

The Effectiveness of SPAWN Strategy on Improving the Creative Writing Skills Among Tenth Basic-Grade Female Students

Samar M. K. Hussein*

Department of Curricula and Teaching Methods, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan

Nasr K. Muqabila

Department of Curricula and Teaching Methods, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan

Abstract—This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the SPAWN strategy in developing creative writing skills—specifically fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration, among tenth-grade female students in Jordanian public schools. The research sought to answer the primary question: What is the impact of using the SPAWN strategy on enhancing creative writing skills among tenth-grade students compared to traditional methods? To address this, a quasi-experimental approach was adopted, involving two groups: an experimental group (n=25) taught using the SPAWN strategy, and a control group (n=26) taught through conventional instruction. The research instrument was a creative writing test designed to measure the four target skills. After verifying the test's validity and reliability, pre- and post-tests were administered to both groups, and data were analyzed using ANCOVA to control for pre-test differences. Findings showed statistically significant differences at the ($\alpha = 0.05$) level in favor of the experimental group, with a large effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.696$), indicating that approximately 69.6% of the improvement in students' creative writing performance was attributable to the SPAWN strategy. The results confirmed the strategy's effectiveness in enhancing students' abilities across all four creative writing dimensions. Based on these findings, it is recommended that Arabic language teachers be trained to apply the SPAWN strategy in classrooms and that it be integrated into teaching guides and national curricula. Future studies are encouraged to explore its impact on other language skills and educational contexts.

Index Terms—SPAWN strategy, creative writing, tenth basic grade

I. INTRODUCTION

With the Arabic language being considered as the most important means of communication and human interaction, the learners get trained in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in order to be proficient in its use. Arabic is a language of the present. It is, on one hand, highly needed for the preservation of cultural and intellectual legacy and at the same time, its transmission is guaranteed.

The educational process has experienced significant changes during the last few decades from the conventional types centered on the teacher to the new ones that support putting the learner in the middle of the educational process. These changes are brought about by worldwide cognitive changes along with the use of technology and pedagogy that encourage constructivist and learner-centered paradigms. As the literature has shown, traditional forms should be analyzed, conceptualized, and moved toward greater engagement and student-centered learning while providing enriched environments for experimentation, dialogue, and reflection. The literature also supports that employing action learning can assist in academic achievement, communication ability, working together, as well as critical and creative thinking (Malanog & Aliazas, 2021).

Hence writing functions as a factor that supports the transition to education upon the grounds of developing logical reasoning and the promotion of reflective and analytical skills, and also allows for an expression tying the learner to his/her environment. Writing is not simply a product; it is a process of organizing one's thoughts, communicating, and problem-solving, which is the basis for any contemporary education that emphasizes understanding, creativity, and self-directed learning (Kuo et al., 2024; Vandermeulen et al., 2024). It has been described as “the ability to convey thoughts, information, and emotions through written linguistic symbols following specific rules to communicate with others or document knowledge” (D'Souza, 2021). Writing is also a complex cognitive process that involves planning, composing, and revising within a recursive cycle that produces cohesive and meaningful text (Hassanian, 2018).

Creative writing, which is an artistic form of literature, gives the writer the opportunity to unleash the power of imagination as well as the mastery of language to create not only but also stories, poems, and dramas among other things (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009). The creative writing process, which is characterized by the total freedom of

* Corresponding Author. Email: 2022230027@ses.yu.edu.jo

expression and moving away from strict academic rules, fosters the development of both imagination and self-expression (Elbow, 1998; Sawyer, 2006). In schools, it is a major means of giving linguistic and cognitive skills a boost through the evocation of critical, imaginative and emotional processes. Those learners who are engaged in the practice of creative writing can do so through the innovative expression of their ideas, building of their uniqueness as well as linking of knowledge with their personal experience, and thus, their academic motivation and achievement is enhanced (Clifton, 2022; Vicol, 2024).

In spite of its importance, a large number of research articles and observations point to the same fact, and that is weaknesses in students' writing patterns and basic skills are still persistent. One major difficulty is that there are not enough chances for reflective practice, rote memorization is still very much in use, systematic writing instruction is not paid enough attention, and teachers are not well prepared (Alhawary, 2023; Alsariera & Alsarairah, 2024). These drawbacks affect the quality of writing produced by the learners characterized by fluency, originality, and flexibility; thus, the growth of creative and analytical thinking is also limited.

Recognizing these challenges, scholars have examined a range of approaches in modern instruction that focus on active learning, reflection, and creativity. The SPAWN strategy, one of those approaches, is a model that develops flexible, critical forms of thinking by putting students into creative, reflective, and organized writing tasks (Fisher & Frey, 2007). It brings together thinking and writing skills by creating an open-ended learning situation where students create thinking space through problem-solving and reflective questioning.

Hence, this study examines the efficacy of the SPAWN strategy in developing tenth-grade female students' creative writing abilities in Jordan. It seeks to remediate decades-old shortcomings in the teaching of writing and give useful evidence-based recommendations to Arabic language teachers, curriculum designers, and policymakers who wish to enhance creativity and reflective learning around writing pedagogy.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *The SPAWN Strategy: Definition and Development*

In the early 1990s, educational researchers Draper and Collins developed the SPAWN strategy to incorporate reflective thinking and critical thinking skills into the reading and writing process, which this was later further refined by MacKay in Aboelsaad (2024). In opposition to traditional instructional models of teaching that supported the memorization and facile rote learning, SPAWN expanded learners' opportunities to analyze, interpret, and apply knowledge in meaningful contexts. Since then, it has found varying curricula for developing higher-order thinking, reading comprehension, and creative writing distinguishing competencies (Konopka et al., 2015).

SPAWN refers to a post-reading and writing strategy undertaken by reflection in which learners must complete a series of structured tasks in which multiple perspectives are considered in the interpretation of texts; students are supposed to engage with the content creatively, view problem-solving approaches, and relate learning to real-life situations (Fisher & Frey, 2007). Beyond its role in reading comprehension, SPAWN functions as an instructional model that integrates reflection, creativity, and written expression to deepen learning (Brozo, 2017).

B. *Components of the SPAWN Strategy*

The acronym SPAWN stands for five major interrelated components that encourage reflective and creative engagement with texts (Fisher & Frey, 2007):

- S (Special Powers): The students receive the right to edit a certain part of the text and give a reason for their changes, thus, engaging themselves more with the text and developing their analytical skills.
- P (Problem Solving): The learners use both creative and critical thinking to come up with solutions for the problems or dilemmas that are presented in the narrative.
- A (Alternative Viewpoints): The students rewrite the main idea of the text from a different point of view, which helps to develop the traits of empathy, flexibility, and conceptual versatility in them.
- W (What If?): The learners investigate the imaginary or the different scenarios by asking reflective questions, which in turn encourages the development of their imagination and their ability to foresee.
- N (Next): The students will make predictions about the text's logical developments or next events and justify their reasoning, thereby building their logical and foresight.

In conclusion, the teacher's design through these five elements slowly leads a student writer away from merely stating the facts to engaging in analysis and producing their own original text. They view writing as a finished product only present on the paper, to a fun, creative, and communicative act of meaning that is alive and happening in the very moment of writing.

C. *Objectives of the SPAWN Strategy*

SPAWN aims to foster critical and reflective thinking, develop understanding, and bridge academic learning with personal experience. It encourages learners to undertake the analysis of ideas, combining both theoretical and practical understandings, and expects students to present themselves in an honest and inimitable manner (Ali et al., 2024). The thinking strategy builds the capacity to tolerate different perspectives and, through metacognition, enables students to monitor and adjust their thinking during the whole process of writing.

D. Significance and Applications of SPAWN

The SPAWN technique is seen as the trigger for the above, as well as increased learner involvement in active and learner-centered pedagogies. The framework itself can help students develop higher-order thinking skills, which are now an expectation of student success in either schools or workplaces, and it helps increase student motivation to engage when learning tasks are contextualized in real life (Ali et al., 2024). On the other hand, the SPAWN framework is universally applicable across all subjects and curricula; it has been successfully implemented in teaching Arabic, social studies, science, and moral education as well (Alkthey & Al-Qiawi, 2020). Sendag et al. (2015) recount a good number of ways in which the SPAWN method could be applied, such as, the development of students' reading comprehension abilities, a reflective writing process, dealing with social and moral issues, scientific inquiry, and a highly engaging format for student-to-student discussion in the classroom. Thus, this very flexibility makes it a wonderful and a flexible tool for the teachers as it not only groups students according to their different levels but also allows for the easier transfer of learners who have progressed faster than the others.

E. The Teacher's Role in SPAWN

SPAWN is an acronym for students formulating and posing their own open-ended questions on topic-related issues. The role of educators is vital as they serve as SPAWN facilitators. This role requires creating open-ended prompts that relate to the learning outcomes and require critical inquiry rather than providing an answer. They may also encourage students to hold additional meaningful discussions, draw bridges between classroom opportunities and real-world experiences, and offer formative feedback that leans toward students' strengths and gives extra attention to areas requiring growth (Wilhelm, 2001; Sendag et al., 2015). Hence, SPAWN implementation depends on teachers' expertise in steering reflective dialogues and scaffolding creative inquiry.

F. The Student's Role in SPAWN

Students partake in SPAWN as a major contributor to the whole process (Zwiers, 2004). They relate their school learning to life experiences and start to view their classmates' opinions from a distance as independent, courteous, and critical. In this way, children go through a transformation from being inactive knowledge receivers to becoming independent, reflective, and creative writers with the power of analytical and artistic expression (Alkthey & Al-Qiawi, 2020).

G. Creative Writing: Definition and Importance

Creative writing is a style of writing that interweaves imagination and linguistic expertise for the deliberate intent of crafting new and aesthetically pleasing and original texts, whether those texts are stories, poems, or plays (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009). The focus is on originality, freedom of expression, and emotional impact (Elbow, 1998; Sawyer, 2006). Within education, creative writing facilitates cognitive and emotional development through opportunities for critical, imaginative, and reflective engagement with language (Clifton, 2022; Vicol, 2024). Creative writing is typically evaluated across four criteria: fluency, originality, flexibility, and elaboration (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 2013; Runco & Jaeger, 2012). Creative writing can also benefit language and literacy development, creativity, and psychological well-being (Razgathoğlu & Ulusoy, 2022).

H. SPAWN Strategy and Creative Writing

Studies show a distinct relationship between SPAWN and creative writing. As SPAWN requires students to envision alternatives, consider new points of view, and engage in reflective thinking about hypothetical situations, it encourages creativity and critical thinking (Aboelsaad, 2024; Fisher & Frey, 2007). Educators who leverage SPAWN promote students' engagement in the imaginal potentialities of meeting writing expectations which, in turn, stimulates higher order thinking about the nature of writing and potentially will lead students towards quality writing (Ahiskali & Maltepe, 2023). This further enabled SPAWN to promote reflective learning towards expressive learning, wherein writing is translated from a mere end product to an autonomous meaning-making process.

I. Previous Studies

Research shows evidence to support the use of SPAWN to enhance writing and thinking. Amer and Duraid (2023) found SPAWN provided notable impact on analytical skills and organizational skill among Saudi students. Alkthey and Al-Qiawi (2020) detected coherence in writing and productive thinking in writing assignments with UAE high school students. Aboelsaad (2024) in Mexico reported improvement in reflective writing as well as displaying creative expression, and Abu Hussein et al. (2020) found similar patterns among Palestinian learners. Ali et al. (2018) observed fluency, originality, and elaboration in Saudi classrooms. Similarly, Suraworachet et al. (2023) reinforced these findings by demonstrating positive effects on students' critical and creative thinking in South Korea. Taken as a whole, SPAWN has been shown across contexts, languages, and cultures to be a suitable strategy for encouraging creativity and reflective learning in writing information.

III. METHODOLOGY

This section elaborates on the research design, research question, participants, instrument, data collection methods,

and analysis methods used to determine the influence of SPAWN on the creative writing ability of tenth-grade students.

A. Research Design

This study used a quasi-experimental design with two groups of tenth grade girls: an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group was taught using the SPAWN strategy and the control group was taught using traditional, teacher-centered teaching strategies. Pre and post-tests were given to both groups to determine the change in creative writing performance. This established the researcher could measure if the differences in achievement were due to the SPAWN intervention.

B. Research Question

This study sought to answer the following primary research question:

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant difference at the $\alpha = 0.05$ level between the mean scores of the two study groups (traditional vs. SPAWN) in overall creative writing skills and their sub-skills (fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration)?

C. Participants

The participants consisted of 51 tenth-grade female students from Kufr Soom Secondary School for Girls, located in the Bani Kenanah Directorate of Education during the second semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The control group ($n = 26$) was taught using conventional instruction, whereas the experimental group ($n = 25$) received SPAWN-based instruction. Additionally, a pilot sample of 35 students from Sahm Secondary School for Girls was used to test and verify the reliability of the research instrument. All participants were of comparable educational backgrounds and age levels, ensuring sample homogeneity.

D. Instrument

To assess the effectiveness of SPAWN on creative writing performance a Creative Writing Skills Test was developed to evaluate the students' proficiencies in fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration.

(a). Test Development and Selection of Topics

The test's development was determined through a complete review of scholarship and existing research (Ali et al., 2024; Al-Shammari & Al-Rubaie, 2022). Thirteen sub-skills were established from the four creative writing dimensions, which were used as a preliminary list for the final prompts. In each prompt, students were asked to create short texts that demonstrate both creativity and language skill. Scoring rubrics were provided to ensure fairness and consistency.

(b). Validity

A panel comprising of subject-matter experts reviewed the test in terms of content validity, clarity, and alignment with the intended objectives. In light of expert feedback, the number of items was decreased from 16 to 13, and changes were made to enhance clarity and comprehensibility. The ultimate version was considered suitable for the language and cognitive level of the target group.

(c). Reliability

1. Test-Retest Reliability

The pilot sample underwent the test, which was given again after a period of two weeks. Table 1 demonstrates the computation of Pearson correlation coefficients for the different creative writing skills and the total score of the test.

TABLE 1
TEST-RETEST RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS FOR CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS

Creative Writing Skills	Test-Retest Reliability
Fluency	0.85
Flexibility	0.90
Originality	0.82
Elaboration	0.81
Total Test	0.89

Most likely the test's stability over time was rather confirmed, given that overall the coefficients extended from 0.81 to 0.90, with the overall reliability being 0.89.

2. Inter-Rater Reliability

Assisted by a researcher, an experienced Arabic language teacher having a BA in Arabic Language and Literature from Jerash University and with eighteen years of teaching experience scored the test. Inter-rater agreement was calculated using Holsti's (1969) formula, as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
INTER-RATER RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS FOR CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS

Creative Writing Skills	Inter-Rater Reliability
Fluency	0.89
Flexibility	0.91
Originality	0.91
Elaboration	0.94
Total Test	0.91

The significance checked for the coefficients' range of 0.89-0.94 exceeding Holsti's (1969) threshold, or greater than 0.85, shows a significant agreement within raters.

E. Data Collection Procedures

Pre-tests and post-tests were given to the two groups under the same conditions, and the students were told to adhere strictly to the test rules. Scoring was done using a standard rubric that assigned points in the following manner: 5–3 points for full and correct answers, 2 points for partial mastery, and 1 point for minimal mastery. Each grammatical, linguistic, or spelling error led to the deduction of half a point. This method guaranteed that the writing performance assessment was unbiased and uniform.

The SPAWN intervention spanned over a period of seven weeks, beginning on March 18 and ending on May 15, 2025. Implementation consisted of a 45-minute session that was conducted each week during the second semester of the 2024/205 academic calendar. The researcher oversaw the entire process and was able to ensure the implementation took place according to specifications by meeting with teachers and making regular visits to each classroom. The experimental group received intervention instruction based on the principles of SPAWN while the control group received continued instruction based on conventional methods of teaching and learning.

To create consistency in instructional methods, the researcher created a comprehensive teacher's manual that included lesson plans, reflective SPAWN prompts, and assessment tools. The teachers were prepared to facilitate open-ended questioning and to work to be receptive to varying perspectives and to facilitate group discussion with peers. The pupils were constantly involved in writing, reflecting, and judging together, which promoted both self and mutual learning processes.

F. Equivalence of Study Groups

Prior to the intervention, the researchers conducted an independent samples t-test to ascertain the similarity of the two groups with respect to the pre-test scores, which are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST FOR PRE-TEST PERFORMANCE OF STUDY GROUPS

Teaching Strategy	Mean	Standard Deviation	t Value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance Level (p)
Traditional	29.12	6.82	-0.421	49	0.675
SPAWN	30.04	8.60			

The outcome ($t = -0.421$, $p = 0.675 > 0.05$) showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups before the intervention, thus supporting their equivalence. To additionally eliminate the pre-test effects, ANCOVA was applied during the analysis.

G. Variables and Data Analysis

A quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test two-group design was adopted in this research where one group was instructed using the SPAWN strategy and the other by traditional methods. The independent variable was the teaching strategy (traditional vs. SPAWN), while the dependent variables were the four dimensions of creative writing; fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration, together with the total creative writing score.

ANCOVA was used to analyze the data and it looked at the overall differences among the groups after controlling for pre-test scores, whereas MANCOVA was utilized to analyze the differences among the groups concerning the four creative writing sub-skills. Further, η^2 (eta-squared) values were computed to reveal the degrees of effect size, thus showing the practical importance of the SPAWN strategy's influence on writing performance.

SPSS 28 was used in the statistical analysis to ensure that the various analyses are accurate, transparent, and reproducible.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research main goal was to find out if applying the SPAWN method would make a big difference in the creative writing capabilities of female students of the tenth grade when assayed with regular teaching. In order to evaluate the research question, descriptive and inferential analyses were both executed.

A. Descriptive Statistics

Initially, a descriptive analysis was carried out to compare the means of the pre-test, post-test, and adjusted post-test

scores among the control and experimental groups. The Table 4 presents the results.

TABLE 4
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF PRE, POST, AND ADJUSTED POST-TEST SCORES ON COMBINED CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS

Teaching Strategy	Pre-test Mean	SD	Post-test Mean	SD	Adjusted Mean	SE
Traditional	29.12	6.82	42.16	6.76	42.53	0.63
SPAWN	30.04	8.60	52.08	7.01	51.72	0.61

The performance of both groups in the post-test as presented in Table 4 improved; what is more, the experimental group scored noticeably higher than the control group in terms of mean scores. The adjusted post-test mean of the SPAWN group ($M = 51.72$) not only surpassed but also indicated a significant difference in creative writing performance between the two groups, as the traditional group scored ($M = 42.53$).

B. Inferential Analysis

The differences were then assessed using ANCOVA, after taking the pretest performance into account. The results of these tests are provided in Table 5.

TABLE 5
ANCOVA RESULTS FOR POST-TEST SCORES ON COMBINED CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.	Effect Size
Pre-test (Covariate)	1856.883	1	1856.883	190.318		
Teaching Strategy	1072.609	1	1072.609	109.935	0.000	0.696
Error	468.323	48	9.757			
Adjusted Total	3578.627	50				

The ANCOVA results have shown a huge and statistically significant difference between the two teaching methods in post-test performance ($F = 109.935$, $p < 0.001$), with the SPAWN strategy being the most beneficial one. The effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.696$) reflects that nearly 69.6% of the variance in students' creative writing performance is due to the SPAWN-based instructional approach, thus demonstrating a large and practically significant effect.

Subsequent multivariate analyses (MANCOVA) corroborated the significant uplift of the four creative writing sub-skills; fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration, all of them being at the advantage of the experimental group.

Consequently, the results give an unequivocal reply to the inquiry of the study (RQ1), supporting the notion that SPAWN teaching produces advancements in creative writing abilities that are significant from a statistical point of view, both in total and in all the assessed aspects, when compared to conventional instruction.

The results have given a solid backing to the SPAWN strategy as the one with the highest impact in the area of creative writing among the tenth-grade female students in Jordanian schools. The considerable differences that were noticed between the SPAWN group and the control group have proven that structuring reflective writing assignments can greatly improve the students' creativity.

At the outset, in the aspect of fluency, the SPAWN strategy essentially invited the students to produce a variety of thoughts without any restriction, or it simply required them to come up with different answers to the same problem, or it just pushed the students to express themselves by using other words. This evidence is in agreement with the opinion of Asmiati (2013), who asserted that through the creative patterns the SPAWN framework provides, students can improve their writing.

Secondly, regarding flexibility and originality, the "What If?" and "Alternative Viewpoints" elements of SPAWN encouraged a divergent thinking aspect that made students think of different viewpoints and reframe the existing ones.

The findings back up the opinions of Runco and Jaeger (2012), who claimed that engaging in these kinds of activities causes creative thinking and consequently wider concept revelation.

To clarify further, the advancement in elaboration was excellent, as SPAWN asked students to justify, extend their ideas, and make connections, which in turn promotes logical detail and reflective engagement. This finding corroborates with the results of Alkthey and Al-Qialwi (2020) stating SPAWN's reflective tasks were beneficial for expressive complexity and cognitive organization.

The large effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.696$) suggests not only statistical significance but also important instructional change for students' attitudes towards writing when using SPAWN strategy. Students who participated in the SPAWN strategy were more enthusiastic and confident towards writing, and showed greater coherence and creative compositions. There could be suggestions of a connection between reflective thought and creative writing; as a result, writing became an active learning experience instead of simply completing steps.

The findings corroborate previous studies, revealing that SPAWN improved writing and critical thinking ability. Amer and Duraid (2023) reported finding similarly increased levels of their students' analytical and organizing abilities. Abu Hussein et al. (2020) and Alkthey and Al-Qiawi (2020) also referred to its beneficial effects on creativity and critical thinking.

This study further supports the earlier research that show that SPAWN is applicable within the Jordanian educational context, and adds to the global body of evidence of active learning in Arabic writing education. This means that SPAWN could be a major factor in changing the teaching of Arabic writing from a strict obeying of rules to one where

creativity, independent thinking and involvement are all granted. Hence, it is important for the curriculum developers, teacher trainers and the educational policy makers to take this into consideration.

In this way, SPAWN activities may be the beginning of closing the gap between what the Arabic writing process purports to teach and what is creatively taught and engaged on, thereby contributing to a generation of learners in Arabic who are reflective and creative in their learning journey.

V. CONCLUSION

The study affirms with empirical evidence that application of SPAWN strategies improves the creative writing skills of tenth-grade female students in Jordanian public schools. Quantitative analysis of the whole writing revealed that SPAWN actually is an efficient tool for reflective and creative learning. The enormous impact not only shows the reflection from imagined situations but also contributes to the student's writing capability. One of the contributions of this research to the field is the use of SPAWN in Arabic language teaching and the demonstration of its effects in a non-Western, Arabic-speaking context. Therefore, it has created one of the very first localized models that provide methods for adapting a reflective Western model to suit Arabic instruction culture and language contexts. This way it connects the reflective learning theory, creative cognition, and Arabic writing pedagogy, and thus the new insight that metacognitive strategies can be used to cultivate creativity and independent thinking is given.

These results clearly define implications for the policies and practice regarding education. Using SPAWN activities in Arabic teaching will not only make the writing instruction more contemporary but also make the students more independent, creative, and deep in their understanding of the texts. The teacher training programs must highlight the use of SPAWN's five components of reflection, Special Powers, Problem Solving, Alternative Viewpoints, What If, and Next, as a means to get the teachers to engage the students analytically and imaginatively. In Jordan, the use of reflective writing strategies will facilitate the government's efforts to develop innovativeness and communication skills among students which are now considered as the main educational reform priorities in the country and the entire Arab region.

To test the generalizability of the results in future research, the present study needs to be replicated across different grade levels, genders, and education contexts. Longitudinal and mixed-method approaches are recommended to explore the sustained influence of reflective writing on creativity and motivation. Additionally, examining SPAWN's integration with digital learning platforms or hybrid instructional models; such as project-based or storytelling approaches, could yield innovative frameworks for enhancing creative and reflective writing instruction.

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Samar M. K. Hussein was born in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Arabic Language Teacher Education and later obtained a Master's degree in Arabic Language Curricula and Teaching Methods from the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Yarmouk University, Jordan. She is presently a graduate student and research member at Yarmouk University and focused on Arabic language curricula and teaching methods in the Faculty of Educational Sciences. Her work explores new learning approaches in Arabic language teaching, specifically in creative and reflective writing. She has been involved in a research project on active learning approaches and has shared her research on curriculum development and writing skills improvement. Currently, she is interested in research related language pedagogy, curriculum innovation, and ways to promote creativity in Arabic writing. Ms. Hussein is an active member of the academic community at Yarmouk University and has participated in research projects addressing the improvement of Arabic language instruction in Jordanian schools. Email: 2022230027@ses.yu.edu.jo



Nasr M. K. Muqabila was born in Jordan on August 3, 1957. He earned a B.A. in Arabic Literature from Yarmouk University in 1986, a Postgraduate Diploma in Arabic Language Teaching Methods from the same university in 1988, an M.A. in Educational Supervision from the University of Jordan in 1993, and a Ph.D. in Curricula and Teaching Methods from Ohio University, USA, in 1999. He began his career as a schoolteacher and later served as an Arabic language supervisor at the Model School of Mutah University. From 1999 to 2011, he was a faculty member at Mutah University, where he also chaired the Department of Curricula and Instruction. Since 2011, he has been a professor at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Yarmouk University, where he teaches and supervises graduate students. He has published widely on Arabic curricula, teaching methods, and curriculum evaluation, with particular interest in modern approaches to Arabic teaching and the

integration of technology in education. He has presented at national and regional conferences, served as a reviewer for academic journals, and contributed to curriculum development committees. Email: naser.m@yu.edu.jo