

## **Guiding Students' Interests and Attitudes: Helping Counselors Help Students**

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## Abstract

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has begun to undergo significant diversification in addressing the way forward. On April 25, 2016, Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman introduced the “Saudi Vision 2030” to address and decrease the country’s dependency on oil production (Rashad, 2016). From this goal came the program, Khebrat, that was designed aiming to diversify the system of Saudi Arabia’s schools through allowing teachers, school counselors, and school administrators to travel to other countries. Where they can observe and learn from the immersion program within the school systems in the other countries.

Through the Khebrat program, participants go through intensive language studies in their countries, then develop a Capstone project and guiding paper which will be translated into Arabic to implement in the system of Saudi Arabia’s schools. The goal is to add more expertise to the transformations that are currently being made and to improve students’ engagement and success (Alayyafi, 2018). This paper was prepared during the immersion phase in Florida Charter Schools in Orange County, where the Capstone project was aimed to develop a counseling curriculum focusing on a way to help Saudi students in making a “box” to represent their “personal self.”

The format and procedures of the project were adapted from concepts of the Hyde program of Maine, which discuss five words and five principles of good development. It can be stated that at the core of the Capstone project, the goal of the Khebrat participant is to provide a unique aspect that would benefit the system of Saudi Arabia’s schools. These aspects were investigated through a fifteen-minute zoom-presentation to four Saudi school counselors from all around the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia who completed the six-item

mixed-method survey. The school counselors agreed that the project was unique and needed, as well as, a huge amount of information was given to assist with the project implementation.

**Keywords:** Khebrat Program, Saudi Vision 2030, Hyde Program.

### الملخص

بدأت المملكة العربية السعودية بإجراء تنوع كبير في طرق التعامل في شتى المجالات من اجل المضي قدما. في 25 أبريل من عام 2016، قدم ولي العهد الأمير محمد بن سلمان "رؤية السعودية 2030" والتي تهدف بشكل أساسي لتقليل اعتماد المملكة على إنتاج النفط. ومن هذا الهدف جاء برنامج "خبرات" والذي تم تصميمه من اجل إثراء نظام مدارس المملكة العربية السعودية من خلال السماح للمعلمين ومستشاري ومديري المدارس بالسفر إلى دول أخرى. حيث يمكنهم اكتساب وتعلم أفكار جديدة اثناء برامج الانخراط التي سيحضرونها في مدارس البلدان الأخرى.

من خلال برنامج خبرات، يخضع المشاركون لدورات لغة مكثفة في بلدانهم، ثم يطورون مشروع وورقة إرشادية سيتم ترجمتها إلى اللغة العربية لتطبيقها في نظام مدارس المملكة العربية السعودية. والهدف من ذلك هو إضافة المزيد من الخبرة للتحويلات التي يتم إجراؤها حاليا في النظام التعليمي في المملكة وبالتالي تحسين مشاركة الطلاب ونجاحهم.

تم إعداد هذه الورقة أثناء مرحلة الانخراط في احد مدارس فلوريدا في مقاطعة أورانج ، وقد كان المشروع آنذاك يهدف إلى تطوير منهج إرشادي يركز على اقتراح طريقة لمساعدة الطلاب السعوديين في صنع "صندوق" لتمثيل "ذاتهم الشخصية"

تم استنباط شكل وإجراءات المشروع من مفاهيم برنامج هايد في ولاية ماين، والتي تناقش خمس كلمات وخمسة مبادئ للتنمية الجيدة. يجدر الإشارة إلى أن جوهر وهدف هذا المشروع، يتمثل بإشراك برنامج خبرات في توفير نظام فريد من شأنه أن يفيد مدارس المملكة العربية السعودية. تم تقديم المشروع من خلال عرض تقديمي مدته خمسة عشر دقيقة لأربعة استشاريين سعوديين والذين كانوا قد أكملوا الاستبيان المكون من ستة عناصر. اتفق مستشارو المدارس على أن المشروع فريد من نوعه وأن نظام

المدارس في المملكة بحاجة له، بالإضافة إلى أنهم قدموا الكثير من المعلومات للمساعدة في تنفيذ المشروع.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** برنامج خبرات، رؤية السعودية 2030، برنامج هايد.

## 1. Introduction

The Islamic holy city of Medina is the capital of Al-Madinah Region in Saudi Arabia. Al-Masjid an-Nabawi “The Prophet's Mosque” that lies at the heart of Medina city, is the place where the Islamic prophet, Mohammad, was buried. Medina city contains about one and a quarter million people and it is about 120 miles (190 km) from the Red Sea coast (General Authority of Statistics, 2019). Medina city is situated at the most fertile part of the Hejazi territory and it is common with the production of dates and vegetables. The current economic growth of Medina city is through the “Medina Knowledge Economic City” project, which focuses on knowledge-based industries and has been planned to boost the development process and the number of jobs.

The 6.7-billion-dollar “Knowledge Economic City in Medina” project was scheduled to include a technology zone, institute of advanced IT studies, campus for medical researches and life sciences, and an interactive museum on the life of Prophet Mohammad. The “Knowledge Economic City in Medina” planned to be adjacent to a retail zone, business districts, and residential zones including high rises, houses, fully serviced apartments, shopping malls, and a mosque with a capacity of 10,000-worshippers (Hamilton, 2006).

On April 25, 2016, Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman introduced the Saudi Vision 2030, intending to decrease the country’s dependency on oil production through diversifying the Saudi’s economy and developing the public service sectors such as health, education, infrastructure, recreational facilities, and tourism (Rashad, 2016). Khebrat program was designed aiming to diversify the system of Saudi Arabia’s schools through allowing teachers, school

counselors, and school administrators to travel to other countries. Where they can observe and learn from the immersion program within the system of the other countries' schools (Alayyafi, 2018).

This paper is detailing a Capstone Project which is part of the Khebrat program with a reflection of an immersion phase of the Florida Charter Schools' system in Orange County, The Capstone Project journey began from an observation made by a person with experience as a teacher for eleven years and as a school counselor for two years in high school and one year in middle school in Saudi Arabia. The topic of interests and attitudes impacts thousands of students in Saudi Arabia and it is one of the most challenging topics for school counselors to work with. Where it defines who students are, what they love to do, and their overall mentality. Also, it characterizes students in many different ways, such as some students asking themselves the questions "what do I love to do?" and "what am I supposed to do after I finish school?" Furthermore, students who acknowledge their interests enrich their self-sense or "find themselves", as well as, nurture this process and build confidence in their life. In contrast, if students don't recognize their selves or interests, attitudes, and goals, they will have a hard time coping with their personal lives and future choices.

Unfortunately, this appears to be a big problem in the system of Saudi Arabia's schools as a whole and specifically with the counselors. Where there are several schools that are lacking the dimensions and resources of identifying students' interests and attitudes, which cannot promote students' future academic or career options. In addition, some families aren't aware of their children's abilities and capabilities, so they depend on their school counselors to enlighten them. So, it would be a dilemma if the school counselors do not

know how to explore, discover, measure, and cultivate students' attributes.

From these points, it can be seen that the school counselors have a big role in the education process, especially concerning students' mental health, education status, and problem-solving. When the counselors are well educated and well prepared, students find themselves safer within a competent hand. For those reasons, the goal of this Capstone project is to address the topic of students' interests and attitudes in different ways and to show the advantages of implementing clearer pathways for the future success of Saudi students.

The "Khebrat" program offers the most opportune chance to help the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its students by reducing the accumulation of studying with dead-end majors and bad educational outcomes. Finally, this Capstone project plans to provide researches on the new ways of enlightening school counselors, as well as, glean additional knowledge through observations that were made during the school immersion phase while observing American counselors at their work.

## 2. Research Purpose

The "Box" session is highly structured based on concepts from the Hyde program of Maine which discusses five words and five principles of good development. There is a preplanned lecture format with therapist guidance and direct instruction. These instructions will be monitored by audiences or student participants (Brabender & Fallon, 2007). The purpose of this study is to provide a faithful presentation of the "Box" exercise to ascertain what the participants/students found useful/helpful.

The researcher explored the results of encouraging active participation from workshop participants throughout the workshop. Students were asked to consider the concepts that were presented and to develop personal strategies for applying them as a representation of their selves. The personal discussion periods were between each block of information. The attendees were encouraged to participate by discussing the material and then implementing their strategies verbally to the counselor/instructor.

### **3. II. Research Questions**

This study addressed the following questions:

1. What would the participants' responses reflect as being valuable about that experience and what would the rank of that be with other counselors and participants?
2. What is the new theory that would emerge as a result of the analysis using a qualitative method in the Grounded Theory Tradition? see Glaser & Strauss, (1967)

### **4. Theoretical Hypotheses**

This study was guided by two theoretical hypotheses:

1. A faithful presentation of the "Box" exercise will elicit the active participation of the participants.
2. Participation in the exercise can be expected to positively influence the student's self-sense, thereby motivating positive behavior after the

session.

## 5. Research Hypotheses

This study was guided by three research hypotheses:

1. Individuals who were interviewed and completed the written measures after an event will honestly describe their experiences as they remember them.
2. Participants involved with the research study will be willing to participate in the study and discuss their relationships honestly.
3. All of the participants and students in the research study will participate in the activity's discussions.

## 6. Research Limitations

The study had three limitations:

1. The “opportunity sample” was restricted in the initial study to one grade school in Orlando and the counselors who completed the surveys were from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia only.
2. Because an opportunity sample was used, there was the possibility of having participants that would be familiar with either the material being presented or the researcher influencing their answers.
3. Although all attempts were made to not influence the participants' interpretations of the information being presented, because of participating the researcher could affect the process information

interpretations (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994).

## 7. Literature Review

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is well underway with its *Vision 2030* (Nurunnabi, 2017). The Ministry of Education has begun multiple implementations in schools aimed to increase students' enthusiasm, provide access to appropriate learning and teaching resources, and improve and introduce necessary learning and teaching methods. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is prepared to more invest in the education and training fields so that their young men and women are well equipped for the future. In 2016, as part of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia wide overview, the "National Transformation Program, 2020" compiled a list of the areas that need more focus in the education sector (Fallatah, 2016).

From this, performance indicators were identified for obtaining favorable results. Unfortunately, at present these indicators continue to possess challenges. The career guidance forum has shown to be significant in providing learning or training and guidance to the students related to career and social development to prepare them to meet the future market demand. This forum has been helpful in allowing students to recognize their interests and develop appropriate skills to justify the professional needs of the future market. Schools' performance was found to be below 50% in guiding school administrators to improve and provide awareness regarding future requirements and available higher education to meet the market demand (Almudara, 2019).

The purpose of this Capstone project is to work with the existing evolution in addressing the current challenges and implementing the necessary

steps in school counseling to guide and develop the students. To accomplish this, the Capstone project planned to develop a counseling curriculum influenced by school counseling immersion observations and focuses on a way to help Saudi students to make a “box” and represent their “personal self.”

The format and procedures are being adapted from the concepts of the Hyde program of Maine which discusses five words and five principles of good development. The Hyde program, established in 1966 by Joe Gauld which is a co-educational, boarding school that started in Bath, Maine to teach attitude development to the students that assessed emotional experiences and behavioral challenges, as well as, the students who may not have great academic skills but they are willing to work hard with help. In addition, the program understands that with the development of attitude, students learn how to be more giving, more accepting, take leadership, show concern for others, and exhibit curiosity. The Hyde philosophy believes that every person is gifted with a unique potential. Since its inception, the Hyde school has expanded to multiple locations throughout the United States and the mission and principles are being utilized as school guidance programs in other schools (Ferrerri, 1996).

## **8. Research Methodology**

As part of the Khebrat program, each Saudi member must first undergo intensive language studies in their countries. This is a vital step in a multi-layer approach to glean the information to successfully formulate a Capstone paper that will describe the implementation of the project which aimed to

completion of Saudi Vision 2030 (Alayyafi, 2018). After successful English learning, the next goal was to gain ideas that would be translated into Arabic to implement in the system of Saudi Arabia's schools.

The project goal is to add new experiences to the existing transformations that are currently being made and to improve students' engagement and success. With this Capstone project, a new idea was gained through researches and observations that were made while the immersion phase within Florida grade school in Orange County, During the immersion, an observation was made which indicated a high degree of participation from all who were involved and it impacted positively on the participation of students in their schools. This Capstone project goal was to make the observed ideas and experiences from the immersion phase as a guide to develop the students' attitude hoping to positively impact their scholastic success.

The following are definitions and guiding concepts (see appendixes for examples of activities).

#### **Five Words:**

- 1- Courage: This means I learn the most about myself by facing challenges and taking risks.
- 2- Concern: This means I need a challenging and supportive community in which to develop my character.
- 3- Curiosity: This means I am responsible for my learning.
- 4- Integrity: This means I am gifted with a unique potential and conscience is guided to discovering it.

5- Leadership: This means I am a leader through asking the best of myself and the best of others.

#### **Five Principles:**

- 1- Destiny: This means each of us is gifted with a unique potential.
- 2- Humility: This means we believe in a power and a purpose beyond ourselves.
- 3- Conscience: This means we achieve our best through character and conscience.
- 4- Truth: This means it is our primary guide.
- 5- Brother's Keeper: This means we help others achieve their best.

#### **Discovery Group:**

The discovery groups are similar to the advisor groups, but discovery groups focus on students' attitudes and the kind of person that each student trying to become. In the discovery groups each month there will be highlighted words from the five principles with activities and the materials that related to the word. Students will meet from two to five times during a week and the group members will know each other on a personal level; know each other fears, know the things that they are confident in, learn new things, learn how to become the kind of person that they wanted to be, and to know their struggles.

The discovery group meets up to five times a week at the time that the school arranges. In the discovery groups, there are two times where the student can choose a book and read by himself/herself or with a partner to help them improve their reading skills. The rest of the days the students have an activity-based around one of the five words or one of the principles of the

month. In addition, the activity varies from if it is inside the school or outside the school activity and the reason of why to engages the students in thinking on their relationship with each other and with themselves.

Also, as part of the Methodology of this Capstone paper and project, a presentation has been designed highlighting personal information about the Capstone developer and presenter, as well as, the development and purpose of the Capstone project. the core of this Capstone paper and project is the uniqueness and the usefulness of the project's purpose. The information was presented through a fifteen minutes zoom presentation to four other Saudi school counselors who will be completing a six-item mixed-method survey (four quantitative questions, one to five Likert scale questions, and two qualitative questions) (See Appendix A) looking at raw data, statistical means, as well as useful qualitative information and word patterns.

## 9. Research Results

As stated in the Methodology section of this paper, the core of this Capstone paper and project is its uniqueness and the usefulness of the project purpose. The project idea was tested by being presented through a fifteen minutes zoom presentation to four Saudi school counselors who will complete a six-item mixed-method survey (four quantitative questions, one to five Likert scale questions, and two qualitative questions) (See Appendix A) looking at raw data, statistical means (averages), as well as useful qualitative information and word patterns.

The goal of the survey is not to “test” the new idea but to elicit as many useful insights from the Saudi fellow school counselors before presenting the final project to other school counselors in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. From the zoom presentation the results of the quantitative questions that used the

scale of 1 to 5 (where 5 is “very much” and 1 is “not at all”), the ratings were averaged from the other school counselors’ feedbacks as follow:

- 1) How unique is this information for the KSA, 1-5? 5 average
- 2) To what openness do you think this information is relevant to people that are interested in it, 1-5? 5 average
- 3) How well do you see the Ministry of Education in the KSA in accepting this proposal, 1-5? 5 average
- 4) How useful do you see the Capstone project if proposed to your area in the KSA, 1-5? 5 average

#### Qualitative Questions

Write a brief answer that you think would be helpful to the success of this project:

- 1) How may this project be more accepted by people in the KSA? Very needed. Will need a workshop. Maybe as an elective class. Easy to put in place and get started.
- 2) How may this project be more accepted by the Ministry of Education in the KSA? Use the time to convince. Take time to explain the meaning and purpose.

### 10. Conclusion

On April 25, 2016, Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman introduced the “Saudi Vision 2030” to address and decrease the country’s dependency on oil production (Rashad, 2016). From this goal came the program, Khebrat, that was designed aiming to diversify the system of Saudi Arabia’s schools through allowing teachers, school counselors, and school administrators to travel to other countries. Where they can observe and learn from the immersion

program within the school systems in the other countries (Alayyafi, 2018).

As part of the Khebrat program, each Saudi member must first undergo intensive language studies in their countries. This is a vital step in a multi-layer approach to glean the information to successfully formulate a Capstone paper that will describe the implementation of the project which aimed to completion of Saudi Vision 2030 (Alayyafi, 2018). After successful English learning, the next goal was to gain ideas that would be translated into Arabic to implement in the system of Saudi Arabia's schools. The project goal is to add new experiences to the existing transformations that are currently being made and to improve students' engagement and success.

This Capstone idea came from the observations that were made while the Khebrat immersion phase in Florida school at Orange county, The Capstone project aimed to develop a counseling curriculum influenced by school counseling immersion observations and focuses on a way to help Saudi students to make a "box" and represent their "personal self." The format and procedures were adapted from the concepts of the Hyde program of Maine which discuss five words and five principles of good development.

The core of this Capstone paper and project is the uniqueness and the usefulness of the project purpose. These aspects of this project idea were investigated through a fifteen minutes zoom presentation through four Saudi school counselors who completed a six-item mixed-method survey (four quantitative questions, one to five Likert scale questions, and two qualitative questions) (See Appendix A) looking at raw data, statistical means (averages), as well as useful qualitative information.

The goal of the survey was to elicit useful insights from the Saudi fellow school counselors before presenting the final project to other school counselors in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The results of that zoom presentation indicated the following; The participants felt that the idea was very unique, the information was relevant to the citizens of the KSA, the proposal could be easily accepted by the KSA Ministry of Education, the proposed idea would be useful in each participant's area in the KSA. Furthermore, the qualitative questions gathered some useful information such as; this project is very needed, will need a workshop, maybe as an elective class, and easy to put in place and get started. This project will use the time to convince and take time to explain the meaning and purpose to be more accepted by the Ministry of Education.

From these points, it can be seen that the counselors have a big role in the education process, especially concerning student mental health, education status, and problem-solving. When the counselors are well educated and well prepared, then the students will find themselves in more safer and competent hands. For those reasons, the goal of the Capstone Project is to address the topic of students' interests and attitudes in different ways and to show the advantages of implementing clearer pathways for the Saudi students' future success.

The "Khebrat" program offers the most opportune chance to help the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its students by reducing the accumulation of studying with dead-end majors and bad educational outcomes. Finally, this Capstone paper and project plans to provide researches on the new ways of enlightening school counselors, as well as, glean additional knowledge through observations that

were made during the school immersion phase while observing American counselors at their work.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### 2020 Capstone Result Data Survey

#### Quantitative Questions

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is “very much” and 1 is “not at all”, rate the following:

- 1) How unique is this information for the KSA, 1-5?
- 2) To what openness do you think this information is relevant to people that are interested in it, 1-5?
- 3) How well do you see the Ministry of Education in the KSA in accepting this proposal, 1-5?
- 4) How useful do you see the Capstone project if being proposed to your area in the KSA, 1-5?

#### Qualitative Questions

Write a brief answer that you think would be helpful to the success of this project:

- 5) How may this project be more accepted by people in the KSA?

6) How may this project be more accepted by the Ministry of Education in the KSA?

## Appendix B

### The Magic Carpet:

#### SUMMARY

The group will need to flip over the 'magic carpet' without touching the ground. It needs communication, coordination, and creative thinking to be accomplished.

#### SET UP

Students will need to prepare a carpet, blanket or poster paper just big enough for the entire group to stand on. For larger groups, they may need to be divided into smaller groups.

#### INSTRUCTIONS

- Each group member should imagine they are standing on a magic carpet.
- Describe the beautiful scenery that can you rush by.
- Then the group members will realize that the magic carpet has no steering wheel and it only goes one direction... if they want to get back home, they will need to flip the carpet over to go the other way.
- To do so, no one can leave the carpet. If anyone comes in contact with the ground they will have to start over.

#### VARIATIONS

- The smaller the magic carpet, the more challenging the activity will be!
- Start with a large carpet and see how many times the group can fold it in half and all be on it.
- If you are using paper, if anyone breaks any of the rules you can ask them to step off of the carpet, cut a piece of it off to make it smaller, and then have them restart.



Figure 1: Visual Example of The Magic Carpet

## Appendix C

### The Human Knot

Goal	Group problem solving, Surfacing group dynamics
Time	10-15 minutes (not including processing)
Physical contact	Extensive
Physical challenges	Must be able to move, twist, and turn
Number of participants	8-20 students
Space requirements	Open floor space
Materials needed	None

#### Instructions

- This exercise works well with “knots” of between five and eight students. If the group is larger than eight, break it into smaller groups.
- Let each group stand in a circle.

- Let students cross their arms in front of their bodies and join hands with two other students. Students who join hands should not be standing next to each other, and everyone should be connected to two different students (not holding both of one student's hands).
- The group has now formed a "human knot," and their job is to get out of it without letting go of each other's hands. In most cases, with a lot of twisting and turning and stepping over and under each other's arms, this can be done in a few minutes. It is all right if students end up facing outside the circle.
- If the group members seem hopelessly entangled, let them pass a. If everyone in the knot receives the pulse, they are in just one knot and are likely to be able to get untangled. If not, they are in more than one knot and should probably break up and try it again.

#### Processing suggestions

- The Human Knot can be used to illustrate the importance of group cooperation, trust, being considerate of each other, and working together.
- You can make points about teamwork and the flow of leadership in a group.
- What was it like trying to get out of the knot? Did people think they would be able to do it when they first began?
- Did anybody take the lead? If members of the group were not helping to get out of the knot, how did that affect the outcome of the exercise or students' feelings about it?
- If the group gave up trying to get out of the knot: Who gave up? What were the dynamics of it?

- If you had two knots going at once: Did the groups become competitive?  
Did one group give up because the other group had finished?
- What kind of “knots” is this group in? What do we need to unravel those knots?

## Appendix D

### **Senior Process Class- Public Self/Private Self Boxes:**

This exercise is designed to encourage students to explore and disclose what they choose to share with others and to explore deeper aspects of themselves.

- 1) Students will choose a container and decorate the outside with metaphorical images, drawings, value representations, character representations, passions, and interests that the student wishes others to know about themselves, as well as, representations of how they think others may see them. The container should be large enough to address and house all that students will put in it:
- 2) Students will fill the container with representations they keep to themselves and may not share readily with others indicating their values, principles, and important people in their lives.
- 3) The Box should have an accompanying essay with a description of the box, a process of making the decisions of what is on the box and what is in the box, to include the emotions tied to the representations and process of choosing them, as well as, emotions tied to assemble the representations and disclosure of their meanings.
- 4) The final act is when presenting to the class and school staff, and how to present to include refraining from disclosure at any time. The students may be asking for feedback from other students o the class and the school staff.