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Primary teachers' conceptions and approaches to using visual arts in writing in Saudi Arabia

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Abeer Alhanaky

Abstract

This thesis investigates the use of visual arts (drawing and images) in teaching writing from the perspective of Saudi language teachers. The interviews were conducted with primary-school teachers and the data was interpreted through the lens of the phenomenographic paradigm. The analysis of the gathered data revealed three main conceptions that teachers have adopted regarding the use of visual arts in teaching writing: curriculum-focused, knowledge-transfer, and student-needs.

The curriculum-focused teachers relied predominantly on the textbook and curriculum requirements and used visual arts sparingly, leaving such activities to the student's choice. Knowledge-transfer teachers focused on how visual arts could be used as an effective means to transfer knowledge. The teachers who applied the visual arts approach to meet students' learning needs were those most in favour of visual arts and stress their benefit. The knowledge-transfer and student-needs categories were further subdivided into subcategories to reflect the original experience. Student perception and writing quality were the categories identified in the knowledge-transfer group, while the student need-focused experience was divided into beginner students and those with learning difficulties.

The data were further categorized according to three common dimensions that emerged from the analysis of the teachers' conceptions: significance of visual arts, type of impact, and student learning level. The findings showed that the curriculum-focused category viewed the use of visual arts in teaching writing as a marginal and indirect approach for post-beginner students. The student needs-focused category viewed the use of visual arts as an essential and direct approach that perfectly matches the needs of first graders and students with learning difficulties. The knowledge-transfer category shared the view that this approach is essential, but at the same time, it considered the indirect impact on post-beginner students. The thesis concludes by recommending more research in this area in Saudi Arabia. The main implication for practice refers to the teachers' opportunity to enhance students' literacy learning and especially, writing by employing visual arts.

Primary teachers' conceptions and approaches to using visual arts in writing in Saudi Arabia

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Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Declaration

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Statement of copyright

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the author's prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Personal Motivation

I have always been intrigued by the ability of children to acquire new knowledge whenever visuals are involved. Even before starting primary school, my children loved learning new things with the help of visual arts such as drawing and images. Therefore, when they first attended school, I was eager to see how the curriculum would integrate visuals with literacy teaching and learning. Although the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia has made significant steps toward improving the curriculum many times to reflect recent findings in literacy learning research, I found that the classroom reality is not always aligned to educational requirements for various reasons. I was determined to bring my own contribution to turning literacy learning into a more enjoyable activity for both students and teachers. Therefore, once I got a chance to pursue my postgraduate studies, this topic was the main priority on my agenda.

I started researching the topic, but I soon found myself stuck with the realization that literacy learning in Saudi Arabia has not been explored in depth to date. Neither teachers' conceptions about visual arts integration nor the connection between visual arts and literacy learning have garnered much attention from Saudi researchers. Thus, this study aims at studying primary teachers' conceptions and approaches to using images and drawing in writing in Saudi Arabia. Since the body of research on this topic in Saudi Arabia is very scarce, I found that conducting such research in the context of Saudi Arabia would be a valuable addition to the field. It would serve to encourage other researchers to undertake further studies to enrich the understanding of this phenomenon in education.

1.2. Education in Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is one of the largest countries in the Middle East (Figure 1.1), covering 2,150,000 square kilometers of land, or four-fifths of the Arabian Peninsula. The Saudi Arabian census of mid-2020 recorded about 35

million people, with a majority of young adults (General Authority for Statistics, 2016).

Figure 1.1 Kingdome of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is made up of thirteen governmental zones (Al-Zahrani, 2010). The geographical scope of this study, and where it was conducted, is the Qassim region. Qassim is a large area in the central area of Saudi Arabia with a population of 1.5 million and an area of 73000 square kilometers of land. Figure 1.2 shows the location of the Qassim region.

From an educational perspective, the Qassim region has more cities and towns providing general education for the entire population. Table 1.1 shows statistics about primary schools in the Qassim region.

Table 1.1 Primary school statistics

Education Data of Primary schools at Qassim region	
Number of students	141427
Number of classrooms	7876
Number of schools	1580
Number of teachers	14470
Number of staff	3159

Source: Ministry of Education. (2020)

In Saudi Arabia, the government provides a generous annual budget for education, and the majority of Saudi Arabia's young population are enrolled in public schools and higher education institutes (Almoaibed, 2020, Ministry of Education, 2019). Moreover, the government offers free public-school education for all citizens and residents, accessible higher education for citizens, with some scholarship programs for residents (Ministry of Education, 2021). Based on social and religious considerations, the schools are segregated by gender (Springsteen, 2014). The government's Vision 2030 links its strategy to the education system, specifically education excellence to economic performance growth (Almoaibed, 2020, Vision 2030, 2020).

The official language of Saudi Arabia is Arabic. The Ministry of Education prioritizes teaching the language in every grade, while striving to enhance Arabic language skills across the curriculum (Algamdi & Nooraldeen, 2002). Since the majority of the population speaks Arabic, the interview questions for this study were prepared in the Arabic language to overcome any linguistic obstacle. Of note, English is the second most-utilized language in the country (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009)

The formal education system in Saudi Arabia started in 1932, and now includes three compulsory educational stages (primary, intermediate and secondary) for ages between 7 to 17 years. Education in Saudi Arabia is compulsory for those between 6 to 15. Students must accomplish 12 years of public school before moving on to higher education (Alsonbol, Alshabanh, & Mordi, 2008). Attendance is scheduled five days a week, from Sunday through Thursday. Children usually are enrolled in the first primary grade at the age of five and six months if they were previously enrolled in preliminary education. If they were not enrolled in preliminary education, they can start the first grade of primary education at six. Primary education lasts for six years, followed by three years of intermediate education and three years of secondary education. Students can continue their studies in public or private universities, vocational education institutes, and colleges (General Authority for Statistics, 2017a). The distribution of the enrolled students by educational stage is presented in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 General education phases in Saudi Arabia

stage	Age[1]	Duration[1]	Students enrolled[2]	Number of schools[2]
preliminary	3-6	2	264736	3272
primary	7-12	6	2409236	14053
intermediate	12-15	3	1167933	8576
secondary	15-18	3	1192012	4724
University and college	19-22	2-7	1236928	66

Source: 1General Authority for Statistics (2017b). 2: Ministry of Education (2021)

Language Curriculum

The language curriculum in primary school has received much attention from stakeholders, including the government, policy makers, teachers, and researchers since it is the foundation of following educational stages. Qassem (2004) found a positive correlation between students' linguistic ability and their achievement in other academic subjects. Since language mediates and facilitates the learning and teaching of other subjects, good linguistic skills open the door for better performance in others subjects as well. Tamir (2011) discussed the criteria upon which the Arabic language teaching and learning are built; these

criteria may be used to measure and evaluate overall performance and achievement.

From this standpoint, the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia has paid great attention to teaching the language, especially in primary schools. The curriculum implemented has a different number of language lessons taught weekly for every grade, depending upon perceived learners' needs. For example, the first grade comprises 11 lessons, the second and the third grade have nine lessons, and eight lessons are typical for the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades (Alghufaili, 2013).

The Ministry of Education has identified several general goals that teachers of Arabic in primary grades need to reach: specific goals emerge from these general purposes for each class separately. Among the general education goals, three specific purposes for Arabic language teaching focus on equipping the student with receptive and productive skills, enabling them to practice speaking and writing with accuracy, fluency, and quality. These goals are:

1. Developing the skill and habit of reading in pursuit of increased knowledge.
2. Gaining the ability to correctly express themselves in communication, speaking, and writing with sound use of language and organized thinking.
3. Developing linguistic ability through various means that nourish the Arabic language, while first tasting it and then realizing its style and ideation (Document of the Arabic Language Curriculum in General Education 1427 AH, 2007, 13).

The "لغتي" (meaning my language) curriculum developed by the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia comprises Arabic language subjects. The Ministry has decided to implement them in the primary schools, starting with the academic year 1431 AH (2009-2010). The developed curriculum consists of the following educational materials:

1. Student's Book: an indispensable tool for both the student and teacher. They rely on it to achieve the objectives of the curriculum in synergy with the rest of the subjects. It is divided into units for each grade, each unit

14

extending over several weeks. The first school week starts with the diagnostic evaluation. After every two units (meaning two weeks), the Student's Book allots one week to student evaluation. The last week of each semester is devoted to an overall assessment of the semester units.

2. Activity Book: the written application of the components of the Student's Book.

3. The Teacher's Book does not constitute authority over the teacher; it is an organizational framework that allows for innovation for both the teacher and the student.

4. Audio-visual teaching aids accompany the Student's Book and include productive teaching aids the teacher can use to enhance proficiency, instill motivation and excitement in students, and teach language skills more interactively (The Ministry of Education, 2012).

1.3. Background to the study

This study explores three significant research areas in education: teacher conceptions, visual arts, and the learning of writing. Each concept is treated separately or in conjunction with concepts in other studies. Yet scholars have not given enough interest in exploring the dynamic interaction between these three areas concomitantly; that is, teachers' conceptions about using visual arts in writing learning. As explained later, teachers' conceptions play a very important role in how the classroom practice unfolds, as teachers usually translate these conceptions in their approach to teaching, educational materials, and interactions with students.

Research about teachers' use of visual arts in the classroom has emerged from scholarly interest in the connection between drawing, images, and early writing endeavors. This research has focused on visual arts as potential pedagogical tools to engage children in planning, generating, illustrating, and writing ideas, while developing critical, creative, and constructive thinking and learning (Penn, 2020).

On the other hand, since writing supports the integration of language and emergent literacy skills, particularly letter knowledge, writing is a critical process in children's learning (Gerde, Bingham, & Wasik, 2012). In other words, learning writing by using visual arts in primary classes is not just a transient, insignificant process; instead, it is of paramount importance and likely to influence the development of critical thinking, reasoning, and the literacy growth of students (Rahmat et al., 2020).

Studies have tapped into the natural ability of children to create meaning through visual representation and bring together drawings, images, and writing endeavors into the classroom (Olshansky, 2018). Drawing and writing are considered to be naturally interconnected and an integral part of the meaning-making process (Newkirk, 2014). Drawing precedes writing, and writing develops as a more complex form of drawing in the first stage (Schickedanz and Casbergue 2009). Children learn to communicate through multisensory approaches, combining art and written language during emerging writing skills without much effort. Sometimes they are not even aware of it. (Martens et al., 2012; Neumann et al., 2009).

A growing body of literature shows a strong connection between the use of visual arts in the classroom and enhanced writing skills (Ryan, 2014, Ryan and Barton, 2014, Ewing, Manual, and Mortimer, 2015). Students in primary grades need to learn how to ignore bothersome sounds and interlocutions, use pen and paper to communicate, discern the differences between scribbles and letters, and organize their ideas into sequences (Crafton, Silvers, and Brennan, 2017). These challenges become alleviated when visual arts are involved in the learning process. Progress in object drawing brings students closer to the point where they can recognize writing and start to imitate it (Levin and Bus, 2003).

However, acknowledging this fact does not make concept implementation any easier in the classroom. Olshansky (2014) proposed an integrative approach, starting from the premise that pictures are a natural language for thinking, developing, and expressing ideas, while images entice students more than words.

An arts-integrated curriculum supports an integrative approach. Arts and literacy learning intersect and work together for the advancement of knowledge and cognition development (*"What is arts integration?"*, n.d.). Writing and arts are incorporated as key components in literacy learning, not as separate entities that work independently toward the same goal (Olshansky, 1994; Poldberg, Trainin, and Andrzejczak, 2013).

Although numerous studies have been dedicated to visual arts integration with literacy learning skills (writing is the topic of this study), to the best of our knowledge, scholars have not yet connected them to teachers' conceptions. They are a complex combination of a belief system (Kagan, 1992), reflections on prior experiences (Eley, 2006), actual classroom practice, (Hampton, 1994, Borg, 2019), personality traits, and contextual factors (Borg, 2003). Previous research has demonstrated that teacher conceptions impact classroom behaviour, strategies, and activity selection (Ireland et al., 2011; Wang and Matsumura, 2019; Masduki, Suwarsono, and Budiarto, 2019). Other researchers have gone beyond the effect on practice, proving that teachers' conceptions substantially impact student learning (Verloop, Van Driel, & Meijer, 2001; Borg, 2003; Goncz, 2017). Therefore, understanding teacher conceptions and the mechanisms at work in shaping them is of paramount importance for improving the learning experience.

However, teachers' conceptions about visual arts in literacy learning have scarce representation in the literature. On one hand, teachers do not devote enough time to writing instruction, in general (Graham, 2019). On the other hand, teachers do not hold enough positive conceptions about their teaching efficacy and strategies (Latham and Ewing, 2018; Bahlmann and Myers, 2020). Strengthening the capabilities and motivations of teachers would make them more confident and willing to teach writing (Graham and Harris, 2018). Additionally, studies have investigated visual arts in writing learning from different aspects, including using images and picture books (Weeks, 2013). Specific art has been integrated in writing programs (Poldberg, Trainin, Andrzejczak, 2013), but not in conjunction

with teachers' conceptions. This topic has not received much interest, although doing so would enrich the educational insight enormously.

Of note, research investigating teachers' conceptions and views worldwide is relatively extensive as compared to Saudi teachers' conceptions of all subjects. Most studies have explored Saudi teachers' conceptions in such areas as Teaching English as Foreign Language (Alfahadi, 2012; Alshahrani & Al-Shehri, 2012) and Science (Mansour, N., Alshamrani, Aldahmash & Alqudah, 2013; Alamri, 2017), but not specifically in literacy learning or visual arts.

Since teachers' conceptions are crucial to an enhanced learning process, and visual arts integrated with writing skills are adequate for literacy teaching, this area needs careful consideration in the research literature. The present study addresses this gap in the literature in the specific context of the settings of Saudi learning. The lack of studying visual arts about teaching writing from Saudi teachers' conceptions represents the study's rationale for investigation.

1.4. Research focus and rationale for the study

The rationale for the current study entails three main areas:

> (1) the need to fill a gap in the literature regarding using visual arts (images and drawing) in writing
>
> (2) the vital role of teachers' conceptions that might impact the learning process
>
> (3) the need for studies about literacy learning in primary schools in Saudi Arabia

On the one hand, we believe there have been productive attempts to study the use of visual arts in literacy learning. However, as the background section shows, while researchers have investigated either writing in literacy learning or visual arts implementation, they have yet to examine them together in a comprehensive study. Moreover, they have not connected visual arts and literacy learning to teachers' conceptions. Thus, the gap in the literature is two-fold; this study

addresses it by scrutinizing teachers' conceptions about the use of visual arts in teaching writing in primary grades.

Studying visual arts in writing learning is only possible when teachers' conceptions are thoroughly investigated since they represent a critical aspect of the learning process. Researchers have reported that some internal and external factors might affect teachers' conceptions, which in turn, impact the student performance. Of course, teachers act in their classrooms based on what they believe; their pedagogical decisions and choices reveal their conceptions (Lund and Stains, 2015; Jacobs et al., 2016; Wang and Matsumura, 2019; Goncz, 2017; Masduki, Suwarsono and Budiarto, 2019). Therefore, studying teachers' conceptions about using visual arts in writing instruction would be pivotal for both teachers and researchers, and, consequently, the learning process. Teachers could provide feedback and identify the factors, strengths, weaknesses - and possible barriers - that contribute to or hinder the effective use of visual arts in writing.

This motivation, along with the scarcity of studies investigating Saudi primary schools, has led to the need for the present study. The study's aim is to examine teachers' conceptions about using visual arts in writing education in Saudi primary schools. To the best of our knowledge, the implementation of visual arts in writing instruction has not been investigated in this context. Therefore, this study hopes to fill the gap with valuable information laden with clear evidence on the use of visual arts in writing instruction in Saudi Arabia.

To sum up, the current literature lacks definitive studies on the use of visual arts (images and drawings) in writing learning for primary schools in Saudi Arabia. To the best of our knowledge, studying teachers' conceptions in this context has not received any interest so far. Therefore, we believe that investigating the use of visual arts (images and drawing) in writing instruction from the perspective of teachers' conceptions will add valuable information to help fill the literature gap and open new avenues of future research.

1.5. Research objectives and questions

Given the absence of such a study in Saudi Arabia, the primary aim of the present study is to add new knowledge by investigating Saudi primary school teachers' experiences and conceptions of using visual arts in writing learning. In this vein, the following research objectives were formulated:

- investigate Saudi language teachers' conceptions of using visual arts (images and drawing) in writing.
- describe the qualitatively different ways Saudi language teachers understand and experience the use of visual arts (images and drawing) in writing.
- map Saudi language teachers' conceptions in their pedagogical approaches.

The specific research questions of this study are as follows:
- What are the Saudi language teachers' conceptions about using visual arts (images and drawing) in writing?
- What variations exist in how Saudi teachers understand and experience the use of visual arts (images and drawing) in writing?
- What is the relationship between Saudi teachers' conceptions of visual arts (images and drawing) in writing instruction and their pedagogical approaches?

1.6. Researcher Role and Ethics

The researcher of this study identified the problem, recruited the participants, conducted the interviews, analyzed the data, and reported and interpreted the findings. Since this is qualitative research, the author attempted to access the concept systems of the participants, namely Saudi primary school teachers of Arabic.

It was not an easy task. The researcher had to play an instrumental role in activating past experiences that might have been difficult to remember and express. Working with people's thoughts and ideas placed them in a vulnerable

position. Personal and sometimes painful experiences, memories, and conceptions resurfaced and were shared with the researcher. Therefore, regardless of how the data were collected, one of the main responsibilities of the researcher was to safeguard the participants' well-being and keep the data collected securely stored.

The mechanisms for safeguarding should be clearly articulated before data collection (Sutton and Austin, 2015). The author followed the required guidelines provided by the university ethical commission to ensure compliance. The subjects were explicitly told that they would experience no harm, discomfort, or danger at any time during the data collection process. They were assured numerous times that if any risk should arise, the interview would be stopped immediately. The participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time if they felt uncomfortable, without any penalty. Furthermore, to protect privacy and anonymity, the author ensured that the participants would never be identified during the data analysis process. Their names were never linked to the data provided or used in any written publication explicitly discussing the research. All research was disseminated using pseudonyms.

As a qualitative researcher, the researcher was mindful of personal biases about the topic and made sure not to lead any interview participants to draw conclusions that they might not otherwise make. To control any bias, the researcher suspended judgement and approached every data item with the explicit intention to discover and learn, not to inflict her own worldview or mindset on the data. She would only report the data directly gathered from the participants and corroborate it with findings from the literature review.

Phenomenographic research implies an interplay between the oral expression of participants' conceptions and the meaning of those conceptions. This refers to the process of exploring and identifying internal connections between ideas from the perspective of the participant's own understanding of the phenomenon (Sin, 2010). The researcher's role in a phenomenographic study is to look for the conceptual meanings and the correlations at play. Therefore, the interviews would

prompt in-depth answers to demonstrate the participants' thoughtful and careful insight into the problem. The researcher created a delicate balance between what was expressed about those conceptions and the meaning drawn from those expressions.

1.7. Organization of the study

Chapter 2 starts with an overview and the definition of concepts. It then provides a review of the relevant literature, structured in three sections. The first focuses on the theoretical background of the efforts undertaken to improve child education, including using visual arts in learning literacy. The second section focuses on how visual arts have been used in writing instruction. The conclusion closes the chapter.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology. It begins with an overview of the chapter. The next section provides details of the research methodology, including the research paradigm and phenomenography. The third section discusses data collection in detail, including participant selection, the questionnaire, interview design, and collection challenges. The fourth section introduces details of the data analysis of the study. Lastly, issues of reliability and validity, along with ethical considerations, conclude the chapter.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study in three sections. In the first section, a summary of the results is provided: the categories of description. The second section examines the findings in depth, according to standard structural dimensions. In the third section, a graphic depiction of the findings is given, supported by an extensive explanation.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings in relation to the literature introduced in Chapter 2. It begins with a short introduction of the research objectives and questions, and a summary of the findings. The interpretation of the findings, including the factors that influenced teachers' conceptions, is given. The discussion moves on to the implications of the study findings and their position in the literature. As is the tradition, the limitations of the study are introduced, followed by the contributions of the research and recommendations for future work. A short conclusion closes

the chapter.

Chapter 6 concludes the thesis. It begins with an overview of the study. Following this, three types of limitations, scope, data, and analysis, are discussed in detail. Next, the contributions that this study brings to the field of education research are considered. The chapter concludes with recommendations arising from the study, suggestions for future research, and closing remarks.

2. Literature review

2.1. Overview of chapter

This chapter looks at teachers' conceptions, visual arts, and literacy learning in the research literature from a theoretical and empirical perspective. It investigates writing and visual arts as integrated parts of literacy learning and the connections between them. The chapter also examines teachers' conceptions about this integration and the link between visual arts and writing learning.

A definition of concepts lays the foundation for the choice of key terms and theoretical approaches, the meaning and context of such concepts, and how they are explored in depth in this study. The theoretical background section focuses on theories developed over time regarding the integration of visual arts with literacy learning. It first explores learning by interaction through the lens of classical philosophers such as Jean Jacques Rousseau, Johann Herbart, John Henry Pestalozzi, and then moves on to the 20th century approaches of John Dewey and Jean Piaget.

Lev Vygotsky's theory of language learning as a result of social interaction and Jerome Bruner's idea of language as a world mediator for children will be subsequently discussed in the section about language learning as an interactive activity. The chapter then dives deeper into more modern theories about writing as part of the literacy learning process section. Vygotsky and Bruner laid the foundation, but more recent studies have added a more nuanced perspective while looking at the developmental process and the challenges accompanying it during learning writing skills.

The section on visual arts as part of literacy learning parallels the previous section about writing, but this time the focus is on arts integration. Many recent studies have investigated the connection between visual arts and learning achievements as well as the arts and curriculum; thus, this section is longer than others.

Narrowing down the literature review to studies specifically on visual arts integration with writing, the section that follows dedicates space to the

demonstrated effects of such integration and transmediation as a multimodal learning experience. The process of transmediation represents the most recent version of visual arts integration with multimodalities of learning, so the section discusses this phenomenon succinctly.

To counterbalance the resounding positivity that revolves around the arts integration with literacy learning, the section about diverging ideas addresses several of the less positive studies that have proved that this integration has its downsides as well. Winner and Hartland, two Harvard scholars, stand at the forefront of this countermovement. Although their studies were written about 20 years ago, they raised awareness about arts integration.

Teachers' conceptions are also later explored in the section that looks at various typologies and aspects of this vast and still unmapped area. It reveals differing views around how teachers' conceptions impact classroom activities and student learning, opening new avenues for future studies. Furthermore, this section delineates what the present study considers as a good working definition of teachers' conceptions. The contextual factors impacting the formation of teachers' conceptions are also discussed.

Since teachers' conceptions may vary from one subject matter to another, their conceptions about the use of visual arts in literacy learning are explored in detail. A number of studies have conducted in-depth analyses of conceptions or visual arts integration in preschool or elementary school, but few took literacy learning as their sole focus. Therefore, the theoretical background lacks insight into this particular topic.

The second large section of this chapter focuses on the empirical background while carefully sifting through the literature and narrowing down the focus to those studies that specifically address the relationship between visual arts and literacy learning. More studies support that there is a growing movement aiming to integrate visual arts with writing skills in elementary classroom settings.

Again, the section on teachers' conceptions lacks insight because of the lack of relevant studies published on the topic. The closest study I could find in terms of

connecting drawing and writing at the same time was conducted by Bahlmann and Myers in 2020. However, teachers' conceptions were just one of a few parameters investigated by the researchers, so they just brushed over it briefly. This section identifies some of the main issues related to why teachers' conceptions of visual arts integration with writing is not as popular a topic as others. These identified issues naturally lead to the conclusion section and the view that most studies talk about this subject tangentially, but do not dedicate in-depth analyses of teachers' conceptions, and do not connect them directly to visual arts and literacy learning.

2.2. Definitions of concepts

This study brings together three significant areas in education: teacher conceptions, visual arts, and literacy learning. Each concept has been theorized in multiple scholarly works either independently or in conjunction with other concepts. However, the dynamic interaction among them and how teacher conceptions influence the use of visual arts in literacy learning has yet to be discovered.

A growing body of literature has linked visual arts to literacy learning, creating the paradigm of visual literacy (Vermeersch and Vandenbroucke, 2015). The trend of using visually-enhanced materials for course teaching has increased dramatically over the past decades to keep up with a culture saturated with visual elements. The digital age brought about a huge proliferation of images that turned students into visual consumers, making it easier for teachers to link literacy learning to the permeating world of images (Thomsen, 2018). Textbooks are infused with visuals since the constant review of teaching materials attempts to keep up with the digital era. However, the actual use of visuals in classrooms lacks qualitative meaning (Sibanda and Sibanda, 2013). In other words, textbooks are designed to reflect the pervasiveness of visuals, with a lot of images for in-class use, yet these images are not employed as expected. The discrepancy between theory and practice makes teacher conceptions of paramount importance in understanding how visual arts are used to teach literacy.

It is difficult to find a precise definition of teacher conceptions since they are embedded in a personal and contextual knowledge that keeps evolving (de Vries and Beijard, 1999). Teacher conception research usually elicits participants' answers by asking retrospectively about teachers' experiences and how these instances have molded what teachers think and believe.

These post hoc reflections may be indications of the functional relationship between conceptions and actual classroom practices, but they do not inform the decisional processes that take place during teaching episodes (Eley, 2006). Decisional processes represent the spontaneous shifts and changes in teachers' strategies in the classroom that are not reflected in surveys and interviews. Besides, teacher conceptions are bound to the historical, cultural, social, and educational contexts within which teachers work. Therefore, there is no homogenous construct of teacher conceptions that could be accepted worldwide (Brown, Gebril, Michaelides, 2019).

This study encompasses both the past and the present, and the socio-cultural and educational context of teachers. Teachers' conceptions include a personal concept system about students, classrooms, and curricula (Kagan, 1992), reflections on prior experiences, actual classroom practices and the decisional process leading to them (Eley, 2006), the personality of the teacher, and other contextual factors (Farrell & Lim, 2005; Borg, 2003; Brown, Gebril, Michaelides, 2019).

Visual arts are defined as including, but not limited to, pictures, paintings, drawings, sculpture, video and computer projections (Stokes, 2002). A comprehensive definition is provided by the NCSE (National Council for Special Education); this study is using it as a starting point for further research. The definition is, "Visual arts activities enable the student to communicate in a unique way and to organize experiences, ideas, feelings and imaginings in a visible and tangible way. Through drawing, painting, constructing and inventing, the student is able to assimilate, respond to, and make sense of, his/her experience of the world." The visual arts curriculum enhances self-confidence and self-esteem by

encouraging students to be spontaneous and creative in their self-expression (*"Visual arts guidelines"*, n.d.). Drawings and images are the most fundamental art activities and the first art that children can deal with. Researchers have demonstrated that drawings and images are a powerful pedagogical tool to engage children in writing, as these visual arts are discursive and performative by nature (Penn, 2020). Students experience the transition to the written language more easily when allowed to create meanings, and plan and organize their ideas through drawing.

Due to their natural ability to create meaning through visual representation, children can overcome the fear of writing if they first generate the ideas through pictures (Olshansky, 2018). Moreover, there are a lot of things that children ideate but cannot express through spoken language; however, they can represent them through their drawings. Since images and drawing are the most common types of visual arts used and promoted by Saudi curriculum in the context of language learning context, this present study focuses only on these two primary visual arts. Video and computer projections are not as commonly used, while sculptures are rarely used.

Literacy has been defined as an "open-textured" sophisticated concept that shifts forms and changes meanings according to the context (Barton and Ewing, 2017). As such, literacy is "interpretive and expressive fluency through symbolic form, whether aural/sonic, embodied, textual, visual, written or a combination of these within context" (Barton, 2014, p.3). Barton and Ewing (2017) claimed that all arts disciplines should be viewed as different ways of creating meanings; in other words, different literacies that operate synchronous and not in competition with each other. Therefore, literacy learning and visual arts are working together, not separately, and in a balanced manner, to create meanings and help students understand the implications of their learning beyond the walls of the classroom (Postema, 2013).

The area of arts and literacy covers multi-disciplinary approaches; therefore, researchers have focused on distinct characteristics and followed different

trajectories. Barton and Ewing conducted multiple studies in Australia, where they explored different sides of literacy and visual arts (2012, 2015, 2017). Most commonly in classrooms, literacy refers to reading and writing (Gilbert, 2013). Since the interaction between literacy and visual arts is so broad, this study focuses on one part of literacy learning (writing) within a specific learning timeframe (primary school) in a given educational context (Saudi Arabia). The reason for focusing exclusively on writing in relation to drawing and images is that these are considered naturally interconnected, being an integral part of the meaning-making process of the students (Newkirk, 2014). Composing with images and drawings empowers students to shape their own meanings of reality while constructing their identities (Thomsen, 2018).

A growing body of literature shows a strong connection between the use of visual arts in the classroom and enhanced writing skills (Ryan, 2014, Ryan and Barton, 2014, Ewing, Manual, and Mortimer, 2015). Both are semiotic systems, yet the visual arts represent an open, flexible, unconstrained system that comes naturally, while writing is a closed system, constrained and determined by rules, and has to be taught (Mackenzie and Veresov, 2013). Children learn to communicate through multisensory approaches, combining art and written language in the emerging writing skills (Martens et al., 2012; Neumann et al., 2009). The use of images and drawings builds a bridge between the visual culture of students so pervasive outside the classroom and their literacy learning, promoting confidence in composing with the power of images (Thomsen, 2018). Not only are children more prone to learn writing while drawing, but they are also able to create more complex meanings (Mackenzie and Veresov, 2013).

Researchers have also debunked the conventional way of writing as a "mastery" of different text types and challenged the over-emphasizing of grammar, punctuation, and spelling as the best ways to assess writing skills. They have promoted a new conceptualization of writing as a creative tool for self-development, and the improvement of learning and literacy levels (Barton and Ewing, 2017). Many empirical studies have explored different aspects of visual

arts and its practice in education. The theoretical and empirical background is discussed below.

2.3. Theoretical background

Efforts to improve child learning have emerged as a major recurring theme. More theories of learning have been developed in the field of educational research, demonstrating the complexities of learning and the high diversity in learning style (Jorg, Davis, and Nickmans, 2007). However, when most people hear the word "learning" they usually think of school, as learning is narrowly understood as situated only in the context of the classroom and is linked to teaching. Therefore, a good definition of learning would start with what learning is not. First, learning does not occur only in schools because many children come to their first day of school laden with a great baggage of knowledge acquired at home, outdoors, and in their social circles (Ackoff and Greenberg, 2008).

Second, learning is not a factory-line model of knowledge production where teachers fill up the students' minds with the necessary information for a successful life because students are dynamic and not passive beings. They like to be engaged in the process of knowledge acquisition (Robinson, 2011; Nagel, 2013). Third, learning is no longer isolated to a place or a timeframe because nowadays, information grows exponentially and children have easy access to it through computers, smart phones - and the list is endless (Nagel and Scholes, 2016).

One of the pioneers in contemporary research about learning, Roger Saljo, published a seminal study in 1979 that has influenced the theory of learning since that time. He postulated five categories of learning: (1) learning as a quantitative acquisition of knowledge, (2) memorizing or storing knowledge, (3) acquiring facts, skills, and methods that can be used in the future, (4) making sense or abstracting meaning, that is, relating parts of information to each other and to the real world, and (5) interpreting knowledge so as to comprehend reality and the surrounding world (Saljo, 1979, in Nagel and Scholes, 2016). Therefore, learning is both a product and a process (changing the understanding and conceptualization of the world), both external (something happening from the

outside) and internal (something done by the individuals themselves), both reproductive (memorizing and replicating the information) and creative (making meanings). Seeing learning as a complex, dynamic process requires a critical examination of what happens when learning takes place.

Children can learn through observation, listening, exploring, experimenting, and questioning. All of these ways of learning rely on interaction as a foundation for learning. Understanding how children learn and interact with learning is paramount for exploring teachers' conceptions about children's different ways of learning (Learning: Primary and secondary school years, 2022). To discuss teachers' conceptions and approaches to using visual arts in writing instruction, it is imperative to start by exploring the theoretical knowledge base of children learning and how it developed over time to narrow it down from previous theories to the scope of the current study. The sections that follow provide some children's learning orientations. Discussing such orientations connects the theoretical background to the current topic of this study.

The following sections will follow the theoretical orientations of learning, paying more attention to more recent ones. They will also narrow down the scope of past research to the actual purpose of the present work, namely, to study primary-school teachers' conceptions and approaches to using visual arts in writing instruction in Saudi Arabia. To this end, the following sections focus first on theories of learning by interaction. They then narrow the scope by stressing language learning as an interactive activity. The next sections concentrate on existing research about writing as a part of the literacy learning process and the integration of visual arts with writing instruction. Subsequent sections focus on theoretical findings related to the use of visual arts as part of literacy learning process and the integration of visual arts with the curriculum in teaching writing.

Sometimes, the researchers contradict each other; thus, this section will critically follow their approaches and consider them carefully from the perspective of this study. The last two sections follow theories about teachers' conceptions and their

role in influencing learner development, as well as the lack of literature about this particular topic in the research on visual arts and literacy learning.

2.3.1. Learning by interaction

Published in 1762, Jean Jacques Rousseau's work, *Emile* (1762), proposed that individual progress occurs through natural stages as a child proceeds from infancy to adulthood. He strongly recommended that education be organized according to these natural stages to support an individual's development as the person grew. Rousseau started from the premise of children's natural goodness and claimed that the innate capacities of children need protection against the dominations and manipulations of others so they can develop through autonomous discoveries. He advocated for children to be left as free as possible to draw personal conclusions as a result of their own explorations. If there are no restrictions imposed by society, children could reach their full potential, both educationally and morally. This regular improvement should be child-centered, emphasizing the child's needs and experiences over the stages of development.

However, Rousseau emphasized the role of the tutor as the main actor in creating the proper environment for the balanced development of the child. The tutor constantly interacts with the child, not in a domination-subordination relationship, but as a mediator of the new experiences that keep enticing the child. For example, the period of early adulthood when the adolescent starts taking interest in others requires careful guidance from the tutor to develop compassion and gratitude towards others, rather than selfish attitudes. Therefore, Rousseau stressed learning by interaction in two directions: with the tutor and with life experiences.

Another philosopher that wrote extensively in the 18th century about education and the relationship teacher-student was the German educational reformer, Johann Herbart (1776 – 1841). He was highly regarded for his principles on moral education (Herbart, 1893, 1901). For Herbart, the main goal of teaching is character development through shaping attitudes and skills, but also moral insight into the world. The only means for strengthening character permanently is

teaching; but this should celebrate and encourage the free expression of children's individuality, not impinge upon it. The most fruitful way to acquire this balance is to cultivate a "versatile interest", that is, a personal connection between the child and the object through a comprehensive study that links different sides in an all-encompassing communion of the child with the world (Hilgenheger, 1993)

Herbart considers concepts to be the main units that build the mind, and the function of a concept is to justify its inclusion in the study. In the modern sense, Herbart is concerned with the development and creation of conceptual structures that will contribute to the development of an individual's character (Bybee et al., 2006). As such, he proposed five formal steps of teaching that were later restated and refined by Rein at Jena and C.A. McMurry (De Garmo, 1895). They are as follows: (1) preparation – linking new material to past memories of the child in order to boost the interest in the topic, (2) presentation – a hands-on experience of learning by means of using objects or actual experiences, (3) association – comparison with previous acquired knowledge to consider the similarities and differences with the goal of instilling new ideas in the child's mind, (4) generalization – developing the mind of the child beyond the now-and-here of the perceptions, and (5) application – every learned idea has to be internalized to develop a functional mind that is turning them into its own ideas (De Garmo, 1895). This stress on personal connection and interaction between the child and the learning experience placed Herbart at the forefront of the humanist philosophies that promoted learning by interaction in the 19th century.

Other contributors to the field, John Henry Pestalozzi, Jean Frederic Oberlin, and Robert Owen emphasized empirical research to support educational theories (Berk, 2006). Herbart's principles were carried forward by the European scholar, John Pestalozzi, the proponent of an educational approach that encompassed "learning by head, hand, and heart" (Tarr, 1989). Pestalozzi was influenced by the philosophies of Jean Rousseau and applied modern principles of education while teaching children. Pestalozzi's works (1781, 1801) introduced ideas that affected the role of teachers that shifted from being an evaluator of memorized

content to presenting ideas to students, while focusing on meaning and understanding of concepts.

Pestalozzi recommended a hands-on approach to teaching that would allow the child to observe the world and learn new skills through interaction with surrounding objects. Teachers should not impose ideas on the child's mind; instead, they should rely on the child's interests and surrounding environment to communicate knowledge (Downs, 1975). However, he warned against artificial means of transferring knowledge, which is mainly verbal, and urged educators to disseminate more efficient learning by doing things that are practical with long-lasting effects (Pestalozzi, 1968).

Among the most important skills a child should master to become a well-rounded person, Pestalozzi inserted drawing. He was considered the promoter of "pedagogical drawing", an approach that links drawing to one's personal expression of artistic taste and skills. It differs from traditional general education where drawing is present yet not very useful to students' learning (Ashwin, 1981).

The philosophical approach of John Dewey was widely recognized in the field of education and shed new light on the practice of child education. As a prominent educational theorist, Dewey (1916) highlighted the influence of human experience in the learning process. He advocated that students learn through experience with practical problem solving and reflect on the learning process. Dewey's early works including *My Pedagogic Creed* (1897), *The School and Society* (1900), *The Child and the Curriculum* (1902) proposed that education and learning are social and interactive processes, and school were social institutions through which social reform occur. In *The Child and the Curriculum* (1902), Dewey argued that a major flaw in the contemporary schooling system was the inactivity of the student. According to him, "the child is simply the immature being who is to be matured; he is the superficial being who is to be deepened" (p. 13).

Yet Dewey considered that these immature beings are all unique learners; therefore, their individual interests should drive teacher instruction and not the other way around. To this end, he proposed social interactions that mirror real-life

situations in classroom. The classroom environment should function as a social entity for children, where they can solve problems and learn together as a community. This type of learning allows students to participate in learning activities that are both flexible and versatile, as in real social settings (Williams, 2017). With his ideas influencing art, science, logic, and ethics in education, Dewey was one of the major contributors to the progressive education movement (Heilig et al., 2010). "Progressive education as described by Dewey should include socially engaging learning experiences that are developmentally appropriate for young children" (Williams, 2017, p. 92)

Dewey had a very particular approach to drawing. His famous "drawing out" and "drawing into" concepts are still perpetuated in arts classes today (Schyfter, 2016). Drawing is neither recognition, nor visual reproduction or representation in his opinion; it is a form of extraction of meanings from the objective material world (drawing out). It is also a translation of the material world into a "relation of mutual reinforcement with all other plastic means – color, light, the spatial planes" by an individual according to his or her personality, vision and experiences (drawing into) (Dewey, 1934, p. 96). This goes along with the use of drawing in the visual arts teaching of literacy, since drawing is more than just a form of representation: it is a form of self-expression.

Jean Piaget (1896 – 1980), whose philosophies strengthened people's thinking about child psychology (Davidson & Benjamin, 1987; Prochner, 2009), performed many epistemological studies with children. He proposed the theory of cognitive development. Piaget (1936) believed that the process of thinking and intellectual development happens through assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation occurs when a child responds to new knowledge by fitting it into what they already know. Accommodation is when the child modifies his or her existing knowledge to accept newer thinking by reshaping already known knowledge. His theory of cognitive development is used as a tool in the early childhood classroom, according to which children develop best in a classroom with interaction. Learning results from experience, both physical and logical, when supported by instructors in an educational setting (Piaget, 1964). Piaget (1956) argued that drawing can

represent the child's cognitive ability and viewed it as an entry point into general cognitive development (Brooks, 2009).

Piaget viewed drawing as an imitative accommodation of the child's perceptions about reality into graphical representation. He related the child's ability to understand the permanent existence of objects to their mental recall of material objects and then the translation of that memorized image into a drawing (Piaget, 1956) Although he considered drawing a symbolic representation of reality - not as Dewey did, a drawing-out, drawing-into experience - Piaget still viewed it as a form of learning by organizing experiences of the world through images to further understand it.

All these classical works and philosophies on education, regardless of their different perspectives, view interaction as a common ground for developing learning in children, their cognitive system, and a well-rounded personality. According to these scholars, learning is not a one-way process, where the teacher transfers information that the student receives and commits to learning and using. The process of learning is a two-way communication between the teacher and student.

The philosophers emphasized that the learning occurs through interaction and placed drawing at the forefront of literacy learning process. Rousseau stressed learning by interaction in two directions: with the tutor and life experiences. Herbart suggested celebrating and encouraging the free expression of children's individuality by cultivating a versatile interest. Pestalozzi recommended hands-on learning that would allow the child to acquire new skills by interaction with surrounding objects. Dewey developed the drawing-out and drawing-into concepts that create meanings in relation to the material world, according to the personality of the students. Piaget claimed that drawing is an imitative accommodation of reality into graphical representation. Therefore, their theories have informed the impact of visual arts on writing learning, representing the preliminary support for this present study and its aims.

Using visual arts in literacy learning is not a novel fashion; these philosophers

demonstrate that this should be the norm in every class for a successful outcome. The following section will narrow the scope of research to language learning as an interactive activity.

2.3.2. Language learning as an interactive activity

Language learning is one aspect of child development and education that needs to be developed as an interactive, not passive activity. Interaction has two major sides, social and individual, that have been summarized as,

> *"[T]he first is an individual, isolated activity, and that is the interaction of a learner with the learning material, be it text, television or computer program; the second is a social activity, and that is the interaction between two or more people about the learning material. Both kinds of interactions are important in learning." (Bates, 2005, p.60).*

Since language itself is a means of communication and interaction, language learning theorists stress that interaction is an indispensable and integral part, both a means and a goal, of the language learning process. Interaction is such an important aspect of language learning that "interactive" usually precedes language skills, as in "interactive listening", "interactive writing", and "interactive reading" (Wang, 2004, p.374).

Social interaction has proven to be the key for acquiring language in infants (Kuhl et al., 2003, Kuhl et al., 2007). In 2003, Kuhl et al. conducted an experiment demonstrating that infants showed phonetic learning from live, not recorded exposure to a foreign language. They concluded that social interaction is a prerequisite for the language learning process. Furthermore, in 2007, Kuhl et al. claimed that "the developmental transition from an initial universal state of language processing to one that is language-specific requires social interaction" (p.110).

Even for adults, the sociality of language plays a crucial role in facilitating foreign language learning. "This evidence suggests that there is a two-way influence between social interaction and communication" (Verga and Kotz, 2013, p.2). The pioneer of social interaction in language learning settings is Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist, renowned for his studies on the psychological development

of children. Vygotsky (1896 – 1934) believes that language learning is a result of social interaction, whereby the child needs to perform a task and the adult's role is to facilitate it (Langer & Applebee, 1986). Vygotsky extended Piaget's theory of cognitive abilities. While Piaget asked that teachers support children in their independent discoveries of knowledge and world exploration, Vygotsky stressed the importance of establishing opportunities for children to learn through interaction with more skilled peers. He focused on the idea that language is social communication (Vygotsky, 1962).

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory views child development as a socially-mediated process in which children acquire new knowledge and skills through collaborative interaction with more knowledgeable members of society, be they parents, teachers, or any other kind of educators. He argued that a child's higher abilities come from his/her learning of social and functional relationships and that learning is achieved in a cultural context with social interaction. He affirmed the role that culture and language play in developing a child's thinking, where adults help children develop new ideas and skills.

In this relationship, interactive events are at the heart of language learning. While the child is an active learner in the classroom, the teacher can provide guidance and direct participation in early reading and writing. In language learning settings, the interactive activity would be social communication, as Dewey said, that mirrors real-life situations in the classroom. Children learn together as a community, sharing the same knowledge as they are grouped by age and, sometimes, by language proficiency level.

Similarly, Jerome Bruner (1915 - 2016) investigated how adults can assist by using language to mediate the world and help children with problem solving (Cameron, 2001; Bruner 1983, 1990). He adopted the term "scaffolding" to describe the assistance provided by adults to control elements beyond their capabilities (Langer & Applebee, 1986). Bruner believes that language is the basis of concept formation and the most essential tool for cognitive development (Bruner, Olver, & Greenfield, 1966). Both Vygotsky and Bruner believed that

language learning develops from the communication between adults and children, whereby adults facilitate and help children understand and perform assigned tasks.

While oral communication between adults and children is a form of direct interaction, researchers have demonstrated that written communication involves a different type of interaction, which is more indirect and requires different approaches from teachers. This type of interaction will be discussed in the following section.

2.3.3. Writing as part of the literacy learning process

Vygotsky (2004) suggested that verbal language is different from written language since the latter requires rules that children may not master in the first place. Written language represents a monologue, or a type of speech without an interlocutor since it is addressed to an imaginary person who may be absent or implied in the discussion. This is a new and strange situation while learning to write because children have been used to speaking only to real, present interlocutors up to that moment. Therefore, they have to learn how to make an abstraction of an interlocutor and create monologues.

In addition, writing requires a double abstraction, claimed Vygotsky: one is from the interlocutor and the other from the sound of speech. A child learning to write has to learn how to make an abstraction of sounds as well and turn them into drawn signs. Finally, the development of writing skills does not reiterate the development of oral speech because it uses pen and paper, not the vocal cords. Writing is not only about abstractions, it is also about practicing a set of signs – letters – that make meaning by conveying an understandable and logical message (Vygotsky, 2012).

A significant aspect of writing is that unlike oral communication, which is more spontaneous, it requires a more organized sequence of ideas. Graves (1982) studied children and their writings through systematic observation and defined the writing process as a sequence of operations that starts with choosing the topic of writing and ends with delivering (publishing) the writing. Additionally, because

writing can support the integration of significant language and emergent literacy skills, particularly letter knowledge, writing is a critical process in children's learning (Gerde, Bingham, & Wasik, 2012).

Gerde et al. (2012) claimed there is solid experimental evidence about the importance of writing for children's literacy growth. The National Early Literacy Panel report (NELP) (2008, p. vii), based on different studies with large number of children, identified some literacy skills, among them writing, as abilities highly relevant to later literacy development. The study discovered a strong connection between the early skill achievement of writing and later literacy development in writing. Moreover, Bruner (1973) viewed writing as an effective tool that is important for thinking, while teaching can promote the development of reasoning skills through practicing the mastery of written language (Langer & Applebee, 1986). In other words, learning writing in elementary classes is not just a transient, insignificant process; instead, it is of paramount importance because it will influence the development of critical thinking, reasoning and literacy growth of the students (Rahmat et al., 2020).

Different studies have explained the development of children's literacy skills as writing skills are honed through different stages (Lieberman, 1985; Bloodgood, 1999; Schickedanz and Casbergue, 2009). As Schickedanz and Casbergue (2009) stated, in the early stage, toddlers' writing develops from scribbles to scripts; they often start by writing small marks that may not look like a letter, or they sometimes draw pictures that have a message. Children recognize drawings as drawings before they recognize writings as writings. In the beginning, their scribbling does not look like a drawing. When they start recognizing drawings, they learn how to draw objects referentially, meaning they start representing reality as they view it. The progress in object drawing brings them closer to the point where they are able to recognize writing and start to imitate it (Levin and Bus, 2003).

Flower and Hayes (1981, 1984) discussed the knowledge and previous experiences one has (e.g. images, patterns, etc.) that can be translated into

"written" language, namely scribblings and marks. Children become aware early on of the connection between oral and visual representations and begin to explore written communication by producing approximations of writings that makes sense to their own understanding. King (1979) recommends the need for understanding the framework of how children's desires (intentions) communicate with different learning contexts as they transition from talking to writing. The pictures or scribbles children draw convey their intentions, although they often do not make sense to adults (DeFord, 1980). They discover that meaning-making is multi-modal; in other words, they can create meanings through a combination of means, such as drawing used as a bridge to learning how to write, or music as an expression of the self (Crafton, Silvers, and Brennan, 2017).

Usually in kindergarten years, children progress by creating consistent shapes and patterns using scribbles, such as loops. They develop by writing symbols that look like letters before using letters and letter-like forms (Gerde et. al., 2012). At this stage, they might start to distinguish between what is writing and what is drawing (DeFord, 1980). This can be noticed from the different uses of shapes and forms for writing or drawing (Clay, 1975). They start copying words and drawing strings of letters, showing they understand writing as a means of communication, even though they don't understand what they are writing. This also shows knowledge of letter formation and the concept of words, but children do not yet understand the connection between letters and sounds. Name writing is considered to be an early form of writing for children and is connected to letter knowledge and word recognition (Gerde et al., 2012; Welsch et al. 2003; Bloodgood, 1999).

Following these stages, in first grade, children increasingly initiate a spelling-focused process, in which they spell words based on the heard sounds of the language (Gerde et al., 2012; Bear et al. 2008; Read 1975). Eventually, they are able to write words correctly. Children might move back and forth between these stages based on assigned writing tasks, whether the task is name writing, word writing, or story writing (Levin et al. 2005). As stated by Sulzby and Teale (1985), these forms of writing are considered emergent (Gerde et al., 2012). Levin et al.

(2005) believe that practicing letter formation in writing leads to learning the relationship of sounds, which helps them understand the alphabetic principle since letters represent the sound of words.

Writing, therefore, poses different challenges than oral communication to teachers as well as students. Children need to learn how to make an abstraction of sounds and interlocutors, use pen and paper for communication, learn the differences between scribbles and letters, and organize their ideas in sequences. Teachers need to help students transform their scribbling into logical signs, letters first, and then words and sentences in order to translate their ideas and drawings into written languages and develop critical thinking and reasoning.

One important obvious aspect in the studies mentioned above is the connection between drawing and writing, as drawing precedes writing and writing develops as a more complex form of drawing in the first stage. Therefore, the above-mentioned studies showed that at later stages, writing helps children develop cognition, more complicated ideas, understanding, and new meanings. The next section will discuss this important link between visual arts – specifically drawing and images – and the literacy learning process.

2.3.4. Visual arts as part of the literacy learning process

2.3.4.1. Theoretical assumptions

Vygotsky (1978) talked about symbolic representation development and stated that some activities, such as make-believe play, writing, and drawing are counted in the verbal and written communication development process. He explained that development is a process of growing abstract representation, distancing the object from the symbol, eventually leading to higher order thinking (Poldberg et al, 2013). Based on Vygotsky's point of view, which has also been proposed by Smagorinsky (1993, 1997), the production of visual arts (such as drawing and images) enables a broader expression than language itself by using "non-verbal" resources (Trainin, Andrzejczak, & Poldberg, 2006). These non-verbal representations can support the development of the higher order cognitive functions necessary for literacy learning (Trainin et al, 2006; Poldberg et al, 2013).

Gardner (1980) believes that images, including drawings, could provide a means for children to communicate more complicated ideas.

Dyson (1986) extended Vygotsky's understanding and claimed that children can create new meaning through the use of images in the writing process. He established a close connection between learning the writing process and the use of images and drawing in this process. Drawings and images can represent ideas in a child's mind and provide a means for collecting and organizing them for writing (Dyson, 1986). This could be very beneficial, especially in the early stages of literacy learning since it requires considerable cognition. Additionally, Dyson (1986) believes that children depend on various symbol systems to construct more consistent writings, where they emerge from using images and words mutually (Trainin et al, 2006; Poldberg et al, 2013).

Flower and Hayes (1981) presented a linear stage model of writing, in which the major units of analysis are simple and mental processes organized in a linear sequence or pattern, such as idea generation, pre-writing, writing, and rewriting. The widespread acceptance of pre-writing has aided in improving composition instruction by emphasizing planning and discovery as legitimate components of the writing process. However, linear stages highlight the progress of writing rather than the inner processes of the person producing it. "Pre-Writing" refers to the stage before words appear on paper; "Writing" refers to the stage of producing a product; and "Re-Writing" refers to the final reworking of that result. However, previous studies indicated that writers are continually planning (pre-writing) and revising (re-writing) as they compose (write), rather than in separate stages (Sommers, 1978). Furthermore, the clear boundaries between the operations of planning, writing, and rewriting of the stage models may significantly mislead how these tasks work. For example, Nancy Sommers has demonstrated that revision is a continuous process of "re-vision" or re-seeing the ideas as they are produced (Sommers,1980). A more accurate description of the writing process would need to encompass the fundamental cognitive processes that connect planning and revision. Because stage models are based on the finished output, they provide an insufficient picture of the moment-by-moment conceptual process of writing.

How is the output of one stage, such as pre-writing or incubation, transported to the next, for example? As any writer knows, having good ideas does not inevitably translate into good text (Flower and Hayes, 1981).

Based on over three decades of the research on the cognitive processes in writing, Hayes and Berninger (2014) created a framework with three levels of the cognitive dimensions involved in writing. The bottom or resource level involves general cognitive resources like attention, long-term memory, working memory, and reading. Attention is the cognitive ability that keeps the focus on what is relevant to the writer. Long-term memory is a complex resource that stores the children's sources of knowledge, such as "facts, events, motor planning, control, and execution skills, letter form access, and production skills" (Hayes & Berninger, 2014, p. 5). It also includes knowledge of vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and discourse representation. Working memory is related to fluency and quality of writing, and it stores the required information while the operation of writing is performed. Reading is another important cognitive resource for writing because children spend much time rereading the text they have just written or is currently under construction. These resources interact with each other and for young children, this could be a demanding cognitive process.

Scardamalia (1981) and Bereiter and Scardamalia (1982) investigated how children cope with the cognitive demands of writing. Well-learned abilities, such as sentence structure, tend to become automatic and disappear from conscious awareness over time. But since so little of the writing process is effortless for young children, they must commit deliberate attention to a range of distinct cognitive activities that adults accomplish swiftly and easily. The studies that track the development of a certain ability across multiple age groups reveal the hidden components of how young children learn. These studies have demonstrated the difference between children's capacity to handle idea complexity and their ability to handle syntactic complexity. In other words, these studies emphasize the difference between perceiving complicated relationships and translating them into proper language (Scardamalia, 1981; Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1982). Applebee (1984) concluded in another review that different tasks allow for different levels of

processing. Tasks that promote deep processing, such as an essay writing, are more likely to enhance learning than tasks that lead to more superficial processing, such as note-taking.

Studies in other fields support these findings. Some neuroimaging studies reveal that "drawing shares cortical substrate with writing, access to the semantic system, memory, naming, imagery" (Tyler and Likova, 2012, p. 3). This finding suggests that the shared neural substrate offers a strong potential for a cross-cognitive transfer in learning literacy as well when visual arts are involved. Besides, using drawing for the development of writing reinforces the retention and retrieval of information since both skills are located within the same cortical substrate (Tyler and Likova, 2012).

The integration of visual arts in literacy learning has an emotional component as well, according to psychologists. Visual stimuli trigger inspiration in students. Inspiration is a mental experience mediated by the limbic system as well as the reward system of the brain. They are responsible for emotional desires, motivational rewards, and the appreciation of esthetic values (Tyler and Likova, 2012). Students develop a strong sense of self-efficacy when they are able to complete a task they might not have been able to complete without the help of images. They also develop self-expression skills and become more aware of their own emotional states and body language. Students learn to work independently as well as in groups and take initiative in their writing production (Lok, 2014).

This mutual enrichment does not happen only in the brain of the child. It has to be supported by the classroom experience as well. More choices in learning, particularly the inclusion of visual arts, help students "produce stories that are richer, more elaborate, and engaging" (Beckley, 2014, p. V). Beckley (2014) found that students prefer to use a variety of visual methods in narrative creation. Also, they are more engaged and enthusiastic about literacy learning in a choice-based environment.

2.3.4.2. Visual arts and learning achievements

Previous research has demonstrated that the connection between the visual arts

and academic achievement is real and bears fruits in a wide range of situations or contexts. Visual arts are beneficial for any subject, but especially for language subject (Jordan and DiCicco, 2012). Vaughn and Winner (2000) found that students taking arts classes had higher scores in the verbal and math SAT tests than students who took no arts class. Wilhelm (1995) found that visual exposure to arts increases reading comprehension scores on standardized tests. Wilhelm (2004) showed that visualizing scenes, characters, and ideas are vital for reading comprehension and reflective reading. Caterall, Chapleau, and Iwanaga (1999) discovered that students coming from low-socioeconomic contexts, who took theater classes, showed visible improvement on reading tests. However, Jordan and DiCicco (2012) warned that such results are not possible when visual arts are viewed as separate from literacy learning; it is only when they are fully integrated in the common core instruction.

The integration of visual arts in the classroom encourages creative writing, improves academic achievement, promotes meaning, motivates students, develops problem-solving skills, self-expression, and imagination (Ahmadi, Riasati, and Bavali, 2019). Some researchers have demonstrated that visual arts could help as a form of motivational engagement to reading and writing by promoting positive practice (Ernst, 1994; Wilhelm, 1995; Burger and Winner, 2000).

Other researchers (Olshansky, 1998; Silver, 2001; Efland, 2002) go beyond this by identifying a link between the art making process and literacy (i.e., reading and writing). They agreed that visual arts connect students' early drawings to the literacy learning in the sense that it makes the passage from scribblings to logical writing more smooth and enjoyable. When students get engaged in literacy learning based on visual arts, "their understanding of literacy expands, and images become powerful texts" (Van Horn, 2008, p. 13).

Jordan and DiCicco (2012) claimed that visual arts can also be used to teach writing by carefully selecting a work of art, guiding students to pay attention to details, and then transferring the observations to writing composition. Images as

46

"powerful texts" is a metaphor that teachers could use to emphasize the similarities and draw parallels between visual arts and the written word. Both artists and writers apply the same principles of making things "come alive with detailed description," so students "can be taught to show – not tell – vivid textures in their writings." (Jordan and DeCicco, 2012, p. 30).

Penn (2020) claimed that drawings are "seductive spaces" where the competing interests of children and teachers are satisfied in that both the performative standard imposed by the curriculum and teachers' expectations, along with the self-expression of the child, find room to coexist. Drawing has the power to move classroom engagement beyond the traditional curriculum that privileges writing over visual arts activities. More than that, the author discovered that drawing represent more than just "vehicles for pre-literacy" as teachers often use it. Drawings produce "critical, creative, and constructive thinking and learning" (Penn, 2020, p. 211).

2.3.4.3. Visual arts and the curriculum

The agreement among researchers that the integration of visual arts in literacy learning is beneficial for students does not make the implementation of the concept in the classroom any easier. Olshansky proposed an integrative approach, starting from three basic premises: (1) pictures are a natural language for thinking, developing, and expressing ideas, (2) not all students work easily with words, yet most of them, even those struggling or with learning problems, are truly enticed by images, and (3) for the benefit of all students, teachers should expand the range of thinking tools provided in the classroom (Olshansky, 2014). Regardless of the student's learning styles, needs and preferences, pictures are a common means of communication that every child uses and loves. Teachers should take advantage of this and tap into the child's eagerness to draw and use images for self-expression. This approach views pictures and words as equal languages for learning; therefore, students are encouraged to move freely between visual and written language to create meaning with both their artwork and written text (Newland, 2013).

The visual arts have been used for teaching and learning in a variety of ways in recent years which can be grouped into three main categories: (1) arts as curriculum, (2) arts-enhanced curriculum, and (3) arts-integrated curriculum ("*What is arts integration?*", n.d.). Arts as a curriculum means "arts learning," which refers to developing students' knowledge by using a particular art form, such as music, art, drama, etc. An arts-enhanced curriculum refers to using the arts as a teaching strategy to support and enhance other curriculum areas. Some teachers use the visual arts as a supplementary activity, something that adds some flavor to a lesson to enliven it for students. Others give an equal chance to both writing and visual arts, using the same level of rigor while emphasizing the importance of both in acquiring literacy learning successfully (Mishook and Kornhaber, 2006).

Yet, an arts-integrated curriculum supports an integrative approach, in which arts and literacy learning intersect and work together for the advancement of knowledge and cognition development. The arts become "the approach to teaching and the vehicle for learning" ("*What is arts integration?*", n.d.). Learning literacy with and through the arts should not only be efficient and motivational, but also mutually reinforce both literacy learning and visual arts improvement. Writing and the arts are incorporated as key components in literacy learning, not separate entities that work independently toward the same goal (Olshansky, 1994; Poldberg, Trainin, and Andrzejczak, 2013), which the next section discusses in detail.

2.3.5. Visual arts integrated with writing

Previous research has looked at how the integration of arts with learning can be justified according to different factors and claims. Fleming (2006a) suggested that different alternative ways of justifying the role of arts in education is a better approach than providing a list of reasons for teaching arts. The author identified several positions that discussed the justification of arts-integrated teaching and proceeded to talk about them briefly. One position was to question whether it is appropriate to justify the arts as a generic concept and Fleming argued that it is better to consider different art forms particularly rather than abandoning the

reasoning line for arts' sake altogether. Moreover, the integration of particular arts often generates different responses from students and may reveal important insights in the teaching and learning process.

In another article, Fleming (2006b) focused specifically on the drama as a form of art used to teach language and provided practical examples of drama techniques that could benefit students' language learning. He explained that using drama as a pedagogic tool provides various opportunities for students to use language in multiple contexts. Additionally, since it engages students' feelings and attitudes, it enriches the language experience for the students. In line with Fleming's argument, this present study takes a separate form of arts, the visual arts (drawing and images), and examines their integration with a specific literacy learning skill, writing, and the impact it has on students' learning progress from the teachers' perspective.

In a more recent article, Fleming (2021) investigated whether arts contribute to language learning. He addressed four questions to clarify the value and role of arts in education. Once again, he stressed the importance of justification in relation to particular art forms and specific context to avoid the danger of overgeneralizing. He also considered that small-scale empirical research projects are very useful because they emphasize exactly these particular cases in language teaching and learning contexts. More than just enlivening the classroom, Fleming stressed the transformational potential that arts may have when teachers take their role seriously as facilitators of arts' form in classroom. In other words, the teachers actively intervene and support students in the process of creating art instead of keeping it as a simple way of enjoyment.

The author revolved his analysis around drama techniques as in the previous studies, but his findings are relevant for this present research as they reveal how important is to focus on particular rather than general forms of arts, the significance of small-scale studies, the role of teacher in facilitating learning through arts integration, and the impact arts have on students' academic achievements.

While speaking skills are assiduously attained through drama, as Fleming demonstrated, writing is a different type of skills that require a different approach. Olshansky (1994), Olson (1992), Hobson (1990), among other scholars, stressed two crucial assumptions: (1) children are both visual and verbal learners, two characteristics present more or less in every child, and (2) images and words are both tools for communication that overlap each other; writing developed historically as a visual means of communication (illustrated manuscripts, calligraphy, tapestries, etc.) and images were known from ancient times to communicate messages (murals, sculptures, stained glass, etc.). Graves (1994) names drawing as an unconscious rehearsal that precedes writing, an activity that gives children a chance to think before they decide what they want to write based on the rich ideas expressed and thought of during drawing. Therefore, "it seems obvious that the two should never been separated. Unfortunately, the traditional understanding of the visual image has been far too narrow and greatly misunderstood by most language-arts teachers" (Olson, 1992, p. 45, in Hobson, 2002). Since drawing and writing may overlap at some point during the literacy learning process, there have been attempts to integrate drawing with writing into curricula over past decades. Both Dewey (1938) and Gardner (1993) provided different entry points for children into learning by using an integrated curriculum (Winner & Cooper, 2000; Winner & Hetland, 2000).

Writing involves not only learning to draw some symbols – letters – that communicate a message, but learning how to create a meaningful, logical message to express the self and personal imagination, to think creatively and innovatively as well. Copping (2018) explored the connections between writing and creative thinking in a pilot study where the author organized a writing workshop about a Victorian murder mystery. He found that the connection between writing and creative thinking can be improved if teachers create and maintain an environment for thinking in the classroom. Teachers should also add value to the process of thinking and offer a tangible purpose that leads to increased motivation. Finally, increased expectations do not hinder academic achievement, on the contrary, they lead to higher attainment.

On the other hand, Olshansky (1995) indicated that the use of an imaginative approach plays a vital role in the writing process for children. Along with creative thinking, the imaginative process is improved as well when arts are integrated with the writing learning. For example, when a child writes a story, he or she typically imagines things or puts his or her mind to work by creating mental images, which enables the child to write creative content. Although Olshansky (1994) developed the method of picturing writing, in this work, she did not examine the influence of art on writing development. Furthermore, it was not clear whether the influence is due to art integration or following her new writing process.

Visual arts and writing mutually enrich one another. Dyson (1992) believes that it is not necessary for drawing to precede writing, but they both develop concurrently. Thus, the transition between drawing and writing becomes possible from a connection already made. Moreover, Dyson (1992) believes that the transition to symbol understanding in writing develops from symbol understanding in drawing, where both systems share forms such as lines and curves.

Not only do they enrich each other, but they also represent a multimodal experience. Multimodal experiences refer to different means of communication, such as visual representations, music, drama, etc. that intermingle. Some ideas are hard to put in writing, so more means of expression facilitate better performance. In his seminal book, Blending Genre, Altering Style: Writing Multi-Genre Papers (2000), Tom Romano expanded on the numerous ways to integrate multimodal experiences into the teaching of writing and talked about multi-genre writing. Romano (2000) defined multi-genre writing as "composed of many genres and subgenres, (…) yet connected by theme or topic and sometimes by language, images, and content" (Romano, 2000, p.x-xi). Andrelchick (2015) pointed out that reading and writing do not stay in diametrical opposition to artmaking, and teachers should view visual arts in intersecting textual literacy as meaning-making tools. In other words, literacy learning (writing and reading) and visual arts compensate each other, whereby the creation of meanings is enhanced by visuals and words altogether.

This fluidity between genres or modes of expression has been enhanced by digital technology, where students learn new ways to create text and take an active role in meaning making (Scully, 2008). Texting and drawing capabilities, by means of the interactive applications of smart phones, tablets, laptops and computers, allow for smooth passing from one genre or mode of expression to another, as well as mingling or overlapping them. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. are used by children from a very early age today, and they offer the possibility of self-expression through a combination of text, emoticons, images, videos, and so on. Text is no longer an isolated means of communication that teachers along with students can rely on to create meaning. "When using multimodalities, everything from the placement of images to the organization of the content to the method of delivery creates meaning" (Osman, 2021, p.1). This present study is treating only two of these multimodalities – writing and visual arts – while exploring the interaction and benefits of using them for literacy learning. This study focuses on the initial stage of development (primary school students) in the specific context of language classrooms.

The multi-genre writing and multimodal experience has experienced a rebranding over the last few years when researchers started to gain interest in the concept of transmediation. According to Osman (2021), transmediation is "the process of bringing meaning from one semiotic system to another." (p.1) The semiotic systems of interest to this study are the linguistic and the visual ones. In the case of this present study, transmediation refers to the process of taking what one knows into the visual system and representing it in another modality—specifically, the written word.

When teachers no longer map content from one modality to another but let students navigate the transformation, students develop innovative, abstract, critical, and reflective thinking (McCormick, 2011). They also learn to generate multilayered interpretations since they have to relate not only to the original mode (images, drawings, etc.) but also to the new one (writing); and this expand their interpretive potential. McCormick (2011) found another interesting thing in her research, namely, that transmediating enabled students to enhance their

vocabulary and language use across disciplines.

2.3.6. Contrasting ideas about the use of visual arts for teaching writing

"The scholarly literature on the arts in education is filled primarily with advocacy statement," claimed Gaztambide-Fernandez (2013, p. 212). The advocacy argument has embraced rhetorical effects on educational outcomes and transformative experiences. In other words, arts impact, transform, and enhance learning. Gaztambide-Fernandez warned that the attempt to demonstrate what the arts can do as the only thing that matters has turned into the "holy grail of arts advocacy." It is a biased approach that impairs researchers' ability to see beyond that (p. 213). This advocacy for positive effects discards the complexities and other possible not-so-positive things that lurk behind the experience of arts in education.

This section follows the "empirically based doubts on the holy grail of arts advocacy" (p. 218) and proves that arts integration is neither a straightforward, nor gratifying process as it seems to be at first glance. A content analysis study by Stanley and Sturm (2008) examined the pictures in sequential art books intended for beginning readers. The study indicated that the visual support in these books is not sufficient alone; the pictures should blend with text, and the text should add context to the images as well. Stanley and Sturm (2008) claimed that pictures have a positive role in word recognition. However, while it is possible to describe something concrete and actual through pictures, it is more difficult at this stage to describe something conceptual that requires abstract thinking. Also, students do not have hands-on art practice with pictures books, which may lead them to get bored and lose interest.

Tooley (2009) found that, according to the results of a survey analysis, most teachers agree to the use of drawing and visual images when teaching how to write. According to these teachers, "drawing is a necessary part of writing, and most of the teachers list drawing in their description of student writing behaviors or as a part of their instruction" (Tooley, 2009). Even if this study has paid more attention to teachers' views about the integration of visual arts with writing, it

limited the survey to teachers of fourth-grade students. The conclusion of this study is worth here as a starting point for analyzing teachers' perceptions regarding writing in its earlier stages of development.

Barton and Ewing (2017) conducted three case studies about how literacy have been enhanced by drama classes and story-telling. Each case study demonstrated that encouraging a dynamic relationship between arts and literature results into the enhancement of literacy learning. Although the study was about other artistic forms (drama and story-telling), and not specifically about drawing, it still represents important proof that the arts are a very powerful means to improve literacy learning.

Of note, not all researchers agree with the positive use of visual arts in literacy learning. Some researchers have doubts about the claimed role of visual arts. Burger and Winner's (2000) meta-analysis study tested the hypothesis whether visual arts instruction improves reading; they are also important to the present study. Their study analyzed previous research projects and compared the effects of arts-only instruction. The researchers concluded that both art and reading are visual skills, making possible a transfer of skills from one subject to another given that they use visual representation as a common ground for learning. When the transfer occurs using visual skills, then the degree of transfer from art to reading is moderate; but when it involves different types of skills, such as from visual to linguistic skills, the transfer is distant (Burger & Winner, 2000).

In other words, when the transfer is far (not using the same set of skills, i.e. visual skills, but from one set of skills to a different set), the arts have only a very small effect on reading readiness and achievement. For example, if the reading readiness tests involve figures and images (they often do), the transfer is near, making possible a moderate transfer of skills from arts to reading, as they both use a visual. When the tests only involve instructions, the transfer is far - from visual skills (arts) to linguistic skills (the instructions from the tests).

According to Burger and Winner, there is no transfer of skills in this case. But the results are somewhat limited because most of the studies are vulnerable to

teacher expectancy effects. Moreover, their conclusion is limited because the study was based only on a few studies, and many are vulnerable to teacher expectancy effects in favor of the arts group.

Burger and Winner's (2000) study brought forth an important question in arts education that still needs to be determined. Although the results of this study cannot be generalized, the research gives direction on how art can impact reading instruction for the better and indicates that future classroom practice needs exploration.

Winner (2001) looked at studies that showcase how art improves reasoning, thus leading to higher scores. These studies also indicate certain variables in this hypothesis, such as students who attend schools with arts programs perform better, or those with parents that support the arts demonstrate the same performance. The period of exposure to art also matters. For instance, students who have spent four years studying art tend to perform better than those who only have one year. While external factors can't be controlled by teachers and educators, this research will focus more on teachers' conceptions and what teachers say about using visual arts in teaching writing, and not on the students' backgrounds and their exposure to visual arts over time.

Winner & Hatland (2000) argued that most studies look at certain claims when doing comparisons. However, the connection in the arts has several premises. For instance, art may be linked with students becoming more persistent, observant, and learning to revise their work. The authors consider that these aspects could then be transferred to other areas, leading researchers to believe that those who study the arts are higher achievers. Winner & Hatland (2000) argue that the best way to determine whether or not the arts lead to high achievement is to conduct a true experiment dependent upon groups and comparisons that lead to reliable results.

Winner & Hatland (2000) suggest the importance of demonstrating that two groups of students must showcase similar traits and abilities. Most researchers make the mistake of assessing overall test results as opposed to looking at how

some art skills are transferred to specific areas of academic achievement. They should test the exact effects associated with art. Indeed, this is a problem worth considering when investigating the relationship between performance and the use of visual arts in literacy learning. However, as mentioned, some effects cannot be tested exactly, and only teacher feedback can tell how such skills develop and what other areas of education are affected. The present study aims to address this issue by focusing on teachers' conceptions about how these skills develop in the classroom when visual arts are implemented constantly and efficiently.

On the other hand, some researchers are still not sure that associating visual arts with literacy learning can be assessed through experiments or the classroom experience alone. For example, Eisner (2001) presented a different opinion, arguing that the contributions of art to educational achievement are quite trivial. From his perspective, neither experiments, classroom experience, nor general standardized scores are sufficient to assess literacy learning when visual arts are integrated in classroom activities. The author explained that control experiments that associate art with achievement have not yet produced any significant data on transfer to facilitate a conclusive hypothesis. For instance, there is no indication that the students involved in arts programs perform better on their SATs than those who are not. The author suggested that it is important to study how individuals are able to make connection between them, namely the conditions of learning, and not the connection between skills or domains of study (visual arts and literacy learning). This will have relevant implications for this particular topic and other fields as well. It would offer a basis of understanding how the transfer between skills works and, thus, better assessment methods.

Olshansky confirmed these findings in her studies. She observed that students are prone to read and interpret the picture they had created as support for organizing and elaborating their writing process. One student said, "I learned that after you paint your pictures, it is much easier to write because you have all the details right in front of you" (Olshansky, 2008, p. 19). Once students complete the artwork, they are encouraged to read and translate the meaning of the picture into words, thus providing a natural bridge from pictures to writing through oral

rehearsing (Olshansky, 2014).

Teachers play a very important role in this integration because as the decision-makers, they influence the use of visual arts in the classroom. The following section will show, however, that this is not an easy process, as teachers' conceptions are far more complex than they might seem at first sight.

2.3.7. Teachers' conceptions

Teachers develop teaching strategies, using children's preferences and interests as an entry point to achieving their teaching goals and improve weak areas (Sidelnick & Svoboda, 2000; Poldberg, Trainin, & Andrzejczak, 2013). Another important factor that plays a crucial role in devising effective teaching strategies are teacher conceptions. As such, it is important to understand how teachers perceive effective teaching strategies and how they apply these conceptions in practice. Previous research reported that teachers act and practice in their classrooms based on what they think; their pedagogical decisions and choices are based on their own conceptions (Shavelson & Stern, 1981).

Despite the difficulty of identifying and exploring teachers' conceptions, as they cannot be observed directly (Johnson, 1994), previous studies have stated that teachers hold a large amount of complicated conceptions about pedagogy, students, and practices (Shavelson & Stern, 1981; Berliner, 1987; Borg 1998, 2003). Dweck (2012) argued that teachers can have a fixed or growth mindset. The fixed mindset adheres to a deterministic model about progress. This mindset implies that teachers have little influence on students' development as, according to this view, some children are born intelligent while others are not. In this mindset, writing is limited by a child's in-born ability; therefore, teachers will use only the learning tools and materials they consider as appropriate for specific ages and stages of development. The growth mindset sees children in a continuous process of change, always becoming and never constrained by their age to attain access to a wide range of literacies. Distinguishing between these two mindsets and molding them for the sake of better classroom practices and as a result, improved learning development, is therefore of paramount importance. Yet, this

is not the only issue regarding teacher conceptions.

Borg and Alshumaimeri (2019) warned against the simplification of two independent issues: 'stated beliefs' and enacted behaviors. They claimed that the expectation of having consistency between 'stated beliefs' and actual classroom choices is naïve and dangerous for the correct understanding of teachers' conceptions. Gross (2015) demonstrated that there is an inconsistency between what people say or believe and what they do; and this is true in the case of teachers as well. Borg (2018) talked about more recent works that compared stated beliefs to subsequently observed classroom practices and drew conclusions oblivious of the discrepancies between the two.

However, not all researchers agree with this assumption. Some studies found a certain consistency between conceptions and classroom practices. Tavakoli et al. (2016) observed a high consistency between teachers' conceptions and their corresponding practices. Ireland et al. (2011) claimed that teacher conceptions impact learning and implementing of new teaching behaviors during professional development. In other words, pre-service teachers develop behaviors consistent with their conceptions that are reflected later in classroom practices.

Some recent studies have focused specifically on integrated writing instruction and have found consistency here as well. Wang and Matsumura (2019) found that teachers' conceptions influenced their selection of writing tasks. Those who considered writing as an application of reading skills chose writing tasks that were very explicit and did not allow ambiguity in students' responses. Li, Zhu, and Cheong (2020) explored the alignment between Chinese language teachers' conceptions and the curriculum objectives. Teachers' choice of integrated writing tasks varied greatly from those who held examination-oriented views (writing as an examination paper) to those who held holistic views (writing is connected to other language skills and is a developmental process). However, this variation was from one individual to another, not from conception to practice.

This argument between researchers is due to the method used to gather information about teachers' conceptions. Borg and Alshumaimeri (2019), Gross

(2015), Borg (2018), among others, agreed that there is a discrepancy between beliefs and practices that follow "stated beliefs," namely, the actual verbalization of what teachers think. On the other hand, Wang and Matsumura (2019), Tavakoli et al. (2016), among others, discussed the consistency between beliefs and practices when psychological and statistical evaluations are employed to understand teachers' conceptions. Comparing findings, they reached the conclusion that teachers translate their conceptions into practice, sometimes unwillingly and unconsciously, resulting in an unawareness of the close connection between them.

The present study considers that teachers' conceptions are a complex combination of the following: teachers' personal belief system (Kagan, 1992), reflections of prior experiences (Eley, 2006), actual classroom practice (Hampton, 1994, Borg, 2019), personality traits and contextual factors (Borg, 2003). These assumptions reflect what teachers practice and instruct in classrooms (Hampton, 1994, Farrell & Lim, 2005; Borg, 2003). Speaking of previous experience, it involves more than the teaching experience. Borg (2003) believed there is enough evidence that teachers' learning experiences can develop teaching cognitions that continue to impact their professional lives.

Other researchers have gone beyond its effect on teachers' practice, believing that teachers' conceptions have a strong impact on student learning as well (Calderhead, 1996; Clark and Peterson, 1986; Pajares, 1992). Different research work has studied this impact (Borg, 2003; Calderhead 1996; Carter 1990; Richardson 1996; Verloop, Van Driel, & Meijer, 2001). As teachers' conception and cognition have an important effect on their instructional decisions (Shavelson, & Stern, 1981; Tillema, 2000) - and teaching practice in general (Borg, 2003) - students are directly affected by it, and their learning processes develop accordingly. For example, Houlihan et al. (2009) found that teachers who feel anxious about teaching prefer minimized interactions with students and usually devise strategies that involve pair work or student presentations. Goncz (2017) stated that depending upon their conceptions, teachers may emphasize subject matter knowledge, while others emphasize planning, execution, and evaluation.

Yet others stress expertise in social, emotional, and moral development. Masduki, Suwarsono and Budiarto (2019) discovered that teachers' conceptions about teaching methods are turning students either into passive or active learners, depending upon the method used in the classroom. Where teachers assume the traditional model of teaching, students turn into passive learners, receiving knowledge from the teacher through an expository method. But students who have a teacher that practices the facilitator model are more engaged in active learning and discovering knowledge collaboratively.

The personality of the teacher plays an important role in the formation of teaching conceptions. Borg (2003, p. 81) states that "teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs." The professional identity of teachers inevitably involves their personalities and what they consider important for their profession. Depending upon their personalities, teachers may hold different conceptions. Wayne and Youngs (2003) found that students learn more from teachers with certain characteristics, such as good communication skills, a positive attitude, and close relationships with students. The current educational psychology lacks sufficient evidence for how personality impacts teachers' conceptions, although an abundance of personality theories has been developed. Goncz (2017) reviewed the psychological research in this field and found studies either tangentially speaking of teacher personality or treated the topic from the perspective of students or other stakeholders.

Finally, teachers' conceptions and practices are influenced by contextual factors that control, to some extent, the application of their conceptions (Borg, 2003; Beach, 1994; Tabachnick & Zeichner 1986). Such contextual factors may include, but are not limited to, the school where they teach, the subjects taught, and the characteristics of the students and society (De Vries, & Beijaard, 1999). More recent research has confirmed these findings. Lund and Stains (2015) demonstrated discipline differences within the context of a single institution that play an important role in teachers' conceptions and classroom decisions. The

data revealed that in one discipline, teachers employed a student-centered approach, while in another, teachers from the same institution primarily used a teacher-centered approach. Even in student-centered schools, teachers may hold different conceptions.

Jacobs et al. (2016) explored this phenomenon by interviewing 13 teachers in the same medical institution. They found that contextual characteristics, such as department support, management and finances, and the leadership style of the department chairs played a crucial role in shaping teachers' conceptions and influencing their classroom practices and behavior. Rubie-Davies, Flint, and McDonald (2012) found that school contextual variables (socio-economic level of school) mold teachers' conceptions. The socio-economic level of the school can determine differences in teacher practices and classroom climates as well.

2.3.8. Teachers' conceptions and the use of visual arts in literacy learning

Visual arts are used as a means of teaching in various subjects, literacy learning being just one of them. Lund and Stain (2015) demonstrated in a study that teachers' conceptions may vary from one subject to another; thus, it is expected that teachers' conceptions about the use of visual arts in literacy learning will differ from their conceptions of visual arts usage in other school subjects. Yet, it is important to know these teachers' conceptions about the use of visual arts, in general, since this is the starting point for further investigation into the specific use of visual arts in literacy learning.

Gunn (2000) examined teachers' conceptions of visual art programs in early childhood and found that teachers supported a student-centered visual arts teaching approach. However, they were not taking an active role in facilitating students' knowledge enhancement with the help of visual arts. This non-interventionist, hands-off approach has been perpetuated well into the 2000s, with a plethora of researchers decrying the issue in their studies (Richards, 2009; Terreni, 2009; Pohio, 2009). Leung (2017) found the same belief-practice gap in early visual arts teachers from Hong Kong. Most teachers reported that they believed in a student-centered approach that engages students in acquiring

knowledge with the help of arts, yet they delivered close-ended instruction. Terreni (2016) explored the current approaches and practices in visual art education in New Zeeland and showcased several examples of high-quality visual arts teaching. But she recognized that these are isolated instances, where teachers' conceptions of visual arts act as a way of extending students' thinking and learning. Although recognizing the importance of visual arts in knowledge advancement, teachers proved in every single study to be reluctant when it came to practice and how to involve visual arts in the classroom.

One of the studies that established a bridge between teachers' conceptions and the integration of arts at the elementary level was conducted by Hipp and Dowell (2019). Even though the research did not specifically address the relationship between arts integration and literacy learning, its significance lies in the fact that the authors investigated those factors that challenged and supported preservice teachers' beliefs and subsequent practices about arts integration. Of note, they identified five significant challenges: a lack of time and poor time management; deficient ways to incorporate arts in classroom activities; a lack of resources, knowledge, and awareness about the integration of arts; standardized tests, and the pressure to follow the scripted curriculum.

They discovered that the best support for arts integration is the preservice teachers' self-perception of personal attitudes and conceptions coupled with the perceived attitudes and conceptions of their mentor teachers. The school and classroom settings for preservice teachers' training usually reflects the mentor teachers' conceptions, thereby impacting the students' perception of these conceptions. Another support for teachers' conceptions, beside mentors' attitudes and conceptions, is access to resources and the creative use of existing materials. This finding juxtaposed some of the recognized challenges, showing that preservice teachers shared the belief that resources are of paramount importance for the integration of arts with elementary level teaching.

All the researchers commended recent curriculum changes and the effort put into developing a visual arts approach by different policy makers; but they complained

that teachers are not well equipped to implement these changes (Terreni, 2010; Leung, 2017; Lindsay, 2021). Lindsay (2020) explored the visual arts conceptions held by vocationally-trained early childhood educators, finding that teachers carry an unwanted "baggage" of low self-efficacy regarding exploring visual arts in pre-service training. This baggage limits their development and may create biased, divergent conceptions about the purpose of visual arts in early childhood education. Teachers may not receive enough pre-service training that included procedural knowledge for promoting creativity and self-expression in visual arts class (Stone, 2015). On the other hand, the mentor teachers' conceptions and attitudes toward arts integration could support or ruin the development of positive conceptions in pre-service teachers.

The challenges that pre-service teachers are facing usually adds to this burden (Hipp and Dowell, 2019). Lacking proper educational training and good mentorship, coupled with the 'baggage" of biased conceptions, could be disastrous for teachers' conceptions when visual arts are not properly engaged as a means of learning in the classroom.

2.4. Empirical background

2.4.1. Visual arts and writing

The following studies address how visual arts have been used in writing instruction and the various results of this approach. Norris (1997) explored the influence of drawing on students' writing performance. He claimed that students who do both writing and drawing outperform those who do only writing, engendering more enthusiasm about the author's project, the willingness to extend the writing time, and writing ability confidence. Norris' study was limited to 119 third grade students. Also, the students who were asked to draw before writing were allocated an extra 30 minutes for drawing, time not allocated for the students who performed only the writing task. This allowed the first group to have more time to think about the topic. He was aware that the integration of visual arts in a writing task requires more time to finish than a simple writing task. The direct implication is that teachers have to understand that students need a longer time

to perform such activities. Therefore, teachers have to design lessons that consist of only one or two main activities during class, so students have enough time to perform the tasks of drawing and writing. In other words, teachers have to leave out subsequent activities as required in the curriculum to be performed in the same time frame. The choice of fewer classroom activities should not be a problem in terms of literacy learning, and the following studies have demonstrated that time and again.

Bartel (2005) studied the use of visual arts in literacy learning by assessing the practices of art teachers with a long teaching experience. He claimed that with social and cultural interactions, children were able to make associations with the spoken and written language as well as their drawings (Bartel, 2005). A more recent study by Souki (2019) strengthened the idea that using cultural interactions promote the development of young refugee children. The author claimed that visual arts bring refugee children closer to "meaningful and nurturing experiences that can facilitate their integration within the new host community" (Souki, 2019, p. 1). Although these studies did not focus on drawing and writing specifically, but on puppetry and storytelling as the means of enhancing students' learning and social integration through visual arts, they are still significant because they stress the connection between cognitive, communication, and social-emotional development. Therefore, the use of visual arts in the classroom has a positive effect not only on literacy learning, but also on the whole development of a child.

Brooke, Grant, Hornsby, & Hutchison (2007) investigated gains in children's literacy learning, with an emphasis on writing with the use of visual arts. They conclude that learning writing with the integration of visual arts in classroom activities helps students get more involved in attending, seeing, thinking and using language more elaborately. Students learn to make connections with diverse texts, indicating the positive effects of more art engagement in literacy learning (Brooke et al., 2007). They also discovered that art has an influence on the readiness and preparation for the reading and writing activities of the participants. Although the study presented the initial findings of small-scale research that explored the influence of art on oral language, which in turn – as the authors

believe – contributes to reading and writing development, the study combined different art forms (visual arts, drama, and sculpture) with reading and writing activities. This combination makes for unclear results regarding what form of art has influence, and whether on reading or writing. Furthermore, the study did not justify the selection of different grade levels (prep, year 5, and year 6 students) for the participants. However, it is important to retain what the authors consider to be an enhancement of language usage and connections when visual arts are involved.

Later studies examined the impact of drawing on literacy levels and teachers' collaboration toward that outcome. Carpenter and Gandara (2018) focused on the collaborative effort between classroom and arts teachers to improve literacy learning. They studied the effects of mandala drawings (complex abstract drawings based on geometric patterns, with repeating colours and shapes) and paintings on teaching about the water cycle. Students used mandalas to learn new techniques for watercolor painting, understand the different parts of water cycle in the atmosphere and on earth, and develop their own visual symbols and forms of representation that convey a message to others. The teachers who participated in this experiment learned that concepts from different areas overlap and work together to enhance the students' learning experience. They changed their perceptions about the integration of visual arts in teaching different concepts and became eager to translate hard-to-understand abstractions into more manageable chunks with the help of visual arts.

McDonnell & Ludlow (2015) focused more on the connection between drawing and writing to investigate whether drawing before writing supports the development of a child's metacognition and whether this sequence of tasks improves both the quality and quantity of writing. They were interested in children's self-perceptions as writers. A two-fold questionnaire (pre- and post-test) revealed that at the conclusion of the study, all of the children showed an increase in their writing skills, adding 2-4 additional ideas to their story. Students improved by 1-2 levels, on average, and reported that drawing before writing

helped their story writing. This indicated that the literacy level of children would improve every time they drew something before writing.

In the same vein, Penn (2020) conducted an eight-month case study of children's drawings in a kindergarten language curriculum. The author was not interested in drawing as a pedagogical intervention but as "an emergent event in which the interactions of children, drawing, and discourses coalesce" (Penn, 2020, p. 208). She found that drawings are not merely indicators of literacy acquisition but also of constructive learning experiences with significant implications for further education. Although this study sought students' perceptions of seeing themselves as writers, it did not study teachers' perceptions about the students' performance.

However, the conclusion it reached is important for this study: there seems to be a strong link between drawing and writing in terms of literacy development. Although the results of these studies discussed cannot be generalized, the research gives direction on how visual arts are used in literacy learning and encourages for further investigation.

This study will explore Saudi teachers' conceptions and views on the use of visual arts in writing instruction. As demonstrated, the existent literature does not treat this topic specifically; either it concentrates on other aspects not particularly relevant to this study, or it treats together different visual arts, and writing and reading altogether. To sum up, from the reviewed studies, more in-depth exploration is necessary in the field, particularly exploring the learning environment from the teachers' understanding and views. It is hoped that the findings of this study will add to the information available in the reviewed literature that investigates the use of visual arts in children's language learning.

2.4.2. Teachers' conceptions

Despite the fact that many researchers have studied the relationship between visual arts and writing, as seen in the studies reviewed above, no one study, to the best of our knowledge, studied teachers' conceptions about using visual arts in teaching writing, especially in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, in comparison to the relatively large amount of research work investigating teachers' conceptions and

views performed worldwide, very few studies that have investigated Saudi teachers' conceptions in all subjects. Most of these studies are in such areas as Teaching English as Foreign Language (e.g. Alfahadi, 2012; Alshahrani & Al-Shehri, 2012), and Science (e.g. Mansour, N., Alshamrani, Aldahmash & Alqudah, 2013; Alamri, 2017). We believe that the lack of studying visual arts in relationship to teaching writing from the perspective of teachers' conceptions establishes a reasonable rationale for investigating this area at present. Moreover, as stated above, many studies have investigated visual arts in writing from different aspects. Examples include: using images and picture books, drawing, specific art integrated writing programs. However, studying this topic from teachers' conceptions has not received much interest, and we believe it is still neglected.

The most relevant study that explored drawing and writing at the same time was conducted by Bahlmann and Myers in 2020. However, the study did not examine the teachers' conceptions but rather how the use of stations and intentional teaching encouraged writing in two preschool classrooms. This study took place in a preschool program in the United States and employed a collective case study design. Since writing requires intentional action, it can be initiated by the teacher as well as the student. The individual student took the reins of learning into his or her hands by deciding to communicate a message through writing.

On the other hand, teachers made intentional choices that included both the classroom environment and guiding the writing task, so the collaborative effort of teachers and students resulted in enhanced learning. The Dramatic Play Stations allowed students to organize their classroom into different stations, such as a Beauty Shop, Sistine Chapel, Gross Motor, Message Station, Art Station. These Play Stations also encouraged students to compose messages related to the specific theme of the station, developing their writing and other skills in multiple areas.

Since this present study examines the use of visual arts in writing and the teachers' conceptions about it, the stations offered a combination of writing and

drawing materials that would provide children with everything they needed to post a message. The teachers encouraged the children to draw pictures and add words or even letters to their drawings before posting them as notes in one of the stations. Both drawing and writing skills were dynamically interwoven as teachers, along with the students, were engaged in creating messages related to the work station. The study found that teachers believed the best role an educator could have is a facilitator of learning, noting the importance of observation when playing. One teacher made this belief very clear, saying that while she was well aware of the foundational skills that needed to be developed that year, she was not trying to push such an agenda. She paid close attention to the children's interests and built upon their intrinsic motivation, so she could integrate the skills as smoothly as possible. In other words, teachers' conceptions both inform and are informed by classroom practices. They are not static, but entail continuously evolving concepts that help teachers navigate their interaction with children and the development of writing skills.

Another study that linked teachers' conceptions to the use of drawings in teaching writing - but not in such a direct manner - is Mackenzie's (2011, 2014, 2018) research on shifting teaching priorities. These studies focused on procedural changes, not on changing beliefs or attitudes, which are more personal and harder to influence. Therefore, Mackenzie's studies hardly touch on the matter of teachers' beliefs and conceptions; but still, they are important because of the responses elicited from teachers. In one study (Mackenzie, 2011), the author encouraged 10 teachers of first-grade students to make drawing central to their writing program. But shifting teaching priorities requires a certain type of teacher conception that allow children to flourish in such a learning context.

These conceptions involve a growth mindset, yet not all teachers have one; so without this mental prerequisite, priorities cannot be shifted. Although they lack the proper training in most cases, an increasing number of teachers are eager to use this approach to teach children to write, concluded Mackenzie. Teachers are surprised to find out that children who get encouraged to draw first and then communicate their ideas in writing are more confident and flexible writers as

compared to children who learn to write and draw separately. Mackenzie's studies do not focus specifically on teachers' conceptions, yet they are obvious in light of the fact that reactions elicited from teachers when drawing become central. The teachers' surprise is suggestive of an unfamiliarity with this learning approach.

One of the reasons why teachers' conceptions about the use of visual arts in literacy learning are so scarcely represented in the research literature has been identified by Graham (2019) about changing how writing is taught. After reviewing 28 recent studies, the overall picture was that teachers did not devote enough time to writing instruction. He found that at both the elementary and secondary level, the typical teacher spent less than one hour a day to teach writing, and in some instances, once a week or even every two to three weeks. Although the author did not mention teachers' conceptions specifically as a cause, it was obvious that teachers would not dedicate more time to writing because they did not hold strong beliefs about its importance. In the few cases, where teachers devoted more time and attention to writing tasks, Graham emphasized that teachers' beliefs were the main reason.

Other studies agreed with this finding. Graham and Harris (2018) found that strengthening the capabilities and motivations of teachers would make them more confident and willing to teach writing. Their conceptions about teaching writing would improve subsequently and that improvement will be reflected in classroom practices as well. Troia and Graham (2017) followed how frequently teachers made writing instructional adaptations and found that teachers were more willing to apply specific writing practices they considered acceptable. Viewing practices as acceptable was a main predictor for more frequent adaptations, demonstrating again that teachers' conceptions about writing are of paramount importance for literacy learning.

The most relevant study about the relationship between teachers' conceptions, classroom practice, and learning time - dedicated specifically for writing - was conducted by Rietdijk et al. (2018) in the Netherlands. They mapped more teachers' conceptions and skills about writing in general; writing instruction; and

efficacy in teaching high quality instruction, assessment, and monitoring writing activities, while linking them to the allocated versus realized learning time. The authors found statistically significant correlations between teachers' beliefs and the learning time. The realized learning time increased when teachers were more efficient in teaching and promoting active learning, and when they taught more lessons in a month. Realized learning time was positively related to teachers' conceptions about their own efficacy, learning strategies, differentiating, and promoting active learning. Coming back to Graham's 2019 study, it is obvious from these studies that teachers do not devote enough time to writing because they do not hold enough positive conceptions about their own teaching efficacy and strategies.

Latham and Ewing (2018) worked with teachers who held a growth mindset. They recognized that drawing is natural for children as a universal language that translates imagination and informs thinking, yet it is not natural for teachers – unless they have a growth mindset – to encourage drawings and value them as a creative process, and not only an artistic product. Even though this study did not address drawing in connection to writing development, it stressed the importance of the teacher's mindset as the ultimate factor in determining the value given to the language of drawings in classroom.

Bahlmann and Myers (2020) observed that teachers' conceptions about writing instruction and its intentionality greatly impacted their interaction with children. What teachers valued was obvious in their classroom practices. The teachers thought that "the best way to support children's writing was through creating engaging stations based on children's interests" (Bahlmann and Myers, 2020, p. 240). Their conception of the implementation of arts in writing was to offer students authentic scenarios and creative opportunities, rather than pressing them to use traditional worksheets and colored pencils.

However, some teachers' conceptions varied from one classroom to another. Some teachers preferred the role of observers of writing, while others "provoked" writing and took a more active role in students' writing endeavors. The study

concluded that the level of adult support and the quality of materials shaped students' motivation to write and seek skill improvement.

2.5. Conclusion

The literature review sheds light on more issues. On the one hand, pre-service teachers are not trained well enough to know how to implement visual arts with literacy learning in primary school settings, although they are very enthusiastic and open to this approach. This enthusiasm seems to be more theoretical because more studies have shown that when it comes to practice, teachers are reluctant to implement new strategies whose effectiveness they do not feel confident about.

Teachers' mindsets not only make it hard to internalize such strategies but they represent a hindrance to classroom practice as well. A growth mindset is desirable to be developed in every teacher for the benefit of student learning. Endowing teachers with such a mindset during pre-service training is key to successful outcomes in their future careers. On the other hand, teachers in general spend very few hours a month dedicated to writing instruction. How useful are the transferable skills acquired during workshops or seminars if so few hours are spent to teach writing? It seems that teachers may know more than they are willing to do since they dedicate so little time to teach writing. Therefore, it is obvious that visual arts for literacy purposes are undeservedly ignored and neglected in the classroom, even when teachers are equipped with the necessary knowledge. As a consequence, teachers' conceptions about the use of visual arts for writing learning are even more difficult to map because it is difficult to disentangle conceptions from classroom practice. In conclusion, it is almost impossible to do sound research about teachers' conceptions of writing when they are not well represented in classroom activities.

Researchers' interests complicate the problem even further. They have expressed different opinions and explored different questions. Very few researchers have dug into teachers' conceptions regarding this topic. Therefore, even when teachers had integrated visual arts with writing in classroom practice,

researchers were focusing on other aspects and did not talk extensively about it. As a result, most studies talk about this subject tangentially, but they do not dedicate in-depth analyses to teachers' conceptions nor connect them directly to visual arts and literacy learning. Furthermore, a number of studies have treated teachers' conceptions and the integration of visual arts separately; in other words, teachers' conceptions of the use of visual arts on the one hand, and the role of visual arts in literacy learning, on the other hand.

One of the main contributions of this study in regard to the literature is the effort to bring together teachers' conceptions and the use of drawing and images in writing learning. It addresses two gaps in the field of educational theories. The first connects two separate paradigms to find how teachers' conceptions impact the use of visual arts in literacy learning. The second important gap is that, as far as we know, no study about this topic exists in Saudi Arabian scholarly literature. Even though they are geographically restricted to the specific context of Saudi Arabia, the findings of this study could guide other areas as well and open further avenues of research in the broader field of education.

3. Methodology

3.1. Overview of chapter

This chapter presents the methodological decisions made in this research. The research questions were the starting point of the study:

1. What are Saudi language teachers' conceptions of using visual arts (images and drawing) in writing?
2. What variations are there in the ways that Saudi teachers understand and experience the use of visual arts (images and drawing) in teaching writing?
3. What is the relationship between Saudi teachers' conceptions of visual arts (images and drawing) in writing instruction and their pedagogical approaches?

The first section is rooted in the theoretical background of phenomenography and outlines the qualitative research paradigm of the study. The section is divided in two parts, namely, research paradigm and phenomenography. The research paradigm presents the ontological and epistemological stance of the author that led her to choose the phenomenological approach as the most suitable methodology for her position and the scope of the study.

The latter section is further organized according to the major presuppositions of pheonomenography about research progress: categories of description, the outcome space, and the object of the research. The definition and working concepts of phenomenography, such as conceptions and the second-order perspective, are presented. Next, the analysis process groups conceptions in categories of description to derive the outcome space. The object of the research is the interconnected relationship between multiple aspects of teachers' experiences.

The next section discusses the process of data collection and the selection of participants along with the design and implementation of the questionnaire and the interview protocol. A purposive sampling was employed to identify the participants most knowledgeable about the phenomenon and able to provide rich

insight into the experience of it. To find those participants, a questionnaire was designed and distributed to primary schools in Saudi Arabia, and the interview protocol for the target group was designed. This section talks about the data collection challenges, such as teachers' reluctance to complete the questionnaire or participate in the study, the dissemination process, and the translation from Arabic to English.

A section outlining the stages of the research process follows, organized in two parts, phenomenographic principles and the actual analytic process. The section on phenomenographic principles discusses how researchers have attempted to make data manageable by proposing more stage approaches to data analysis. The next section, data analysis, talks extensively about the stages chosen for the present study. The first step was to read the interview transcripts repeatedly to become familiar with the data. The second was to identify and select relevant data using a decontextualized approach to generate units of meaning. The subsequent step was to organize the data into pools of meaning according to the similarities within and between individual transcripts. Finding themes and grouping them was a daunting process during this stage as well. The last stage was to establish the categories of description by searching for meaning, structure, and relationships among and within categories. The outcome space resulted from this analytic process. The chapter closes with consideration for the reliability and validity of the present study. Reliability pertains to "the consistency and trustworthiness of research findings" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009), while validity was divided in seven manageable stages of quality control of the research process: thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, validating, and reporting. All stages were carefully considered while assessing the reliability and validity of this present research.

3.2. Research methodology

3.2.1. Research paradigm

The research paradigm represents "the conceptual lens through which the researcher examines the methodological aspects of their research project to

determine the research methods that will be used and how the data will be analysed" (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017, p. 26). The researcher's orientation to the methodological aspects is very important as they determine every decision made in the research process with various implications for how meaning is to be obtained from the data collection. Therefore, locating this research in a research paradigm is essential for giving clear direction on how teachers' conceptions are studied and how the results are interpreted.

A research paradigm consists of four components: ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Ontology refers to the nature and structure of reality, be it a singular verifiable reality or multiple socially-constructed realities (Scotland, 2012; Patton, 2002). As a branch of philosophy, ontology is concerned with understanding the phenomena that constitute reality (Scotland, 2012; Scott and Usher, 2004). In considering the ontology of this present research, the author believes that reality can be fathomed in the mental constructions of individuals or groups of individuals. It is intangible, based on experience and social interactions that are sensitive to context and place and dependent upon the individual (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Teachers hold individual conceptions that imply subjective constructions and interpretations of reality. It does not follow, therefore, that the nature of teachers' conceptions represents a singular verifiable phenomenon, but multiple realities because teachers do not objectively experience teaching in the same way.

Since there are multiple realities, it is impossible to have one singular objective knowledge of them all; there are many different forms of knowing them (Svensson, 1994; Crotty, 1998). Epistemology is defined as the study of the nature of knowledge and the process by which knowledge is appropriated and communicated to others (Schwandt, 2000; Gall, Gall and Borg, 2003; Scotland, 2012). The epistemological position of this study regards knowledge as holistic, derived from the individuals, and not from something independently existing in the external world. It views all conceptions of teachers as being equally important for the outcome of the research.

Therefore, the epistemology of this study is rooted in constructivism. The literature review chapter already discussed the views of the main theorists, namely, Dewey, Piaget, Brunner, and Vygotsky. A common assumption of these theorists is that knowledge is constructed on prior knowledge and through interactions with other people and the surrounding world (Dewey, 1933; Vygotsky, 1934/2012; Bruner, 1960; Piaget, 1972). In constructivism, the relationship between the knower and the known is interactive, and the findings were created as the research unfolded. This interaction between researcher and participants is of paramount importance for eliciting mental constructions of realities (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

Such an interaction is crucial for this study; it does not start from concepts determined a priori but rather allows them to emerge from the encounter with the language teachers. Besides, the author is interested in a specific contextualized learning environment, namely, the use of visual arts in teaching writing in Saudi primary schools. Thus, the findings of this study are contingent on the particular cultural and individual context of language teachers.

This study does not look for causes and explanations of the studied phenomenon; instead, it seeks to understand it from the point of view of the people experiencing it, namely, the teachers (Crotty, 1998). The study also meets the requirements of interpretivism, which claims that realities are multiple, the interaction between researcher and participants is inevitable, knowledge is dependent on the context and created by the findings, and contextual factors are vital and should be taken into consideration (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Morgan, 2007). Interpretivism views knowledge as relative to particular circumstances and representational of individuals' interpretations of multiple realities (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Interpretivism focuses on gathering the conceptions of participants from their points of view; afterwards, interpreting and analyzing them in relationship to the teachers' practices, rather than emphasizing the researcher's viewpoint (Brunt, 2018).

Axiology justifies the chosen epistemology and must harmonize with the ontology in the paradigmatic commitment of the research (Patterson and Williams, 1998).

Axiology looks at the role of values in research; as Carnaghan (2013) stated, it fulfils several roles. First, it makes the researcher's values known in the study. It also reports on the biases and the nature of information gathered by the author. According to Patterson and Williams (1998), the axiological commitment refers to the aims of the research. The positivist paradigm is committed to gaining an explanation, prediction, and control, while the interpretivist paradigm deals with understanding and communication (Patterson and Williams, 1998). Since positivists view research as objective and based on precise observation, they consider it value free. On the other hand, constructivism views reality as socially-constructed and thus value-laden. Therefore, the axiology of research in the interpretive constructivism is very important since it looks at the values held by the researcher.

The author of this study believes there are multiple realities and, thus, multiple forms of experiencing and knowing them. Furthermore, knowledge is mentally and socially constructed by individuals or group of individuals. Therefore, the researcher needed to gather the perspectives of the participants and their points of view to understand the phenomenon in question. It follows that the interpretive lens is most suitable for the context of this study because it views knowledge as relative to particular circumstances. The methodology and associated methods that fit this theoretical perspective were adopted. Figure 3.1 uses the diagram from Patel (2015, adapted from Hay, 2002 and Crotty, 1998) to illustrate the connections between concepts in this current research paradigm.

This study explores Saudi teachers' conceptions about the phenomenon of teaching writing with the help of visual arts. Phenomenography offers a prerequisite framework because it is a scientific approach that aims to describe conceptions of the surrounding world and map variations in a group of individuals' experiences of a phenomenon (Svensson, 1997). Phenomenography is a distinct approach to qualitative research that emphasizes human conception as the object of inquiry (Barnard, McCosker, and Gerber, 1999). It focuses on the "commonality of understanding;" in other words, it seeks patterns of understanding or differences in the way people understand or explain the world around them

(Tesch, 1990, p. 65). The present research is focused on conceptions and the commonality of understanding.

Ontology	Epistemology	Theoretical perspective	Methodology	Methods	Sources
What is reality?	What and how can I know reality/ knowledge?	What approach can we use to get knowledge?	What procedure can we use to acquire knowledge?	What tools can we use to acquire knowledge?	What data can we collect?

Adapted from Hay (2002) pg. 64 and Crotty (1998)

| Multiple realities | Constructivism | Interpretivism | Phenomenography | Interviews | Saudi teachers |

Figure 3.1 Research paradigm

Second, phenomenography stresses the interdependence between the individual and the phenomenon because the latter is experienced and understood in different ways by different human beings (Svensson, 1997). Third, the ways individuals perceive a phenomenon are the categories of description that develop a hierarchical order, called the outcome space (Marton, 1986). Neither the phenomenon nor the individual is the focus of this study, but the outcome of these perceptions and the structural relationships among them. Fourth, phenomenography engages in a second-order approach, where the world is not described as it is, but as it is understood through people's perceptions. This is the aim of this present study. (Marton, 1986; Svensson, 1997). Last, although it shares the same goals as phenomenology, namely, to describe the world as people perceive and explain it, phenomenography has its roots in pedagogical rather than phenomenological traditions and continues to be applied consistently in the pedagogical realm (Barnard, McCosker, and Gerber, 1999).

Although there are underlying similarities between phenomenography and phenomenology, historically speaking, phenomenography was not established in the phenomenological tradition. Thus, it would be problematic to include it as a part of phenomenology entirely (Svensson, 1994). Since the setting of this study is an educational institution and explores the pedagogical conceptions of

teachers, phenomenography is the best route to take. It is examined in detail in the next section.

3.2.2. Phenomenography

Svensson (1994) claimed that the term phenomenography was first used by Ference Marton in his 1981 study, mainly within the discipline of education. Svensson made a clear distinction between phenomenography as a research program (the comparison and systematization of the description of conceptions) and phenomenography as a research tool (learning and teaching are studied in a certain way based on the conceptions described). This present research used phenomenography as a research tool or method to study the conceptions of Saudi teachers in an explorative and interpretative manner. This approach focuses on participants' collective understanding, on the one hand, and the possibility of the findings of the studied phenomenon to be used for future improvement, on the other hand (Sandberg, 2000).

The phenomenographic approach has been chosen since it is the most suitable methodology for the current study. Marton's initial definition of "phenomenography" is "research which aims at description, analysis, and understanding of experiences; that is, research which is directed towards experiential description" (see Marton, 1978, p. 6; 1981, p. 180). The definition was initially considered ambiguous, so he developed a more comprehensive definition later. Marton (1986) stated that "pheonomenography investigates the qualitatively different ways in which people experience or think about various phenomena" (p.31). This definition delineates the aim of phenomenography, which is not concerned (1) only with the phenomena or the human beings that think about the phenomena, and (2) with perceptions separate from the subject of those perceptions (Marton, 1986). Later, Marton (1994b, p. 4424) defined phenomenograhy as "the empirical study of the limited number of qualitatively different ways in which various phenomena in, and aspects of, the world around us are experienced, conceptualized, understood, perceived, and apprehended."

From the ontological point of view, the most fundamental assumption in phenomenography concerns the nature of conceptions, namely, the relational nature of conceptions to knowledge. Reality presents itself in human thinking in varied forms; knowledge is intimately related to human conceptions, making conceptions the central source of knowledge in phenomenography (Svensson, 1994).

The most fundamental assumption from an epistemological perspective in phenomenography are the categories of description. Conceptions are not individual qualities, but rather categories of description that are stable and generalized between different situations, even if individuals may move between categories on different occasions (Marton, 1981). These categories represent the content and form of conceptions about a phenomenon, and they may be described through a reduction process. They favor "abstraction, reduction and condensation in relation to the richness of the object (and data)" (Svensson, 1994, p. 16). Regarding the methodological side of phenomenography, data collection and interviews must be very explorative, yet focus specifically on the conceptions of the phenomena and an examination of the participants' meaning-making process (Svensson, 1994).

Marton (1981) made a distinction between the study of reality as a first-order perspective and the perception of reality as a second-order perspective. Marton (1978) considered that the conventional research adopts a first-order perspective that tries to describe the individual's world from the outside, but usually in the same terms as the individual would describe it. He proposed a second-order perspective that describes the world from the inside, through the individual's eyes - how they experience it. Phenomenographic researchers access knowledge "from the reports or inferences of their subjects," and characterize these reports in categories of description (Marton and Booth, 1997, p. 125). The researchers that take this second-order as their point of departure and do not separate the object of perception from the participants' content of thought. In other words, they tap into the relational nature of conceptions, even if they are personal views or

misconceptions about reality, and describe the world as it appears to the individual (Marton, 1986).

This research approach used suits the purpose of the current study, which is to examine Saudi teachers' conceptions of using visual arts (images and drawing) in writing instruction in primary school. This phenomenon is examined from the viewpoint of the teachers consciously experiencing it. In this study, teachers are not the units of analysis; but rather, they are the conceptions held. In fact, as stated above, a teacher may have more than one conception of the phenomenon. In addition, the current research investigates Saudi teachers' descriptions of their experiences, thoughts, and understanding of using visual arts in writing instruction, rather than presenting the researcher's own experimental descriptions and views.

3.2.2.1. Categories of description

The different ways of experiencing and understanding the phenomenon under investigation emerge from data collection and are grouped in categories of description. There are infinite ways of experiencing and understanding a phenomenon at the individual level, but when the meaning is created collectively, the experience is reduced to a limited number of categories of description (Brunt, 2018). Marton and Booth (1997) claimed that these categories of description should be limited in number. The system of categorization should use as few categories as necessary to capture the variation in the data, so that quality matters more than quantity regarding the categories of description (Marton and Booth, 1997).

Conceptions are organized by phenomenographers into categories that represent the primary outcomes and represent a crucial step in the phenomenographic research (Marton, 1986). There is evidence that the conceptions in question could be organized into qualitatively distinct categories that are logically related to each other and present a hierarchical order. Also, the individual categories should correlate to the phenomenon in such a way that each category communicates

something distinct and clear about the particular way of experiencing the phenomenon (Marton, 1994; Marton and Booth, 1997).

Within the framework of a particular phenomenon and the individuals participating in the study, the researchers looked for the most distinctive characteristics and structurally-significant differences that appeared in the relationship between the individuals and the phenomenon and frame of the structural context within which various categories of description exist and function (Marton, 1986). The hierarchical mapping of categories of description is to be done by what Marton (1986) defined as the "outcome space". Since some categories are more desirable than others in terms of being more efficient in capturing meanings and variations in data, they have to be formulated as particular outcomes in the outcome space (Richardson, 1999). The outcome space is discussed in the section below.

3.2.2.2. The outcome space

The outcome space can be defined as "the complex of categories of description comprising distinct groupings of aspects of the phenomenon and the relationships between them" (Marton & Booth, 1997, p. 125). It also has been defined as "a map of a territory" (Saljo, 1997, p. 44), referring to how the categories of description are mapped into phenomenographic results. Another definition called it "a diagrammatic representation" (Bruce, 1997, p. 87) as the categories of description may be organized hierarchically in various formats, including tables, charts, diagrams, etc. (Yates et al., 2012). Marton (2000) claimed that the outcome space is a "logically structured complex" (p. 105) because the results of phenomenographic research describe variations in experiencing the phenomenon in ordered set of categories.

According to Wiles (2017), the outcome space has been presented in many different ways. Akelind (2005a) proposed the linear hierarchical space. In this case, the outcome follows a sequenced line of increasing complexity. A set of related categories are arranged in a particular order, following each other, from the simple to the more complex phenomena. Bowden et al. (2005) described the

branched outcome space as a divergence in experience at a specific moment. These diverging experienced are presented as branches of the phenomenon under investigation. Bruce (2003) focused on another type of outcome space, which starts from the core of experiences, extends to the outskirts of it, and explores perceptual boundaries as well. The outcome space is presented in increasingly broader terms. Lupton and Bruce (2010) and Kleiman (2008) designed the outcome space as nested. In this case, they started from the premise of an inclusivity that absorbs lower levels categories into more complex higher-order ones.

Three more common types of outcome space are recommended in phenomenography: hierarchical, chronological, climatic (Han and Ellis, 2019). The chronological (temporal ordering) and climatic (explanatory level ordering) outcome spaces pertain to the structural and referential aspects of the categories in a linear order (Englund et al., 2017; Laurillard, 1993; Han and Ellis, 2019). The most common type is the hierarchical order. The hierarchically inclusive outcome space organizes categories from the lower-order to higher-order categories, where the lowest indicate the most simplistic experience of the phenomenon and the highest levels demonstrate a more sophisticated experience (Tight, 2016).

The present research uses the hierarchical order, starting with the most common teachers' experiences, adding layers of more elaborated experiences and organizing the most sophisticated experiences at the highest level. The reason for choosing this typology is because it follows closely the order of interpreting experiences by looking at the external and internal horizon of the phenomenon. Morton and Booth (1997) claimed that the external horizon refers to the contextual factors of experience, while the internal horizon narrows the scope to the very experience. The hierarchical order builds on these factors and represented the best approach for this present study as well.

3.2.2.3. The object of research

The object of phenomenographic research is to uncover variations in how people perceive a phenomenon. In other words, the object of investigation are the

qualitative differences in the ways people perceive a phenomenon, rather than the phenomenon itself or the people experiencing it (Lucas, 1998). Therefore, a clear definition of conceptions was crucial as the definition has changed over the years. From the simple 'different ways of understanding', it evolved to a more complex definition provided by Marton and Booth (1997). They define conception as the unit of description in phenomenography, comprising two intertwined aspects. One is the referential aspect – "a particular meaning of an individual object (anything delimited and attended to by the subjects," – and the other is a structural aspect or "the combination of features discerned and focused upon by the subject" (Marton and Pong, 2005, p. 336; Marton and Booth, 1997).

The meaning of conceptions requires interpreting what a person is saying and requires discernment of the variations in what a phenomenon represents for individuals. The structural aspect refers to the structure *within* conceptions, not to the structure *between* conceptions, and can be identified by linguistic markers, such as the pronouns used or the singular-plural shift (Marton and Pong, 2005). The structural aspect consists of two elements: the external horizon – the delimitation of the experience determined by its context or background – and the internal horizon or the relationship between the components of that experience (Marton and Booth, 1997).

The nature of the internal and external horizon has been defined in different ways by researchers. Marton and Booth (1997) used the analogy of seeing a deer in the woods to explain the two different parts of the structural aspect. The external horizon, they said, comprises the immediate boundaries (the forest) and all the other contexts in which the individual may have experienced seeing the deer (zoo, hunting, tales, etc.) The internal horizon narrows the scope of experience to the deer itself - its part and presence. Marton (2000) compared the things in the foreground, which are explicit and thematized versus those in the background that remain un-thematized and blurry. Bruce (2003) opposed the focal components of attention (the internal horizon) to the outer limits that remain peripheral (the external horizon). The anatomy of the experience is presented in figure 3.2.
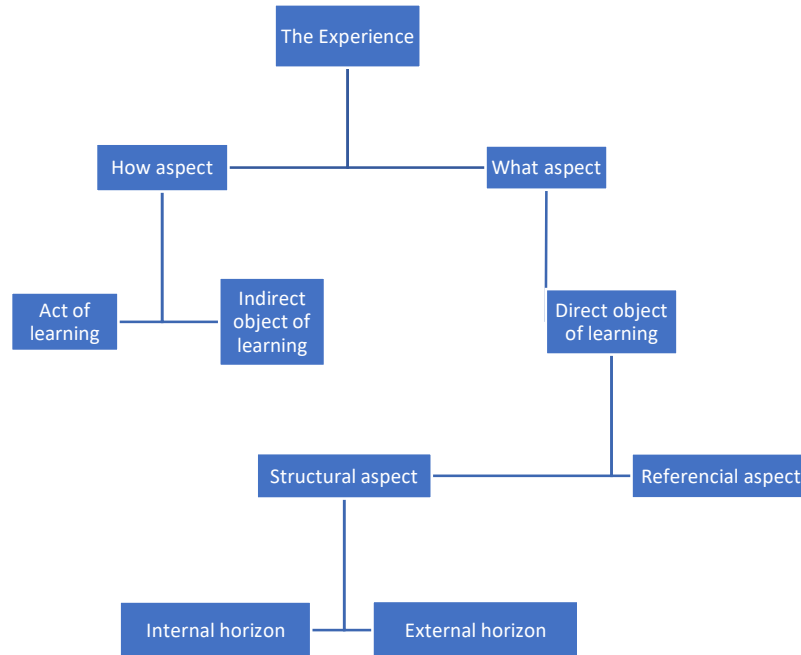
Figure 3.2 The experience of learning, including the referential and structural aspects with the internal and external horizon (Marton and Booth, 1997)

3.3. Data collection

3.3.1. The questionnaire

3.3.1.1. The questionnaire design

The design of the questionnaire was based on the research questions. The primary goal was for the participants to complete the questionnaire (see Appendix D) – which included closed and open questions – to glean further material to develop in the following interviews. The main goal was to find appropriate participants, willing and able to provide and share their views about the research topic, as the interview was based on information already provided in the questionnaire. In the questionnaire, participants were asked to provide an explanation for their thoughts on using visual arts in writing and how this holds true in their practice and the students' learning experience.

The questionnaire collected background information that would be useful in the further identification and selection of interview participants. This information included age, gender, and teaching experience. Additionally, it collected

information about basic aspects, such as how familiar they are with visual arts, their thoughts about using them, and when and if they use visual arts in teaching primary students. Afterwards, the questionnaire focused on more specific aspects: how often visual arts are used, the changes they prompted teachers to make, and the specific visual arts used for teaching writing.

The questionnaire also asked several questions about writing lessons: how much time the teachers dedicated to teaching writing, if they used visual arts in teaching writing, whether they felt that they had enough training and preparation for the implementation of visual arts in teaching writing, and so on. The following questions offered multiple choices about the challenges of using drawing and images as part of writing, and the students' use of them in learning writing. The last questions offered the teachers the opportunity to develop their answers about various aspects such as the type of visual arts projects, the best writing curricula, and the benefit of using visual projects for students.

The questionnaire ended by asking teachers if they were willing to participate in an interview about using visual arts in teaching writing and invited them to add any additional information they considered important for the researcher. The questionnaire comprised 36 questions, and as the previous section stated, 80 out of 120 teachers answered them.

3.3.1.2. The questionnaire findings

The survey answers revealed some important points. First, some answers needed more discussion and investigation through one-on-one interviews, while others were incomplete, confusing, or had contradictory answers. Some teachers started answering a question but left it unfinished or did not carry it to the final conclusion (incomplete answers); and others provided unclear or difficult to understand answers (confusing answers). Yet others contradicted themselves: in one question they said one thing just to contradict it in a subsequent answer (contradictory answers).

Second, the survey provided a general idea of teachers' conceptions, which in turn could be used for a better selection of interview participants.

On the other hand, participants sometimes had interesting views about using visual arts in writing. The answers ranged from those who do not think writing can be taught without using visual arts to those who believed that visual arts have a marginal role to play in writing learning. These views were explored further in the interviews when teachers could talk about their conceptions at length.

The participants had mixed views about using visual arts in writing learning in different ways. This revealed that for some teachers, visual arts are just an assisting tool, used only when needed; for example, in the case of struggling students. Other teachers thought that writing cannot be taught without using visual arts, thus generalizing and emphasizing the importance of visual arts for all categories of students.

The subject matter plays an important role in using visual arts in the classroom, according to the questionnaire results. The participants thought that using visual arts depended on the subject taught or the age of the student. For example, the chance of using it for some subjects might be more likely than for others. Grade level is another aspect the survey revealed as a significant factor in using visual arts. Some teachers thought that using visual arts in lower grades was more effective than using them in upper grades. In addition, the participants claimed that the different purposes served by visual arts played an important role in how they used the method. They thought that using visual arts in writing for lower grades could contribute to improving student motivation and learning letters and words, while for upper grades, it could help students compose, visualize, and understand the process better.

Some teachers – aged 30-39 - are familiar with visual arts, and they use it. Some teachers between 40-49 use visual arts less, or they limit their use to the first grade only. This is one of the reasons why the teaching experience in general is not as useful and relevant for the research topic as compared to the experience of teaching writing skills using visual arts. Some participants even contended that visual arts have either a limited use in writing learning or have nothing to do with

it at all. They believed it could help only in learning letters and shapes. Once children learn letters, visual art is not important anymore.

Most of the answers provided in the survey were short explanatory sentences, which make the interview a very crucial tool for understanding the full picture of the phenomenon. The open-ended questions were of most significance because they allowed teachers to explain their conceptions. Indeed, the explanations in the survey were limited and the interview gave them a chance to explain further what they wanted to say in the survey. The questionnaire was designed to elicit answers that would allow for a careful selection of potential candidates for interviews, but the interview was the research method used for in-depth investigation of teachers' conceptions.

To make sure that the participant selection was not biased, the investigator carefully analysed the surveys first. The questionnaire facilitated the recruitment of interview participants based on two sets of criteria, inclusion and exclusion criteria. Most importantly, the questionnaire allowed the researcher to make an informed decision about which participants represented "information-rich cases" (Patton, 1990, p.169). These cases represent the teachers who took the challenge very seriously and offered thorough responses that displayed deep insight into using visual arts in teaching writing. The selection criteria for the interviews included (1) information-rich cases; (2) interesting answers provided in the questionnaire; (3) various conceptions regarding the use of visual arts in teaching writing. The exclusion criteria pertained to: (1) surveys that only brushed the surface, offering very short, fragmented, and confusing answers, (2) teachers that were not familiar with the phenomenon and did not use visual arts in the classroom, and (3) teachers whose conceptions were not grounded in classroom practice.

Thus, the screening survey collected background information that allowed the researcher to design an interview protocol based on the findings of the questionnaire and to select those participants who offered the most comprehensive answers and were most knowledgeable of the phenomenon.

As stated before, the survey stage provided a general idea of teachers' conceptions that represented the starting point for conducting the interview. The survey revealed that teachers shared contradicting conceptions about to what extent using visual arts is an efficient strategy to teach writing. Another important point found in the survey was about how central or marginal role visual arts play in teaching writing. Moreover, they differed in their conceptions about the appropriate grades where the visual arts are most beneficial in teaching writing. These key points guided the interview, which prompted teachers' answers about their conceptions regarding (1) visual arts as a teaching strategy for learning writing; (2) the role of visual arts in teaching writing; (3) the appropriate grades for using visual arts in teaching writing efficiently. The next section discusses the design of interview in detail.

3.3.2. The interview design
3.3.2.1. Phenomenographic interview

Keeping in mind the distinctive nature of phenomenographic research, the most suitable typology for this study was the semi-structured interview. Therefore, the author designed a semi-structured interview with pre-set questions that revolved around the research purpose. A series of probing questions were used to prompt in-depth responses from the teacher participants whenever more details were needed (See Appendix E). As Entwhistle (1997) suggested, the interview would start with general, broad questions and then move to more specific experiences by asking for particular examples. Larsson and Holmstrom (2007) also encouraged asking participants about concrete examples to avoid superficial answers and be prone to be more specific about their direct experiences and understanding.

Afterwards, the interview narrowed the focus of questions to the use of visual arts for teaching writing, particularly in the manner described by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009). Teachers were expected to provide insights into their conceptions and approaches of using visual arts in writing instruction in the classroom context. Each interview lasted approximately forty to sixty minutes in a face-to-face

interaction; it was audio-taped for transcription purposes. With a comprehensive set of questions, participants were able to articulate and clarify their conceptions and approaches to using visual arts (drawing, images) in writing instruction.

Qualitative interviews are considered an important method in qualitative research studies (Fraenkel et al., 2012). This is a data collection tool whereby the researcher collects detailed, in-depth information from the study participants (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). Yet everything about the phenomenographic interview is distinctive compared to other conventional interviews in qualitative research, as conceded by Bruce (1994). The aim of the phenomenographic interview is to find variation and breadth of experience and not conformity in participants' understanding of the phenomenon.

The interview focus is neither on the participants nor on the phenomenon, but rather on how the participants experience it. The role of the interview is to help the researcher see the phenomenon through the eyes of the participants (Bruce, 1994). The phenomenographic interview allows the researcher to access the direct experiences of participants, describe them in detail, and avoid any bias from the interviewer (Brightman et al., 2018).

The design of the interview is also distinctive, since phenomenographic interviews have to tap into the lived experience of the participants and give them freedom to "choose the dimension" for their answer (Marton, 1988, p. 197). The implementation of the interview is also important because the ways in which data is gathered influence the findings of the interviews. The researcher had to stay alert to all kinds of variations during the implementation of the interview to discern them within the single interviews or between participants (Bruce, 1994).

Qualitative interviews can be structured, unstructured, or semi-structured (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), but the widely adopted typology in phenomenographic research is the semi-structured interview (Brunt, 2018). Semi-structured interviews allow for in-depth exploration of participants' points of view, while maximizing their input about the phenomenon. The phenomenographic principle claims that interviewers should minimize input and comments, and focus

on neutral questions to make the subjects eager to elaborate their perceptions of the phenomenon (Green and Bowden, 2009).

3.3.2.2.   Interview design

The interview guide was adapted from the interview design constructed by Brightman et al. (2018). The interview had four sections that focused on background, experience with the phenomenon, conceptual understanding, and summative reflections. The background section of the interview captured the background information of the participants. Discussing these details "can help build rapport with participants, contextualize the experiential responses and inform follow-up questions" (Brightman et al., 2018, p.3). The first four opening questions covered this part of the interview. The interview elicited answers about teachers' preferred approaches in teaching writing, and if they integrate visual arts within writing lessons. They asked teachers if they ever use visual arts in teaching writing and what are their opinions about using visual arts in writing. Additionally, the interviews prompted reflection on whether visual arts play a role in teaching writing. Teachers were also given the opportunity to compare the potential benefits that visual arts hold for learning writing and compared them with the outcomes of learning writing without the help of visual arts.

The phenomenon section of the interviews focused on the "thorough account of one or more key encounters the participants has had with the phenomenon, including their understanding of these encounters" (Brightman et al., 2018, p.4). Phrasing the phenomenon "establishes the focal point for the remainder of the interview" and prompts participants to talk more about their experience of visual arts teaching (p.4). This section asked five questions that the researcher could rely on, depending upon the flow of the discussion. Teachers talked about any additional visual arts they used and that were not included in the curriculum. They expressed their conception about the writing stage that offers the opportunity for using visual arts in class. Teachers also discussed the skills that students can develop while using visual arts in learning writing. The interview encouraged them to talk about any other form of writing that they use along with visual arts. Lastly,

this section gave them a chance to elaborate on the strategies they use to integrate visual arts in writing. These questions focused on teachers' conceptions about the use of visual arts in teaching and a writing curriculum that offers opportunities for visual arts. The repeated use of the words, "why" and "explain" gave the teachers the chance to develop their thoughts while the researcher paid attention to the variations inside their perceptions.

The third section of the interview consisted of conceptual understanding questions (11-15), asking about the participants' understanding of the phenomenon. This section, emphasizing depth over breadth of experience, pointed out particular aspects and focused on them instead of trying to cover as many experiences as possible. The researcher framed the questions to limit teachers' answers to writing classrooms, probing for in-depth reflection about the possible factors that influence this teaching experience.   The strategies and teaching approaches evidenced conceptual understanding of the phenomenon. Teachers were asked to describe a writing lesson that includes visual arts and to ponder the potential it has for increasing students' learning. The next three questions (12-14) focused on the type of student from the specific standpoint of visual arts integration into the writing lesson. Teachers expressed their conceptions about the role of visual arts in teaching writing, students of different ages and in different school grades.

The fourth section allowed for concluding remarks, prompting participants to reflect on their experience of the phenomenon and to "clarify, refine, or add to any of their previous responses" (p.4). This section offered teachers the opportunity to clarify and refine their previous answers furtherly. Two questions (16-17) prompted teachers to further reflect on their successful and unsuccessful experiences in using visual arts while teaching writing skills. Next two questions (18-19) encouraged teachers to evaluate their overall experience regarding the use of visual arts in teaching writing and the impact of visual arts on teaching and learning in general. Eventually, the interview gave teachers a chance to add some final reflective comments and other ideas that they felt were important for understanding their conceptions.

3.3.3. Participant selection

According to phenomenographic principles and in line with the purpose of this study to qualitatively investigate the different ways of experiencing the use of visual arts in teaching writing, the selection of participants followed the purposive sampling model. Purposive sampling refers to the conscious selection made by researcher to include "information-rich cases" that are instrumental in learning "a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research" (Patton, 1990, p. 169). The selection of participants using purposive sampling is a non-random technique used in qualitative research to identify and select participants that have proficient knowledge of the phenomenon, are available and willing to participate and communicate their experiences in a reflective and articulate manner (Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim, 2015).

The selected participants for this study fulfilled these requirements and two other criteria. First, since the aim of the study was to explore the conceptions of primary grades language teachers regarding the use of visual arts in writing, the study participants were only primary grade language teachers from Saudi public primary schools. Second, the participants should have prior teaching experience in the same area of interest regardless of background, so the researcher contacted only those participants with consistent experience in the field.

Phenomenographic theorists do not agree on the ideal number to reach saturation; some suggest15 to 20 participants (Trigwell, 2000), while others suggest 25 to 30 participants (Green and Bowden, 2009). Yet others think that 10 to 20 would be enough (Akerlind, 2005c) to find both variations and consistency in conceptions. Instead of prescribing a certain number, the research literature suggests a sample size that is both substantiated and manageable (Yates et al., 2012). Furthermore, researchers have suggested a sample size that has reached the "saturation point," where new data or categories no longer emerge (Sandberg, 2000). This study found that this point was reached at 20 participants; therefore, 20 individual interviews were conducted.

The initial step was to design a questionnaire that included both closed and open-ended questions. The closed questions were about the subjects' background in teaching visual arts and writing, and their perception about their own teaching style. The open questions asked teachers to provide an explanation of their thoughts on using visual arts in writing and how this holds true in their practice and the students' learning experience. The questionnaire was designed so the researcher would get a better idea about teachers' knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon, thus making it easier for her to identify the most knowledgeable participants.

After obtaining ethical approval from her university, the researcher contacted more school principals and introduced the research, the goals, and the project scope. Upon agreement of the principals, all teachers willing to participate were invited to complete the preliminary survey.

The questionnaire was distributed to 16 primary schools and 80 out of the total of 120 teachers working in these schools agreed to participate in the survey. However, not all participants had enough experience in the topic at hand. Moreover, not all of the survey questions were answered by each participant. This explains why the total number of answers for some questions is less than the number of survey participants. Analyzing the results of the questionnaire before approaching the participants for an interview gave the researcher a chance to get a better idea of the potential interview participants. The questionnaire was analyzed based on the data provided about the familiarity of teachers with the phenomenon under investigation – the use of visual arts in writing.

According to their responses, the participants were grouped into three categories. The first group provided rich information, interesting answers, and an overall insightful perception of the phenomenon. They displayed better knowledge and more consistent conceptions, and they accepted to conduct interviews as well. This was the target group for the interviews. The second group provided less information, insufficient answers, a rather incoherent and fluctuating perception of the topic. They displayed less knowledge and consistency in ideas. Some of

the participants in this group were considered for interviews as well. The third group provided contradictory, half-completed answers, even superficial and trivial answers, confused ideas and above all; some of them did not accept to be part of the interview process. These participants were not selected.

Some administrative steps preceded the actual data collection of the interviews. Details about each participant were provided after the consent form had been signed. The interview dates were scheduled and participants' consent signatures were obtained before meeting in person at the participating schools. The interview participants saturation point was reached at 20 teachers. The focus was on selecting the knowledgeable participants to consider the differing views and to ensure that all conceptions were investigated. Also, the investigator paid equal attention to all different teachers' conceptions to avoid any possible bias that could result from focusing on a specific set of conceptions. The nominated participants had a rich knowledge about the research topic in general. Also, their answers were not contradictory or confused, as they clearly understood the questions and the purpose of the survey. The questionnaire showed that the chosen participants might offer more valuable information about the phenomenon based on their answers to the survey.

This made the author aware that even more information could be elicited from the participants to explore the reasons behind their answers in a one-on-one interview.

The different answers and views definitely got the researcher's attention. The interview design took a semi-structured form, allowing participants the freedom to insist on some aspects or even digress a little to make things clearer. Both the questionnaire and interview questions were translated into Arabic because all participants were expected to be Arabic language native speakers. A qualified expert interpreter translated the questionnaire and interview questions.

The study comprised 20 participants of which 11 were female and 9 were male. Only two participants were between the age of 20-29 with less than 5 years of teaching experience. Six participants were aged between 30-39, and their

teaching experience varied from 6-10 years to 16-20 years. Eleven of the participants were between 40-49 and five of had 16-20 years of experience. Two of had a shorter experience of teaching, between 6-10 years. Four teachers had more than 21 years of experience. All the participants were certified language teachers and all selected for the interview were conducting language classes for primary students. At the time of the interview, 11 teachers were teaching individual grades, three of them were teaching two grades, and the rest were teaching three grades or up. Some were teaching language classes to all six grades in primary education. Table 3.1 shows the participants' profiles.

Table 3.1 Participants' profiles

Participant	Gender	Age	Education	Experience (years)	Teaching Subjects
1	M	30-39	BEd Elementary level teaching	16-20	Language
2	F	20-29	BEd Language	< 5	Language
3	F	20-29	BEd Language	< 5	Language
4	M	> 40-49	BEd Elementary level teaching	> 21	Language
5	M	40	BEd Elementary level teaching	18	Language
6	F	40-49	BEd Language	6-10	Language
7	F	40-49	BEd Language	> 21	Language
8	F	40-49	BEd Language	6-10	Language
9	M	40-49	BEd Language	<21	Language
10	M	30-39	BEd Language	11-15	Language
11	M	40-49	BEd Language	16-20	Language
12	M	40-49	BEd Language	20-16	Language
13	F	30-39	BEd Language	6-10	Language
14	F	30-39	BEd Language	6-10	Language
15	F	40-49	BEd Language	16-20	Language
16	F	40-49	BEd Language	> 21	Language
17	M	40-49	BEd Elementary level teaching	> 21	Language
18	M	30-39	BEd Elementary level teaching	11-15	Language
19	F	30-39	BEd Language	16-20	Language
20	F	40-49	BEd Language	16-20	Language

3.3.4. Data collection procedures

The author expected to face some issues related to data collection, such as the unwillingness of teachers to participate in the study. These expectations were based on the author's experience while writing the masters' thesis, when she encountered issues related to data collection as well. To make sure that the questionnaire would be completed by the language teachers, the author personally handed out hard copies of the questionnaire rather than forwarding a link on the Internet. The author contacted the school district offices and school principals personally and explained the purpose of the study. Furthermore, she explained that she would like to meet only language, full-time, and in-service teachers, who have the requisite training and experience. The school district offices helped in approaching the most relevant participants. This posed a challenge in terms of collecting enough relevant information about each teacher to make sure the person would be the most fit for an interview.

At the meeting time, the author explained the questionnaire and the study briefly. Since the meetings were held at schools, teaching schedules were considered all times, which led to some delays. This process of questionnaire distribution is time consuming in reaching participants, collecting questionnaire copies, as well as getting the expected results.

Another challenge faced by this study was that some teachers did not accept to participate in the questionnaire, without saying why. The principal just informed the author that those teachers did not want to get involved but did not provide any explanation. Some school principals did not choose to cooperate with us or their cooperation was restricted and less than expected. For example, one principal did not want to call all the teachers recommended by the school district office and dealt with the situation as if he wanted to get rid of it as soon as possible. When asked about a specific teacher, another principal provided an elusive answer and did not assist the author of the study in finding the most convenient time for the teacher interview. To overcome this issue, the supervisors at the district education office were asked to provide support by facilitating the process of contacting schools and seeking participants.

Another difficulty was that some participants did not return the questionnaires and did not respond to the researcher's calls or text messages. This was expected even before starting the process of data collection. To deal with this possibility, many copies as needed were distributed, more than those collected. The author distributed about 120 questionnaires to teachers but got back only 80. Although the response rate seemed encouraging at first, when reading the questionnaires, the author found that not all of the respondents could be considered for interviews. Some did not take the study seriously; they filled the questionnaire quickly and carelessly without taking time to concentrate and think about the questions. Other participants were interested and asked about unclear points. Some skipped to other questions, which made their participation useless. This gave the author a reason for not choosing them since their answers were not reliable.

Furthermore, some participants did not provide contact information, making it difficult to contact them for an interview. It was challenging to find them, even with help from the school principals, but finally some names were discerned. However, others had to be left out as undetermined respondents. People were encouraged to participate by explaining to them how useful and important their participation will be to the study and to the field of education. Fortunately, this encouragement was successful to some extent and a meaningful insight was elicited from teachers.

The school principals were contacted to encourage teachers to participate in the research, but other issues appeared as well. For example, some teachers were on medical leave, some did not accept to be audiotaped during the interview or did not feel comfortable signing the consent form, although a translated copy was provided, explaining the content of the interview in detail and assuring them again and again that all data would be anonymous and kept confidential. On the other hand, a further inconvenience was that it was hard to find a convenient time for the teachers to participate in the interviews due to their teaching duties and busy personal schedules. The schools were visited repeatedly until a favourable opportunity to properly conduct the interview was found.

Since all the participants were native speakers of Arabic, the questions and answers were in Arabic. Baumgartner (2012) observed that "the actual depth and engagement of the statements is completely missing in the interview carried out using English as the inquiry language" (p.8). Therefore, the author of this study decided to use the mother language of the participants as the inquiry language for the interviews, while the analysis was conducted in English. Baumgartner (2012) pointed to an obvious problem in multilingual research, namely, the linguistic positioning of the researcher. A situation where the researcher is fluent in both the inquiry language (here, Arabic) and the target language (here, English) is very rare. However, if the researchers are fluent in both languages, they are able to glean meaningful observations and findings. The author of this study speaks Arabic as her mother language and English as a second language; therefore she belongs to that rare category of researchers that are good in both languages of the research.

Holmes et al. (2013) claimed that the double role of the researcher, as both translator and interpreter, has other benefits as well. The researchers "are able to mediate between different linguistic worlds, identify areas of methodological concern, and develop higher levels of ethical sensitivity" (p. 287).

The downside of having a double role is that the workload doubles for the researcher. To avoid this issue, a qualified expert interpreter translated the interview questions, and they were revised again and again until the best outcome was achieved. However, this could represent a challenge because "subtle meanings and nuances may be lost" (Holmes et al., 2013, p.287) in the process of translation. To solve this problem, Baumgartner (2012) suggested using the inquiry language for the first familiarization with the data, the first analysis of each interview, and the first set of codes. The emerging names and codes of this research were analyzed in a program called MAXQDA, similar to NVivo but able to support different languages, especially those whose alphabets are not similar to English, such as Arabic in this case. The author of this study used the same approach proposed by Baumgartner (2012) and Holmes et al. (2013) and conducted the first phases of analysis in Arabic, then generated the categories of

description and the outcome space in the target language of the research (English).

One last challenge related to the translation and interpretation of interviews was that phenomenographic analysis is not chronological. The analysis is usually iterative and comparative, prompting the author to move back and forth between stages and sometimes working simultaneously on two or more steps (Akerlind, 2005b). As such, the author had to move back and forth between languages. But this iterative process just contributed to the enhanced reliability and validity of the research.

3.4. Data analysis

3.4.1. Phenomenographic principles

This present research studies teachers' conceptions about the use of visual arts in teaching writing and it employs a phenomenographic approach as the previous sections have showed. Therefore, the data analysis applies the phenomenographic principles to understand the different conceptions comprehensibly.

The aim of a phenomenographic analysis is to derive qualitatively different conceptions of the phenomenon in question from the data. The researcher does not just record the different ways in which participants experienced the phenomenon but delves beyond them to find categories across the board. Sin (2010) suggested that the analysis be made collectively rather than interpreting the conceptions of individual participants. Conceptions are clustered in categories of description, and their meanings are interpreted in relation to each other (Sin, 2010). Akerlind (2002) also claimed that several common principles should be applied. The researcher should avoid any predetermined and rushed conclusions, focus on the collective nature of the experienced phenomenon, and search for any variation in meaning between and within categories, and the structural relationships between them (Akerlind, 2002).

Walsh (2000) supported the same idea of working across data to understand how a particular phenomenon is understood and experienced by the participants. As

stated by Svensson (1997), "The aim is to give summary descriptions of parts of data corresponding to conceptions of phenomena. Thus, such parts of the data will be abstracted from the rest and condensed as to their meaning and grouped under categories."

Another important phenomenographic principle is to generate the categories of description and the resulting outcome space from the data, not from pre-determined categories (Marton, 1986). Therefore, the data analysis should be descriptive instead of prescriptive of the categories and outcome space (Barnard et al., 1999). Furthermore, the analysis should emulate the participants' own language so as not to miss important conceptions and the overall tone of the data. The collective experience of the phenomenon should be obvious from the entire data collection (Marton, 1986).

However, Akerlind (2005a) argued that practices vary when considering entire transcripts, and thus the entire data collection, extending to the selection of smaller excerpts that are separated from the manuscript and combined in the "pool of meanings" as recommended by Marton (1986). In the former approach, the researcher works with what seems most pertinent while keeping the data in its original place for better contextualization. In the latter approach, the researcher separates the more pertinent chunks and combines them with others in a decontextualized pool of meaning (Akerlind, 2005b). The proponents of the contextualized approach claim that transcripts should be viewed as a set of interrelated meanings and researchers should work with whole transcripts. The proponents of the decontextualized approach, on the other hand, argue that working with whole transcripts can endanger the analytic focus, forcing the researcher to concentrate on individual participants rather than the whole group as a collective (Akerlind, 2005b).

Regardless of the approach, researchers have to make data manageable; otherwise, they may become overwhelmed by the task at hand and lose focus. Akerlind (2005b) contended that it is impossible "to hold all possible aspects of 20 or more interview transcripts in one's mind in an open way at one time" (p.328).

Therefore, the need to handle a dataset in manageable pieces without reducing its accuracy has prompted theorists to devise different approaches. There is no single, correct way of doing an analysis of phenomenographic data, and researchers have taken different approaches over time (Yates et al., 2012). Marton (1986) rejected the idea of an articulated method; however, other researchers have advocated for some sort of methodology for data analysis to guide researchers through the whole process.

Marton, Carlsson and Halasz (1992) designed a four-stage approach to data analysis: identifying relevant data; clustering the data based on similarities among data and not participants; contrasting groups of similar data to generate a category of description for each; and verifying the data by asking an independent judge to run through the analysis again. Saljo (1997) added two more stages to this approach. Before identifying relevant data, researchers must familiarize themselves with the data by reading and rereading it until they start seeing and understanding patterns within it. After generating categories of description, the researchers will then focus on understanding conceptions to make sure they see the similarities and contrasts among them. Akerlind (2005b) conceded that the entire process of data analysis is "a strongly iterative and comparative one, involving the continual sorting and resorting of data, plus ongoing comparisons between the data and the developing categories of description, as well as between the categories themselves" (Akerlind, 2005b, p.324). No matter how many steps are involved in the data analysis, the intended outcome is for the researcher to identify the number of categories that summarize the ways in which the conceptions of phenomenon are expressed (Yates et al., 2012).

For this present study, the conceptions indicate how teachers experience the use of visual arts in writing instruction while categories refer to the variations in their experiences of the phenomenon, i.e., the use of visual arts in writing education. The next section talks extensively about the analytic process. Having explored the literature, I now focus on my own analysis based on phenomenographic principles.

3.4.2. Analytic process

The analysis done in the current study was based on the collected data. The surveys were examined first by reading and rereading them to identify emerging phenomena. Then, each interview transcript was examined by giving names to and coding all emergent themes in a program called MAXQDA, similar to NVivo. It was able to support different languages, especially those whose alphabets are not similar to English, such as Arabic in this case. Each individual transcript was compared to others, looking for matches and differences in teachers' conceptions. All emerging themes were meaningfully grouped in "categories of descriptions" (Marton, 1981). These categories showed the variations in experiencing the use of visual arts in writing instruction in primary school in Saudi Arabia. These categories altogether were organized to form what is called an "outcome space", which provided clarity on the teachers' understanding of the phenomenon (Marton, 1986).

This present study drew upon the stages of analysis proposed by different researchers and did not strictly follow a specific approach or framework. A combination of steps taken from Marton and Booth (1997), Akerlind (2005b) and Hycner (1985) provided the framework for the analytic processing of data. By interpreting and analyzing the interview transcripts as a whole and also collecting relevant fragments from the interviews to populate the pool of meanings, the categories of description and the outcome space were constituted.

The first step proposed by Akerlind (2005b) is to read the interview transcripts repeatedly to become familiar with the data. The transcripts recorded literal statements and, sometimes, even non-verbal and para-linguistic signs (Hycner, 1985). While reading, judgement was suspended, as the author did not rush to assign meanings and interpretations or establish pre-determined categories, but instead entered the unique mental world of the interviewed individuals (Giorgi, Giorgi, and Morley, 2017). Hycner called this approach 'bracketing' or 'reduction'; it means "using the matrices of that person's world-view in order to understand the meaning of what that person is saying, rather than what the researcher expects that person to say" (p. 281). Listening to the recordings and reading the

transcripts several times is the best method recommended by phenomenographic researchers across the board (Hycner, 1985; Marton, 1986; Marton and Booth, 1997; Akerlind, 2005b). Through each rereading of the transcripts, more nuances were found of the expressed perspectives. Even more relevant passages were defined that revealed the meaning of experience from the participants' points of view. The relationship between the participant and the phenomenon of using visual arts in teaching writing was constantly scrutinized for more clues as well as for similarities and differences between the views held by the participant teachers.

The next stage, according to Marton and Booth (1997), is to identify and select relevant data. For this study, the decontextualized approach was chosen to make the data more manageable. The larger context was always considered when selecting excerpts, yet relevant segments were taken out of their original context for creating pools of meanings (Akelind, 2005b; Marton, 1986). To ensure the integrity of the data analysis, two perspectives, namely, two types of 'whole' were considered: each transcript as a whole and the group of transcripts as a whole (Dortins, 2002).

When looking at each transcript as a whole, compatibility between statements made by the same individual was the first thing to search for. When the entire group of transcripts were considered, the consistencies and inconsistencies between conceptions made by different individuals were evaluated. Therefore, this stage focused on looking at the two 'wholes' and finding compatibility or incompatibility among statements.

Additionally, units of meaning were generated during this step. Collier-Reed and Ingerman (2013) suggested that the key to create a sound pool of meanings is to focus on a single meaning unit, namely, a single aspect of the phenomenon perception, across all interviews and within individual interviews. This rule was followed, and this study focused on the singular aspect from the beginning, following the thread of conceptions for any detail indicative of the meaning unit. This was done by looking at recurring ideas that became conspicuous while rereading the transcripts. For example, several themes – a step that usually

belongs to the next stage, or organizing data – were found during this stage. Once the meaning units had been identified, only the relevant segments of text were retained and 'placed' in the pool of meanings. The meaning units were isolated from the main text and compared and contrasted with other excerpts in an iterative method to turn everything implicit from the raw data into explicit meanings, conducive to the essential structure of the phenomenographic analysis.

The following step was to organize data into pools of meaning, according to the similarities and differences between individual transcripts and, also, at the collective level (Marton and Booth, 1997). At this stage, the researcher's attention shifted from identifying individual meaning units to meaning embedded in the segments (Marton, 1986). Based on these meanings, excerpts were "sorted into piles, borderline cases are examined" until they form "groups of quotes" that were subsequently "arranged and rearranged, narrowed into categories" (Marton, 1986, p.43). The meaning units were scrutinized for critical aspects and major themes running through the data (Collier-Reed and Ingerman, 2013). This stage was the most demanding part of the process as more tasks had to be considered at the same time given that the data analysis alternated between the emerging categories, the identification of critical aspects and borderline cases, and the themes that substantiated or contradicted the relationships between different groups of experiences.

Listing all the themes generated by the previous and present stage took some effort, as it required constant grouping and regrouping, renaming themes and codes, merging smaller themes into bigger categories, reducing some redundant data, or adding new themes that emerged while creating the pools of meanings. At this point, mapping the conceptions in a logical and interconnected way to generate preliminary descriptive categories required complex graphical depictions, and tables and charts to be mixed together for a comprehensive image of the research so everything would be prepared for the next step. In this daunting stage, MAXQDA really helped with coding and thematizing in a smooth and thorough manner.

The last stage was to establish the categories of description by searching for meaning, structure, and relationships among and within categories. The categories of description represent the "researcher's abstractions of the different ways of understanding," a stage that moves away from sorting and organizing raw data to a higher level of conceptualization (Larsson and Holmstrom, 2007, p. 56). They do not represent the result of study or the outcome space since there is one more step to get there – the hierarchical correlation between categories and defining the structural relationship between them (Larsson and Holmstrom, 2007).

Therefore, this last step was divided into two stages. First, groups of qualitatively different categories were identified and related to each other to distinguish which aspects were critical for the categories of description. In total, three main categories and four subcategories were found and hierarchically arranged, from the most sophisticated, higher-order categories to the least developed, lower-order categories. The pools of meaning showed how participants conceptualized and categorized the experience of the phenomenon. Some expressions could be distributed in several different categories since an excerpt from one participant may contain different understandings of the phenomenon. In this case, the expressions appeared more than one time and in different categories, yet with different codes and themes assigned to them.

Second, the categories of description were logically connected to form the outcome space. "The outcome space is thus a robustly constituted set of logically related categories comprising distinct groupings of aspects of the phenomenon" (Collier-Reed and Ingerman, 2013, p. 8). Also, "The outcome space provides a rigorous way for describing a phenomenon using different experiences that allows a more inclusive understanding of that phenomenon" (Dringenberg et al., 2015, p.11). In other words, the set of logically-related categories that leads to an inclusive understanding of the phenomenon represents "a great visualization that allows capturing variation in a clear way" (p.11). The variation in teachers' conceptions of using visual arts in teaching writing was captured as well through

the hierarchical structure of the categories of description, offering a fresh framework for understanding this phenomenon in Saudi primary schools.

Although these steps seem consecutive and in chronological order, the analysis was iterative and comparative, prompting the author to move back and forth between stages and sometimes working simultaneously on two or more steps. Akerlind (2005b) conceded that the whole process of data analysis is "a strongly iterative and comparative one, involving the continual sorting and resorting of data, plus ongoing comparisons between the data and the developing categories of description, as well as between the categories themselves" (Akerlind, 2005b, p.324).

3.5. Reliability and validity

Guba (1981) proposed a four-criteria model to assess the trustworthiness of qualitative data: truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality. Truth value refers to the investigation of human experiences as they are lived and understood by the study participant. Later, Lincoln and Guba (1985) renamed it as credibility. Applicability has been approached from two perspectives: generalization and transferability. Since qualitative studies are conducted in naturalistic settings that are unique, and the variables cannot be controlled entirely by the researcher, generalization is an 'illusion' because the particular experience of the phenomenon cannot be replicated in other studies (Sandelowski, 1986). Therefore, Guba (1981) proposed an alternative perspective, called transferability. Researchers can transfer the findings of a study to contexts that fall outside the particular situation but only when the degree of similarities between contexts is very high (Krefting, 1991). To avoid the blame game, Lincoln and Guba (1985) made clear that transferability is the responsibility of the researcher attempting to transfer the findings in another context rather than the researcher of the initial study.

In the spontaneous and semi-structured context of qualitative research, the third criterion – consistency – is also inapplicable. In quantitative research, consistency means that the findings could be replicated with the same results in a similar

context (Sandelowski, 1986; Krefting, 1991). However, in qualitative research, this is not possible; so, consistency should be replaced with a more encompassing concept. Therefore, Guba (1981) introduced the concept of dependability, which means that the research process was conducted with careful attention and according to the rules of qualitative methodology (Ulin et al., 2005). Even though the findings could not be replicated, at least the researcher can prove that the study respected all the rules and requirements. The last factor, neutrality, refers to the lack of bias in the research findings. While quantitative research emphasized the neutrality of the researcher, Lincoln and Guba (1985) shifted the focus on the neutrality of data. They claimed that the confirmability of data should be the focus of neutrality.

The specific strategies suggested by the above-mentioned four-criteria model – triangulation, prolonged engagement, or peer debriefing (Guba, 1981; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Krefting, 1991) – are not always appropriate for phenomenographic research because they operate with participants' conceptions about a particular phenomenon rather than according to the observation of their actions or the phenomenon itself. Therefore, the criteria were subsumed under the more appropriate factors of reliability and validity as described by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009). Reliability pertains to "the consistency and trustworthiness of research findings" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009), while validity is divided in seven manageable stages of quality control of the research process: thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, validating, and reporting.

This study's reliability relies on the interview design and implementation, the accuracy and integrity of translations and interview transcripts, and the methods of bracketing and categorization of conceptions. The interview design was based not on the author's personal ideas and perceptions of the phenomenon, but on the findings from the questionnaire. During the interview, no leading question was used, and the participants were free to expand or amend their ideas whenever they felt like doing so. An independent certified interpreter was employed to translate the interviews into English and the questionnaires into Arabic. The method of data analysis was grounded in the established and largely-used

approaches in phenomenography. The categorization of conceptions evolved from a rigorous and iterative analytic process with the use of MAXQDA, a world-leading software program used for qualitative research.

The validity of the research is obvious when the seven stages of quality control are applied to it. Thematizing validity deals with the soundness of the theoretical presuppositions; this study started from this premise and was supported by the literature review about the use of visual arts in teaching writing. Designing validity involves adequacy to produce knowledge beneficial for the subject matter. It is believed that the phenomenographic method used for this study will benefit both the field of teaching writing and visual arts as well as teachers' formative conceptions about the combination of the two skills in the classroom. The study will also promote awareness of the Saudi teaching and learning context in primary education, affording a better understanding of how conceptions impact the use of visual arts in writing classes.

Validity in interviewing pertains to the participants' freedom to express their conceptions openly with minimum intervention from the interviewer. This study employed a semi-structured interview protocol and non-directive questions to ensure that the participants gave honest input about the experienced phenomenon. Transcribing validity refers, in this case, to both the transcription and translation method. A certified translator was employed, and the resulting work was checked for accuracy. Where differences in translation emerged, they were discussed and amended by both the translator and the author, whose native language is Arabic as well.

Ensuring validity relates to how sound is the interpretation of data. Since this study adopted the descriptive approach characteristic of the phenomenographic research – unlike other qualitative research that follows prescriptive and explanatory approaches – the validity of the analysis process is supported by interview excerpts, the codes and themes generated through MAXQDA, and the step-by-step method of interpretation.

Validating is the sixth step in Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) model; it entails the reflective judgement about what forms and procedures of validation are relevant to this study. Given its nature, a limited group of researchers, including my advisors and colleagues, could validate the research process, making suggestions and challenging my interpretations when necessary. Reporting validity comes from two directions: the researcher herself and her readers. The role of the readers in doctoral thesis is obvious as the academic audience of such endeavors may report the validity of the study. On the other hand, the author is convinced that she provided as accurate and truthful an account as possible.

3.6. Ethical considerations

The study was conducted according to the ethical guidelines prescribed by Durham University. Full ethical approval was granted by the university (see Appendix A). The researcher carefully considered all the factors recommended in the code of conduct and the BERA ethical guidelines (BERA, 2018) regarding the researcher's responsibilities to participants in terms of informed consent, voluntary participation, transparency about privacy, data storage and disclosure, and the right to withdraw, openness, confidentiality and anonymity. No incentives were offered to teachers for participation in this study.

The author was aware of the ethical considerations that govern academic research and made sure that the present study conformed to them in every single aspect. She was open to criticism and new ideas, ready to report honestly about each detail as it pertained to ethical choices made along the research process. Furthermore, the author was open and honest with the participants as well, answering their questions and talking to them about the sensitive nature of the research. To ensure the highest level of professional and academic integrity, the author reported accurately and objectively the methods, data analysis, results, and everything related to the study.

Before starting the data collection, the teachers were invited to read through an informed consent form and sign it if they agreed to participate in the study (see Appendix C). Their participation was voluntary and sprang from their interest in

the research topic. The consent form informed all participants about the nature of the research. It also made them aware that the interviews would be recorded for the purpose of transcription and data analysis.

They were also informed about their rights as participants, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without having to provide any reason for that (see Appendix B). Additionally, due to the hierarchical structures in the Saudi educational system, consent was gained from the school district offices and school principals to contact the teacher participants. Their consent was necessary because of the sensitive nature of the study. The teachers were asked to share personal experiences that involved interaction with children. Thus, the author considered it necessary to ask for school management permission to collect data. No student name was mentioned nor used as an example, and the researchers, along with teachers, avoided focusing on individual students in the interviews.

The research guaranteed the confidentiality of the data and participant anonymity in several ways. First, only the researcher, her supervisor, and the translator would have access to the interview recordings and transcripts. The data was stored on a password-protected server. Second, participant anonymity was protected by coding the information, so the transcripts and analysis always referred to them by numbers. The author made sure that no one could be identified from the research analysis. Only demographic details, including gender, age, education, along with the teaching experience were included in the analysis.

4. Findings

4.1. Overview of chapter

This chapter presents the findings of data analysis in three sections, identified as follows. The first section presents a set of categories that emphasize the different ways teachers used visual arts in teaching writing in the classroom, followed by an overview of each category. In the second section, the structural relationships between categories are examined through several dimensions that emerged from the phenomenographic analysis of the data. Finally, the third section presents the outcome space and how it was created. The final graphical presentation shows the various qualitative ways that teachers experienced and understood the use of visual arts in writing.

Throughout the chapter, quotations from interview transcripts illustrate and emphasize the main characteristics of each category, as well as support for teaching approaches regarding the interpretative claims presented in this chapter. All quotations are written in italics, and the bold font underlines key aspects of the quotation. An ellipse enclosed in brackets is used for the deleted part of the transcript [...]. If found in the quotation, "I" and "P" are used to represent the investigator and the participant, respectively. The participant number is shown in bold font and the transcript line number between parentheses at the end of each quotation. The quotation's initial location in the chapter is cited if used more than once.

4.2. Categories of description

This section presents a detailed description of the teachers' conceptions. The conceptions have been grouped into different categories and subcategories, based on similarities and differences among them. The findings reveal that teachers' experience with visual arts in writing can be divided in three qualitatively different ways, each based on a specific focus. Teachers were found to have different conceptions of the phenomenon, which led to the following categorization:

1. Curriculum-focused experience
2. Knowledge-transfer support experience
   a. Student perception
   b. Writing quality
3. Student-needs focused experience
   a. Beginner students
   b. Students with learning difficulties

4.2.1. Summary of categories

The summary of each category starts with an encompassing quotation that subsumes how visual arts in writing is experienced in that particular category. A brief description of the category is given, considering its main characteristics. The summary ends with an analytical framework that includes two aspects: referential and structural. The structural aspect consists of an internal horizon and an external horizon. Each aspect is based on a specific meaning that distinguishes the category from the others.

Category 1: Curriculum-focused experience

In the curriculum-focused experience category, teachers viewed and experienced the visual arts in teaching writing as an element of curriculum content which could be dispensed with.

> *I: Through your experience in teaching, do you think that the use of visual arts, drawing and images, is a necessity that you use always, or limited, that you use sometimes or marginally? Can writing be taught without using visual arts?*
> *P: Not always and not necessary. I might dispense with it.*
> *I: How?*
> *P: I follow the course content; I think it is enough, according to the lesson and syllabus. For example, in composing the story, I show them images, and the students compose the story, and the use varies from one student to another. 6(52-59)*

For teachers in this category, adhering to the curriculum was key. They followed the curriculum contents closely when they teach, considering that covering the curriculum is more important than using visual arts in the classroom. Although some textbook lessons include some visual arts activities, teachers did not approach these activities as essential parts of the lessons. They saw these

activities as complementary, while covering the core contents was a priority, especially when they felt that they were running out of time. Accordingly, they focused mostly on completing the writing content activity, rather than using visual arts in the process of teaching writing, as the following quotations illustrate.

> *We adhere to what is in the book, and I feel that the language curriculum is good and adequate.* **6***(274)*

> *I barely complete the content of the book. We take to complete the curriculum.* **5***(93-100)*

Teachers also did not include any out-of-curriculum visual arts methods or contents. Moreover, they claimed that using visual arts had a very marginal (limited) impact on writing learning, and they implied that the curriculum had core and marginal, or supportive, contents for teaching writing.

> *Including images and drawings in the exercises or the lesson depends on what we have in the curriculum and according to time. There is no specification. [...] Sometimes they are in the book, and we can return to it.* **8***(52 - 57)*

The referential aspect makes this category distinct from the others because of the focus on curriculum. The referential aspect of the use of visual arts in writing is limited to the content in the textbook. The external horizon is defined from the context as something that occurs only in certain cases or situations. The internal horizon is the content and its learning instructions included in the textbook. Figure 4.1 shows the analytical framework of how teachers in this category experience visual arts in writing learning.
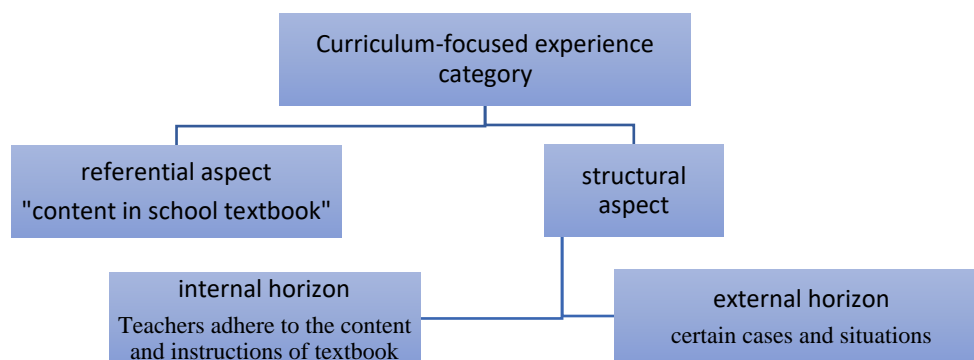
Figure 4.1 Curriculum-focused experience category: Analytical framework

Category 2: Knowledge-transfer support experience

In the knowledge-transfer support experience category, the use of visual arts in writing was viewed and experienced in two ways. Firstly, it was seen as a means of knowledge transmission and acquisition. Secondly, the use of visual arts was experienced as the application of knowledge per se, and its successful application represented the eventual achievement that teachers expected from their students. In other words, knowledge was applied in the use of visual arts, and once the students mastered it, they had achieved the educational goal. Thus, the goal was to get students to apply what they had learned. Many teachers in this category discussed the advantages of visual arts in learning achievements as a two-way technique, or rather a mechanism that could help students receive and recall knowledge.

Subcategory 2a: Knowledge-transfer support experience (Student perception)

In subcategory 2a, teachers focused more on the support of visual arts in knowledge transfer to students. They thought that students' understanding and perception can be improved when visual arts are integrated with lesson instructions. For example, they viewed it as a useful tool to deliver the main idea or the goal of a story. The following quotations emphasize the advantages of using visual arts to enhance students' perception.

The image was clear to the student, and the benefit of this image was that it ***facilitated*** *the delivery of information. [...] It saves me time and effort in* ***understanding*** *the subject for the students.* ***15****(4 - 8)*

The idea, or goal of the story, was ***delivered*** *using images.* ***10****(34-35)*

Teachers in this subcategory expressed their views about how visual arts helped students. They viewed visual arts as an effective way of improving students' perception during the teaching process. These teachers did not think that visual arts (drawing and images) had a direct relationship (or impact) with writing learning; however, they viewed it as a helpful means for students to learn and understand writing instruction. Also, they considered it important for learning general rules, such as the script positions, and grammar rules. For example, as the following quotations illustrate, they mainly depended on visual arts to deliver the ideas of the lessons.

It helps me a lot in ***communicating*** *ideas in the lesson, as it is a way to help me in teaching and help my students* ***comprehend*** *very much. I communicate to students in the best possible way by including images or drawings. So far, I cannot imagine myself explaining to a student without any of the means of visual arts. It makes it easier for me.* ***2****(113-115)*

They also thought that information recall was easier when using visual arts. This approach gave students a chance to embrace more knowledge and improve more skills, as they stated.

I consider them necessary for the benefit of the teacher and the student to ***facilitate*** *the educational process [...] to help students* ***focus*** *and facilitate* ***knowledge retrieval****. I feel that it is easy to give students more than what is required, [...] because if they master the basics, I can give them additional skills that will help in developing them until they reach the stage of excellence, not just to perform what is required of them only.* ***2****(417 - 423)*

To demonstrate the efficiency of visual arts, teachers compared writing lessons where visual arts had been used or not. They supported their thought about the improvement in students' perception by claiming that information stuck with students in the following days. Teachers thought that using visuals would improve students' long-term memory.

*The lesson based on visual arts, such as drawing and images, is **kept in the students' minds** tomorrow better than the lesson without drawings and images. 3(61-63)*

Another advantage that teachers noticed is that visual arts can easily stimulate students' thinking and provide more information linked to the images. This process improved the learning atmosphere by making students more excited and joyful. Consequently, visual arts helped in making the learning process smooth and beneficial.

*I think, through experience, that the use of visual arts is very important, especially for primary school students, helps students with **thinking** skills, brings information **closer** to the student, helps the teacher deliver information **easier** and **faster**, and makes the curriculum **likable** to the student. It helps the student **enjoy** the lesson and **not bored**. 18(196 - 198)*

In this subcategory, the external horizon represents specific teachers who adopted a specific approach of teaching writing. The internal horizon consists of how knowledge transmission and students' perception were improved by using an elaborated teaching approach that incorporates visual arts in writing instruction. The referential aspect refers to improving writing teaching and learning by making instruction more effective. Figure 4.2 presents the analytical framework of the teaching experience in this subcategory.
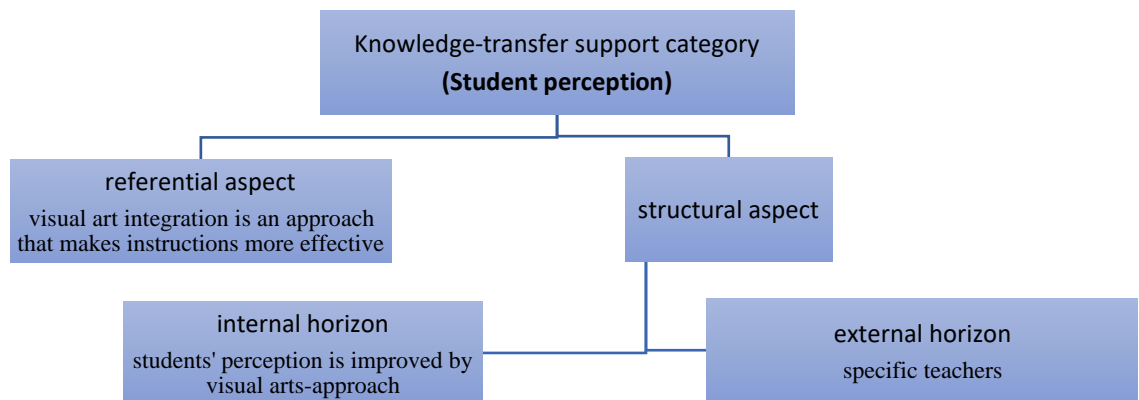
Figure 4.2 Knowledge-transfer support category (students' perception): Analytical framework

subcategory 2b: Knowledge-transfer support experience (Writing quality)

Subcategory 2b regards the other approach to the two-way technique, which is a mechanism that could help students receive and recall knowledge. This subcategory refers to the support that visual arts can provide to students in recalling knowledge, represented by the ability to compose verbally and in writing later. Both subcategories 2a and 2b share a similar general concept of knowledge transfer support. Teachers used visual arts to convey knowledge to students. They introduced knowledge to students by visual arts in order to enhance the interaction between students and teachers. subcategory 2a focused on delivering writing instructions in a way that made it easier for students to understand the material and the teaching process more efficiently. On the other hand, the goal in subcategory 2b was to improve students' writing by using visual arts. Teachers in this subcategory emphasized the advantages of using visual arts to improve students' writing quality, as explained in the next quotations.

> *They take advantage of images in writing **compositions**. After looking at the images, a student begins **arranging** sentences and ideas and concatenating sentences **mentally**. **4**(62 - 63)*

> *I use it for the skill of **composition**. For example, in explaining a specific lesson, at the core of the lesson, or its end [...] I ask them, tell me about this image. Who can make a sentence about this image? They see the image and **express** [...] so, I find this method brings attention. **13**(83 - 85)*

> *I show images without writing on them [...] the students **compose** a story based on these photos. **15**(58-60)*

These teachers thought that visual arts could stimulate critical thinking, information retrieval and analysis, which are key elements for improved quality of writing. Similar to subcategory 2a, these teachers did not think that visual arts directly supported writing. However, they viewed it as an essential means of presenting knowledge, stimulating thinking, and sequencing ideas for verbal composition, which preceded the writing process. Thus, teachers counted the support of visual arts for the quality of writing by the richness of language used and the number of words produced, as well as the sequence of ideas.

*I ask them to write a sentence over the story they have colored. It helps the students **form** and **arrange** useful sentences through the image. They have something useful, not scattered words. They produce very useful words, of course, with different individual differences. **15**(231 - 234)*

In this subcategory, the referential aspect refers to improved knowledge implementation that contributes to writing enhancement. The external horizon is defined from the context, as specific students can employ specific knowledge for the quality of writing. The internal horizon consists of how the application of knowledge can improve writing. Figure 4.3 describes the analytical framework for experience in this subcategory.
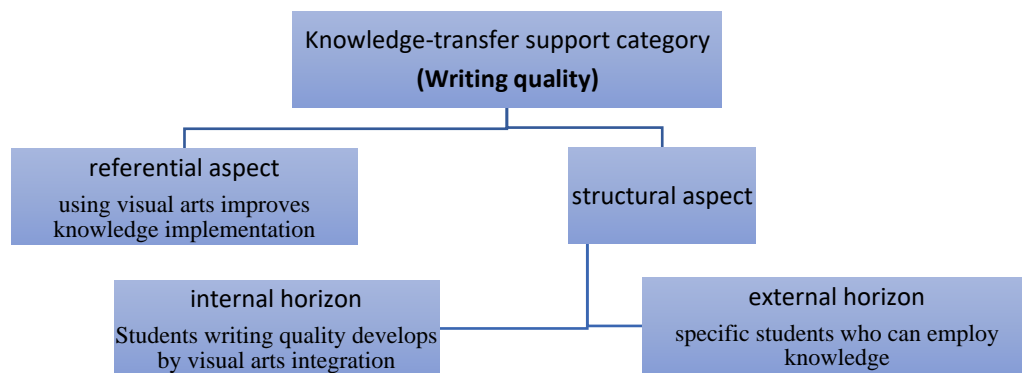
Figure 4.3 Knowledge-transfer support category (writing quality): Analytical framework

Category 3: Student-needs focused experience

Conceptions in this category emerged from the perspective of students' needs. Teachers in this category were focused on beginner students or students with learning difficulties. They looked at visual arts as an essential means for teaching the basics of writing to these types of students. Therefore, conceptions in this category have been further divided into two subcategories, regarding beginner students and students with learning difficulties. Both types of students are taught similar skills, namely the basics of writing. Beginner students are first-graders in primary school, while students with learning difficulties could attend any grade of primary school, but still suffer from difficulties in learning writing. This section discusses the two categories and introduces some useful quotations.

Subcategory 3a: Student-needs-focused experience (Beginner students)

Teachers in the student-needs-focused subcategory paid attention to the needs of students within particular stages of development; in this case, first graders. They thought that using visual arts in teaching writing for the first grade is essential and it is the method they follow in teaching writing.

> *It is **necessary**; it cannot be dispensed with, particularly in the **first grade**. **10***(8-15)*

They encouraged this technique and they recognized that it would be impossible for them to teach writing without using visual arts. Their experience stood on the conception that visual arts could provide help in learning some initial writing skills, such as holding and controlling movements of the pen. They proved the appropriateness of this teaching approach by looking at the tangible and positive results of students' learning, such as memorizing and shaping letters, and understanding the position of letters on the line during writing.

> *I evaluate this approach through the students' **tangible results**. For example, I started on how they can **memorize** letters; I found that drawings made it easier for me because students knew how to **control** the **shape** of the letter and how to **lower it from the line,** and students memorized in their memory. Definitely, I believe it is **very successful**, especially for the **first grade** of primary school. **15***(314 - 315)*

Teachers viewed visual arts as vital for beginner students; namely, first-grade students. They thought it was appropriate to teach writing by using visual arts because of the common attributes that drawing and writing share, including how to hold and control the pen, train hand muscles, practice lines and curve drawings, and shape letters. Therefore, practicing drawing beforehand had a powerful impact on students' writing and prepared them to perform writing correctly through these common attributes:

> *Strengthen the **hand muscle** so that the pen is held and **controlled** correctly. Drawing really helps the student write **correctly** through his hand being used to writing. When I teach the letter, they become familiar with **the writing movements** since they have already trained on it through drawing. **10***(26-27)*

Moreover, teachers held a common conception that images and drawings engaged and enticed children to learn new lessons. Beginner students may struggle and feel discomfort with learning settings, such as the class atmosphere. They may not get familiar with the school environment easily, making it hard for them to accumulate knowledge in the first stages of school attendance. However, it is very likely that they are attracted to visuals, drawings, and coloring at this early age. Thus, teachers tapped into this attraction from the very beginning. They claimed that visual arts could provide the right ambiance to overcome first graders' reluctance and help them engage in class activities. Day by day, teachers invested more in this area to make students familiar with the basics of writing.

> *P: The goal is to accustom the child to writing by linking entertainment with education. The student draws the letter with **pleasure** and does not feel **bored**; he feels **fun**. This had a very big impact in preparing the student, **drawing attention**, **motivating**, and **removing fear**.*
> *I: How?*
> *P: Starting the lesson abstract without the images, without any drawings, makes the child **uncomfortable**, but if I start with the setup and the images - images of animals, cars, things from the student's daily life - he accepts the lesson and **interacts** with it. **1**(90-101)*

In this subcategory, the referential aspect is about learning the basic skills accompanying and improving the writing skill. The external horizon is defined from the context as specific students in the first grade. The internal horizon refers to mastering basic skills (such as holding and controlling the pen movements) that lead to writing learning. The analytical framework for the experience in this subcategory is presented in figure 4.4.

```
                    Student-needs focused experience
                          (Beginner students)

    referential aspect                          structural aspect
 Using visual art is a significant way of
              teaching

            internal horizon
     skills learning can lead to learn              external horizon
            writing basics                       Students in the first grade
```
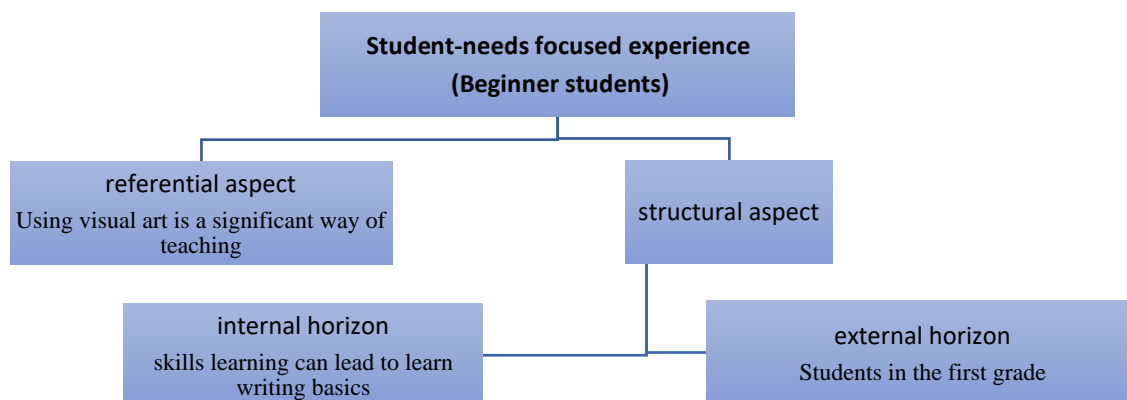
Figure 4.4 Student-needs focused category (beginner students): Analytical framework

Subcategory 3b: Student-needs focused experience (Students with difficulties)

Students with learning difficulties struggle to learn and acquire knowledge and usually fall behind their peers in the learning process because of their lack of abilities. The concept of learning difficulties might cover a wide range of conditions in all ages. However, this category focuses on learning difficulties of writing basics in early primary school classrooms.

Teachers in this subcategory viewed visual arts as the appropriate approach for promoting learning for students with learning difficulties of writing basics. They used visual arts to improve writing learning for such students. They thought that using visual arts in writing instruction could overcome students' difficulties and provided supplemental materials to enhance students' capabilities.

> *It would be beneficial to use visual arts in writing for students with **learning difficulties**. It helps them **overcome weaknesses**. Because it makes it easier for them [...] one day, I had a student who had some **difficulties**, but with the images, he **responded**. 4(130 - 133)*

Similar to subcategory 3a, teachers in this subcategory reported using visual arts to get students engaged in the learning process, but in a different way that accounted for the students' needs. This subcategory differs in its focus, as well, since teachers shifted their attention from using visuals as a means to help

students overcome their fear of the unknown in their early experience of attending school, towards a means to help a specific category of students overcome their weaknesses and lack of confidence.

> *I have to use images to **overcome** the lack of understanding; that is, if the student becomes **difficult** to learn to write. So I use it if there is **difficulty in learning writing**. **15***(43 - 48)*

Classrooms were not homogenous at all, and teachers were highly aware of the differences between individuals and how these differences impacted the use of visuals in teaching writing. Although the whole class seemed to be more receptive when teachers used visuals, some students benefited more than others, since information became clearer and easier to understand this way.

> *I think visual arts benefit **all types of students**, it benefits them all, but if I focus on the **weak and the moderate** students, it will **benefit** them more, and the information **reaches** them **quickly**. It is **easier** for them and me. **19***(235 - 238)*

In this subcategory, the referential aspect narrows down to using visual arts to promote and enhance writing learning for students with difficulties. Therefore, the context defines the external horizon as students with learning difficulties. The internal horizon refers to how art-integrated instruction can overcome student weaknesses. Figure 4.5 demonstrates the analytical framework for the experience in this subcategory.
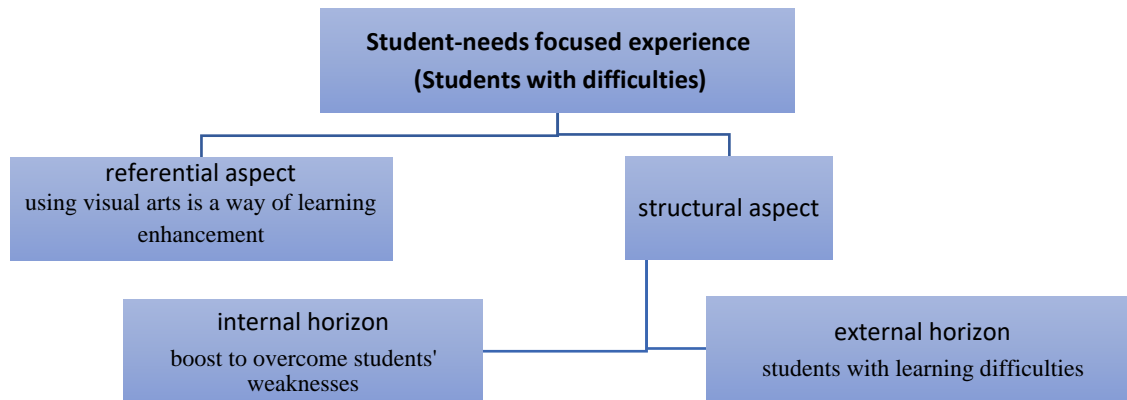
Figure 4.5 Student-needs focused category (Students with difficulties): Analytical framework

4.3. Structural relationships between categories of description

This section analyzes the structural relationships between categories of description in terms of similarities and differences among the categories. Data-derived similarities and differences, as presented by the participants, are combined under three common dimensions. These dimensions are aspects of the phenomenon and exist in each category, but the participants have various ways of experiencing them. Each dimension is identified through participant data. These dimensions are as follows:

1. **Significance of visual arts**
2. **Type of impact of visual arts**
3. **Student's learning level**

These dimensions are discussed and reported in the context of different categories of description. Accordingly, each description category has its own focal aspect, representing the values experienced within the dimension. Furthermore, each dimension is presented thoroughly by providing its definition and focal aspect. The explanation of the relationship with different description categories follows. Data quotations from participants' interviews support all illustrations and assertions to correlate the links with the dimension.

4.3.1. Dimension 1: Significance of visual arts

This dimension highlights the extent to which teachers depended on using visual arts within the context of teaching writing in primary school. Teachers were found to have two different positions regarding the use of visual arts in writing. The first position viewed it as an essential medium where teachers emphasized the idea that writing cannot be taught without visual arts. They relied heavily on visual arts during their teaching of writing in classrooms. On the other hand, the second position considered it a marginal medium, where teachers did not rely on the use of visual arts and did not think they would lose a key factor if visual arts were not used in teaching writing.

Table 4.1 shows the variations in how teachers relied on visual arts in writing according to the role they thought it played in learning.

Table 4.1 Variations in the significance of visual arts

Significance of visual arts		
Category of description	**Focal aspect**	**Focus**
• Curriculum-focused experience	Curriculum	Marginal medium

• Knowledge-transfer support experience
   o Student perception
   o Writing quality
	Knowledge	Essential medium

• Student-needs focused experience
   o Beginner students
   o Students with learning difficulties
	Student	

Category 1: Curriculum-focused experience

In this category, teachers adhered to the curriculum contents provided by the Ministry of Education. They dealt with visual arts only when they were included in the textbook. Even less than that, they sometimes considered it marginal in the curriculum, which they did not heed in teaching writing (see *6(274)* p.112).

*I cannot say that I cannot teach writing without drawing and images; I **do not** build on it primarily. It helps us, but it can be **dispensed** with. 16(227-234)*

If they decided to insert visual arts in their teaching, they would only use those available in the curriculum, but did not integrate additional materials from outside the textbook. They went even further, considering that such visual arts in the textbook are not main contents that they should rely on during teaching. They only covered them in very limited cases when the time permitted or if some students were interested in such activities. Therefore, visual arts were not specifically prioritized by teachers. They were not an integral part of their teaching practices, and definitely not something that would be directly addressed in the normal course of their teaching. When activities that involved images, drawings and other visual arts were part of the learning suggestions in the curriculum, these teachers used them sparingly. Moreover, where the curriculum was silent, teachers did not bother to use other visual arts in the classroom.

*Some of the students like to draw. Sometimes, when I give them a topic, they ask me: Can we draw it? I tell them to **write first and then draw** any drawing that expresses the writing. I leave the drawing as **desired by the student.** Some of them enjoy it but not all of them. I do not ask them to draw, but if the drawing is in the lesson and we do have **time**, I leave it to the **student's desire**. I noticed that some students benefit from images for writing, and others do not use them. If the drawing is not present in the curriculum, we **do not consider** it. 6(62-70)*

These teachers gained their understanding of what visual arts are and how they might be used for teaching writing by following instructions laid out in the textbook. They did not make any effort to move beyond the curriculum instructions and develop a better understanding of the phenomenon.

*I use what is included in the content of the curriculum, I do not provide additional means, and I am **satisfied** with what is in the curriculum. 5(56-61)*

The explanation behind this view was that students in upper grades had already learned basic writing and no longer needed visual arts for developing their writing skills even further. Therefore, these teachers concluded that visual arts played a marginal rather than a key role in the learning process.

*I am talking about the third and fourth grades. I feel that they have learned to write, as they **do not need** drawing and images. 7(208-209)*

Additionally, they referred to the fact that the curriculum did not include much visual arts, since students at this level had already passed the need for such supporting tools:

*my dependence on images is very little, and this is due to the preparation of the curriculum, as the curriculum itself **does not** consist of a lot of images. 8(15)*

When the textbook involved visual arts, it usually did that to ask students to complete a specific writing activity or exercise. Completing such activities was the sole way for teachers to use visual arts in writing. They considered it textbook content, rather than a powerful tool for learning writing. Beyond that, they considered such visual arts as a sort of entertainment for students.

*I use it **according** to the unit requirements if composition and drawing are required. Some lessons do not need it at all. In some lessons, I use it as **entertainment** that is considered a way out of reading and writing. But normally, I **adhere** to what is present in the curriculum. 6(80-83)*

Even though visual arts were part of the writing curriculum, they remained peripheral to teachers' views of teaching and learning writing. Visual arts were not viewed as a mandatory part of instruction, even when teachers could no longer avoid them. The next example explains this conception very well:

P: An example of writing lesson on morals and virtues in the fifth grade. In this lesson, we talk about the morals and virtues that a person should have. After discussion, I ask the students to express these morals orally. Then, I ask them to write a short sentence describing each of the virtues, such as honesty, cooperation, smiling, etc.
I: Is there any images in this lesson?
P: yes. Sometimes, students use them. 7(229-244)

It is worth saying that these teachers do not try to use any extracurricular teaching approaches besides those available in the curriculum. Again, emphasizing following the curriculum accurately, the following teacher noted:

*I **do not** use any additional methods. I only do what is in the curriculum. 5(126-131)*

127

Subcategory 2a: Knowledge-transfer support experience (Student perception)

In subcategory 2a, teachers' focus shifted from curriculum to knowledge transfer. Teachers in this subcategory viewed visual arts as a significant teaching strategy to convey knowledge to students. They strongly thought that using visual arts is effective in teaching writing. Their approach to using visual arts in teaching writing helped them provide knowledge and contents to students clearly and adequately.

> *From my experience, the use of visual arts is **necessary**. Drawing or images are **very valuable and important** [...]I use it in all my lessons, displaying images and drawings.-**3**(50-51)*

They thought that this approach supported students' perceptions and comprehension in turn. The information conveyed through visual arts enhanced students' perception and saved much effort and time for both teachers and students. Knowledge transfer was seen as more fluid, fruitful, and rewarding this way (see *2(113-115)* p.114).

Moreover, students' attention and concentration could be held easily by using such visuals, since they preferred this way of learning. Using visual arts to introduce a new lesson and attract students' attention was one of the most common experiences reported by participants.

> *I use images before starting the lesson for both **suspense** and **attention-grabbing**. **19**(94-95)*

Teachers in this subcategory found that using visual arts in teaching writing was not marginal, but rather a significant and beneficial tool for better educational outcomes:

> *I wish I could make it a **mandatory** part of the curriculum and **can not be dispensed** with because it facilitates access to information and makes it **memorable** in the student's mind. **4**(9-13)*

Teachers also thought that using such a medium would encourage students to participate and discuss lesson ideas, improving their confidence and engagement. Teachers used visual arts available in the curriculum, but also

added extracurricular visual resources. Their approach proved how significant they viewed this medium to be.

> *I try to **stimulate** them to the lesson and have their **longing** for it, I show them images, drawings, or a YouTube clip, and then I notice that the students started to **interact** and get **excited** with the lesson and have a dialogue with me. All students **participate**, and it makes students have **confidence** in themselves and the **capability** to learn.* **10***(119-129)*

Teachers reported that there were obvious improvements in student perception when they used visual arts. They noticed that students' thinking and understanding had been improved, as well. Also, they observed that visual arts made it easier for students to memorize, understand, and retrieve the writing rules.

> *The lesson based on visual arts such as drawing and images was **kept in the students' minds for a longer time** better than the lesson without drawings and images. [...] as an example, how to use the exception word, a group of people went out to the park except for Khalid, so I showed them the exception use visually, I showed them images to show them that Khaled is not with them. They understood it well and better.* **3***(55-60)*

Teachers' perceptions of the significance of visual arts were obvious in how they used visual arts to support imagination and information retrieval. Teachers noticed the difference between students' skills, based on their exposure to visual arts. They believed that students' perception improved when visual arts were involved.

> *Those with whom I use visual arts, their information and imagination of the topic become better, and their **understanding** becomes better. They have better information retrieval. Even if I ask them the next day, they will **interact** and **respond** to me more than if I did not offer it. But, those I did not provide did not have the same level of these skills.* **14***(120-125)*

The last occurrence of using visual arts in the classroom was at the end of the lesson, when teachers reviewed what they taught and assessed students' comprehension of previous lessons. They used visual arts to assess the knowledge acquired. Furthermore, teachers commonly used this practice to confirm the understanding of specific concepts.

*Most of my use is during the lesson, and sometimes before or after the lesson. I use it to determine the student's **understanding**, perception, and whether the student absorbs the information. It could be **checking** their **understanding** of the lesson. **18***(97-102)*

To sum up, teachers in this subcategory dealt with visual arts as a significant method they always included in their teaching approaches, due to the benefits they had on students' learning and cognitive development. The next quotation is one example among many others that shows how teachers depended on visual arts for teaching writing. They found this kind of approach generated joy among students, and was very effective and memorable. In this quote, the teacher explained how images were used to identify the differences between parts of speech, the differences between tenses, the proper structure of a sentence, and the differences between types of sentences.

*I use a **brainstorming** strategy. I show some images or drawings and then ask the students, what do you see in the image? The students answer the words they **deduce** from the images, and I write them in front of them on the board. I ask them to identify the part of speech of these words by extracting nouns, verbs, and prepositions. Then I go to more detail and ask them to identify the types of these nouns and verbs, for example, the name of a human or animal, past tense or a present verb, and so on. After all the possible words are extracted from the image, I ask them to point out the differences and when they can be used. For example, the difference between the past tense and the present tense. The difference between a noun and a preposition. Then I moved them to an advanced level, which is the correct structure of the sentence. For example, I explain to them that a preposition is always followed by a noun and the difference between a sentence that starts with a noun and a sentence that starts with a verb, and so on. **14***(130 - 143)*

Subcategory 2b: Knowledge-transfer support experience (Writing quality)
In subcategory 2b, teachers thought that students made use of visual arts to show the knowledge they acquired through good writing. They demonstrated the ability of visual arts to support students in recalling knowledge successfully, which was reflected furthermore in the quality of writing. Teachers in this subcategory thought that visual arts stimulated students' thinking, retrieval and analysis, which are key elements for the quality of writing. Similar to subcategory 2a, teachers thought that visual arts represented important support for writing. However, unlike teachers in subcategory 2a, who focused more on students' cognitive

development, these teachers concentrated more on the qualitative aspects of writing. They viewed it as an essential means of knowledge recall, stimulation of thought, and sequencing of ideas for verbal composition, which preceded the writing process. They thought that the quality of writing, which included the richness of language used and the number of words produced, as well as the sequence of ideas, depended mostly on the support of visual arts.

> *The use of visual arts, drawing and images, is **essential**. Through my experience, I think that it is **useful** and **effective**, especially in the education of the primary stage, because if the student learns through such visual means, his writing becomes **clear** and carries **rich meanings and ideas**, **linguistically** and **intellectually**. It is also a way to raise the student's level of writing. **9**(10-13)*

They explained the significant relationship between visual arts and the quality of writing by the improvements they noticed when students employed visual arts in writing. Students could utilize visual arts to construct sentences and mentally organize the sequence of ideas before they put them down in writing. Teachers reported that this approach definitely improved the quality of students' writing tasks.

> *The construction of sentences, their order, writing, and language richness have **improved** over time when using images or drawings. **20**(74-77)*

Teachers in this subcategory used supplementary extracurricular visual arts to improve composition, which demonstrated the extent to which they thought visual arts were essential in teaching writing. Presenting images to students helped them compose and analyze sentences, which was one of the main skills in the curriculum. Therefore, teachers paid more attention to such activities by providing extra visual tools that could help students improve their writing skills.

> *they benefit from it to learn **composition** skills. They can express and comment on an image and then write a sentence about it. So, the image helps them in **creating** sentences. The skill is included in the curriculum, but I bring **extra** images out-of-the curriculum to perform the "composing and commenting on images" activities. **20**(99-110)*

Another teaching approach was based mainly on images that students used to produce ideas and imagine story events and characters before writing the story.

A concept map represented the preparation phase where students could put all the story elements. Students used these elements as guidance to write the story. Teachers believed that without the help of images, students might not be able to produce a similar level of writing quality. The preparation tools that preceded the writing task definitely enriched the story writing and the quality of written expression.

> *I use the "story face" strategy with my students. I show images, and the students begin to **extract** characters and places. For example, the animals in the forest and the characters in the images. The events that they expect through the images. Then they convert these elements into a concept map. [...] The concept map makes the student separate the events with her imagination by reviewing the images. The student **extracts** the story and the events and imagines the story through the images. After drawing the concept map and putting together all the information, I ask the students to turn the concept map into a written story. And I keep the concept map shown to them as they write. **14***(106-119)*

Subcategory 3a: Student-needs focused experience (Beginner students)

In this subcategory, teachers emphasized the significance of using visual arts for first-grade students. Their teaching approaches revolved around using visual arts as an essential tool to teach writing basic skills.

> *I believe it is an **essential** method for teaching **writing basics** to **first-grade** students. **2***(49-51)*

Holding the pen, training hand muscles, practicing lines and curves, and shaping letters were essential basic skills that could be achieved through practicing drawing. On the other hand, students enjoyed the fun that visual arts brought to the writing task. Teachers moved from one stage of teaching writing to another by taking advantage of the benefits that drawing could offer. They started by teaching students how to hold the pen and then moved on to practicing curves and directions. Eventually, they reached the goal of teaching letters.

> *before we start writing learning, we must prepare the child, so we start training and strengthening the child's **hand muscles** through drawing, playing with clay, and playing with sand. **1***(113)*
>
> *In the first grade, children **love** drawings and colors, so I offer them intensive **drawings** to teach them to **hold the pen**, then the stage of accustoming the students*

*to some **bends** until they are good at them, then the stage of **directions** such as **arrows** until they reach **shapes** and drawings close to some letters or **letter shapes**, then I get to the shapes of letters. **17***(4-6)*

Another aspect that made teachers consider this approach was that the young students might initially feel uncomfortable with the institutional learning settings. They might struggle to adjust to the school environment, especially in their early experience of attending school. Thus, teachers found that visual arts provided a good way to overcome such obstacles and engage their students in the excitement of the pursuit of learning writing. Not only did students become more receptive when such teaching strategies were involved, but they also overcame their fears of the school setting.

*drawing helps students become more **confident** for better writing learning, especially at the beginning of their learning at school when they are not familiar with the school system. Some students feel confused, and visual arts activities make them comfortable and **ready** to learn. **15***(211-214)*

Teachers in this subcategory believed this approach was an effective way of teaching basics in writing lessons. They extended the use of visual arts by providing supplemental extracurricular visuals to enrich writing lessons and promote learning.

*I bring some **extra** sketches and drawings **out-of-the curriculum** to help students learn writing skills. Sometimes, the drawings in the curriculum are not enough. Students practice drawings by writing on dotted lines and coloring to identify letters and their differences. Also, I show them an image of something they know that begins with the letter I teach, along with an image of the letter, so that they can recognize the letter. **10***(44-45)*

They agreed that such an approach was time-consuming at the beginning of the semester, but once the students had mastered the basic skills, they moved faster through the rest of the curriculum. They thought that the appropriate way to teach beginner students the basics of writing was by giving them intensive tasks. Once the students had mastered these skills, they became able to learn other writing skills more easily.

*In terms of time, at the beginning of the school year, this method takes time. But over time, the work is cumulative and greatly **shortens** the time later because the response becomes faster in writing. I have a rule for education: I get tired at the beginning but I reach the goal at the end. Now we have two months left, the students write and read words, and the lesson that needs more classes is shortened into fewer classes, all thanks to drawing. **4**(142-143)*

Teachers thought that using visual arts for beginner students helped them memorize letters easier and recall them later. They made correlations between drawings or images and the desired letter so that students could recognize that letter easily. One common example of these approaches was including a specific letter in a drawing of an object that started with the same letter. The next quotation presents an example where the teacher drew a jug to teach his students the letter "ج", which is "J" in English. He used the handle of the jug to represent the letter "ج" ("J" in English) and teach them the sound and how to write the letter. When he erased the whole drawing except the handle, the letter "ج" ("J" in English) remained (the handle) so students could easily relate the word and the letter to the drawing.

*After accustoming and preparing the hand muscles for writing, I started teaching letters by drawing the shape of the letter directly based on drawing things from reality and daily life. Then I erase part of this drawing to reach the desired goal, which is the letter. The student associates the letter with the name of the thing drawn. For example, in teaching the letter " ج", I draw a jug and explain the handle of the jug, which forms the required letter, and then erase the rest of the image. There remains a drawing that is the shape of the letter " ج" (the jug handle), so it is known that this is the letter "ج" deduced from the drawing of the jug. If I draw it at any time, the name and shape of the letter are immediately known by **recalling** what was drawn previously, and the response and understanding of the student become quick. This association with drawing establishes in their mind the letter so that they respond quickly to writing it. **4**(22-28)*

Subcategory 3b: Student-needs focused experience (Students with difficulties)

Teachers in this subcategory thought that visual arts are essential, choice-based tools, and a vital factor in improving the learning process of students with difficulties. Such students might also have some other strengths and abilities that

teachers needed to discover and put to work for the benefit of the students. One of these strengths was the strong attraction of students to visual arts.

> *It is important that we give them physical and visual things because they have learning difficulties in learning writing, but they also have some other supernatural intelligence and imagination. So, I took benefit of their **potential** abilities to improve their writing skills, and I found it very successful because I used the appropriate way of teaching them the way they love and interact with. **2***(305-310)*

As observed by teachers, students with learning difficulties might have less confidence due to their weaknesses or deficiencies, which required more attention and involvement from teachers. Hence, integrating visual arts in the learning process made students more responsive and cooperative, improved students' confidence in their abilities, and made them more confident that they could learn. Such common practices as incorporating supplemental visual materials could foster and improve students' abilities.

> *A student with learning difficulties needs visual arts as help. Because the student of difficulties has intelligence, she needs to develop skills and encouragement. Since she has difficulties, she is frustrated due to her poor level compared to her peers. Images **encourage** her, give her **self-confidence**, help her imitate and simulate, and overcome her weakness. **15***(49-50)*

Teachers thought that the use of visual arts was a priority and an appropriate way of teaching students with difficulties, based on the needs of the students. In other words, the use of visual arts had to address the exact needs of the students for the impact to be efficient and long-lasting. For students who had difficulties such as poor understanding of specific writing rules or distinguishing similar letters, teachers should offer a personalized approach that targeted the specific difficulty appropriately.

> *it depends on the type of difficulty. I use images to **improve** the understanding of writing rules. Still if a student has difficulty holding the pen and writing the letter correctly, I use intensive drawings to let his hand train and control the pen. It is very important to understand the problem so I can solve it and deal with it. **18***(155-159)*

On the other hand, the students' needs dictated how much and what visual arts teachers had to integrate in the lesson. Once the writing skills improved and students no longer needed so many visuals to stimulate their learning, teachers could decrease the use of visual arts. Additionally, as teachers had experienced, the use of visual arts among students varied from one individual to another. The more the students were struggling, the more visuals teachers involved and the more attention learners received.

> *The use **varies** based on the level of difficulty. Once I feel the skill has improved, I change my approach to normal. Also, students with difficulties are not the same. So, I deal with each difficulty as it needs. **12**(58)*

Teachers in this subcategory believe that students with learning difficulties need more attention and concentration than others in terms of intensive use of visual arts. In other words, this amounts to more time dedicated by teachers to help such students master the writing skill:

> *Students learn quickly, but those who have difficulty learning basic writing skills need more focus. For example, if the student has difficulty distinguishing similar letters, I show her more images to distinguish the "ر" and "ز" forms. This type of student needs a slow progression in education. I teach them skills at intervals. Whenever they master a skill, we move on to the next, and so on. **19**(204-211)*

Teachers were able to observe any learning weaknesses or deficiencies among students and this helped them customize their teaching according to the needs they observed. Students with learning difficulties seemed to be less cooperative during the lesson, and teachers thought that using visual arts was an essential way of boosting their capabilities. The following quotation illustrates how they used supplemental extracurricular materials. Using visual arts activities in lesson instruction was an appropriate learning approach that helped students improve their writing abilities, such as recognizing letters and the differences between similar letters. Also, this approach encouraged students to participate and become more confident.

> *I **intensify** and focus more on the student who suffers from difficulties in writing learning by displaying out-of-the curriculum aids such as images, drawings, and models to improve the process of understanding and comprehension of letters and*

*words and distinguishing between similar letters. These tools help me because images and drawings **encourage** the student with difficulties and give her confidence in herself. Images make her participate and interact more. These things encourage her and make her accept learning and develop in writing. **15**(51-55)*

4.3.2. Dimension 2: Type of Impact

This dimension sheds light on the type of impact that visual arts have on writing. Teachers' conceptions were divided in two groups regarding how they perceived the impact of visual arts on teaching and learning writing skills. The first group of teachers considered that the use of visual arts directly impacted the learning of writing. They thought that both writing and visual arts shared common learning attributes; namely, both involved a preliminary form of drawing, so they mutually impacted students' writing development.

In contrast, the other group thought that visual arts impacted writing only indirectly. They considered that there were other intermediary skills (critical thinking, for example) that mediate the impact of visual arts on writing. More specifically, they did not think that visual arts joined other skills and mutually impacted the development of writing skills. Instead, they claimed that visual arts worked through those skills to impact the learning of writing. Table 4.2 shows the variations in teachers' views of how using visual arts impacted writing learning according to the role it has in learning development.

Table 4.2 Variations in the type of impact of visual arts

Type of impact of visual arts		
Category of description	**Focal aspect**	**Focus**
• Curriculum-focused experience	Curriculum lessons	Indirect impact

• Knowledge-transfer support experience
  o Student perception
  o Writing quality
	Promoting (improve) learning	

• Student-needs focused experience
  o Beginner students
  o Students with learning difficulties
	Student need	Direct impact

Category 1: Curriculum-focused experience

Teachers in this category focused on the curriculum contents provided by the Ministry of Education. Therefore, they did not include any extracurricular materials in teaching writing. Moreover, this view was based on the conception that the relationship between visual arts and writing learning was marginal. Consequently, visual arts did not receive a notable interest in their teaching or lesson preparations. Therefore, they neither prioritized visual arts in their teaching, nor thematized their teaching around it. Likewise, if writing lessons included some visual arts activities, they viewed them either as subsidiary content that could help in learning writing, but not as a critical factor in the learning process; or as a way of avoiding boredom among students.

Furthermore, this concept is based on the belief that visual arts, at best, impacted writing indirectly through other means of learning. Teachers used them as a warm-up introductory discussion about specific topics and acquiring knowledge. This group of teachers thought images could enrich and stimulate discussions, leading to knowledge acquisition and visualization. However, they did not consider that approach as significant as those who relied heavily on visual arts, such as category 2 teachers. Teachers found that visual arts might, in the limited cases in this category, have an indirect impact on learning writing by preparing the atmosphere and helping students concentrate on the writing task. They also used visual arts to sum up knowledge learned during the class and confirm students' understanding. Entertaining and engaging students was another use of visual arts that limited them only to such goals.

> *Drawing and images do not clearly affect learning the writing itself. I use them, images or drawings and sometimes coloring, as a simple matter of entertainment. Sometimes, I use it at the end to review and check their understanding of the lesson or at the entrance to the unit to bring students' minds to the discussion about the lesson topic. **16**(281-284)*

Even though they believed it had a limited impact, teachers thought that one of the visual arts-related activities in the curriculum was composing and commenting on images. Students were usually asked to comment and extract concepts and

ideas from images, but this was another example of the indirect impact. Teachers thought that these activities could help students enrich composition skills and prepare them for a writing activity.

> *They acquire the skill of composition in the second and third grades. They can express and comment on an image by writing a sentence or more. I think images help in writing composition.* **16***(99-110)*

Since teachers adhered to the curriculum instructions and did not include any extracurricular materials, they would always stick to the visual arts activities available in the curriculum. Writing composition was an activity where drawing and images could provide some indirect assistance in preparation for writing. Students would think about the topic and arrange the ideas based on the images provided in the textbook. However, teachers always left it to students' preferences whether they wanted to use this helping tool or not. Whenever visual arts were included as a required part of the lesson, teachers used them sparingly; otherwise, they would not receive any attention from teachers. Teachers confirmed this view by using images and other visual means in very limited cases. They considered the visual arts effective just for some activities, yet not for all curriculum matters.

> *In the upper levels, I feel that visual arts are* **not important** *because most of the lessons do not need images and drawing, and they are not included in the curriculum. Some lessons contain writing activities that include drawing and images. I ask the students to complete the writing activity, but I do not force them to use drawing or images and leave that to their desire. Some students use images to organize their thoughts before writing, and some do not.* **7***(166-167)*

Teachers found that images provided indirect support to students' learning. This kind of support was not necessary for all students. Students had different levels of use, ranging from those interested in using images, to those who were not interested in including images in writing tasks. In all cases, teachers limited the use of visual arts to those included in the curriculum and did not provide any supplemental contents (see **6***(62-70)* p.124).

Subcategory 2a: Knowledge-transfer support experience (Student perception)

Teachers in subcategory 2a emphasized the transfer of knowledge to students. They used visual arts as a facilitator that could assist in passing knowledge down to students. However, like those in category 1, they also thought that the impact of visual arts was mediated by other means of acquiring knowledge. Teachers used visual arts to improve students' perception and understanding of writing lessons. They noticed a positive impact on the learning of writing if visual arts were included in teaching. However, they did not think that there could be a direct relationship between visual arts and writing learning. In fact, they found that visual arts improved the classroom ambience by holding students' attention, which made them ready to receive knowledge and understand learning materials. They also went further than the first group by viewing visual arts as tools that stimulated students to visualize and memorize concepts, making it easier to recall them later. Thus, the indirect impact of visual arts on writing learning revolved around non-writing-related factors, such as grabbing attention, generating joy, facilitating perception, and visualizing knowledge. Such factors could make students ready and excited to learn writing, especially at the beginning of the lesson. Additionally, teachers thought that visual arts benefited students and helped teachers, as well, in delivering information to the students.

> *It helps in their **attention** to the lesson, draws their attention, and helps them accommodate and understand the concepts and not forget them. It helps me **communicate** what I want to communicate, so it becomes fixed in the students' minds. For example, if I present or express an image or a drawing, they will remember that and understand more using images or drawings. Or, for example, if I tell them a story and explain it to them through drawings, it helps in their understanding and comprehension of the lesson. **20**(32-43)*

Teachers found that images and visuals, in most cases, could carry much more knowledge than normal words. By default, an image provided more information than simple words and students were able to acquire new knowledge anchored in the visual elements. Teachers could initiate meaningful conversations around an image and elicit more complex answers that could later be translated into writing. This approach conveyed the required knowledge in an interesting and

engaging manner. This could save time for both teachers and students and make the learning process more efficient.

> *Images are beneficial for clarification and explanation. Using images during the explanation **anchors** the information and **clarifies** it to the students more than just abstract words. I use images to simplify and communicate information during the teaching process. Confirming information makes them master and benefits from them in a quick and fun way. [...] By using some images, we bring the idea closer to students.* **12***(42–43)*

Teachers used drawings and images to deliver ideas in an interesting and interactive way. As they explained, the process was easy and the students were very responsive to the discussion. This approach developed students' thinking and encouraged them to be part of the class discussion. Additionally, the information discussed had long-lasting effects for students' memory, which was an important advantage because they could retrieve information from memory during the writing process. In the following example, the lesson topic was "the environment." Without aid from visual arts, it was obvious that students might not have enough knowledge of the topic to have a meaningful conversation with their teacher. Also, without visual arts, the teacher was not able to deliver clear and comprehensive knowledge only in abstract words, since students might not understand the teacher's point. However, with the help of images and drawings, the teacher initiated a relevant discussion, stimulating students' thinking, and encouraging them to share their thoughts and ideas. Also, students were able to understand the meanings and acquire significant knowledge about the topic from images. The information acquired would later be retrieved in writing tasks.

> *For example, I had a writing lesson about the environment, and I used some images and drawings to illustrate the idea before they started writing. The students **interacted** with me perfectly through the images. Their participation was rich, and most of them participated. I found the experience very interesting because it allows them to think and brainstorm, even for the below-average students. The students loved it. It helped me easily deliver much information that they will keep in their minds for a more extended time since they related the information to the images.* **15***(241-246)*

141

Teachers in this category thought that images and drawings assisted them in transferring and communicating knowledge to students. Images also facilitated receiving, understanding and assimilation of information among students. Hence, teachers thought that the knowledge acquired through images and drawings served to store information in the student's mind that could be accessed any time in the future. Information retrieval helps students develop and learn writing.

> *Visual arts help the student to **understand** and **assimilate** information. Thus, he has a stock of knowledge that is used later in discussion and analysis and the practice of writing because the student without a stock of knowledge will not be able to write about a specific topic. **18***(65–68)*

Therefore, teachers in this subcategory considered that visual arts only indirectly impacted the learning of writing, yet in a more powerful way than the teachers in the first category. While those teachers limited their use of visual arts to what the textbook provided, namely, to certain activities and specific students, the teachers in subcategory 2a viewed the visual arts as a vital means to develop a positive attitude, good insight, and enhanced perception that would finally lead to improved writing learning.

Subcategory 2b: Knowledge-transfer support experience (Writing quality)
Similar to subcategory 2a, teachers in this subcategory thought that visual arts have an indirect impact on the learning of writing. This view is also based on the conception that visual arts can improve the development of some other skills, which may positively impact writing skills afterwards. When students are exposed to visuals and images, these can stimulate students' thinking. They start imagining scenarios in their minds that represent the core material for writing and can enrich the content. This way, they have a chance to prepare the ideas, sequence the events, and recall knowledge mentally before they put them down in writing. Another type of reasoning behind this idea is that writing is always preceded by verbal composition. Thus, students verbally compose sentences and phrases before they write them down. Although visuals have no direct impact on writing itself, they still can improve some other crucial skills, such as thinking and verbal composition, that in turn, impact writing quality.

*for example, I teach them a composition lesson about "the generosity of morals," and I offer them some images about a story of someone who provided help to an elderly person crossing the road. The students try to **think** and give me a set of values. Then, I give them an uncolored image and ask them to color it. In the end, the students try to write some sentences about the story they colored. This exercise helps the students to think and visualize the events through the image and form and arrange sequence sentences, which helps in expression and writing composition since they write useful words that form useful and integrated sentences with some individual differences. **15**(231-234)*

Speaking about story writing, teachers thought that showing images to students before or during the writing composition helped students improve their writing in different ways. First, images helped stimulate their thinking and imagination by recalling and relating images to their background knowledge. Consequently, students were able to prepare the story writing by arranging ideas and the sequence of events, making their writing coherent. Also, student writings were rich in vocabulary and the number of complete sentences.

*If I look at the side of the composition and writing the story, I need a number of images that **stimulate** students with which the image represents. The composition continues with it, so the images must be presented to help students recall and sequence ideas and produce rich and meaningful sentences. **4**(122-123)*

Teachers noticed a notable difference between students' writings if they were exposed to visual arts, compared to situations when they were not, in terms of richness of ideas and contents. They linked this difference to the chance that images could offer students to think, express, and prepare for writing. However, without the help of images, students might not be able to stimulate their thinking and expression. Images always provided materials for thinking and generating ideas that were translated into writing composition:

*The expression without an image is **less**, fewer ideas and fewer words, the student may be incapacitated and never write because the idea may not reach him. For example, when I ask him to talk about the spring season, he can write a sentence or two, but if I show him a landscape or an image of the spring season, he starts talking about roses, trees, and birds, then he starts writing about every part of the image. Also, his perception expands because he expresses what is in the image. Thus, I have nurtured his thoughts through images. **9**(16-21)*

Although teachers thought that visual arts supported the quality of writing, they started with the premise that students must have already learned the basics of writing and know how to make sentences. In other words, they considered that visuals were effective in writing some simple sentences and useful in improving writing. Thus, the indirect impact of visual arts on writing pertains to enhancing the quality of the writing that is produced, making it more informative and coherent. Students learn how to take advantage of visuals to improve their writing. Teachers observed that students' writing developed a more elegant structure, better expression of ideas, and better flow of thinking.

> *The students have already learned writing basics, but I try to **improve** their writing by some skills such as thinking and generating ideas mentally through images and drawings. For example, they use the visual arts to structure their writing by arranging sentences and making them richer and more consistent. **4**(66-69)*

In the following approach to a story-telling task, the teacher used images to stimulate the student's interest and think about the story. First, the teacher encouraged students to come up with ideas from their imagination. He started by showing them some images of the story scenes and then asked them to discuss the potential events with their colleagues. The teacher went through different steps to help students construct their writing around those ideas. After that, he asked students to write the stories individually, and then exchange their stories with their fellow students to learn from the different perspectives. After reading other stories, students had a chance to improve and polish their own stories in light of what they had just read.

> *One of the approaches I used to teach writing using images was the written communication approach. For example, in the story writing exercise, I show the students a number of images that represent scenes from the story. Then I asked each student to discuss the story events with his colleague based on my images. Next, I ask them to write the story individually. After they finish, I ask each one to exchange his story with his colleague and to read his colleague's story. Lastly, I ask them to review their stories again for improvements. **14**(92-95)*

Subcategory 3a: Student-needs focused experience (Beginner students)

As defined earlier, the view in this subcategory is built on the students' learning needs. Teachers thought that the basics of writing, such as letter shaping, share

common attributes with drawing skills, such as shaping lines, curves and circles. Skills like holding and controlling the pen, training hand muscles, and letter shaping are just examples of common skills between drawing and writing basics. Thus, the impact in this subcategory is because of such commonalities. Teachers adopted this approach in teaching writing basics for beginners based on the relationship between writing and drawing. They even considered such an approach to be the best way to teach basics. They thought that the best time to implement visual arts in writing was when students start learning letters. They viewed such practice to be very successful and effective. Therefore, this subcategory is focused on early stages of development when students are prone to see writing as another type of drawing.

> *Writing is a drawing, and the letter is as if it was part of a specific drawing. When I teach the child to write the letter, it is as if he is drawing parts of a drawing and trying to complete a certain drawing.* **1***(263 - 266)*

Teaching writing basics to beginner students goes through different stages, which have direct connections to visual arts. First, teachers focused on teaching students how to hold the pen. Then, they trained their hand muscles by practicing some drawings and shapes. After that, they started shaping some letters by writing over dots. During this process, teachers tried to connect the letter to some specific drawing or image to make it easier to remember.

> *at the beginning of teaching writing, I start teaching them how to hold the pen because holding the pen impacts the correct writing. In the second week, I start with some drawings to practice their hand muscles and get them used to the controlled movements. After they mastered this, I teach them the letters by explaining how to pronounce and write them. Initially, they write over dots and then without the dots. I also show them an image of an object that starts with the letter to link it in their minds.* **17***(8-10)*

The association of writing with drawing can alleviate the fear of the unknown when students go to school for the first time. Such tasks put each student at ease during stressful situations. Teachers counted on this strategy to engage students in learning the basics of writing skills. They encouraged students to replace random drawings with a more organized, logical sequence of drawings.

*I link entertainment with education, so the student draws the letter having fun. I keep using this way to teach them the letters by including images and drawings, so they find it fun, which significantly impacts their learning. **10**(135-137)*

Moreover, visualizing the lesson help them link words and images in their mind. Teachers reported that this would have a long-lasting effect, since students learn to put together images and their meanings through writing. Learning to shape letters and numbers may be confusing and overwhelming without visuals. Therefore, these teachers advocated facilitating learning through images, coloring and drawings, as much as possible.

*It has such a significant impact. If I give him the letter, the student feels not excited. But if I present it in the form of drawings and the form of colors, then he enjoys it. This has the effect of remembering the letter and keeping it in his mind. I think using these teaching aids is like engraving on stone. **17**(28-29)*

The writing curriculum for the first grade is rich with visual art activities. Still, teachers in this subcategory added a lot of extracurricular visual content to their teaching materials. Their approach reflected their conception in the advantages of visual arts. They did everything to catch students' attention by using lovely and attractive materials, as well as physical and decorative objects.

*I use some **extra** materials for teaching my students the basics. So I bring additional auxiliary cards, physical letters, and drawings. Sometimes I use words written in beautiful, decorated, and colored handwriting for all the words of the letter. I ask my students to color the letter. **10**(39-42)*

Teachers viewed the impact of visual arts on writing learning as very important and effective at this age, because the next phases of learning will build upon the knowledge acquired in the first grade. When the foundation is solid, what is built on next will have the chance to last longer. In other words, preparing students efficiently is very beneficial for them in the years to come.

Subcategory 3b: Student-needs focused experience (Students with difficulties)

Similar to subcategory 3a, teachers in this subcategory held a perspective that rendered the direct impact of visual arts on learning writing skills. They focused on students with difficulties, who have some issues in learning the basics of

writing. Each student is unique; therefore, these learning difficulties may differ greatly from one individual to another. Teachers applied an individualized approach that would fit each student's needs and learning style and integrated as many visuals as possible. They intensified the use of visual arts whenever necessary, because they thought that such difficulties could be overcome when using visual arts in teaching the basics of writing. Due to the common ground of skills shared by writing and drawing, teachers employed one to develop the other. Students found it easier to relate to images and their learning improved over time.

> *I use visual arts in writing with students with weak abilities to link the image with what they have learned, as it helps in **improving** their level and writing skills. If the student's level becomes too low, his education is individualized. When I tell them to write, this student does not write, but when I request him specifically, he writes. He needs **individual** education because he does not respond to group instructions. Thus, I give him methods on his own other than what I present to the students in the class. For example, I had a student in the third grade, and these methods helped him with dictation. If he did not know a letter, I would intensify the means that I use, such as images, or bring an object or drawings for him because this student needs an individual education, so I deal with him alone. **12**(114-127)*

Teachers' conception in this subcategory resembles teachers' views in subcategory 3a, but the recipients of learning are different in these subcategories. While subcategory 3a focused on first-grade students, subcategory 3b concerns students who have learning difficulties in writing basics. They can be either first-graders or older primary-school students who still struggle with writing. Teachers used visual arts as therapy with these children to overcome the difficulties.

> *for students with difficulties, I explain and clarify certain rules but with an explanation using drawing until she reaches a good level of understanding. **15**(258-259)*

Students with learning difficulties may struggle with writing position, locating the letter correctly on the line, holding the pen, distinguishing between similar letters, or recalling the letters. One common example is when the student cannot distinguish similar letters such as (ض،ص – ق – ف،خ – ج،ح،خ – ع،غ – س،ش – ر،ز – د،ذ

ظ،ط). Teachers trusted the visual arts as the best way to overcome such challenges:

> *I have many examples of learning difficulties that I have faced. For example, the difficulty in recognizing the letter, the difficulty in distinguishing similar letters, the problem of writing on the line, not knowing the letters that are written above the line, and the letters that are written below the line. Also, some of them do not hold the pen correctly, and therefore their writing is unorganized. 1(190-200)*

A strategy that teachers capitalized on in this case was involving students' senses to facilitate learning. This method depends on making students coordinate their senses during learning. It helps teachers enrich the educational process and increase students' understanding of the material. In the following example, the teacher used the multisensory strategy to write the letter using a distinctive color and an image, while the student was watching. Then, the teacher and the student read the letter together. After that, the student traced the letter by tapping his finger, saying the letter's name at the same time. The teacher repeated the previous step until the student mastered it. Then, the student wrote the letter down three times or more, copying from the board on a sheet of paper, pronouncing the letter's name while writing. Eventually, the student learned to write and name the letter simultaneously, without assistance. Teachers stressed the direct impact of visual arts on learning writing many times, but this example offers the most detailed explanation.

> *For example, to teach writing the letter "س", First, I write a word of an image that starts with the letter "س" on the board, using a distinctive color while the student is watching. Second, the student and I read together the letter "س" more than once. Third, the student traces the letter "س" with his finger while uttering the letter simultaneously. Fourth, I repeat the previous step more than once. Fifth, the student writes the letter "س" three times, quoting from the board on a sheet of paper, while pronouncing the letter while writing. Finally, the student writes the letter "س" and names it simultaneously without assistance. 2(318 – 325)*

4.3.3. Dimension 3: Students' learning level

The third dimension, the students' learning level, looks at the student's level of knowledge about writing learning. The students involved in the above categories were at different stages of learning writing. Each category focused on specific

148

students in terms of their developmental stage in learning writing. Some students were in early grades, others were more advanced; some had learning difficulties, while others were high achievers. To organize teachers' perceptions according to students' learning stages, teacher experiences are coupled in two different orientations of learning writing. On the one hand, the beginner students are at the introductory level in learning writing; namely, they are still learning the basics of writing. This level includes students who learn the basic writing skills in the first grade, and the students with learning difficulties, regardless of their age or grade level. On the other hand, the so-called 'post-beginner' students have already learned the basics of writing and moved on to higher levels. Table 4.3 shows the variations in the students' stages of learning regarding using visual arts in learning writing.

Table 4.3 Variations in the students' learning level

Students' learning level		
Category of description	**Focal aspect**	**Focus**
• Curriculum-focused experience	Textbook content	Post-beginner students

• Knowledge-transfer support experience
   o Student perception
   o Writing quality
	Effective learning	

• Student-needs focused experience
   o Beginner students
   o Students with learning difficulties
	Student level	Introductory students

Category 1: Curriculum-focused experience

Teachers in the curriculum-focused category followed the textbook contents exclusively. They thought that students in third grade and upwards (age 9 and up) are 'post-beginners' and they have already passed the crucial period when they needed visual arts for support in writing instructions. Based on students' learning level in this category, the teachers thought that the visual arts did not play an important role in learning writing. Thus, these teachers did not give visual arts activities very much attention whenever the curriculum integrated them. They left

such activities to students' choice, considering that students who loved images would use them voluntarily, while others would not. They did not hinder the use of visual arts, either, but let the students decide whether they wanted to use them or not in the learning process. They viewed such activities as marginal or additional activities, included in the curriculum but not mandatory and not necessary for the rounded development of writing skills. Teachers kept their focus on completing the main content of the lesson, which proved to be more important to them than any use of visuals.

> *In the third grade, the drawings and images do not make much of an impact on the writing.* **5***(23)*

> *I rely on images in the first grade and cannot dispense with the visual arts. But in the second and third grades, its dependence is **less**, not much. […] my dependence on images is very **little**, and this is due to the preparation of the curriculum, as the curriculum itself does not consist of a lot of images.***7***(130-138)*

Common to this category was the way the teachers shifted from textbooks with more explicit images in the first grade to materials that had few, simple and scarce images in the third grade. They supported the idea that textbooks got it right when images were gradually removed, since visual arts were no longer as useful as in the first grade.

> *my dependence on images is very **little**, and this is due to the preparation of the curriculum, as the curriculum itself does not consist of a lot of images. […] I am talking about the third and fourth grades They have **learned** to write, as they do not need drawing and images.* **7***(205-209)*

The teachers thought that following the curriculum contents provided by the Ministry of Education was the appropriate way of teaching writing. Additionally, they thought that post-beginner students had already gained and practiced the basic skills that visual arts supported in the early stages of their learning. The eagerness to follow the curriculum and the conception that post-beginners did not need visuals to learn writing explains why these teachers chose not to include extracurricular visual arts activities.

*I apply what is present in the curriculum and the applications it proposes. In the first grade, they are the ones who rely on the visual arts at this stage. But in the third grade, their dependence on images is **little**. 8(17-18)*

Teachers frequently referred to the limited time available for covering the main content in the curriculum, which meant less flexibility and time for other activities. Whenever visual arts were used, teachers considered them an inconvenience, since they limited the use of other activities available in the curriculum. Consequently, whenever possible, they left visuals to the choice of interested students. They covered such activities only if they had time and only for the sake of interested students. Yet, the point of using visual arts was not for learning, but to let students enjoy themselves. In other cases, teachers considered these activities as marginally beneficial, since students had already passed the need for such activities.

In third and fourth grades and beyond, I use images and drawings in the story. Sometimes I show them an image on the data show device and ask them to write a story about it. For example, this image in front of you took place in the woods, so write a story about it. If I have a free class or want to have language communication, I give them an image, and they start expressing it. 5(115-119)

In the second and third grades, if an expression or sentence is requested and we have time, I display the images of the book and ask them what do you expect they talk about? Sometimes there is an interaction. 16(90-91)

Subcategory 2a: Knowledge-transfer support experience (Student perception)

In this subcategory, teachers focused their attention on the student perception. They were curious about the effective way to transfer knowledge to students. They found that using visual arts could convey knowledge to students from specific learning levels. One specific level consisted of post-beginner students (age 9 and up), who had already learned the basics of writing. Students at this stage had already learned the basics of writing and become ready for more advanced writing skills, in which perception was the preparation phase before writing. Solid background knowledge and good understanding of the writing rules were required for a student to write a meaningful and informative text. Teachers thought that delivering such information and knowledge to students as a

preparation for writing could be effectively conveyed using visual arts. Teachers thought that post-beginner students' understanding and perception would improve exponentially once they integrated visual arts in teaching writing. Both teachers' effort to convey information and students' internalization of it could be significantly reduced by using visual arts in writing instruction. In the view of teachers in this subcategory, if knowledge can be represented visually, it is easier for students to learn, acquire, and recall it later. This technique made teaching more effective, simplified the process of knowledge transfer, and increased the perceptive abilities of students, as well.

> *The use of images or visual arts in learning is crucial, especially in the initial stages of writing. For the upper grades, I used it to **support** the information, clarify and develop understanding and awareness, and communicate the idea in the student's mind as well.* **12***(32-33)*

> *If I want to **deliver** information to my students, I use images and drawings because the information is focused and cannot be forgotten. I feel it makes it easier for students to get information.* **19***(279-280)*

Teachers thought that visual arts were a suitable starting point for writing lessons, so they found appropriate techniques that would work for post-beginner students. They used visual arts to grab students' attention and make them more excited and prepared for the lesson. Also, they tried to stimulate students' curiosity and motivation by showing some images and involving drawings in learning. Teachers also used different images at the end of the lesson to assess the students' understanding. They thought such an approach stimulated and encouraged students to participate and make the class more interactive and collaborative compared to the traditional scenario, where the teacher asks questions and only one student answers.

> *I think visual arts integration with writing is **useful** in the introductory stage of the lesson to attract students' attention and stimulation. At the end of the lesson, I can benefit by assessing the student's level of understanding. I display images at the beginning of the lesson, and at the end of the lesson, I show other images and ask the students to express what they understood from the lesson. I find the students in third and fourth grade **participate more** than if I did not display*

images. I have also made the information memorizable and understandable to the students. This is better than asking a question, and one student answers. 9(66-71)

Moreover, teachers reported that visual arts instilled in students critical thinking and other cognitive skills. Students developed advanced mental skills, such as deep thinking, analysis, extraction and deduction of ideas. They built arguments around specific visual scenes and ended up with advanced ideas and rich language.

*In integrating the visual arts in writing, the student **acquires** the skill of critical thinking and **develops** his mental abilities and level of perception in extraction and deduction, especially for students of upper grades, also in the third grade, because they link the image with what they previously learned and their experiences and restore their thinking skills. 10(105-106)*

*The use of visual arts certainly has a **significant** effect on upper-grade students. It increases their enthusiasm for education more, charge their thinking and analyzing which reflect on their understanding and good writing. 20(272-277)*

To deliver some complicated concepts for post-beginner students, teachers found that images and visuals could help deliver much more information in a shorter period than any normal verbal explanation would do. It was obvious that images could send a lot of messages simultaneously and teachers made sure to bring information-rich pictures, so that students could have food for thought outside the classroom, as well. They wanted to ensure that learning would go beyond the classroom doors and stay with students for a long time. This purpose may not be suitable for some younger students, but teachers reported it was fruitful for post-beginner students. As they stated, this approach could develop post-beginner students' critical thinking and deduction and prepare them for similar situations in the future.

*Of course, the use **varies** according to the purpose and the student's level. Differs in magnitude and focus by displaying images and drawings. For example, with the first grade, use images to learn writing and basic skills. As for the fourth grade and above, the usage is different, as the focus is on displaying images and drawings to communicate complex ideas that need clarification. 11(118–121)*

In the following approach, the teacher used visual arts to deliver complex information about inventions and scientists. He chose to enrich their information

first by delivering some information to them and encouraging them to discuss the invention and its benefits to humanity. When he thought they were prepared to move on to the next task, he allowed them to write down their thoughts individually.

> *In the linguistic communication unit in the sixth grade, for example, I had a lesson on the inventions of scientists. The subject needed clarification through drawings and images, such as images of scientists and some drawings of their inventions. Images and drawings helped enrich the way of discussion among the students when I brought them an image of a scientist and some images of his invention. And then, we start the discussion on the subject of the invention, how the invention works, and the benefits of the invention. After the discussion is finished, I ask some students to come out in front of their colleagues and talk about the topic and what they have gained from the previous discussion. This method prepares them very nicely when writing.* **14***(187-190)*

Subcategory 2b: Knowledge-transfer support experience (Writing quality)

This subcategory viewed visual arts as an assisting tool to produce improved written pieces. Post-beginner students can use visual arts to recall knowledge, arrange ideas, and produce informative and qualitative text. Teachers thought that students cannot achieve this goal directly by using visual arts because of the indirect relationship between writing and visual arts (just an assisting tool). However, post-beginner students can benefit from visual arts, since they stimulate thinking and analyzing, deducing ideas, and sequencing and arranging verbal compositions. Post-beginner students were already able to write and compose text at this stage, yet teachers found that visual arts could polish their writing skills.

> *When I show them images, they **remember** more and **better think and organize** oral expressions. Oral expression is reflected in writing later on. Images **helped** students arrange ideas and events, and also they helped in deducting some information from images. So, when they start writing, they have all the knowledge they need.* **13***(90-98)*

> *The integration of visual arts helps by **developing** the way the student tells the story and the sequence of the story, the elements of the story, and gives them the ability to express. It helps in the expression and arrangement of ideas and helps enrich the student's written language.* **15***(101-104)*

Teachers noticed that the integration of visual arts led to other improvements, as well, such as enhanced vocabulary and use of appropriate words, correct

sentence structures, and correct punctuation marks. Teachers reported that visual arts helped post-beginner students achieve such skills and consequently, they improved students' writing. The following example illustrated the approach followed by the teacher to improve his students' writings. The images worked as a knowledge base for students every time they wanted to improve the quality of writing based on the teacher's remarks.

> *The images are **helpful** for the upper grades. For example, I show students an image, and I ask each student to express the image, so the student writes sentences, arranges ideas, and extracts words, which differ from student to student, so each student looks at the image from a specific perspective that differs from the other student. I focus more on the student's expression of written words, sentences, ideas, language integrity, and punctuation marks in the sentences. For example, did the student put the question mark in the interrogative sentence or forget it? We start by alerting students gradually to punctuation and the order of ideas. 9(14-15)*

Because such skills required a specific learning level, this technique was not applicable to the early stages of developing writing skills. Using visual arts to improve writing quality is more suitable for students who have already learned the basic skills and become more familiar with the writing context. Visual arts in such contexts did not impact the quality of writing directly. They rather motivated thinking and sequencing, arranging ideas and events, that finally led to an improved and enjoyable writing task.

> *Each student is according to their class. I do not come up with images that require deep thinking, analysis and imagination for first graders, but these images are appropriate for upper-graders. Each image must be suitable for the student's age and grade to benefit and enjoy it. I do not come up with an appropriate image for a sixth grade and present it to a first grade, or vice versa. Therefore, attention should be paid to the type and level of visual arts used for each age and grade level to improve interaction and outcomes. 13(247-254)*

Subcategory 3a: Student-needs focused experience (Beginner students)
The conception that teachers shared in this subcategory was that students' needs should be addressed based on their learning level. Teachers thought that visual arts played a significant role in teaching writing to first graders. These students are still learning the basics of writing. They are in the first grade of primary school

(namely, age 7), where students need to learn different basic skills, such as holding the pen, training hand muscles, and correct writing position. Teachers took advantage of students' natural attraction to visual arts to teach writing basics. Students at this level sometimes could not distinguish between drawings and letters. Writing and drawing share similar forms, such as curves, lines, and circles, so they mutually impact each other. Using visual arts in learning writing could motivate and enhance their writing skills, since drawing and writing can be, to some extent, interchangeable in the first stages. (see *17(4-6)* p.131).

> *The most successful experiences are drawing letters and beginning to learn writing for beginners in the first grade, so the drawings **help** form and learn to draw the letter and distinguish between them. **1***(250-261)*

First-graders were most attracted to visual arts, which encouraged teachers to utilize visual arts to enhance and improve the learning process. Such support could provide the means to motivate children for learning and make the learning process a lovely and enjoyable activity. This is an important factor in appeasing anxiety and stress for beginner students struggling with the new school environment (see *1(90-101)* p.119).

From the point of view of students' needs, the learning level of the first-grade students benefited greatly from the support of visual arts in learning writing skills. The teachers who considered visual arts integration beneficial frequently added extracurricular visual materials to support the learning process. They took advantage of children's attraction to colors and drawings to make classes more engaging for students' development. They also noticed that students were more receptive to images when connecting letters to form a word, so they went along with whatever they observed to be beneficial for students. Students' behavior was a good indicator of what they needed and teachers who were sensitive enough to those hints would guide their visual choices accordingly.

> *From my experience, it is **essential** for the first grade. I use some images out-of-the-textbook to train them to write some words and put an image to write the word under it, they write it. But if I do not give them an image and tell them to write the word "school", not all of them respond easily because the student associates the*

*image with the word. There are individual differences between students, of course. Students love images and colors, and they interact better if I include them in my teaching. **17***(97-112)*

At a later stage of learning writing for beginner students, teachers utilized linking letters to images to provide a way for students to memorize them. This approach was effective, especially for similar letters which students often confused. Because of their short experience in learning and practicing writing basics, students faced the challenge of memorizing language letters. Utilizing images could help students remember letters easily, as the following teacher explained:

> *The images and drawings **helped** me a lot in students memorizing and mastering letters such as the letter "ت""Ta" by linking it with images and drawings. This is in the first grade of primary school, so it helps them with the simulation and linking. I feel that drawing and images are important and indispensable, especially with letters. For me, there are no unsuccessful experiences of using drawing and images. **15***(310 - 313)*

Teachers in this subcategory thought that visual arts were an inevitable technique for beginner students. However, the curriculum did not seem to provide enough for what they and their students needed, so they went far beyond that. They searched and integrated visuals that appealed to students' interest and motivation, and matched their learning style and preferences.

> *I believe it is **necessary**. I applied it for the first-grade students because I found it helpful in the first semester as a start. I always use it and bring some tools out-of-the curriculum because not everything is in the curriculum. The method helped them and reached them to a specific level of abilities. **2***(58-59)*

Subcategory 3b: Student-needs focused experience (Students with difficulties)

This subcategory consists of teachers using visual arts in teaching writing for students with difficulties in writing basics, mostly in second and third grades (age 8 and 9), and, in some cases, beyond. Teachers in this subcategory focused on the needs of students, paying more attention to their behavior and focusing more on their progress. Moving on to the next grade while still having writing difficulties is not hindered by such issues. Students still get the opportunity to enjoy the next stages of learning, even though they are a little behind in writing. The difficulties

are not considered disabilities, since they are more or less the result of external factors. For example, moving from one country to another or changing the language of instruction could hinder the developmental stage of learning writing. Even local changes, such as moving from a public to a private school, with a fast pace of learning, could generate such difficulties. In other cases, students could have received deficient learning instruction before, leading to some writing difficulties. Teachers in this subcategory treated this kind of student in the same way that they treated beginner students who had not mastered the basics of writing. In some cases, teachers even intensified the use of visual arts (drawing and images) to approximate the concepts and the ideas to the students. Visual arts played a role in teaching students with difficulties, whether related to understanding or writing skills. In the following example, the teacher went through an approach that helped the student to overcome his weakness in writing skills, using different types of drawing.

> *I use visual arts with a weak student in writing to **strengthen** his writing. I have a student who has a writing difficulty in the fourth (or third) grade. I treat him as being less than his age and learning level. I use illustrations with him to introduce him to writing. For example, I draw a letter "ب" for him and associate it with a drawing from reality, or I draw it for him as a hollowed-out letter, then ask him to color it red, green, or yellow. Then he begins to paint and tries to write to learn the letter, so I have used drawing to raise his level and get him to love writing. After that, I show him images of the letter in its final form, and he writes on it with a pen. This helps me a lot, so instead of teaching the student and raising the level of writing within two months, he may have reached full mastery of the task within a month. **9** (94-95)*

This subcategory focused on such students and how visual arts could improve and promote learning to bring them to the appropriate level by applying an intensive learning approach. Not all students had the same levels of difficulty. Consequently, not all of them reached the same level of improvement simultaneously. For some students, it could take longer than others, and teachers assisted them individually, according to their needs. However, teachers found that visual arts were the appropriate support for students with difficulties to fill in the gaps of their missing knowledge and strengthen their weaknesses in learning the basics of writing (see *12(58)* p.134).

Each difficulty is different, and I need to deal with them appropriately. For example, I had a student who had learning difficulty; she was slow to understand. I facilitated her, and I showed her the image with the word and let her repeat its parts as letters. I used to teach her the letters in the second grade because she had a learning difficulty, and she did not master the learning of letters in the first grade. In the beginning, the student was excited when I showed her images. She got better than before. For example, she can express the image and associate images with letters. 19(212-227)

Teachers tended to use intensive extracurricular visual arts materials with this type of student. They adjusted their teaching methods and strategies according to the observed needs and involved different visuals to ignite their interest and boost their progress. Applying a specific and intensive learning approach to students with difficulties improved writing skills and made them more confident.

*I had a student in the third grade of primary school who was weak in reading and writing. I resorted to the way of drawing and images. The student mastered 50% or more, meaning the percentage that makes him **master** basic skills that help him succeed - the minimum skills. I resorted to some visual tools that were not found in the curriculum. 1(205-208)*

Distinguishing similar letters is another common skill that is a challenge for students with learning difficulties. The Arabic language has 28 letters, and there are about eight pairs of similar letters such as (ق،ف – خ،ح،ج – غ،ع – ش،س – ز،ر – ذ،د ظ،ط – ض،ص –). It is a common challenge for students at the introductory level to distinguish between these letters. Another challenge in Arabic letters is that some letters include dots in different positions (e.g., ع،غ – ج،ح،خ). Students normally get confused between them, especially when learning letters. Also, most Arabic letters have different forms based on their position in the word (beginning, middle, end). For example, the letter "ع" has three different forms based on its position: at the beginning of the word, "عـ", at the middle of the word, "ـعـ", and at the end of the word "ـع". Therefore, teachers found that images could provide good assistance by linking each letter with a specific image that helped the student to remember and distinguish it.

*The student with learning difficulties does not sometimes respond to me when I say and explain verbally to him. But when I show him drawings and images, he **responds** and **interacts** better. Therefore, the intensive use of graphics is greatly*

beneficial to him. He understands and responds better, and focuses more on what I explain. **18***(160-165)*

4.4. Presentation of the outcome space

The outcome space represents the set of resulting categories and the relationships among them. It presents the phenomenon under investigation by comparing and distinguishing among different categories of description. It also emphasizes the similarities and differences between particular aspects of the categories. To elaborate on the outcome space, three rounds of analysis are presented here, each focusing on a specific aspect.

The analytical framework has already been presented in this chapter, illustrating different dimensions of the phenomenon for each category. However, this is briefly reiterated here to make the outcome space more obvious. The analytical framework includes the referential and structural aspects, further divided into internal and external horizons. In the internal horizon, the use of visual arts refers to the attributes presented by the participants. In contrast, the external horizon determined the use of visual arts from its context. Table 4.4 brings all analytical aspects together to distinguish each category and understand the relationships between them, focusing on the referential and structural aspects.

Table 4.4 Relationship between categories (focus on referential and structural aspects)

Category	*Referential aspect*	*Internal horizon*	*External horizon*
1. Curriculum-focused experience	Content in school textbook	Teachers adhere to the content and instruction of the textbook	Certain cases and situations
2. Knowledge-transfer support experience a.	Visual art integration is an approach that makes instructions more effective	Students' perception is improved by visual arts-approach	Specific teachers
b.	Using visual arts improves knowledge employment	Students writing quality develops by visual arts integration	Specific students who can employ knowledge
3. Student-needs focused experience a.	Using visual art is a significant way of teaching	Learning skills can lead to learning writing basics	Students in the first grade

Category	Referential aspect	Internal horizon	External horizon
b.	Using visual art is a way of learning promotion	Boost to overcome students' weaknesses	Students with learning difficulties

The whole image of the outcome space becomes clear and complete when these categories of description are entirely integrated into the analytical framework. For the external horizon, which is a structural component, teachers discussed the role of visual arts in mastering writing skills in different ways, separate from the context. Visual arts integration in learning instruction sustains different ranges regarding certain cases and certain people. For instance, when comparing different categories, it is obvious that the external horizon moves from "certain cases" (category 1), where visual arts were only used in specific situations (based on the curriculum) to "students with learning difficulties" (category 3b), where visual arts were viewed as a necessary means of teaching to overcome students' difficulties. Similarly, the external horizon narrows down from "specific teachers" and "specific students who acquire knowledge" (subcategories 2a and b respectively) that regarded visual arts as an important way to promote writing, to a more specific "early grade students" (subcategory 3a), where teachers' conceptions were focused on using visual arts for young students in the first stage of learning writing. This variety of teachers' understanding demonstrated how visual arts were viewed and applied differently based on different conceptions held and experienced by teachers.

Moving attention forward to the referential aspect of the categories of description, the associated nature with the external horizon is obvious. Visual arts certainly involve specific and special attributes to be distinguished and determined from their context. The superficial and simple role of visual arts as an integrated part of curriculum (category 1) stands in sheer contradiction to the stronger conception about the role of visual arts from other categories, peaking in category 3, where visual arts are viewed as a critical part of the teaching and learning setting. Based on this progression of views, the referential aspect presents the shift of visual arts from a marginal presence to a central and essential one. Visual arts play a crucial

role in teachers' understanding of learning writing. The referential aspects are also different, despite, or rather because of, the various levels of involvement found in the external horizon regarding student typologies (students in first grade, students with learning difficulties, etc.).

Returning to the structural aspect, the internal horizon indicates how visual arts were understood within writing lessons and the classroom environment. The internal horizon involves the attributes that form the phenomenon, how they are related to each other, and how they are related to the referential aspect. Consequently, each category of experience has different attributes, based on how teachers understood the experience of using visual arts in learning writing.

This study found that teachers who thought that using visual arts in teaching writing is just simple content in the curriculum integrated visual arts according to their conceptions, by following the lesson instruction available in the textbook. On the other hand, teachers who viewed visual arts as effectively addressing students' needs organized their teaching instructions according to this conception. Differences between categories of description regarding the internal horizon move from strict commitment to the textbook instructions (category 1) to teachers' focus on learning needs in subsequent categories (2 and 3).

The textbook instruction in category 1 constrains teachers, as well as their students. However, moving on to the other categories, it is evident that teachers and students become more flexible and engaged when visual arts are used based on the needs of the learning process (categories 2 and 3). In category 2, teachers and students took advantage of visual arts opportunities for learning without being entirely limited to the textbook. Furthermore, teachers in category 3 considered visual arts as required content in addition to the content from the manual. They even moved beyond the contents of their textbooks and provided more visual arts for the benefit of students' learning.

The three dimensions of the phenomenon are related to the questions of (1) how significant visual arts are for learning writing; (2) what type of impact visual arts have on writing; (3) what level of learning is most responsive to the use of visual

arts. Each category has an answer to these questions, but from different perspectives and based on different experiences. To express the relationships, the three dimensions are mapped to the structural and referential aspects of categories of description in table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Relationship between categories (focus on reference, structure, and dimensions)

Category	Referential aspect	Internal horizon	External horizon
1. Curriculum-focused experience	Content in school textbook **Dimension 2:** V*isual arts are included in some lessons; with limited and indirect impact on the learning of writing.*	Teachers adhere to the content and instruction of the textbook **Dimension 1:** *teachers deliver contents according to textbook and they do not prioritize visual arts in lesson instructions.*	Certain cases and situations **Dimension 3:** V*isual art activities are left to students' desire and time availability.*
2. Knowledge-transfer support experience a.	Visual art integration is an approach that makes instructions more effective **Dimension 2:** *Teachers use visual arts to improve students' perception and understanding of knowledge.*	Students' perception is improved by visual arts-approach **Dimension 1:** *Visual art is a significant medium that can improve students' readiness and understanding of lessons.*	Specific teachers **Dimension 3:** *Teachers make instruction meaningful and more effective by adopting art-integration techniques.*
b.	Using visual arts improves knowledge implementation **Dimension 2:** V*isual arts stimulate students to improve writing.*	Students writing quality develops by visual arts integration **Dimension 1:** *Quality of writing is influenced by art-integration support.*	Specific students who can employ knowledge **Dimension 3:** *Some students utilize arts for enhancing their writing processes.*
3. Student-needs focused experience a.	Using visual art is a significant way of teaching **Dimension 2:** *Teachers adopt art-integration teaching approach due to its direct impact on beginners.*	Skills learning can lead to learning writing basics **Dimension 1:** *Teachers utilize common skills between arts and writing. They depend on beginners' attraction to arts.*	Students in the first grade **Dimension 3:** S*tudents' motivation and basic writing skills are improved through art-integration activities.*
b.	Using visual art is a way of learning enhancement **Dimension 2:** *Students can overcome learning difficulties by art-integration instruction.*	Boost to overcome students' weaknesses **Dimension 1:** *Visual arts can improve students' confidence to overcome difficulties.*	Students with learning difficulties **Dimension 3:** *Intensive art-integration instructions are applied to help students improve their difficulties.*

As observed in the above table, different dimensions have been related to different aspects of the analytical framework. The *Significance of visual arts* dimension introduces the context that delineates visual arts integration in writing

learning. The *type of impact* dimension works within the referential aspect, representing the general meaning of visual arts integration. Lastly, the *students' learning level* dimension presents how teachers integrate visual arts in the classroom, and it is framed by the external horizon of the structural aspect.

The inclusion of the three dimensions in the above table allows deeper analysis of the structure of the categories, on the one hand, and the relationships between them, on the other. However, the phenomenographic approach has an essential characteristic; namely, presenting data as minimally as possible. To understand the various ways teachers experienced the phenomenon, the critical aspects are presented next.

Following this characteristic of the phenomenographic approach, table 4.6 presents an additional abstraction, where the referential aspects, internal and external horizons are combined with the three dimensions. This representation of the dimensions and the referential and structural aspects provides an understanding of the relationships between dimensions and presents the phenomenon from a different perspective.

Table 4.6 Relationship between categories (focus on dimensions)

Significance of visual arts	
Marginal medium ⟵⟶	**Essential medium**
Curriculum-focused experience	**Knowledge-transfer support experience**
○ *Visual arts are not specifically thematised or prioritised. They were not an integral part of teaching practices or something that would be directly addressed in the normal course of teaching.*	○ *A dependable tool that can convey and clarify knowledge and provide an appropriate learning atmosphere.* ○ *Support students by stimulating critical thinking, retrieval, and analysis, which are key elements for quality of writing.* **Student-needs focused experience** ○ *An inevitable approach to teaching writing for beginner students.* ○ *Provide appropriate learning promotion that helps students improve their writing abilities and confidence and boost their capabilities.*

Type of impact	
Indirect impact ←————————————→	**Direct impact**

| **Curriculum-focused experience**

○ *Indirect relation- limited cases represented by other supportive means.*

Knowledge-transfer support experience

○ *Catch students' attention and help them concentrate, which in turn makes them ready to receive knowledge.*
○ *Stimulate thinking and imagination before writing.* | **Student-needs focused experience**

○ *Common ground between drawing and writing basics - useful tool for beginners.*
○ *Improve students' learning abilities* |

Students' learning level	
Post-beginner level ←————————————→	**Introductory level**

| **Curriculum-focused experience**

○ *Students exceeded the age where visual arts integration is needed.*

Knowledge-transfer support experience

○ *Students have already learned the basics of writing and visual arts can help provide an appropriate atmosphere where knowledge can be easily and effectively acquired.*
○ *Internalize knowledge, arrange ideas, and produce informative and qualitative text.* | **Student-needs focused experience**

○ *Learning basics of writing through practicing some visual arts activities.*
○ *Special way of teaching is given for specific students to promote learning.* |

Table 4.6 provides another perspective that derives different conceptions and classifies categories of description based on differences between marginal and essential views of visual arts. A brief description of each view is introduced to identify the conception held by each category. The significance of visual arts is presented in terms of the extent to which visual arts are important in the process of teaching. Although visual arts are used in classrooms, they do not have the same significance level for all teachers. The values range from marginal for category 1 to essential for categories 2 and 3.

The type of impact is the second dimension that shows the view of each category regarding the impact of visual arts in classrooms. The attributes of each category

illustrate the role that the visual arts play in writing learning. The type of impact does not represent the importance of art-integration, but rather how visual arts can affect the learning of writing (either directly or indirectly). Only one category (category 3), its two subcategories included, considered that visual arts directly impact learning writing basics, due to the shared characteristics between drawing and writing. Other categories defined the impact as indirect, through other means that can provide a better readiness for learning writing.

Finally, students' level of learning is the last dimension that is distinguished among the categories, based on the target student group. In the primary school, students have different learning levels, which make visual arts dependent on the level of learning. Categories are grouped into two different learning levels: students who are learning the basics of writing, and students who have already learned the basics and are at a more advanced level of learning writing.

Figure 4.6 shows the final abstraction of the outcome space without text. Only the three dimensions – the significance of visual arts, the type of impact, and students' learning level – and the three categories of description are graphically mapped together.
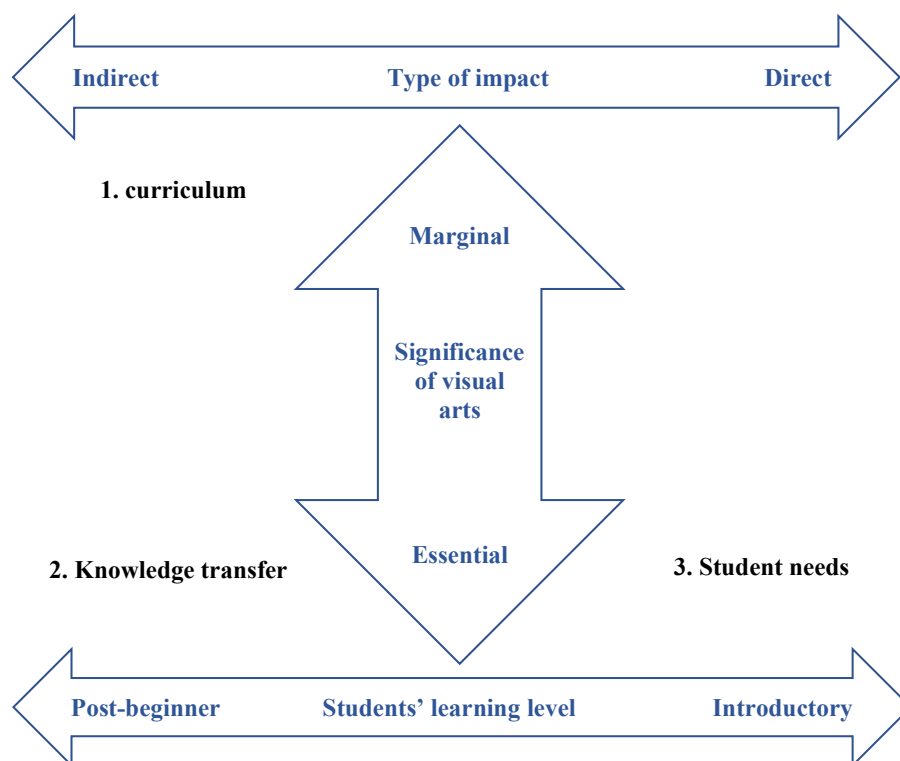
Figure 4.6 A framework for understanding the qualitatively different ways primary school teachers experience the use of visual arts in writing classes

In this figure, the categories and description dimensions are presented in a different style. The curriculum-focused experience category is at the top left corner of the figure. For this category, visual arts is a marginal means used by teachers of post-beginner students. Visual arts, in this experience, make the least contribution to the teaching process of writing, due to the view held by teachers about using visual arts in the process of learning writing.

In extreme opposition, the student-needs experience category is located at the right bottom of the figure, where visual arts are essential for teaching writing basics. In this case, teachers rely heavily on visual arts, due to their essential role in teaching writing basics. Teachers in this category thematized and prioritized visual arts, organizing their teaching around them. Teaching writing, in this experience, gets the largest contribution from visual arts due to the massive inclusion of arts activities and practices in the process of learning the basics of writing.

While categories 1 and 3, are extreme opposites to each other regarding the dimensions of description, category 2 is in between them in terms of dimensional properties. The Knowledge-transfer support category is located at the bottom left of the figure, where it shares the indirect type of impact with category 1. Yet, it shares the significance of visual arts in teaching writing with category 3. In this experience, teachers rely on visual arts as a significant means of teaching that indirectly supports the learning of writing for post-beginner students by providing the required setting for learning.

Thus, the use of visual arts in teaching writing for primary school students includes different conceptions and experiences, based on different structural relationships represented by the description of dimensions. The experience ranges from minimal involvement of visual arts, as in the curriculum-focused category, to predominant implementation as in the student-needs category. The knowledge-transfer category lies in between, since it considers visual arts as an essential means of learning writing, yet indirectly supports that learning.

Both categories 1 and 2 hold the same view that visual arts have only an indirect impact on learning writing, but they have different views regarding the significance of visual arts. In the same manner, both categories 2 and 3 depend on visual arts in their teaching of writing, but they target two different levels of student learning. While category 2 is meant for post-beginner students who have already learned the basics of writing, category 3 aims to take advantage of visual arts in teaching the basics of writing to introductory students.

5. Discussion

5.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the study's findings in more detail concerning the literature and its associated interpretations and implications. The chapter will also discuss the study's limitations and recommendations for future research.

The study aimed to investigate Saudi language teachers' conceptions about using visual arts (images and drawing) in writing and describe the qualitatively different ways that Saudi language teachers understand and experience their use in writing.

The primary purpose of the study was to add new knowledge by investigating Saudi primary school teachers experiences and conceptions in light of the following objectives:

- investigate Saudi language teachers' conceptions of using visual arts (images and drawing) in writing.
- describe the qualitatively different ways in which Saudi language teachers understand and experience the use of visual arts (images and drawing) in writing.
- map Saudi language teachers' conceptions of their pedagogical approaches

The specific research questions are as follows:
- What are Saudi language teachers' conceptions about using visual arts (images and drawing) in writing?
- What are the variations in how Saudi teachers understand and experience the use of visual arts (images and drawing) in writing?
- What is the relationship between Saudi teachers' conceptions of visual arts (images and drawing) in writing instruction and their pedagogical approaches?

Since this study adopted a phenomenographic approach in investigating teachers' conceptions, the research questions cannot be separated into individual

answers because they are overlapping each other in the categories of description, dimensions, types of impact, sets of orientation. However, this chapter makes the answers clear and explicit by taking each category separately and discussing the conceptions, their variations, and the relationship between conceptions and pedagogical approaches according to their particularities.

The discussion of the findings is divided into sections. First, a summary of the study findings is presented. The interpretations and the meaning of these findings will be explored next. Third, the study's implications and its localization in the literature will be discussed.

5.2. Summary of the research findings

The findings chapter presented three different conceptions and experiences, each with a specific focus on using visual arts in teaching writing: *curriculum-focused, knowledge-transfer, and student-needs*. The *knowledge-transfer* and *student-needs* categories were further subdivided into subcategories to classify the original experience. Each showed that visual arts are viewed and experienced in different ways. The similarities and differences among these categories are presented according to three common dimensions that included *significance of visual arts, type of impact*, and *student's learning level*. These dimensions were discussed in the context of different categories of description since each category has its own focal aspect that represents the experienced values within the dimension.

The dimensions were further analyzed to produce a set of orientations. First, the marginal or essential orientation to visual arts presented how teachers have different views about the significance of visual arts in teaching writing. Second, the direct or indirect impact supposed that visual arts might play such a role based on how teaching is deployed during writing learning. Third, the post-beginner or introductory level of the student's learning level focused on the student's level of knowledge concerning writing learning during the use of visual arts in teaching writing.

5.3. Discussion of the findings

The study results provide insight into teachers' conceptions of using visual arts in teaching writing in Saudi primary schools. The distinctive categories that emerged from the data analysis have led to a critical query of what makes the categories of description different and what reasons lie behind their diversity. Answering this query should shed light on other features of this study and add more pieces to the puzzle. Some of the factors that influence teachers' conceptions are discussed in the following sections.

5.3.1. The contextual factors of teaching writing

The study findings showed diverse teachers' experiences and conceptions of using visual arts in writing instructions. Although teachers use the same curriculum textbook, they hold different conceptions about using visual arts in teaching writing. Thus, understanding the reasons behind the diversity of conceptions is paramount. Furthermore, teachers' conceptions are formed from personal and contextual knowledge that keeps changing over time (de Vries and Beijard, 1999). Teaching writing influences teacher practices and experiences, and how the subject matter is delivered to students. Therefore, conceptions are constantly shaping and reshaping and several factors impact this metamorphosis over time.

The aspects of personal and contextual influences on teachers' conceptions have been discussed in the literature review, and the findings of this study confirm their role in shaping teacher values and thoughts. The first factor that influences teachers' conceptions is the personality and desires of both teachers and students. Borg (2003, p. 81) claimed that "teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs." Teachers may hold specific conceptions based on their personalities. On the other hand, they normally use familiar approaches that have been mastered well. Their personality traits and personal style may be a blessing in disguise or a hidden hindrance to the efficiency of their teaching.

Teacher personalities and desires map the willingness to embark on a changing track, or not. Although the ministry of education improves the writing curriculum periodically, some teachers do not adjust their style accordingly, preferring to stick to the beaten path. It is more comfortable and convenient. Their conceptions have been formed from their usual practices; and shifting the focus of the curriculum to a new position may seem daunting and comfortless since it shakes the very foundation of how they perform in classroom. An interesting finding of this study confirmed the impact of this factor: teachers always refer to their everyday style when explaining their teaching practices.

Students' personalities and desires also represent a contextual factor (Borg, 2003) that sometimes matches and other times comes in direct conflict with teachers' desires. The focus of this study is the use of visual arts in teaching writing, which is an enjoyable, fun activity. If the focus were something less enjoyable, the findings would likely reflect some other reality. But teachers' and students' desires do not differ too much, as the findings of this study show. Teachers stated that they mostly follow what students prefer. This is one of the strong motivations to use visual arts given that it is a lovely tool for teaching writing.

The desires and abilities of students change according to their learning level. As found in the study, the desires and abilities of early grades students are different from those of upper-grade students. Dealing with this dynamic evolution over time, teachers should adapt their conceptions accordingly. Those who care about the desires of their students will find themselves changing their practices. As teachers interviewed in this study stated, they try to find the most effective way for teaching writing and please students' desires and needs. Whenever visual art was acceptable and preferable to students, they used it.

Consequently, teachers have different conceptions about using visual arts in teaching writing based on the students' learning level. Experience and practice with different learning levels is thus another contextual factor that may influence how teachers form their conceptions and thoughts. Moving the teaching duties

between subjects and grades, especially in the early grades, is a common experience in Saudi Arabia that also conceptualizes teachers' beliefs and views.

In the case of teachers, the desires and personality traits can be shaped during their education and learning time before they get a degree. Studies have demonstrated on how the education of pre-service teachers impact their conceptions (Kokotsaki, 2011, 2012). When we refer to educational background, this does not imply that all student teachers in the same educational program will hold the same conceptions. On the contrary, everyone forms their own conceptions that will interact with the education system they work for. In this study, teachers do not have the same educational background since they have not graduated from the same program or the same school. Therefore, we met a diverse landscape of conceptions in the findings chapter.

As if that were not enough, teachers could carry the unwanted "baggage" of low self-efficacy beliefs and conceptions regarding visual arts in their pre-service training. This baggage limits their development and may create biased, divergent conceptions about the purpose of visual arts in early childhood education (Lindsay, 2020). These conceptions will definitely affect their teaching practice and influence their decisions. As we found in the results, some teachers have little teaching experience; yet they have strong conceptions about using visual arts in writing. As they confessed, they may have gotten these conceptions from their educational or social background.

Sometimes, the influence comes from educators working in the program they graduated from. They always have some sort of impact on their students; and teachers may form their conceptions under the pressure of their educators. The mentor teachers' beliefs and attitudes could support or may hinder the development of positive conceptions in pre-service teachers. The challenges that pre-service teachers usually face adds to that burden (Hipp and Dowell, 2019). Lacking proper educational training and good mentorship, coupled with the 'baggage" of biased conceptions and low self-efficacy, could be disastrous for

teachers' conceptions when visual arts are not properly engaged as a means of learning in the classroom.

The school environment is another contextual factor that influences teachers' conceptions. Teachers' practices and conceptions are affected by school policies and rules. As found in the results, some schools are very supportive of enhanced writing learning through visual arts and encourage teachers to pay more attention to such activities. Writing skills competitions were held in schools and encouraged by the school district. Also, these schools provided supplemental tools for using visual arts in writing to help teachers in this endeavor.

In other cases, teachers got support from the school principal, who did whatever it took to make them more enthusiastic about their work. During the data collection process, we found that schools were not similar in providing teachers with what they needed to be more creative and effective in teaching writing. Some schools did not provide enough material support and left the entire teaching process hanging on teachers' shoulders. Teachers felt overwhelmed by the daunting task of procuring materials and other supportive items by themselves. Differences among teachers' conceptions across the board could be a result of this factor as well.

Another side effect of this contextual factor was generated by the number of classes taught during a semester. The workload differs from school to school, sometimes from teacher to teacher. Therefore, the conceptions found in this study may have been impacted by this aspect. A full workload coupled with little to no support from the school or district management is the perfect recipe for disaster, and conceptions can take a drastic downward shift. Therefore, the number of classes and grade range were among the issues discussed during the interviews of this study.

Conceptions regarding the coverage of the curriculum were present, another contextual factor to be considered; it depends on the pressure that schools press on teachers to finish in time. Some teachers focused on finishing the curriculum within the given time frame; consequently, they prioritized and thematized their

teaching around it. Teachers sometimes referred to this reason to answer why they were not using visual arts in teaching writing. They thought that visual arts tasks are time-consuming and could lead to running behind the curriculum schedule. Other teachers were more focused on the goals and skills the students would get at the end of the semester. They thought that the goal is to help students master a specific skill and will be able to understand the rest of the content faster and easier. They view the curriculum as a set of skills to prioritize. Therefore, they emphasized mastering the skills included in the curriculum. Depending upon school requirements, the time limitation, and how to cover the entire curriculum content were pervasive topics in the interviews. As can be noticed, time impacts teachers' practices and, later, their different conceptions.

5.3.2. The roles and interactions in classrooms

The second factor are the roles and interactions in the classroom. This interaction could influence teachers' conceptions about using visual arts in teaching writing. According to the theories discussed in Chapter 2, learning is not a process where the teacher transfers information, the students receive it, and then commit to learning and using it. The process of learning is a two-way communication between the teacher and the student.

Education theorists emphasized that learning occurs through interaction and have placed drawing at the forefront of the literacy learning process (Dewey, 1934, 1938; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978; Piaget, 1956, 1964, etc.). In other words, both drawing and literacy are highly interactive activities that generate learning. At the same time, language learning is another dimension of education that needs to be developed as an interactive activity. Vygotsky believed that language learning results from social interaction, whereby the child needs to perform a task and the adult's role is to facilitate it (Langer & Applebee, 1986).

Thus, the interaction is a cornerstone of the education process; it becomes even more critical in language learning, where the teacher plays the role of facilitator between students and the new language. The role of the teacher in the interaction process is to help students develop new skills by providing support and

assistance, especially in the early learning stages. The findings revealed that teachers are aware of the role they play and how their interaction with students impacts the learning outcome. Their conceptions were firm about interaction and its effects on student learning. Teachers reported using visual arts to enhance students' learning abilities.

The roles and interactions in classroom are clearly reflected in the presentation of the findings in the previous chapter. We introduced the structure of categories and the relationships among them. Here, we discuss how those relationships affect the dynamics between teachers and students in the classroom. In the findings, it is obvious that the teachers in category 1 followed the curriculum-centered approach, where the teacher deflects their authority to the content in the school textbooks, as they adhere to it along with the instructions. They focused essentially on teaching the curriculum. This type of classroom adheres to strict discipline; they consider student's interests only after the curriculum contents have been completed. The teacher acts as the expert filling the students' "empty vessels" with information from the manuals.

Knowledge-transfer support experiences a shift from the teachers' role to a more student-centered approach, although this is not entirely so. As discussed in category 2, the learning process takes a more central role, but there is a difference between subcategories 2a and 2b. The subcategory 2a demonstrates that student perceptions are improved by visual-arts teaching. However, the subcategory 2b focuses more on students and how their writing skills develops, while using visual arts, and at the same time, how they acquire knowledge in this process. Unlike the curriculum-focused experience, teachers usually pay more attention to students in the knowledge-transfer experience. Nonetheless, knowledge is the spotlight here. Teachers organize their teaching around knowledge acquisition; and although this approach has its merits, students are not yet the focal point. The interaction between teachers and students is mediated by knowledge goals and not by students' needs and desires.

As its name clearly denotes, the student-needs-focused experience is where the real student-centered approach occurs. Both subcategories 3a and 3b are all about students and their development. This student-centered approach is generated by the category of students that teachers work with, namely, students in first grade and students with learning difficulties. Both subcategories represent vulnerable learners, and the challenges teachers face could explain the trigger point in using a more student-centered approach. Visual arts are no longer dependent upon the teachers' handling of the textbook; neither on the teachers' goals of effective knowledge acquisition and production. The integration of visual arts is solely dependent upon student preferences and learning needs to improve their writing or boost their confidence.

Furthermore, the findings show that the curriculum-centered approach is more present at the post-beginner student learning level; the type of impact is also more indirect. The introductory level is more student-centered and, at the same time, more direct. Still, teachers view the significance of visual arts as essential in this equation, proving that students' central role does not dissuade teachers from being fully involved in the process. Even better, visual arts play a very important role, as teachers heavily rely on them, thematizing and prioritizing their teaching around their integration.

This major study finding demonstrates how significant the roles and interactions in the classroom are for the benefit of students. It also shed light on discrepancies that emerge between grades and students' abilities. While first grade and learning difficulties are student-centered, the upper grades and demonstrated improved abilities shift away from this approach. Teachers' conceptions tend to shift as well, as this study found. The participants that dealt with first graders or students with difficulties on a daily basis tended to embrace the student-centered approach more easily and thoroughly. Those participants who worked with the upper grades and more advanced or skilled students held a different conception: that visual arts are not as necessary as they might seem, and the curriculum is the right path to follow in this case. By contrast, conceptions of participants in the knowledge-

transfer category were more focused on the learning process and the effectiveness of knowledge acquisition and production.

5.3.3. The nature of teaching and learning

The last factor that shapes conceptions is the nature of teaching writing. In Saudi primary schools, teachers have had autonomy in teaching and evaluating writing, especially in upper grades for a long time. The Ministry of Education has built writing evaluation guidelines, but the process is still subjective to teachers' considerations and conceptions. There are no standardized writing tests for primary school students. Writing teaching methods and approaches are left to the teachers' decision, although the Ministry has periodically updated the writing curriculum.

The lack of unified teaching methods for writing has both a positive and a negative result. On the one hand, it gives teachers more freedom. From a different viewpoint, the continuous updates of the writing curriculum encourage some to change their approaches accordingly, to accommodate new methods and tools, ultimately influencing their conceptions. On the other hand, the lack of a unified approach to methods and teaching strategies leaves teachers vulnerable and unprepared; they have to navigate the experience alone – not a positive aspect at all. This two-edge sword contributes to shaping teaching conceptions as diverse teaching methods result in different outcomes.

The findings of this study support both directions. Some teachers reported that they viewed these periodic updates as frustrating since they had to change their approaches and methods to match them every time the curriculum was updated. Their reaction to such changes and updates in the writing curriculum is sometimes slow, and teachers tend to stick to their previous practices and strategies, even if they feel a new approach is more effective. These teachers perceived their old teaching approaches as better and ranked them higher in their preferences. Consequently, they did not make major changes although the curriculum had been updated several times. Their justification was their familiarity with specific teaching methods; and besides, those methods proved to be more fruitful

according to their experience than other more recent approaches. The teachers felt that using familiar approaches is the proper way to teach writing, so they continued to stick to them. Such subjective approaches have generated different perspectives as reported in the findings, proving that the nature of teaching impacts teachers' conceptions as well.

Other teachers interviewed in the study were more responsive to the updates of the writing curriculum. They reported that they updated their teaching approaches and methods as needed, e.g., curriculum updates. These approaches and practices contributed to the constructive conceptualization of views and thoughts. Instead of letting their conceptions become ossified by an outdated teaching style, they accepted the challenges posed by the curriculum updates and changed their methods and strategies periodically. This, in turn, shaped their conceptions over time, and they became more confident that they had made the right decision by changing their teaching style to match curriculum changes.

One interesting observation noticed during the interviews was that the teachers who took the changing and improving path were very confident. They provided answers to our questions and explained their views in such a way that we did not have to ask more questions to clarify their points. On the other hand, teachers who reported being comfortless about the curriculum changes and updates were less clear in their answers, so we had to ask more questions. They defended themselves by saying that since the outcomes were satisfactory, they felt no need to change their way of teaching.

5.4. Implications of the findings

Within the current study's findings, two different approaches to teaching writing using visual arts were identified. Teachers' conception in category 1 represented the first approach. The teachers in this category focused exclusively on the curriculum, considering that the completion according to the timeline is the right way to teach. They explained that they could barely cover all the curriculum contents; they stuck to it even though they had to neglect interactive activities in the meantime. They considered visual arts as unnecessary, skipping many of

the activities as a result of this subjective conception. They considered that learning would not be affected if visual arts activities were skipped.

The second approach was represented by teachers' conceptions in categories 2 and 3. According to curriculum objectives, teachers in these categories focused on the skills required for learning writing. They viewed writing from a different perspective: that teaching writing aims to make students master specific writing skills covered in the curriculum. They thought that focusing on teaching these skills effectively would lead to that goal and improve progress in later lessons since the students had already mastered the required skills. They reported using visual arts in their teaching as a means for acquiring skills and enhancing the learning experience of their students.

The findings reveal that both approaches cover the contents of the curriculum, but in different ways. While the progress in the first approach was stable (the speed rate was the same) and according to the timeline of the curriculum, the progress in the second approach seemed to be slower in the beginning but picked up later during the semester. Once the students had learned the skills, the teachers reported that the progress increased exponentially.

The section localizes the study results within the existing knowledge of using visual arts in writing learning. Each category of description is discussed in the following sections according to the literature review.

5.4.1. Curriculum-focused experience

The prevailing teachers' conception in category 1 is the commitment to the writing instructions provided in the textbooks. Teachers looked at visual arts included in the curriculum as a complementary part and not that important or necessary. They considered that the writing learning would not be negatively affected if visual arts were neglected or skipped. They insisted on completing the contents even though they knew that the curriculum could barely be completed by the end of the semester. Previous literature showed that Saudi teachers feel overwhelmed by the curriculum contents they need to cover, resulting in the reduced time given to the arts, as described by (Alter et al., 2009) for Australian primary school

teachers. This might add more pressure on teachers to decide and prioritize the contents of the curriculum.

The number of classes allocated for teaching language in Saudi primary schools is addressed in the literature (Almoaiqel, 2014). Teachers in Saudi Arabia believe that language classes are not enough to cover and practice the required language skills. Students cannot master these skills even through numerous exercises due the few classes offered (Almoaiqel, 2014). Teachers have reported this issue in the findings of this study although the Saudi Ministry of Education has paid attention to the problem and increased the number of language classes from 9 to 12 classes for the first grade, while reducing the amount of curriculum contents for upper grades (Al-Shallal et al., 2000). This seems to be an ongoing problem, and the literature has raised awareness on this issue. It is likely that most teachers also know about it because of the Ministry's attempts and the researchers' studies.

Another explanation for attitudes on visual arts is the conception of the role they have in the curriculum. Despite some of the teachers in category 1 admitting that visual arts maybe have a positive role in the learning process, they do not focus on that advantage. Teachers in category 1 have built their conceptions on the assumption that the curriculum has core and marginal contents. They looked at visual arts activities as a complementary part of the curriculum left to the student's choice, or if there was enough class time.

The literature has discussed that the arts are neither as straightforward nor an instant gratifying process as they seem at a first look. It might be possible to describe concrete and actual things with pictures; however, it is more challenging to illustrate concepts that require more abstract thinking (Stanley and Sturm, 2008). Teachers support their conceptions by pointing out how pictures and drawings are gradually removed from textbooks when moving to the upper grades. They referred to this practice to prove that visual arts lose their role as students grow up. Of note, previous literature confirms that conception. Even if it is more difficult to illustrate complex concepts, there is evidence that visual

instruction can be transferred as a skill. Burger and Winner (2000) have tested the hypothesis of whether visual arts instruction improves reading. The authors found that both art and reading are visual skills, making possible a transfer of skills from one subject to another since both use visual representations as a common ground for learning (Burger & Winner, 2000).

For a long time, the language curriculum in Saudi Arabia was separated into different textbooks, where each language skill (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) was taught separately. In 2007-2008, upon extensive review by experts and educators, the Ministry of Education had introduced a new integrated language curriculum, which included all language skills (Almoaiqel, 2014). In the new curriculum, the Ministry tried to move from the teacher-centered experience to the student-centered experience (KSA Ministry of Education, 2007). The Ministry described the motivation behind the new curriculum as an attempt to renew teaching methods and strategies. Consequently, teachers thought that following this new updated curriculum would be the epitome of improvement in teaching writing as well. It would be unfair to blame conceptions about the limited use of visual arts only on teachers. How the curriculum was portrayed to them impacted their conceptions, so they came to believe that abiding by the curriculum would be sufficient in terms of using visual arts in classroom.

5.4.2. Knowledge-transfer support experience

Teachers in category 2 emphasized learning by using visual arts as intermediary tools that support the knowledge transfer. Teachers' attention is focused on the development of students' skills, unlike the teachers in category 1 who focused on completing the curriculum contents. Even though these teachers did not find a direct influence of visual arts on writing learning, they insisted on the idea that visual arts provided the right context for the learning to take place. This claim is supported by sound research. Brooke et al. (2007) discovered that art influences the readiness and preparation for reading and writing activities. Recently, Penn (2020) established a link between drawing and writing in literacy development. He stated that drawing can move classroom engagement beyond the traditional curriculum that privileges writing over visual arts activities. Additionally, he

described drawings as more than just "vehicles for pre-literacy" as teachers often use, but they produce "critical, creative, and constructive thinking and learning" (Penn, 2020, p. 211).

Besides engagement, teachers claimed that visual arts grab students' attention and facilitate knowledge, understanding, and memorizing. Starting with Vygotsky, there is enough ongoing evidence to support this conception. Vygotsky (1978) discussed symbolic representation development and stated that some activities, such as writing and drawing, are paramount in the development of verbal and written communication. He explained that this development eventually leads to higher order thinking (Poldberg et al., 2013). Based on this point of view, also been proposed by Smagorinsky (1993, 1997), the production of visual arts (such as drawing and images) can support the development of higher-order cognitive functions necessary for literacy learning (Trainin, Andrzejczak, & Poldberg, 2006; Trainin et al., 2006; Poldberg et al., 2013).

Non-verbal representations (drawing and images) can support the development of higher-order cognitive functions necessary for literacy learning (Trainin et al., 2006; Poldberg et al., 2013). Gardner (1980) believed that images provide a means to communicate more complicated ideas. Brooke, Grant, Hornsby, & Hutchison (2007) supported this concept and found that learning writing with the integration of visual arts in classroom activities helps students get more involved in attending, seeing, thinking, and using language more elaborately.

Skill integration is another topic that teachers in this category have discussed. They thought that drawing and writing should not be viewed as independent, solitary activities. On the contrary, these skills overlap and intermingle with other skills in the learning process. In Saudi Arabia, Almoaiqel and Al-Sadhan (2001) have studied the reality of teaching and learning language in Saudi primary schools. They recommended focusing on the skills and strategies of reading, writing, speaking, and listening by integrating more interactive activities.

Previous studies indicated that this imaginative approach is crucial to the writing process and viewed writing and drawing as mutually enriching one another

(Olshansky, 1995; Dyson, 1992). Recently, Osman (2021) described this concept as "Transmediation, the process of bringing meaning from one semiotic system to another." (p.1). In this present study, transmediation refers to the process of taking what one knows in the visual system (visual arts) and representing it in another modality, specifically, written words. Consequently, students navigate the transformation and develop innovative, abstract, critical, and reflective thinking (McCormick, 2011). Additionally, it enhances students' vocabulary and language use across disciplines since they have to relate not only to the original mode (visual arts) but also to the new one (writing) (McCormick, 2011).

In summary, teachers in category 2 strongly think in the significant role that visual art play in classrooms in terms of knowledge acquisition and production. Although they have not explicitly established a strong and direct link between visual arts and writing, they have expressed their positive experience of using visual arts in the classroom.

5.4.3. Student-needs focused experience

Moving beyond the idea that visual arts play a supporting role in learning and producing writing, teachers in the third category thought that visual arts and writing share the same ground. Based on students' needs to learn the basics of writing, whether they are beginners or have learning difficulties, these teachers intermingled visual arts and writing for better outcome. Since drawing and writing have symbolic systems that share the same forms, such as lines and curves, the transition to symbol understanding in writing develops from symbol understanding in drawing, as described by (Dyson 1992). Learners create meanings through a combination of means, such as drawing as a bridge to learn how to write (Crafton, Silvers, and Brennan, 2017). Teachers in this category supported this finding in the literature review, as they held the common conception that images along with drawings are effective means to get children engaged. Beginner students or students with learning difficulties may struggle with learning settings such as the class atmosphere and may take time to become familiar with the school environment, especially in their early grades. Teachers found that visual arts are appropriate ways to overcome their reluctance and get engaged in class activities.

They invest in this to get students trained in the basics of writing.

The use of visual arts in teaching instructions could improve writing learning for these students. In the literature, there is agreement among researchers that the use of visual arts in literacy learning is beneficial for students. However, this does not make the implementation of the concept easier in the classroom. Olshansky proposed an integrative approach, whereby pictures are a natural language for thinking, developing, and expressing ideas since not all students work easily with words. Yet, even among those struggling with learning problems, most are truly enticed by images. Accordingly, for the benefit of all students, teachers should expand the range of thinking tools provided in the classroom (Olshansky, 2014).

Teachers in this category reflected on how they introduced pictures and drawing, or other examples of visual arts into their teaching to meet students' need. They implemented them organically as Olshansky (2014) proposed, meaning they did not force students to use them beyond their needs or pleasure. Several teachers agreed that visual arts are crucial in the first semester or year, but as time passed and students became more confident in their knowledge of letters, their need for images changed and the use of them changed accordingly. Teachers were flexible about increasing or decreasing the use of visual arts in teaching writing depending upon students' needs; but from their experience, they saw this need decreasing over time (see *8(17-18)* p.149)

The use of visual arts in literacy learning has an emotional component as well, and teachers can tap into this dimension to meet students' needs. Visual stimuli trigger inspiration in students, a mental experience mediated by the limbic system and the rewards system of the brain - both responsible for the emotional desires, motivational rewards, and the appreciation of esthetic values (Tyler and Likova, 2012). King (1979) notes that the framework of how children's desires (intentions) communicate with different learning contexts as they transition from talking to writing.

Teachers in category 3 supported this finding. They believed they should be aware of the first-grade students' desires, especially when they live their first

experience at school, by using visuals and drawings as a means of learning writing. Even teachers in category 1, the curriculum-focused experience, stated clearly that the use of visual arts activities is left to the students' desire and time availability. However, teachers in that category did not rely on visual arts as much as the teachers in the third category.

Teachers in category 3 thought that the best chance for using visual arts in writing is when students start learning letters. Controlling the pen and training hand muscles are among the skills needed at the early stages of learning writing, and drawing can provide opportunities for improving such skills. Students get trained through drawing to develop writing movements. Once learners master drawing and know how to control the pen, teachers reported it being much easier to learn letters and how to draw/write them on paper (see *10(26-27)* p.118). The introduction of letters is gradual, as one teacher pointed out since students first learn shapes and lines that are similar to letters and then move on to letter shaping. (see *17(4-6)* p.131).

These teacher conceptions are supported by sound research that goes back to Piaget (1964) and has been developed over the years by many scholars. Piaget (1964) demonstrated that learning results from physical and logical experiences with teacher support. Drawing represents the student's cognitive ability and is viewed as an entry point into general cognitive development (Piaget, 1956; Brooks, 2009). Dyson (1992) believed that the transition to symbol understanding in writing develops from symbol understanding in drawing, where both systems share forms such as lines and curves. These ideas are supported by Schickedanz and Casbergue (2009). At the early stage, students' writing develops from scribbles to scripts. The progress to object drawing brings them closer to the point where they can recognize writing and imitate it (Levin and Bus, 2003). They start copying words and drawing strings of letters, showing that they understand writing as a means of communication, even though they don't understand what they are writing. This shows knowledge of letter formation and the concept of words (Gerde et al., 2012; Welsch et al., 2003; Bloodgood, 1999).

186

5.5. Closing remarks

This study discussed the findings of the research on Saudi language teachers' conceptions about using visual arts in writing, focusing additionally on the variations in how they understand and experience their use. Teachers were divided in several categories according to the conceptions they hold about this topic: curriculum-focused, knowledge-transfer, and student-needs conceptions. The findings were correlated to the literature review, where we found strong support for contextual factors.

The roles and interactions in the classroom section covered how teachers' conceptions in different categories cover a broad spectrum, from the curriculum-centered approach to a student-centered focus. The findings also pointed out an intermediary category of teacher approaches that is knowledge-centered, whereby knowledge transfer is the focal interest, yet students along with their teachers attain an important role in the process. Another important finding discussed is that the student-centered approach for the first grade and students with learning difficulties shifted away along with the reduced use and interest in visual arts implementation in the upper grades.

The curriculum-focused conceptions were supported by previous literature; but the studies found were older - from the mid-2000s - and they are not directly relevant to this topic. On the other hand, knowledge-focused and student needs-focused conceptions found sound support in more recent studies that directly addressed the use of visual arts in teaching writing. The articles published by Beth Olshansky (2014, 2017, 2018) particularly contributed to support the view that visual arts play a critical role in literacy learning and teachers' conceptions in category 3 that are aligned with this trend.

The next chapter ends the study with a discussion of limitations, contributions, and recommendations. The limitations cover several areas, namely, scope, data collection, and analysis limitations. The contribution segment emphasizes the major inputs brought into the field by this study and recommendations for new avenues of future research.

6. Conclusion

This chapter begins with a study overview and goes on to summarize all the steps taken in this research to reach its aims and answer the questions initially designed. The methodological course of action was to integrate the phenomenographic paradigm and perform a data analysis in the light of the findings from the interviews. These were important steps that led to the categories of description and dimensions that made the outcome space emerge in the end.

The second section discusses the teachers' development through the study findings. The section presents some practical developments through different teachers' conceptions and approaches to using visual arts in writing learning presented in the study.

A third section of this chapter looks at the limitations of the study and presents three categories that focus on the different research steps presented in the overview section. The scope, data, and analysis were all areas where the research process encountered limitations; and they are discussed in detail.

The limitations did not hinder the contributions that this study brings to the field of education research. Since this is a pioneering study that explored a niche in Saudi education, both the topic and context make the contributions even more significant for the field.

Finally, the recommendation section offers some insights into future avenues of research that can be explored. The limitations of this study create opportunities to fill in the gaps, while the contributions advance knowledge so future studies can build on the findings.

6.1. Overview of the study

The lack of previous studies on the role of visual arts in learning writing in Saudi primary schools in the context of the growing international awareness of the benefit of this teaching method represents a significant gap in the literature, one this present research aimed to cover. The study took a phenomenographic approach and investigated the problem through the lens of Saudi teachers'

188

conceptions of using visual arts (namely, images and drawings) in teaching writing. Individuals experience life events differently; therefore, the study aimed to describe the qualitatively different ways that Saudi language teachers understand and experience this phenomenon. These different conceptions mapped the road of understanding their pedagogical approaches, another aim of this study.

To reach these objectives, three research questions specifically focused on (1) Saudi language teachers' conceptions about using visual arts (images and drawing) in writing; (2) the existing variations in teachers' conceptions about this phenomenon; (3) the correlation between teachers' conceptions of the phenomenon and their pedagogical approaches. These research questions linked theory and practice in such a way that the teachers were able to connect their expressed conceptions to the classroom practice. Meanwhile, the researcher intervened only to make sure they continued the journey from their personal conceptions, views, and beliefs to the product, namely, classroom implementation.

This qualitative study followed the research paradigm of phenomenography since it offers a prerequisite framework as a scientific research approach that describes conceptions of the surrounding world and maps variations in a group of individual experiences of a phenomenon (Svensson, 1997). Phenomenography is a distinct approach to qualitative research that emphasizes the human conception as the object of research (Barnard, McCosker, and Gerber, 1999). It focuses on the "commonality of understanding"; in other words, it seeks for patterns of understanding or differences in the way people understand or explain the world around them (Tesch, 1990, p. 65). As mentioned, the study examined Saudi language teachers' conceptions, seeking patterns of understanding that were later organized into categories of description. A comparison among the categories of description gave rise to several common dimensions in relation to the focal points in each category. The outcome space, according to the phenomenographic approach, emerged from an analysis of the categories of description and the common dimensions, offering a cumulative perspective on the phenomenon.

The data analysis emphasized recurring conceptions among teachers that were grouped to reflect their views on the significance and role of visual arts in teaching writing in primary schools. The findings chapter presented three different conceptions and experiences, each with a specific focus on using visual arts in teaching writing. These conceptions are *curriculum-focused, knowledge-transfer, and student-needs*. The *knowledge-transfer* and *student-needs* categories were further subdivided into subcategories to classify the original experience. Thus, teachers' conceptions in knowledge-transfer support experience were further divided into, student perception, and writing quality, while the student need-focused experience was divided into beginner students and those with learning difficulties. These categories have implications for understanding teacher behaviour in the classroom since conceptions are translated into practice, and students deal with different teaching strategies. The traditional teacher-versus student-centered approaches resurfaced again in this study, bringing forth a new finding - the other category, knowledge-transfer. Visual arts as a strategy in teaching writing to students demonstrates that some teachers are more oriented toward conveying knowledge. This could be dubbed as the knowledge-centered approach.

The similarities and differences among categories were presented according to three common dimensions: *significance of visual arts, type of impact*, and *student's learning level*. These dimensions were discussed in the context of different categories of description since each has its own focal aspect. The significance of visual arts moved across all categories of conceptions to assess teachers' emphasis on visual arts in the classroom. The type of impact analyzed how visual arts approaches influence learners' progress from the teachers' perspectives.

Since the study examined only teachers' perspectives, the impact was filtered through their eyes only. The students' learning level represented another dividing line between teachers' conceptions since the teachers reported different approaches to students' grade levels. Therefore, the analysis of the categories of description considered the referential and the structural aspect, with both internal

and external horizons. The cross-analysis revealed that the categories of description needed another type of division, one that looked at a different set of particularities to reflect teachers' conceptions and experiences accurately.

The dimensions were analyzed and produced a set of orientations. First, a marginal or essential orientation to visual arts showed how teachers have different views of the significance of visual arts in teaching writing. Teachers in the curriculum-focused category fell under the marginal medium, while the knowledge-transfer and student need-focused categories fell under the essential medium regarding the significance of visual arts in teaching writing. Second, the direct or indirect impact supposed that visual arts could play such a role based on how teaching was deployed during writing learning. Curriculum-focused and knowledge-transfer categories leaned toward an indirect impact, while the student needs-focused category was firm about the direct impact of visual arts on teaching writing. Third, the post-beginner or introductory level of student's learning level focused on the student's level of knowledge concerning writing learning during the use of visual arts in teaching writing.

The analysis of the students' learning level generated another division regarding teachers' conceptions; therefore, the curriculum-focused and knowledge-transfer categories viewed the post-beginner level as a breaking point in the use of visual arts. On the other hand, the student need-focused category stressed the importance of visual arts in teaching writing at the introductory level (first graders and students with learning difficulties).

The findings revealed that the curriculum-focused category viewed the use of visual arts in teaching writing as a marginal and indirect approach for post-beginner students. At the other end of the spectrum, the student needs-focused category viewed the use of visual arts as an essential and direct approach that perfectly matches the needs of first graders and students with learning difficulties.

The knowledge-transfer category shared the view that this approach is essential for the student needs-learning category; at the same time, it shared the indirect impact for post-beginner students with the curriculum-focused category. All in all,

191

the curriculum-focused and student needs-focused categories were in extreme opposition at the ends of a continuum between marginal and medium significance, indirect and direct impact, and introductory and post-beginner learning levels. The knowledge-transfer category migrated from one end to the other, according to the dimension categorization. They proved to be more versatile than the other categories in viewing the use of visual arts as essential, while indirect in the process of writing skills learning.

The outcome space resulted from the integration of all categories of descriptions and the dimensions of the phenomenon within the analytical framework. Tables and charts organized categories and dimensions visually in the findings chapter to show the systematic, hierarchical movement from concrete aspects to more conceptual and abstract aspects. Teachers experienced the use of visual arts in teaching writing in a different qualitative manner, and the outcome space integrated all these views in the final framework.

6.2. Teachers' development through the study findings

The findings of this study have revealed the different teachers' conceptions and approaches to using visual arts in writing learning. As discussed earlier in the literature review chapter, teachers' conceptions play a very important role in how the classroom practice unfolds, as teachers usually translate these conceptions in their approach to teaching, educational materials, and interactions with students. Considering the different categories that emerged from the data analysis, this section will make the conceptualizations explicit and discuss how the different conceptions and approaches found by this study might help in teachers' further development.

The study found that teachers' conceptions about using visual arts in teaching writing classes greatly differ in how they are translated into teaching approaches. Data analysis revealed that there are three categories: (1) teachers who use visual arts according to the curriculum requirements (curriculum-focused experience); (2) teachers who use them in order to transfer new learning (knowledge-transfer support); and (3) teachers who use them to address

students' needs (student-needs focused experience). The simple role of visual arts as an integrated component of curriculum (in category 1) is in clear contrast to the more robust conceptions of visual arts from other categories (categories 2 and 3), where visual arts are considered a key aspect of the teaching and learning context. The range of teachers' conceptions were also illustrated by classroom practice, how visual arts were regarded and utilized differently depending on the teachers' conceptions and experiences.

Looking at these findings carefully for the purpose of making them relevant to the education system in Saudi Arabia, we found that they may be useful to language teachers from two perspectives. First, the findings may raise more awareness about the significance of teachers' conceptions, especially for the classroom impact. Second, the findings may help teachers navigate their conceptions and how they are translated into classroom activities. Each of these two perspectives has more dimensions that are discussed next.

First, the findings of this study may help teacher development by raising awareness among teachers and teacher-trainers about the significance of teachers' conceptions for the benefit of students' learning and teaching strategies.

Teachers may filter personal conceptions through the findings of this study to learn about their proclivities and teaching modes. Knowing their conception propensity (curriculum-focused, knowledge-transfer, student-needs) may help them understand why they like some activities more than others, why they insist on some tasks more than others, and so on. Evaluating their conceptions is crucial because it means knowing and understanding the "why" behind the actions. Consequently, they become more aware of the teaching approaches and practices that fit their conceptions.

Moreover, teachers learn to pay more attention to their own conceptions about using visual arts in different contexts (first-grades, students with difficulties, etc.) because the study revealed that context impacts conceptions and how they are translated into practice. Teachers may act upon different conceptions depending on the situation. For example, what is appropriate for upper-grade students may

not be suitable for younger students. The study showed that first-grade teachers and those teaching students with difficulties were more inclined to use visual arts than those teaching upper grades. Examining teachers' conceptions from the contextual perspective also helps them adjust to every situation accordingly.

Lastly, the study showed that teachers shape their conceptions according to several external factors. These factors include teachers' desires and personality, everyday practice, teacher educational and social background, the school environment, rules and policies. They all can shape teachers' conceptions, and implicitly, their practices. Some teachers find it hard to change their practices because of the contextual factors that shaped their conceptions. The study findings help teachers understand the importance of such factors in forming their conceptions and make them more aware of the surrounding factors. Therefore, they can take action in this direction and improve their reaction to factors.

Secondly, the findings of this study may contribute to teacher development by helping them navigate their conceptions and how they are translated into classroom activities.

For teachers who mostly focus on the curriculum, the study proved that it is possible to use visual arts while staying within the curriculum framework. The Ministry of Education has turned the curriculum from teacher-centered into the student-centered experience to renew the teaching strategies. The modernized curriculum has integrated all language skills, and the number of language classes has increased over the past few years. Teachers who hold this conception are able to use the curriculum's images and other visual cues for teaching writing. Thus, teachers do not have to go out of their way (in following the curriculum) to integrate visual arts, they just have to stay committed to using the images and visuals provided by the curriculum.

For teachers focused on knowledge transfer, integrating interactive activities that mingle writing and visual arts to make the transfer of writing knowledge easier and enjoyable is an effective strategy that they can use. Even though they may think that visual arts do not directly impact writing learning, the findings of this

study show that the visual arts provide the right context for learning to take place. Teachers can use visual arts to improve and support students' cognitive thinking necessary for writing learning where more complicated ideas can be communicated. They also can utilize visual arts to make the learning process more interactive in knowledge acquisition and production.

The study revealed that teachers focused on student needs use visual arts too generously. But using images, drawings, and other visuals for teaching writing does not have to be obtrusive and unpleasant. The findings of this study proved that the best approach is to use them organically, not beyond students' needs and pleasures. Therefore, one prerequisite for using visual arts is that teachers must understand the student's needs to learn the basics of writing. Teachers can utilize visual arts the most when students start learning letters. Skills like holding the pen and controlling the movements by training hand muscles can be improved by drawing. Moreover, students in this level are not familiar with words, so teachers can use visual arts as a natural language for thinking. Teachers may notice that the students' needs may change as they develop their skills, therefore teachers must be aware of this change by changing the use of visual arts accordingly.

6.3. Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study are divided in three categories, each of them looking at specific research steps (the scope, data, and analysis) and emphasizing the limitations encountered in the process.

6.3.1. Scope limitations

The lack of similar studies about teachers' conceptions in Saudi Arabia in both languages, English and Arabic, in the literature limited the scope of this study. Previous studies in the field always open new avenues of research, enriching the perspective while offering more possibilities of elaboration. The author had to do some pioneering work in the domain, and the lack of studies raised challenges along the way. However, this limitation made this study unique and its contribution to the literature all the more significant.

Another scope limitation in this study was focusing only on the subject of writing. A round-up approach would address the other side of the coin in literacy learning, namely, the reading subject. Due to the time limitations imposed by the writing for a doctoral thesis, this study did not focus on reading. However, reading is an important research area in literacy learning that is always related to writing. Reading and writing mutually impact each other. Since the scope of the study was defined at the beginning of the study, we had to adhere to it and not include reading. Limiting the study to primary schools excluded the preschool level, which is much into using visual arts in writing. In some countries, including Saudi Arabia, learning writing could start as early as preschool if the child has been enrolled. Thus, excluding the teachers' conceptions of the preschool level was one of this study's shortcomings. The scope was not feasible because of time constraints.

This study was limited to language teachers; however, including teachers from other areas such as art and learning difficulties would lead to more valuable findings and shed light on other important areas. Another important category not included – students' conceptions – is explained by the fact that primary school students are limited in expressing their conceptions. Therefore, such limitations accounts for this study's limitation in this direction. This study was limited to understanding teachers' conceptions; but students' beliefs can support understanding the phenomenon from a different perspective.

The limited geographic area of the schools covered in the study was also another limitation. Due to the set timeline of preparing the study, covering more territory of a big country such as Saudi Arabia represents a real challenge. Saudi Arabia covers 2.15 million square kilometers. The study was limited to the country's central region where the researcher lives, i.e., the Qassim area (see section 1.2). However, even though the study represents a limited geographical area, we tried to cover as many parts of the region as possible. Certainly, covering a larger area or the peripherical areas of the country would be beneficial.

Finally, the Covid-19 pandemic limited the scope of the study and data collection. It was difficult to contact teachers and work over the email or phone when the

entire world was quarantined in place. But the lockdowns were not permanent, so the study eventually unfolded as premised. Data collection limitations will be discussed in the next section.

6.3.2. Data collection limitations

The biggest data collection limitation was the Covid-19 pandemic that affected the process, causing delays. Fortunately, we accommodated this issue since we had done most of the interviews before the pandemic had started. However, the world health crisis was one of the main reasons affecting the data collection process.

The other limitation was the number of questions in the questionnaire. Although comprehensive and meticulously designed, the multiple question format proved to backfire on the researcher's work, as some participants skipped questions and did not complete the questionnaire. We believe that the questionnaire should be limited to questions that reveal the participants' experiences within the phenomenon. In our case, some questions were quite deep and aimed to discover teacher's conceptions and experiences. Some participants preferred to discuss verbally during the interview rather than explain their views by writing in questionnaires, so they skipped questions thinking they would catch up during the interviews. Thus, we might have missed some experienced participants because of poor information.

School cooperation was one of the challenges of this study. Some were not cooperative, and we had to contact the school district to facilitate the process of data collection. This might be because the school principals and teachers were unfamiliar with the research practice. They needed to be instructed by higher management before cooperating with researchers. This limitation also decreased the spread of the data collection area, which was restricted to the central region rather than the whole country.

6.3.3. Analysis limitations

Due to the study's qualitative approach, the data analysis represents a critical phase in conducting the study. One data analysis limitation was the native

language of the participants, i.e., Arabic. Translating the questionnaire and the interview data back and forth was a task that required a translation expert. In the beginning, we tried to use the NVivo data analysis tool, but it does not support the Arabic language. Thus, we translated the transcripts into English, which was time-consuming. However, we noticed that translating the data might lead to losing meaning, thus depriving the analysis process of more insight.

Consequently, we used another data analysis tool, MAXQDA, to support the Arabic language. We found that the second approach was much better in coding and thematizing data. Moreover, learning how to use these tools was another issue that had be overcome by taking different courses. Another challenge of gathering data in Arabic was the slang used by most participants, which added extra work during the data analysis phase.

Another important limitation were the inconsistent teaching practices used by some teachers. In other words, some teachers moved between early grades and upper grades due to the need to cover some teaching loads. Thus, we had to make sure that they explained their conceptions according to the grades taught. A positive side of this limitation was that we had the chance to interview a certain kind of instructors, having multiple experiences with different practices. However, this caused the interview to last longer and become complicated; and in some cases, we had to investigate and ask more questions.

6.4. Contributions of the study

This study has significantly contributed to research knowledge in certain areas. It aimed to dig into teachers' conceptions to understand better what they think about using visual arts in writing learning by means of an in-depth investigation of primary school teachers in Saudi Arabia.

First, the study contributes to filling the gap in the literature in terms of studying teachers' conceptions, an aspect neglected in previous studies. Although some researchers have focused on some aspects of using visual arts in classroom practice, they have not dug deeper into teachers' conceptions. Despite some studies talking about these issues tangentially, an in-depth analysis of teachers'

conceptions and their connection to visual arts and literacy learning has yet to be made.

Second, this study brings together teachers' conceptions and visual arts in writing learning. The literature includes some studies that had investigated these two aspects separately. However, no study has combined the two so far. Thus, this study contributes to the field by connecting the two separate paradigms to discover teachers' conceptions about visual arts in writing learning.

Last but not least, to the best of our knowledge, this topic has not been studied in the context of Saudi Arabia. Very few Saudi studies have been performed, making this study crucial and beneficial to both academia and research knowledge. We believe that the study results will open further avenues of research.

6.5. Recommendations

In light of the study limitations and contributions, further studies are encouraged to be conducted in the field in the future. First, this study focused on writing learning; however, investigating the use of visual arts in reading learning is another facet of literacy learning. Conducting such a study will enrich the understanding of the role of visual arts in literacy learning in primary schools.

Second, every country has its particular educational system, and scholars have different perspectives and educational backgrounds. Thus, investigating teachers' conceptions in other countries is critical. Third, this study was limited to primary school teachers; however, including preschool teachers in such studies would be significant since some preschools introduce literacy classes for their children. As found in the results, one of the important conceptions held by teachers about using visual arts in writing learning applied to beginner students who learn writing basics.

Last, students' views and beliefs about using visual arts are an important aspect that needs investigation, but it was not within the scope of this study. The learner is an important player in the education process, and understanding how they look at the role of visual arts in literacy learning would be beneficial to the field.

Still, there is a need to perform further research studies. Considering these aspects in future studies will be beneficial to the research body. As mentioned, the lack of similar studies in the literature was one of the issues faced; enriching the area by conducting further studies on different aspects will add valuable knowledge.

6.6. Closing remarks

As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, I was surprised to see that the classroom reality in Saudi primary schools is not always aligned with the educational requirements of the Ministry of Education, although numerous efforts have been put into modernizing and updating the curriculum to reflect recent discoveries in literacy learning research.

The present research demonstrates that approaches to teaching and learning are modulated by teachers' conceptions, which cannot be regulated by some sort of legislation or curriculum update. This sound finding comes with the recommendation that the Ministry of Education invest equal effort in shaping teachers' conceptions during their pre-service years to incorporate novel approaches beyond the covers of a textbook or the requirements of the curriculum. Since conceptions and curriculum mutually influence each other, they can grow into a fruitful collaboration, instead of tampering with each other when things are not aligned correctly. That seamless collaboration eventually translates into enhanced classroom practices.

On the other hand, the findings of this study prove that the implementation of visual arts in teaching writing is attainable and effective; but it depends upon teachers' conceptions to become part of every student's learning experience. Teachers' conceptions play an intermediary role between the lesson content and how it is conveyed to students; therefore, they need as much attention and effort as other aspects in the supply chain of education. This study stressed the importance of a missing link that did not get much scrutiny in the Saudi educational context to date.

Appendices

Appendix A: Ethical approval letter

Durham University

School of Education

Shaped by the past, creating the future

17/10/18

Abeer M. Alhanaky
y@durham.ac.uk

Dear Abeer,

Primary teachers' conceptions and approaches to using visual arts in writing in Saudi Arabia

Reference: 3192

I am pleased to inform you that your ethics application for the above research project has been approved by the School of Education Ethics Committee.

May we take this opportunity to wish you good luck with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Nadin Beckmann
School of Education Ethics Committee Chair

وزارة التعليم
Ministry of Education

المملكة العربية السعودية
وزارة التعليم
(٢٨٠)
إدارة التعليم في محافظة الرس

الموضوع: بشأن تسهيل مهمة الباحثة عبير
محمد الحناكي

تعميم خاص بالمرحلة الابتدائية (بنين – بنات)

المكرم مدير /ة مدرسة   حفظه الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته.

أمل منكم تسهيل مهمة طالبة الدكتوراه بجامعة (درم) في بريطانيا / عبير
محمد الحناكي والتي تعد بحث بعنوان (مفاهيم وأساليب معلمي المرحلة
الابتدائية حول استخدام الفنون البصرية في تعليم الكتابة) وتعبئة الاستبانة
المرفقة وإجراء المقابلات مع المعلمين والمعلمات المستهدفون.

متمنين للجميع التوفيق والسداد.

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet

Title: Primary teachers' conceptions and approaches to using visual arts in writing in Saudi Arabia

You are invited to take part in a research study of Primary teachers' conceptions and approaches to using visual arts in writing in Saudi Arabia. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

The study is conducted by [Abeer Alhanaky] as part of her PG studies at Durham University.

* This research project is supervised by Dr. Dimitra Kokotsaki (xxx @durham.ac.uk) from the School of Education at Durham University.
The purpose of this study is to investigate the use of visual arts in writing from the perspective of teachers' conceptions and beliefs.

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to answer questions in a questionnaire and to participate in a semi-structured interview.

Your participation in this study will take approximately [40-60] minutes.

You are free to decide whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences for you.

All responses you give or other data collected will be kept confidential. The records of this study will be kept secure and private. All files containing any information you give are password protected. In any research report that may be published, no information will be included that will make it possible to identify you individually. There will be no way to connect your name to your responses at any time during or after the study.

If you have any questions, requests or concerns regarding this research, please contact me via email at [Abeer Alhanaky,   xxx @durham.ac.uk] or by telephone at [00966xxxxx].
This study has been reviewed and approved by the School of Education Ethics Sub-Committee at Durham University (date of approval: 17/10/2018)

[Abeer Alhanaky /   ]

[تاريخ   ]

ورقة معلومات المشارك

العنوان: مفاهيم ومناهج معلمي المرحلة الابتدائية في استخدام الفنون البصرية في الكتابة في المملكة العربية السعودية

تسرنا دعوتك للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية لمفاهيم ومناهج معلمي المرحلة الابتدائية في استخدام الفنون البصرية في الكتابة في المملكة العربية السعودية. يرجى قراءة هذا النموذج بعناية وطرح أي أسئلة قد تكون لديكم قبل الموافقة على المشاركة في الدراسة. تقوم بالدراسة الباحثة [عبير محمد صالح] كجزء من دراساتها في جامعة دورهام.

* يشرف على هذا المشروع البحثي الدكتورة ديمترا كوكوتسكي (durham.ac.uk@   )) من كلية التربية في جامعة دورهام.

الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو دراسة استخدام الفنون البصرية في الكتابة من منظور مفاهيم ومعتقدات المعلمين. إذا وافقت على أن تكون في هذه الدراسة ، سيُطلب منك الإجابة عن الأسئلة في استبيان الدراسة والمشاركة في مقابلة كذلك. ستستغرق مشاركتك في هذه الدراسة حوالي [40-60] دقيقة.

أنت حر في تقرير ما إذا كنت تريد المشاركة أم لا. إذا قررت المشاركة ، فأنت حر في الانسحاب في أي وقت دون أي عواقب سلبية بالنسبة لك.

سيتم الاحتفاظ بسرية جميع الردود التي تقدمها أو البيانات الأخرى التي يتم جمعها. سيتم الاحتفاظ بسجلات هذه الدراسة بطريقة آمنة و ذات خصوصية. جميع الملفات التي تحتوي على أي معلومات تقدمها ستكون محمية بكلمة مرور. في أي تقرير بحثي يمكن نشره ، لن يتم تضمين أية معلومات من شأنها أن تجعل من الممكن تحديد هويتك بشكل فردي. لن تكون هناك طريقة يمكن من خلالها ربط اسمك بردودك و اجاباتك في أي وقت سواء أثناء الدراسة أو بعدها.

إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة أو طلبات أو مخاوف بشأن هذا البحث ، يرجى الاتصال بي عبر البريد الإلكتروني على [Abeer Alhanaky، y@durham.ac.uk   ] أو عبر الهاتف على الرقم 00966].

تمت مراجعة هذه الدراسة والموافقة عليها من قبل اللجنة الفرعية لأخلاقيات التعليم في جامعة دورهام (تاريخ الموافقة: 17/10/2018)

204

Appendix C: Declaration of Informed Consent

- I agree to participate in this study, the purpose of which is to investigate the use of visual arts in writing from the perspective of teachers' conceptions and beliefs.
- I have read the participant information sheet and understand the information provided.
- I have been informed that I may decline to answer any questions or withdraw from the study without penalty of any kind.
- I have been informed that data collection will involve the use of AUDIO recording devices.
- I have been informed that all of my responses will be kept confidential and secure, and that I will not be identified in any report or other publication resulting from this research.
- I have been informed that the investigator will answer any questions regarding the study and its procedures. [Abeer Alhanaky], School of Education, Durham University can be contacted via email: xxx@durham.ac.uk] or telephone: [00966xxxx].
- I will be provided with a copy of this form for my records.

Any concerns about this study should be addressed to the School of Education Ethics Sub-Committee, Durham University via email to ed.ethics@durham.ac.uk.

_____

Date   Participant Name (please print)   Participant Signature

I certify that I have presented the above information to the participant and secured his or her consent.

_____

Date   Signature of Investigator

نموذج الموافقة المسبقة

• أوافق على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة ، والغرض منها هو دراسة استخدام الفنون البصرية في الكتابة من منظور مفاهيم ومعتقدات المعلمين.
• لقد قرأت ورقة معلومات المشارك وفهمت المعلومات المتعلقة بالدراسة.
• لقد تم ابلاغي بأنه يمكنني رفض الإجابة عن أي أسئلة أو الانسحاب من الدراسة دون أي تبعات من أي نوع.
• لقد تم إخباري بأن عملية جمع البيانات تشتمل على استخدام جهاز تسجيل صوتي AUDIO.
• تم إخباري بأن جميع إجاباتي ستبقى سرية وآمنة ، وأنه لن يتم تحديد هويتي في أي تقرير أو منشور آخر ناتج عن هذا البحث.
• لقد تم ابلاغي بأن الباحث سوف يجيب عن أي أسئلة تتعلق بالدراسة وإجراءاتها. [عبير محمد صالح] ، كلية التربية ، جامعة دورهام يمكن الاتصال بها عبر البريد الإلكتروني: durham.ac.uk@‏‏ أو هاتف: [‎0096 ـــــــــــ].
• سيتم تزويدي بنسخة من هذا النموذج لسجلاتي.

ينبغي توجيه أي مخاوف بشأن هذه الدراسة إلى اللجنة الفرعية لأخلاقيات التعليم في جامعة دورهام عبر البريد الإلكتروني إلى ed.ethics@durham.ac.uk.

تاريخ:

اسم المشارك (يرجى كتابته):

توقيع المشارك:

أقرّ أنّي قدّمت المعلومات المذكورة أعلاه إلى المشارك وحصلت على موافقته.

تاريخ:

توقيع الباحث:

206

Appendix D: Questionnaire

1. Your subject specialty:………………………

2. Your gender? ☐Male ☐Female

3. Your age group? ☐20-29 ☐30-39 ☐40-49

4. Length of your teaching experience?
☐0-5 years ☐6-10 years ☐11-15 years ☐16-20 years ☐21 years or more

5. What grades do you teach?
☐ ☐1st ☐2nd ☐3rd ☐4th ☐5th ☐6th

6. Do you use drawings, images, graphics, or charts in teaching?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ sometimes ☐ Don't know

7. How familiar are you with visual arts (specifically, drawing and images)?
☐ Familiar ☐ Somewhat familiar ☐ Not familiar ☐ Have never heard of it

8. Do you think visual arts (e.g. images) are an important subject?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes ☐ Don't know

9. In what subject do you use visual information the most?
☐Reading ☐Writing ☐Math ☐Science ☐Other, please specify:

10. Why do you use visuals more in this subject?

11. In what subject do you use visuals the least?
☐Reading ☐Writing ☐Math ☐Science ☐Other, please specify:

12. Why do you use them less in this subject?

13. Do you think of yourself (as a teacher) as a visual learner?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes ☐ Don't know

14. The percentage of your students you believe to be visual learners is
☐Less than 25% ☐25-50% ☐50-75% ☐More than 75%

15. How often do you include visuals, such as drawings, images, charts, graphs, posters, or diagrams into your lessons?
☐Always ☐Often ☐Occasionally ☐Rarely ☐Never ☐Others, specify:

16. How do you rate the importance of utilizing visuals to teach your students effectively?
☐Extremely important ☐Very important ☐Somewhat important ☐Not at all important

17. In your teaching, have there been any changes in the way you include visuals

into lessons? Please describe:

18. Do you think visual arts help in teaching writing?
    ☐ Yes. Please explain:

    ☐ No

19. Do you think that encouraging using visual arts in writing is easy or hard?

20. Why do you think this?

21. How long do you allocate to writing instruction each week? _____ minutes/ week

22. How long do students spend on writing daily? _____ minutes

23. What does your typical writing lesson look like? Please describe.

24. Do you believe you have received enough writing-related training?
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No

25. In your teaching, have there been any changes in your writing teaching? Please describe.

26. In your opinion, what are the challenges of teaching writing effectively? (Tick all that apply)
    - Resources
    - Time to plan the lessons
    - Time to present the lessons
    - Time students need to accomplish their writing
    - Time for helping students individually (conferencing)
    - Writing activity evaluation
    - Individualizing instruction
    - Student motivation

- Other, please specify:

27. Please describe how do you motivate struggling students in writing?

28. How do you evaluate drawing to be a part of writing? (Tick all that apply)
    - It helps students form concepts and visualize ideas
    - It helps to illustrate what students visualize
    - It is essential for thinking
    - It is not needed if children can write
    - It helps creativity and self-expression
    - It complements writing
    - It is a form of writing
    - It motivates students, especially struggling students
    - It provides a better communication approach
    - Other, please specify:

29. How do you evaluate images to be a part of writing? (Tick all that apply)
    - It helps students form concepts and visualize ideas
    - It helps to illustrate what students visualize
    - It is essential for thinking
    - It is not needed if children can write
    - It helps creativity and self-expression
    - It complements writing
    - It is a form of writing
    - It motivates students, especially struggling students
    - It provides a better communication approach
    - Other, please specify:

30. In the writing process stages, how do your students use drawing and images (Tick all that apply)
    Prewriting stage
    - Draw or sketch to elaborate ideas
    - View images to plan a story
    - Other, please specify:
    Drafting stage
    - Draw or sketch to stretch strategy
    - Review images
    - Other, please specify:
    Revision/editing stage
    - View drawing or images to look at overall ideas
    - Other, please specify:
    Publishing stage
    - Draw to express final product
    - Other, please specify:

31. What are the types of visual art projects do your students work on?

32. Which writing curriculum area offers the best opportunities for the use of visual arts?

33. In your opinion, do students benefit if they spend time in visual projects? (i.e. drawings, images, illustrations) How? In what ways?

34. How much time do you devote to teaching graphic design concepts?

35. Are you willing to participate in an interview about using visual arts in the teaching of writing?
☐ Yes   ☐ No

36. Any additional information you want us to know:

استبيان حول مفاهيم ومناهج معلمي المرحلة الابتدائية في استخدام الفنون البصرية في تعليم الكتابة في المملكة العربية السعودية

1. التخصص : ....

2. الجنس: • ذكر • أنثى

3. العمر : • 20-29 • 30-39 • 40-49

4. عدد سنوات الخبرة في التدريس:
• 5 سنوات أو أقل • 6-10 سنوات • 11-15 سنة • 16-20 سن • 21 سنة أو أكثر

5. الصفوف التي تقوم بتدريسها في المرحلة الابتدائية:
•تمهيدي •الأول •الثاني •الثالث •الرابع •الخامس •السادس

6. هل تستخدم الرسومات أو الصور أو(الرسومات البيانية والمخططات والجداول) في التدريس؟
• نعم • لا • في بعض الأحيان • لا أعرف

7. ما مدى معرفتك بالفنون البصرية (على وجه التحديد ، الرسم والصور) (الفنون البصرية هي مجموعة الفنون التي تهتم أساساً بإنتاج أعمال فنية تحتاج لتذوقها إلى الرؤية البصرية المحسوسة فهي الأعمال الفنيّة التي تشغل حيّزاً من الفراغ كالصور والرسم والتلوين والنحت و التصوير (تأخذ شكلاً) وهي بهذا تختلف عن الفنون الأخرى كالشعر والموسيقى)؟
• مألوفة بالنسبة لي • مألوفة إلى حد ما • غير مألوفة • لم أسمع بها من قبل

8. هل تعتقد أن الفنون البصرية (مثل الصور) هي موضوع (مقرر) مهم للطالب؟
• نعم • لا • في بعض الأحيان • لا أعرف

9. في أي مقرر يتم استخدام الفنون البصرية (الرسومات والصور) على الوجه الأكثر من بين المقررات؟
• القراءة • الكتابة • الرياضيات • العلوم • غير ذلك، يرجى التحديد:

10. لماذا تستخدم الفنون البصرية (الرسومات والصور) بكثرة في هذ المقرر ؟

11. في اي مقرر تستخدم الفنون البصرية (الرسومات والصور) على الوجه الأقل من بين المقررات؟
• القراءة • الكتابة • الرياضيات • العلوم • غير ذلك، يرجى التحديد:

12. لماذا تستخدم الفنون البصرية (الرسومات والصور) بقلّة في هذ المقرر ؟

13. هل تعتقد في نفسك (كمدرس او مدرسة) أنك متعلم بصري (المتعلم البصري هو الذي يربط الأفكار والمفاهيم والبيانات والمعلومات الأخرى بالصور والرسومات)؟
•نعم • لا • في بعض الأحيان • لا أعرف

14. النسبة المئوية للطلاب الذين تعتقد أنهم من المتعلمين بصرياً هي
•أقل من 25% • 25-50% • 50-75% • أكثر من 75%

15. إلى أي مدى تقوم بتضمين الفنون البصرية ، مثل الرسومات أو الصور أو المخططات أو الرسوم البيانية أو الملصقات أو المخططات في دروسك؟

• دائمًا   • غالبًا   • في بعض الأحيان   • نادرًا   • أبدًا   • غير ذلك، حدد:

16. كيف تقيم أهمية استخدام الفنون البصرية لتعليم طلابك بطريقة فعالة؟

• مهم للغاية   • مهم جدا   • مهم إلى حد ما   • غير مهم على الإطلاق

17. في عملك بالتدريس، هل حدثت أي تغييرات في طريقة تضمينك للفنون البصرية في الدروس؟ يرجى التوضيح:

18. هل تعتقد أن الفنون البصرية تساعد في تعليم الكتابة؟

• نعم . يرجى التوضيح:

• لا

19. هل تعتقد أن التشجيع على استخدام الفنون البصرية في مناهج الكتابة أمر سهل أم صعب؟

20. لماذا تعتقد ذلك ؟

21. كم من الوقت تخصص لتعليم الكتابة كل أسبوع؟ _____ دقيقة / أسبوع

22. كم من الوقت يقضي الطلاب في الكتابة يوميا؟ _____ دقيقة

23. كيف يبدو درسك النموذجي للكتابة؟ يرجى التوضيح:

24. هل تعتقد أنك تلقيت دورات تدريبية كافية في مجال تعليم الكتابة؟

• نعم   • لا

25. في عملك بالتدريس، هل حدثت أي تغييرات في طريقة تدريسك للكتابة ؟ يرجى التوضيح:

26. في رأيك ، ما هي التحديات التي تواجهها في تدريس الكتابة والتي تعيق الوصول الى النتائج الفعالة؟ (ضع علامة على كل ما ينطبق)

• المصادر (مثل الوسائل المساعدة والضرورية للتدريس)

• الوقت لتخطيط و تحضير الدروس

• الوقت لتقديم و عرض الدروس

• الوقت الذي يحتاجه الطلاب لإنجاز كتاباتهم

• الوقت لمساعدة الطلاب بشكل فردي

• كتابة و اعداد طريقة تقييم النشاط

• التعليمات الفردية لكل طالب

• تحفيز الطلاب

• غير ذلك ، يرجى التحديد:

27. كيف يتم تحفيز الطلاب الذين لديهم صعوبات في تعلم الكتابة؟

28. ما هو تقييمك لأن يكون الرسم جزءًا من دروس الكتابة؟ (ضع علامة على كل ما ينطبق)

• يساعد الطلاب على تشكيل المفاهيم وتصور الأفكار

• يساعد الطلاب على توضيح ما يتخيلونه

• ضروري للتفكير

• ليست هناك حاجة له إذا كان الأطفال قادرون على الكتابة

• يساعد على الإبداع والتعبير عن الذات

• مكمل و متمم للكتابة (بمعنى أن درس الكتابة لا يكتمل الا به)

• شكل (نوع) من أشكال الكتابة

• يحفز الطلاب ، وخاصة الطلاب ذوي صعوبات التعلم في الكتابة

• يوفر وسيلة تواصل أفضل

• غير ذلك، يرجى التحديد:

29. ما هو تقييمك لأن تكون الصور جزءًا من دروس الكتابة؟ (ضع علامة على كل ما ينطبق)

- يساعد الطلاب على تشكيل المفاهيم وتصور الأفكار

- يساعد الطلاب على توضيح ما يتخيلونه

- ضروري للتفكير

- ليست هناك حاجة له إذا كان الأطفال قادرون على الكتابة

- يساعد على الإبداع والتعبير عن الذات

- مكمل ومتمم للكتابة (بمعنى أن درس الكتابة لا يكتمل الا به)

- شكل (نوع) من أشكال الكتابة

- يحفز الطلاب ، وخاصة الطلاب ذوي صعوبات التعلم في الكتابة

- يوفر وسيلة تواصل أفضل

- غير ذلك، يرجى التحديد:

30. في مراحل عملية الكتابة ، كيف يستخدم طلابك الرسم والصور (ضع علامة على كل ما ينطبق)

مرحلة ما قبل الكتابة

- الرسم أو تنفيذ مسودة رسم لتحديد الأفكار

- الاطلاع على الصور وعرضها للتخطيط لكتابة قصة

- غير ذلك، يرجى التحديد:

مرحلة الصياغة

- الرسم أو تنفيذ مسودة رسم لتوسيع الاستراتيجية

- استعراض و مراجعة الصور

- غير ذلك، يرجى التحديد:

مرحلة المراجعة / التحرير

- عرض الرسم أو الصور للنظر في الأفكار العامة

- غير ذلك، يرجى التحديد:

مرحلة النشر

- الرسم للتعبير و تحديد منتج الكتابة النهائي

- غير ذلك، يرجى التحديد:

31. ما هي أنواع مشاريع او انشطة الفنون البصرية التي يعمل عليها طلابك؟

32. كم من الوقت تخصص لتدريس مفاهيم التصميم الجرافيكي لهذه المشاريع او الانشطة (التصميم الجرافيكي: هو الجمع بين الرموز والصور أو الكلمات لخلق تمثيل مرئي للأفكار والرسائل)؟

33. برأيك، أي جزء من أجزاء منهج الكتابة يمثل الفرصة الأفضل في استخدام الفنون البصرية؟

34. برأيك ، هل يستفيد الطلاب إذا قضوا بعض الوقت في المشاريع او الانشطة البصرية؟ (على سبيل المثال ، الرسومات ، الصور ، الرسوم التوضيحية) كيف؟ بأي طريقة؟

35. هل ترغب في المشاركة في مقابلة حول استخدام الفنون البصرية في تدريس الكتابة؟

- نعم
- لا

36. هل ترغب بإضافة أي معلومات تريد أن نعرفها:

Appendix E: Interview

1. Do you ever use visual arts (drawing, images) in your teaching? Can you provide more details? (subject, setting etc.)

2. What is your belief about using visual arts (specifically drawing and images) in writing? Why? Please explain.

3. In your teaching experience, do you believe using visual arts (drawing and images) in writing is (essential: you use it always, limited: you use it sometimes or for some cases, or marginal: you can teach writing without using visual arts)? Please explain and give examples.
    OR : In your teaching experience, to what extent do you use visual arts (drawing and images) in writing? Why? Please explain and give examples.

4. Do visual arts (drawing and images) hold special potential benefits for students learning to write compared to learning to write without the use of visual arts? What are these special benefits?

5. If you use visual arts in writing, do you use any additional visual artworks (drawing or images) other than those included in the curriculum? Why? Please explain. Can you provide an example?

6. Which writing stage (e.g. writing letters, words, sentences, composing) offers the best/least opportunity for visual arts? Why? In what primary school grade? Please give examples.

7. What skills (if any) can students develop from using visual arts in writing? Please give examples.

8. In what stage of the writing lesson are these skills manifest (e.g. prewriting, during writing, after writing practice)? Please explain with examples.

9. Do you use any form of writing (name, word, story, etc.) along with artwork (e.g. drawing, images)? Can you give examples?

10. What strategies do you use in integrating visual arts in writing? In what age? Please give examples.

11. Please describe a writing lesson that includes visual arts (drawing or images). In what ways is the use of visual arts in this lesson beneficial for the children? What more can be done to further increase these benefits?

12. Do you believe using visual arts in writing depends on the type of student (e.g. high, average, low ability students)? Please explain.

13. Can visual arts be used differently according to the students' age and school grade? In what ways? Please explain.

14. Do you believe it is valuable to use visual arts (drawing and images) in writing for students who struggle with writing? Why? Please give examples.

15. In your teaching experience, are there any factors that facilitate or constrain the use of visual arts (drawing and images) in writing?

16. Please share some successful experiences you have had when using visual arts (drawing and images) in your teaching of writing.

17. Please share some unsuccessful experiences you have had when using visual arts (drawing and images) in your teaching of writing.

18. How would you evaluate your experience overall regarding the use of visual arts (drawing and images) in writing? Why?

19. Overall, would you say that you have had positive experiences of using visual arts… in your teaching? Or not? Have this had a positive impact on learners, or not necessarily?

20. Can you add some final reflective comments on the use of visual arts (drawing and images) in teaching writing? Is there anything else you would like to add drawing on your relevant experiences?

1. هل يسبق لك استخدام الفنون البصرية (الرسم ، الصور) في تدريسك؟ أرجو التوضيح بالتفصيل؟)المقرر او المادة، الاعداد ، الخ(

2. ما هو اعتقادك حول استخدام الفنون البصرية (الرسم والصور) على وجه التحديد في الكتابة؟ لماذا ؟ يرجى التوضيح.

3. من خلال خبرتك في التدريس، هل تعتقد أن استخدام الفنون البصرية (الرسم والصور) في الكتابة هو ضروري: تستخدمه دائما ، محدود تستخدمه في بعض الأحيان أو في بعض الحالات ، أو هامشي: يمكن تعليم الكتابة دون استخدام الفنون البصرية (يرجى توضيح كيف لك وإعطاء أمثلة.

   a. أ و: من خلال خبرتك في التدريس، إلى أي مدى تستخدم الفنون البصرية (الرسم والصور) في الكتابة؟ لماذا ؟ يرجى توضيح لك وإعطاء أمثلة.

4. هل الفنون البصرية (الرسم والصور) في الكتابة تسبب هذا الطلب للفن يتعلمون من الكتابة مقارنة بتعلم الكتابة دون استخدام الفنون البصرية؟ ما هي هذه المزايا الخاصة؟

5. إذا كانت تستخدم الفنون البصرية في تعليم الكتابة ف هل تستخدم أي أعمال فنية بصرية محددة (رسم أو صور) غير تلك لمدرج في هذه؟ لماذا ؟ يرجى توضيح لك و اعطاء أمثلة؟

6. ما هي مرحلة الكتابة)الكتابة لحروف، للكلمات ، الجمل ، التعبير و الإنشاء(التي تقدم تفضل / أ الفرصة للفنون البصرية؟ لماذا في أي عمر أوصف درس يتم لك؟ يرجى اعطاء أمثلة.

7. ما هي المهارات)إن وجدت(التي يمكن أن يتعلمها ا الطلب من استخدام الفنون البصرية في الكتابة؟ يرجى اعطاء أمثلة.

8. في أي مرحلة من مراحل الكتابة لدرس تظهر هذه المهارات)على سبيل المثال ، عند الاعداد للكتابة ، إنشاء الكتابة ، بعد ممارسة الكتابة(يرجى التوضيح مع الأمثلة.

9. هل تستخدم أي شكل من أشكال الكتابة)الرسم ، الكلمة ، القصة ، الخ(مع الأعمال الفنية)مثل الرسم ، الصور(؟ هل يمكنك إعطاء أمثلة؟

218

10. ما هي الاستراتيجيات التي تستخدمها في دمج فنون الصور في المنهج في أي عمر يكون لك؟ يرجى اعطاء أمثلة.

11. أرجو وصف درس في المنهج يتضمن فنون الصور (الرسم أو الصور). كيف يكون استخدام فنون الصور في هذا الدرس مفيداً للطلاب؟ ما الذي ينطوي عليه زيادة هذه الفوائد؟

12. هل تعتقد أن استخدام فنون الصور في المنهج يعتمد على نوع الطالب (على سبيل المثال، الطلاب ذوي القدرات العالية أم المتوسطة أم الضعيفة)؟ يرجى التوضيح.

13. هل يمكن استخدام فنون الصور بشكل مختلف أو متفاوت وفقاً للعمر الطالب والصف المدرسي؟ كيف يكون لك؟ يرجى التوضيح.

14. هل تعتقد أنه من المفيد استخدام فنون الصور (الرسم والصور) في المنهج للطلاب الذين يعانون من ضعف أو صعوبات في التعلم في المنهج؟ لماذا؟ يرجى اعطاء أمثلة.

15. في تجربتك التعليمية، هل هناك أي عوامل هل أوقفتك استخدام فنون الصور (الرسم والصور) في المنهج؟

16. أرجو ذكر بعض تجاربك الناجحة عند استخدام فنون الصور (الرسم والصور) في تدريسك للمنهج.

17. أرجو ذكر بعض تجاربك غير الناجحة التي مررت بها عند استخدام فنون الصور (الرسم والصور) في تدريسك للمنهج.

18. كيف تقيم تجربتك بشكل عام فيما يتعلق باستخدام فنون الصور (الرسم والصور) في المنهج؟ لماذا؟

19. بشكل عام، هل ترى أن التي اكتسبت تجارب إيجابية حول استخدام فنون الصور في تدريسك للمنهج؟ أم لا؟ هل كان لهذا تأثير إيجابي على الطلاب، أم هي بالضرورة؟

20. هل يمكنك ذكر بعض التطبيقات أو التصورات التي هي قد تلخص استخدام فنون الصور (الرسم والصور) في تدريس المنهج؟ هل هناك أي شيء آخر تود إضافته؟

219

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