robson (2002, p.310)

#### **Role of the researcher**

The observation was conducted by the researcher who acted as a non-participant observer. Two templates were designed by the researcher to help record observation notes when in different settings [see appendices 21 and 22]. In addition to observing classes, schools and other events, the researcher used her own experience as a national of the United Arab Emirates who grew up and was educated in Sharjah, completed higher education in Abu Dhabi, currently working in the field of education and has been exposed to educational institutions and schools in Dubai, Ajman, Ras Al Khaimah, Umm Al Quwain and Fujairah for more than 10 years as part of her job [see appendix 20 for the observation notes].

#### **Ethics and barriers**

- As a teaching supervisor, the researcher's job involves visiting different schools in different districts, attending and observing classes, evaluating teachers, writing



appraisals, training, researching and presenting lectures and workshops concerning educational issues. That was beneficial in order of using one own experience to add to the research being investigated and to make use of her own observations to investigate and evaluate the current status of education in general and gifted education in particular

- Observation included different schools, classes, teachers and students in different areas, cities and districts throughout the emirates. Observation was done as part of the job but was used to complete and support the findings and results of the research.
- In some situations, the teachers were informed about using the data from the observed class in the research study, while in most situations, observation data was used indirectly. In most cases, teachers were aware of the observation and their permission was obtained.
- Permission for recording classes was sought from the observed teachers using video or audio means but the permission was declined due to ethical and cultural issues. Thus, only note taking was used.

#### **IV. DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

Mertens & Mclaughlin (2004) stated that documents and records give the researcher access to information that would otherwise be unavailable; as all organizations leave trails of composed documents and records that trace their history and current status. They also indicated that the researcher must turn to these documents and records in order to get the necessary background of the situation and insights into the dynamics of their functioning.

Thus, in order to get a proper picture of the status of education in the UAE, and wither there are provisions for gifted education or not, a variety of documents such as official documents, statistics, decrees, regulations, and publications were reviewed and analyzed to complete and support the data collected from the observation, questionnaire, and interviews.

#### **Ethics and barriers**

- Many of the documents and records that were found were not of use to the study. Most of what was found was unpublished documents, ministerial decrees,

ministerial circulars, booklets published by the ministry for school use only. They were used nevertheless because they are considered official publications of the Ministry of Education and used by schools and districts in the country.

- Most of documents found were in Arabic. Efforts were made to find English versions but not much was found. The researcher used her own experience as specialized in teaching English as a second language for many years, in addition to being exposed to the literature in gifted and talented education as a MEd student to interpret necessary information in order to use them in the research.
- Not many of what was found was related to gifted education in particular. However, some of the documents mentioned gifted education within other topics. The researcher tried to make use of these indications to add to the findings.

*Chapter 4*

## PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

The purpose of this study was to examine the status of gifted education in the United Arab Emirates in order to give the appropriate recommendations to enhance the quality of provisions given to the gifted and talented in government schools. The study also aimed to investigate the beliefs and values of educators in the UAE regarding gifted education and what strategies and identifications methods are thought to be best for the education system of the UAE.

The data were collected through the use of four different methods of research: a questionnaire survey, interviews, observation and document analysis as discussed in the previous chapter. In this chapter, the results from each method are discussed separately. A discussion of the results follows up in the coming chapter.

## I. RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

**Participants**

As the surveys were sent to a large number of UAE government schools, 200 surveys were returned back out of around 300. Unfinished surveys were removed and 100 surveys were selected randomly to be analyzed. The participants of the questionnaire survey were all educators working in the educational field in the UAE.

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| principal/vice principal               | 22% |
| social worker/educational psychologist | 20% |
| educational supervisor                 | 5%  |
| teachers                               | 41% |
| special educator                       | 12% |

|                         |      |
|-------------------------|------|
| Teachers                | 41 % |
| School administrators   | 47 % |
| Special Needs educators | 12 % |

As shown in table 1 and 2, most of the participants were teachers and school administrators working in the field. Nearly half of the respondents (47 % as shown in table 2) were school principals, school administrators, social workers or educational

psychologists. This was intended to give a wider view of the provisions and practices carried out for the gifted and talented as various participants represented different schools across the UAE.

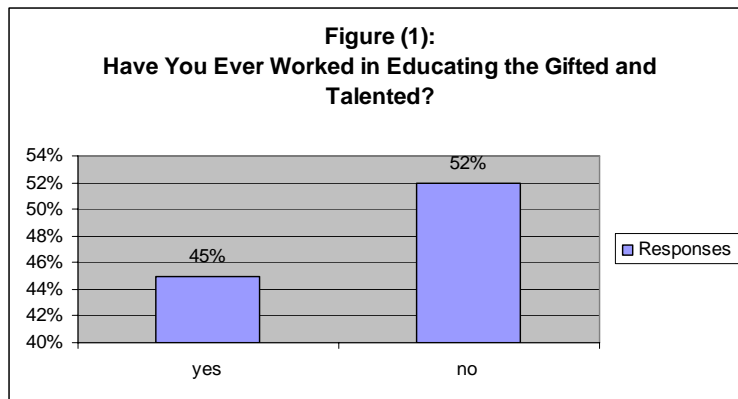
| school stage           | percentage |
|------------------------|------------|
| Basic /cycle 1 (G1-G5) | 44 %       |
| cycle 2 (G6-G9)        | 17 %       |
| secondary (G10-G12)    | 32 %       |

Table 3 shows the distribution of school stages. Most participants represented schools from basic education which includes grade 1 to 5, male and female. The basic cycle is the main stage where identifications of gifted and talented are supposed to take place. Still, an appropriate percentage (32 %) of the participants represented secondary schools, also male and female. The secondary stage is also important as provisions and programs for the gifted and talented are also supposed to take place. This distribution was intended to give trustworthiness to the study as responses were to shed light on the status of gifted education in the different levels of government schools.

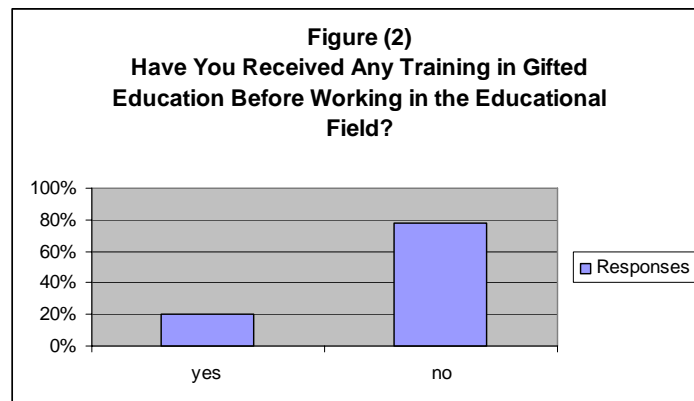
|              |      |
|--------------|------|
| 0-10         | 28 % |
| 11-20        | 56 % |
| More than 20 | 16 % |

The majority of educators participating in the survey, 72 % as shown in table 4, had an experience of more than 10 years in the education field. Their long experience was a valuable factor in the survey, as some of them seemed to start their experiences within the early years of the beginning of the educational system in the UAE.

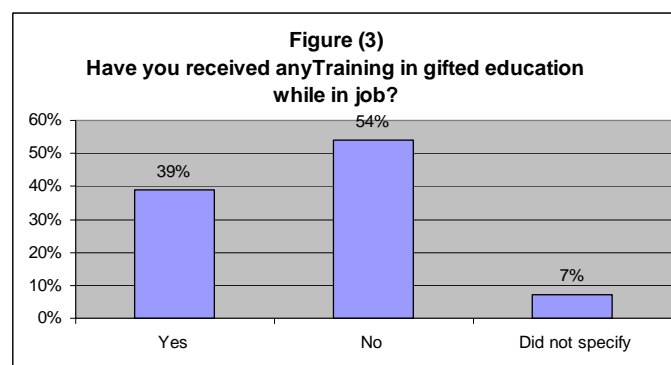
As the study aimed to investigate teachers' experiences in gifted education, the results showed that more than half of the participants (52 %), as shown in figure 1, never worked in educating gifted and talented. The number of participants who worked in gifted education were mostly educators specialized in special needs education or social workers and educational psychologists whom had some experience in special needs education.

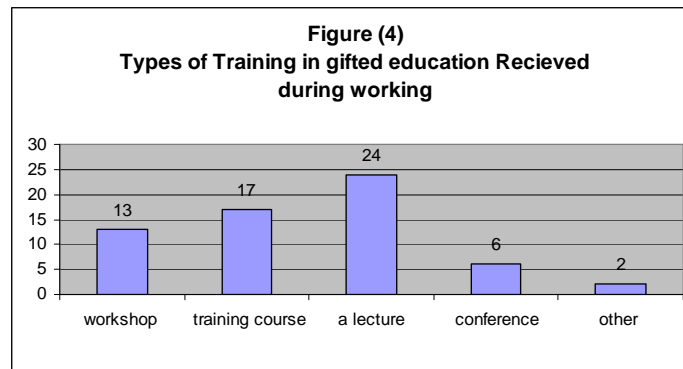


The results also showed that about 80 % of the participants, as shown in figure 2, did not receive any training in gifted education during their college education which means that they are not professionally qualified to educate gifted and talented.



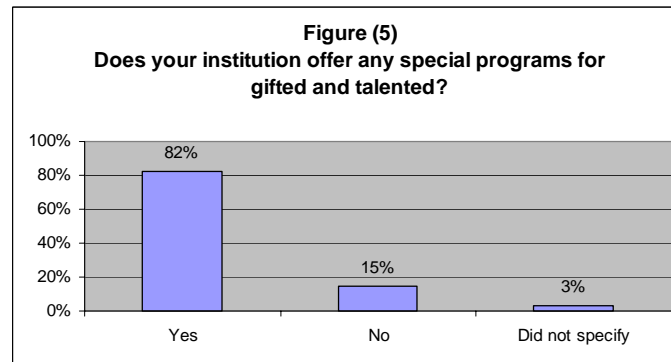
Furthermore, 54 % of the participants, whom are educators in the field, did not receive any training in gifted education while in job (see figure 3). Participants who had some training (39 %) were asked to specify the type of training they had received. The results showed that most of their training was only lectures of 1-3 hours. Only 17 % of the participants had training courses and only 13 % had some kind of (1 – 3 days) workshops as shown in figure 4.



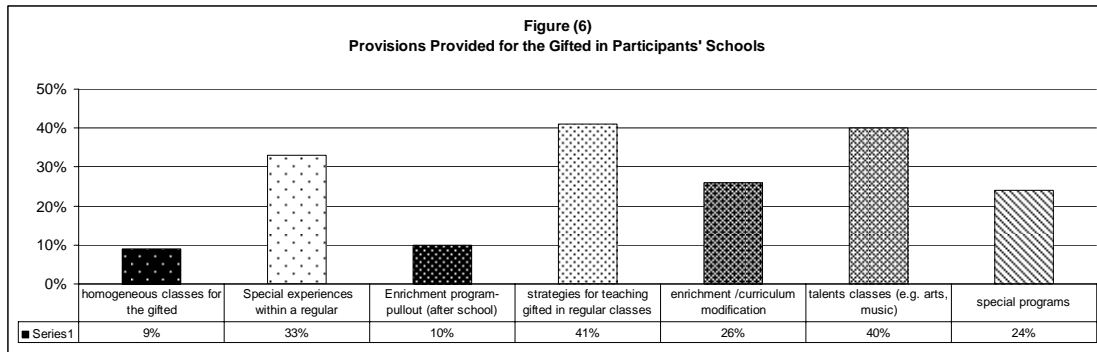


**Provisions**

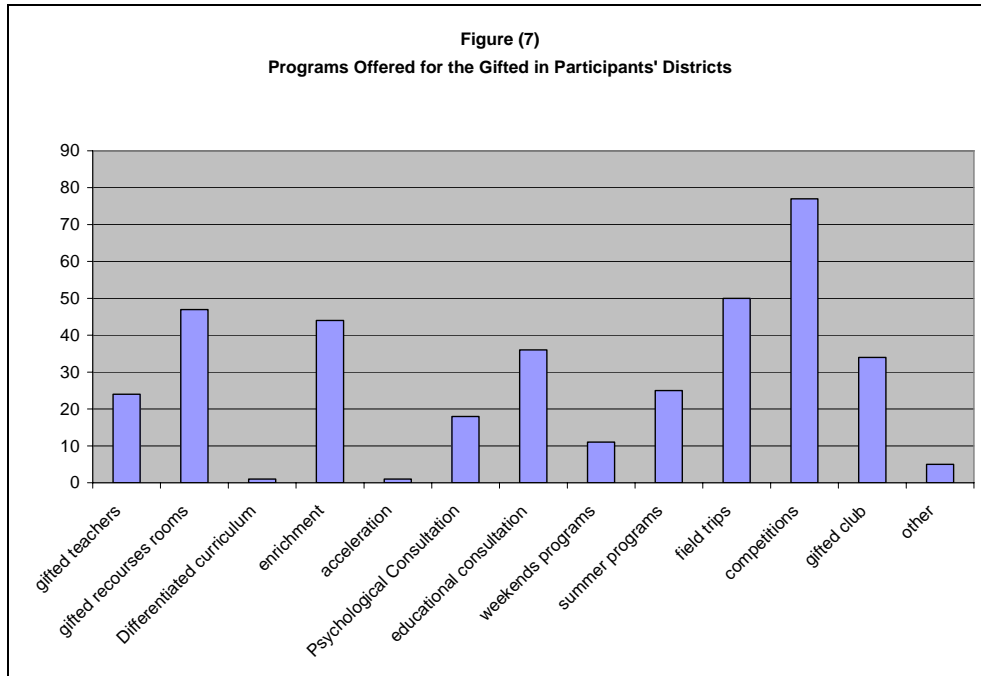
When surveying schools that offered special programs for the gifted and talented, the results as shown in figure (5) were significant. Apparently, more than 80 % of schools had some programs for the gifted and talented.



Participants were asked to specify types of programs offered for the gifted in their schools. The results are shown in figure 6. The majority of the programs offered were modifications in teaching strategies, enrichment types of programs, and talent classes; mostly arts and music. Some special programs were added by the participants included remedial classes, reinforcement classes and extra classes; all related to the subjects taught in school. Students were getting these types of extra classes in order to get better achievement scores in tests. Gift classes and pull out programs for the gifted got the least results as they were only offered in few schools. These schools, as clarified by the participants, were participating in a special project for the gifted initiated by the Ministry two years ago in cooperation with the Gulf University in Bahrain. This project was still in progress and participated parties got some courses in planning provisions for the gifted and talented.



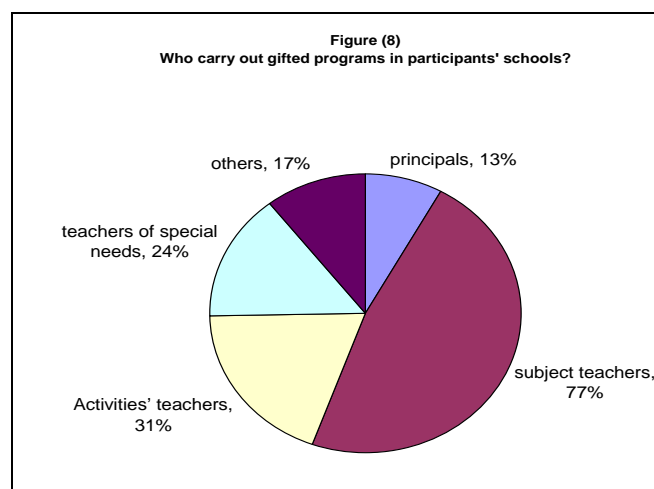
The participants were asked to check the provisions offered in their district/area but not necessarily provided in their schools. The responses are represented in figure 7 which show that most of the programs offered in government schools, boys and girls, in the three main stages were school competitions and field trips. Resources rooms, enrichment programs, educational supervision and gifted clubs came next. In addition, 20 % of the provisions included gifted teachers, summer programs and counseling programs. As the results showed, acceleration and curriculum differentiation were the least (1 % only) of the provisions available in schools across the country.



As figure 8 shows, most of these activities and programs were carried by school teachers who teach general subjects such as mathematics, science, religion and languages and activities' teachers who teach music, arts and sports. It is significant to

note that music is only taught in Cycle 1, arts classes are taught up to cycle 2 (Grade 1-9), and only sports is provided in all stages. This means activities' teachers are not available in all stage levels, thus, subjects' teachers most probably carry out the activities and programs by themselves.

Teachers of special needs carry out 24 % of the activities for the gifted. However, they only teach in primary stage (G1-5) and most of them are not actually specialized in gifted education.

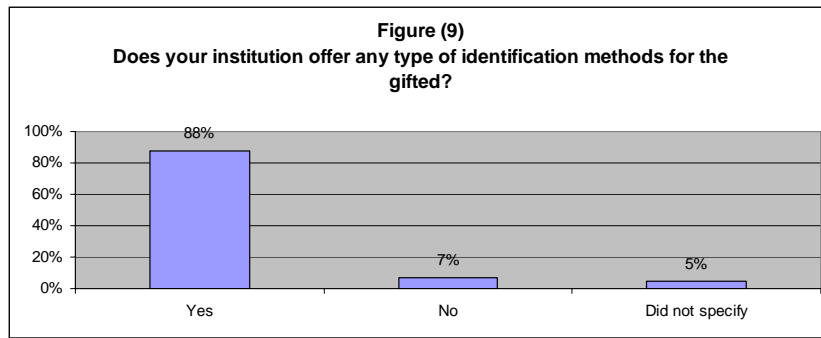


School principals and others (social workers and educational psychologist as specified by the respondents) represented about 30 % of people who carry out such programs for the gifted which indicates their interests in gifted education. However, they are also not specialized in giftedness and most of them did not receive any training but, as they indicated, they made efforts to educate themselves by attending related workshops and conferences in order to be able to provide such activities for the gifted.

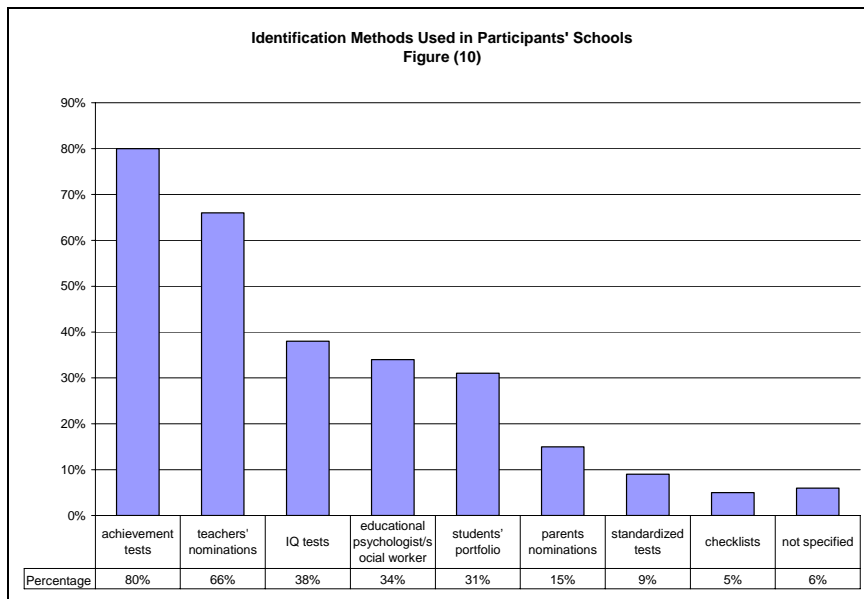
### **Identification methods in schools**

The results in figure 9 showed that 88 % of schools participated in the survey offered some type of identification methods. Figure 10 shows the two main methods of identification offered by these schools which are achievement test scores and the nominations of teachers. While some schools use IQ tests to identify gifted students, not all of them do, most likely because of the lack of experts that can carry out these tests.



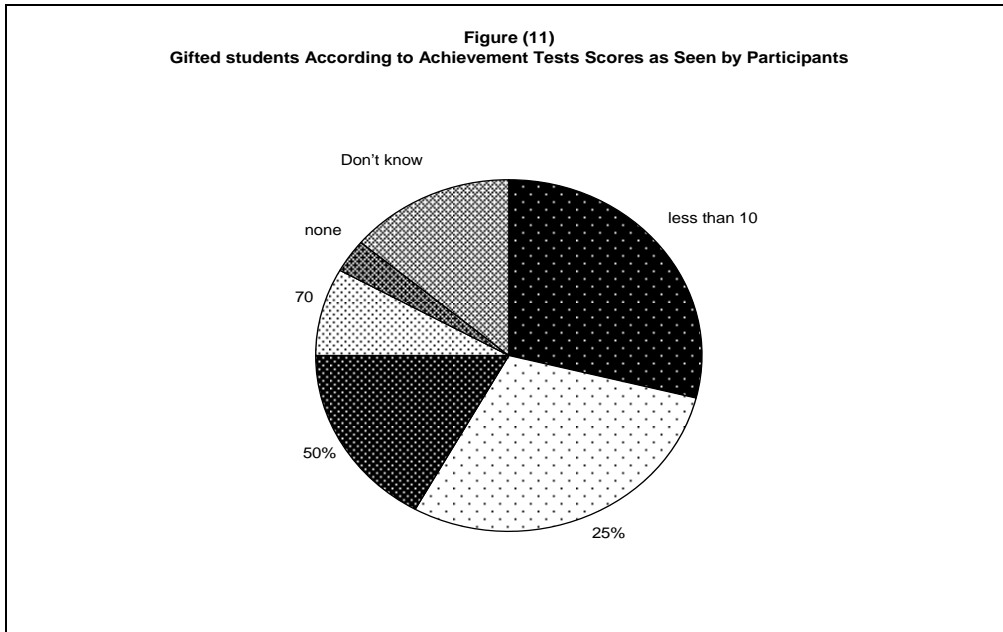


IQ tests in UAE government schools are usually carried out by educational psychologists (EP). There are only few numbers of educational psychologists in each district and many of them are responsible of approximately 9 or 10 schools in the district area. The relation between IQ tests and the nomination of EPs may explain the closeness in percentage of the use of IQ tests and the use of educational psychologists' nomination (38% and 34%). The results also show a significant use of the students' portfolios (31%) which may indicate the increasing awareness of the importance of using different identification methods.

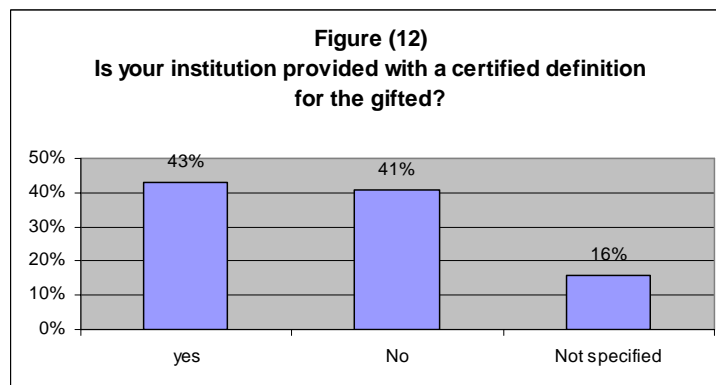


As the results show that most of those in gifted programs are identified through achievement test scores, it was important to identify who is considered gifted according to these scores.

More than half of the participants, figure 11, consider students who achieve scores of 95 % and above in achievement tests as gifted students. However, at least 5 % of the teachers consider students who score 80 % in their tests as gifted as well.



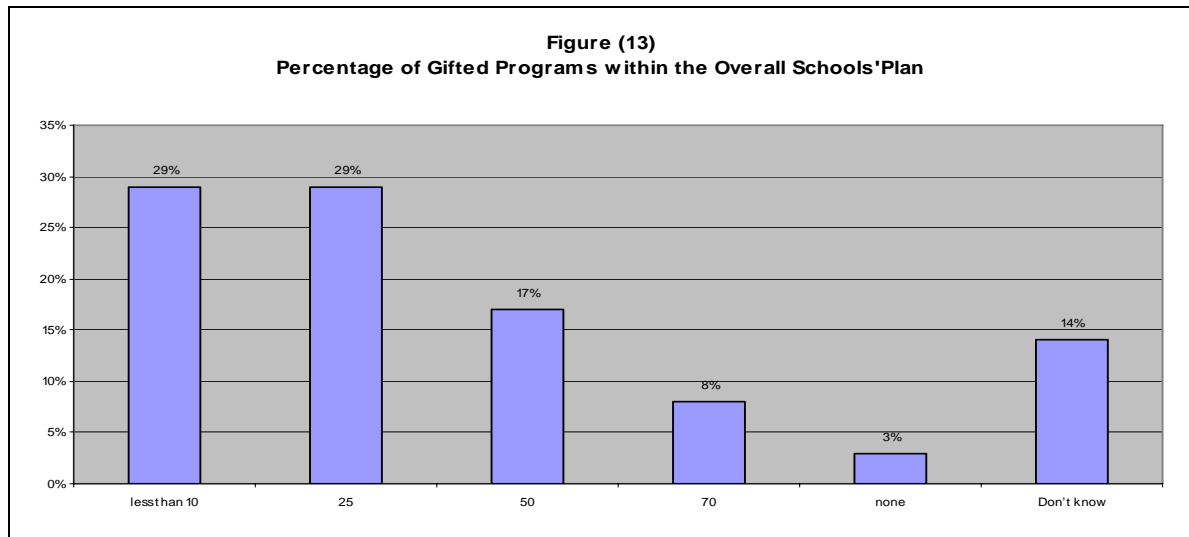
This discrepancy in deciding who is gifted suggests that around 45 % of students who score between 80 % and 90 % might not be considered gifted, and consequently, might not have the right to join any gifted programs in some schools while students who score the same in other schools in fact receive some provisions.



**Definitions of Gifted and Talented**

The participants were asked if they were provided with a certified definition from the ministry of education so that students will be treated fairly. As shown in figure 12, only 43 % of the respondents were provided with a definition. The rest of participants

(57 %) were not provided or did not know about a certified definition. Participants who indicated to have some sort of certified definitions were asked to specify them.



Less than half of the 43 percent who responded with yes, mainly specialists in special education; educational psychologists; social workers and some school principals, provided a form of definition. Most of these definitions were based on achievement scores. More about these definitions are discussed later in chapter 5.

Table 5  
Distribution of Participants Who Provided Definitions For The Gifted in the survey

|     |              |     |
|-----|--------------|-----|
| yes | Provided     | 42% |
|     | Referred to  | 28% |
|     | not provided | 30% |

Moreover, 28 % of the respondents referred to a booklet guide issued by the Department of Special Abilities Program which is discussed later in the findings [see also appendix 9]. However, a significant percentage of the respondents (30 %), who said yes, did not specify any definition nor refer to any document.

### **Gifted Plans**

To understand the percentage of programs provided for the gifted in these schools. First, participants were asked to indicate if their schools had a plan for gifted programs. As table (6) shows, most of them had a plan for the gifted. Only 22 % did not have a plan or did not specify if they had one.

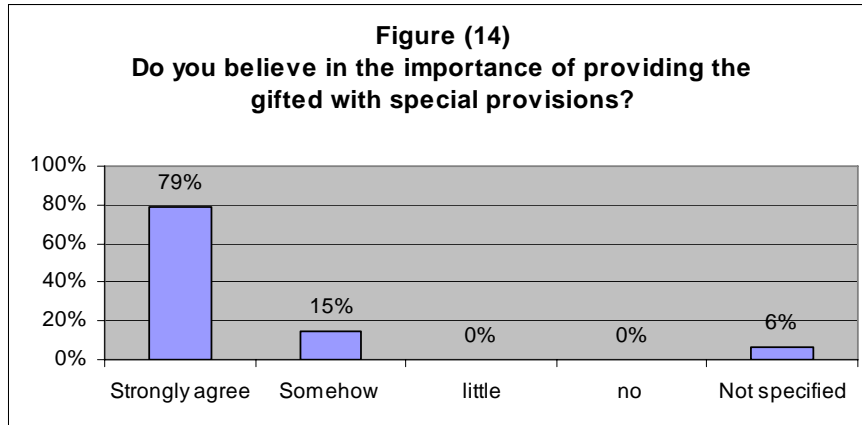
|                 |     |
|-----------------|-----|
| Yes             | 78% |
| No              | 13% |
| Did not specify | 9   |

Second, participants were asked to indicate the percentage of gifted programs in the overall school plan choosing between a range of 10 % and less to 75 %.

As figure (13) shows, more than 50 % of the surveyed school spent less than 10-25 % of the school plan on gifted education. It is significant that at least most of the schools have some kind of programs for the gifted in spite of the quality of the programs. At least some gifted students had some attention in the schools.

**Opinions and Beliefs**

It was important, as the study examines the status of gifted education, to investigate the participants’ opinions and beliefs regarding the education of gifted and talented. Participants were asked how strongly they believed in giving the gifted and talented an appropriate education. It is significant that most of the participants believed in it at least to some extent.



As showed in figure 14, approximately 80% strongly agreed that educating gifted and talented is important and 15 % thought it was somehow important. They were asked to give reasons to what they believe. Table 7 shows why educators think gifted education is important. Most of them believed that supporting the gifted is a national duty so that the society can benefit from their exceptional abilities. It is commonly believed that if these children are not educated appropriately their exceptional abilities will be wasted. Some of the participants believed that these children are the future of

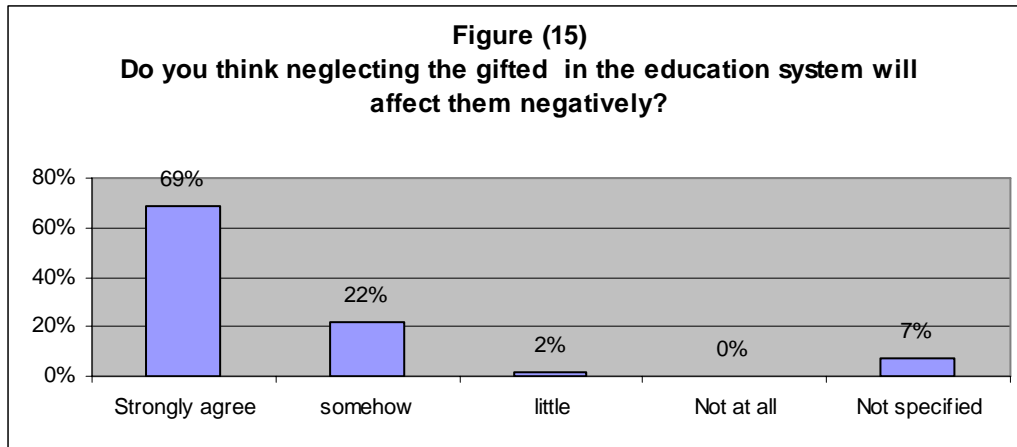
the nation. Some other educators thought that leaving these students without appropriate education will lead them to frustration and their exceptional abilities will be misused.

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Because it is national duty to improve and develop their abilities appropriately instead of wasting them   | 50 % |
| Because the society can benefit from their exceptional abilities better when they are educated differently | 34 % |
| When educate them, we encourage their creativity and innovation  | 16 % |
| Because they deserve to be discovered and introduced to the society  | 8%   |
| Because they are the future of the nation  | 6 %  |
| Because they have an influence on other students to do well in school                                      | 4%   |
| If they are not educated well, they will become frustrated and this will affect their abilities            | 2%   |

Participants were also asked if they thought that neglecting the gifted in education might affect their exceptional abilities in the future. As figure 15 shows, nearly 25 % thought even if gifted youth did not get appropriate care and support this might not highly affect their potential as they might succeed on their own. However, the majority of respondents agreed that neglecting the gifted might affect their potential. When asked to give reasons, most of the respondents said that neglecting their needs might lead to frustration and anger, they might become underachievers or use their abilities negatively which would be a loss to the society.

### **Barriers of Educating Gifted and Talented**

The respondents were asked to give their opinions on what they believe that hinder the progress of gifted education in the UAE. These opinions are summarized in table 8. As the table shows, educators, believe that the overloaded curriculum and the heavy school schedule were the main barriers to provide programs for the gifted. It is difficult to advocate an appropriate time to plan for extra activities for the gifted especially that the current curriculum does not offer any differentiation for different abilities.



In addition, most teachers are not qualified or trained to teach the gifted and there are no funds for gifted programs in schools. Most schools complain that there is no cooperation between the different departments in the ministry of education, and between the different districts or between the different ministries as there are no clear laws or regulations regarding the gifted and talented. Accordingly, there are no policy plans or programs serving the gifted and talented.

Table 8  
 Barriers Of Gifted Education As Given By Participants

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 1  | overloaded school curriculum  |
| 2  | Lack of time in School schedule                                     |
| 3  | Lack of qualified and trained teachers for the gifted               |
| 4  | Lack of special centers for the gifted                              |
| 5  | No budget for gifted education                                      |
| 6  | No cooperation between the different authorities                    |
| 7  | No motivation or encouragement for the gifted                       |
| 8  | Lack of national/ standardized programs for the gifted              |
| 9  | Lack of special curriculum for the gifted                           |
| 10 | No available/appropriate teaching aids                              |
| 11 | School buildings are not appropriate for gifted education           |
| 12 | Lack of experts to carry out IQ tests and counseling for the gifted |
| 13 | Concentrating only on achievement scores                            |
| 14 | Lack of gifted classes  |
| 15 | Teachers are overloaded with other responsibilities                 |
| 16 | Lack of related laws and regulations regarding gifted and talented  |

Respondents also give their recommendations and suggestions to activate and improve the programs offered to the gifted and talented in the country. These recommendations are summarized in descending order according to their frequency in responses. Recommendations will be discussed comprehensively later in a separate chapter.

| Table 9<br>Recommendations Given By Participants To Improve Provisions For The Gifted In Their Schools |  |
|--|--|
| 1  | Establishing special centre for the gifted and talented  |
| 2  | Train teachers to deal with the gifted and talented in schools   |
| 3  | Establish a committee from the ministry of education to organise and carryout programs for the gifted in all the districts |
| 4  | Gifted classes in schools  |
| 5  | Special curriculum for the gifted  |
| 6  | More teaching aids and techniques should be made available to teachers   |
| 7  | allocating a budget for the gifted programs  |
| 8  | assigning a coordinator in schools to plan and organize gifted programs  |
| 9  | Private sectors should contribute in supporting gifted and talented programs   |
| 10   | Providing international programs (pull out, acceleration, enrichment etc)  |
| 11   | Increasing the awareness of parents on the importance of gifted programs   |
| 12   | Issuing laws and legislation regarding gifted and talented   |

## II. RESULTS FROM INTERVIEWS

The aim of this research is to study the education system in the UAE in order to detect the status of gifted education and the provisions offered in government schools for these children with exceptional abilities. As previously discussed in part 3, interviews were conducted as part of the methodology in order to support and add to the findings by the questionnaire and the rest of the methods.

The interviews were conducted on three different groups using three different types of interviews. Following is the summary findings by each type of interviews

### 1. Semi-structured interviews

As previously discussed in the methodology chapters, this type of interviews includes pre-determined questions by the researcher as a guide for the interviews. Wording and orders of questions depend on how the interviews go when conducted. Interviews were conducted on different separate visits.

The interviewees in this group were all educators and administrators; male and female. Three of the interviewees hold a PhD degree and work in a high position in the ministry of education;

Dr. # 1 is the director of The Administration of the Programs for Those with Special Capabilities.

Dr. # 2 is the Head of the Department of Gifted and Talented,

Dr. # 3 is the Senior Supervisor (First Inspector) of the Special Needs Department.

The rest of the group was composed of school principles, supervisors and teachers of special needs and subject teachers. All of them had an experience of more than 15 years in the field of education [see appendix 14 for transcription accounts of the interviews].

### The findings:

After analyzing the findings of the semi-structured interviews, [see appendix 4 (p. 107)] results from these interviews can be summarized as follows:

- There is a department that is responsible for the gifted and talented, however, it has only been established recently; in 2000 by individual efforts.
- The department seems to be only giving consultation as it still has no power or authority to apply provisions or assign funds for the gifted programs.
- Schools do not have a clear idea on what to offer gifted and talented.
- What are being done in some schools are only individual efforts, either by the principals or by the teachers.
- Schools which carry out programs for the gifted use part of the school budget, or request funds from sponsors such as private companies or charity foundations. This is not available to all schools as each school has its different needs depending on the area it is located in. Some schools have resources and can get funds while others spend most of their budget or whatever funds they get in providing their students with more necessary things such as air conditioning and computers.
- Some schools have advanced programs such as enrichment and curriculum differentiation while other schools may only have resource rooms or field trips depending on the awareness of the principal of the school.

## **2. Structured interviews**

As previously discussed in part 4, structured interviews with gifted students were conducted to examine the provisions that had been offered to them during school. These students were selected depending on the nominations of their teachers and according to their achievement test results in school. Two of the students got distinction awards for the distinguished academic performance while in school. All



the three students were national and studied in government schools. Transcriptions of these interviews can be found in appendices 16, 17 and 18.

### The Findings:

Analyzing the findings from the structured interview, these results can be summarized as follows:

- All the three students did not receive appropriate gifted education during school years. No modifications, differentiations or special classes were offered to any of them while in school.
- The main reason for their excellent performance in school seemed to be because some of their teachers cared enough to encourage them and guide them to show their gifts and talents through school and co-curricula activities or because of the encouragement of family.
- They believe that if they had been received any support or counseling during schools, things would be easier for them when deciding their future major and career.

### **3. Unstructured interviews**

Unstructured interviews were conducted with children, boys and girls, in basic stage [primary and middle] to find out what provisions they get at school. These children were selected depending on teachers' nomination and achievement test scores as well. Transcription of some of these interviews can be seen in appendix 19.

### The findings

The findings can be summarized as follows:

- Students feel they need more attention and more support
- Most of them feel bored during classes because they finish quickly and have no extra activities to do
- Most of these students want to know more and learn 'more interesting' information.
- Some of them are engaged in many activities in school and also participate in many competitions. Most of them participate in several activities at the same time. However, most of these activities are limited to arts and music.

- Most of these students are good at mathematics and language but do not receive any advanced programs in these areas, they receive no differentiation, no modification and no extra materials to help them build more skills.
- Most of them receive encouragement and reinforcement from their parents and teachers and that what seem to keep them motivated in school.
- Some gifted students become underachievement because they do not receive proper counseling due to their social and economical status at home.
- Some of these students seem to be being used from the teachers as they take some of the responsibilities like tutoring weaker students, checking quiz papers and helping in teachers' work which might be appealing to these students as they think they can be responsible enough. At the same time, these students could use the time to be taught more advanced skills instead of just helping around.

In conclusion, most of these students seem to excel because they get an attention from a parent or a teacher who recognizes their giftedness and talents. No identification methods seem to be taken place or provision seems to be given.

### III. RESULTS FROM THE OBSERVATION

Results from observation seem to be no different than the results found from interviews or the survey. Following is a summary of the findings by using the observation method. Observation notes are attached in appendix 20.

#### **Regular schools:**

Regular schools are free and admission is open for UAE nationals only. However, a newly decree issued recently that gave an admission to Arab expatriate with a reasonable amount of fees and certain conditions. All regular schools that were observed have no gifted classes. Most of these schools have resources rooms for the use of teachers only where they can carry out classes that need the use of multimedia projector or the Over Head Projector (OHP). Not all classes are held there as teachers take turns using them. There is a library in all schools. The quality and the use of the library vary in different schools. Most of books are either outdated or not attractive to the students in most of the schools. In some schools, the library is used as a resource room or a classroom.

A few numbers of these schools have some modification in the school buildings in order to have resources rooms or an activities' clubs for the students. Some of the schools have fixed classrooms where students are seated in rows and the teachers move between different classrooms while other schools assign rooms for teachers to use and the students move between rooms. Not all regular schools have computers and TVs in the classrooms depending in what district the school is located.

Students are seated in mix abilities classes according to previous year's test scores. No curriculum differentiation is provided for students with exceptional abilities either the gifted or those with learning difficulties. Arts and music classes are given to all students in primary stage level only. Arts classes are introduced until Grade 9 only while sports are taught in all levels. Not all schools are provided with a gym. Few schools are provided with a swimming pool. Students who are gifted in arts, music or sports are selected by the teachers to participate in national and international competitions.

### **Model schools:**

Model schools are government schools which provide different educational services. There are (2-5) model schools in every emirate; boys and girls. These schools have been established recently. Most of them are mainly primary (G 1- 5). Some of these schools added upper grades up to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Model schools are different than regular schools in many things. They have different structure of buildings which are enhanced with a better facilities and surroundings that are not usually available in regular schools such as playgrounds, swings and slides , small gardens, farm animals, a restaurant where they serve two hot meals every day, a gymnasium, and a swimming pool. They provide different types of activities such as Karate, swimming, and ballet.

Classrooms are equipped with TVs, videos, computers and multimedia projectors ready to be used by the teachers. Teachers teach the same national curriculum but with more enhancements such as extra co-curricula activities, differentiated teaching techniques, flexible school schedule, and more options in activities' classes. They use different syllabus for teaching English that is more intensive. They also teach extra

and more advanced computer classes. The school day is longer than the regular schools and the teacher are paid higher than those who work in regular schools although they acquire the same qualifications. However, usually teachers with excellent appraisal reports are transferred to model schools.

However, these schools are open for general admission and not intended as gifted schools. The classes are mixed abilities and students are expected to pass placement tests when first admitted. Fees and charges are paid per semester for school admission, uniforms and nutrition. Not all model schools provide the same quality of education; it depends on many factors; most importantly the efforts made by the principals and teachers to offer more and better choices for their students [see appendix 23 for observation notes on model schools].

### **Lessons:**

Most lessons that were observed did not provide any differentiation for gifted students. Only few of the teachers provided differentiated worksheets or extra exercises for the more able students. Most teachers do use different teaching aids and provide a variety of teaching techniques but without a differentiation in curriculum to suit different abilities.

### **Awards:**

There are a number of awards that are dedicated to the gifted and talented in the education fields which are noticed in the UAE. The most notable awards that aim to distinguish high performance and exceptional abilities in schools are Hamdan Bin Rahsid Awards for Distinguished Academic Performance<sup>2</sup> and Sharjah Award for Distinction in Education<sup>3</sup>. Both awards have a category for distinguished students with high academic performance.

Hamdan award was established under the direction of his Highness Sheikh Hamdan, Deputy Ruler of Dubai, the Minister of Finance and Industry in 1998. When reading the goals of Hamdan Award as stated by the official website<sup>4</sup>, it said that this award

---

<sup>2</sup> Website: [www.hamdanawards.ae](http://www.hamdanawards.ae)

<sup>3</sup> Website: [www.shjaward.com](http://www.shjaward.com)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.sheikhhamdan.ae/english/awards/award\\_dist\\_acc.htm](http://www.sheikhhamdan.ae/english/awards/award_dist_acc.htm)

was intended to appreciate the distinguished and innovative work besides providing a modern education environment that cares for the talent and skills. This award has certain procedures, various applications to be filled and certain conditions to be reached in order to qualify for its expectations.

The second award is Sharjah Award which was established in 1994 under the directions of his highness Sheikh Sultan bin Mohamed Al Qasbi, the Ruler of Sharjah. It also has a category for the gifted students with high academic performance. These two awards are considered highly important and prestigious awards that recognize motivate and reward gifted students in the UAE. Thus, students with high academic performance tend to compete strongly to win one of these awards in order to gain recognition and support. Students who get awarded get financial support in addition to the opportunity to attend different workshops and training courses.

Hamdan Award Council of Trustees which chaired by the minister of education plays an active role in the area of caring and supporting gifted and talented. It has signed many agreements with distinguished international universities in the area of identification of gifted and talented. It announced a national plan for discovering and fostering talents in government schools which intended to be launched in the academic year of 2007/2008. It aims to cover 3600 male and female students at different educational levels in addition to administrative and teaching staff in 28 specialized schools all over the country (Rashid, 2006a). As it was published in Khaleej Times news paper in September, 2006, three specialized schools will be assigned in each emirate from kindergarten up to the secondary stage for the purpose of spotting talents. These schools will be joined by the 3600 gifted students and the trained staff and counselors. These schools are intended to have different curricula, an e-learning centre, an annual exchange programs and four Olympiads (Rashid, 2006 a)

Furthermore, an agreement was signed in October, 2006 with a notable German university to implement the national scheme of supporting talented students in the UAE aiming to develop survey tools to assess students' intelligence and creativity (Rashid, 2006 b).

#### IV. RESULTS FROM THE DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

In order to support the findings found through the survey, the interviews and the observation methods, an analysis of related documents were necessary to investigate and understand the visions and plans intended or implemented regarding the education of gifted and talented. The documents reviewed were mostly ministerial decrees, resolutions, official publication of the ministry of education, and UNESCO reports. See list of references for further details. The findings from the document reviews and analysis are as follows:

##### **The Education of Gifted and Talented in the UAE**

It is significant to say that the goals of education in the UAE emphasize building a comprehensive personality of students on the doctrine, behavior, competency, and performance level. They also put emphasis on responding to the society's quantitative and qualitative needs in human recourses, providing equal education opportunities for all citizens and allowing a space for creativity and innovation (Article 3, UNESCO report on UAE, 2000).

Therefore, reports submitted to the UNESC showed a considerable attention to the education of the gifted youth as the ministry of education has shown a concern for the gifted education at all academic levels. The report submitted by the UAE government to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2001) shows that the ministry provides psychological and social services to help early discovery of gifted and talented students and helps overcome any difficulty affecting their progress.

In addition, Article 59 of the Ministry Framework (as cited in EFA report 2000) states that a central higher committee was established to supervise and provide the education of the gifted and the special needs known as 'The Administration Of The Programs For Those With Special Capabilities' which reports directly to the Assistant Under-Secretary For Private And Quality Education in the ministry of education. This committee provides programs and promotes the welfare of gifted students through various activities.

Furthermore, the Emirates Association for the Welfare of Gifted Persons was established by a Ministerial Decree in 1998. This association is a civil institution which aims to encourage and help gifted persons to express their creativity and inventiveness. It also ensures that they receive the appropriate services. (The Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates report, 2002).

A booklet on gifted education was issued by the Administration of the Programs for Those with Special Capabilities which was referred to by many teachers in the surveys and when interviewed. The booklet contains many useful information and forms to be used with the gifted in schools, however, most schools have not received it or are not aware of it yet [a summary of this booklet can be found in appendix 9].

### **Gifted Education Policy in the UAE**

When talking about education policies in the UAE, the source of laws and legislation must be defined. As a matter of fact, the major source of laws and legislation governing the political, economic and social affairs of the state in the UAE is the constitution. It provides considerable directions regarding education in the country. Article (17) states that 'education is one of the major factors for achieving the society progress' stating that it is compulsory in the primary stage and free in all its stages. It also states that law shall develop the plan necessary for spreading and universalizing education at all levels and eliminating illiteracy. To achieve this, article 120 stipulates that the Federal Government is responsible for legislation in the area of Education (National Report on the Development of Education in the United Arab Emirates, 2001).

A Ministerial Commission on Education was assigned in 1992 entrusting the Ministry of Education to form a committee that prepared a report on education policy in the light of the principles adopted by the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien/Thailand, March, 1990) emphasizing the quality of education. Sequentially, The Ministry of Education proposed the Educational Policy Document in 1995 which was adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers (National Report on the Development of Education in the United Arab Emirates, 2001).

To fulfill the requirement of educational development and to achieve a higher quality of education, the organization of the Ministry had been restructured. A new organizational structure was adopted by the Cabinet's Decree No. 19 for 1999 which deals with a number of different aspects regarding the competencies of the Minister, the Under-secretary and his assistants, the various departments, committees and units (National Report on the Development of Education in the United Arab Emirates, 2001).

In the light of the education document, the Ministry of education is entrusted by the government to provide a quality education to its youth. Facilities and plans were assured for the Ministry to carry out an overall change in the education system and to set the necessary policies to provide a high standard education system. While educating gifted and talented is an essential part of this quality system which should be considered by the Ministry's education policy, no policies for the gifted and talented were mentioned yet.

In addition to that, many parties participated in the formulation and development of the educational policy. Members representing the National Council, Ministries, universities and organizations were among the committee entrusted with the development of such a policy. In the early meetings, a draft project submitted by the ministry was adopted by the committee forming eight committees to carry out the first stage of the policy. It was dedicated to develop the major directives, principles and strategies of the education system. Short and long term educational plans were undertaken to achieve the set goals of the policy. After the sub-committees submitting their reports, the educational policy of the UAE was formulated (National Report on the Development of Education in the United Arab Emirates, 2001).

Social organizations also took part in the planning for the education policy in the country and contributed effectively in producing and educational change of outcomes. These organizations have also participated in developing a number of projects to develop the educational system such as model schools, computerization projects and National prizes (National Report on the Development of Education in the United Arab Emirates, 2001).



While certain policies and mandates regarding Education in general do exist, policies related to gifted and talented seem to be missing not only in the UAE but also world wide(Irby & Lara-Alicio, 2002). There are different Acts and policies for free and appropriate public education for students with other types of exceptionalities and special needs. However, specific mandated policies that require action to implement educational programming at the local level for gifted and talented students are highly needed.

### **The Definitions of Gifted and Talented in the UAE**

The decree no. 94 (2002) issued by the Ministry of Education and forwarded in 12 February 2005, and the Continuous Assessment Card for the gifted and talented distributed by the ministry of education [see appendix 26] define the gifted as ‘the students who achieve more than 95 percent in the school attainment tests’ and the talented as ‘the students who achieve more than 95 percent in the attainment tests of specific subjects such as mathematics ,chemistry or literature and/or those who are talented in school social, physical or arts activities’. It also includes all the students who pass the school achievement tests and have an IQ of 130 or the ones who are high intellectually functioning in general.

These definitions identify the child as “ gifted” if shows above average ability in one or more areas such as general intellectual ability, specifically academic ability, leadership, creative thinking, visually and performing arts or psychomotor ability (Lupkowski ,1985, Davis & Rimm 2004). However, the ministry definition does not specify any other characteristics or abilities other than high academic achievement in tests and high performance in sports and arts activities. Nevertheless, those students recognized as gifted are expected to complete various psychological and intelligent tests.

### **The Identification Procedures for the Gifted Students in the UAE**

The Administration of the Programs for Those with the Special Capabilities in the ministry of education is responsible of providing the identification and support for the gifted and talented in the different educational institutions. As it was stated in the UAE report—article 59 which was submitted to the EFA committee ( 2000), this

administration undertakes research and gathers data and information on the gifted pupils in coordination with educational zones and schools to define and provide the required plans and programs for the gifted and talented students. It also supervises the implementation and assessment programs to give the necessary recommendations and provides these students with care services in terms of financial and human resources. In addition to that, the administration is supposed to provide the gifted with special curricula, plans and programs such as enrichment, accelerated and remedial programs. It, additionally, participates in the preparation of psychological diagnosis, therapy tests, examination and assessment procedures.

Those students who are found to have special capabilities according to the ministry's definition are supposed to be nominated by their schools. The nomination should rely on the judgment and evaluation of their teachers and/or parents in coordination with the school attainments scores. These students are required to carry out various psychological and intelligent assessment tests. An official nomination form must be completed by the students, teachers, parents and the school administration in order for these students to benefit from the special programs provided by the ministry.

In addition, a committee for identifying and supporting the gifted and talented must be established in schools. This committee should be under the supervision of the school head teacher or the assistant and includes a social worker and an educational psychologist in addition to teachers of various subjects such as Arabic, science, mathematics, English, IT and the physical and social activities.

This school committee is required to list the identified students and send the names to the educational zone. It is also required to complete and update a profile for each student. The profile must contain information on the student's health and family status, the nomination form, psychological and social evaluation reports, , achievement and IQ test scores in addition and student's continuous assessment card (see appendix 26).

### **The Provisions and Programs of the Gifted in the UAE**

The schools are encouraged, as stated in the Ministerial Resolution no. 94/2, issued in 2002, to provide different programs to ensure the appropriate support of the gifted and

talented. Resource rooms are established in primary stages intending to be gradually extended to all academic levels. The ministry also encourages modifying the school day to allow time for the various activities and programs that help meet the students' needs.

In addition, the schools must ensure that enrichment and accelerated programs and creative thinking activities such as the ones that improve students' abilities academically, physically, socially and psychologically are provided.

Schools should also observe the improvement of the gifted and talented by completing and updating a continuous assessment card and the gifted students profile annually in order to help identify and support their individual needs (see appendix 26). Schools are also urged to try and use different strategies in educating the gifted whether included in regular classes or attend special classes.

It is believed that many provisions are expected to be undertaken by schools, however, little are noticed to be effectively provided. Most schools need funding and qualified teachers to contribute efficiently in the gifted education programs.

### **The Assessment of Gifted and Talented in the UAE**

The Ministry of Education has established a centre for preparing examinations and educational measurement. Although it declares to take into consideration of the global experiences in learning and more comprehensive qualitative assessment (UNESCO Report, 2000), there seems to be no differentiation or comprehensive assessments are yet undertaken. The same assessment tests are used for all students in classes and no exceptions or modifications are made for the gifted and talented. Students are assessed periodically by achievement tests developed by their teachers or introduced by the Ministry of Education at the end of each of the two academic semesters.

However, the legislation decree number 94, issued by the Ministry of Education in 2002 indicates some issues related to the identification and assessment of the gifted and talented. The admission to the gifted and talented programs in theory provided by the Ministry is limited on the students who achieve 95 percentile and above in the overall achievement performance tests and/or in specific subjects and the students who achieve an IQ score of 130. The Ministry's decree lists the methods which

should be used to identify and assess the gifted and talented as follows: achievement tests; standardized examinations; intelligence tests; creativity tests; nominations by teachers and school administrations; parents' nominations; psychological evaluation. The decree also recommends setting profiles for the gifted and talented which combine social and psychological evaluations and the results of intelligence, creativity and achievement tests. The profile should also contain a follow up assessment report to identify the students' needs and capabilities and assign the appropriate programs accordingly.

However, practices in many schools in the UAE and interviews with a number of professional educators in the country show that identification and assessment of the gifted and talented are mainly based on achievement test and teacher nominations which seem to cause some problems as the achievement tests can be limited and their results are insufficient. It is widely argued by many researchers that using cut-off numbers to judge on students' performance can exclude students with high potential and creativity that do not show in test results. Moreover, creativity tests do not measure every aspect of a child's creativeness and parents and teacher nominations can be biased in favor of certain students (Davis & Rimm, 2004).

Discussion of the results of the findings from the methods used in this study is further discussed in the following chapter.

*Chapter 5*

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study intended to investigate the status of gifted and talented education in the United Arab Emirates in order to suggest the appropriate recommendations needed for developing and promoting education for these students. To achieve the goals of this study, a number of methods were used including a questionnaire survey, interviews, observation and document review. The results and outcomes of these methods were analyzed and presented in chapter 4. In this chapter, these results are discussed and summarized to look for answers to the research questions. A conclusion is derived at the end of the chapter. Recommendations regarding the research findings will come later in a separate chapter since they are considered an important part of the research questions.

The research was based on a number of questions which were to be investigated through the different types of methods used in this study. These research questions are as follows:

1. Does the current education system in the UAE meet the needs of the gifted and talented students?
2. What is the status of the education of gifted and talented in the government schools in the UAE?
3. How does the legislation and policies regarding educating the gifted and talented in the U.AE cater for the gifted and talented education and needs?
4. What are the recommendations and provisions that are in need for educating the gifted and talented in the UAE?

The discussion of the results and findings of the study aims to find answers for these questions. The first three questions are discussed in this chapter while the last question is discussed later in chapter 6. Since question #4 requires providing recommendations, it was thought to be discussed in a separate chapter.

**Question # 1: Does the current education system in the UAE meet the needs of the gifted and talented students?**

Looking at the findings from the collected data, it is significant to say that the education system with its current status does not meet the needs of the gifted and talented students. While the documents of the ministry of education and the reports submitted to the international organization such as the UNESCO show the concern and the interest of supporting gifted and talented, the provisions and the programs found in government schools, do not reflect this concern and interest (Gaad et al, 2006).

It is a fact that there is an administration department that is supposed to plan and provide for the students with exceptional capabilities, interviews with administrators in charge of this department show that they still in the process of developing the department in order to be able to activate such provisions. Furthermore, they do not have the fund or the authority to activate such plans or to promote them in schools across the country. Their role seems to be limited to consultation and publicity of such programs for the gifted and talented.

While more than 70 % of the educators in the UAE who participated in the study strongly believe in gifted education (see figure 15, chapter 4), most of them seem not appropriately aware of how to provide it. Things such as the definitions of gifted students or the identification process are highly important to be acknowledged by the teachers and administrators in schools in order to provide the gifted with programs suitable to their abilities. Unfortunately, there are only few publications that give such information and guide these educators to such procedures, the booklet guide mentioned in the previous chapter for instance. While these publications are helpful, they are not widely recognized or nationally known.

Most of programs provided for the gifted in government schools are limited to field trips and competitions (see figure 7) which do not serve or promote much of their abilities. While some enrichment programs do exist, they are not widely activated or used by schools. In addition, most of the existing provisions in some schools such as curriculum enrichment or teaching strategies for the gifted are carried out by inexperienced teachers who had received none or little training. Other provisions such

as recourses rooms or talented clubs are not seem to be truly designed for the gifted and they are used as teaching aids or entertainment centers for all the students.

Assessments of gifted and talented in the UAE are based on achievement test scores and teacher nominations. Other various assessment methods to identify gifted and talented such as IQ tests, creativity tests, psychological and social evaluations, parents nominations are planned and urged but not widely conducted or used. Gifted and talented are in need of proper identification in order to be provided with essential support to meet their needs.

Furthermore, gifted children may become distressed when their expectations are not met. It might appear as behavioral and emotional conflicts such as emotional distress, maladjustment, and underachievement, school drop out, juvenile misbehavior, depression and suicide (Davis and Rimm, 2004) or tendency to violence (Yewchuk, 1999).

In conclusion, the UAE highly values the rights of children to be entitled of appropriate education and the opportunity to receive what will develop their abilities, individual judgment, and sense of moral and social responsibility to become a useful member of society (Principle 7, Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1959). However, the education system in the UAE in its current status does not meet the needs of gifted and talented.

**Question #2: What is the status of the education of gifted and talented in the government schools in the UAE?**

Having examined the education system in the UAE in relation to the gifted students, interviewed many educators and surveyed many schools across the country, there seems to be no classes or formal provisions for the gifted and talented at any level. Gifted students are placed in regular mixed ability classes. No national curriculum modification is provided and no gifted teachers are assigned for these students. Some schools do have plans and programs going for the gifted but they are random and insufficient. Most of these programs are carried out by individuals who need support and funds.

The definition of gifted and talented seems to be vague and the identification procedures are unclear to most of schools. However, The UAE ministry of education seems to take the education of the gifted in consideration and in fact is making progress in providing such programs although these programs are still in need of development.

In the light of Educational Policy Document which was proposed by the Ministry of Education in 1995 and was adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers, the Ministry of education is entrusted by the government to provide a quality education to its youth. Facilities and plans were assured for the Ministry to carry out an overall change in the education system and to set the necessary policies to provide a high standard education system. While educating gifted and talented is an essential part of this quality system which should be more considered by the Ministry's education policy, no policies for the gifted and talented were mentioned yet (National Report on the Development of Education in the United Arab Emirates, 2001).

It is a fact that there is a special department of administration for the programs of students with exceptional abilities which is supposed to be responsible of certified gifted provisions in the country. However, the department has only been established recently and is still in progress. In addition, it does not have the authority to assign funds or implement projects. The main role of the department seems to be supervising and encouraging on going programs, providing consultation, planning and providing training.

However, there are some school programs for the gifted which are carried out individually by schools' administrators or concerned teachers. These programs are much welcomed and encouraged by the ministry. Schools, nation wide, as stated in the Ministerial Resolution no. 94/2 (2002) are encouraged to provide different programs to ensure the appropriate support of the gifted and talented.

The government schools are encouraged as well to observe the gifted and talented by completing and updating a continuous assessment card and a gifted profile in order to help identify and support their individual needs. This is provided by the ministry in the guide booklet published by the department of exceptional abilities in addition to definitions, characteristics, application forms, checklist and teaching strategies



regarding the gifted and talented. Schools are urged to try to use these different materials to plan for gifted programs. Looking at the results from the surveys and the interviews with teachers, most of schools seem to not know about this guide or the provided materials. Most of the respondents in the survey were not aware of any definitions for the gifted and talented nor the identification process or the teaching strategies.

Most of the provisions for the gifted which are indicated by educators in the surveys and interviews were limited to few things such as resources rooms which are established in most schools. However, these rooms seem not to be intended or operated for the use of the gifted but are used as teaching aids' rooms. While using more specialized teaching aids or techniques to teach gifted and talented are encouraged and urged, teachers complain of many things that they consider as barriers to educating the gifted such as lack of time and the overloading school schedule (see figure 14 and 15).

Furthermore, the teachers think it is unrealistic to expect differentiation in teaching instruction for a gifted child within a class of different abilities, learning difficulties and special needs. Teachers complain of not having the time to shift attention to students with learning difficulties let alone paying attention to gifted students whom most of teachers believe are able to succeed without help. These gifted students that their needs are most likely ignored in the class develop problems such as boredom and unresponsiveness to traditional teaching methods. Their high capabilities may be repressed and wasted and they might even become underachievers.

The ministry also encourages and allows modification of school day to set time for the various activities and programs that help meet the students' needs (National Report on the Development of Education in the United Arab Emirates, 2001). However, as findings showed, most of these activities are targeting the general population of schools and little is dedicated for the gifted. Furthermore, most of these programs are only intended as extra-curricula activities and seem not thoroughly planned. Most of these plans and programs need to seek professional assist in order to gain some benefits.

In conclusion, the status of gifted education seems vague and few programs are known to be carried out as no actual gifted programs officially exist. Most of what is provided seems to be only plans awaiting implementation. No comprehensive, well organized provisions seem to be present yet. Modifications and enrichment programs are not carried out officially but are encouraged and urged. Clear regulations are not yet established or applicable for gifted and talented students in schools and a more comprehensive policy for the gifted and talented are highly needed.

Furthermore, most schools lack funding for gifted programs and there are no qualified or trained teachers for the gifted to contribute efficiently in any gifted programs. Gifted and talented students are enrolled in regular classes; receive the same education as their peers without any differentiation in curriculum or in assessment. In addition, identification methods are not undertaken seriously in schools and they are limited to achievement scores and teachers' nominations only. Sometimes IQ tests are carried out as well but due to the lack of experts, they are not quite common.

**Question #3: How do the legislation and policies regarding educating the gifted and talented in the U.AE cater for the gifted and talented education and needs?**

After examining the available documents and observing different programs and plans in schools, it is significant to note that there seem to be no official policy regarding gifted and talented education yet. While few plans have been traced regarding improving the quality of education and meeting the needs of gifted and talented, no related legislation has been established yet.

In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the education system is relatively new, since the country was only established in 1971. Yet, it has developed rapidly during the 35 years of the country's age. Policies regarding the education systems have been developed and modified over the years. However, the country seems to need more organized and authentic based education policies to overcome the existing ones which have become outdated and do not suit the current world changes and challenges (Gaad et al, 2006).

Looking through the education policy of the UAE, policies regarding the gifted education in particular are significantly missing. No specific written policy on gifted and talented children was noticed nor were guidelines or regulation found. However,

in accordance with the Constitution and the other laws regarding the educational, mental and vocational welfare of the people with special needs, a department has been established for individuals with special abilities and is considered one of the organs of the sector of the Assistant Undersecretary for Special and Polytechnic education.

This department is responsible for the welfare of people who

require teaching special experience including the talented students. It has undertaken a number of reforms regarding the development of strategies for the gifted and talented students including exploratory surveys on the means of identifying and supporting the talented students, attending national conferences regarding the education of talented and gifted students, experimenting different projects in educating gifted and talented such as acceleration programs and enrichment plans(National Report on the Development of Education in the United Arab Emirates, 2001). Nevertheless, from observation, investigating official document and interviewing the head of this department, no written or official policy regarding the gifted and talented appeared to be available yet.

Having such policy for gifted and talented is essential for the development of the country. Caring for these students is a responsibility of the government. Meeting their needs within the education system through certain policies will enhance their capabilities and ensure that the country benefits from their special abilities and talents. Before setting an effective policy for these children, there should be a common understanding about who gifted and talented are, their needs, identification process, programs as well as funds and financial support needed to provide them with the necessary promotion and provisions.

In conclusion, a wider education policy in general and a policy for the gifted education in particular are highly needed in the UAE to meet the needs of the gifted and talented. There should be clear instructions and common regulations on who is responsible for gifted education and what programs and plans should be implement to provide them with appropriate education. It is important that this policy makes sure that these students receive adequate programs, have access to the most enabling

setting that meets their needs, have regular opportunities to interact with their peers, enjoy the life of school, participate in local community activities and have access to specialized classes and services required to their development.

## *Chapter 6*

### RECOMMENDATIONS

This study intended to investigate the status of gifted education in the government schools in the UAE and give appropriate recommendations regarding the subject matter. One of the research questions was to find out what kind of recommendations can be provided throughout this study. The question was as follows:

Question #4: What are the recommendations and provisions that are in need for educating the gifted and talented in the UAE?

Depending on the findings and after reviewing related literature, some recommendations are given in this chapter to improve and develop a better education system for the gifted and talented in the UAE. Recommendations are grouped under a number of topics including recommendations towards policy, definitions of gifted and talented, identification process and provisions.

The researcher does not claim that these are the definite and final recommendations that can be obtained regarding the subject matter, but these are few of what can be applied and done depending on the outcomes of the study. Recommendations are given regarding the following areas: policy, definition of gifted and talented, identification methods, provisions and programs. Recommendations for further research are also given at the end of this chapter.

#### POLICY

It is significant to note that changing existing policies is not claimed to be easy. As Taylor (2001) stated; it needs to be done through the passage of time and through reform movements in general education policies. Clear written policies are needed to mandate identification and provisions to the gifted and talented students. A better understanding to the needs of gifted and talented is also needed by those who administer and endorse the policies (Taylor, 2001).

Policies should be sensitive to the demographics and cultural needs of the children that are served in public school. Policies must be clear, sensitive and able to be interpreted and implemented appropriately. A policy should have the impact on those

who are intended to derive benefits from (Irby & Lara-Alicio, 2002). Designing a policy for the gifted and talented education must be flexible and indulgent. According to Passow and Rudnitski (1993, as cited in Irby & Lara-Alicio, 2002, p. 266) no common model is there to shape policies regarding gifted and talented education.

While no policies regarding gifted and talented exist, an overall education policy is already present. However, these policies need to be modified and changed to embrace the new trends and changes in the world. This policy must be designed and based on the philosophy of the education in the country and emerged from its goals and aims. Thus, a policy for the gifted and talented education has become a necessity in the UAE to ensure that these exceptional learners have the opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to be self-reliant, responsible, caring and contributing members of their society. To fulfill these goals, the ministry should develop and administrate legislations, regulations and polices related to the governance, funding and delivery of gifted education in the country (Alberta learning, 2000)

Policies should include explicit guidelines and directions regarding gifted education. These policies should focus on life skills and experiences and should have indications on how learners are prepared to take part actively in current life matters and acquire analytical skills to solve problems and cope with different situations. Creating a sense of relationship to one's homeland, the Arab nation and the world at large is important as well. In addition, characteristics of good citizenship should be promoted in such policies.

People with interests in the gifted education should be involved in planning the policy for the gifted and talented education. The composition of a committee of these people may differ for one district to another. Such committees can include representatives from the district administrators, school administrators, teachers (at each stage level), counselors, library or media specialists, school psychologists, gifted education specialists, curriculum specialists, school board representatives, parents, students, community members and university representatives (Alberta learning, 2000).

It is important to determine the purpose and set goals before setting any policy. The committee in charge should examine and review current Acts and existing learning

policies and guidelines before establishing new ones. They should also examine the philosophy of the Ministry of Education which needs to be consistent with their own vision and philosophy. Their goals should include examining what is currently in place for the gifted students, assessments determining the number of potential students, the attitudes of teachers toward gifted students, resource availability and the kind of in-service staff that will be needed to implement a program (Alberta learning, 2000).

Administrators at the district level can observe the different phases of designing, developing and implementing the policy. They must ensure that teachers and administrators at the school level are capable of the implementation of the policy.

Personnel to conduct and coordinate programs should be considered. Coordinators can be placed in schools to be a link between the districts and the schools and to make sure programs are provided appropriately.

District administrators, experts in the field, university representatives and school administrators can carry out the evaluation plan of the policy in its different stages. The evaluation process and the results will identify areas of success and provide recommendations for improvements. This evaluation plan should be integrated in the initial program design and its purpose should be clearly stated and understood by people involved before the process begins. Input from students, teachers, schools and district administrators, resource personnel, board and community members should be considered and valued as well (Alberta learning, 2000).

The form of an education policy for gifted and talented will vary according to the needs of the school and the students. The major goal of such policy should be creating a 'positive atmosphere based on a sense of community and a shared sense of values (Ibid as cited in Beveridge, 1999 p. 104). Rules should be clearly agreed and explicit consideration should be given in the school curriculum to the development of mutual respect, responsibility and self discipline.

This policy should include the development of appropriate teaching materials and text books for the gifted and talented. New teaching methods should be introduced to emphasize self learning; critical thinking and study skills and integration of subjects

throughout the curriculum should be considered as well. Learning resource centers, modernized teaching aids and teaching methods should be taken in consideration when introducing the new materials and curricula. Moreover, different assessment methods should be adopted to measure gifted and talented achievement level and enhance their learning.

It is recommended that a policy for the gifted and talented be supported with an action plan or a procedures booklet (Taylor, 2001). The existence of such written policy will avoid those children being overlooked by the education system or by a broad education policy. Another recommendation is having a coordinator in schools to ensure the co-operation and integration of all programs for the sake of the gifted and talented.

#### DEFINITION OF GIFTED AND TALENTED

Most people especially parents and teachers often believe that gifted children are able to work on their own and do not need further help or support while they are in need of tremendous support same as all children. Thus, it is important to create awareness among schools and communities on the gifted definition, characteristics, identification and supporting programs. Renzulli, Smith and others (2005) have placed the blame for non existence of provisions for the gifted and talented on political factors rather than economic factors. Thus, even policy makers should be provided with a definition of “giftedness” in order to have a clear idea on what decisions should be taken to secure their education (Baker, 1995),

A definition of gifted and talented should be agreed upon and provided to all schools in the country. It should be clear and comprehensive and reflects the philosophy and values of the country in addition to the current international theories and trends.

The characteristics of gifted and talented should be included with the definition and made easy to understand by parents and teachers. They might be illustrated or supported by pictures in order to be easier to spot and recognize.

Children should have equal opportunities regardless of their ethnics, gender, disabilities or social and economic status. They should be allowed the access to a challenging and varied curriculum at many levels (Yewchuk, 1999). They should not



be rejected nor excessively praised in classroom. From an ethical point of view, the gifted must be seen as ‘average with gifts, not as superior with faults’ (Manaster & Powell p. 73, as cited in Yewchuk, 1999).

Gifted and talented should be viewed as no better than their peers, just different learners. They must be recognized to have academic, emotional and social needs that must be acknowledged and nurtured in school whether in regular or special classes. They require supporting services as any other children. It is not acceptable to label them as they may get pressured from their teachers and rejected by their peers. They are also not expected to be perfect and act perfectly or exposed to high expectations beyond their abilities, or judged as ‘lazy’ or ‘misbehaving’. Female gifted should be given the opportunities in the society to reach their potential.

Differentiation should be made in school curriculum to match the needs of all the gifted. Counseling and advice is important and gifted and talented have to develop a respect for themselves and others and to accept individual differences. Gifted and talented must be treasured and nurtured as they are the future of any society or culture. Teachers should consider the key characteristics of the gifted students such as the pace at which they learn, the depth of their understanding and the interest that they hold when planning teaching strategies and accommodating teaching instruction (Parke, 1992).

#### IDENTIFICATION

More comprehensive assessment methods should be used to overcome the problems in the current assessments and identifications of gifted and talented students which are based mainly on achievement tests, teacher nominations and/or IQ scores.

Multidimensional approaches in assessments are suggested to identify students who seem high in any one of a number of criteria, particularly the general intellectual ability, specific academic talent, creativity, leadership, talent individual and performing arts (Davis & Rimm, 2004). An education policy for the gifted and talented should emphasize and implement such assessment methods to help achieve better results and provide better promotions for the gifted learners.

Identification gifted children must be carried out at fairly early age, before they reach fourth grade, to avoid the risk of becoming under achievers or develop behavioral problems (Balch, 1993).

It is important to use multi numbers of methods to identify the gifted and talented and avoid depending on one method only such as I. Q. tests or achievement tests (Balch, 1993).

Discovery of gifted children should start from home. Parents are valuable source of identification of gifted children. They can use checklists to note down the characteristics of their children. Lists used by teachers and parents are available in many education books. They can be researched by schools and distributed to teachers to help recognize and nominate children for gifted programs. These lists are only guides but they can be useful in spotting these children (Balch, 1993).

Assessments should also be varied, ongoing and repeated periodically so that teachers can gain a comprehensive understanding of the students' development and plan learning objectives accordingly (Davis & Rimm, 2004). Teachers should not depend only on achievement tests but should use alternative assessments such as class assignments, observation, informal interviews, parents' consulting or portfolios which contain students various work and results to evaluate students' progress and development (Smutny, 2000).

#### PROVISIONS AND PROGRAMS

A variety of programs should be offered for students who are gifted and talented to meet their various needs. Different organizational options have evolved for educating gifted and talented. These differences are based on the philosophical consideration such as acceptance by students, parents, communities and teachers and the demographics such as cost and resources.

It is very important to prepare the environment for the gifted to make it possible to meet all their needs. Children need an environment that is emotionally natural which provides opportunities for a better learning. The environment includes both the physical and social context. When the environment facilitates the development of the gifted children, they will prosper (Porter, 2005).

The ministry can choose to provide a variety or combination of options in order to offer a range of opportunities that are appropriate to the diverse needs of the gifted students (Alberta learning, 2000). These options of programs may include what Marland(1972 as cited in Alberta learning, 2000) suggested; programs such as acceleration by subjects, grade skipping, enrichment of regular curriculum, creative problem solving skills, future problem solving program, and leadership training program. Options given by Joseph Renzulli (1997 as cited in Alberta learning 2000) might be included as well such as regular curriculum compacting, general exploratory activities, group training activities and individual small group investigation of real problems.

Other programs can include the following (adapted from Alberta learning 2000):

- Provisions within the regular classroom where differentiated programs are offered. Students receive individualized programming based on their Individual Programming Plan (IPP).
- Provisions within the school setting where consultant specialist assistance and differentiated instructions are provided with the help of a specialist in gifted education. Examples of programs that can be provided can be as follows:
  - Clustering: grouping several gifted students in the same classroom and providing appropriate learning experiences,
  - resource room/pull out programs where students can leave the classroom on a regular basis for differentiated instruction
  - Pull-out for specific subject acceleration where students attend classes at a higher grade level in a specific subject area. Multi-age classroom grouping where students grouped in a classroom of two or more grades.
  - Interest classes where students attend classes on topics beyond or outside the regular curriculum such as seminars
  - Community mentor program where students work on an individual basis with community members in specific areas of inters.
  - Advanced placement or International Baccalaureate where students take university- level courses while attending high school.

- Special classes where gifted students are grouped from several classes on a scheduled basis.
- Provisions outside the school setting where some provisions can be offered to the gifted and talented such as the following:
  - Special schools can be established such as charter schools where students are placed in a congregated setting and provided with differentiated programming
  - Magnet school where students receive specialized instruction in accordance with the school established alternate program offering such as fine arts.
  - Summer programs where students attend courses offered by a variety of institutions such as universities, colleges and technical schools.

Offering such a variety of programs provides flexibility in ensuring that each student has access to the best educational opportunities. While the needs of each student may change and require different provisions, every individual who is gifted and talented shall be provided with an individual program plan (IPP) to give direction in provision planning and placement.

Although Curriculum modification seems difficult in the UAE which needs a radical change to the education system, teachers can still modify lessons to suit the needs of the gifted and talented. Maker (1982 as cited in Berger, 1991) advises teachers to develop appropriate objectives based on the core curriculum and differentiate them in terms of practice, content and results to meet the needs of gifted and talented. The ministry of Education can allow curriculum compacting for the gifted students in which they can process the essentials and advance beyond the already mastered materials. Gifted students can have the option to choose activities they are interested in and unrelated to the actual materials. In addition, teachers can design more activities related to the lessons but more challenging (Smutny, 2000).

Counseling programs and career guidance are important for gifted education. Gifted and talented may feel overwhelmed by the fact that they have multiple interests and abilities. They also have to make the 'right' decisions for future career (bin Talal, 2004). Thus care services, counseling and career guidance should be provided in schools. These students should be monitored by specialists to receive the appropriate

advice and counseling that help overcome problems and difficulties in their social, emotional or academic life (Davis & Rimm, 2004).

Activity centers for self-initiated projects can be established in schools to help support creative learning (Smutny, 2000). Students can work on projects or topics they choose to enhance their learning and get advanced in school work. Different activities can be allowed to promote creative thinking, analytical abilities and advanced learning.

Teachers should be encouraged and trained to differentiate the teaching strategies, methods and styles to create an attractive learning environment for all students in general and the gifted in particular. They can be trained to use a wide range of materials and give opportunities for different activities when introducing lessons especially to the gifted students who usually finish their work before their peers.

Different forms of groupings that are based on the learning objectives can be allowed in classes to provide productive learning and help the gifted students avoid boredom and frustration (Smutny, 2000).

Moreover, gifted students should be more encouraged to join activities such as student council, school newspaper, computer club, debating team and other activities that are available for all students but can serve gifted students as well and enhance certain abilities like leadership and creativity (Parke, 1992).

To conclude this chapter on recommendations, it is significant to note that many things can be done to promote gifted education and develop more flexible system for the gifted and talented. What is provided in this study are only few as the literature on gifted and giftedness full of valuable ideas and practical procedures.

Developing a policy for the gifted and talented education in the UAE is highly recommended to arrange better provisions for these learners as they have the right to be educated appropriately and their needs to be fulfilled and nurtured.

When developing such a plan for the gifted and talented, a philosophy and rationale should be established and agreed upon and should be set in the context of reality observing the requirements of national and state frameworks and the Ministry's goals and aims for the education in the country. This should contain why the school needs to cater for those children and what it needs to achieve in the long term.

The policy should also contain guidelines regarding the definition of gifted and talented children among the school population, the ways they can be identified, the programming options that can be provided in the classroom and in school and how these programs will be assessed and evaluated in the students' achievement and in the overall programming progress.

Defining all these guidelines will lead to the implementation of the policy. The ministry then must agree on what is needed to implement this plan, how to achieve the goals, how much funding should be allocated for the programs, and what sources and purposes must be taken in consideration. In addition, a school coordinator is recommended to ensure the co-operation and the integration of all the programs regarding the gifted and talented. A policy is an evolving document, so school officials must regard it as tentative and reviewable deciding the way it may fit within other policies.

Different methods of assessment can help the teachers identify students who are gifted and talented and plan alternatives, differentiate teaching strategies and apply modifications to meet their needs within the available fund and training. More integrated activities for the gifted and talented in mixed ability classes can be introduced as well.

Modifications can be applied to the curriculum to provide more challenging materials and advanced knowledge. The testing systems can also be modified and assessments can be varied to be more continuous and comprehensive to cover all students' aspects and needs. Gifted and talented can be provided with resources room and receive enrichment programs. Curriculum compacting and counseling provisions should be allowed to help the gifted students learn advanced materials and overcome their problems to reach their potential.

Although it is never an easy task to move from having no provisions for the gifted and talented to provide a comprehensive program, it is possible to make changes to current programs while planning for a better and more developed overall system that takes care of gifted and talented needs and abilities.

#### RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. It is recommended for further studies to carry out case studies to focus on gifted individuals throughout different school levels to investigate the reliability of provisions given in schools.
2. It is recommended that this study be replicated in a period of time, ten years for example, to evaluate changes made to the education system regarding gifted education.
3. It is recommended for future studies to seek more particular topics regarding gifted and talented such as changes in values towards gifted education or ethical and social barriers facing the gifted and talented in the UAE.
4. It is recommended for future studies to cover different or individual aspects of gifted provisions in the UAE such as acceleration process and enrichment programs as there are lack of research on these aspects regarding the UAE.
5. Long-term studies regarding the subject of gifted and talented in the UAE are highly recommended for further research as there is increasing need to investigate different aspects in various longer periods of time.

*Chapter 7*

CONCLUSION

To summarize this study, it aimed to investigate the status of the education of gifted and talented in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). A comprehensive literature review was carried out to understand the concepts and theories behind gifted education. The study used different types of methodology including a questionnaire survey, interviews, observation and document review. Results and findings from the different conducted methods were studied and analyzed to understand the actual status of the gifted education in the UAE so appropriate recommendations can be given.

It was significant to realize the importance of gifted education world wide and the efforts made to improve and promote the quality of provisions for the gifted students in different parts of the world. It was also significant to recognize the considerable efforts done by notable researchers and educators who provided and enriched literature with different theories and philosophies concerning the gifted and giftedness which greatly helped in designing and conducting this study.

As the study was concerned of investigating the gifted education in the UAE, different methods were considered and planned to achieve the purpose of the study. Time and efforts were made to achieve the goals and find answers to some questions regarding the gifted education in the UAE.

The main questions of the research were to find out the status of the education of gifted and talented in the government schools in the UAE and to identify whether appropriate provisions and policies are made available to educate gifted and talented students among the general educational.

The rationale of the study was based on the need for a proper education for the gifted learners because they have the right to be provided with help and support in order to promote their exceptional abilities and their unique needs. In addition, they are considered the future of the nation as many of them might grow up to become the future leaders, artists and scientists of the nation if provided with the necessary care and support and if their abilities were nurtured and developed.



The study was conducted and the findings were analyzed to find out that the education of gifted and talented in the UAE is in need of vital improvement. While many schools provide some programs for the gifted, most of these programs are carried out by individuals and need much enhancement and modifications. It is true that many educators in the country believe in gifted education, however, the education system needs to pay more attention to it as no gifted schools or gifted classes are available for the gifted and talented. Many programs are in need to be provided to the gifted in regular schools as no modifications or enrichment are applied to the national curriculum which is taught to all students with no differentiation.

More over, a policy regarding educating gifted and talented is highly needed as there was none found. A comprehensive definition of gifted and talented that is appropriate to the culture of the society and the needs of the country is also needed instead of a limited definition which considers students with high academic achievement as gifted and excludes many other students who do not fit to the description. Carefully planned instruments must be applied to identify gifted and talented in order to provide them with tailored programs meeting their needs instead of depending only on achievement scores or impressions of teachers.

In conclusion, the study found that it is important to improve the status of the education provided to the gifted and talented in the government schools because it does not meet their needs or the need of the country. A lot of improvements, modifications and efforts must be made to develop a more comprehensive education system that meets the needs of all students including the gifted and talented. Promoting and developing the exceptional abilities of these gifted and talented youth is a great responsibility which must be taken with great care and consideration by the whole nation not only by teachers and educators.

*Chapter 8*

REFERENCE

- Alberta Learning (2000) *Teaching Students Who Are Gifted and Talented. Programming for Students with Special Needs*. Special Education Branch, Edmonton: Canada  
Obtained from ERIC  
<http://www.eric.ed.gov>
- Baker, B (1995) *The Economic Health of Gifted Education in Three Northeastern States: An analysis of Public School Opportunities and Private Programs in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut*. Analysis Report Obtained from ERIC DATA BASE  
[Access 27/3/ 2006]
- Balch, M. (1993) *The Gifted Child: Personality Traits, Learning Styles, and Useful Teaching Strategies*, Obtained online from ERIC: ED 386846  
[Accessed 9/10/2006]
- Berger, S (1991) 'Developing Programs for Students of High Ability', *The ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education (ERIC EC)*, The Council for Exceptional Children *ERIC EC Digest # 502*  
Obtained from:  
<http://ericec.org/digests/e502.html>  
[Access 27/4/2005]
- Bertrand, L. (2001) "Teacher support" In *Special needs education: European Perspectives. Proceeding of the international conference*. The European-agency for Development in Special Needs Education. Meijer, C. &Watkins, A Brussels(Eds)  
Available online from [www.copiedit.co.uk](http://www.copiedit.co.uk)  
[Access 13/1/ 2005]
- Beveridge, S. (1999) *Special Education Needs in Schools*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge p.p.104
- Bin Talal, H. (2004) 'The Arab Human Development Report 2002: review and reform', *Arab Studies Quarterly (ASQ)*, Spring Issue, 2004, Vol. 6, No. 2  
Obtained from: HighBeam Research  
<http://www.highbeam.com>
- Bisland, A. (2003) 'Student-Created Public Relations for Gifted Education', *Gifted Child Today*, Vol. 26, No. 2, p. 60–64
- Boeree, G. (1998) *Qualitative Methods Workbook*, Shippensburg University  
Electronic resource Obtained online from:  
<http://www.ship.edu>  
[Accessed 31/10/06]

Bradshaw, D. Tennant, L. & Lydiatt, S. (2004) 'Special Education in the United Arab Emirates: Anxieties, attitudes and aspirations', *International Journal of Special Education*. Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 49-55

Burt, J. (2005) 'Impact of Active learning on Performance and motivation in female Emirati Students', *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives*. Vol. 1, No. 1  
Online journal available from:  
<http://www.zu.ac.ae/lthe/index.html>  
[Access 22/4/2005]

Colangelo, N. & Davis G. (2003) *Handbook of Gifted Education*. Third Edition (eds), Boston: Allyn and Bacon .

Coleman, M. (2003) 'The Identification of Students Who Are Gifted', *ERIC Digest*. VA; Arlington: ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education.  
Obtained online from  
[www.eric.ed.gov](http://www.eric.ed.gov)

Cramond, B. (2004) 'Can We, Should We, Need We Agree On A Definition Of Giftedness?', *Roeper Review*. Vol. 27, No.1, pp. 15-16

Davis, G. & Rimm, S. (2004) *Education of the Gifted and Talented*. (5th Ed) Boston: Allyn & Bacon

De la Jara, R. (2006) *IQ Comparison WebSite*, Website address:  
<http://members.shaw.ca/delajara/index.html>  
[Accessed 25/11/2006]

Farley, G. (2002) *Barriers and Supports Affecting the Inclusion of Special Education Issues into the Pre-service Training of School Principals: Faculty Perceptions*. East Tennessee State University  
Obtained online from:  
<http://etd-submit.etsu.edu/etd/theses/available/etd-1119102-004431/>  
[Accessed 11/10/2006]

Federal Environmental Agency (2002) *The United Arab Emirates Report on Sustainable Development World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26th August-4th September 2002*.

Feldhusen, J.(2001) 'Talent Development in Gifted Education'. *ERIC Digest* E610. ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education, Arlington, VA  
Obtained online from: [www.eric.ed.gov](http://www.eric.ed.gov)  
[Accessed 29/8/2006]

Gaad, E., Arif, M. & Scott, F. (2006) 'Systems Analysis of the UAE Education System', *International Journal of Educational Management*, Vol. 20, No. 4, pp. 291-303

Gallagher, J (1988) 'National Agenda for Educating Gifted Students: Statement of Priorities', *Exceptional Children*, Vol. 55, No.2, pp.107-14

Gallagher, J. (1994) 'Current and Historical Thinking on Education for Gifted and Talented Students'. In : *National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talent. An Anthology of Reading*. Ross, P. (ed) Washington DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, pp. 83-107

Gallagher, J. (2002) 'Society's Role in Educating Gifted Students: The Role of Public Policy', *Senior Scholars Series*. National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, Storrs, CT., Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.

Glass, T. (2004) 'What Gift: The Reality of the Student who is Gifted and Talented in Public School Classrooms', *Gifted Child Today*, Vol. 27, No. 4, pg. 25-29

Hill, F., Le Grange, L. & Newmark, R. (2003) 'The Use of Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies in A Special Education Needs Study', *International Journal of Special Education*, Vol. 18, No. 2

Obtained electronically from:

<http://www.internationaljournalofspecialeducation.com>

[Accessed 18/10/2006]

Government of South Australia (1996) *Gifted Children and Student Policy, Policy Statement*. No. 9. Department of Education and Children's Services. Date of Issue: 12 April 1996

Obtained electronically from:

[www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/files/communities/docman/1/GiftChildrenStudentsPolicy.pdf](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/docs/files/communities/docman/1/GiftChildrenStudentsPolicy.pdf)

Irby, B & Lara-Alecio, R. (2002) "Educational Policy and Gifted/Talented, Linguistically Diverse Students" In: *Reaching New Horizons: gifted and talented Education for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*, (Ed.) Castellano, J. & Diaz, E. Allyn & Bacon: Boston, pp.256-281

Jalahmah, A. , Utaibah, F. & AbudlAziz, A. (2001) *Exploratory Study On Identification Methods Of Gifted And Talented And Educational Provisions In Government Schools In The United Arab Emirates 1999-2000*. Dubai: Ministry of Education Publishing (Arabic Reference)

Jalahmah, A & Utaibah, F (2003) *Guidance Booklet for The gifted and Talented Programs: Educational District & Schools 2002- 2003*, Department of Programs for Special Abilities– Gifted and Talented Section – Ministry of Education, UAE (Arabic Reference)

Kapiszewski, A.(2000) 'Population, Labor and Education Dilemmas Facing GCC States at the Turn of the Century'. In : *Cross-Roads of the New Millennium. Proceedings of the Technological Education and National Development (TEND) Conference (2<sup>nd</sup>, April 8-10, 2000, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates)*. P. 43

Lupkowski, A. (1985) 'Meeting the needs of gifted preschoolers'. *Children Today*, March-April issue. Available on line from:

Find article website

[http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m1053/is\\_v14/ai\\_3658754](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1053/is_v14/ai_3658754)

[Accessed March,8, 2005]

Manning, S. (2006) 'Recognizing Gifted Students: A Practical Guide for Teachers'. KAPPA DELTA PI RECORD. Winter Issue, pp. 64-68

Obtained from ERIC

Merrill, B. (1983) *Growing up Gifted: Developing the Potential of Children At Home and at School*, (2nd ed.).

Mertens, D. & Mclaughlin (2004) *Research and Evaluation Methods in Special Education*, California: Crowin Press

Ministry of Education; Department of Information and Research (1996) *National Report of the United Arab Emirates on the Development of Education from 1993/1994 - 1995/1996*, Dubai: Planning and Evaluation Sector, pp. 120, 110.

Ministry of Education; Curricula & Educational Programs (2006) *Summary of Educational Statistics 2004-2005*. Department of Educational & Institutional Research, Documentation & Statistics Section, UAE

Mohammed, N. (1998) 'The Preventive Approach to Special Education as Applied to Gifted Exceptionality: A focus on Assessment'

Obtained from ERIC

<http://www.eric.ed.gov>

[Access 25/4/2005]

O'Sullivan, M.(2003) 'Needs Assessment and the Critical Implications of a Rigid Textbook/Syllabus for In-service Education and Training for Primary English Teachers in the United Arab Emirates', *Teacher Development*, Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 437-456

Parke, B. (1992) 'Challenging Gifted Students in the Regular Classroom', The ERIC clearinghouse on Disabilities and gifted Education (ERIC EC), The council for Exceptional children. *ERIC Digest # 513*

Obtained from ERIC

[www.eric.ed.gov](http://www.eric.ed.gov)

Passow, A. & Rudnitski, R. (1993) 'State Policies Regarding Education of the Gifted as Reflected in Legislation and Regulation'. National Research Centre on the Gifted and Talented, Office of Educational Research and Improvement (Ed). Washington, DC.

Obtained from: ERIC: ED 379849/ EC 303722

Porter, L.(2005) *Gifted Young Children: A Guide for Teachers and Parents*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Berkshire: Open University Press

[Access 26/4/2005]

Rashid, M (2006 a) 'National Talent Hunt to Be Launched In Government Schools', *Khaleej Times*, 29 September 2006

Obtained electronically from

[www.khaleejtimes.com](http://www.khaleejtimes.com)

[Accessed 14/11/06]

Rashid, M (2006 b) 'Talent Support Plan Set To Cost Dh100m', *Khaleej Times*, 18 October 2006

Obtained electronically from

[www.khaleejtimes.com](http://www.khaleejtimes.com)

[Accessed 14/11/06]

Renzulli, J. (2001) 'Standards and Standards Plus. A Good Idea or a New Cage?', *Gifted Education Communicator*, Gosfield, M. (ed). California Association for the Gifted, V. 31, No.1, p. 10.

Obtained from ERIC ED 463605

Renzulli, J. (2003) 'Conception of Giftedness and Its Relationship to the Development of Social Capital', In: Colangelo, N. & Davis, G (eds) *Handbook of Gifted and Talented, Third Edition*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon , pp.75-87

Renzulli, J., Seigle, D. Gubbins, E. Chen, H. Brown, S. & Zhang, W. (2005) 'Assumptions Underlying the Identification of Gifted and Talented Students', *Gifted Child Quarterly*, vol. 49, no.1, 68-79

Renzulli, J., Smith, L., White A., Callahan, C., Hartman R., Westberg, K., Gavin M., Reis, S., Siegle, D., Sytsma, R., (2005) *Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students*, Creative Learning Press, Inc. obtained from: [www.creativelearningpress.com](http://www.creativelearningpress.com)

[Accessed 6/5/2005]

*The Research Methods Glossary* (2000) GOLD home Website

<http://www.bath.ac.uk/e-learning/gold/glossary.html>

last updated 2000

[Accessed 8/12/2006]

Resnick, D. & Goodman, M.(1994) *American Culture and the Gifted*. Office of Educational Research and Improvement (Ed), Washington, DC. Pg. 109-121

Riley, T. (2004) 'Looking ahead: Research to Inform Practice in the Education of Gifted and Talented Students in New Zealand', *The New Zealand Journal of Gifted and Talented*, Vol. 14, No. 1

Obtained on line from: <http://www.giftedchildren.org.nz>

[Accessed 11/10/2006]

Robinson, N. (2002) *Assessing and Advocating for Gifted Students: Perspectives for school and Clinical Psychologists*, *Senior Scholars Series*. National Research Centre on the Gifted and Talented, Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED)

Obtained from ERIC

<http://www.eric.ed.gov>

[Access 25/4/2005]

Robson, C. (2002) *Real World Research, Second Edition*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing

Russel, A (2005) 'Zayed University Students' Teaching and Learning Beliefs and Preferences: An analysis based on the surface versus deep learning approach', *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives*. Vol. 1, No.2

Online journal available from: <http://www.zu.ac.ae> [Access 22/4/2005]

Sak, U. (2004) 'About Creativity, Giftedness, and Teaching the Creatively Gifted in the Classroom', *Roepert Review*, V.26, No. 4, Academic Research Library pg. 216-222

Sharjah Award for Academic Distinction Website < [www.shjaward.com](http://www.shjaward.com) >

[Accessed 14/11/06]

Shay, S. & Jawitz, J. (2004) 'Assessment and the Quality of Educational Programs: What Constitutes Evidence?' *Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED)*

Available online from:

[www.ched.uct.ac.za](http://www.ched.uct.ac.za)

Sheikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Official Website (2003) Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum Awards for Distinguished Academic Performance < [www.sheikhhamdan.ae](http://www.sheikhhamdan.ae)>

[Accessed 14/11/2006]

Silverman, L. (1997) *What We Have learned about Gifted Children, 1979-1997*, Gifted Development Center, Denver, CO. p.4

Obtained online from ERIC : ED 428 473

Smutny, J.(2000) 'Teaching Young Gifted Children in the Regular Classroom', *The ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education (ERIC EC)*, The Council for Exceptional Children, ERIC EC Digest #595

Obtained from:

<http://ericec.org>

[Accessed 27/4/2005]

Stenberg, R. (2003) 'Giftedness According to the Theory of Successful Intelligence'. In Colangelo, N. & Davis, G.A. (eds.) *Handbook of Gifted Education (3rd edn)*, Boston: Allyn & Bacon (Eds.), pp.88-99

Stephens, K. & Karnes, F. (2000) State definitions for the gifted and talented revisited. *Exceptional Children*, vol. 66, No. 2 ; Academic Research Library, p. 219

Tannenbaum, A.(2003) 'Nature and Nurture of Giftedness' In: Colangelo, N. & Davis, G (eds.) *Handbook of Gifted and Talented, Third Edition*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon , pp. 45-59

Taylor, S. (2001) *Gifted & Talented Children: A Planning Guide*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Ugur, S.(2004) 'A synthesis of research on psychological types of gifted adolescents',  
*Journal of Secondary Gifted Education*, Obtained from: Highbeam research  
<http://www.highbeam.com>

UNESCO Report on the United Arab Emirates (2000) *The Education For All (EFA) Assessment (2000): Country Reports: United Arab Emirates*, Ministry of Education and Youth,  
Obtained from:  
[http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/united\\_arab\\_emirates/contents.html#cont](http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/united_arab_emirates/contents.html#cont)  
[Accessed March, 8, 2005]

United Arab Emirates Initial report on the convention of the rights of the child ( 2001)  
*Consideration Of Reports Submitted By States Parties Under Article 44 Of The Convention On The Rights Of The Child*. October 24, 2001.

The United Arab Emirates Report on Sustainable Development (2002) *World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, and 26th August -4th September 2002*. prepared by Federal Environmental Agency, reviewed by the National Committee for the preparation of UAE' s participation in World Summit on Sustainable Development(WSSD 2002)

United Nation (1959) *Declaration of the Rights of the Child*, UN Document Series. Symbol: ST/HR/UN Issuing Body: Secretariat Centre for Human Rights. Proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 1386(XIV) of 20 November 1959

United Nations (1989) Convention on the Rights of the Child *UN General Assembly*, Document A/RES/44/25 (12 December 1989)  
Obtained from:  
<http://www.cirp.org/library/ethics/UN-convention/>  
[Accessed 6/5/2005]

United Nations General Assembly (2000) *The Dakar Framework for Action; 2000: Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments*, submitted to the World Education Forum in Dakar Senegal, 26-28 April, 2000  
Obtained from the UNESCO website: [www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org)  
[Accessed 26/11/2006]

United Nations -Convention of the Rights of the Child- 15 April (2001), Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Initial reports of States parties due in 1999, United Arab Emirates*,. GE.01-45455 (E)

United Nations -Geneva 5-8 September (2001)The Department of Information, statistic And Research Ministry of Education & Youth, *National Report on the Development of Education in the United Arab, Education*, ( 2001) ,Programs and Curricula ; submitted to the 64th session of the International Conference on Education

United Nation (2002)*Executive Board of the United Nations Development Program and of the United Nations Population Fund, Second Country Cooperation Framework for the United Arab Emirates (2002-2006)*.1st regular session 2002, New York, Item 3 of The Provisional Agenda, Country Cooperation Frameworks and Related Matters, DP/CCF/UAE/2



United Nations (2002) *The Permanent Mission Of The United Arab Emirates, Geneva, Written Replies By The Government Of The United Arab Emirates Concerning The List Of Issues Received By The Committee On The Right Of The Child Relating To The Consideration Of The Initial Report Of The United Arab Emirates*. CRC/RESP/1, GE.02-41435(E) 230502 240502

Obtained from: Office Of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights website:

[www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/6/crc/doc/replies/wr-uae-1.pdf](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/6/crc/doc/replies/wr-uae-1.pdf)

[Accessed 26/11.2006]

Weinberger, S. (2004) *Teaching Gifted kids in the Regular Classroom: Strategies and techniques Every Teacher Can Use to Meet*. US: Free Spirit Publishing

*Wikipedia*, The Free Encyclopedia (2006)

Available on line:

<http://en.wikipedia.org>

[Accessed 14/10/2006]

The World Education Forum Drafting Committee (2000) *The Dakar Framework for Action, Education for all: Meeting Our Collective Commitments. Notes on the Dakar Framework for Action, World Document Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000*. ED-2000/CONF/211/1

Obtained online from:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001202/120240e.pdf>

[Access: 3/5/2006]

Yewchuk, C. (1999) 'Learning Characteristics of Gifted Students: Implications for Instruction and Guidance'. *The New Zealand journal of gifted Education*. Vol. 11/12, No. 1

Obtained online from: <http://www.giftedchildren.org.nz/>

[Accessed 14/11/2006]

Zirkel, P. (2004) 'The Case Law on Gifted Education: A New Look', *The Gifted Child Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 4, pp. 309-314

#### Arabic Reference:

الجاهة عائشة ، العتيبة فاطمة، و عبدالعزيز عبدا لعظيم (2001) الدراسة الاستطلاعية حول طرق اكتشاف الموهوبين و أساليب رعايتهم بمدارس التعليم العام بوزارة التربية و التعليم و الشباب بدولة الامارات العربية المتحدة 1999-2000 – إصدار وزارة التربية

الجاهة عائشة، العتيبة فاطمة (2003) الدليل الإرشادي لبرامج الفائين و الموهوبين: المنطقة التعليمية / المدرسة لعام 2003/2002 إدارة برامج ذوي القدرات الخاصة- قسم الفائين و الموهوبين ، وزارة التربية و التعليم، دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة، عائشة ، فاطمة العتيبة.(eds)

وزارة التربية و التعليم، المناهج و البرامج التعليمية (2006) خلاصة إحصائية التعليم 2004- 2005 إدارة البحوث التربوية – قسم التوثيق و الإحصاء



