



# Effectiveness of Role-Playing in Enhancing Creative Writing of English Major Students at Al-Quds University

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## Authors' contributions

*This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. Author RD designed the study, wrote the protocol and supervised the work. Authors IN and BK carried out all laboratories work and performed the statistical analysis. Author BK managed the analyses of the study. Author IN wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author RD managed the literature searches and edited the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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## ABSTRACT

**Aim:** The study aims to identify the impact of using the strategy of role-playing in enhancing the creative writing skills of English Majors at Al-Quds University.

**Methodology:** In order to carry out this study, some educational material was prepared from the Drama course in accordance with the strategy of role -playing. The material was applied on the sample of the study which consists of 15 students (female and male) from the Department of English at Al-Quds University in Palestine. In addition to the creative writing test, an interview of 6

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students (male and female) was conducted. The study used the quasi-experimental approach with one group pre-and post-test design to determine the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent one.

**Place and Duration of the Study:** The study was carried out in the Department of English at Al-Quds University, West Bank, Palestine, between March 2016 and June 2016.

**Results:** The results of the study showed a development in creative writing skills as a whole. After studying a selected play using the role-playing strategy, the results showed a development in students' creative writing skills: originality, linguistic accuracy, and content organization. The study shows no development in both skills fluency and flexibility. It also showed no gender differences of statistical significance between the pre and post tests. The results of the interview showed positive impressions among the students regarding the use of role-playing strategy and its impact on developing their creative writing skills, as this strategy helped them in analyzing the text in a better way, organizing their writings and enhancing their imaginations of the events.

**Conclusion:** Creative drama activities are an effective technique to enhance students' creative writing skills. Role-playing helps students to understand, evaluate and appreciate the text in a better way. It also helps them enjoy the literary text, and thus look at the text from a beautiful perspective.

**Recommendations:** In light of the results of the study, the researchers recommended the need for further similar studies but on other variables, as well as the necessity for the use of role-playing strategy in teaching.

*Keywords: Drama; role-laying; creative writing skills; fluency; test; interview; strategy.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

We face social, moral and ethical issues in our daily lives. Drama is the expression of these issues through body, words, gestures and writing. Drama not only helps us improve our communication skills but also it helps us develop our self-perception and creative thinking and writing skills. The close relationship between educational drama and the development of language and literacy has been recognized [1]. There are few empirical studies that investigated the relationship between drama and creative writing; those that tend to have focused on the role drama plays in motivating writers and improving writing [2].

According to [3], dramatic play was highly related to total word writing fluency; although this was only shown through single dictated words. [4] found that drama was a more effective forerunner to writing than traditional planning and discussion and others too have observed and recorded similar findings (e.g. Wooland, 1993; Wagner, 1998; Booth & Neelands, 1998).

Primary aged learners, in the opinion of [5] engage in drama prior to writing, write more effectively and at greater length, using a richer vocabulary that contains more emotive and expressive insights. Her work also reveals that students' writing during drama reflects a better understanding of the issues and possesses a

clearer sense of voice, which she defines as 'writing-in-role where the writer appears able to 'get under the skin' of the character and identify with him / her on an affective as well as cognitive level' [5:79].

In [6's] point of view that drama enhances secondary pupils' attitudes to writing and that such pupils recognize the mutually reinforcing relationship between drama and writing and their empathetic potential. Also working with secondary aged learners, [7] stated that role playing can support persuasive writing, whilst [8] indicated that it can enrich historical writing.

As has been illustrated by [9] who also found that students' writing composed in drama had more depth and detail. These researchers propose that drama becomes a medium which facilitates a flow of imagination between process and product. It could be argued however that drama has the potential to be more transformative than this metaphor implies, since multiple perspectives are adopted and a variety of tools are available for kinesthetically, orally and physically generating ideas. It is clear that through drama students compose multi-modally and are able to shape their ideas in action prior to committing these to paper or screen [10,11].

More recently, [12] undertook a quantitative study also indicating the positive effect of drama on primary learners' achievements in writing and other core subjects. Work in the field of language

and literacy has additionally shown that when drama is integrated pedagogically into the teaching of reading, writing, speaking and listening, the quality of related writing is enhanced, particularly when it is written in-role [13-15]. Research undertaken for the Primary National Strategy has also revealed that boys' attitudes and attainment in writing can be positively affected if drama is integrated into the English curriculum [16]. This research sought to examine this interplay further, exploring the nature of the links between drama and writing and identifying any qualitative features of writing which regularly surfaced in student's drama related compositions.

Creative drama activities allow students both the enjoyment of reading an author's story book and to internalize the messages of the story [2]. Through reading story books for several times for comprehension, checking their understanding through questions regarding the story elements, and dramatizing the messages of these literature resources are important learning experiences for students [6]. Through use of creative drama students can actively participate in the learning process and they can discover their skills and creativity as well. It is assumed that creative drama activities can be an effective method to increase students' creative writing skills [17]. Role playing enable students to step outside themselves, to accept and change into a different character. Students either improvise or create their own character or they are given role-cards [2]. In either case, it has a stimulating effect and students feel freer to engage themselves in learning.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Since writing is considered very important in the workforce in and daily life, especially for English majors, any limitation in the writing skills will have negative impact students. Through interaction between the researchers and students, it has been noticed that students are having problems in the writing skills and specifically in creative writing. The present study seeks to investigate the effectiveness of role-playing in enhancing the individual skills (fluency, flexibility, originality, linguistic integrity, content organization) as well as collective skills of creative writing among English majors at the University. It also seeks to explore the students' attitudes towards the strategy of role playing. The study seeks to answer the following general question:

What is the effect of employing the strategy of role-playing on the progress of creative writing skills among the students of the English Department at the Al-Quds University?

### 1.2 Objectives

The present study aims to achieve the following goals:

- Investigate the effectiveness of role-playing in enhancing the individual skills of creative writing (fluency, flexibility, originality, linguistic integrity, content organization).
- Identify the students' attitudes towards using the strategy of role playing in education.

### 1.3 Questions of the Study

Based on the above general question, the study aims to answer the following specific questions:

1. What is the impact of using role-playing on enhancing the individual skills (fluency, flexibility, originality, linguistic integrity, content organization) as well as the collective (overall) skills of creative writing among the students of the English Department at Al-Quds University?
2. Are there any significant differences at the level of significance ( $0.05 \geq \alpha$ ) between the means of the pre-test and post-test due to the gender of the students?
3. What are the students' attitudes towards the strategy of role-playing?

### 1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study can be attributed to the following points:

- The importance of the subject matter, the effectiveness of role-playing strategy in enhancing creative writing, as well as the importance of the participants in this study, university students who are expected to be English language teachers—hence the need to develop their creative writing skills.
- The results may help other university and college English teachers to employ the strategy of role-playing in teaching creative writing skills.
- The current study may also open the way for further similar research.

## 1.5 Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the students of English who are enrolled in the second semester of the academic year 2015/2016. Also this study is limited to the qualitative and quantitative analysis. In addition to that the study is related to conceptual limitations in creative writing (fluency, flexibility, originality, linguistic integrity, and well-organized content).

Procedurally, role-playing is seen in the present study as simulated situations which represent real life situations, played by students during a lesson or a lecture, to tell a subject or a phenomenon under the guidance of a teacher. Creative writing is a type of writing that gives rise to an issue for the purpose of clarification and discrimination. It takes place in a framework of beautiful meanings, and it has a great emotional impact on the receiver. Procedurally, creative writing refers to the student's ability to express his feelings and thoughts in writing via a creative image characterized by fluency, flexibility, originality, linguistic integrity, and well-organized content. It is formulated in a beautiful literary manner. It is measured in this study through a test prepared by the study team for this purpose.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to [18], writing is one of the significant skills in people's expressing their views and their effective communication. Writing is an activity including cognitive, affective, social, and psychomotor processes. In the writing process, writer needs to realize various cognitive processes coordinately in order to express his/her feelings and ideas effectively and to convey meaningful messages to the readers [19]. Along with this process, individual's attitude, interest and desire play an important role in the writing process. Attitude towards writing is an affective feature that related with how individual feels himself/herself while writing. Students those who developed a positive attitude towards writing, desire to write, enjoy writing and are more likely to become successful. Negative attitudes developed towards writing causes students to avoid being engaged in writing activities and leads to unsuccessfulness [20]. Students' attitudes towards writing are an important factor in shaping their success or unsuccessfulness in the writing process [21-23].

As has been observed by [24], the use of role-play in an undergraduate university course

designed to prepare students to become public school coaches and physical education teachers. The five original vignettes that were role-played were specifically written to prepare the students to successfully handle situations they might reasonably encounter in their future work. The role-play model used in the research was originally created by the Shaftels in the 1960s, but several creative variations devised by the current investigators were added to that model for this study causing it to be an adapted version. Data collected included questionnaire responses from two different questionnaires, information from a focus group, and observations by the two investigators. Investigators concluded that the students not only exhibited skill in the techniques used to resolve the issues in the vignettes, but that students gained confidence the more they participated in the role-plays which occurred over a 4-week period. The students themselves reported that learning from one's peers, trying out their ideas in a safe environment, being forced to plan an intended outcome in advance, and hearing feedback from others were their most valued experiences. They also overwhelmingly reported preferring role-play to the more traditional university lecture method.

In a study conducted by [25] with the purpose of examining the educational effect of applying role – playing teaching method in History on second grade girl students of Asadabad guidance school in 2012-2013 academic year. For this purpose 60 student among 254 were selected through random sampling method. The research method was semi experimental through pre-test and post test design with control group. The data gathering instrument was researcher made questionnaire .Findings showed that role- playing method has increased students' educational skills Keywords: Role- playing, history, educational skill, guidance school.

In an attempt made by [19] to determine the effectiveness of role-playing teaching as a pedagogical approach for construction management educators in achieving educational objectives. The paper presents the results of an experimental study where one group of students was taught using role-playing and the control group was taught using traditional approach. Results indicate that students taught using role-playing demonstrated a better understanding about the subject matter and showed more positive attitude towards construction as a profession. Based on the results, the paper argues that role-playing teaching meets the

needs of construction management educators who are attempting to offer students an active learning environment that balances theory and practice while equipping students with the skills necessary to be successful in the profession.

In the opinion of [20] the pedagogical use of integrated drama-based role play and Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) cooperative learning, and its effects on the first year non-English majors' speaking skills, motivation, and self-esteem. The study was conducted over an academic semester in a Basic English class in a northeastern university in Thailand with two separate groups, with a quasi-experimental design. The participants in this study were 80 non-native undergraduate students whose major was not English. Over the 16 weeks of the study, both groups of students studied English with the same learning content; however, only the experimental group was introduced to drama-based role play and STAD, with blended-learning instruction, while the control group continued using the course book role plays with regular group work activities and classroom instruction. The results of the quantitative and qualitative analysis showed the effectiveness of drama-based role play combined with STAD on students' speaking skills, motivation, and self-esteem in the experimental group. The study concludes with recommendations for the integration of the blended drama-based and cooperative learning to improve students' English speaking skills and affective involvement.

The impact of using role -play on improving students' speaking ability for the primary school was investigated by [26]. The study is restricted to sixth grade female pupils in the primary schools in Babylon City during the second term of the academic year 2011– 2012. The population consists of (160) Iraqi EFL students distributed over two sections A and B. Sixty students are chosen randomly to represent the main study sample and other twenty students represent the pilot administration. To achieve the aim of the study, two tests are constructed. The total number of items of the first test which represents written test is (10). While, the second test represents oral test. From the analysis of the data, it is found that the mean of post- scores of the experimental group is (57.7333), which is higher than the mean scores of the control group that is found to be (48.1000). This indicates that students' achievement in the experimental group

is better than that of the control group, which shows that role –play technique is more useful for them in teaching speaking skill than the lecture method teaching.

Learning to write is a long formal process. Writing is the most difficult language skill [27,28]. For the writers, those who have not got the necessary skills for writing, writing is hard and requires much effort. In order to make this process easier, systematic teaching is required [29]. Writing is not considered as an attractive activity [30]. Among the reasons of this, there is necessity of abiding strict rules while writing [31]. Furthermore, writing needs many processes in terms of cognitive, social and psychomotor point of view, students find writing process difficult and boring. Most students have negative opinions about writing because of the experiences that the students lived before, and writing is a skill which can be acquired hard and late [18].

At the basis of negative feeling, opinion and attitudes of the students towards writing, also there lies that students not being motivated enough to writing. Students need to be motivated in order to begin, continue and complete the writing. With right method and techniques, these motivational supports can be supplied and students can be helped for developing positive attitudes towards writing [32]. Various methods and techniques should be employed to make the students develop positive attitudes towards writing. Such methods and techniques are student-centered, creative and enjoying [33]. Creative drama is one of these methods. The creative drama method can be employed to improve the students' writing skills and their attitudes towards writing [34].

Creative drama refers to as the expansion of experience and learning [35]. [36] argues that creative drama is a method in which individuals reorganize their cognitive patterns regarding an experience, an event, an idea, an abstract concept or behavior in a group setting through theater or drama techniques such as role-playing or improvisation. [37] defines creative drama as a process in which imaginative ideas are transformed into actions. Creative drama involves fictional journey. Participants of the process are allowed to inquire about the experiences through fiction [38]. The most significant characteristics of creative drama are based on the individuals' own experience and the provision of a living educational environment [36].

Creative drama provides the individuals significant opportunity to remember their life experiences [39]. Creative drama used in classrooms is a useful tool to improve creativity, imagination and curiosity. It teaches reasoning, self-perception and visualization. It further helps the teaching of these skills through experiential techniques [39]. Creative drama has the characteristics for realizing holistic learning. It involves the cognitive, affective and physical dimensions of learning processes. Participants experienced various drama processes in which they are in the center of the learning process. They assume several roles in this process and become more familiar with themselves, perceive themselves better and develop various predictions [40,41].

The method of creative drama includes three major steps [18]. The most basic distinction among these steps from traditional practices is that they involve implicit or explicit participation of the leader and others in the process [41]. These three steps are as following [40]:

1. Preparation-warming up activities: It is the step in which the body is activated, senses are used intensively and self-oriented activities are done. Various activities are conducted to build a group dynamics. The basic aim of this step is to prepare the participants for the next step.
2. Animation: This step is composed of the activities in which a topic is shaped, revealed and developed.
3. Evaluation-discussion: At the third step, the outcomes of the creative drama activities are evaluated and discussed to uncover their essence, significance and qualities [18].

Research suggests that creative drama improves the students' writing skills and their attitudes towards writing [34,39,42,33,43]. According to many educators, creative drama has a potential power for developing and sustaining of students' writings [27].

The process of writing is also composed of several steps, including pre-writing, drafting, reviewing, organizing and publishing [44,45]. Creative drama helps to implement these steps of writing process [39]. Since preparation-warm up, animation and evaluation activities carried out in the creative drama process includes and supports these steps, creative drama improves

the students' writing skills. Students perform many activities of the writing process during the process of creative drama. Creative drama techniques propose linking ways for supporting writing process. According to [38], arts, music and kinesthetic processes that used in creative drama activities provide students rich experiences in the pre-writing activities. [30] The more efficient these processes are, the more qualified the writings will be.

The writing skill is developed together with other language skills which are listening, speaking and reading [30,18]. All these skills are interconnected, any of them can be developed itself. During the writing activities included in the process of creative drama, four language skills improve simultaneously. Creative drama is therefore a creative and integrated tool for the interaction of these language skills [39].

In the development of students' writing skills and students' developing positive attitudes towards writing, teachers have the key role. Teachers may help the students to improve their writing skills and attitudes towards writing through the suitable learning and teaching processes. However, teachers should have developed good writing skills and positive writing attitudes in order to provide such processes [18]. Their own writing skills, their perspectives regarding the process of writing and their writing attitudes significantly affect the writing activities [32]. According to [31] it is important and necessary for teachers who want to provide writing activities should try writing before realizing these activities. That teacher's doing such activities not only improves his/her writing skills but also it provides establishing empathy with their students [46].

The above previous studies related to creative writing are various and included its conceptual understanding and its various practices like cognitive, social and psycho-motors sub-skills [47]. The studies also included ways of developing creative writing such as role-playing and the dilemmas that students have and the skills that they need to develop, especially the writing skills. Most of the above research focus on role-playing and the use of drama activities to enhance the creative writing of students since it enlighten students' minds to new methods that may help in improving their writing skills [17]. This will open the horizon to students to use their imagination and cognition to be creative writers in the future [48].

### 3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### 3.1 Approach

The study used a quasi-experimental approach with one group pre- and post-test design to determine the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

#### 3.2 Population of the Study

The population comprised all male and female English-major students (225) enrolled in the academic year 2015/2016.

#### 3.3 Sample of the Study

The study selected a purposive sample of 15 Drama course students from the English Department enrolled in the second semester of the academic year 2015/2016. There was only one section and the instructor wanted to try a new method for teaching the course. As part of the course requirements, students were assigned to read, analyze and critique three plays.

#### 3.4 Preparation of Educational Material

Making use of the related literature, the researchers designed educational material in accordance with the steps of strategy of role-playing. A Shakespearean play was selected for this purpose. The implementation process needed 14 lectures of approximately 90 minutes each over a month and a half. To carry out the lessons, the researchers adopted the following steps:

- Step 1:** The preparation phase: determining and explaining the problem.
- Step 2:** Selecting participants (Students often had the choice to choose the character or role which they wished to embody or play).
- Step 3:** Setting up the stage: determining the issue of setting up the stage and the roles.
- Step 4:** Preparing the viewers: assigning tasks.
- Step 5:** Implementation of the scene.
- Step 6:** Discussion and evaluation: reviewing the process of role-playing.
- Step 7:** Reimplementation of the scene.
- Step 8:** Discussion and evaluation: reviewing the process after it is completed.
- Step 9:** Sharing and circulation of experience: linking the problem case with real life practices and dissemination of key behaviors.

#### 3.5 Instrumentation

Having reviewed the related literature, the researchers carefully designed a test for creative writing. In addition, they also used the interview as an instrument to learn about the students' attitudes towards the strategy of role-playing.

##### 3.5.1 Test of creative writing

This test was prepared in accordance with the creative writing skills (fluency, flexibility, originality, linguistic integrity, content organization). The test consisted of three main questions with five sub-questions each. A 1-5 scale lexical rubric was designed to mark creative writing skills. The test was administered to the study sample before the intervention, and then it was re-administered after the intervention was completed in accordance with the role-playing strategy.

To check its reliability and validity, the test was reviewed by a jury of specialists, and based on their remarks, necessary modifications were made. Then, it was administered to an exploratory sample from outside the study sample and was re-administered after two weeks. Pearson correlation coefficient between the two applications was calculated (0.80), a result which is acceptable for this kind of studies.

##### 3.5.2 The interview

The researchers interviewed (8) students from the sample to identify their attitudes towards utilizing the strategy of role-playing in teaching drama.

#### 3.6 Steps of the Experiment

- 1) Choosing a unit of the Drama course to prepare lessons according to the steps of role-playing strategy.
- 2) Preparing the test of creative writing and verifying its reliability and validity.
- 3) Administration of the creative writing test to the Drama class of the English Department before intervention.
- 4) Application of the unit prepared in accordance with the steps of role-playing strategy for a month and a half, equivalent to (14) lectures with nearly (90) minutes each.
- 5) Administration of the creative writing test after intervention.
- 6) Monitoring, analyzing and interpretation of the results.

### 3.7 Treatment of Data

Pearson correlation coefficient was used to calculate the reliability of the instrument through testing and re-testing the exploratory sample. In addition, means and standard deviations were calculated. T-test was also used to investigate whether there were any significant differences in mean scores of the participating group.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the light of the pre- and post applications (pre-test and post-test) of the study administered to the sample group and the outcome of the statistical treatment using SPSS, recommendations and suggestions were made. What follows is a presentation and analysis of the findings of this study according to the sequence of its questions.

### 4.1 Results Related to the First Question

What is the impact of using role-playing on enhancing the individual skills (fluency, flexibility, originality, linguistic integrity, content organization) as well as collective skills of creative writing among the students of the English Department?

To answer this question, means and standard deviations for the participants' grades in the test of creative writing skills (fluency, flexibility, originality, linguistic integrity, and content organization) were calculated separately, and so were the collective skills of creative writing in both the pre-test and the post-test. The value of (t) was also calculated for two interlinked

samples to find out the significance of differences between the mean scores of members of the study group. The results were tabulated in Table 1.

Table 1 shows an improvement in each of these creative writing skills (originality, linguistic integrity, content organization), and an improvement in the collective creative writing skills among members of the experimental study group, as a result of their studying one unit, using role-playing strategy. This is evident in the following table.

There is no statistically significant difference at the significance level (0.22) between the pre- and post-applications to the test of creative writing skills for the skill of fluency. This is an indication that the strategy of role-playing has no effect on the fluency skill development.

There is no statistically significant difference at the significance level (0.17) between the pre- and post-applications to the test of creative writing skills for the skill of flexibility. This is an indication that the strategy of role-playing has no effect on the flexibility skill development.

There is a statistically significant difference at the significance level (0.005) between the pre- and post-applications to the test of creative writing skills for the skill of originality, in favor of the post application. The mean of the post-test scores increased by (0.93) over the mean of the pre-test scores in the skill of originality, which shows that the strategy of role-playing has an effect on the originality skill development.

**Table 1. Significance of differences between the pre-test and post test of creative writing skills**

Skill	Test	No.	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree of freedom	Calculated value of t	Calculated level of significance
Fluency	Pre-	15	3.87	0.92	14	1.29-	0.22
	Post-	15	4.13	0.92			
Flexibility	Pre-	15	3.73	1.15	14	1.43-	0.17
	Post-	15	4.06	0.70			
Originality	Pre-	15	3.13	1.24	14	3.28-	0.005
	Post-	15	4.06	0.79			
Linguistic integrity	Pre-	15	3.13	1.24	14	4.05-	0.001
	Post-	15	4.33	0.72			
Content Organization	Pre-	15	3.13	0.83	14	7.89-	0.001
	Post-	15	4.06	0.90			
Overall Degree	Pre-	15	17.00	2.71	14	5.27	0.001
	Post-	15	20.66	4.75			



There is a statistically significant difference at the significance level (0.001) between the pre- and post-applications to the test of creative writing skills for the skill of linguistic integrity, in favor of the post application. The mean of the post-test scores increased by (1.2) over the mean of the pre-test scores in the skill of linguistic integrity, which shows that the strategy of role-playing has an effect on the linguistic integrity skill development.

There is a statistically significant difference at the significance level (0.001) between the pre- and post-applications to the test of creative writing skills for the skill of content organization, in favor of the post application. The mean of the post-test scores increased by (0.93) over the mean of the pre-test scores in the skill of content organization, which shows that the strategy of role-playing has an effect on the content organization skill development.

There is a statistically significant difference at the significance level (0.001) between the pre- and post-applications to the test of collective creative writing skills, in favor of the post application. The mean of the post-test scores increased by (3.66) over the mean of the pre-test scores in the collective creative writing skills, which shows that the strategy of role-playing has an effect on the development of the collective creative writing skills.

The researchers believe that the presence of statistically significant differences between the collective creative writing skills and the individual creative writing skills (originality, linguistic integrity, content organization) can be attributed to the use of the strategy of drama which helped the students to use their own style in writing and to express their ideas more effectively. In addition to that, thanks to this strategy, they were able to discuss their roles en masse. Thus, it opened more prospects for writing, giving the students the opportunity to contribute effectively to the various situations that led them to think critically, exchange and discuss ideas, search for new information, organize thoughts, and modify them till they managed to produce a creative piece of writing. In short, drama has provided the students with the opportunity to understand the concepts and ideas through portraying them and through role-playing, discussion, participation and imagination.

More interestingly, drama added an atmosphere of delight and gratitude to the lectures. Students'

anxiety of writing was observed to have decreased. They had a feeling of achievement and confidence. They also felt that their writing skills and abilities had been improving, which motivated them to write more and more.

## 4.2 Results Related to the Second Question

Are there any significant differences at the level of significance ( $0.05 \geq \alpha$ ) between the means of the pre-test and post-test due to the gender of the students?

To answer the second question, i.e. to explore if there were any differences between the means of the pre-test and post-test due to the gender of the students, the researchers calculated t-test for independent samples. Table 2 shows the result.

Table 2 shows that the mean for males was (19.28), while the mean for females was (21.87). The value of the Calculated ( t ) was (2.03) at the significance level (0.06), a value which is greater than the value ( $0.05 = \alpha$ ). There are no statistically significant differences related to gender.

The researchers explain this result as follows: using the strategy of role-playing produced the same effect regardless of the gender of the student, especially because male and female students in the same class had been exposed to the same method of teaching and taught by the same professor.

## 4.3 Results Related to the Interviews

Six participants were interviewed, and the analysis of the interviews showed that the dramatic activities had influenced the students' creative writing:

### 4.3.1 Students' attitudes towards dramatic activities and role-playing

All the interviewed students reported that drama is very important for the students to develop their ability to appreciate, evaluate and critique the texts being studied.

**Student J:** Role-playing helps me to develop my ability to understand and analyze texts.

**Student M:** Drama has indeed developed our ability to judge and think critically.

**Table 2. Results of post t-test for independent samples by gender**

Gender	No.	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree of freedom	Calculated t	Calculated level of significance
Males	7	19.28	2.75	13	2.03-	0.06
Females	8	21.87	2.17			

All the interviewed students pointed out that role-playing and drama had enriched their linguistic repertoire and provided them with helpful vocabulary and expressions.

**Student B:** Through drama activities, we have gained new words and phrases.

Five out of six students reported that dramatic activities had broadened their horizons and helped them solve the problems they face.

**Student D:** When we discuss issues and articles, we think in deferent ways to solve the problem, and this technique has improved our ability to solve problems.

Five out of six students said that drama had helped them to exchange ideas with each other.

**Student F:** Through dramatic activities, we were able to exchange ideas.

**Student S:** Dramatic activities have encouraged us to speak our views.

#### **4.3.2 The role of dramatic activities in enhancing students' creative writing skills**

Students expressed their satisfaction with learning English through role-playing and dramatic activities, as this method had been clearly fruitful in the development of their abilities in creative writing. All the interviewed students pointed out that they had gained the skills of writing through dramatic activities, and that they had developed their competence to write texts.

**Student J:** Reading the roles helped us to learn new words and enhanced our linguistic fluency.

Five students explained that dramatic activities gave them the opportunity to discover the qualities of the characters they were playing; in addition to improving their linguistic abilities, such activities improved their ability to imagine the sequence and interdependence of events. The students said that dramatic activities also encouraged them to search for new words and express their thoughts more clearly.

It can be argued that drama allows students to ask questions and engage in discussing the

answers and getting a lot of knowledge. This result is supported [13-15] findings that drama enhanced reading, writing, speaking and listening. The present research shows that drama helps students to appreciate writing. This reflected on their ability to write paragraphs and texts. It could be said that this requires changing teaching writing to be more active and helpful.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The analysis of the test and the interviews show that drama helps students to understand and evaluate the text. It also helps them enjoy the literary text, and thus look at the text from an interesting perspective; go beyond the external level of the story and become able to appreciate the themes which the story implies. This result is supported by [2] findings that drama activities allow students both the enjoyment of reading an author's story book and to internalize the messages of the story.

The study findings also show that drama increase students' ability to write texts related to creative writing. This result may be attributed to the fact that role-playing helps students to understand the literary text in a better way, and drama helps in improving students' creative writing skills by increasing their vocabulary fortune. This corresponds with [6]. Through the use of creative drama, students can actively participate in the learning process and they can discover their skills and creativity as well. It is assumed that creative drama activities can be an effective method to increase students' creative writing skills [47].

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The researchers recommended that teachers should focus on drama as a learning method, and that it should be applied in various university courses. It is also recommended that teachers should focus on creative writing skills especially fluency, flexibility, and originality. Researchers also recommend the need of conducting a similar study in other departments of the Palestinian universities.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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