

## Improving Paragraph Writing Skills of Saudi EFL University Students Using Flipped Classroom Instruction

**Bala Swamy Chatta**

Department of English

College of Sciences and Humanities

Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Al Kharj, Saudi Arabia

**Mohammad Imdadul Haque**

Department of Management

College of Business Administration

Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Al Kharj, Saudi Arabia

### Abstract

The study aims to examine the effect of Flipped Classroom Instruction in improving the paragraph writing skills of Saudi EFL students. Level-1 Writing course (NAJM 163) students of Business College are the participants of the study. Two sections of the course were selected randomly, and control and experimental groups were formed. A mixed-method supported for the collection of data using pre and posttests for the two groups, a questionnaire, and a group discussion with the experimental group. The topics from the textbook were identified, and videos selected from YouTube are shared with the experimental group through the E-Learning portal of the university called Blackboard. The control group was taught using the traditional method consisting of classroom lectures and doing exercises and practice at home. The findings showed that there is a significant difference between the control and experimental groups statistically. The experimental group students wrote better paragraphs, and there is a considerable improvement in their writing. The students and the instructor showed a positive attitude towards Flipped Classroom Instruction. Therefore, the present study recommends that implementing flipped classroom instruction in the EFL university classrooms of Saudi Arabia improves paragraph writing skills of students.

**Keywords:** Blended learning, Educational technology, flipped classroom, paragraph writing, Saudi EFL students, technology-integrated learning

**Cite as** Chatta, B. S., & Haque, M. I. (2020). Improving Paragraph Writing Skills of Saudi EFL University Students Using Flipped Classroom Instruction. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Special Issue on CALL (6)*. 228- 247. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/call6.15>

## Introduction

Education and pedagogy continuously change and transform to suit the needs of students. In this digital age, where technology has come to the palms of the students and become an integral part of educational settings (Basal, 2015), learning a language should be enhanced and supported by the technical gadgets. Wu, ChenHsieh, and Yang (2017) say, "Technology, with distinctive features such as mobility, reachability, personalization, spontaneity, and ubiquity, is widely used to facilitate language teaching and learning" (p.142). Incorporating technology in the process of teaching language is the need of the hour in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Ministry of Education supports using technology in the language classrooms (Alresheed, Leask & Raiker, 2015). As the laptops, computers, smartphones, and various other gadgets are available to the students of Saudi Arabia, an EFL teacher should best make use of them in departing language skills. Yang (2017) opines, "In modern societies, people have grown up with technology, and they are very much in tune with using technology in their daily lives" (p.2). As the students use technology in their daily lives, they can use it to advance their learning. Wells, de Lange, and Fieger (2008) have opined that technology has changed the way students learn and teachers teach. It has made significant changes in the education field. Therefore, teachers are continually looking for opportunities to use technology to make students learn better (Koehler, Mishra, Hershey, & Peruski, 2004). As technology offers multiple opportunities for language teachers, they have been using technology in their classrooms as much as possible (Seljan, Banek, Špiranec, & Lasić-Lazić, 2006).

Flipped Classroom Instruction (FCI) makes use of technology in and outside the classroom. Wu et al. (2017) state, "In a conventional class, new knowledge is introduced in the classroom, usually via lecture, and students practice using the knowledge at home, via homework. Flipped learning reverses this paradigm, with information introduced to students before class using technology" (p. 142). They continue "the core of flipped learning is to provide a learning community where students develop knowledge through constructive learning experiences, peer interaction, and collaboration" (p.143). At present, the requirement is to make the lessons available to the students outside the class and let the students view the lessons at their speed and understanding. Flipped Classroom Instruction serves this purpose in the best manner.

Undoubtedly, writing a paragraph is the most vital skill among all other language skills. As writing involves thinking capacity, language proficiency, and trained memory, it is a test for the cognition levels of the writer (Kellogg, 2001). The awareness of concepts involved in writing such as topic sentences, supporting sentences, details, concluding sentences, cohesion, linking words, arrangement, punctuation, grammatical aspects lead to writing better paragraphs. In addition to all these, a writer has to review and edit what he has written several times, which makes writing a challenging process. EFL students of Saudi Arabia find it a difficult task to write paragraphs to fulfill the requirement of their courses. Not adopting technology into teaching stands as the primary reason for this difficulty among all others like using traditional methods, lack of motivation of the students, insufficient time available in the class for practice, and not being aware of the importance of English as an international language.

Considering the above aspects, the Flipped Classroom serves to make the paradigm shift in the activity of teaching and helps students solve their learning difficulties. The FCI provides a good number of opportunities for students by integrating technology into language learning. (Chen

Hsieh, Wu, & Marek, 2016; Hung, 2015; McLaughlin et al., 2014). The flipped classroom instruction is a new and emerging approach where lecturing happens at home with the use of technology and practice, and writing assignments happens in the class with the teacher and the peers (Lage, Platt, & Treglia, 2000). The teacher makes the students write paragraphs in the class to solve their writing problems, and provides scaffolding. The FCI classroom becomes a stage for group discussion and problem-solving by encouraging learners to participate in classroom activities and games. (Triantafyllou & Timcenko, 2014). The flipped model encourages students to be autonomous in learning, solve problems, and discover their learning strategies (Şengel, 2014). As it is an EFL context in Saudi Arabia, classroom activities involving paragraph writing should happen in the class. The theory of writing can be taught to the students at home in the form of recorded videos. Instead of being passive listeners in the class, they could actively participate in writing activities in the class. The present study focuses on the influence of flipped classroom instruction on Saudi Arabian EFL students' paragraph writing skills. The following research questions guide the present study:

1. Can the paragraph writing skills of EFL students be improved by following the FCI method?
2. As the teachers use traditional methods in one section and the FCI method in the other section, is there any difference between the paragraph writing skills of these two sections of students?
3. Do the language instructors and the EFL students have a positive opinion about the FCI model?

### Literature Review

In the traditional setting, content delivery occurs in the class, and the application of this theory happens at home in the form of assignments. There is restricted and limited time for content delivery for the teacher. In this traditional method, the teacher becomes the center of the class. The learners may listen to the lecture again only when the teacher repeats it, and the students need to do the assignments individually at home. The FCI offers to solve this problem effectively, so it is appealing to many teachers (Gilboy, Heinerichs, & Pazzaglia, 2015). The teacher shares the videos of the lessons with the students to view them at home and understand the theory. They could watch the video number of times till they acquire the knowledge. Then, the students do the assignments and activities in the class with their peers and the teacher. In this method, the teacher performs the role of a guide making the students active participants. It becomes a student-centered class where they do the activity of writing paragraphs.

In the traditional setting, teachers impart lower-order thinking skills by making the students listen, understand, and memorize. In the FCI model, a student has to apply, analyze, synthesize, and create doing higher-order thinking skills. So, flipped classes incorporate both lower, and higher-order reasoning skills and encourage the learners to have higher-order reasoning skills (Qader & Arslan, 2019). As the learner involves in the creative process, he has his classmates and the teacher available to help him.

Marcey and Brint (2012) have conducted a study for introductory biology classes to compare FCI with conventional methods. The experimental group scored higher marks on the quizzes and tests than the control group who have undergone traditional teaching methods.

McLaughlin et al. (2014) studied the effect of FCI in a pharmaceuticals course with 162 students and found an increase in students' learning. The students who have undergone the program are positive towards FCI.

At a State University in Turkey, Basal (2015) has implemented the FCI in an English language class to obtain the perceptions of 47 prospective English teachers. The findings of the study show that pre-service teachers have a positive attitude towards FCI. As he feels, FCI offers four benefits, such as learning as per the students' comfort, and speed, preparing for the classes in advance, avoiding limitations of class time, increasing students' participation in the class.

Egbert, Herman, and Lee (2015) have used flipped instruction in English language teacher education. They have conducted a design-based study in a complex, open-ended learning context. The study has the purpose of filling several gaps in the literature of FCI and provides principles for the design of teacher education courses.

Blair, Maharaj, and Primus (2015) have conducted a study at a university in the West Indies for the students of Material Technology. In that context, FCI has made a little difference to the exam performance of the students. Nevertheless, teachers like to continue to use FCI as it provides more time in class to work with individual students.

Yu and Wang (2016) administered a study for undergraduate English writing course students of Business. The study proved that FCI brought better academic achievement and improved the writing skills of the students than the traditional method.

Wu, ChenHsieh, and Yang (2017) have conducted a study in central Taiwan for 50 English-majored sophomores. They have examined how an online learning community in a flipped classroom impacts the oral proficiency of EFL students. The research has proved that the flipped classroom model has improved the students' verbal ability and made them more active in learning activities, such as storytelling and class discussion.

Kurt (2017) has studied the impact of FCI in a higher education institution in Turkey. He flipped a classroom management course in a pre-service English teacher education, which has 62 pre-service teachers. The findings of his study revealed that the experimental group students learned better, displayed autonomy in learning, and possess a positive attitude towards FCI.

The study conducted by Yang (2017) involved 57 students from two secondary two classes in a band three secondary school and two teachers. This study shows that FCI is suitable for English Grammar class. The students of the experimental group are, in general, positive towards the flipped classroom.

Ayçiçek and Yanpar Yelken (2018) have carried out a study in the English course for four weeks in a secondary school, Hatay city. The teachers taught the experimental group by using FCI, but they trained the control group using the traditional methods. The study has shown a significant difference between the pre and posttests of the experimental group. The control group students' scores are similar in pre and posttests.

Qadar and Arslan (2019) have examined the influence of the flipped classroom instruction on the writing skills of EFL learners in Iraq. The study included 66 students of the English Department of College of Languages from Salahaddin University. By employing a mixed-method, the researchers have proved that the experimental students have written better than the control students. The students' attitudes are positive towards flipping the class.

Rahman, Yunus, and Hashim (2019) did an overview of the flipped classroom learning studies in Malasia. They have identified 19 studies on flipped classroom instruction. Their findings show that most of these studies have revealed significant results of the students and the teachers having positive opinions towards the FCI. They conclude that the FCI should be implemented in every discipline in the education system.

Abdullah, Hussin, and Ismail (2019) applied a flipped classroom model on 27 undergraduate students of advanced communication skills course. The researchers used a combined method which involved pre and post oral tests, observation, and group interviews. The results showed that the flipped classroom model was very useful in the EFL speaking classroom. The FCI played a significant role in increasing the students' participation in English speaking tasks and their commitment to learning.

Ali, Yunus, Hashim, Hidayat, and Zaman (2019) view the students as digital natives and consider that it is challenging to confine their engagement only in the classroom. They explored the effectiveness of the flipped learning approach in improving the students' participation in an ESL context. They gathered the opinions of 18 experts by an online questionnaire using the fuzzy Delphi method. The experts were positive towards the FCI.

Chew, Jones, and Wordley (2018) investigated the experience of engineering students on flipped classrooms in a private university, Malasia. Using the action inquiry method, the researchers implemented the FCI in an engineering subject. The findings show that the FCI transformed the classes from passive lectures to active learning by engaging them in reflective communication and collaborative discourse. The participants of the study exhibited positivism towards the FCI.

Raman, Rathakrishnan, and Thannimalai (2019) did a study with B.Ed undergraduates to identify their self-efficacy levels. They divided 35 students into the control group (17) and the intervention group (18). They exposed the control group to conventional teaching, and intervention group to the FCI using Padlet website. The study exhibited that the experimental group acquired better results than the control group.

***Conduction of FCI in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia***

Unfortunately, researchers have done very few studies in Saudi Arabia in the area of flipping classrooms. Al-Harbi and Alshumaimeri (2016) claim, “However, one promising approach that uses technology in teaching, the flipped classroom strategy, had not yet been studied in the EFL Saudi Arabian context” (p. 60). And they continue, “While the flipped classroom strategy has shown success elsewhere, it had never been tried in the context of Saudi culture and the Saudi education system” (p.61). It gives a strong reason for the researchers to conduct the study in KSA.

Alsowat (2016) has investigated the effect of FCI on graduate students’ higher-order thinking skills (HOTS), engagement, and satisfaction. The study involved 67 female graduate students at Taif University, KSA. It reveals that students’ achievement is very high during FCI, and a significant relationship exists between HOTS and student engagement and satisfaction.

Al-Harbi and Alshumaimeri (2016) have applied FCI in teaching English Grammar to secondary school students. The researchers uploaded the video lessons on the Edmodo site before classes for the experimental group students. They taught the control group in the traditional method. The posttest results of the experimental group are higher, and students’ attitudes are positive towards FCI.

Yu and Wang (2016) have observed that despite the vast availability of literature on the flipped model, very few studies have concentrated on Business English Writing Classroom. So, the researchers have decided to apply the FCI in Business College for the Writing course students. The purpose of conducting this study in Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University Level 1 College of Business Administration students is to bridge the gap between theoretical classes and writing assignments at home. The writing course (NAJM 163) is delivered in the classroom using a smartboard. Q: Skills for Success, Reading and Writing, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Special Edition, Series Number 1 is followed. Ninety (90) hours are allocated for the course. The theory is delivered in the class, and students write assignments at home. To help students write better paragraphs in their assignments and to solve their writing problems, FCI is adopted.

**Methodology**

The research involved quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. This eclectic method was appropriate to find out the impact of the FCI on paragraph writing skills of students. In the context of a classroom, using a mixed-method is suitable to influence thoughts about issues and problems and practicing the activities of learning and teaching. The researchers could analyze the results of pre and posttests using quantitative data. It helped to find out the students’ attitudes towards FCI. The group discussion conducted for the experimental group found out the effect of FCI on students and their reaction. The quasi-experimental method was employed. This method helps to identify the impact of any specific treatment on selected learners (Creswell, 2009). The method involved a pretest for both groups, conduction of experiment to the experimental group, and posttest for both control and experimental groups.

**Participants**

The Level-1 Writing Course (NAJM 163) students of Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University for the academic year 2019-20 participated. The control group had 32 students, and the experimental group had 31 students. Table one displays the sample selection of both control and experimental groups.

Table 1. *Control and experimental groups sample selection*

Group	Students' age	Frequency of Students	Percentage
Control group	17-18 years	11	34.37
	18-19 years	14	43.75
	19-20 years	7	21.87
Total			100%
Experimental group	17-18 years	12	38.70
	18-19 years	15	48.38
	19-20 years	4	12.90
Total			100%

Table one depicts that the age group of the participants is from 17 to 20 who willingly consented to participate in the experiment. The total number of participants is 63. They are all native speakers of Arabic. They all had similar exposure to English as they are from in and around Al Kharj and Riyadh. The two sections of the Level-1 Writing Course (NAJM 163) from Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University were randomly selected. They were all homogenous. The researchers designated one group with 31 students as the experimental group, and the other group with 32 students as the control group.

The teachers taught the control group using traditional methods. For the experimental group, they applied the FCI. Video is the best tool for teaching among all other technological mediums (Hartsell & Yuen, 2006). So, the teaching videos selected from YouTube were uploaded in the university E-Learning portal, which is known as Blackboard.

Table 2. *Writing course flipped class videos*

Unit Number	Topics in the Unit	YouTube Video URLs Uploaded in Blackboard
Unit 1	Writing the main idea and supporting sentences	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JS29h3ABBqs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JS29h3ABBqs</a>
	Subject + like / want / need +infinitive / noun phrase	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-w5kT1kCfAo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-w5kT1kCfAo</a>
Unit 2	Writing compound sentences with 'but' and 'so'	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UrEmPZg81DY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UrEmPZg81DY</a>
	Simple past with regular and irregular verbs Negative forms of the simple past	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QtAYUaRWnnI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QtAYUaRWnnI</a>

Unit 3	Using correct paragraph structure (TS, SSs & CS)	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rE6zJ8_muhw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rE6zJ8_muhw</a>
	Sentences with 'because'	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uVnKD3j9myY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uVnKD3j9myY</a>
Unit 4	Writing a topic sentences	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ccw68Ijjag">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ccw68Ijjag</a>
	Sentences with 'when'	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_8saObUvjY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_8saObUvjY</a>
Unit 5	Writing supporting sentences and details	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vv53n9H-fvU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vv53n9H-fvU</a>
	Prepositions of location	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DJJi7Q1Sgs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DJJi7Q1Sgs</a>
Unit 6	Writing concluding sentences	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdiYtCaiB68">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdiYtCaiB68</a>
	Infinitives of purpose (in order + infinitive to show purpose)	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_dV4l5RRHZo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_dV4l5RRHZo</a>
Unit 7	Clauses with 'after' and 'after that'	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iFK_nF7hM-Y">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iFK_nF7hM-Y</a>
	Making a timeline to plan your writing	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o50HA6QTxj0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o50HA6QTxj0</a>
Unit 8	Contrasting ideas with 'however' and 'but'	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGyi1Ezh33M">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGyi1Ezh33M</a>
	Comparative adjectives	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fQb7_KUs3A">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fQb7_KUs3A</a>

The above table two depicts the list of the videos according to the topics of each lesson. The students viewed those video lessons at home and prepared for the classes. In the classroom, the group did the exercises of the lesson and wrote homework. In case of any doubt, the teacher did the scaffolding. The instructor played the role of a guide and helped students in the activity of writing paragraphs. The researchers conducted a group discussion for 12 students at the end of the study.

#### ***Tools for Collecting the Data***

The researchers collected the required data through pre and posttests, a questionnaire, and a group discussion.

*Pre and posttests:* A pretest was conducted for both the groups before applying the FCI method. The question paper included writing a paragraph and identifying topic sentences, supporting sentences, details, and concluding sentences. The topic of the paragraph was, "What is an ideal job for you?" After experimenting, the researchers administered a posttest to both the groups with similar questions. The topic of the posttest was: "What makes you or someone you know laugh?" To evaluate the answer scripts, the researchers used a custom-made rubric that had the criteria: topic sentences, supporting sentences, concluding sentences, organization, and the use of transitional words, language, and vocabulary. Each of these five parts received 0 to 2 marks. Four other instructors evaluated the paragraphs using the same rubric to check reliability and validity. As the given scores were similar, the researchers considered that the rubric is valid and reliable to assess the pretest and the posttest.

*Questionnaire:* A questionnaire was prepared and translated into Arabic. It was given to the experimental group students after completing the program to determine their attitudes towards FCI. It had 15 questions with a five-point Likert scale that ranges from ‘Disagree’ (1) to ‘Strongly Agree’ (5). These questions reveal the response of the students towards FCI.

*Group Discussion:* At the end of the program, the researchers conducted a group discussion in the experimental group. A total of 12 students volunteered to participate in the discussion. It was conducted mainly to understand the students’ unique experiences and problems while doing the program. The discussion was recorded and analyzed by the researchers. The students discussed many points, such as the best thing I like about FCI, the worst drawback of FCI, the most challenging problem of the program, and my response to exercises and practice in the class.

### ***Materials and Procedure***

The researchers conducted the program in Level-1 Writing Course (NAJM 163) with 63 students. The textbook for the course is Q: Skills for Success, Reading and Writing, Special Edition, Series Number 1. The main objective of the writing part of the textbook is to teach topic sentences, supporting sentences, details, and concluding sentences. Writing a paragraph is the ultimate goal of all the lessons of the book. For the control group, the teachers delivered the lessons of the textbook using the traditional methods in which students listened to the lectures in the class passively and did exercises at home

For the experimental group, the researchers identified the teaching videos from YouTube as per the topics of the lessons, and shared with the students through Blackboard. The students of the university use Blackboard daily for all the courses. So, there was no problem for the students to download the videos and view them at their homes. The video lessons were given in a flash to two students who don’t have proper technical support at home. The students prepared the lessons at home and did the exercises of the book and practiced writing paragraphs in pair work and group work activities. The instructor provided help as a guide and did the scaffolding.

### ***Data Analysis***

Before experimenting, the researchers conducted a pretest in both control and experimental groups. The researchers, following the rubric, evaluated the answer scripts and took the average of the evaluations as the final score. After experimenting, the researchers conducted a posttest in both the groups and evaluated the scripts, following the same rubric. The average of the evaluations was taken as the final score. Using the SPSS 16, the researchers conducted an independent t-test to check whether there is any significant difference between the scores of control and experimental groups.

After the conduction of the program, the experimental group students answered a questionnaire to exhibit their attitudes and reactions to the FCI. The questionnaire was translated into Arabic to eradicate the language barriers. The items were analyzed, taking the percentage of each item.

The researchers conducted a group discussion for 45 minutes with the 12 students who volunteered to find out the students' attitudes in an in-depth manner. This qualitative data helped the researchers to understand the personal experiences of students.

### Findings

The FCI played a significant role in developing the paragraph writing skills EFL students. The researchers calculated mean and standard deviation to describe the scores, as in table three.

The first hypothesis to be tested is:

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the control group pretest and the experimental group pretest.

Alternate Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the control group pretest and the experimental group pretest.

Table 3. *Difference between the control group and the experimental group before the experiment*

Groups	t-value	P-value	Df	Mean difference	P-value
Equal variances assumed	.904	.369	61	.17944	.203
Equal variances not assumed	.906	.368	60.283	.17944	

Table three shows, an independent sample t-test was conducted. The results show that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the control and experimental group before holding the flipped classroom method. It is essential to have a homogenous group for experimenting.

### *The difference between the teaching methods*

The researchers did a paired sample t-test to determine the difference between the writing skills of the control and experimental groups before applying the FCI.

The second hypothesis to be tested is:

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the control group pretest and the control group posttest.

Alternate Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the control group pretest and posttest.

Table 4. *Difference between the pretest and posttest control group*

Control Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value
Pretest	32	6.4375	.84003	-1.299	.203
Posttest	32	6.7188	.92403		

Table four demonstrates that there is no much difference between the writing skills of the students in control group pretest ( $\bar{x} = 6.4375$ ,  $SD = .84003$ ) and posttest ( $\bar{x} = 6.7188$ ,  $SD = .92403$ ) and  $t = -1.299$  and  $p = .203$ .

If we observe, both the groups exhibited similar skills in writing paragraphs before attending the FCI. The researchers calculated a paired sample t-test and p-value to determine whether there is any difference in writing ability after doing the FCI.

The third hypothesis to be tested is:

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the experimental group pretest and the experimental group posttest.

Alternate Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the experimental group pretest and posttest.

Table 5. *Difference between the pretest and posttest experimental group*

Experimental Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value
Pretest	31	6.2581	.72882	-10.258	.000
Posttest		8.0645	.85383		

Table five depicts that after conducting the FCI in the experimental group, the students have improved their writing skills significantly. A substantial difference exists between the mean scores of pretest ( $\bar{x} = 6.2581$ ,  $SD = .72882$ ) and posttest ( $\bar{x} = 8.0645$ ,  $SD = .85383$ ) of the experimental group. The t-value is -10.258 and p-value is .000. The t-test shows that the posttest scores have a considerable improvement in the experimental group ( $p < 0.05$ ). The difference came only because of the implementation of the FCI program.

### ***Experimental group students' responses towards FCI***

The researchers calculated the frequency and the percentage of each item in the questionnaire as presented in the following table six to determine the students' attitudes towards FCI.

Table 6. *The students' attitudes towards FCI from the questionnaire*

N	Items	Disagree		Can't say		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	FCI enables me to apply the concepts learned at home and makes me write better paragraphs in the class.	2	6.45	1	3.22	2	6.45	16	51.61	10	32.25
2	I prepare well for my exams and answer paragraph writing questions comfortably.	5	16.12	3	9.67	3	9.67	12	38.70	8	25.80
3	FCI allows me to prepare the classes in advance.	0	0	3	9.67	4	12.90	10	32.25	14	45.16
4	FCI makes me confident in asking questions in the	8	25.80	2	6.45	1	3.22	16	51.61	4	12.90

	class and seek clarifications.										
5	I can learn confidently through FCI.	7	22.58	0	0	2	6.45	5	16.12	17	54.83
6	I like the scaffolding given by the teacher when I write paragraphs in the class.	0	0	0	0	5	16.12	11	35.48	15	48.38
7	FCI makes me responsible for my learning in and outside the classroom.	6	19.35	4	12.90	2	6.45	9	29.03	10	32.25
8	I have enough time to understand the lessons through the videos.	2	6.45	2	6.45	0	0	7	22.58	22	70.96
9	I have learned to participate in group activities and become a good team player.	3	9.67	5	16.12	5	16.12	12	38.70	6	19.35
10	After participating in FCI, I have developed a sense of belonging to the group.	7	22.58	2	6.45	7	22.58	13	41.93	2	6.45
11	I felt comfortable to do activities in the class with my peers.	0	0	2	6.45	0	0	4	12.90	25	80.64
12	I was able to explore new concepts in the course with the help of the instructor.	2	6.45	1	3.22	10	32.25	8	25.80	10	32.25
13	The instructor and my peers respected my opinions.	1	3.22	1	3.22	3	9.67	12	38.70	14	45.16
14	The traditional method makes me understand the lessons more than FCI.	16	51.61	12	38.70	0	0	1	3.22	2	6.45
15	FCI has not helped me at all.	18	58.06	6	19.35	3	9.67	2	6.45	2	6.45

Along with the questionnaire, a group discussion was conducted with 12 volunteers from the experimental group to determine the individual unique experiences of the students. During the discussion, the students revealed the following observations.

Table 7. Responses of students towards FCI from Group Discussion

Area	Points	F	Items Supported
The strengths of FCI	Lessons are available all the time.	7	7 & 8

	Viewing the lessons number of times	8	2, 3 & 8
	Practicing in the class	10	1 & 9
	Scaffolding from the teacher	6	6
The problems in doing FCI	Blackboard doesn't work sometimes.	2	-
	Not having enough time at home	1	-
	Preparing for other courses exams at home	3	15
Contribution of FCI for writing skill	Pair work and group work in the class	8	9, 10 & 11
	Immediate feedback from the teacher and classmates	5	6 & 12
	A chance from learning peers by seeing how they are writing	5	10 & 13
The drawbacks of FCI	Lack of technical support	2	-
	Not used to this method before	2	14
	Unable to understand the pronunciation in the videos	4	-
Students' participation in the class	Active participation	7	1
	Highly motivated and responsible for completing the task	3	7
	Confident and independent	4	4, 5

Table six reveals that, 84% of students believed, when they answered the item one, that FCI enabled them to apply the concepts learned at home to write better paragraphs. In the group discussion, ten students supported this finding. Two of the participants stated:

*"It was fascinating for me to come to classes and write my ideas in the paragraphs with my classmates." (S1)*

*"I learned the lessons at home through the videos and wrote good paragraphs in the class." (S3)*

Concerning the items two and three in table six, 65% (Item two) and 77% (Item three) students responded that they prepared well for the classes and exams, and wrote paragraph writing questions comfortably. Eight students support this finding. One student stated:

*"The lessons are always available on the Blackboard. I watched the videos again and again. I wrote well in the exams. I got good marks for my paragraphs." (S7)*

As demonstrated in table six, when responding to items four and five, about 65% (Item four) and 71% (Item five) of students believed that FCI made them confident in asking questions in the class and clarify their doubts. Four students supported this finding. Two students said:

*"I can always ask questions, and the teacher is free to explain to me." (S4)*

*"I feel confident to learn in the class because I can ask the teacher to help me and clear my doubts." (S8)*

As seen in table six, when responding to item six, about 84% of students liked the scaffolding provided by the teacher in the paragraph writing activities. Six students support this finding. Two students said:

*“My teacher helped me whenever I felt difficult to write paragraphs.” (S5)*

*“One best thing in writing class is the teacher helps us to write paragraphs in the class. I like it because I can ask him many questions.” (S2)*

As table six shows, 61% of students said, when responding to item seven, that they became responsible for their learning due to the introduction of the FCI. Three students in the group discussion support this finding. One student stated:

*“I depended on myself to write in the class. I learned well because the lessons were available, and I had practice in the class.” (S6)*

The students responded to items eight, nine, and ten positively. 94% (Item eight) of students said they had enough time to understand the lessons through the videos, and 58% (Item nine) of students felt that they could participate in the group activities by becoming good team players and 48% (Item 10) have developed a sense of belonging to the group. Around eight students support this finding. Two students responded:

*“For other courses, we can’t rewind the lesson, but for Writing Course, lessons were always there in the Blackboard to watch. I can see them until I understand.” (S9)*

*“I am doing well in my team. We are learning well on our team.” (S10)*

Items 11, 12, and 13 focused on comfort working with the teacher and their classmates. 94% (Item 11) of students said that they are comfortable working with other students, and 58% (Item 12) of students felt that they could explore new concepts with the teacher and felt respected. 84% (Item 13) of students felt that the classmates and the teacher respected their ideas. Five students support this finding. Around six students said in the group discussion that they were comfortable in the class to deal with the teacher and their classmates. The comment of a student shows it:

*“I feel that the teacher is my friend. He always helps me. My peers also cooperate with me well.” (S11)*

The responses for the last two items, 14 (51%) and 15 (58%), show that students were in support of FCI because it helped them understand the lessons better and practice well. A student said:

*“I don’t have the burden of listening to the long lectures in the class. I don’t miss any lessons in FCI. It helped me a lot to write well.” (S12)*

As table seven portrays, sometimes, students faced some technical issues. However, the problems were temporary. The Blackboard was not accessible occasionally due to some technical issues. This problem lasted only for a few minutes. Some students couldn’t understand the pronunciation used in the videos. This problem was solved when the teacher reviewed the lesson in the class, and the students got used to the pronunciation eventually.

Two students expressed at the beginning of the experiment that they were not provided computers with the internet at home. So, the researchers offered the lesson videos in a pen drive to these students. Only one student said that he didn't have much time at home as he was doing a part-time job. The instructor paid special attention to him in the class and reviewed the lessons to make him understand. The instructor and the researchers provided clarity and encouraged the students to participate in the program, as they are not used to this method before. Within no time, students were into it and benefited from it. The students felt that they could not spend much time on videos during the exams as they have to prepare for them at home. At that time, the instructor focused on group activities that involved writing practice.

### Discussion

The study demonstrates that after applying the FCI, the students became more active, motivated, and enthusiastic. The grades of the experimental group's posttest show that they made a drastic improvement in paragraph writing. Thus, the first research question gets answered positively. The posttest results show that the students have improved their writing skills. The paragraph writing skills of the control group have not improved much as the mean scores of pretest and posttest are similar. Thus, the second research question gets answered that there is a little improvement in the writing skills of control group students. In contrast, the experimental group students have made a drastic improvement in their writing skills. After analyzing the questionnaire and the group discussion, the researchers understood that both the experimental group students and the instructor have a positive opinion about the FCI. Thus, the research question three gets answered positively.

These results align with Yu and Wang (2016), who flipped the English writing course for the undergraduate students of Business. The experiment group students have better academic achievement, and wrote better than the control group students. The scores of the experimental group are higher, and the students are positive towards the FCI. Similarly, they agree with the results of Qadar and Arslan (2019), who studied the effect of FCI on Iraqi EFL learners. In this study, the students of the experimental group have written better paragraphs than the control group.

The results of the present study show that the FCI contributed to the development of EFL students in Saudi Arabia. It is similar to the study of Alsowat (2016), who concludes that the female graduate students of Taif University in Saudi Arabia displayed higher-order thinking skills when the teachers flipped the classes. Accordingly, a study conducted by Al-Harbi and Alshumaimeri (2016) who have applied FCI in teaching English Grammar to Secondary School students. The scores of the experimental group are higher, and the students' are positive towards FCI. Students of the FCI give positive feedback because of its easy to view lectures, a facility for review, self-directed learning, and availability of the instructor. The teachers find more time for guiding the students and providing feedback individually.

The studies are also in accordance with Basal (2015), Egbert et al. (2015), and Kurt (2017), who flipped the classes for pre-service English language teachers. The experimental group students displayed autonomy in learning, became responsible for their growth, and possessed a positive attitude towards the FCI.

In the present study, the students of the experimental group improved their scores by writing well in the tests just like the experimental group students of the studies conducted by Marcey and Brint (2012) for biology classes, McLaughlin et al. (2014) for Pharmaceutics classes, and Ayçiçek and Yanpar Yelken (2018) for English course in a school. In all these studies, the scores of the posttests were higher than the pretests.

The study conducted by Yang (2017) shows that FCI is ideal for English Grammar class. The present study also proves that the FCI is suitable for a Writing Course as the students of the experimental group improved their writing skills and are, in general, positive towards the flipped classroom.

The studies done on engineering students on one of their subjects (Chew et al., 2018), B.Ed undergraduates to identify their self-efficacy levels (Raman et al., 2019), and undergraduate students of advanced communication skills course (Abdullah et al., 2019) reveal that they align with the present study in terms of teachers' satisfaction, and students' active participation in the class. Out of 19 research studies identified by Rahman et al. (2019), most of the studies match the results of the present study. Similarly, the 18 experts consulted by Ali et al. (2019) expressed their positivity towards the FCI. The same is the case with the teachers and the students of the present study, who exclaimed that they possess positive opinions about the FCI.

In the traditional method, the instructor has time constraints to deliver the lecture in the class and make the students do the exercises. The students also experience boredom to listen to long lectures every day and find themselves helpless while doing the exercises at home. In this context, FCI impacts learners to be motivated and to take personal responsibility while improving their writing skills. Instruction should provide an ample number of chances for learning, but it should not be a hindrance.

The FCI provides enough time to prepare for the classes by watching the videos and practice the rules of writing in their classes. The learners' acquisition improves with the change of methodological instruction. If the instructors fulfill the academic requirements of the students, they develop their writing skills quickly and comfortably. The students of the experimental group could improve their writing skills by memorizing and remembering the concepts for a long time. As a whole, the researches in many contexts prove that the FCI brings excellent results in improving the learners' writing abilities.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Technology plays a crucial role in advancing various aspects of society, especially education. Language instruction using technology is the present trend across the world. The results of this study confirm that FCI makes students write better paragraphs than traditional education. The FCI model provides a huge victory for the students and the teachers (Critz & Knight, 2013). Unlike the traditional method, with the teacher-centered class, the FCI enables student-centered classes. The learners become autonomous and employ their learning styles in acquiring knowledge. The outcomes show that in FCI, students become more active and learn with enthusiasm. The students shoulder the responsibility of learning and involve themselves totally in

the classroom activities. As per the students' feedback, they have become motivated and cultivated an interest in language acquisition.

In traditional instruction, the instructor does the theoretical explanation in the class and expects students to apply it at home without assisting. In contrast with this, in the FCI, students have an opportunity to understand the concepts at their will and apply the knowledge in the classroom activities taking the help from the teacher, and coordinating with their peers. In this method, students can watch the video lessons number of times until they understand and internalize the content. They also have sufficient time in the classes to practice what they have already learned. In this way, they learn actively, independently, and collaboratively. In contrast, the teacher always has the burden of time constraints in the traditional method. In FCI, the instructor gives feedback individually, corrects mistakes, and clarifies doubts. Classroom time is managed and employed more efficiently, contributing to the growth of every student personally.

The current study proves that implementing FCI in the EFL university classrooms of Saudi Arabia improves paragraph writing skills of students. The researchers can do further studies on the role of teacher's feedback in the school and the motivation levels of students to write paragraphs. The researchers did the present study only in the writing course (NAJM 163). The researchers recommend that similar analysis should be done for other skills such as listening, speaking, and reading. If all the skills of language are imparted by following the FCI, it may create a high impact on the overall improvement of the language. The students' classroom participation increases if the teachers implement the FCI for all the language courses of the university.

The researchers also recommend that the university encourages all the language instructors to get trained in the FCI. For this purpose, the university may conduct workshops and seminars. The researchers recommend the university to take the additional responsibility of providing technology and solving the technical problems involved in the FCI for better growth of students.

The present study proves that students improve their writing skills through FCI. However, it is undertaken for only one section and 31 students. So, studies conducted in the future may employ more number of students at various levels. Since the researchers conducted this study for tertiary-level EFL university students of Saudi Arabia, the teachers can apply it to various other departments for a large number of students.

#### **About the Authors:**

**Bala Swamy Chatta** is a lecturer in Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Al Kharj, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He has 15 years of experience in teaching English in various colleges and universities. He is an expert in English literature, teaching LSRW skills and Grammar. He has published around ten research papers in various international journals in the areas of literature and ELT. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7269-2649>

**Dr. Mohammad Imdadul Haque** is an Associate Professor and Head of the Management Department, College of Business Administration at Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia. He has published more than thirty-five research papers in journals of international repute

and awarded eight funded university projects to his credit in the last 12 years of his teaching and research experience. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6323-032X>

## References

- Abdullah, M. Y., Hussin, S., & Ismail, K. (2019). Implementation of Flipped Classroom Model and Its Effectiveness on English Speaking Performance. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (IJET)*, 14(09), 130. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v14i09.10348>
- Al-Harbi, S.S., & Alshumaimeri, Y. A. (2016). The Flipped Classroom Impact in Grammar Class on EFL Saudi Secondary School Students' Performances and Attitudes. *English Language Teaching*, 9(10), 60-80. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v9n10p60>
- Ali, M. M. A., Yunus, M. M., Hashim, H., Hidayat, W., & Zaman, M. S. (2019). Experts' Agreement towards Student Engagement Constructs For a Strategic Development of a Flipped Learning Framework for ESL Context. *International Journal of Academic Research Business and Social Sciences*, 9(3), 1423–1431. DOI: 10.6007/IJARBS/v9-i3/5806
- Alresheed, S., Leask, M., & Raiker, A. (2015). Integrating Computer-Assisted Language Learning in Saudi Schools: A change model. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 14(4), 69-77.
- Alsowat, H. (2016). An EFL Flipped Classroom Teaching Model: Effects on English Language Higher-order Thinking Skills, Student Engagement and Satisfaction. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7 (9). 108-121.
- Ayçiçek, B., & Yanpar Yelken, T. (2018). The Effect of Flipped Classroom Model on Students' Classroom Engagement in Teaching English. *International Journal of Instruction*, 11(2), 385-398. <https://doi.org/10.12973/iji.2018.11226a>
- Basal, A. (2015). The Implementation of a Flipped Classroom in Foreign Language Teaching. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 16(4). 28-37.
- Blair, E., Maharaj, C., & Primus, S. (2015). Performance and Perception in the Flipped Classroom. *Education and Information Technologies*, 4, 1–18. DOI: 10.1007/s10639-015-9393-5
- Chen Hsieh, J. S., Wu, W.C. V., Marek, M. W. (2016). Using the Flipped Classroom to Enhance EFL Learning. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 30 (1-2), 1-25. DOI:10.1080/09588221.2015.1111910
- Chew, E., Jones, L. J. N., & Wordley, S. (2018). "Flipping or Flapping?" Investigating Engineering Students' Experience in Flipped Classrooms. *On the Horizon*, 26(4), 307–316. <https://doi.org/10.1108/OTH-04-2017-0014>
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication, Inc.
- Critz, C. M., & Knight, D. (2013). Using the Flipped Classroom in Graduate Nursing Education. *Nurse educator*, 38(5), 210–213.
- Egbert, J., Herman, D., Lee, H. (2015). Flipped Instruction in English Language Teacher Education: A Design Based Study in a Complex, Open-Ended Learning Environment. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language*, 19(2), 1-23.

- Gilboy, M. B., Heinerichs, S., & Pazzaglia, G. (2015). Enhancing Student Engagement Using the Flipped Classroom. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 47(1), 109–114. DOI:10.1016/j.jneb.2014.08.008
- Hartsell, T., & Yuen, S. (2006). Video Streaming in Online Learning. *AACE Journal*, 14(1), 31-43.
- Hung, H. T. (2015). Flipping the Classroom for English Language Learners to Foster Active Learning. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 28(1), 81-96. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2014.967701>
- Kellogg, R. T. (2001). Long-Term Working Memory in Text Production. *Memory & Cognition*, 29(1), 43–52. <https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03195739>
- Koehler, M. J., Mishra, P., Hershey, K., & Peruski, L. (2004). With a Little Help From Your Students: A New Model for Faculty Development and Online Course Design. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, 12(1), 25-55.
- Kurt, G. (2017). Implementing the Flipped Classroom in Teacher Education: Evidence from Turkey. *Educational Technology & Society*, 20(1), 211–221.
- Lage, M. J., Platt, G. J., & Treglia, M. (2000). Inverting the Classroom: A Gateway to Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment. *The Journal of Economic Education*, 31(1), 30-43.
- Marcey, D. J., & Brint, M. E. (2012). Transforming an Undergraduate Introductory Biology Course through Cinematic Lectures and Inverted Classes: A Preliminary Assessment of the CLIC Model of the Flipped Classroom. *Proceedings of the Biology Education Research Symposium at the meeting of the National Association of Biology Teachers* 1-9. Retrieved from <http://www.nabt.org/websites/institution/File/docs/Four%20Year%20Section/2012%20Proceedings/Marcey%20&%20Brint.pdf>
- McLaughlin, J. E. et al., (2014). The Flipped Classroom: A Course Redesign to Foster Learning and Engagement in a Health Professions School. *Academic Medicine*, 89(2), 236-243. DOI: 10.1097/ACM.0000000000000086.
- Qader, R.O., & Arslan, F.Y. (2019). The Effect of Flipped Classroom Instruction in Writing: A Case Study with Iraqi EFL Learners. *Teaching English with Technology*, 19(1), 36-55.
- Rahman, S. F., Yunus, M. M., & Hashim, H. (2019). An Overview of Flipped Learning Studies in Malaysia. *Arab World English Journal*, 10 (4) 194-203. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol10no4.15>
- Raman, A., Rathakrishnan, M., & Thannimalai, R. (2019). Flipping the Undergraduate Classroom: A Case Study. *The Journal of Social Sciences Research*, 5(1), 134–138. <https://doi.org/10.32861/jssr.51.134.138>
- Seljan, S., Banek M., Špiranec, S., & Lasić-Lazić, J. (2006). CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning) and Distance Learning. In P. Biljanović & K. Skala (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 29th International Convention*. (pp. 145–150). Opatija Croatia.
- Şengel, E. (2014). Using the “Flipped Classroom” to Enhance Physics Achievement of the Prospective Teacher Impact of Flipped Classroom Model on Physics Course. *Journal of the Balkan Tribological Association*, 20(3), 488–497.
- Triantafyllou, E., & Timcenko, O. (2014). Introducing a Flipped Classroom for a Statistics Course: A Case Study. *Proceedings of 25th Annual Conference European Association for Education in Electrical and Information Engineering (EAEEIE)*, 5-8. DOI:10.1109/EAEEIE.2014.6879373

- Wells, P., de Lange, P. A., & Fieger, P. (2008). Integrating a virtual Learning Environment into a Second-Year Accounting Course: Determinants of Overall Student Perception. *Accounting & Finance*, 48(3), 503-518.
- Wu, W.C. V., Chen Hsieh, J. S., & Yang J. C. (2017). Creating an Online Learning Community in a Flipped Classroom to Enhance EFL Learners' Oral Proficiency. *Educational Technology & Society*, 20(2), 142–157.
- Yang, C. C. R. (2017). An Investigation of the Use of the 'Flipped Classroom' Pedagogy in Secondary English Language Classrooms. *Journal of Information Technology Education: Innovations in Practice*, 16, 1-20. Retrieved from <http://www.informingscience.org/Publications/3635>
- Yu, Z. & Wang, G. (2016). Academic Achievements and Satisfaction of the Clicker-Aided Flipped Business English Writing Class. *Educational Technology & Society*, 19(2), 298–312.