

The Use of Flipped Learning as Technology Enhanced Pedagogic Tool to Support EFL Students' Writing Skills in Saudi Context

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ABSTRACT

Flipped classroom is an instructional approach in which students view explanations and materials prepared by the teacher at out-of-class time to expand collaboration with students in an informal way. In this study, it used as a technology-enhanced educational approach to convey teachings with computer-mediated interaction, such as video recorder, computer-generated lectures, and online conversations. This study investigates EFL students' views regarding the effectiveness of flipped learning on the improvement of their writing skills. A mixed method was utilized, which included assembling quantitative statistics, followed by the quantitative results. The first quantitative phase used a pre- and post-test true experimental design with a control group. Experimental group (a) consists of 35 female students has been teaching with the flipped learning method. Control group (b) is composed of 32 female students and followed traditional face-to-face teaching technique. Two ways Ancova was used to measure the writing improvement in both groups. It was discovered that the EFL students in experimental group outperformed the learners in the control group after treatment procedure. The findings show that the majority of students expressed generally positive attitude toward flipped learning on the improvement of their writing skills.

Keywords: Flipped classroom (FC), traditional class (TC), blended learning, academic writing English skills.

INTRODUCTION

The current innovation in the arena of educational technology have guided to renew attention in blending conventional approaches of teaching with technology which might enrich language instruction in Saudi Arabia. The inadequate level of competence of English as a foreign language (EFL) amongst students in Saudi Arabia continues one of the kingdom's major interests. Despite the remarkable endeavors that targeted to improve EFL syllabus, English in Saudi Arabia shows inadequate function whilst Saudi students infrequently drill the language.

The flipped classroom instruction has gained momentum in the recent decade (Young & Moran, 2017). However, its integration into EFL teaching has evoked much debate among teachers, especially in traditional English language classes (Young & Moran, 2017). This literature review is aimed at shedding light on a flipped classroom model and, more specifically, on the use of flipped classrooms for developing EFL university students' writing skills in the Saudi context. It starts with the definition of a flipped classroom model, and then proceeds to the comparison between flipped and traditional classrooms, and to the analysis of the roles of teachers and students within a flipped classroom. In the final section of the review, the prior research evidence on the use of a flipped instruction is brought to the fore and discussed.

Flipped classroom model

The flipped classroom instruction has gained momentum in the recent decade. While a flipped classroom (FC) model is often discussed through the technological lens, it is more appropriate to define it as an instructional approach in which the explanations and materials prepared by the teacher are viewed by students at out-of-class time (Mehring, 2017). Following this definition, a flipped EFL instruction provides the teacher with an opportunity to expand collaboration with students in an informal way, diversify learning, and free time on different activities in class. Instead of giving explanation during a lesson, the teacher shares instructional videos among students to ease and facilitate the acquisition of EFL writing skills (Leis et al., 2015). With a flipped classroom model, the teacher promotes personalised learning and gives impetus to the use of individual learning styles (Leis et al., 2015).

In this paper, flipped classroom is utilized as a technology-enhanced instructional approach to deliver lectures with computer-mediated interaction such as videos, virtual lessons, online conversations, and dialogue to support learning and assist social interactions, and eventually language enhancement. Thus, it can be realized that, the definition of FC strengthens the idea of social constructivism theory, which include collaborations amongst students throughout chat, online conversation to simplify approachability, and self-reliant to construct knowledge. The main distinction between traditional classrooms and flipped classrooms is that the former uses lectures and homework to shape EFL students' knowledge and the latter introduces knowledge outside classrooms through

innovative methods and tools (Reidsema, et al., 2017; Talbert, 2017). As is clear from this distinction, flipped classrooms are student-centred, while traditional classrooms are teacher-centred (Elfatah & Ahmed, 2016; Garcia-Penalvo et al., 2019). In traditional classrooms, the teacher disseminates new materials among EFL university students and gives them writing tasks to practice the acquired knowledge (Talbert, 2017). A flipped instruction encourages EFL university students to take responsibility for their writing, expand their learning experiences, and acquire writing competence through mastery of fundamental writing principles. Given that Saudi EFL students experience the greatest difficulty with writing in EFL traditional classrooms (Rafada & Madini, 2017), the shift towards a flipped instruction is fully justified.

In a flipped classroom, the roles of teachers and students are different from the roles, which these stakeholders fulfil in a traditional classroom (Reidsema et al., 2017). While EFL teachers are knowledge builders and EFL students act as passive recipients of language knowledge in a traditional classroom, EFL students become active agents of the learning process in a flipped classroom. This active participation is explained by the increased corroboration of students with teachers during writing activities, teachers' scaffolding, and the challenges which students face when they learn new materials in out-of-class settings (Leis et al., 2015). In more specific terms, a flipped instruction stimulates EFL students to use reflective thinking while processing new information and overcoming learning difficulties. However, EFL students are supported by teachers when they fulfil the activities which are beyond their levels of English proficiency (Leis et al., 2015).

The flipped classroom considered as one of the blended learning methods. Boelens et al. (2018) highlighted the main characteristic of blended learning as “an instructional approach that combines online and face-to-face instructional activities, to create more flexible modes of education, and personalized learning trajectories” (p. 199). Consequently, the idea of time and place flexibility blended learning delivers students with ample occurrences to accomplish personalized education. The notion of blended learning reposes on the belief that the technology should not replace the conventional learning, however would add further breadth to the learning experience.

Relevant Studies

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of a flipped instruction on EFL students' writing skills, it is essential to overview the prior research evidence. There is a shortage of research on the use of a flipped instruction for developing EFL students' writing competence within the Saudi context. Two studies undertaken by Alsmari (2019) and Chatta and Hague (2020) have revealed that the Saudi EFL university students who received a flipped classroom instruction significantly improved their paragraph writing skills in comparison to students who were engaged in traditional language learning. The flipped instruction for the study of Chatta and Hague (2020) was developed on the basis of YouTube videos, which were spread among the participants of the experimental group and helped them understand the concepts for better paragraph writing. Given that the Saudi EFL students had enough time at home to watch the videos and learn the material at their own pace, they succeeded in clarifying complex writing issues during lessons. The findings of Alsmari (2019) and Chatta and Hague (2020) are consistent with the results received by Soltanpour and Valizadeh (2018), despite the fact that three studies were carried in different contexts.

The evidence acquired by Soltanpour and Valizadeh (2018) has shown that the quality of argumentative essays written by Iranian EFL learners increased after 3 sessions of a flipped instruction. Due to the instructional video, two PowerPoint files with explanation, and a collaborative discussion of the new material in a class, the participants outperformed the EFL students who were taught in a traditional language classroom. While the study of Soltanpour and Valizadeh (2018) has focused on the EFL students with the upper-intermediate level of English proficiency, their follow-up study has assessed the impact of a flipped instruction on the grammatical competence and writing skills of low achievers. The findings of Valizadeh and Soltanpour (2020) have proved the evidence acquired in their prior research. In this further research, ten sessions of a flipped instruction helped low achievers actively participate in the construction of English language knowledge in terms of grammar and writing. The similar results have been obtained by Ekmecki (2017) and Qader and Arslan (2019) within the Turkish and Iraqi EFL contexts. In more precise terms, the writing proficiency of EFL students has increased due to high levels of enjoyment and a more flexible environment in flipped classrooms.

METHODS

This study is mixed methods as it collects both qualitative and quantitative data. The justification for integration both sorts of data was that using only one technique would not be enough to response the research questions or address the issues around the topic, such as issues about difficulties that students encountered or how they observed flipped classrooms to support them in the improvement of writing skill. Therefore, mixing both data offers an inclusive image of the research problem.

The quantitative method used in this study was a pre- and post-test true experimental design with a control group. The rationale for selecting this particular design is that there is random selection of the participants in the study. Focus groups interviews were used in the qualitative strand to comprehend and explain preliminary quantitative statistics in more depth.

This current study attempted to answer the following questions:^[1]_[SEP]

- (1) What is the effect of the use of flipped classroom as pedagogical approach on the development of writing skills in English as a foreign language?
- (2) Is there a significant difference on students' achievements level by the using of flipped classroom on the development of the writing skills between students in preparatory year?
- (3) What is the effect of flipping on students' attitude concerning it?^[1]_[SEP]

Participants

In this study, the target population was all female EFL undergraduates in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Within this target population, a sample was chosen that involved of EFL undergraduates in their foundation Program at King Khalid University (KKU) at community college at English language department in the fall semester of 2019–2020 academic year.

The sample of the study is constituted of two groups registering in the PYP. One of these groups was allocated as the experimental group (a) randomly and the other one comprised the control group. Experimental group consists of 35 female students. Control group (b) is composed of 32 female students. The average level of the students is B1 (intermediate) in accordance with the standardized English language test, which applied in Saudi Arabia to be accepted into an undergraduate program. Table 1 shows the distribution of study sample members in the experimental and control groups, depending on the student's learning level variable.

Table 1. Distributions of the experimental and the control groups with the student's learning level variable

summation	student's learning level					Group
	Excellent	Very good	Good	Medium	poor	
32	0	0	1	22	9	Control (the usual method)
35	17	14	4	0	0	Experimental (the inverted learning method)
67	17	14	5	22	9	summation

Data Collection Process

As the design of the study has two groups namely; experimental and control group two ways two way Anova test was used to examine the main effect for each independent variables (traditional and flipped learning) on a dependent variable (Students' writing skills development). *Effect size* and *Eta square* were also implemented to examine the effect of traditional learning on English writing development.

After identifying the study's purpose and research questions, the researcher decided to use pre and post test as a tool to measure the writing improvement in both groups. This study adopted results on the argumentative paragraph rubric in order to measure the level of improvement in English self-writing for the individual, as well as relied on and responses on the focus groups interview. Participants in the experimental and control group were requested to write an argumentative paragraph about a topic they would choose from the three topics provided by the researcher. For post-test, participants were asked to write an argumentative paragraph again about the same topics provided in the pre-test after fifteen weeks' treatment throughout Flipped Writing Class approach.

Students' argumentative paragraphs were checked according to rubric components. The adapted rubric consists of five dimensions; a) organization and structure, b) relevance and content, c) lexical range/word choice, d) grammar/sentence structure, e) mechanics. The responses of the writing dimensions were evaluated according to Likert scale; very good=3, good=2, satisfied=1, poor=0. Cronbach's Alpha of the rubric in pre-test was used to determine the responses in the test.

To achieve the objectives of the study, several procedures have been followed; obtain approvals necessary to conduct the study, set up the English typing test. Furthermore extract the evidence of validity and stability, choose and assign the sample study by method of instruction in two groups. Meetings have been held with the teacher who

taught the learning module developed in a reciprocal way, in order to identify and train them to apply instruction using the reciprocal learning method developed for the purposes of this study. Develop three articles for female students to choose from in the pre-and-post test to see how well English-language writing has improved. Pre-application of the English-language improvement test was applied for students of the preparatory year in the experimental and control groups for statistical control purposes. Doing experimental treatment by teaching the experimental group using the flipped learning method, while the control group studied using the traditional method. The experimental treatment was done by the following steps such as, offering videos, and providing video links to each student determines, the lesson goals that, identifying student learning resources at home. After the application of the flipped learning method, the English writing improvement exam was reapplied to the experimental and control groups (post Application). Female students' answers have been corrected, and were summarized in tables, and then data is entered and statistically processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results were calculated, presented, interpreted and discussed, and then we propose recommendations.

Table 2

post	Flipped Classroom	pre	Experimental
post	Traditional Classroom	pre	control

Bryman (2012) advised using face validity to guarantee effective working in advance, where face validity refers to “reflect[ing] the contents of the concept in questions” (p. 171). To ensure the reliability and face validity of the rubric employed, Experts in a particular field are asked to decide whether rubric items reflected the main purpose of the study (Bryman, 2012). Thus, four bilingual Saudi experts were requested to review and comment on the instrument used in the current study. Based on their comment, some of the points were amended.

Treatment process Data Analysis

The students in the experimental group were taught the English Intensive Course (EIC) via Course Management System (CMS) in blackboard ultra. Blackboard permitted them to follow the course necessities and to see the shared links by the instructor. The experimental groups consisting of 35 students were taught for (one semester) throughout Flipped Class Model. The students perceived the teacher-created videos on various topics about how developing their writing skills, how to use process approach, mind map in writing at home as coursework and in-class time was devoted to practice paragraph-writing practices.

The control group containing of 32 students were instructed through a traditional lecture-based writing class. The same materials were presented associated with the pre-selected course book. At the end of the semester, both groups were given the same post-test to determine the difference between and with-in the groups. The paragraphs written by the students in each group in the post-test were assessed by on the basis of the argumentative paragraph rubric. As ethics plays a fundamental role in educational research, ethical concerns were addressed for each phase of the study. Two way Anova test was used to examine the main effect for each independent variables (traditional and flipped learning) on a dependent variable (Students' writing skills development). *Effect size* and *Eta square* were also implemented to examine the effect of traditional learning on English writing development.

The use of focus groups interviews in the existing study enabled the explanation of quantitative outcomes and added in-depth understanding to students' perceptions. Each participant was emailed to organize an appropriate time and place to meet with them. Throughout the session with the participants, the purpose of the study was clarified, and the necessity to offer honest views to support the reliability of the study was emphasized. Five concise open-ended questions were then requested to get participants' opinion about the main issue of the study. The preliminary inquiry was served as an icebreaker. The primary questions concerned with the main research questions. They were asked to comment on open-ended questions. The follow-up interview replies were taped and transcribed by the researcher.

Thematic analysis was adopted in this study to obtain in depth information from the data by generating codes, themes, and sub-themes to make reasonable associations between them. Braun and Clarke (2006) defined *thematic analysis* as “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data” (p. 79). It is a detailed analysis that includes coding, themes, and sub- themes, which can serve different points.

Content analysis was utilized as well. Bryman (2012) outlined content analysis as a technique of analysis used to calculate the content to recognize and summarize the data in a systematic way. Therefore, after generating the primary codes, themes, and sub-themes to make reasonable relations between them, the content analysis was chosen to permit for counting words that coded initially in the text.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To determine the extent to which the first hypothesis was met, the 2 Way ANCOVA Analysis Test was implemented. To determine the effect size of the teaching method variable, which used to improve writing skills, the ‘Eta Square’ has been applied in SPSS 20.0 software.

This section first presents the findings from the statistical analysis by examining whether there is any significant difference between the flipped and non-flipped groups in their paragraph writing skill after the treatment. The mean, and standard deviation (SD) were employed in both groups who taught throughout Flipped Writing Class Model and traditional model. The mean, and standard deviation (SD) reported values on Students’ argumentative paragraphs on pre and post test in all writing rubrics dimensions; a) organization and structure, b) relevance and content, c) lexical range/word choice, d) grammar/sentence structure, e) mechanics. Then it moves on to present the qualitative findings based on some important quantitative outcomes that need further explanations.

Findings and Discussion related to the First study question ‘What is the effect of the use of flipped classroom as pedagogical approach on the development of writing skills in English as a foreign language?’

The test of the hypothesis that emanates from it states: "There are no statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha \geq 50.0$) between the average scores of female students in the two groups: Experimental (subject to the reversed FC learning method) and control (subject to the usual TC method) on the test of improving English writing".

To answer the first question and test its hypothesis, the arithmetic averages (mean) and standard deviations of the students’ scores in the two groups were extracted: Experimental (which studied in the manner of "inverted learning method ‘FC’ and control", which studied in the usual manner ‘TC’ to test the improvement of English writing in its five components (introduction and results, components, organization, citation and mechanism) in the pre-post applications, the results were as in table (3).

The analysis of the results of the pre and post-test indicate that the significant difference between the experimental and control groups in means with regard to effectiveness of *Flipped Writing Classroom* model to support EFL students’ academic writing skills on five writing rubrics. The following table presents the results of the pre and post-test.

Table 3. Mean, and standard deviation about pre and post test between experimental and control group

Writing Rubrics		Pre test		Post test	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Introduction and conclusion	Experimental Group	2.26	0.27	2.57	0.30
	Control Group	2.30	0.32	2.28	0.38
Body of paragraph	Experimental Group	2.28	0.30	2.70	0.39
	Control Group	2.24	0.40	2.12	0.48
Organization and structure	Experimental Group	2.36	0.28	2.66	0.35
	Control Group	2.40	0.38	2.55	0.45
Citations	Experimental Group	2.45	0.37	2.65	0.34
	Control Group	2.14	0.38	2.10	0.49
Mechanics	Experimental Group	2.12	0.32	2.20	0.47
	Control Group	2.28	0.42	2.16	0.38
Total	Experimental Group	2.29	0.30	2.55	0.37
	Control Group	2.27	0.38	2.24	0.43

Table 3 shows that there are apparent differences between the average scores of female students in the experimental groups and the control over the English writing improvement test and each of the five English writing improvement skills in the pre-application.

Furthermore, Table 3 displays that there are apparent differences between the mathematical averages of female students on the English writing test and on each of the five English writing improvement skills in the post-test application. To determine whether the differences in the arithmetic averages of the students of the experimental

groups and the control over the English writing improvement test and their five skills are statistically significant at the significance level (≥ 0.05) and to isolate the differences between the two groups in the pre-test application, two way Ancova covariance analysis was used and the results were as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. The two-way ANCOVA about experimental and control groups on pre test

Writing Rubrics	Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F	Level Sig.	η^2 The size of the effect
Introduction and conclusion	Pre test	3.305	1	3.330	45.490		
	Group	2.450	1	2.477	33.880	*0.001	0.377
	Error	4.260	65	0.077			
	Total	10.015	67				
Body of paragraph	Pre test	7.660	1	7.600	108.120		
	Group	2.122	1	2.133	28.980	*0.001	0.344
	Error	4.160	65	0.72			
	Total	13.942	67				
Organization and structure	Pre test	5.760	1	5.889	104.988		
	Group	1.880	1	1.800	32.110	*0.001	0.340
	Error	3.400	65	0.054			
	Total	110.40	67				
Citations	Pre test	8.870	1	8.900	204.111		
	Group	2.120	1	2.020	48.780	*0.001	0.450
	Error	2.660	65	0.040			
	Total	13.650	67				
Mechanics	Pre test	7.750	1	7.998	180.120		
	Group	3.660	1	1.990	45.887	*0.001	0.430
	Error	4.120	65	0.062			
	Total	15.530	67				
Total	Pre test	6.669	1	6.743	128.565		
	Group	2.446	1	2.084	37.9274	*0.001	0.388
	Error	3.720	65	0.061			
	Total	12.835	67				

The results in table 4 show that there are statistically significant differences between the average grades of female students in the control, and the experimental groups of the improvement of English writing and its five components (introduction and results, axes, organization, citation and mechanism), where the values of F calculated for the differences between the two groups ranged from 28.980 to 5. These values are statistically significant at the level of $\alpha = (0.01)$ (that there are differences of statistical significance at the level of $(\alpha = (0.01))$ between the average student scores in the experimental group (which studied in the way of the reciprocal learning) and the control (which was studied in the usual way) on the post-test of improved writing in the English language and Its five components (introduction and results, axes, organization, citation and mechanism).

To find out how a variant of the teaching method affects the overall improvement of English writing in female students, the ETA square (η^2) has been calculated with the value of the ETA square on the overall English writing

improvement test (0.388). Thus, we can say that 38.82% of the variation in English writing skills as a whole between the students of the experimental and control groups is due to the used instruction method. The value of the ETA square for each skill of the five self-improvements of English writing (introduction and results, axes, organization, citation and mechanism), respectively (0.377), (0.344), (0.340), (0.450), (0.430).

In order to determine the value of the differences between the average grades of the preparatory year students in the experimental and control groups on the improvement of English writing, the modified arithmetic mean was extracted as a result of isolating the effect of female students' performance in the pre-application of the English writing improvement test on the performance of female students in the post-application of the measure, as in table 5.

Table 5. The edited means between experimental and control groups on pre test

Writing Rubrics	Group	Edited Means	Error
Introduction and conclusion	Experimental group	2.66	0.05
	Control Group	2.40	0.05
Body of paragraph	Experimental group	2.70	0.05
	Control Group	2.22	0.05
Organization and structure	Experimental group	2.90	0.04
	Control Group	2.30	0.04
Citations	Experimental group	2.88	0.04
	Control Group	2.33	0.04
Mechanics	Experimental group	2.44	0.04
	Control Group	2.80	0.04
Total	Experimental group	2.72	0.04
	Control Group	2.41	0.04

The results in table 5 show that the adjusted arithmetic averages of the pre-year students in the experimental and control groups for the improvement of English writing, in the post-application, after isolating the effect of their performance in the pre-test application, were for the experimental group's students (which were studied according to the inverted learning method). The modified arithmetic mean of their performance on the scale and its five fields were higher than the modified arithmetic mean of the control group students (studied in the usual way) and therefore the statistical hypothesis from question 1, which states that there are no statistically significant differences at the level of the significance ($\alpha \geq 0.05$) between the average student grades in the two groups, is rejected: Experimental (which is subject to the inverted learning method) and control (which is subject to the usual method) on the English writing improvement test, the alternative hypothesis that demonstrates the effectiveness of teaching English is accepted using the inverted learning method to improve English writing in the preparatory year's students. In general, in each skill of improving writing in five English, compared to the usual teaching method.

Findings and Discussion related to the second study question ‘Is there a significant difference on students’ achievements level by the using of flipped classroom as pedagogical approach on the development of the writing skills in preparatory year?’

The test of the hypothesis that emanates from it states: "There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \geq 0.05$) between the average grades of students in the two groups: Experimental (which is subject to the inverted learning method) and control (which is subject to the usual method) of the test for improved English writing, due to a variable difference (the achievement level)".

The mathematical averages and standard deviations of the students' grades for the preparatory year were derived from the test of the improvement of English writing and its five fields, in the pre-post applications, according to teaching methods: (the method of inverted learning, the usual method) and the achievement level (excellent, good, medium, poor), and as in Table 6.

Table 6. Mean and standard deviation of pre and post-test in terms of way of teaching and achievement level

Writing Rubrics	Achievement level	Pre test				Post test			
		Experimental Group		Control Group		Experimental Group		Control Group	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Introduction and conclusion	Very Good	2.22	0.28	2.33	0.24	2.88	0.18	2.55	0.33
	Good	2.40	0.39	2.20	0.35	2.70	0.30	2.44	0.38
	Satisfying	2.33	0.44	2.40	0.24	2.77	0.20	2.12	0.47
	Poor	2.12	0.34	2.30	0.21	2.44	0.19	2.70	0.45
Body of paragraph	Very Good	2.30	0.42	2.05	0.35	2.65	0.43	2.11	0.47
	Good	2.32	0.37	2.18	0.36	2.86	0.12	2.30	0.45
	Satisfying	2.02	0.32	1.86	0.40	2.41	0.29	1.80	0.50
	Poor	2.44	0.35	1.90	0.45	2.77	0.33	2.20	0.55
Organization and structure	Very Good	2.33	0.20	2.66	0.22	2.78	0.08	2.77	0.20
	Good	2.40	0.35	2.50	0.39	2.86	0.36	2.49	0.39
	Satisfying	2.51	0.36	2.20	0.34	2.71	0.34	2.15	0.65
	Poor	2.41	0.21	2.71	0.26	2.98	0.06	2.83	0.18
Citations	Very Good	2.48	0.27	2.30	0.45	2.94	0.16	2.41	0.75
	Good	2.43	0.37	2.20	0.40	2.74	0.31	2.33	0.50
	Satisfying	2.07	0.48	1.95	0.42	2.52	0.38	1.79	0.44
	Poor	2.30	0.42	2.05	0.35	2.65	0.43	2.11	0.47
Mechanics	Very Good	2.32	0.37	2.18	0.36	2.86	0.12	2.30	0.54
	Good	2.20	0.40	2.10	0.38	2.70	0.40	2.05	0.39
	Satisfying	2.16	0.33	1.99	0.37	2.86	0.32	2.04	0.47
	Poor	2.02	0.23	1.86	0.40	2.41	0.29	1.80	0.50
Total	Very Good	2.33	0.31	2.30	0.32	2.88	0.19	2.43	0.42
	Good	2.35	0.37	2.24	0.38	2.77	0.29	2.32	0.44
	Satisfying	2.22	0.37	2.08	0.35	2.65	0.31	2.47	0.49
	Poor	2.26	0.31	2.16	0.33	2.65	0.26	2.32	0.43

The data in table (6) show that there are apparent differences in the arithmetic averages of female students in the pre-application to test the improvement of English writing and its five fields, depending on the changes: Teaching method (inverted learning method, standard method) and achievement level (excellent, good, medium, poor) where these differences were statistically adjusted using binary contrast analysis (ANCOVA) -2 way.

The results in table (6) also show that there are apparent differences in the arithmetic averages of female students in the post-application of the test for the improvement of English writing and its five fields, according to the variable method of teaching (the inverted learning method, the usual method) and the achievement scale (excellent, good, medium, poor).

To find out if those apparent differences in the computational averages on the dimensional application of the English writing improvement test and its five fields are statistically significant based on the interaction between teaching and learning variants, and to isolate differences in pre-application to test the English writing improvement, the combined binary variance analysis was conducted (Ancova)-2 way At the significance level $\alpha = .05$ the results were as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. 2way Anova test about students' scores on the pre writing test according to the way of teaching and achievement level

	Source of variation	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Introduction and conclusion	Pre test	2.882	1	2.768	39.789	
	Teaching method	2.455	1	2.514	36.220	0.000
	Achievement level	0.566	2	0.310	3.879	0.044
	Teaching method × Achievement level	0.066	2	0.028	0.365	0.683
	Error	3.663	61	0.58		
	Total	9.632	67			
Body of paragraph	Pre test	6.444	1	6.715	88.897	
	Teaching method	2.356	1	2.200	32.111	0.000
	Achievement level	0.410	2	0.180	2.448	0.115
	Teaching method × Achievement level	0.055	2	0.041	0.455	0.619
	Error	3.870	61	0.060		
	Total	13.135	67			
Organization and structure	Pre test	4.516	1	4.520	82.990	
	Teaching method	1.810	1	1.880	35.484	0.000
	Achievement level	0.477	2	0.266	4.656	0.014
	Teaching method × Achievement level	0.040	2	0.018	0.410	0.733
	Error	2.180	61	0.049		
	Total	9.023	67			
Citations	Pre test	7.620	1	7.530	177.111	
	Teaching method	2.400	1	2.100	52.998	0.000
	Achievement level	0.170	2	0.087	2.444	0.116
	Teaching method × Achievement level	0.088	2	0.048	1.220	0.339
	Error	2.450	61	0.039		
	Total	10.366	67			
Mechanics	Pre test	4.550	1	6.550	90.777	
	Teaching method	2.770	1	1.998	49.884	
	Achievement level	0.060	2	0.069	3.566	
	Teaching method × Achievement level	0.088	2	0.047	0.560	
	Error	3.001	61	0.035		
	Total	10.469	67			
Total	Pre test	5.202	1	5.616	95.912	
	Teaching method	2.358	1	2.1384	41.339	0.000
	Achievement level	0.304	2	0.182	3.398	0.043
	Teaching method × Achievement level	0.067	2	0.0364	0.602	0.543
	Error	3.032	61	0.048		
	Total	10963	76			

The results in table 7 indicate that there are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance $\alpha = .05$ between the arithmetic averages of female students in the post-application of the test for the improvement of English writing and its five fields (introduction and results, axes, organization, citation and mechanism) that are attributable to the interaction between teaching methods (the method of invert learning, The usual method) and the level of the educational achievement (excellent, good, medium, poor) where the calculated values of the interaction between the layout and citation variables (0.0410.) (1.220) are not statistically insignificant ($\alpha = .05$), that means the improvement of the writing in English of the student of the preparatory year does not vary with their levels of educational achievements. And the application of the inverted learning method has a significant effect on the improvement of the English writing of the preparatory year female students, regardless of their educational achievement.

This reveals students experienced to the flipped learning setting outperformed the students in the traditional writing class in terms of writing proficiency regardless to their achievement level. Accordingly, hypothesis, which states that there is no statistical difference on the means, sores between experimental and control groups with regard to teaching methods and achievement level in writing performance will be accepted.

Findings about FOCUS Groups Interview

Focus groups interviews was used in the qualitative strand to gaining required data about the effectiveness of *Flipped Writing Classroom* model to enhance EFL students’ academic writing skills and the perceptions of the experimental group towards the new teaching approach. The purpose of focus groups interviews was to comprehend and explain preliminary quantitative data in more depth. The current study uses a thematic analysis that encompasses major themes, sub-themes, color-coding accompanied with students’ quote in the transcription. The students were presented the question ‘Having accomplished this program, do^[1] feel you are able to write well?’ the responses were classified as positive, negative, and unsure. The second question was ‘If you had a chance, would you prefer Traditional or Flipped Writing Class? why?’ the responses were classified on the foundation of students’ preferences as FC, TC, and unsure. The third question was ‘Did you have any obstacles when contributing in in Flipped Writing Class? Examples?’ The responses were categorized as lack of technical support, poor Internet connection, and great amount of assignments. The last question about ‘Do you have any recommendations or observations that you would like to add changes in the Flipped Class to improve Writing skills?’.

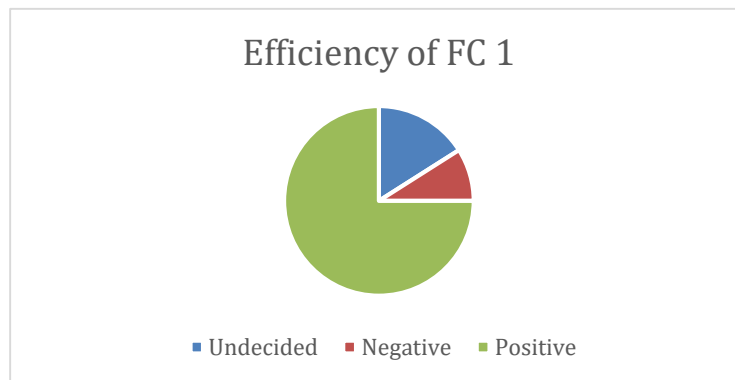
Findings Related to study Question 1 Having accomplished this program, do^[1] feel you are able to write well?

As it obviously seen in the graph below, the majority of participants (75%) perceived FC to be supporting their writing throughout teachers’ well-informed comment, study notes, and asynchronous interaction, which sent in videos by the teachers. Various students in each group thought that feedback provided by their classmates or teachers assisted them improve their writing. For example, student M (in FG1) said that: I believe receiving pre-recorded lecture about the usefulness of feedback to develop writing is so valued. For example, the instructor sent us a video about how can I provide a useful feedback to my colleague to help her develop her writing’. Student M (in FG2) added another point ‘For me I enjoyed FC because it was more efficient and convenient’.

Efficiency of FC

Positive	Negative	Undecided
75%	9%	16%

Graph 1. Efficiency of FC



Similarly, student A (in FG4) described how her writing was improved by peer review feedback throughout the online lecture: ‘my teacher sends me several videos about how I can provide a polite peer feedback to develop writing. I believe peer assessment is a suitable activity to improve writing. I promoted from this to correct my errors. For example, I perceived something like “it is much better if”. I appreciated offering or getting feedback more in the online lecture. It is helpful’.

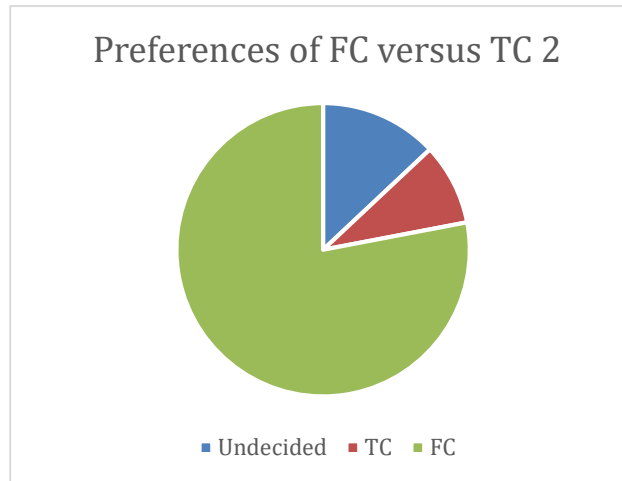
By contrast, only (9%) of students expressed dissatisfaction as they reported FC made them lose their attentiveness. As student B shown, “this kind of learning is little bit boring and makes me unfocused”.

Some participants stated that they still unsure (16%) if their writing was improved or not. Surprisingly, student L and others in the second focus group interview extended an exciting point. They were unfamiliar with plagiarism and its consequences. As the teacher requested them to review writing before submission and to be sure that it is plagiarism free. Student L stated, “I don't know what is this term mean... I need to just pass this year. Why copying and pasting are not suitable, and I believe everybody does this practice. We did not have further time to write. The instructor says, “don't duplicate” but we don't know in what way”.

Findings Related to study Question 2 ‘If you had a chance, would you prefer Traditional or Flipped Writing Class? why?’

FC	TC	Undecided
78%	9%	13%

Graph 2. Preferences of FC versus TC 2



As shown in the graph 2, (78%) have reported that they would prefer FC to the TC. Student H (in FG3) said “personally, I would choose flipped learning. It is enjoyable. I can watch materials of the lecture at my own pace. I have a further opportunity to practice. For example, I benefited from teachers videos to watch at home before the lecture on how to make notes, different kinds of essays, and how to organize my writing [quoting, summarizing]. It is entirely a new training for us”.

As apparent in the graph, only (9%) of students were in favor of TC. Surprisingly, Student L and others in the second focus group interview raised exciting opinion. She stated that they were not acquainted with university system and thus they prefer traditional class communication as they had some computer literacy problems. Only (13%) of students were unsure that whether they preferred FC or TC. Student H (in FG3) said that: I think FC improved my essay writing but I still don’t know if this improvement as a result of FC.

Findings Related to study Question 3 ‘Did you face any obstacles when contributing in in Flipped Writing Class? Examples?’

A higher proportion of students criticized about some technical problems, such as unclear auditory in online lectures while involved or time-consuming downloads from Blackboard in the FC setting. From the analysis, four themes emerged in relation to the third study question as outlined in graph 3.

Poor Internet connection and technical problems

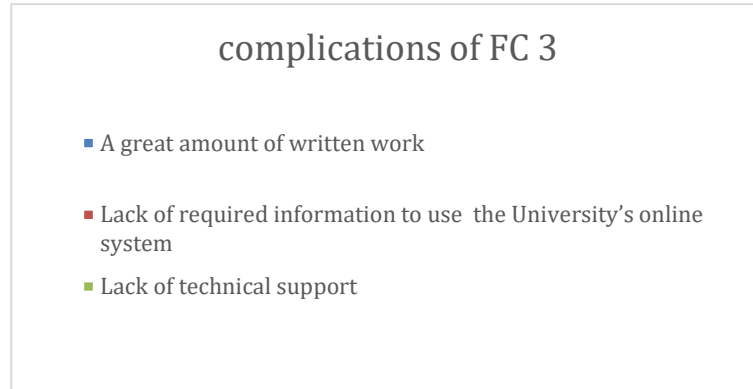
As demonstrated in the graph below, large numbers of students (40%) revealed that they experienced poor Internet connection such as poor voice quality. Student B (in FG3) revealed that, “in online lectures, we normally have technical problems like unclear echoes or recurrent cut-offs”.

Student Z (in FG4) criticized that when she had to download an task from bb for asynchronous communication, she had troubles, as the system did not respond, which affected submission postponements: “I had a difficulty happen many times when downloading my task throughout Blackboard”.

Complications of FC 3

Poor Internet connection and technical problems	Lack of technical support	Lack of required information to use the University’s online system	A great amount of written work
40%	31%	13%	16%

Graph 3. Complications of FC



Lack of technical support

Moreover, (31%) of participants reported slowly in response when they raised a complaint about any technical issues they faced. Such as student S (in FG1) said that, “if we had any technical inconvenience, we didn’t know where to go. Just our colleagues support us”. This problem caused in us not attending lectures”.

Lack of necessary information to use the University’s online system

As show in the graph, (13%) of students conveyed annoyance about the absence of required information at the commencement of the course that facilitated FC learning. Student S “I believed the course is worthy for us. However I am a freshman and I need more information about how to use university online system initially”.

A great amount of written work

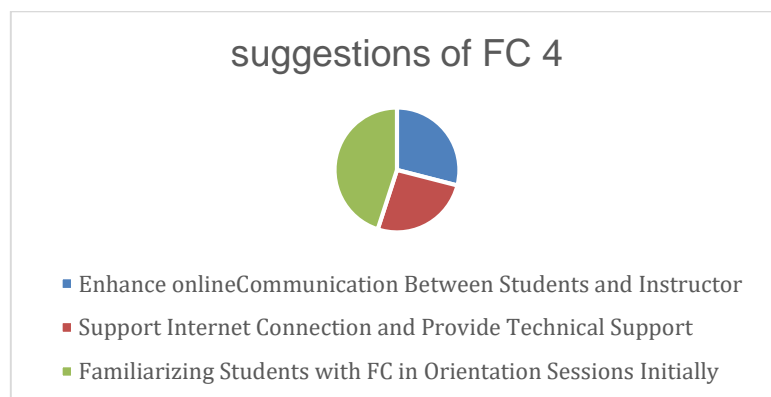
Lastly, (16%) of students reported problems related to the workload that necessitated additional time and efforts to accomplish. More than three students stressed a thoughtful outcome as they have inadequate period to complete their tasks: they gave the task to someone else to do for her. Student B (in FG3) said “the huge amount of assignment [was a problematic], as I found myself compulsory to offer it to someone to do it for me, which was pricy”.

Findings Related to study Question 4 ‘Do you have any suggestions or comments that you would like to add changes in the Flipped Class to improve Writing skills?’

Suggestions of FC

Familiarizing Students with FC in Orientation Sessions Initially	Support Internet Connection and Provide Technical Support	Enhance online Communication Between Students and Instructor
45%	26%	29%

Graph 4. Suggestions of FC



Familiarizing Students with FC in Orientation Sessions Initially

The above graph shows that, with respect to orientation sessions, most students (45%) believed that having orientation in advance would be helpful for identifying some issues in relation to the university online system and virtual classes. Student A (in FG3) said, “I think flipped classrooms is very advantageous however the difficulty is in its application [...] the most fundamental stage is to deliver an orientation session about it”.

Support Internet Connection and Provide Technical Support

As evident in the graph 4, (26%) of students repeatedly recommended the crucial necessity to develop Internet connections and rapid reply to enable them interact with specialists to resolve technical difficulties. For example, student R (in FG2) recommended, “quality of chatting online need to be developed”. Furthermore, student S (in FG3) said that, “I think the lack of technical support is a serious difficulty. Otherwise we can’t log on or join the virtual classes”.

Enhance online Communication Between Students and Instructor

Lastly, (29%) of students suggested increasing communication hours with instructors. Student S (in FG1) demonstrated this idea: “I am very pleased with FC. It was appropriate for me. I recommend increasing online interaction periods with instructors or generating some other social platforms”.

Discussion

The findings make it vibrant that the use of contemporary technology as a portion of flipped learning is not only required, but also advantageous in terms of the particulars of the development of writing skills. Participants frequently mentioned the essential role of feedback to support writing skills. One clarification for this might be that writing is considered productive skills, which requires human assessments of their outcomes (Sharma & Barret, 2007). This finding is consistent with the data obtained from Alsmari (2019), Chatta and Hague (2020), and Soltanpour and Valizadeh (2018). Briefly, peer feedback throughout lectures (e.g., through email and chat boards) appeared to be more beneficial and collaborative than during offline classes whilst developing essay topic ideas and style, revising other drafts, and using academic vocabularies.

The findings of this study discovered that deliberate plagiarism is considered habitual practice amongst the majority of EFL students. They are used to copy and paste their assignments from the Internet with acknowledging the sources. This surprising outcome advises that students have to be trained about the serious penalties of plagiarism. Such tuition should be commenced, beforehand the university, throughout series of training sessions for using references as well as academic writing procedures, such as summarizing and paraphrasing. This result seems constant with those of Madkhali (2017), who discovered that plagiarism practices are still considered usual amongst Saudi learners.

According to the outcomes of this study, participants perceived FC to be delivering them with time flexibility to learn at their own pace, thereby making it useful. Consequently, they act as adult learners who know their responsibilities to accomplish writing tasks at their own pace. This finding is consistent with the results from former investigation, such as Ekmecki (2017), Thai et al. (2017) and Qader and Arslan (2019).

The most obvious finding to emerge from the analysis is the utilizing numerous educational resources such as YouTube reinforced students in becoming more self-directed. One possible explanation for this finding might be that new web generations have apparently absorbed themselves in technology practice, as obvious when learners indicated the use of diverse sources of mobile learning via mobile phones to access limitless Internet platforms. This result appears to be consistent with other results that online learning resources are of abundant opportunities to students—not only in terms of the practical assistances to their language learning development, but also encouraging autonomous learning, which will be necessary for their upcoming learning practices (Levy, 2017). Despite the Ministry of Education’s magnificent determinations to deliver Internet access for free in universities, weak networks connection remains a major drawback (Ja’ashan, 2015). According to the current study findings, students noticed university websites’ technical troubles (e.g., time-consuming uploading or downloading in Learning Management System) and auditory complications in virtual lectures as key limitations. These outcomes are in line with those of Thang et al. (2012), Hamdan et al. (2017), and (Leis et al., 2015) who recommended the necessity to afford suitable and fast Internet connections on university.

□Based on this study’s findings, there is an absence of technicians who could support students’ technical difficulties throughout the university websites or on campuses. They either postponed or not replying at all. This affected students from logging in to the university online platform to attend online lectures, offering their projects on time, and communicating their tutors. Mostly, inconsistent climate (e.g., heavy rainfall), the university online platform went down fully, generating additional frustration and interruptions for learners. Universities should thus

offer constant maintenance of their online platform and offer well-timed online technical support system 24/7. A fundamental transformation has to be made to deliver effective technical support team to help students with any technical problems, as clearly stated in the students' comments.

□ The findings revealed that students were overwhelmed with assignments in online setting, which caused some negative thoughts about FC as boring and detaching. These outcomes concur with those discovered by Thang, Wong et al. (2012), Al Zumor et al. (2013), Tosun (2015) and Poon (2013), who conclude that assignment loads could unhelpfully distress students' development in flipped learning context.

In light of the existing study results, EFL students had newly practiced flipped learning, which necessitated innovative abilities to survive with technology, mainly for those learners with partial computer literacy. Thus, it seems that preliminary preparation for learners should highlight on how to use university online platform, and how to deal with different LMS tools. EFL students in this study also strongly recommended delivering an orientation session about the university's online system. This result is in line with Ja'ashan's (2015) findings of similar undesirable views linked to the absence of knowledge and clear instructions to follow for online university platform.

CONCLUSION

Insufficiency in English has been a struggle to almost all Saudi learners who are used to learning English by memorization, rather than by adopting in critical thinking skills or self-reliant for language enhancement purposes. Students in this study thought that the use of flipped learning to support academic writing procedures that are crucial for essays, such as summarizing, paraphrasing, note taking, and referencing. Students perceived FC to be advantageous for establishing writing process in a systematic approach in terms of creating supporting ideas, fostering critical thinking skills.

The participants in this study perceived that FC reinforced their communications, commitment, and self-reliant, which eventually guided to writing improvement. They additionally transformed their perceptions towards learning to take liability for their learning when devoting time-consuming hours searching for knowledge online and practice their English language skills.

According to the results, employing flipped learning in Saudi higher education necessitates examinations of positive practices, and the assessment of difficulties faced in certain settings. The switch to flipped learning needs orientations for students and instructors as well as the continuous revision of universities' actions plans. More importantly, prior to the implementation of flipped learning, it is vital to address the infrastructure to avoid further pressure.

□ The evidence received in this literature review suggests that the use of a flipped instruction within an EFL classroom reinforces students' writing because it takes into account the students' different learning styles and needs and expands time on developing writing skills. The prior research has demonstrated that flipped classrooms are beneficial for EFL students' writing, although there are significant gaps in the investigation of flipped classrooms in the Saudi context. More profound research should be undertaken to evaluate the impact of a flipped instruction on writing competence of Saudi EFL university students.

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