

## Research Article

# Saudi Teachers' Self-Efficacy in Implementing the Arabic Language Integrative Curriculum

Arwa Fahad Alfayez 

*Department of Curriculum and Teaching Methods, College of Education, University of Hai'l, Ha'il, Saudi Arabia*

Correspondence should be addressed to Arwa Fahad Alfayez; [af.alfayez@uoh.edu.sa](mailto:af.alfayez@uoh.edu.sa)

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A set of beliefs and knowledge about teaching and learning lies at the heart of every teacher. Curriculum methods are modified as a teacher's knowledge grows, and self-efficacy grows. Teachers' effectiveness and views influence literacy teaching in their courses to various degrees. However, they are frequently obligated to teach in a particular manner in order to obtain desired learning outcomes, even if they do not completely agree with the techniques or approaches. The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between Saudi elementary school teachers' efficacy beliefs and practices regarding implementing the Arabic language integrative curriculum and the factors that affect and impede teachers' instructional classroom practice. This qualitative case study uses Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy framework to provide rich, thick descriptions of Saudi teachers' self-efficacy source experiences and how those experiences shaped self-efficacy beliefs. It highlights three elementary Saudi teachers' efficacy through observations and interviews. The results indicate that teachers' high efficacy beliefs led them to make changes in the curriculum based on their students' needs. Evidence also supported the tension between whether teachers want to implement the integrative curriculum or the separated one. The participants in the study found new ways to maneuver through the scripted curriculum and what they think is best for their students.

## 1. Introduction

Teachers nowadays experience everyday challenges as they attempt to make appropriate decisions in terms of choosing the most helpful techniques for improving their students' learning. The challenges are particularly constraining reading teachers since they stand in the way of diverse approaches to literacy instruction. Even if they are unable to define it, teachers typically have a certain theoretical attitude toward reading [1, 2]. Literacy programs in schools represent an implicit set of literacy knowledge, beliefs, and theories [3]. Teachers' instructional decisions, from lesson planning to interactions with students, are influenced by these ideas and beliefs [4]. Furthermore, teachers' personal beliefs about the nature of the reading process and how students achieve literacy skills affect their choices of teaching materials and approaches [5].

Jackson [6] described the activities and procedures of a normal classroom in his book *Life in the Classroom*. He demonstrated how difficult it is to comprehend why teachers choose a specific method of instruction. He discovered, as a result of his investigation, that "beneath the surface of classroom events lies the complex world of individual psychology" (p. 172). Aside from the inner thought process that leads teacher's activities, external elements also play a role because of the "physical, temporal, and social limits of the classroom have a constructing effect upon the event that might occur there if individual impulse were allowed to reign free" (p. 13).

The Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education began developing a new curriculum in 2005 that integrates Arabic language skills into elementary and intermediate levels [7]. However, teachers were not prepared for this transition. Through interactions with teachers, they seem to have mixed views on the integrative curriculum and how it should be

implemented. Several studies have revealed that individual teacher opinions and beliefs have a significant impact on school objectives, goals, curriculum, and teaching techniques [8]. Teacher self-efficacy is one factor that predicts teachers' future conduct [9]. Teachers with high levels of self-efficacy are more deliberate in their instruction [10]. Furthermore, instructors with high levels of self-efficacy for teaching are more likely than their counterparts with low levels of self-efficacy to use a variety of methods and instructional practices [11].

As a result, comprehending the teaching process entails more than only comprehending teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, how they are formed, and how they impact instruction. It is also critical to understand how these beliefs are influenced by outside events that have an impact on classroom life.

In this study, the researcher wants to understand Saudi teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in implementing the Arabic language integrative curriculum. The main research question is how do teachers' efficacy influence integrative curriculum implementation?

The investigation of this study was led by the following subquestions:

- (1) What is the relationship between Saudi elementary school teachers' efficacy beliefs and practices regarding implementing the integrative curriculum?
- (2) What role do teachers have in shaping literacy instruction in their classroom?
- (3) What elements do teachers consider critical for efficient literacy instruction in an elementary classroom?

*1.1. Developments in the Saudi Reading Curriculum.* The Saudi Ministry of Education oversees education, funding all public schools and developing curriculum and materials [12]. The curriculum is often described as scripted "a term which refers to a wide variety of curricular materials or pre-packaged lesson plans that explicitly script out exactly what the teacher will say, show, and do—and often even how students are expected to respond—so that the teacher only need read from a manual in order to deliver the lesson" [13].

There have been two periods to the development of the Arabic curriculum [14]. During the first half-century, the Ministry of Education relied only on the segregated/separated approach to the curriculum design. The integrated curriculum design was the emphasis of the second phase.

Segregated/separated curriculum: for many years, Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Education has used a separate language arts curriculum. This approach may be characterized as the teaching of language in isolation from other school disciplines. Furthermore, segregated skill training entails teaching the primary language skills apart from one another. It was likely to be the most significant issue facing Saudi Arabia's educational system [15].

Separated instruction, while useful for teaching individual abilities, is rarely applied in a larger classroom setting. This method was solely concerned with linguistic

knowledge, ignoring students' skills and attitudes to practice the language [16]. Reading, writing, dictation exercises, syntactic principles, literature, and rhetoric were all split into separate disciplines in this curriculum. Students' production of the language was not the focus except in two subjects: writing and reading expression. The application of such a methodology led to considerable deficiencies in the linguistic design of the lesson and the organizational technique.

The lack of reading, writing, listening, and speaking strategies in the linguistic content made available to students is one of the fundamental problems of the shared curriculum. Teachers are not required to focus on certain abilities that are critical to the student's success. These abilities would be necessary for a student to effectively generate the language through a scientific approach of instruction [17].

The absence of linguistic engagement with the actual Arabic language is another critical flaw in the Arabic language curriculum. Even when students are presented to authentic language, the themes they are given are not thematically related. Additionally, there is a clear disconnect between the language delivered to students and the language they are required to generate. For example, students are mostly given literary texts, but their everyday needs are to write functional, argumentative, and communicative writings [17].

The divided method ignored the unity of Arabic, which perplexed students studying Arabic as an integrated unit in their daily lives [18]. There have been several studies that have looked into the usefulness of this technique in terms of student outcomes in learning Arabic. These studies determined that this approach was the primary issue limiting teachers and students from accomplishing the objectives of teaching and learning Arabic as mandated by the Ministry of Education [19]. Thus, they proposed to design and implement a different approach that is based on the nature of the Arabic language and the processes involved in learning it.

Integrated curriculum: the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education began developing a new curriculum in 2005 that integrates Arabic language skills into elementary and intermediate levels [7]. By 2007, the Ministry of Education had launched the King Abdullah Public Education Development Project, which intended to implement significant reforms to increase the educational system's overall quality [20]. These goals included a student-centered curriculum and the creation of innovative teaching methods. The Saudi curriculum tried to incorporate constructivist methodologies, and teachers were urged to abandon traditional methods of instruction [21]. The Ministry of Education has released a new Arabic language arts policy that incorporates an integrated approach to language education [7].

Scholars have characterized integrated curriculum, including Cameron [22], who defined it as a thematically structured approach. It is one in which diverse themes are brought together by focusing on a single theme. Cameron [22] explained that it is based on a variety of activities. Al-Ghabisi [23] also included all elements that come together to form a comprehensive framework. As a result, an integrated curriculum entails bringing together information and skills from many disciplines of study in order to identify a topic or

issue that is acceptable for instruction. Furthermore, Shehadeh [24] asserted that the term indicated the methods for connecting and complementing diverse studying resources in a given subject in order to construct a complete unit.

This approach is more successful at teaching comprehension skills that can be used in a wide variety of situations [25]. As a result, the Ministry of Education took this strategy to assist students in their efforts to learn Arabic [14].

The integrated language method promotes natural learning, in which the teacher may utilize appropriate material to help students improve their reading, writing, and speaking skills [26]. Furthermore, the material chosen allows teachers to concentrate on the many skills required to acquire a language, such as grammar, reading comprehension, spelling, vocabulary, and handwriting. Such language skills are more effectively acquired when combined with the other skills. Students, for instance, can learn to read through written and oral exercises. They learn to write while they read, and they may then produce writings. As a result of gaining and generating written language, students are better able to acquire oral language [27].

Due to growing support for the integrative approach, the Ministry of Education developed the curriculum and obligated teachers to apply the curriculum, strategies, guidelines, and instructions. The curriculum is considered a product rather than a process [28]. As a result, they created new integrated textbooks for the Arabic language for grades 1 through 9. These textbooks were designed using a variety of modules that were relevant to students' environment, interests, and lives. The many reading topics provide a place for language skills to integrate and merge. Throughout the reading activities, many communication skills are improved. Answers and responses to questions for photographs and diagrams related to each subject are used in textbooks to promote speaking and writing.

These books teach students how to utilize language by allowing them to select language phrases and patterns from literary texts and applying them to new circumstances.

*1.2. Theoretical Framework.* People, according to social cognitive theory, "are neither autonomous agents nor simply mechanical converse of animating environmental influences" [29], 1175). Rather, a variety of factors influence how and when a person matures. This is best shown by what Bandura refers to as "triadic reciprocal relationships" (1989, p.1175). In this relationship, issues are represented by the individual, the environment, and the outcome. Stated differently, each individual and his or her environment can influence the outcome, or the action-reaction cycle might go in the opposite direction. In this concept, a person's efficacy beliefs play a role in determining motivation, affect, and behavior in relation to proximate tasks [30]. While these tasks may change from one classroom to the next or from one setting to the next, one thing remains constant: an individual's efficacy beliefs about a task are necessary for task completion [31].

Self-efficacy is a complex variable that is context and task-dependent, and it should be investigated using a variety of approaches and methods [32]. For example, a teacher's self-efficacy for classroom management may be strong, but not so much for strategic instruction. In this scenario, the instructor is competent in correcting student behavior and correctly engaging pupils, but not so much in teaching effectively using diverse techniques [33].

Bandura [34] argued that these beliefs were stronger than their actual talents for the task at hand when influencing people's motivation, emotional state, and level of behavior. As a result, teachers who do not expect some students to succeed in literacy education will probably give up because of less planning and teaching effort and the students' struggles. Therefore, beliefs are self-fulfilling with their own efficiency and can be strengthened with either their abilities or their incompetence [35].

Bandura [36] hypothesized that there are four sources of information from which individuals glean information about their abilities, which affects their self-efficacy development. These four sources of information are as follows: (1) one's own previous mastery or nonmastery experience, (2) vicarious experience by observing others, (3) social persuasion, and (4) physiological and emotional states [36].

Individuals with low or practically no self-efficacy beliefs often rely on people around them to accomplish tasks, or these individuals just refuse to participate in circumstances, in order to measure or quantify self-efficacy. Individuals with stronger self-efficacy views, on the other hand, tend to do better on certain activities [37].

Teachers' efficacy beliefs influence their classroom conduct as well. The amount of effort they put into teaching, the goals they set, and their degree of aspiration are all affected by efficacy. Teachers who have a high feeling of efficacy are more likely to prepare and organize their lessons [38]. They are also more open to new ideas and willing to try out new approaches in order to better meet their students' needs [39]. Teachers' efficacy beliefs impact their tenacity when things do not go as planned and their resilience in the face of setbacks. Higher efficacy teachers are less likely to criticize students when they make mistakes [40], to report a difficult student to special education [41], and to deal with troublesome students for longer periods of time [9]. Teachers who have a higher sense of efficacy are more dedicated to their profession [42], more passionate about teaching [43], and more likely to continue in the profession [44].

His approach oriented on people's beliefs of their own ability to influence future change. Efficacy beliefs have an impact on how resilient individuals are when confronted with challenges, how long they will persevere in the face of failure or difficulties, and how much energy they will devote to any specific work [36]. Similarly, efficacy beliefs and results expectations impact a teacher's decisions. According to research, teachers appreciate the majority of classroom methods that have been validated and observed to be successful [45]. Teachers must first have questions that indicate a curiosity about how to improve instructions, as well as a desire to learn more and experiment with their students,

before they can seek out these best practices to use in their classrooms. Teachers' low efficacy views about their teaching abilities are one of the main reasons preventing them from developing this curiosity. In fact, whether or not a teacher would attempt to employ a different, empirically proven instructional strategy in the classroom is determined by his or her self-efficacy [47].

## 2. Methodology

*2.1. Research Design.* Based on the gap that was discovered through the review of the literature, the problem statement mandated a qualitative study as the best approach for the research. The study's core focus was centered on the "overarching" research question [48]: how do teachers' efficacy influence integrative curriculum implementation? As a result, the researcher decided that the qualitative method would allow the participants' views to be heard. Many quantitative studies using self-efficacy quantitative rating scales for middle school students, teachers, and college students are reported. However, little qualitative research exists on Saudi teachers' self-efficacy and its effects in implementing the Arabic integrative curriculum. Using Bandura's [34] self-efficacy framework, the study provided rich, thick descriptions of Saudi teachers' self-efficacy source experiences and how those experiences shaped self-efficacy source. Furthermore, it was felt that the qualitative research methodology known as a case study would best address the research issues. Case studies are generally time-consuming examinations of a limited system or a case (or several cases) by extensive, in-depth data collecting incorporating numerous sources, the findings of which are frequently written up with dense, rich description in order to provide a detailed description of the case [47].

This study, in particular, used a multiple-case study methodology, in which numerous instances were investigated and evaluated. Multiple-case designs offer clear advantages over single-case designs [48]. The data from multiple cases are frequently regarded as more convincing, and the whole research is thus regarded as more solid.

*2.2. Participants.* The Hail Educational Office was requested to recommend schools with integrity and good intentions for the objectives of the current study using intensity sampling and stratified purposeful sampling [49]. The three primary school teachers were chosen in the same manner, with principal recommendations. The information obtained reflected the grades, status, and ranking as determined by academic aid at the start of that school year. These are the statistics that the school would utilize to drive the instructional goals in the school improvement plan at the time of the study.

The participants were all certified third- and fourth-grade teachers. These teachers have acquired teaching certificates in their respective areas and had more than 10 years of total teaching experience. Each had spent at least ten years at the school.

*2.3. Data Collection.* This study focused on teachers' efficacy in implementing the Arabic language-integrated curriculum. Through the interactions of the participants, observations were used to explore the instructional intersections between written curriculum, curriculum planning, and instructional delivery. Observations were conducted through the online classes through the corona pandemic for eight weeks during reading instruction. Direct instruction, mini-lessons, and evaluations were observed. To organize and document data for the study, a field log was used. In order to understand and interpret the interviews, a systematic field observations and detailed written observations were created.

In-depth, semistructured interviews were the major source of data. In-depth, semistructured interviews were the major source of data. Teachers were interviewed in order to learn more about their past and present experiences to help the researcher understand the efficacy of the participating teachers in implementing the integrated curriculum. The interviews were planned after the first week of school, ensuring a time and a platform. The interviews were conducted either during or at the end of the school day.

The purpose of the follow-up interviews was to obtain explanations about teachers' educational delivery based on the previous observations and data. The purpose of the follow-up interviews was to get clarity from the observations and prior interviews.

*2.4. Data Analysis.* Three data sources were examined as standalone sources of information as well as in connection to one another [50]. This case study was built using Yin's [44] analytic methodologies for observations and interviews. The first step was to transcribe the interviews and field notes. A priori codes were predetermined based on Bandura's hypothesized sources of self-efficacy information. The original codes were as follows: "Mastery/Non-Mastery Experiences," "Vicarious Experiences," "Social Persuasion," and "Physiological/Emotional States." In order to ensure reliability, I made a database with all of the information from the first coding cycle. Second cycle coding entailed revisiting the data in order to "reorganize and reassemble the converted data to better concentrate [the] study's direction" [51]. I created a diagram of the codes and linked many of them with the a priori codes to form the primary themes. The interview transcripts were categorized individually for themes concerning self-efficacy sources in the first round. Each transcript was recoded once it had been coded the first time. Bandura's [34] framework was utilized to cluster themes using the second coding (mastery, verbal, vicarious, physiological).

A list of categories was created after the researcher looked for patterns of behavior and consequences. The data were manually coded once the categories were selected to graphically highlight the patterns and contradictions.

Documents related to the study interest were evaluated, in addition to documents obtained by the researcher through observations and interviews. The goal of document analysis was to see whether the researcher's observations, the teachers' replies from the interviews, and the papers

directing and affecting teacher pedagogy could all be triangulated. According to Merriam [52]; “the strength of documents as a data source lies with the fact that they already exist in the situation; they do not intrude upon or alter the setting in ways that the presence of the investigator might” (p.13). The importance of such documents is because they are utilized for planning, education, or both. Data triangulation helps to make sense of the case and builds trustworthiness between the three data sources [50].

The researcher was ready to draw large connections and report on what she found when a defined structure for data analysis formed along with the data and theoretical framework. She started reporting the findings and assigned each case study different themes that explain teachers’ perceptions on reading instruction and the use of the scripted curriculum. In the findings, the researcher described teachers’ characteristics, their beliefs on reading instruction, and advantages and disadvantages of the scripted curriculum. The researcher used teachers’ data from the interview as well as artifacts to explain their point of view. Then, the researcher discussed the findings in general themes that she has found.

**2.5. Ethical Considerations.** In any sort of educational study, ethics is a critical concern. Informed permission, secrecy, anonymity, transparency, and no harm caused are the ethical criteria of educational research, according to Burgess [53]. To avoid such risk, a certificate from the University of Hail’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) was obtained in order to complete the current study. Furthermore, clearance from Saudi Arabia was required. Permission from the Saudi Ministry of Education was acquired in Hail City.

Furthermore, the participants’ informed consent was requested for their participation. Prior to the commencement of the research, the researcher made certain that the participants understood the nature of the research and the procedure in which they would be involved, including why their involvement is required, how it would be used, and how and to whom it will be reported. The researcher made it clear to the participants, in accordance with the IRB standards, that they have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. As a result, participants understood and agreed to their involvement.

In this study, confidentiality and anonymity were taken into account. I did not reference the participants or the schools involved. To maintain anonymity, the teachers in this study were represented with pseudonyms. Furthermore, schools were defined by their setting, not their name. The city name, on the other hand, was provided to assist the audience to comprehend where it happened. Therefore, the city name was retained owing to the Saudi Ministry of Education rules.

### 3. Findings

**3.1. Roaa: Case Study 1.** Integrative approach: Roaa was a great supporter of the new approach. According to her experience, the integrated approach stimulated students’

motivation to read and fostered a learning mindset. She was interested in teaching in the new integrative approach rather than the former separate curriculum. She stated,

I like the new curriculum much more than the previous ones, because it made the student alive in the classroom, she [the student] became more interested than before, she wants to learn and participate whereas in the past she and the chair were one. But now she participates in the learning process; for instance, she writes on the board. Through the whole to part approach she now knows the letter from her brother or father.

Guskey [39] explained that teachers with high efficacy are more open to new ideas and willing to try out new approaches. Roaa is a supporter of the integration in the Language Arts. This entails combining previously distinct language arts disciplines to be learned by utilizing literature and reading to create a context for teaching and learning, as well as the skills and strategies of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Advocates of the integrative approach, such as Roaa, contend that instead of focusing on singular elements of language, integration allows students to understand the Arabic language as a whole, recognizing the connections between its various components [17].

**Integrated approach: relationship between reading and writing:** Roaa viewed a strong relationship between reading and writing. She asserted,

“A student must know how to write and spell the letter or word, when you delay the spelling part and give it after a week or in another class, the student will prepare herself by memorizing but when we practice immediately the student will saturate the lesson more and thus you will be able to assess whether she understood the lesson or not.”

According to Roaa, reading is not only a written script, nor it is spoken words, but it is rather a whole system that should not be deprived of its meaning, because spoken and written language would be useless if it did not represent a meaningful idea. When students read without intonation, for example, there will be a disconnect between the performance and the meaning of the text. As a result, students deny the wholeness of the language and limit it to abstract concepts devoid of meaning. Consequently, students’ writing should consider form and content unity into account. Thus, writing should consider the markers of the language, because writing without any structural organization or punctuation shows that the learner did not grasp the elements of writing, which might lead to a misunderstanding of meaning. Roaa, for instance, expected all writing to be grammatically perfect with the correct movement of the letters. If every language teaching instance must have a content-form association, then teaching students a language through poetry or literature without imparting the purpose behind such works is inadequate. She considered this to be critical for elementary students to master.

Roaa’s support of the new integrated approach to teaching Arabic language art made her more appreciative of the *101 Active Learning Strategies*. The Ministry of Education has strongly advised teachers to implement these instructional strategies in their classrooms. Roaa went over and

beyond in applying the strategies in her classroom. Her motivation in going beyond the 101 *Active learning strategies* stemmed from her high efficacy beliefs. In addition, positive physiological and emotional experiences while creating new strategies have also informed Roaa's self-efficacy. She, for instance, was able to make dolls that took the characters from the texts, a mailing service where students hand the values learned from the lesson, and a treasure box when students answer the question they receive a gift.

Although Roaa created these, she was asked by the Ministry of Education to provide her ideas before using them in the classroom. Despite this restriction, Roaa continued to work on her methods and sent them to the Ministry of Education; she is hoping that they can be added to the 101 *Active Learning Strategies*. Here, Roaa played a major role in shaping what would be appropriate for her student. Her high efficacy beliefs pushed her in doing what she thinks is best for her students.

With these different teaching strategies, Roaa found the curriculum to be engaging for her students. Given her enthusiastic teaching approach, it is impossible to determine whether the scripted program was genuinely entertaining or whether she was the one who made it such. Her vicarious experience by observing her students affected her efficacy beliefs. In addition, Roaa believed that the curriculum made learning fun, allowed her students to engage without fear of failure, and to experience success that led to further success. She stated, The entrance of strategies to the curriculum has benefitted me very much. Strategies have been used for a long time but they did not have names and terms; for instance, I would give a student a flower or put a star in her notebook. This is now called motivation. . . numbered sticks is also a strategy I use in the classroom, for every group. For instance, I want to ask a question, I say number fours stands up, I give them the question, number four in every group does not speak she thinks and asks her friends in the group because she is the speaker of the group, I ask flowers group, for instance, and see if her answer is missing or truncate. I then ask the heart group and she would know that the previous answer was missing and she would complete what was missing and this goes on until we have a complete answer. This makes the classroom flame. . . strategies made the students more cooperative, strategies made instruction more interactive and not like the past only repetitive talk, . . . teachers now only help and the student is the core of the education process.

Integrated approach: cooperative learning: Roaa argued that the strategies made her classroom more alive and that the learning process revolves around the students. Through the many instructional strategies that she mentioned in the interviews, Roaa seems to be a promoter of cooperative learning. She considered this critical for efficient literacy instruction in an elementary classroom. She seemed to be exceptionally confident and excited about this approach. Primarily, her high efficacy was likely informed by her previous successful experiences with using such strategy. She stated, "In the new curriculum, we are asked to put students in groups. I like it. In the past, students worked individually and students were put in rows. Now, the classroom is arranged in small groups."

Cooperative learning focuses on teaching approaches where small groups of students work together to assist each other in acquiring academic material [54]. Felder and Brent [55] also defined it as "students working in teams on an assignment or project under conditions in which certain criteria are satisfied, including that the team members be held individually accountable for the complete content of the assignment or project" (p. 34).

According to Roaa, "Working in small groups made students' more interested. They want to talk." In other incidents, she stated that small group learning encouraged her students to be competitive. "They want to become the winning group." Psychologists and effective instructors have recognized that students learn more effectively through doing rather than merely listening or watching [56]. Beyond that, collaboration improves learning in a variety of ways. When weak students work alone, they are more inclined to give up; when they work together, they persevere. When strong students are given the responsibility of clarifying and explaining information to weaker students, they frequently discover gaps in their own comprehension and fill them. In addition, this approach of teaching and learning alters the role and responsibility of both teachers and students in the classroom. Teaching and learning becomes a shared obligation by groups of students and the teacher [55].

Structure: with this interactive and cooperative style of learning, Roaa emphasized the importance of structure. She gave structure when it was required and in sufficient amounts especially during her reading lesson. According to Allinder [38], teachers who have a high feeling of efficacy are more likely to prepare and organize their lessons. She explained,

Our last unit was about animals, and now we are going to have a new unit and that is, for instance, occasions. I ask the students what does occasion mean? Name some of our occasions in life? The student might say, for instance, *Eid Alfter* or *Eid Al Adha*. I might also add that birth and traveling can be occasions. After that, we open the book, when we open the book, I give them the page number, and then I write the date because it is a new lesson. The student should be looking at the context of the lesson silently, then I give her time and I say look at the book, look at the pictures. I then open the projector and let her read, when she is done reading I read the text myself, before she listens to the readings I ask the student where is my finger, where are my eyes, where is my mind, I make sure that the student is paying attention to the reading, so she can focus on the pronunciation of the word, how the word is written, and all her five senses are working. When we are done with the reading, the student closes the book and pays attention to what I explain because I will explain the skill she needs to learn. . . Then we do the reading where excellent students begin to read because they mirror my reading, then good readers have their turn then the poor readers, because they need more time to listen and practice their reading.

Roaa's instructional structure gave students some sense of comfort because they know how the lesson is going to work. Her lesson begins with a silent look at the book, listening to the reading from the projector and then Roaa's

reading. During this time, the students are reminded to pay attention, and then, excellent students begin to read. Poor students are left at the end because Roaa believes this will increase the amount of material read silently, while other students are reading.

Furthermore, Roaa prepared activities and materials for students in a systematic manner so that they may acquire important sets of skills and abilities. She considered this to be critical for efficient literacy instruction in an elementary classroom. She portrayed herself as a well-organized teacher who employed a variety of educational modes, including auditory, visual, and hands-on: she uses the projector, and “teach[s] by listening, watching, and actually doing the work.” She speaks in their own level of language, so they can comprehend her. This was very clear in the language she used when giving me examples of her teaching, for instance, she expressed, “our last lesson was on parents, we say, parents are this and this, and then I would say every one of you has a mother and a father and if you do not have a father you have a mother, a student told me I do not have a mother and a father, I told her I am just like you, I do not have a mother and a father, the student was happy and she said Miss Roaa is just like me, she does not have a mother and a father.”

*3.1.1. Criticism of Curriculum.* Roaa’s learning through different sources helped her recognize the inadequacies in the curriculum. She noticed the lack in addressing students’ needs. Students differ regarding their attitudes toward teaching and learning, react differently to instructional practices and classroom environments, and differ in their degrees of motivation. Teachers who understand this are more likely to meet their student diverse learning needs [55].

Not meeting students’ needs: although Roaa was comfortable with the scripted curriculum, she critiqued the scripted curriculum for not taking into account different students’ needs. She stated, the curriculum does not consider the students one hundred percent. As I said earlier, they give you the scripted curriculum and we have to use it. Students must read the texts and answer the exercises. They did not look into, for instance, that this student is weak and she will not answer and the excellent student will answer very easily, No, they just gave us the script and we have to use it. But you, the teacher, have to deal with students’ individual differences but the texts are very weak. . . .

Through her vicarious experience, Roaa noticed the lack of attention to different students’ needs in the scripted curriculum. The effectiveness of these programs has been questioned as some evidence indicates they have not been found to meet the needs of individual students [57]. This all falls in the hands of the teachers as Roaa expressed, which makes their job much harder.

Lack of motivation: with the lack of attention to students’ needs, students lose interest, which leads to a lack of motivation. Roaa assured the topics in the scripted curriculum do not motivate the students to read. She stated, “the text does not attract the students, for instance, the text on cars. . . and girls usually are not interested in cars, I must bring

something that helps the girls to read, these topics do not have value to the girls and it will not motivate her to read.” The example lesson that Roaa provided was about cars. Lyons et al. [58] stated, “Motivation is arguably the most critical ingredient for long-term success in learning to read and write” (p. 495).

According to Melekoglu [59], instructors should try to enhance students’ reading abilities, as well as to emphasize the value of reading in their lives. Students may become more interested in developing and less hesitant to read if they recognize the importance of reading. When students are driven by motivation, they can create connections between reading content and relevant experiences [59]. Students must understand how what they are studying pertains to their daily lives. Roaa stated, “Knowledge does not separate from life, our life and our knowledge are always attached, if we made knowledge something separate then what good does it make for the girl? This also helps the student to comprehend and then she is able to experience it and talk about it.”

### 3.2. Reem: Case Study 2

*3.2.1. Instructional Beliefs.* Although Reem did not like the integrative curriculum, which is better in focusing on comprehension than the previous curriculum, she believed that “a student may read and read and read, even though her reading is crumbled, but I feel, for me, that her reading is good. I do not take care in how she pronounces the words.” Here, she focuses on comprehension rather than correct pronunciation. This also is affected by her high efficacy beliefs, since teachers with high efficacy beliefs are less likely to criticize students when they make mistakes [40].

Reem also believed that learning should be fun. She often danced with her students when learning a new letter or when reading a poem. She stated, children need a playful way to learn and I thought this would be a good idea. . . I guess that’s why my knees hurt all the time. For instance, when we are learning about long sounds, tall students would stand. . . .When learning about short sounds, short students would sit down.

Reem explained that students usually lose their attention if the content was not introduced in an interesting manner. It is critical for educators to recognize that giving students information is not teaching and does not foster motivation. Participating in enjoyable learning activities will lead students to feel optimum pleasure [60].

Engagement: along with making teaching fun, Reem asserted that students need to take part in the learning process. She expressed,

Students need to take a role in the learning process. Even when I do my assessment, I let the students assume the role of the teacher. For instance, I ask two students to stand up. I, then, ask student Ĩ [A] to read and student Ɔ [B] listens and corrects her reading, then turns change, student Ɔ [B] reads and student Ĩ [A] corrects her reading.”

Students who participate in their studies are able to learn, comprehend, remember, and enjoy it more and are better equipped to recognize the importance of what they have learned than students who passively accept what we teach

them [61]. Reem provided an example of peer evaluation. She invited students to grade each other's work on specific tasks. While the quality may not be as high as that of a teacher, peer evaluation can provide students with more individualized and direct attention. The role of the teacher according to Reem exceeds teaching. Students also play a part in teaching and evaluating their peers.

Correct answers: interestingly enough, she seemed to contradict herself when she discussed correctness with answers. Despite her desire for students to take roles in the learning process, Reem stressed correct and complete answers. The correct answer according to her perception is based on using the same exact language in the text or from the question itself; for instances,

When I ask a student, "What is your name?" Arwa, I do not want her to tell me Arwa, she should say, "My name is Arwa," "Where do you live?" "I live in Hail," "What is your Nationality?" "My nationality is Saudi."

Reem thinks that answering with a complete sentence is an indication of better understanding. She requires the student to answer in the same language that was provided in the question. A short or incomplete sentence is not acceptable in Reem's view. Her stance is affected by the way she learned in the past which is a major source of her efficacy beliefs. To answer in a complete sentence demonstrates the student's understanding of the formal Arabic language.

Classroom structure: although Reem used fun strategies and new ways to engage students in lessons, she focused on the importance of structure. She stated,

The classroom needs to be prepared and the students as well need to be prepared. The way they sit and where they should sit. When I feel the students are paying attention, I ask them to take out their books and pencils and they put them in front of them, nothing else should be on the table. Their notebooks should be handed to me. Then, I write on the board the date, but I do not write the title of the lesson. When we start, I say, "In the Name of Allah. Sit properly and pay attention." First, I ask them questions on the last lesson, what did we take... because it helps students memorize the information. Then, I give them sticky notes and ask them to spell the words with the correct movement. After that, I begin with the new lesson. I like to start with a story that I create from my own imagination and the events happening in the classroom. When I am done with the story, I ask students some recall questions. Keep in mind that the students still do not know the title of the lesson but they are learning about it. Then, I ask, "What do you think our lesson is about?" When they answer, I would write the title on the board.

Reem's reading lesson had the same structure every time. She believed that such structure made students "independent" because they know what is expected of them. Her stories also aided in attracting students' attention, because it was from the reality of the classroom. Teachers with a high feeling of efficacy are more likely to prepare and organize their lessons.

In order for Reem to accommodate for her different teaching styles, she liked to change the way she structured her classroom, depending on the type of instruction and

the content that will be learned. She stated, "I like the classroom to be arranged in groups when we are working on reading and if I am doing anything else I put the classroom tables in rows." The physical layout reflected Reem's teaching style. If she wanted students to collaborate in small groups, for example, she organized them around tables or clusters of desks. For frequent whole-group instruction, she would put them in rows. Studies have shown that seating students in open layouts such as group clusters promotes social interactions among students, while seating in rows promotes individual academic learning [62]. Furthermore, a well-organized classroom setting is one approach to more successfully manage education since it causes fewer behavioral problems and creates a learning atmosphere.

3.2.2. *Assessing the Curriculum.* The new integrative curriculum: Reem did not like the new integrative curriculum. She stated, "The old curriculum was better." She argued that by teaching reading skills individually, she could maximize the development of each skill by focusing on explicit language components. She considered that the syntax and writing norms of the Arabic language should be explicitly taught at all grades. She was concerned that integrating reading, writing, and spelling, would make it hard to place equal attention on all of these language elements, as she would if she had taught them individually [63].

Reem did not support the new integrated approach to teaching Arabic language arts, which made her more unappreciative of the 101 *Active Learning Strategies*. The Ministry of Education has strongly advised teachers to implement these instructional strategies in their classrooms. Reem was strongly against these strategies, she claimed, "children are naturally hyper and these strategies make them even more hyper." Because it was mandated, Reem tried to implement them in her classroom, but did not use them all the time.

Reem stated that she writes that she uses strategies even though in some lessons she does not, because the advisors ask her to use it. However, she did point out that she does have conversations with the advisors and admits that she does not actually use the strategies in the classroom all the time. I then asked, "How do the advisors react when she tells them that?" She stated, "I do not care what they think, I know my student best." Reem's strong self-allowed her to face difficult situations without feeling frustrated and confused.

Lesson plan: lesson plans are a set of tools that instructors use to help them prepare and execute classes. Reem did not approve of the traditional way of writing a lesson plan nor the new way of buying the lesson plans. She justified,

In the past, we were required to plan a lesson plan for every class and it would take a lot of time; we have to write the instructional objectives, behavioral objectives, procedural objectives, objectives, objectives, objectives. Although we write all of these goals no one applies them in their teaching... it was only for the sake of supervisors.



Reem criticized the usefulness of time given to writing many different objectives. She believed that figuring out all the different kinds of objectives did not make the lessons stronger; they were just for the supervisors. Although Reem used the lesson plans provided by the Ministry of Education, she did not follow the lesson plan precisely. She stated, "I buy the lesson plans, but they are not the real guide." Reem looked for other means that would enrich her lesson plan. She would often use the Internet as a main source for her search.

According to her view, every lesson should be prepared with new and creative ways for student engagement. She searches the Internet for worksheets, tables, and images that can help her during her instruction. She stated, "The Internet is full of new and creative worksheets that I can use in my lesson. I always try to find new things that help my students." She continued, "It is important for teachers to be innovative and look for something new, and not use the same thing every time." She also believed that it helped with students' attention. She explained, "Students[s] have a short attention span, . . . I need to keep their attention at all times."

Teachers and students benefit from planning because it gives structure and context, as well as a framework for reflection and assessment [64]. As part of the lesson planning process, teachers might assess their own understanding of the subject to be taught [65]. For instance, when planning for a new complex grammatical rule, the teacher will be aware that she is not familiar with the rule and will be able to take measures to obtain the relevant material.

Individual differences: with Reem's knowledge of her students, she believes that students differ in terms of their cognitive development and abilities as well as their learning styles and interests. There are several additional elements that contribute to student disparities such as variances in natural intellect, differences in social and economic background, and variations in prior learning experiences. Uniqueness in students comes from the way these traits mix [66].

Reem disapproves of the way scripted curriculum dismisses students' individual differences. She stated,

The curriculum does not take individual differences into account. The new curriculum is really hard on some students. I see some questions that the student and even their parents do not know how to answer. There are individual differences between the students; this is not only related to their brain capacity but also body and ways of learning. When designing the test for students, I put hard questions, easier and then easiest, which all students can answer. Students not only differ by their learning style but also by their cognitive and physical abilities.

Reem explained that the scripted curriculum dismissed students' needs on many levels. First, the questions provided in the script have to challenge the parents as well. This is very problematic. She indicated that there is a need to reassess the way the scripted curriculum evaluates students' knowledge. She explained that she uses different levels of questions to accommodate all her students.

Second, she noticed that students' cognitive abilities and learning styles are different. Gregorc [67] defined learning style as "distinctive behaviors, which serve as indicators of how a person learns from and adapts to his environment. It also gives clues as to how a person's mind operates" (p. 234). It has been suggested by Woolfolk [68] that learning styles refer to the varied methods of seeing and organizing information. Learning style was also examined by Hunsaker in [69]; who wrote: "Learning style, as one aspect of cognitive style, refers to a person's characteristic style of acquiring and using information in learning and/or solving problems" (p. 145). As a result, no matter how valid and trustworthy an instrument is, the results cannot be the same for every given sample of people.

Third, Reem mentioned the difference in physical abilities. In psycho-productive elements of learning, these refer to the ability to participate in physical tasks that are necessary [70]. Diverse activities demand varying levels of physical ability, which likewise varies from student to student; she cited the example of "the physical talents necessary to cut a paper cannot be the same as those required to lift a chair." Each student allocated to these activities will have different physical ability.

Average language level: moreover, one of the ways that the curriculum does not account for individual differences is through the language used in the text. Reem elucidated, "The texts are not very well written, . . . the texts are easy and the normal student can read it easily." Students in elementary school are often taught in a group setting, with learning activities tailored to the average student's level of ability. Teachers may give extra attention to kids who vary from the group's norm because they're slow learners or brilliant students, or they may place them in specific courses. While the underlying premise holds true, teachers tend to tailor their lessons to the class as a whole rather than to individual pupils.

Lack of images: in addition to inadequate language, Reem specifies the lack of images in the reading text provided by the curriculum especially for younger students. She referred to individual differences as a major reason for their importance. She detailed, "there are some students who are in the third-grade level of reading and the images will help her understand and read. The existence of images with the texts helps students tremendously." Zeki [71] explained that when we read in black and white, numerous areas that perceive form, color, orientation, and motion are essentially shut off and placed into sleep mode. With the use of design and color in our writing, we can trigger the reader's emotions in different parts of the brain [71]. Reem's strong efficacy beliefs allowed her to critique the curriculum, and she was able to elaborate on how the curriculum did unjustly to her students. Despite these setbacks, Reem's high efficacy allowed her to make meaningful changes to the curriculum based on her students' needs. Bandura [37] explained, efficacy expectations are a fundamental predictor of people's choice of activities, how much effort they will expend, and how long they will maintain effort in coping with stressful situations if they have the right skills and incentives.

3.3. *Nada: Case Study 3.* Reading instruction: Nada had strong views on how her classroom should look and how reading should be taught. She had the following to say:

I would read the text, a reading that I think is the ideal. I then ask students to read in a rotation, each student reads the whole text loudly if the text is short; if it is long, of course, each student will read a short part. When a student makes a mistake, I usually do not correct her but I draw her attention and ask, "Is it [read] like this?" I do not hesitate to correct only in extreme cases where there is no hope. But I do not let the student pass the word and she is reading it wrong. After reading the whole text, we go back to the content and we untangle the text and try to understand it with each other as much as possible.

Arwa: what is more important here, is it the detailed understanding or is it the general understanding?

Nada: not necessarily, I ask for the general understanding of the text. Sometimes there is a rhetorical image, and what matters is the general understanding. Meaning an emotional interaction with the text, that is very important. Did the student feel ecstasy or not? If it is a pathos poem did she feel sad? Did she feel the text and interacted with it? Did she reflect on her emotions? That's the understanding that I want.

From her statement, Nada is stressing how the students feel when they read a text. Nada's previous mastery experiences show how feelings are important in reading. Unlike Roaa and Reem, she was the only teacher who talked about emotions and its importance in meaning making through reading. Reading may increase one's ability to connect with and comprehend the ideas and feelings of others [72]. Moreover, Rosenblatt considered that readers occupy an efferent (taken away) and aesthetic or "lived through" view when reading [73]. Rosenblatt [74] defined efferent as "ideas, information, directions or conclusions to be retained, used or acted upon after the reading event" (p. 1373). It involves what the reader will carry away and learn from the text. On the other hand, the term "aesthetic" describes the reader's emotions and feelings that she or he applied to the text. This means that the reader was at the heart of the reading experiences and that her experiences facilitated the process of giving meaning to the text. Therefore, reading places the reader at different locations on the efferent continuum or aesthetic continuum, depending on the reader's viewpoint or capacity to bring particular aspects to consciousness through reading. A reader's understanding and interpretation are affected by this.

For instance, the phrase "it was snowing" might mean diverse things to many readers. If the reader was a skier, she would appreciate this. However, for those who are afraid of driving in the snow, this might bring up a lot of bad feelings for them. Readers who have never seen snow before may be intrigued by this and wonder what it looks like in the winter. People who do not enjoy detailed language may skip over it. Additionally, there is the author's intended meaning that is buried in the text, but readers also contribute their own traits to the process of reading that impact how texts are understood. Because of this, every text sends a different message from the one that was intended or mentioned on the page [74].

Thus, one would understand that this theory viewed reading as a dynamic process. According to Rosenblatt [74], a number of elements are brought into play by the reader such as their purpose, emotions, and attention, all of which are influenced by cultural, societal, and personal factors. Each of these factors affects the meaning the reader generates. Accordingly, Rosenblatt believed that understanding was dependent on the reader's background and emotional state at the moment. Due to this, each reader's interpretation will be different.

Nada invites students to take turns to read the text (in the USA, this is called "round-robin reading"); however, if a student makes a mistake and she does not correct her mistakes, she simply draws her attention to the word that she got wrong. This, according to Nada, makes the student "pay more attention" to her reading. Her way of instruction stems from the scripted curriculum and her experience in using it. Enactive mastery experience, according to Bandura [34], is the most significant source of self-efficacy since it gives precise skill evaluation information. Failures, especially while skills are being acquired, reduce self-efficacy beliefs, whereas successful outcomes increase self-efficacy. Intermittent failures may not jeopardize an individual's self-efficacy belief, according to Bandura [30], after a strong sense of self-efficacy has been formed based on successful mastery experiences.

Even though Nada hopes for an emotional interaction with the text, the use of round-robin reading might interfere/contradict with Rosenblatt's aesthetic reading. Literature in the USA has shown that round-robin reading to be a very poor way of teaching reading. In this approach, high and low readers both feel tension, aggravation, and worry when reading. Since slow readers are self-conscious about their poor reading, they do not desire a public performance that draws attention to their reading problems and flaws. Additionally, it is unpleasant for high readers to see poor readers struggle [76].

Importance of decoding: in order for simulation and aesthetic reading to occur, Nada stressed that decoding works best for the Arabic language. She expressed, "learning from whole to part is a new theory, and the Arabic language has an important characteristic which is precision in sound, meaning one letter has many sounds, for example,  $\text{اَ}$  and this is only one letter, a teacher must teach students to recognize these sounds, in this case we have to start with the part and then move to the whole, moving from whole to part does not suit the Arabic language, building students from part to whole enables them to have higher skills." According to her standpoint, approaches other than decoding are not fitting for the Arabic language because of its unique features. According to their role in a sentence, paradigmatic units in Arabic have different spelling and pronunciation. As a result, it is difficult to learn as a language, but the established inflection system ensures that it is accurate. A person who does not have a thorough understanding of Arabic's norms will not be able to express this accuracy. Thus, the system for teaching languages is under increasing strain.

Because of its "diglossic" nature, Arabic differs significantly from English, while having a single formal, consistent

written language (Standard Arabic) is different from the many spoken dialects [77]. While learning and teaching Arabic, this circumstance offers one of the largest obstacles for students, because the language students read and learn at school differs from the one they speak and listen to at home. Therefore, mastering the written language needs direct instruction [78].

Also, there are numerous ways to distinguish between masculine and feminine nouns, as well as many distinct forms for dual nouns that refer to more than one item. As a Semitic language, Arabic has numerous differences from other languages. Sentences are usually constructed with a verb-subject-object pattern rather than subject-verb-object, as in English sentences. Some Arabic letter sounds, such as Dha (ض) and Qa (ق), are difficult to learn because of their phonetic characteristics.

Another reason that affected Nada's perception is her belief in maintaining the correct reading of the Quran. Because the Quran is the word of God, it cannot be altered or shifted. She confirmed, "we are a nation fiduciaries of maintaining the Quran, if we give up the *Fusha* [the formal Arabic language] this means that we are losing our language and our Quran." Not only were the words of the Quran memorized, but also their pronunciation, which is formed into a science called *Tajweed*. This science meticulously explains how each letter should be pronounced, as well as the word as a whole, both in context of other letters and words. This, according to her, helped us save our language in the form that prophet Mohammed received, in order to communicate with the Quran to all generations throughout the years."

Nada's personal religious belief shaped the way that she viewed reading and helped her in keeping a strong sense of self-efficacy in the classroom. According to Mansour [79], Nada's personal religious beliefs operated as a "schema which influenced what was perceived" (p. 37). McIntosh [80] defined a schema as "a cognitive structure or mental representation containing organized, prior knowledge about a particular domain" (p. 2). He also highlighted that schemas were formed as a result of contacts with the social environment and that they could be changed by experience as well.

Nada's belief system affected her perception of new encounters. In her social environment, she organized the pieces in a way that reflected her own personal views or religious schemas. Reading and teaching were shaped by her personal religious ideas and schemas. Individual religious views might affect how a teacher perceives a specific circumstance or event.

Discipline and management: decoding, simulation, and aesthetic reading must take place in a structured classroom. Nada stated, I see in the television that in American classrooms for example, they care about the environment of the classroom, there are a lot of drawings and so forth, I think. . . and this is my personal opinion that these things are not important. We care about figures, and there needs to be a leader, an effective leader in the classroom. That is in terms of our thinking, our culture does not believe in chaos in the way that we sit, whether on chairs or on the floor, we like

discipline. For instance, in the mosque when it is time to pray, there is discipline. When we sit with our children we sit in discipline. A lot of the openness that the people who went to western cultures call for does not work for us. What works for them does not work for us. I want my classroom teaching to be consistent, and students learn discipline, and each has her fixed place.

On the other hand, Nada emphasizes the significance of classroom discipline and management. Even though they are commonly used as synonyms, they are different. In contrast to classroom management, which refers to the way things are done in the classroom, classroom discipline is the particular management of student conduct [81]. According to Marshall [82]; "Classroom management deals with how things are done; discipline deals with how people behave. Classroom management has to do with procedures, routines, and structure; discipline is about impulse management and self-control. Classroom management is the teacher's responsibility; discipline is the student's responsibility" [82], p. 7). Classroom management includes the organizing of space, students, materials, and time in the classroom, which allows the teachers to teach what he or she intended content [83].

Because it provides students with an optimal learning environment, makes both teachers and students feel safer and more comfortable in the classroom, and helps avoid teacher burnout, Nada believes classroom management is essential to the entire education process. Discipline and rules are only part of classroom management. It also requires structure, procedures with which students and teachers become familiar with.

In a well-structured class, students feel safer because they know what to expect. Nada believes that children require structure. An organized classroom allows for more time for learning due to its regularity and rituals. As a result, the learning environment is considerably improved when the classroom is well organized and well managed [84].

Nada's beliefs are affected by religion and culture. The importance of structure in her teaching stems from the way Muslims are ordered when prayer is called. It also originates from the way Saudis sit and behave when they are around elders. It is with respect and complete obedience to the elders. Thus, Nada views classroom management and discipline necessary not only for her instruction but also as an approach to relate to Saudi culture and Islam religion.

Disagreement with 101 active learning strategies: despite her desire in structure, the Ministry of Education is advocating for the 101 *Active Learning Strategies* that require movement; students would not be seated in the same place during instruction. The *Teaching Strategies* were designed for the purpose of enhancing the students' higher-level reasoning skills, particularly their ability to think creatively. 101 *Active Learning Strategies* is a book that teachers get at the beginning of the school year. Teachers did not equally support the use of these strategies. Thus, I believed it was necessary to see what Nada thought about it. When I asked Nada about the 101 teaching strategies, she said, That's because it is a blind imitation. They think if the student moves she is going to build a plane. They built their classroom based on their culture, we should build our

classrooms based on our culture, . . . we must build our classroom based on our disciplined culture. Any change the student will understand it as chaos, she will not use this freedom of movement to her advantage. She will understand it as irregularity, thus we must act according to our culture and deal in accordance without cultural formation.

Nada stressed on the importance of having a resemblance in what is happening in the classroom as well as outside of the classroom. If students are taught at home to behave in a certain way (i.e., respect elders, ask permission before you move from your place, speak in a toned voice) and when they come to the classroom they are required to move, conflict will rise regarding the right way to behave and act. This makes the students puzzled and unsure of the right way to act.

Nada here is disagreeing with the 101 *Active Learning Strategies* because it gives the student a chance to move around the classroom. These new strategies are not affirming Saudi students' cultural identities. The methods and ways of instruction must follow the Saudi culture. A student moving around the classroom while an elder is around being a sign of disrespect. Saudi students must have assigned seats and sit in a formal way and speak when they are asked to talk.

**3.3.1. Evaluating the Script.** Diverse students' needs: it is true that Nada's admiration for the scripted curriculum was limited to her own life experiences; nevertheless, her criticisms of it were focused on its failure to meet her students' intellectual as well as personal needs. Nada talked about how challenging it was to modify her teachings to fulfil the needs of her students. As Nada saw it, the curriculum was not intended to suit the individual learning requirements of all of her students and especially her "excellent and gifted students." She continued, "I have already stated that the curriculum is in bad condition, but I must introduce students to the text I have, through this I will discover the individual differences, and I will discover the difference in understanding. Usually our curriculum does not do justice to all students, especially excellent and gifted students. Our reading curriculum is considered easy." All students' requirements cannot be met by one program.

Nada here is perhaps looking for differentiated instruction, which Tomlinson [85] defines it as the process of "ensuring that what a student learns, how he or she learns it, and how the student demonstrates what he or she has learned is a match for that student's readiness level, interests, and preferred mode of learning." (p. 32) Depending on the learner, teachers can diversify teaching content, method, product, and learning environment. Learning styles, learning preferences, and individual interests all play a role in differentiating learners [86]. It is a strategy of proactively adjusting teaching and learning techniques to meet each student's individual learning needs and preferences in order to make the best possible growth as a learner [85].

Decrease in the quantity and quality of the texts: although Nada came up with her own questions, she explained, "it was difficult." This was due to the decrease in the reading material in the scripted curriculum, of which

she disapproves. She added, "I see the new curriculum as weak, in fact very weak compared to the way that it used to be." The "quantity" and "quality" has decreased, which leads students to having fewer outcomes than before. Reading materials and instructions that are not rigorous leaves students' cognitive and metacognitive reading abilities undeveloped. Al-Jarf [87], who investigated the Saudi scripted curriculum, stated, "Most topics are familiar, they are boring and they do not expand the students' world. The ideas are written in generalized statements and lack specific details" (p. 14).

The shortage in the content also affected students' reading. The curriculum lacked depth and breadth that helps students improve their reading. She explained, "skills need practice and practice comes through repetition. The more you practice, the higher your skills become. Students are craftsmen who need to practice their craft. When a craftsman creates ten of these cups (points at the glass cup in her hand), it is not like a craftsman who only made one cup." Nada advised that students practice and work on their reading. Students must know when to stop, what strategies they would use, and how to better their reading. Yet, the decrease in the content of the reading material is not serving students at all as this is limiting their time of practicing reading. Nada emphasized the need for change so students can advance their reading. Although Nada taught a mandatory subject, she felt a low sense of self-efficacy because she was discouraged by the content that she taught, the amount of content as well as the actual content itself.

## 4. Discussion

Tensions with curriculum: teachers have expressed both admiration and criticism of their scripted curriculum. Teachers were different in their views around the integrative approach as well as the 101 *Active Learning Strategies*. Nada and Reem did not approve of the new curriculum and the new strategies. They think that the Arabic language has specific characteristics that need decoding, drill, and repetition. Contrariwise, Roaa appreciated the new curriculum and claimed that it made the student more active in the classroom.

Although the curriculum did not aid teachers in taking into account students' individual differences, all participants showed a strong desire to assist their students in becoming a better learner. Roaa advocated for cooperative learning, while Reem emphasized students' choice and motivation. Nada, on the other hand, emphasized creativity and academic freedom. Teachers try to make the best and provide students with the necessary skills to make them successful students while thinking about their individual differences. Attending to the student needs with the poor curriculum, which restricted the ability of the teachers to flex with the needs of their students, was definitely challenging. Teachers criticized the lack of motivation, images, resources, thought-provoking questions, and stimulating texts.

Despite their different views on the new curriculum, they all agreed on the importance of the scripted curriculum. It helped teachers provide a firm foundation of skills for their

students. It also helped teachers when they struggled in their instruction.

Due to the many tensions in each participant's experience, there was a little bit of modernist, traditionalist, and independent in all three teachers. While each leaned more toward one, they all had pieces of each. For instance, while Nada tended to the traditionalist viewpoint, she encouraged her students to think of different figures other than the ones provided in the textbook. Although Roaa was a modernist, her image of teachers was connected to the traditional cultural view of teachers. Reem also had tensions; even though she is an independent thinker, she comes back to the traditional view on the importance of structure.

Ideological tensions: professional identity development is the process of balancing personal perspectives with the professional expectations of teacher education institutions [88]. It is the process of understanding and dealing with both the professional and personal aspects of being a teacher [89]. Teachers may feel conflicted about what they believe is important for their profession against what they personally want or think is good during this process [88], p. 109). This link between teachers' own subjectivities or beliefs and their professional identities may be lost, resulting in a conflict between the personal and professional [90]. Teachers' professional identities may be strained as a result of such conflicts. Between the teacher as a person and the teacher as a professional, there exist internal tensions when it comes to undesirable situations, which are called "professional identity tensions." Teachers' learning and functioning can be severely impacted by tensions.

Tensions with the scripted curriculum: throughout this study, many tensions have been raised. Participants expressed some of the tensions they faced without acknowledging them as tensions. Although teachers everywhere feel tensions, I believe that the scripted curriculum might have elevated the sense of conflict. For instance, there are no means to deal with individual differences in the scripted curriculum; meanwhile, teachers expressed the need to adjust the curriculum to fit their students' needs.

Moreover, Roaa and Nada appreciated the structure and repetition, which made teaching easier. Reem felt that the curriculum was simple to follow and prepare for. Roaa appreciated the explicit pedagogical suggestions.

How these teachers viewed scripted curriculum is interesting since the majority of their admiration was based on how it made their work easier. Teachers liked the scripted programs because they were easy to plan, instruction was clear, resources and materials were supplied, and the format was repetitious and easy to grasp. Yet, none was related to the content or its effectiveness in students' learning.

Having a script that was easy to follow made teachers more effective in the eyes of the ministry. Teachers who had a high percentage of exam pass rates were considered effective. Test results were linked with academic achievement, and teachers believed that it was helpful to prepare students with everything for their academic success. However, these instructors were not incompetent; they just worked in a system that emphasized academic performance over educational equity and ethnic identity. "Effective teacher status" required

Reem, Roaa, and Nada to demonstrate that they could follow their prescribed curriculum. Therefore, it is no surprise that the aspects of curriculum they valued were those that helped them achieve their goals.

Meanwhile, teachers did not appreciate the singular perspective on teaching reading. Roaa, for instance, acknowledged that the scripted curriculum was "not relevant to the female students." Reem also expressed her dissatisfaction with the materials as it was "boring." For reading instruction, all teachers yearned for a more dialogic, conversation-inspiring pedagogy. Nada, for example, wanted students to read interesting historic literature that was detailed in description. This showed that the teachers were conscious of the cultural requirements of their students and the inequality of the education they were providing.

Roaa, Nada, and Reem were able to see beyond politics when thinking about the scripted curriculum. They were concerned about the scripted programs' capacity to meet the requirements of all kids at once. Reem believed that the curriculum was created for average students, leaving her struggling and advanced students bewildered or bored. Roaa was concerned that her students lacked the required prior knowledge to succeed. Nada felt that the questions provided with the texts were easy and are not thought-provoking. Despite their small changes to the curriculum, they had to be faithful to the scripted curriculum most of the time.

In addition, teachers had tensions about the whole idea of the script. Nada, for instance, disapproved the script, yet she thought it was necessary for beginner or struggling teachers in order to achieve good teaching. Roaa enjoyed the structure of the script that allowed her students to be comfortable during her instruction, yet she thinks it lacked in addressing students' interest.

Furthermore, there were tensions regarding approaches to teaching reading. For instance, Reem did not approve the 101 *Active Learning Strategies*; yet she emphasized the importance of fun learning. On the other hand, Roaa appreciated the new strategies; however, she censured the need to ask permission in creating her own strategies. Although the Ministry of Education's perspective was not necessarily the instructors', teachers in the research were required to adopt its terminology and perspective.

Teacher's dichotomy: according to research, teacher conduct has a significant impact on both student behavior and academic achievement [1], and when educational reform is implemented without taking existing beliefs into account, the outcomes are typically unsatisfactory [91]. Teachers frequently implement the proposed procedures based on whether their beliefs align with the assumptions underlying the mandates presented [92]. To put it another way, where does teachers' accountability to political requirements lie if students must pay for instructor beliefs and behaviors? Does the ethical duty of teachers to follow the contract outweigh their personal opinions about the educational requirements of their varied students?

All instructors must remember that they are held to a higher ethical and moral standard than most because of their position. Roaa, Nada, and Reem felt compelled to help every student that walked through their classroom door. As

professionals, they are tasked with making sound judgments in the face of uncertainty [1]. As a result, they must exercise caution while evaluating the implications of their professional choices. They must take into account both the terms of the contract and the expectations of their students. If they believe that a prescribed curriculum is doing their students a disservice, they need to use critical thinking skills. Nada, for example, created her questions because she feared students would memorize the answers, which is a disservice for her students. Teachers have an obligation to adapt their lesson to meet the needs of their students, but they must also keep in mind the requirements of policymakers and the standards set by the Saudi Ministry of Education. For instance, the aspect of reading choice was controlled in the scripted curriculum; thus, Reem implemented choice in her homework assignments since she was not able to apply it in class/instruction time.

However, the issue remains: how can teachers retain a sense of balance when their perspectives no longer fit the standards put before them? While some teachers choose to defy such directives by employing rebellious techniques, like Reem who did not implement the 101 *Active Learning Strategies*, others openly fight in an attempt to circumvent the system such as Roaa who brought books to the classroom and students could borrow the books to read at home [93]. Which of the following is true? Do they resist, remaining loyal to their own ideas while perhaps risking their job? Do they compromise in an attempt to promote both their educational belief system and a curriculum that they may or may not believe serves the students they are qualified to teach? In order to retain an ethical position and perform their professional responsibilities, can they just accept those expectations to the best of their ability while also giving up their mastery of creativity, freedom, and professional judgment with regard to the course curriculum? [94].

These were questions that teachers in this study seem to be challenged by. They fully understand their professional duties, which is to follow the script, yet they struggle in following their beliefs regarding students' needs. Hopefully, each expert can discover a method to navigate and, in the end, respond to the issues stated above.

**4.1. Limitations.** The data collected from the interviews were subject to many limitations throughout the study. Personal bias and the emotional state of the participants at the time of the interview may have impacted the interview results [49]. During the interviews, there was a possibility of recall error. It is also conceivable that some individuals responded in a self-serving manner [49].

Because the study's sample was not chosen at random, generalization to all teacher populations was impossible. Instead, to capture an appropriate degree of subject variation across a variety of teacher characteristics [49] and to reflect the population of interest, purposeful sampling was utilized.

It should also be emphasized that when conducting interviews in Saudi Arabia, attention to components of the socio-cultural environment, such as gender, was required. I was confronted with the issue of only researching female

teachers. This was owing to the fact that education in Saudi Arabia is gender-segregated, and interviewing males was fraught with difficulties. These restrictions are ingrained in Saudi society. Shogren et al. [95] stated that research techniques should be culturally responsive and that methodology may be changed to fit the culture and setting of the investigation.

**4.2. Implications and Recommendations.** The study recommends that the Ministry of Education should give teachers a role in curriculum development. As previously stated, despite several efforts to improve the curriculum, the Ministry of Education has failed to establish an adequate curriculum owing to the centralized character of the Saudi Arabian education system and the disregard of teachers' roles in curriculum creation. As a result, it is strongly suggested that the Ministry of Education examines the significance of incorporating all educational stakeholders, particularly teachers.

Teachers must be more active in educational policy. In order for education to develop, teachers' voices must be heard. Because Saudi Arabian teachers are undervalued, policymakers have been unable to develop an acceptable curriculum despite several reform initiatives.

Saudi instructors have not been given any genuine opportunity to participate in curriculum innovation and implementation. They simply need the opportunity to work with other relevant authorities within the educational system to develop an acceptable curriculum, as "teacher involvement in matters of education is not unique to Western contexts" [96], p. 118).

Furthermore, teachers should try to take the initiative in order to empower themselves. Teachers, for example, can form unions to voice their concerns about educational difficulties such as the absence of a voice to demand their rights. Teachers might form study groups after school to discuss their directions, difficulties they've encountered, and their experience applying the scripted curriculum. They may encourage each other and offer suggestions for what can be done as a result of this.

Another implication is that longitudinal studies tracking preservice teachers through their training and first years in the classroom would be beneficial. More study on how instructional strategies affect the development of self-efficacy beliefs is needed. Future research should look into the school environment and instructors' teaching methods to learn more about how instruction affects self-efficacy.

Finally, this research was carried out in the city of Hail. In Saudi Arabia, there are forty-one other educational districts that need to be investigated. Rural and urban regions, as well as all socioeconomic classes, may be included in a research like this one to validate its findings and offer a more complete picture of instructors' opinions and perspectives on reading teaching.

## Data Availability

All the data used to support the findings of this study are included within the article.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest.

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