T. R.
GAZIANTEP UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES TEACHING
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAM

THE EFFECT OF FLIPPED CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION ON IRAQI EFL LEARNERS' WRITING SKILLS

Master of Arts Thesis

Ramyar Qader

Gaziantep
December, 2017

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APPROVAL OF THE JURY

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Thesis Title	**:** The Use of Flipped Classroom Instruction on Iraqi EFL Learners' Writing Skills
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I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Filiz YALÇIN TILFARLIOĞLU)
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This is to certify that I have read this thesis and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

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This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master's of Art.

Examining Committee Members	**Signature**
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It is approved that this thesis has been written in compliance with the formatting rules laid down by the Graduate School Educational Sciences.

(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mehmet, FATİH ÖZMANTAR)
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The information contained here is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate. I have read the University's current research ethics guidelines, and accept responsibility for the conduct of the procedures set out in the attached application in accordance with these guidelines, the University's policy on conflict of interest and any other condition laid down by the Gaziantep University Research Ethics Committee or its Sub-Committees. I have attempted to identify all the risks related to this research that may arise in conducting this research, and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants.

I have declared any affiliation or financial interest in this research or its outcomes or any other circumstances which might present a perceived, potential or actual conflict of interest, in accordance with Gaziantep University policy on Conflicts of Interest.

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DEDICATION

To my parents,

my siblings

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First and foremost, I am highly grateful to God for His blessings that continue to flow into my life. Because of Him, I made this through against all odds.

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ÖZET

DÖNÜŞTÜRÜLMÜŞ SINIF EĞİTİMİNİN İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRENİMİ GÖREN IRAKLI ÖĞRENCİLERİN YAZMA BECERİLERİ ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİ

Qader, Ramyar
Yüksek Lisans, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi
Tez Danışmanı: Yar. Doc. Dr. Fadime, YALÇIN ARSLAN
Aralik-2017, 96 sayfa

Bu çalışmanın amacı, öğretimde Dönüştürülmüş Sınıf Eğitimi (DSE) kullanımının İngilizce öğrenimi gören Iraklı öğrencilerin yazma becerileri üzerindeki etkileri incelemektir. Salahaddin Üniversitesi, Yabancı Dil Anabilim Dalı, İngilizce bölümünde okuyan 66 öğrenci, çalışmanın katılımcılardır. Çalışma kapsamında 2 tane ikinci sınıf yazma sınıfı incelenmiştir. Bu sınıflardan biri, kontrol grubunu oluştururken (32 öğrenci), diğer sınıf deney grubunu oluşturmaktadır (34 öğrenci). Veri toplamak amaçlı, çalışmada karma yöntemden yararlanılmış, ön test ve son test olarak her iki gruba anket uygulanmış ve sadece deney grubuyla görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Yazma testlerinin amacı, sekiz hafta boyunca geleneksel, öğretmen temelli eğitim gören kontrol grubu ile dönüştürülmüş sınıf eğitimi gören deney grubu arasında, istatistiksel yönden anlamlı bir farklılık olup olmadığının belirlenmesidir. Yazı testlerinden elde edilen verilerin analizinde, bağımsız örneklem t-testinden yararlanılmış ve öğrencilerin dönüştürülmüş sınıf eğitimi yaklaşımına karşı görüşlerini tespit etmek için betimsel ve tematik analizler yapılmıştır. Çalışma bulgularına göre, kontrol ve deney grupları arasında istatistiksel yönden anlamlı farklılık vardır ve daha spesifik olarak ifade edersek, deney grubundaki öğrenciler, yazı yazma testlerinde, kontrol grubu öğrencilerinden daha iyi bir performans sergilemişlerdir. Öğrencilerin çoğunluğunun, DSE yaklaşımına karşı pozitif bir tutum içinde oldukları görülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dönüştürülmüş Sınıf Eğitimi, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce, geleneksel öğretim, yazma becerileri

ABSTRACT

THE EFFECT OF FLIPPED CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION ON IRAQI EFL LEARNERS' WRITING SKILLS

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The purpose of this study was to examine the use of Flipped Classroom Instruction (FCI) on Iraqi EFL learners' writing skills. Participants included 66 students in the College of Languages, English Department at Salahaddin University. Two sophomore writing classrooms were examined: one as a control group consisting of 32 students and the other as an experimental group consisting of 34 students. The study employed a mixed method of data collection, utilizing pre- and post-writing tests as well as a questionnaire for both groups and interviews conducted only with the experimental group. The purpose of the writing tests was to determine whether any statistically significant difference existed between the control group, who was administered a traditional, teacher-based writing instruction, and the experimental group, who was administered FCI over the course of eight weeks. For analyzing the data obtained from the writing tests, an independent-sample *t*-test was employed, and a descriptive and thematic analysis was conducted to explore the views of students towards FCI. Findings indicated that a statistically significant difference existed between the control and experimental groups and, more specifically, that the students of the experimental group performed better on the writing tests than students of the control group. The majority of the learners' attitudes towards FCI were positive.

Keywords: Flipped Classroom Instruction, English as a foreign language, traditional instruction, writing skills

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

BL: Blended Learning

CALL: Computer Assisted Language Learning

FCI: Flipped Classroom Instruction

F2F: Face to Face

SRL: Self-Regulated Learning

SDL: Self-Directed Learning

L2: Second Language

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

ESL: English as Second Language

MOODLE: Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment (educational site)

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Presentation

This chapter provides background information and elaborates on the underlying problem of this study. It also discusses the research aims as well as significance of the study and defines key terms and acronyms utilized in this paper.

1.2. Background of the Study

During the 21st century, education has proven a topic of great interest among scholars. Every year, numerous studies are being conducted for the sake of improving education and, more specifically, pedagogy (Glewwe & Muralidharan, 2015). Especially owing to new developments in technology, pedagogies necessarily must adapt to meet the needs of changing students and classroom expectations. Compared with those of the past, the aims and objectives of current teaching practice has also transformed. Presently, students are able to provide more input into their own learning by participating in interactive, real-world learning situations rather than remaining inactive listeners. Consequently, to continue addressing the needs of students of different learning styles, teachers should consider updating their teaching approaches in order to create a supportive learning environment for their students.

Language skills that is important for learners. In particular, writing skills is vital for success in most careers and disciplines today, students must start acquiring good writing skills early-on. Many teachers consider writing one of the most difficult skills for English as a foreign language (EFL) students to acquire. According to Nunan (1999), it is even difficult for formative speakers to fully master writing due to issues in cohesion and structure. Alsamdani (2010)(p. 55) has also stated that "Writing is a challenging process as it involves various skills of thesis statement, writing supporting details, reviewing and editing". According to Abu-Rass (2001), to write a decent writing piece, the writer should be aware of various aspects such as arrangement, aim, content, audience, lexis, mechanism, punctuation, spelling and paragraphs. Easing this acquisition and supporting learners to develop their writing skills nevertheless remains challenging for instructors; however, the use of technology might assist these teachers in successfully developing the writing of their students.

Technology use in the classrooms is a popular topic among Iraqi EFL leaners, but many are not interested in academic writing (Muslim & Abdulmajeed, 2016). The main causes of this disinterest might be related to the fact that they are traditionally not readers, or they lack knowledge of using technology for the benefit of their learning. In an Iraqi EFL context, developing students' speaking skills has been a main concern, while reading and writing skills have been less emphasized (Chastain, 1988; Harmer, 2007) Therefore, Iraqi EFL learners find writing in English to be particularly difficult. Another reason for this difficulty relates to the difference in structure, organization and style between their native languages and English. Moreover, relatively short class durations are not supportive of these students' mastery of writing skills, which requires more instructional time than other language skills. Considering the complexity of writing skills which was previously mentioned, learning to write a decent piece of writing needs more rehearsal and teaching compared to the other skills.

Flipped Classroom Instruction (FCI) is a learning approach which removes the content delivery to the outside of classroom by utilizing technology devices and using class time for more practice and interactions. It involves increasing class length in order for additional practice and activities to be implemented rather than concentrating on

language theories. In this way, learners develop increased ability to produce and learn. In contrast, traditional classroom instruction—which is necessarily teacher-centered—limits students to theoretical instruction during a shorter time frame, and students must complete related assignments outside of class time. This may, in turn, discourage learners from completing the intended practice and thus lacking understanding regarding class material. Meanwhile, FCI has the possibility of permitting differentiated instruction as it changes the teaching and learning experience. Learning is also more individualized and personalized through FCI. As a consequence, learners are more involved and motivated to learn, and they develop the autonomy necessary to direct their learning in a positive direction. This pedagogical change enables learners to guide their own learning by relying on their mental muscles, motivation and interests (Bergmann & Sams, 2014).

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The challenges experienced by undergraduate university students are various, especially for those attempting to acquire a second language. Writing skills, in particular, are a major concern of many of these students. Lee (2003) states that creating a good sample of EFL writing not only is an issue for students but also is difficult for curriculum developers, educators, book designers, writers and researchers.

Researchers have agreed that undergraduate students experience difficulties in writing due to certain reasons including a limited range of vocabulary, a limited amount of instruction time, disinterest in the learning environment and the lack of knowledge regarding cohesion and coherence. Therefore, it is significant to realize the problems encountered by the learners in their writing. Caldwell (2012) has reported several difficulties encountered by second-language learners when they write academic papers. Firstly, there are issues related to a deficiency in learners' information and their conventional construction. Their structures are frequently arranged inaccurately and carry syntactic and spelling mistakes, deficiency of punctuation, cohesion and cohesive devices. However, Lai (2010) has stated that the absence of arrangement and basis in academic papers is also problematic for native English learners. This problem is not always correlated with difficulty in academic writing or a deficiency of linguistic

knowledge, but rather with a deficiency of appropriate reasoning and writing abilities (Lai, 2010). Learners should be made familiar with well-reasoned phrases before focusing on how to write a conclusion, as logic plays a great role in organizing ideas consistently and properly (Lai, 2010). According to Ayoub (2006), most errors made by Iraqi EFL writing learners were due to the method of teaching and other additional factors, such as limited class time, disinterest and demotivation.

Considering the above, FCI seems a viable means for overcoming the writing difficulties experienced by Iraqi EFL students as it can provide an enriched learning environment enabling these learners' autonomy, increased motivation and engagement. According to Brown (2007), a classroom is not the only place for students to learn something; rather, he believes that learning can take place outside of learning settings, which enable learner-centeredness and the achievement of learning outcomes. In order to create such environment, some researchers advocate FCI (Bretzmann & Sams, 2013; Burns, 2013; Weimer, 2013). This study focuses on demonstrating the potential influences of FCI on Iraqi EFL learners' writing skills.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of the present study is to examine the impact of FCI on the writing development of Iraqi university EFL students and to understand these learners' attitudes towards FCI. The major objective is to analyze whether there exists a difference between the writing development of learners who are instructed via FCI and those who are instructed "traditionally". Thus, the following three research questions guide this study:

1. Does FCI contribute to the development of EFL learners′ writing skills?
2. Is there a difference between the writing achievement of students who have received FCI and those who have been taught in a traditional way?
3. What are the views of Iraqi EFL learners regarding FCI?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The findings of the current research are important because they might (a) urge the usage of FCI in EFL writing settings; (b) hold pedagogical implications that could improve learners' independence, motivation and eagerness by addressing their various necessities; and (c) improve the writing abilities of these learners.

The main motivation for this study relates to the gap between practice and theory in an Iraqi educational setting as well as the learning to empower Iraqi educators to become change agents (Walie & Yahya, 2010). It is also hoped that this study will raise awareness concerning the necessity of adjusting educational methodology in a highly technological environment and of better preparing learners to write effectively within a restricted length of time.

FCI is capable of transforming the English teaching practices of all teachers. Bergmann and Sams (2012) have asserted that FCI can fulfil the needs of today's students by incorporating innovative technological tools; helping those students who are engaged in multiple extracurricular activities by providing them with the opportunity to work ahead; promoting real differentiation in the classroom by enhancing class time to allow teachers the opportunity to individually assess their students' understanding and provide better feedback; and improving classroom management by requiring all students to become accountable for their own learning and progress, thus limiting classroom disturbances.

1.6. Assumptions

The first assumption was that students had similar educational and social backgrounds. The second one was that the sampling represented the whole population which were all students at Salahaddin University, English Language Department. The final assumption was that FCI questionnaire and interview form were answered honestly to provide sufficient information on learners' view about FCI.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

This study was implemented for an educational purpose. Though all steps in the study were taken with care, nevertheless the study had the following limitations:

- The number of students participating in this study was limited (only 66); thus, this study cannot provide an exact indication of learners' achievement. The generalizability of the study is limited to similar populations.
- Another limitation of this study was related to the duration time of implementing the FCI program which was only the length of two months of academic year of 2016-2017. Therefore, the researcher was limited to show and share only very limited numbers of videos related to the subject matters.

1.8. Definition of Key Terms

Synchronous Learning/Asynchronous Learning: Asynchronous learning is learning that occurs when the instructor and students do not exist simultaneously, such as when texting and emailing. On the contrary, synchronous learning takes place when the teacher and learners work with each other through online, face-to-face, or telecommunications means (Nicolson, Murphy & Southgate, 2011).

Blended Learning: (BL) is a new teaching approach which is a combination of face-to-face and distance instruction (Bonk & Graham, 2006).

Constructivism: The theory of constructivism is a policy of learning based on the science of how people acquire knowledge by being able to relate new information to existing knowledge and create patterns (Brooks & Brooks, 1999; Clements, 1997; Galvin, 2002; Saphier, Haley-Speca, & Gower, 2008). Simply put, constructivism is the theory of learning which espouses how students should construct their knowledge through engaged learning activities.

Engagement: Jimerson, Campos and Greif (2003) have defined engagement as "a multifaceted construct that includes involvement in school settings, class behaviour, personal relations, extra involvement and educational performance"(p. 7)

Flipped Model of Instruction: (FCI) is a learning technique which reverses the traditional instruction method that takes place within classroom settings and demands additional work to be completed outside of the classroom. According to FCI, assignments that otherwise would be completed at home may be completed instead in the classroom under the guidance of the instructor (Young, 2011).

Traditional Instruction: Klein (2009) described traditional instruction as teaching that is teacher-focused with students receiving explicit teaching.

Direct Instruction: it refers to the usage of upfront, obvious education methods, typically to instruct a particular ability. It is an instructor-directed approach, meaning that the educator dominates the classroom and provides the subject matter to students (Slavin, 2012)

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Presentation

The aim of this chapter is to present the reader with a clear and comprehensive review of previous research on FCI and its effect on writing instruction among EFL learners, include theories informing the approach, such as active learning, constructivism, and self-directed learning. This section also examines the role of technology within the FCI approach and attempts to illuminate the relationship between FCI and second-language acquisition (SLA).

2.2. Second Language Learning and Writing

SL writing has always been problematic for students and a topic of focus among linguistic scholars and educators. Writing is one of the most difficult skills for learners at every level of education and it is fundamental to all academic fields as well as occupations (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). Moreover, whereas speaking skills are usually enhanced through communicating and verbal interaction, written skills are acquired primarily via teaching and rehearsing (Richards, 1990). Therefore, writing well is not necessarily a natural talent; that is, it can be learned or socially conveyed through a set of practices in regular classroom instruction or another setting. Students encounter two main difficulties in acquiring sufficient writing skills: the first concerns rhetoric and the other involves linguistic issues, such as accuracy and fluency. In terms of rhetorical issues, learners are challenged with managing and composing the content, purpose and

arrangement of their opinions and concepts into an academic piece of writing. Linguistic issues refer to problems in syntax, grammar and vocabulary. Based on observations of instructors and students in a writing session, Richards (1990) asserted that learners struggle to manage their thoughts and organize them into particular essay forms. In such a case, the learners typically need "expert" help, and it becomes clear that teachers play an effective role in directing students regarding successful writing. First of all, they can address students' specific concerns when they are producing a piece of writing, and they can observe students' improvement by amending mistakes. This cannot be accomplished when the educator uses class time solely for theoretical clarification of writing procedure and assigns students homework to be completed outside of class time, independent of a guiding figure. Under the observation of educators, students are able to experience a sense of confidence, comfort and motivation regarding their writing, and they observe their mistakes, abilities, and disabilities while taking responsibility for their learning. Consequently, they become more engaged in classroom activities.

2.3. Theoretical Framework of Self-directed, Self-regulated and Active Learning

FCI involves a two-part process and is focused on self-directed learning (SDL) theory. In a flipped setting, SDL aids in strengthening the basis of knowledge construction through preparation outside the classroom as well as learning and doing activities within the boarder of class settings. The out-of-class preparation—the first component of FCI—requires learners to recognize and utilize techniques that support understanding and content acquisition. The second component, in-class active learning exercises, involves activities in which learners participate to obtain more detailed knowledge of the content (see Figure 1). In this case, the learners have more time to practice and explore the content of their learning.

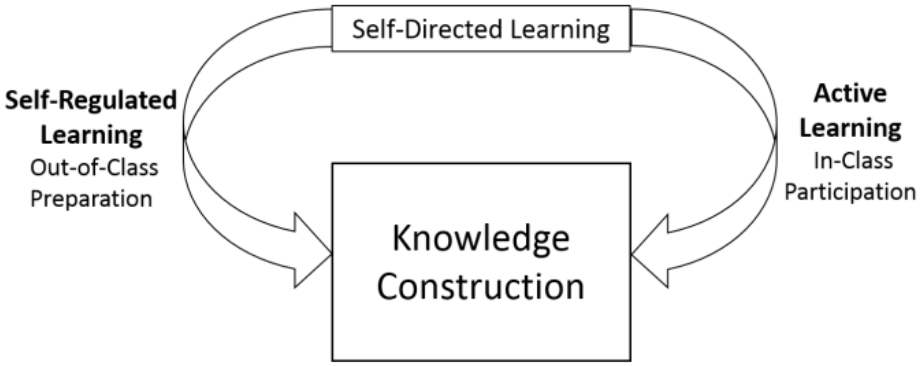

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Theoretical learning model of the self-directed learner in a flipped classroom involves self-regulated and active learning. Out-of-class preparation (e.g., watching video lectures) depends on utilizing self-regulated learning skills coupled with participation in class activities, which leads to knowledge construction.

2.3.1. Self-Directed Learning (SDL)

SDL is based on the principle that learners can effectively monitor and control what they learn and how they learn (Holec, 1981). Schmidt (1995) suggested that the noticing process helps students to identify their awareness and unawareness towards language discourse. FCI involves watching videos outside of class time in which concepts are simplified and utilizing class time for more production. When various sensations are involved in learning, the possibility of recalling information is highly increased. Slavin (2012) explained that visible illustrations appeal to various senses and are thus reserved in the "long-term memory more readily than information that is only heard" (p.192). This "noticing" promotes language development. Moreover, Borich (2014) defined SDL as "an approach that helps learners to take part in the learning process for better accomplishing higher order thinking skills" (p. 324). The most widely accepted description of SDL, which is provided by Knowles, identifies the process as one that is initiated and facilitated by the individual in an attempt to achieve self-imposed learning goals (Boyer, Edmondson, Artis, & Fleming, 2014). Brookfield (1986) also stated that self-directed learners are able to effectively place their learning into the context of different social settings and use alternative perspectives to transform their

existing frameworks. He further suggested that SDL occurs when learners "take action to acquire skills and knowledge" (p. 58). In SDL, the teacher's role is more of a facilitator rather than an instructor (Borich, 2014; Brookfield, 1986; Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007).

Borich (2014) also asserted that learners can become more self-directed and autonomous when classroom materials and activities are originated to encourage autonomous construction of knowledge acquisition. Lessons, assessments, homework, and activities for flipped classrooms can all be created using SDL models. For instance, when theoretical explanation is beyond the border of classroom, learners are required to depend on themselves for self-directing their content knowledge acquisition. Although with limited internal and external motivation for being accountable outside, learners must take notes by their efforts and independence. Within the boarder of classroom, learners are responsible for identifying and using resources for a variety of learning activities, the instructor facilitates these activities, not dictates them. The aim of these kinds of activities is to involve learners to learn exercises on their own pace collaboratively and also learn several ideas and opinions (Meyer, 2014). According to studies in psychological cognition and foreign language learning, when students' attention toward formulation is activated, linguistic knowledge is strengthened. Moreover, according to Schmidt (1995), the noticing is vital and adequate to turn input and change into "intake for learning". Awareness-raising, input development (Rutherford & Smith, 1985) and understanding logical input (Krashen, 1985) are all concepts employed by educators to improve foreign language learning (Izumi & Bigelow, 2000). This learning occurs when students identify several of their language faults and practice their knowledge among peers in a cooperative instruction setting "where all participate, including the teacher" (Kohn, 2006 cites in Orlich, Harder, Callahan, Trevisan, Brown & Miller, 2013, p.33). Cooperative instruction settings urge students to be constructive, independent, and accountable for their learning—in essence, they promote active learning. Cooperative instruction is beneficial for improving foreign language knowledge (McCafferty, Jacobs, & Iddings, 2006 cites in Orlich, Harder, Callahan, Trevisan, Brown & Miller, 2013, p.262) in that it aids in students' differentiation.

2.3.2. Self-Regulated Learning (SRL)

In the SRL model, learners are considered evolving members of their own learning processes. This means that they have the ability to observe and adjust various fields of their cognitive ability, conduct, and study environments; moreover, they can effectively judge whether their learning strategies are sufficient or require alterations (Pintrich, 2004). SDL and SRL are closely related in that SRL is a proactive process in which students self-direct their learning (Zimmerman, 2008). Wolters (2003) qualified self-regulated learners as those students who comprehend their mental abilities and recognize what motivates them academically. He also stated that these learners benefit from a huge number of strategies to support and guide them in their academic lives and in management of their learning as well.

Since FCI requires students' preparation by their implementation of a duty (e.g., watching a video-taped lecture) prior to class time, students are able to adjust their motivation in order to prepare effectively. This self-assessment and regulation typifies the SRL model. Wolters, Pintrich and Karabenick (2005) demonstrated the relationship between SRL and FCI in the following way:

> The challenge to complete academic work at home without the structure of social pressures to continue working that are present in the classroom can be even more difficult. In light of these obstacles, students' ability to actively influence their own motivation is viewed as an important aspect of their self-regulated learning, (p. 254)

In a flipped class, students are responsible for watching pre-recorded lectures in preparation for in-class activities; moreover, ideal preparation may appear through the utilizing SRL strategies, such as "motivational, metacognitive, behavioural and cognitive which are concerned with supporting and managing the processes of learning and then lead most directly to the production of knowledge"(Cazan, 2013; p. 744)

2.3.3. Active Learning

Active learning is a concrete and solid theory that can be effectively accredited to a particular educational theorist, but rather it is an instructional method that is resolutely rooted in constructivism (Meyer, 2014). The work of well-known constructivists, Jean

Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and John Dewey have played a great role in present exertion to increase active learning in the classroom (Bonwell & Eison, 1991; Karpov, 2003; Kolb, 1984; Zuckerman, 2003). The flipped approach aims profoundly at students building their understanding of content while engaging in tasks for learning. Within the constructivist orientation, "teachers want students to take responsibility for their own learning, to be autonomous thinkers, to develop internal and external understandings of concepts, and to pose—and seek to answer—important questions" (Brooks & Brooks, 1993, p.13). Meyer (2014) illustrated that students who enthusiastically participate in learning activities have ability to formulate knowledge through interaction and that learning takes place actively rather than passively. Moreover, time is essential for students' comprehension and construction of language. According to Bransford (2000), "the complex cognitive activity of information integration requires time" (p. 58). This comprehension also requires an active environment in which students are accountable for obtaining knowledge independently by composing language discourse learned on their own and by focusing on their learning techniques. The major argument for FCI is that it increases the time for learners and urges them to participate actively in collaborative activities and gives learners more class time to produce more as well as decreases length of class time dedicated to teaching theoretical parts by the teacher.

According to Brooks and Brooks (1993), in a constructivist framework, instructors are required to create a learning atmosphere in which learner autonomy is urged. In this situation, contented-related activities are created around the use of data and essential resources, students are put into critical thinking, and open dialogue is increased among students as well as with the instructor. Kaufman (2003) specified that teachers' role is not only to transmit but also to guide, as they design lessons to engage students in knowledge construction through learning activities. This builds on Vygotsky's premise that knowledge is not directly "taught" to students but rather "discovered" by them through active participation in discussions and research along with guidance from teachers (Karpov, 2003). This means that learning can be well-achieved by exploring and experiencing content under the guidance of the teacher. A collaborative environment in which students are encouraged to critically analyze resources while

gaining knowledge through self-discovery and instructor guidance is the backbone of the in-class portion of FCI.

2.4. Technology Use in Writing Instruction

Language instruction has been consistently modified based on changing methodologies over time. Although each method has involved different goals, they all have intended to accomplish foreign language acquisition. Nowadays, what motivates learners in-class is new technology which has become prevalent in their lives outside class.

In the present, technology plays a significant role in classroom-based education, as learners no longer need to depend on traditional instruction in which teachers dominate classroom time. For teachers, technology creates the opportunity to design meaningful learning experiences that remarkably improve language learning. The use of technological devices for enhancing education dates to the 1960s, yet according to some researchers, this use does not benefit educational methods. Still, others insist that technology is a powerful weapon for enhancing learning if it is used properly (Bransford, 2000).

In a similar study investigating the effects of internet-based instruction on student learning, Wegner, Holloway, and Garton (1999) compared two groups of teaching instruction; one as a controlled group who was instructed through teacher-based instruction, one as an experimental group who followed internet-based instruction. The results revealed that there was no difference between both groups' scores. But the attitude of experimental group was positive towards the new experience of the method.

In a study conducted by Krismant (2002) who examined the impacts of using internet-based teaching and learning systems on learners at university level in Thailand. The study selected two groups; one as a controlled group, the other one as an experimental group. As a consequence, the study indicated that the experimental group's scores who was taught via teacher-prepared instruction programs on the internet-based system, didn't significantly differ from the controlled group's scores who were instructed via traditional instruction.

Miyazoe and Anderson (2010) investigated the efficacy of various online practices in an EFL classroom at a university in Tokyo, Japan. Even though the results indicated that wikis, forums, and blogs were generally helpful in language teaching, especially in writing instruction, they were not able to differentiate learning products.

Warschauer (1996) also examined the impact of computers as a pedagogical tool in a Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) program. Participants included ESL and EFL learners in university-level writing classes. He found out that learners held positive opinions towards the use of computers in writing despite gender variation. Moreover, learners were highly interested and energetic toward computer use.

A similar study to the one above was conducted by Shih (2011) and examined the influence of Web 2.0 technology on EFL writing learners at a university in Taiwan. The results demonstrated that learners' motivation, enthusiasm and concentration were enhanced due to the integration of Facebook in writing instruction. Learners experienced a cooperative environment and enhanced their writing discourse. The classroom setting was also more learner-focused in which students had more time to work with classmates, exchange information and communicate with their peers.

Lin, Lin, and Hsu (2011) conducted a study on a group of university-level Taiwanese students majoring in English. Their aim was to explore the effectiveness of blogging on learners' writing achievement. A period of two months was employed in which the experimental group was asked to communicate regularly in an online discussion on the blog and the controlled group was asked to record their responses to writing prompts using pen and paper. Findings revealed a minor difference in learners' overall writing achievements for each group.

Shunnar (2012) conducted a study to investigate the influences of computer usage on a group of high-school students' writing achievement in Abu Dhabi. The results indicated computer use to be useful in developing students' written abilities.

Still another study conducted in a College of Languages by Lin and Yang (2011) examined the effects of using Wiki technology on EFL learners' writing abilities. Learners were asked to join an online Wiki page on which they could share and respond five passages posted by their peers. Firstly, participants benefited by receiving instant

feedback from their teacher as they reported. Also, they were able to learn in collaboration with their peers, whose spelling, sentence construction and lexical words they were able to view.

In a similar study examining online writing enhancement by online technology, Sullivan and Pratt (1996) compared a writing classroom utilizing online discussion to a regular writing classroom in which online discussion did not occur. The findings indicated a substantial benefit of the online discussion course in writing development over the length of semester.

Similarly, Kutlu (2013) conducted a study investigating the effectiveness of technology on the English writing skills of ESP students in Turkey. Findings revealed that the students held positive beliefs towards technology use in enhancing their writing skills. They also elicited that technology could be regarded as an alternative for improving learners' written discourse.

2.5. Constructivist Theory, Independent and Blending instruction

Blended Learning (BL), which has become a popular mode of instruction over the past two decades, is the combination of distance-learning and traditional learning, or teacher-based instruction. It is important to distinguish between BL and distance-learning, also known as online learning. Online learning refers to learning that takes place using an internet connection and technological devices instead of a classroom setting. BL is the mixture of distance and face-to-face teaching. BL is the combined integration of teacher-based delivery and internet-based delivery instruction (Whitelock & Jelfs 2003; Oliver & Trigwell 2005). Roehl, Reddy and Shannon (2013) suggest the time achieved by deleting the explanation parts from a classroom setting provides more one-on-one individual participation between educators and learners, and this is achieved by merging distance and teacher-based instruction. Furthermore, one remarkable advantage of using FCI is the overall improvement of learner-to-instructor and instructor-to-learner interactions (Bergmann and Sams 2012). Overall, in BL approach both online and traditional instruction methods are used to deliver a more effective learning knowledge for the students. Instructors would typically engage online learning

components such as educational videos, games, online learning material and podcasts. the online material does not substitute any face-to-face teaching, but rather is used as additional support and to widen students' understanding of the topic. FCI is an approach which reverses the role of teaching with homework by taking advantages of technological devices. In FCI, only online learning is used to deliver learning materials by sharing instructional videos to the learners. The learners are required to view an instructional video or participate in another online learning exercise before coming to class. In the classroom, the new materials are discovered at-length. In most cases, the knowledge that is learned online is applied in the classroom, through a series of practical assignments.

As indicated above, synchronous and asynchronous mediums are useful ways to deliver online learning materials. Virtual Learning Environments (VLE), or what Alonso, Lope, Manrique, and Vines (2005) call "Live Learning," are examples of synchronous mediums that may include immediate texting, video calling sessions or negotiations between students. These environments prompt students to cooperate and exchange knowledge with peers, but they feel no independence in their education. On the other hand, asynchronous devices require more independence from students. In BL, using synchronous and asynchronous tools depends on the designer's call to deliver materials via online methods. As Berrett (2012) has asserted, the benefits of outside video lectures enable educators to create more enhanced connections with their learners within the classroom in terms of participation and communication. The duty of the educator shifts from content deliverer to counsellor, and students can promote each other learning in collaborative groups. Class time is used for meaningful activities and students realize teachers are learning guides instead of authoritative pedagogues. In BL, learners are more effectively empowered to develop themselves, participate, and gain independence. In other words, they are able to direct their learning independently and become autonomous.

Autonomous learning was first elaborated during the 1970s, and one of its most famous advocates was Henry Holec. Holec (1981) described self-directed learners as those who can accept responsibility and accountability for their learning. According to Holec (1981) and Little (1995), this ability is not necessarily a natural characteristic, as

it may be developed systematically. According to Nunan (1999) and Zohrabi (2011), linguistic acquisition must be a student-focused process in which students assess their language performances. BL has enabled instruction to be more individualized, hence enhancing to the linguistic development of students. Smith (2008) similarly has described independent learning as being enhanced by a BL approach in which learning is ultimately under the control of students.

Many educators and researchers have suggested that BL represents the well-enhanced integration of both distance-learning and traditional instruction. The classroom setting becomes the location in which students solve problems, develop advanced concepts and become engaged in collaborative learning (Tucker, 2012). Using Classroom time effectively can empower learners participate more in their learning, take charge of it, and accept more responsibility for their learning. BL assists in this management, as instructors are able to create online learning materials that are easily accessible outside the class frame so that learners are more extensively involved with content introduced during the limited class frame (Baker, 2000; Lage, Platt, & Treglia, 2000; Gannod, Burge, & Helmick, 2008; Strayer, 2009). Many scholars have concluded that BL increases educational involvement as well as interaction on behalf of learners and teachers in the classroom (Oliver & Trigwell, 2005).

In an experimental study, involving two classes of Arab learners in English language classes in Palestine implemented by Adas and Bakir (2013) which measured learners' abilities after implementing a BL approach. Online instruction was delivered via MOODLE, an educational site on which learners viewed weekly videos and shared their writing using error analysis. Each week, model responses were uploaded by the researchers. Findings indicated that the total number of learners with passing grades increased in the experimental group due to the use of online content delivery, which demonstrated improved writing performances.

2.6. The Flipped Classroom Instruction (FCI) Practice

In the following subsections, FCI is elaborated, including a brief history of its implementation and its underlying concepts.

2.6.1. Definition of Flipped Instruction

FCI is an instructional method involving group instruction in an active, cooperative and collaborative setting in which the instructor guides learners as they practice their theories and involve themselves more effectively in class content (Pearson & The Flipped Learning Network, 2013; Sams, Bergmann, Daniels, Bennett, Marshall, & Arfstrom, 2014).

According to Hamdan, McKnight, McKnight and Arfstrom (2013), it is a learning approach in which "teachers shift direct learning out of the large group learning space and move it to the individual learning space" and "devote more time to opportunities for integrating and applying [student] knowledge, via a variety of student-centered, active learning strategies" (p. 1).

In traditional instruction, the instructor is the dominant and does the lecture in the classroom. learners have no or few knowledge about the subject matter when they come to the classroom, In classroom, learners get instructed all the subject matter and are often the basic knowledge about the subject matter. Learners have to do more comprehensive tasks at home without the help of the instructor. But FCI is a 180 degree change in traditional instruction which means that learners have fully access to the subject matter at home where lectures are done via using technological applications. In FCI, the instructor plays as a role of a facilitator and mentor who observes more detailed process of the learning material by learners through doing practices and exercises in the class. Figure 2 below illustrates the difference between traditional and flipped classroom model inside and outside of classroom (Sletten, 2015, p 1)

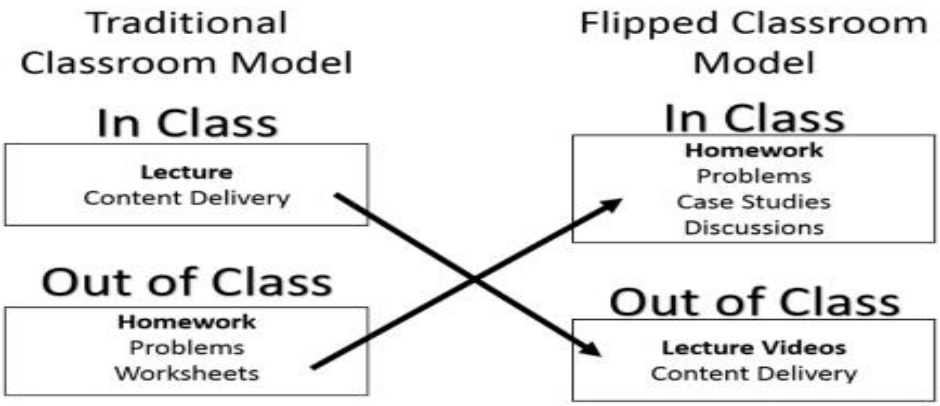

Figure 2. Traditional Instruction vs. FCI

According to Bergmann and Sams (2012), FCI is the reverse of traditional tasks and subject matter presentation because in a flipped class, content delivery—normally the main feature of class time—relocates to an online, independent learning space in the shape of video lectures. Moreover, assignments that were usually given as homework are completed collaboratively as content-related tasks inside the classroom. FCI is an additional development of the original Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). It takes CALL one step further—changing the walled classroom to anywhere an Internet or Wi-Fi connection are accessible, such as a cafeteria, and a library, etc…. Instructors all over the world use it not only to enhance classroom-centered skills including four language skills. but also, skills that are essential for daily life in the language learning, for instance, learner autonomy, digital technology, techniques of language acquisition, and communicative language (Loucky & Ware, 2016). The flipped approach hence changes the concept of the physical setting and creates a boundless setting—an idea which fits with 21st century education.

Referred to by Lage, Platt and Treglia (2000) as an "inverted classroom," FCI reverses traditional instruction by enabling learners to explain subject matter based on various strategies within classroom exercises then later to apply these theories in practice, either independently, in groups, or together as a class. The aim of FCI is to encourage the use of higher-order reasoning by learners. Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom, 1965) drives FCI, as learners are involved both in lower-order reasoning (recollection, comprehension, implementation) and higher-order reasoning (analysis, measurement, construction). The presentation of subject matter involves lower-order reasoning

including basic facts and opinions, which are directed toward higher-order reasoning in the form of hypotheses and assigned work. Traditional delivery classes in which the instructor stands and presents the content regularly offers lower-order reasoning opportunities, but neglects higher-order reasoning. However, in a solitary environment, learners have ample opportunities to create and produce challenging ideas (Cuban, 1983).

2.6.2. Historical Overview of Flipped Classroom Instruction

Although FCI itself emerged as a concept during the 1990s, instructional strategies focusing on learner understanding and application beyond classrooms via cooperative tasks date to the 1850s, when West Point trainees were educated according to the Thayer Method (Shell, 2002). In this model, learners were put into small groups in which they became involved in subject matter in-detail for a longer duration of time. It was hoped that learners would be more prepared in the subject matter during class time. This meant that major terms could be quoted and learners were able to enhance the target language. After demonstrating level development and knowledge of the intended concepts, learners later practiced collaboratively to resolve problematic issues or manipulate knowledge to comprehend the material thoroughly.

The teacher-directed method, known as direct instruction, was gradually replaced, especially with the arrival and accessibility of technology devices for educational purposes. FCI developed as teachers began to provide learning materials outside of classroom time by presenting the subject matter in the form of instructor-oriented teaching. It concerned the idea of learners' previewing the content outside of class time while practicing the material via in-class activities, and it has become a common teaching method of the 21st century. Many educators employ recent technology to transform the learning experiences of their students. FCI promotes a collaborative atmosphere in which the teacher's character changes from a "sage on the stage" to a "guide on the side" (Weimer, 2013, p.76). Moreover, learning is student-oriented, with instructors serving learners to access content knowledge at their own pace rather than functioning as solitary bases for learning.

Perhaps the two greatest proponents of FCI are Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams. In 2007, both Bergman and Sams were challenged with a situation of how to provide the needs of secondary-school learners in their science classes who regularly did not attend class due to illness or lack of effective transportation. They decided to videotape their classroom presentations and make them available to absent students. To their astonishment, even students who attended the class watched the videos. The purpose of this was to support their comprehension and review conceptual terms. Since this time, a new pedagogical trend has developed.

2.6.3. The Traditional Model of Teaching

With the recent increase in popularity of FCI in college classrooms, more scholars has been comparing different aspects of FCI to traditional methods of teaching. Hussey, Fleck and Richmond (2014) found that FCI use in a psychology statistics classroom was able to increase the number of learning opportunities in comparison to the traditional delivery instruction and significant enhanced learning was experienced. Similarly, in an upper-division engineering class, Mason, Shuman and Cook (2013) indicated enhanced learning with FCI use. The researchers also found that students in the flipped course studied less, covered more material, and had better perceptions of course effectiveness. Learners revealed that they had been initially unskilled and worried with the flipped format and required time to integrate to the new teaching and learning style. In another study on the effect of flipping on learners' autonomy in a statistics classroom, Marchionda, Bateiha and Autin (2014) acknowledged that flipped model caused to significantly increase learner autonomy among students, but this independence did not result in higher course grades. Interestingly, they found that the increase in autonomy resulted in learners crediting themselves for success in class yet blaming the instructor or the course structure when they failed to learn the material.

Studies concentrated on comparing learners' development in FCI classes with that of traditional classes have recently shown several results. In a study conducted by Wilson (2013) who attempted to investigate course scores in a statistics course before and after the flipped model treatment, it was found that the scores of the flipped classes improved compared to the scores of traditional classes after the FCI treatment. Pierce

and Fox (2012) also demonstrated that FCI positively influenced learners' practice in a pharmacy session, addressing promotion in active learning strategies. In another study, McLaughlin et al. (2013) also examined a flipped pharmacy course. They found similar results in students' academic practice in both flipped and traditional instruction, but did find significant increases in student engagement and autonomy. No studies reviewed demonstrated that FCI can cause to decrease academic success among learners.

2.6.4. Principles of Flipped Classroom Instruction

FCI is a reverse of teacher-oriented instruction and involves the exposure of learners to new content prior to class time (usually via videos and shared posts) and the later performance of comprehension tasks during class time, such as discussion, debates and problem-solving activities. FCI assists both advanced and struggling students. It aids advanced leaners in becoming more independent and struggling learners in taking more risks as well as persevering in homework or class assignments without being worried that they cannot keep up with the pace of class explanation.

In an FCI approach, learners are given the basic information of related content in an attempt to prompt their independent constructions of learning and search for additional knowledge. They "pause to reflect on what is being said, rewind to hear it again, listen to as much or as little of the lecture as their schedules permit, and view the lecture on a mobile device rather than in a fixed location" (Talbert, 2012; p. 1). On the other hand, learners in a "traditional" classroom are presented subject matter during classroom and complete assignments, projects or other tasks out-of-class time, depending on themselves without assistance from the teacher. In an FCI approach, the classroom is utilized for the completion of homework and other activities that empower students to concentrate on synthesizing the subject matter with the help of their classmates and instructors.

The main conceptual features of FCI can be summarized as technology use by instructors, shifting learning into society, and replacing face-to-face-instruction in a large group setting to more solitary learning environments (Pearson, 2013). In this way, FCI works cooperatively with Communicative Language Teaching Approaches (CLT),

which focus on learning by doing as well as Task-Based Language Teaching Methods in which students answer to a list of assignments depending on their varied capacities. Both FCI and CLT also increase students' engagement in physical and cognitive forms with the subject matter (Butt, 2014). Beyond the border of the classroom, learners can access to the subject matter in the form of instructional videos, reading assignments, discussion and small quizzes. In the classroom, learners continue to interact with the subject matter through application and practice in the form of small and large discussion groups, analytical writing, research, task problem resolving, and scheme creation.

The FCI approach attempts to establish a different method that meets students' needs as both "rule-users" and "data gatherers" (Thornbury, 2006; p. 116) by presenting the students prosperous chances to acquire and practice the content. Likewise, FCI supports session-oriented learning and individual learning. FCI is an approach of cooperative instruction that is intended to aid in the achievement of a specific goal. It infers altering educational practice and reconsidering methods of instruction to create more improved learning products. Learners are fully allowed to review the subject matter outside of the classroom and produce at their own pace. Meanwhile, they feel more self-confident about their education, which is fully available for them to watch anytime, as needed. They can undoubtedly develop by interacting with another students and the instructor who enables them to scaffold their learning. Zownorega (2013) has stated that with the flipped method, learners are able to refresh their memories anywhere and at any time before they will be examined on the content.

2.7. Studies on Flipped Classroom Instruction

In the past few years, FCI has increased in use and widened its reach to different subjects, mostly within higher education. Nevertheless, few studies have examined the use of this teaching approach on sophomore learner's writing performance.

In a study conducted by Gannod, Burge and Helmick (2008) at Miami University, FCI was implemented in computer, science, economics and marketing classes. Students were required to review and watch "Podcasts and Keynote Presentations" before coming to classes. The "millenial" learners benefitted from the

collaborative instruction that followed in the classroom. As a result, their attendance and the overall number of passing learners increased.

In a similar study, Bergmann and Sams (2009) created podcasts for learners in chemistry classes to preview before they came to class. This enabled classroom time to be spent on practicing material via related activities, and the instructor was able to give individual feedback. Unexpectedly, the learners in the flipped class resulted in lower scores compared to learners of the previous year.

Zappe, Leicht, Messner, Litzinger and Lee (2009) and Pierce and Fox (2012) implemented FCI in two courses: architectural engineering classes and a renal pharmacotherapy module. The findings of both studies held positive insights regarding learners' performance and enhanced achievement. Moreover, learners identified fulfilment and advantages for their learning with the influence of this approach.

Strayer (2012) conducted a study of a university-level statistics course to examine the impact of FCI on task orientation, collaboration and innovation, selecting two classes learners. The study compared a traditional delivery environment with that of a flipped instruction environment. It was determined that learners in the flipped class could produce and experience more innovation than students in the traditional class.

In a study conducted by Mireille (2014) which examined the influences of FCI on high-school Emirate female learners' essay performances and explored their opinions regarding FCI, the outcomes showed a statistically significant difference to exist between the test scores of learners in the controlled class and learners in experimental class. This enhancement of learners' writing abilities was contributed to FCI. Moreover, learners' beliefs towards FCI were positive.

In a study implemented in Australia by Butt (2014), who reversed an actuarial class to explore leaners' beliefs regarding FCI, a two-part questionnaire was employed to compare learner opinions before and after the course. He observed that learners understood form most when they had practiced more exercises, and they favoured individualized learning in content materials, group study and class seminars. He also discovered that learners in the flipped classroom were reluctant at the start of the FCI program but started to favor FCI by the end of the program.

A study conducted by Leis, Cooke and Tohei (2015) comparing two university-level English composition courses—one implementing FCI and the other utilizing traditional instruction—revealed that FCI had resulted in more production by students (i.e., number of hours studied and length of compositions) in comparison to the students of the traditional classroom.

In a study conducted by Zhang (2015) examining FCI in a business English course for Chinese university-level EFL students, he utilized teacher-created videos and then compared the impact of the flipped classroom to the traditional classroom. The participants were decidedly satisfied with the flipped classroom based on the surveys. Their satisfaction was categorized into three viewpoints based on classroom observation. First, the students increased their vocabulary and had more opportunities to discuss opinions and practice listening and speaking in English. Second, they were motivated by preparation and fulfilled their affecting desires and needs through more collaboration. Third, the integration of online self-learning and in-class learning should be implemented not to make students feel the key is pre-class, which might cause them to gain relatively less knowledge.

Sung (2015) flipped an English content-based class for twelve university students required to finish all the course necessities in an elective course. Prior to each class, the learners previewed lesson materials such as readings and videos and engaged in diverse online activities on an LMS platform. Then, they performed collaborative class activities such as sharing their thoughts on paper, discussing the questions on weekly readings developed online, and completing a final project of designing an evaluation plan. The results of the analysis of both informal and formal course evaluations and student work showed that they were positive with flipped learning despite early integration difficulties. They also believed that flipped teaching can be a good alternative for modification, at least in current English language teaching.

A study conducted by Mehring (2015) examined the influence of flipped instruction on EFL leaners in a Japanese setting and focused on learners' attitudes towards the change of teaching. Based on interviews conducted with the learners, there

was an increase in self-directed learning and a decrease in absence and inactivity (i.e., hesitancy to initiate conversations and lack of self-confidence to question in classroom).

Adedoja (2016) investigated Nigerian pre-service teachers' attitudes towards the flipped instruction and the challenges they confront. The study used both traditional (face to face) instruction and flipped instruction by utilizing the questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion. The results revealed that the attitude of pre-service teachers was positively in favour of flipped instruction.

Another study was conducted by Nouri (2016) investigated the Sweden learners' attitude towards flipped learning in research methods by administrating the questionnaire. The outcomes showed that a great number of the learners stated a positive attitude towards flipped classroom in terms of increased motivation, engagement, increased learning, and effective learning.

Ekmekci (2017) conducted a study of FCI in a Turkish EFL context to explore its impact on students' foreign language writing skills. The study compared traditional and flipped delivery writing classes based on the mean scores of students. Findings indicated that a statistically significant difference existed between participants in the flipped classroom and those in the traditional delivery classroom in relation to their writing performances based on the created rubric. This reveals that the participants in the experimental class performed better than the participants in the controlled class after applying the program. The findings of the study also showed that many participants in the experimental group held positive beliefs towards FCI.

The FCI has been utilized in various fields of education from different points of views: including, the attitudes of instructors and learners, implementation, its advantages, and disadvantages. According to some researchers, the FCI was considered as a beneficial method of instruction (Bergmann & Sams, 2012; Strayer, 2012; Mireille, 2014). While some researchers viewed the FCI as similar approach as the traditional instruction in terms of learners' achievement and performance (Ford, Burns, Mitch, & Gomez, 2012; Zownorega, 2013). In spite of the reality, technology has been a great role in developing education, but has not been practically attempted and utilized by Iraqi higher education for the benefits of creating a better learning grounding especially for

21st century of Iraqi EFL learners. This study attempts to illustrate the impact of a new approach on Iraqi EFL learners' outcomes at the level of higher education and their attitudes as well. It also serves as an infrastructure for developing educational system in shifting the influence of learning among Iraqi EFL learners.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

3.1. Presentation

This chapter describes the methodological information of the research. It presents research design in which the methodology of the research is introduced. Then, participants of the study are explained. It also presents sampling, data instruments, learning materials, data procedure and data analysis.

3.2. Research Design

The purpose of this research was to examine the effect of FCI on the writing skills of Iraqi EFL students. The length of the research was approximately eight weeks during the 2016-17 academic year. The term “traditional” is used in the context of this study to refer to a student-centered and teacher-driven class with all theoretical explanation taking place within the frame of the classroom, while the practical work and homework is assigned for students to complete outside of the classroom. In FCI, students use personal computers or mobile phones during the course of their study, but in the traditional approach students are usually instructed in the classroom without utilizing technology.

The study was quasi-experimental in nature. According to Creswell (2008), quasi-experimental research attempts to recognize the influence of a specific “treatment” or program on assigned learners. The quasi-experimental study conducted in the study

was non-equivalent control-group which means that a pre-test was administrated to both assigned groups to find out their writing abilities before the treatment and a post-test was administrated again after the treatment. The research study employed a mixed method—quantitative and qualitative—in order to obtain more detailed and precise data. Another reason for adopting a mixed method was to create an opportunity for discovering the reasons that support the impact of FCI on students' writing skills. According to Suter (2006), an educational mixed method study possesses "great potential to influence ways of thinking about problems and practices in the teaching and learning process" (p.65). The quantitative analysis of the data was designed to permit the researcher to differentiate between the results of pre and post-tests and to learn about Iraqi EFL learners' attitudes towards FCI. Interviews conducted with students explored the influence of FCI more in-depth and recorded learners' insights regarding FCI.

3.3. Sampling

The research site in this study was a public university in Erbil, Iraq. There were three groups of sophomore year students, however only two groups were selected and separated into control and experimental groups. Both groups had similar levels of capabilities and knowledge. The type of sampling that was proceeded with this study was convenience sampling. It is the most common type of sampling in L2 research and it is usually used when the characteristics of the participants are related to the purpose of the investigation (Dörnyei, 2007). It is a type of sampling that can be administrated for a mixed-method; quantitative and qualitative researches (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). According to Etikan et al., (2016), it is "a type of nonprobability or nonrandom sampling where members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the purpose of the study" (p. 2). İn this context, the partipants were not forced to particpant in the study unless they had interests and motivation. This gave more valid results to the study. Another reason was related to the location of the research site where was near for the researcher. This enabled the researcher to observe the students' participation in the classroom and their engagement as well.

3.4. Participants

Table 1 below displays the demographic characteristics of both controlled and experimental group participants in terms of gender, mother tongue, and years of English study.

Table 1.

Demographic characteristics of both assigned groups

Demographic characteristics of participants		Controlled Group (n=32)		Experimental Group (n=34)	
		F	%	F	%
Gender	Male	10	31	10	29
	Female	22	69	24	71
Mother tongue	Kurdish	24	75	30	85
	Arabic	7	22	3	12
	Turkish	1	3	1	3
Year of experience	1-2 years	23	72	21	62
	3-5 years	6	19	8	23
	> 5 years	3	9	5	15

As seen in Table 1, the participants included 66 students, ranging from 20 to 22 years old, willingly decided to participate in this study. They were native speakers of Kurdish, Arabic, and Turkish and had one year of experience studying English. Two sophomore writing classes were selected to serve as the context for this study. One class was assigned as the controlled group, which contained a total of 32 learners (Group 1), while the other class was selected as the experimental group and included 34 students (Group 2). The controlled group students were instructed via "traditional" delivery in class, while experimental group students were instructed via FCI. Both groups were studying EFL and expected to advance to the next level of study (junior year) in the 2016-17 academic year. The researcher was in charge of making the videos with the consultation of the instructor and afterwards uploading them for students.

As for the interview, a total of ten participants who were participants from experimental group (6 males and 4 females) were included. They were selected voluntarily and interviewed individually during class session and each lasted for 10 minutes. They were all recorded and transcribed for analysis.

The instructor of the controlled and experimental groups possessed four years of experience in teaching English writing and held an MA degree in TEFL, Applied Linguistics, and English Literature.

3.5. Data Collection Instruments

3.5.1. Writing Pre-test and Post-test

The tool used by the researcher to examine the influence of FCI on the writing skills of learners was created in agreement with the instructor and two other instructors, based on the textbook *4 Longman Academic Writing Series* by Alice Oshima and Ann Hogue which was the curriculum of English department for teaching writing skills. Firstly, the students of both groups were asked to write a paragraph about "The use of the internet in education," including 100-200 words, developing a topic sentence, composing three supporting sentences and finalizing the conclusion sentences (See Appendix I). The pre-and post-tests were administered under timed conditions using pen and paper, and students were required to finish their paragraphs during class time (45 minutes). The pre-test was carried out in November of the 2016-17 academic year and measured learners' writing skills before implementing the FCI treatment. The post-test was done in January of the 2016-17 academic year after ending the FCI treatment. The assessment tool used for evaluating the paragraphs was based on a rubric (See Appendix V) adopted by the researcher with the consultation of his supervisor.

3.5.2. Questionnaires

To investigate learners' attitudes towards FCI, a questionnaire previously used by Mireille (2014) was adopted to gather data from the participants. The questionnaire contained two major sections: in the first segment of the questionnaire, the participants of experimental group were asked to give demographic data about their gender, their mother tongue and years of experience in English. In the second segment, they were asked to respond to ten items using a five-point Likert scale scored from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). The aim of the questionnaire was to gather data

and learn about Iraqi EFL students' opinions towards the FCI program (See Appendix II).

3.5.3. Interviews

After completing the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews were conducted with only the experimental group and were aimed at gaining deeper knowledge of their unique experiences and more input from the learners about their opinions of FCI. According to Creswell (2008), open-ended questions give learners the opportunity to express their thoughts comfortably and are the best instrument for obtaining the view of learners. The interviews included open-ended questions, and all were translated into the mother tongues of the participants whom they were Kurdish. The interviews for both English and Kurdish are given in the Appendix III and IV. A total of ten participants form the experimental group (6 males and 4 females) were voluntarily included in the interviews. They were interviewed individually during class session and each lasted for 10 minutes. They were all recorded and transcribed for analysis.

To ensure the analyzed qualitative data was reliable for the purpose of the study, the analyzed qualitative data were reviewed by two experts who were EFL instructors holding PhDs. Both showed that the analyzed data were positive for the purpose of the study

3.5.4. Learning Material

The textbook *4 Longman Academic Writing Series by Alice Oshima and Ann Hogue* was utilized for both groups. For the experimental group, eight instructional videos were created by the researcher under the supervision of the instructor and his supervisor for ensuring the quality of teaching and the reliability of content. The flipped classroom model of instruction was implemented over an eight-week length at the research site to 34 sophomore EFL students in writing classes (See Appendix VI). The students were instructed and prepared for class by viewing the created videos related to the current topic of study. All the prepared videos for each lesson were uploaded each lesson to a Facebook Social Media Community in which only experimental participants

were enrolled. During class, rather than attending the class to listen to a group's lecture, the participants were involved in activities provided in the book and participated in realistic applications in the presence of the instructor. Using such a method permitted the instructor to better determine the students' comprehension and knowledge of the subject matter. For those participants who had no internet connection, the instructional videos were available on flash drives and DVDs, which they could borrow in order to watch at home. Objectives of the each video which were shared each week are demonstrated below:

The first week's video was about 7 minutes long. The goal was to teach students how to contruct an approprate topic sentence. It aimed to present the problems that students usually face in creating an approprate topic sentence by showing where the problems are in their topic sentence.

The students were provided 4 minutes long in the second week's video. The goal was to give activities to the students related to the topic sentence. First they watched it and did activities. Then, they answered it in class with their peers under observation of their instuctor and get feedback from their instuctor.

The length of the third week's video was about 3 minutes long. The goal was to show the studnets how to support and identify supporting sentences with details and examples.

In the fourth week's video, students had to watch 8 minutes long to learn how to identify and distinguish the fact form opinions.

The duration of the fifth week's video was about 4 minutes long. the goal was to give the students more activities, regarding the fact and opinion so that they could distinguish and be more familier with them.

The goal of six week's video which took 4 minutes was to teach students how to use a concluding sentence to complete a paragraph by using the conclusion signals.

The duration of the seventh week's video was about 4 minutes long. The goal was to give students more exersices related to the parts of a paragraph and highlight each part of a paragraph with thier peers and their instructor as well.

Last but not least, the length of the eighth week's video was about 11 minutes long.The goal was to teach students how to organize a unified paragraph around one cetral idea and construct a coherent paragraph by repeating key nouns, using consistent pronouns, using transition signals to link ideas, and arranging ideas in logical order.

3.6. Data Collection Procedure

Participants were required to use paper and pen to write a paragraph about the use of internet in education as a pre-and post-test. The duration of the writing was a class time (45 minutes) under the observation of the instructor and the researcher. Answer sheets of pre-and post-tests were collected for scoring and analysis.

A pre-test was implemented to calculate the students' writing performance before beginning the research. At the end, the same test was implemented as a post-test to draw differences between the scores of the two assigned classes. Later, the experimental students were asked to complete a questionnaire to learn their views towards FCI. The researcher was able to obtain quantitative statistics through test findings as well as questionnaire outcomes and qualitative information through open-ended questions in interviews. This informational triangulation helped to gather clues from various partakers and aided the researcher in establishing data trustworthiness. Creswell (2008) supports triangulation since it "encourages the researcher to develop a report that is both accurate and credible" (p.266). He states that "although it allows discrepancies of different data sources, triangulation helps to counter validity threats" (Robson, 2002, p.175). Therefore, triangulation was significant for this research to authenticate the results and increase its accurateness and validity.

To ensure the validity of both pre-and post-tests and to have a more explicit reading of the participants' responses towards writing abilities, the same prompts were employed for the pre-and post-tests. The evaluation tool was a rubric (See Appendix V)

adopted by the researcher and his supervisor, which was employed in assessing both groups writings before and after implementation. The researcher and another instructor scored the written paragraphs in order to provide consistency in scoring. When differences existed in scoring, a third instructor was required to score the same papers.

To confirm the reliability of the test, the test-retest approach was utilized. Creswell (2008) believed that the test-retest approach strives to investigate the degree of solidity of results from one test administration to the other. Furthermore, the researcher prepared some topics. The instructor and two English instructors who had extensive experience in writing were asked to choose and review the topics for reliability and credibility. Specifically, they were asked to determine and select which topic was or was not equivalent to and in alignment with the level of the participants based on the syllabus that participants were going to be taught in the second year of college. Their feedback encouraged the researcher to select the same pre- and post-test for the study.

In implementing the research, the following steps were processed before and during two months of the 2016-17 academic year:

i. To apply FCI, the researcher received oral permission from the head of the English Language Department as well as from the instructor. An agreement was made with the instructor to be in charge of the delivery and modification of pre- and post-tests and to prepare the instructional videos for the experimental group. Moreover, permission was obtained for the researcher to visit the classes so as to clarify the goal of the research and ask for voluntary participants.
ii. To assure participants about matters regarding confidentiality, the researcher made a clearer explanation about FCI and the goal behind implementing this treatment.
iii. After explaining of the goal of the study, students were given time to decide whether or not to participate. Fortunately, all the students were interested in participating in this study.
iv. Under the supervision of the instructor and two English instructors, the pre-test was created and the researcher requested feedback from all of them. After

finishing revisions, the test was printed and employed to both control and experimental groups in November of the 2016-17 academic year.

v. After receiving the completed pre-tests, the researcher scored the students′ responses based on an adopted rubric and also provided the two English instructors the rubric as well as explanation on how to use it to score the pre-test. When there were differences in scoring of ten points or more between the scorers, a third instructor was asked to score the tests in order to ensure consistency. After scoring was completed, participants′ marks were input into Microsoft Excel sheets.

vi. The researcher sought advice from the instructor of the experimental group to plan the Flipped Instruction Program. Under the supervision of the instructor and based on the textbook *4 Longman Academic Writing Series* by Alice Oshima and Ann Hogue′, the researcher created the videos by taking advantage of YouTube. After the videos were revised by the instructor, the final decisions were made.

vii. Since there was not internet service within the campus and almost all participants were able to access it at home, the researcher created a community on Facebook to deliver the prepared instructional videos to the experimental group and uploaded them week by week. Facebook was chosen because the class assigned as the experimental group already were members of a Facebook group and then the researcher was added to the group by the admins. The group was used for the purpose of studying and sharing daily activities related to their subjects.

viii. During the treatment, the controlled group followed ″traditional″ instruction in the class in a teacher-centered and student-centered learning setting in which all theoretical parts occurred inside the classroom. In contrast, the experimental group received the lectures of their lessons prior to class, which provided them with opportunities to be more in charge of their learning, to be more engaged in class activities and to have more time to practice the material. Using this different method was the main focus of this study.

ix. Each lesson, experimental participants were provided with a prepared video to view before attending the class. To ensure that students had watched the videos,

in the beginning of each lesson, the instructor first began asking some questions related to the shared video.

x. Students were informed that the post-test, questionnaire and interviews regarding FCI would be administered in January of the 2016-17 academic year at the end of the treatment.

xi. The researcher scored the post-test, which was then rescored by the two English instructors for reliability.

xii. After finishing the post-test, experimental students were provided the questionnaire and they were later interviewed.

xiii. Lastly, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 10 participants. During the interview, the students were permitted to speak either in their native language or English in order to decrease their anxiety and hesitation. Each interview lasted for 10 minutes. The Instruments were conducted from the class duration and the researcher informed the participants about confidentiality of their discussion during the interview process.

3.7. Data Analysis

In order to evaluate and analyze the pre-and post-tests, the researcher adopted a rubric which was used by Paola (2011) based on the syllabus that both groups were being taught during the study (See Appendix V). The rubric evaluates subjects' responses on five different levels: (1) topic sentence, (2) supporting details, (3) organisation and transitions, (4) language use, and (5) mechanics. These features were the standards for scoring learners' writing abilities, and each of these features was marked on a scale valued from 0 to 2 points. To ensure the reliability of the rubric, the researcher gave the same paragraph to four English teachers to score based on the adopted rubric. Based on the evaluation of each teacher, the adopted rubric was proven to be reliable for scoring the pre- and post-tests.

After completing the program, the researcher and the other instructors scored students' responses and finalized the pre- and post-test results. The outcomes were calculated using SPSS (Statistical Package of Social Sciences) Version 20 by running an

independent-sample *t*-test analysis to indicate whether any statistically significant difference existed between the findings of the control and experimental groups.

In order to analyze the data collected from the questionnaire, descriptive statistics was employed using SPSS Version 20. According to Trochim (2006), descriptive statistics supplies straightforward findings about the sample and calculation. The questionnaire aided in data collection and enriched the research with learners′ opinions of FCI.

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) for the analysis of the qualitative data, a five-process technique is required, initiating "preparing the data for analysis, exploring the data, analyzing the data, representing the data analysis, and validating the data" (p. 129). Once the interviewee′s respondents were verified and confirmed, inductive content analysis was administrated for the classification of the data which is defined as ″the general issues that are of interest are determined prior to the analysis, but the specific nature of the categories and themes to be explored are not predetermined″ (Ezzy, 2002, p: 80). Subsequently, the process of coding was described by Ezzy, (2002) as a process of ″disassembling and reassembling the data″ (p. 94), which means breaking the transcribed data into smaller items of text. After that, each item was re-arranged by categorizing and identifying the emergent themes. The qualitative data serves to explore more and different thoughts of students′ unique experiences in a more in-depth manner as stated by O′Malley and Chamot (1990).

CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

4.1. Presentation

The aim of the research was to investigate the relation between FCI and the writing scores of sophomore Iraqi EFL students at Salahaddin University in Erbil, Iraq. This chapter summarizes the most important findings pertaining learners′ writing attainment marks and addresses the underlying research questions. Moreover, it presents statistical and inferential analyses based on the *t*-test to demonstrate results in terms of calculated means and standard deviations of the writing test results.

4.2. Data Analysis

In order to analyze the obtained data from the pre-and post-tests, an independent-sample *t*-test was utilized to differentiate between students' achievement of the experimental and control students' scores. According to Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, and Sorensen (2010), the independent-sample *t*-test can be employed to measure the statistically significant differences between two assigned group means. Therefore, the *t*-test shows the differential means between the two groups.

4.3. The Findings of Research Question 1

Does flipped classroom instruction contribute to the development of EFL pre-service teachers' writing skills?

Table 2 below demonstrates the results: An independent-sample *t*-test was conducted to compare the results of both groups, based on the Mean, Minimum, Maximum and Standard Deviation.

Table 2.

Descriptive statistics for experimental and controlled groups

Groups		Mean	N	Minimum	Maximin	Std. Deviation
Experimental	Pre-test	4.35	34	2.0	8.0	1.852
	Post-test	6.17	34	3.0	9.0	1.722
Controlled	Pre-test	4.64	32	2.0	8.0	1.723
	Post-test	5.31	32	3.0	9.0	1.763

As seen in Table 2, students in the experimental group performed better than students in the control group on the post-test. In reality, there is nearly a one-point score difference between the post-test mean scores of the students in the experimental group (Mean=6.17, N=34, SD 1.722) over the control group scores (Mean= 5.31, N=32, SD 1.763). Regarding the pre-test scores, the highest score for the experimental group and control group was exactly 8.0, respectively. For the post-test overall scores, the highest scores for the experimental group and control group were exactly 9.0. The lowest scores on the pre-test for the experimental and control groups were exactly 2.0 for each, while the lowest scores on the post-test for the experimental group was 3.0 and for the control group 3.0, as well.

Examining the results more closely, it can be seen that there is a remarkable improvement in the test mean scores of students who received FCI in comparison with the small-change results of students who received "traditional, in-class" instruction. For example, students in the experimental group had a mean average that increased from (Mean=4.35, N=34, SD 1.852 to a Mean=6.17, N=34, SD 1.722*)*, whereas the mean

average of students in the control group slightly increased from (Mean=4.64, N=32, SD 1.723 to a Mean=5.31, N=32, SD 1.763).

4.4. The Findings of Research Question 2

Is there a difference between the writing achievement of students who receive FCI and those who are taught in a traditional way?

To answer the second part of this question and to identify whether there exists a difference between the writing achievement of students who followed FCI and those who were taught in traditional way, an independent t-test was conducted at the beginning and end of the FCI program to compare the scores of experimental and control groups.

Table 3 below displays the results for control and experimental groups before receiving the FCI program.

Table 3.

Difference between experimental and control groups before FCI program

Groups	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**t-value**	**P-value**
Experimental	34	4.35	1.852	-.653	0.51
Controlled	32	4.64	1.723		

Table 3 shows that the scores of pre-tests do not vary much before receiving FCI (T= -.653, P=0.51), which indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the pre-tests of the experimental (Mean=4.35, N=34, SD 1.852) and control groups (Mean=4.64, N=32, SD 1.723). In the other words, students in the two groups were of similar writing abilities at the start of the study based on their responses to the test.

Table 4 displays the results for control and experimental groups after implementing the FCI program.

Table 4.

Difference between experimental and control groups after FCI program

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value
Experimental	34	6.17	1.722	2.013	0.048
Controlled	32	5.31	1.763		

As demonstrated in Table 4, at the end of program, an independent *t*-test revealed that there is a noticeable difference in the mean scores of the experimental group (Mean=6.17, N=34, SD 1.722) and the control group (Mean=5.31, N=32, SD 1.763). This indicates that there exists a statistically significant difference between the two groups on the post-tests (T=2.013, P=0.048). In fact, the results on the post-test seen in Table 4 seem to show that the difference between the mean scores is largely attributable to FCI: the *t*-test has helped to demonstrate that post-test results show a significant improvement in the results of students in the experimental group ($P<0.05$).

4.5. The Findings of Research Question 3

What are the attitudes of Iraqi EFL pre-service teachers towards FCI?

The findings of the questionnaire provide an in-depth understanding of Iraqi EFL leaners' attitudes towards FCI. The ten questionnaire items including Likert-type responses were analysed by calculating the mode, the response occurring the most. Ary, Jacobs, Razavie and Sorensen (2010) stated that Likert-type items classified as ordinal measurements are best described using the mode when analysing such data.

Table 5 displays the most common responses for each item of the questionnaire. Moreover, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the questionnaire results, the percentages of students choosing "strongly agree," "agree," "neutral," "disagree" and "strongly disagree" for each item on the questionnaire were calculated.

Table 5.

Learners' opinions of flipped classroom instruction

Items	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
The flipped instruction allows me to prepare for my class in advance.	2	5.9	1	2.9	8	23.5	11	32.4	12	35.3
Through the prepared videos, I have enough time to acquire the sentence structures.	2	5.9	3	8.8	12	35.3	12	35.3	5	14.7
I feel more confident to ask for clarifications after watching the prepared videos.	1	2.9	4	11.8	8	23.5	10	29.4	11	32.4
I feel more confident about my learning due to the flipped instruction.	6	17.6	9	26.5	1	2.9	10	29.4	8	23.5
The flipped instruction made it easier for me to answer and write the test.	1	2.9	9	26.5	15	44.1	6	17.6	3	8.8
My writing strategies are better as I have more time to apply the learning in class.	2	5.9	6	17.6	2	5.9	13	38.2	11	32.4
I feel I am more in charge of my learning through the flipped instruction.	1	2.9	14	41.2	7	20.6	6	17.6	6	17.6
I feel that the flipped instruction has not helped me at all.	10	29.4	8	23.5	8	23.5	6	17.6	2	5.9
I understand more when the teacher explains in class.	3	8.8	9	26.5	5	14.7	9	26.5	8	23.5
I like to write in class to get instant feedback from my teacher.	3	8.8	5	14.7	7	20.6	8	23.5	11	32.4

As seen in Table 5 above, on Item 1, nearly 67% of the students believed that this new approach of instruction permitted them to have more time to prepare for class, while on Item 2, 50% of students believed that the prepared videos were helpful for acquiring sentence structure. On Items 3 and 4, when they were asked about their level of self-confidence, almost 62% of the students believed that the FCI promoted their confidence, and approximately 53% of respondents found an increase in involvement in

their learning. On Item 5, only 27% of students believed that FCI made it easier to write the test, while 30% of students disagreed. On the Item 6, almost 77% of students reported that if they had more time to apply their learning in class, their writing strategies would be better. On Item 7, they were asked if they had become independent in learning through FCI and 44% of students disagreed with this view, while only 23% agreed with it. On Item 8, 53% of students rejected the view that FCI had not helped them at all which means more than half of the students' writings had been improved due to FCI. On Item 9, half of the students understood more when the teacher explained in class, while 36% disagreed. On Item 10, almost 60% of students intended to utilize class for writing to get direct corrections from their instructor, while nearly 24% disagreed.

It is noteworthy on Item 9, which regarded the awareness of learners' comprehension when the instructor gives an explanation in class, 50% of the students preferred to have the instructor give an explanation in class despite whether or not they favored FCI on the other questionnaire items. A probable reason for this is associated with the Iraqi community and tradition in which students have always been taught with the presence of a teacher in class rather than via technology use, which is still new to the country. Item 7 also is noteworthy and relates to students' independence through the FCI. 44% of students did not believe that through FCI, they were more in charge of their learning. This phenomenon could possibly be related to the age of the learners, who were still in the process of developing maturity.

Table 6 below illustrates overall the frequencies and percentages of learners' views toward FCI.

Table 6.

Overall attitudes towards flipped classroom instruction

Overall attitudes	F	%
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Neutral	22	64.7
Agree	11	32.4
Strongly agree	1	2.9

As seen in Table 6 above, most students did not choose “strongly disagree” on the ten questionnaire items (Strongly disagree = 0%), and most did not choose “disagree” on the items (Disagree = 0%), It is noteworthy that 22 students chose “neutral” on the items (Neutral=64.7%. Moreover, 11 students chose “agree” on the items (Agree = 32.4%), and only 1 student selected “strongly agree” to most items on the questionnaire (Strongly agree = 2.9) (See Table 5). A great number of learners displayed positive opinions towards FCI.

4.6. The Findings of the Interviews:

To obtain more detailed knowledge of their unique experiences and more input from the participants about their attitudes towards FCI, interviews were conducted with only the experimental group. 10 participants were selected, including (6 males and 4 females) and inteviewed individually. The interviews included four open-ended questions (See Appendix III and IV). They were recorded and transcribed, and inductive content analysis was employed to search for themes within the data through a repeated process.

Table 7 below demonstrates the themes and topics that were found during the interviews when students were asked to explain their attitudes about the use of FCI.

Table 7.

Students’ views about the use of FCI

Questions	Themes	Students
The use of the FCI	Providing more time for practising daily	S1, S2, S4, S6,
	Providing easily accessible learning	S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S7, S9, S10
	Being interesting, motivating	S1, S2, S3, S5, S7, S9

As shown in Table 7, four students thought that FCI is beneficial for better use of class time. They believe that FCI is a helpful method for providing more time on activities rather than on explanation. As one of them stated that:

Excerpt 1:"*It makes me concentrate more, it makes learning easier and it saves time for study and practice*."*(S1).*

Additionally, eight students thought that it is a useful method due to easily accessible learning materials. They can watch the videos anytime and anywhere. They can pause and repeat the videos many times. One of the students described the following:

> Excerpt 2: "*It helps me to prepare well before taking exams, I can watch the videos anytime and anywhere*."*(S10).*

Moreover, six students repeated that FCI enables interesting, fun, and easy learning. It also makes them concentrate more on studying. One student explained the following:

> Excerpt 3: *"It assists me to understand easily, it's useful method to understand the lessons, it is fun and exciting."(S7)*

Futhermore, they belived that FCI approach has more advantages than lecture-based classroom due to allowence of classroom time for more practices and easily accessing subject matter whenever needed and increases their motivation and excitement towards learning. They felt having access to the videos 24 hours a day was quite advantageous.

Table 8 below demonstrates the themes and topics that were found during the interviews when students were asked to explain their attitudes about how FCI had improved their writing abilities.

Table 8.

Students' views about how FCI improved their writing abilities

Questions	Themes	Students
Improving students' writing abilities	Getting immediate feedback from teacher	S2, S4, S5, S8, S9
	Improving more interaction between peers and teacher	S1, S4, S5, S8, S9,
	Increasing quality of teaching	S2, S7, S9

As displayed above, five students thought that such a method is useful due to the immediate feedback from the teacher during activities. One student explained the following reasoning:

Excerpt 4:*"Because I can get feedback right from teacher when I make a mistake, not from my friends. They might be wrong."(S8)*

Moreover, five students answered that they have more time to communicate with their teachers and classmates. FCI serves to create a classroom atmosphere that is more collaborative. One student explained the following:

Excerpt 5:*"I had more time to practice and communicate with my classmates and my teacher" (S4)*

In addition, three students believed that FCI is like a tutor they have at their home. One student explained the following:

Excerpt 6:*"It can provide more information than traditional way, it is like a tutor for every student at home" (S9)*

Furthermore, they responded that FCI approach improved their writing skills. They emphasised on particularly instant feedback from their teacher, not from classmates. According to them, FCI utilizing technology enhanced the quality of instruction, increased their interaction between their teacher and their peers due to prior knowledge of subject matter, which helped them to build their confidence and improve their understanding of the content.

Table 9 below demonstrates the themes and topics that were found during the interviews when students were asked to explain their attitudes about how to describe themselves in the FCI Class.

Table 9.

Students' feeling about being in a FCI class

Questions	Themes	Students
Students describing themselves in class using the Flipped Instruction	Active and Engaged	S2, S3, S4, S6, S8, S10
	Motivated	S1, S4, S3, S8,
	Self-Independent	S2, S3, S5, S6, S9

As displayed in the table above, six students commented that such a teaching method encouraged them to engage, be active and participate in classroom activities. A student commented as the following:

Excerpt 7:*" I feel more focus on my learning and I feel responsible and active in my learning during the class time and at home" (S2).*

Furthermore, four students defined themselves as motivated, and they believed that FCI increased their motivation and enthusiasm towards learning. One student claimed the following:

Excerpt 8:*"I define myself as motivated student, I am excited about learning activities with my classmates and my teachers, and I don't feel shy to answer when the teacher questions "(S3).*

Moreover, five students commented that FCI urged them to be independent and more in charge of their learning, depending less on the teacher. One student commented as the following:

Excerpt 9: *"I am trying more to participate and depend on myself to learn not even in classroom but also outside of classroom" (S6)*

They believed that utilizing technology would increase their motivation, level of engagements and self-independence. It would urge them to challenge, raise awareness of discovering more about their needs on their own pace and strive to participate in classroom activities without being worried, embarrassed and shy. It provided them with opportunities to work collaboratively and cooperatively in order to improve engagement and their writing.

Table 10 below demonstrates the themes and topics that were analysed during the interviews when students were asked about the drawbacks of FCI.

Table 10.

Students' views about the drawbacks of FCI

Questions	Themes	Students
The drawbacks of the FCI	Slow internet connection	S2, S3, S4, S7, S8, S9, S10
	The quality of videos	S1, S2, S3, S5, S6, S7
	Social Factors	S1, S5, S10
	Unawareness of using technology	S3, S7, S8, S10

As displayed in Table 10 above, six students commented that slow internet connection was a problem. One student explained the following:

Excerpt 10: *"Internet connection in Iraq is very slow and I cannot even have access to the internet within the campus in all Iraqi universities" (S7)*

Additionally, six students reported that the quality of the videos was problem such as long and grainy videos that make FCI boring. One stated the following:

Excerpt 11: *"Maybe it is related to the videos, if it is too long or not clear, then the method would be boring" (S2)*

In addition, three students thought that social factors were a barrier. One student said the following:

Excerpt 12: *"I am restricted to use internet at home, my parents would not let me to be online most of the time" (S5)*

Furthermore, four students reported that it is related to little knowledge of technology use. One student explained the following:

Excerpt 13: *"I don't know how to use the internet for education, especially this method of knowledge needs training before" (S3).*

Moreover, they believed that the slow internet connection, the low quality of videos, social factors and not being able to use the internet were a great challenge for

them while implementing FCI. It seems that these factors made FCI approach less interesting in learning for some learners.

CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

5.1. Presentation

In order to address students' attitudes towards FCI in a university writing classroom at the research, a questionnaire and interviews were implemented at the end of the program. Furthermore, to examine the difference between Iraqi EFL Students who had been involved in FCI and those who had been delivered traditional instruction, a pre-test and post-test were completed by students of two groups before and after the start of the program. This chapter describes the results of the present study and compares them with those of other researchers.

5.2. Discussion

The essential concern of the current study was the difference between FCI and traditional instruction in an Iraqi university-level EFL context. The present study determined that a statistically significant difference existed between learners who had been involved in FCI and those who had received traditional instruction. Furthermore, the attitudes of learners were positive towards FCI.

5.3. Contribution of FCI to the Development of EFL Pre-service Teachers' Writing Skills.

According to the results of this study, FCI can contribute to developing EFL pre-service teachers' writing skills which is in line with a study conducted by Mireille (2014), who found that FCI can contribute to improving learners' grades on English writing proficiency tests. Accordingly, a study conducted by Ayoub (2006), most errors made by Iraqi ELF learners were due to the method of teaching and other additional factors, such as limited class time, enthusiasm, motivation and independence on behalf of students, all of which lead to their boredom. Therefore, productive instruction approaches are essential in developing the writing skills of Iraqi EFL learners. In this context, FCI makes a positive impact on learners' writing abilities in a collaborative environment. Instruction can either be an obstacle or a chance for learning. Class preparation and instructional videos deliver opportune time for learners to comprehend the ruling concepts that control their writing response.

5.4. The Difference between FCI and Traditional Instruction Among Iraqi EFL Students

The findings demonstrate that the current study is consistent with the theoretical assumptions of cognitive language learning and the role of attention and noticing in SLA (Schmidt & Ellis cited in Robinson, 2001; Troike, 2012). The improvement of learners' writing skills is largely accredited to the purpose of noticing, without which "there is little if any learning" (Robinson, 2001). Students' mental input increases when methodological instruction is changed and enhanced to fulfil their necessities and demands. In this case, in-taken language becomes easier, more recognizable and more overt for them. In addition, the results of the research are also parallel with the theory of constructivism. Experimental group participants can form their long-lasting memories more effectively by using inductive instruction techniques to advance their writing abilities.

This study is also consistent with studies conducted in Turkey that investigated the flipped writing classroom in a Turkish EFL context (Ekmekci, 2017). The findings indicated that those students who had studied under the new model of teaching outperformed those who had studied under the traditional teaching method. The current results also are in accordance with a study conducted in Japan by Leis et al. (2015), who flipped his English writing composition to investigate the effectiveness of the approach. The outcomes indicated that those who had received FCI produced a considerably larger amount of words in compositions when compared to those studying under a traditional teaching method. Overall, it has been proven that FCI results in substantially greater enhancements in the writing abilities of students. Finally, the findings are also supported with those studies of Ahmad (2016) and Mireille (2014), who both reserved his English writing classrooms. They found that the difference existed between the controlled group and experimental group which was in favor of FCI programs.

5.5. Iraqi EFL Learners' Attitudes Towards FCI

Based on the data obtained from students' responses on the questionnaires and interviews, it has been determined that most learners had positive opinions of FCI, and a remarkable number of students described themselves as more motivated, self-confident, active, engaged in classroom activities thanks to FCI. There was a clear reflection of learner engagement and a better interaction among students who felt better confidence in their achievements and abilities through FCI. These characteristics, which were stated by many students who had received FCI, not only was reflected by the questionnaires and interviews but also by an improvement in their grades on the writing test. These findings align with Adedoja (2016), who found that the attitude of pre-service teachers was positively in favour of flipped instruction and FCI promoted active learning strategies and provided more opportunity for deep interaction not only with the learning materials but also with classmates and instructor due to prior knowledge of content. Similarly, they are in line with the findings of the study conducted by (Nouri, 2016), who witnessed the effect of FCI on promoting student engagement and a more active approach to learning.

The present study's findings are also consistent with those of Pierce and Fox (2012), who found that FCI influenced learners' performance positively in a pharmacy class, citing an increase in active learning strategies as the main cause. The findings are further supported by those of McLaughlin, et al. (2013), who found that FCI significantly increases student engagement and autonomy. In addition, they also align with the results of Zhang's (2015) study, which determined that participants were more motivated due to the previewing of course contents and fulfilled in terms of their affective needs via increased interaction. Finally, the findings are line with the study done by Doman and Webb (2017), who unveiled that learners in FCI sections held more positive views towards the language learning experience than learners in non FCI sections.

It was demonstrated that the FCI model produces a learning atmosphere that boosts learning prospects for English language students. The FCI approach increases more time for learners to practice, perform more activities in class, and receive immediate feedback from their instructors. Furthermore, the instructor is able to support students more effectively in a one-on-one way, which enhances the quality of lexical conventions, sentence structure, cohesion, organization and content.

CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

6.1. Presentation

This section provides a summary of the current research and clarifies the conclusions which can be drawn from this study. Finally, it offers some suggestions for future research.

6.2. The Summary of the Research

The main concern of the current study was to investigate and identify the influence of the FCI on Iraqi EFL learners' writing abilities and also to explore their beliefs towards the FCI model as well. Pre-and post-tests were administrated to 66 EFL sophomore learners divided into two groups: one as conrolled group, the other one as experimetal group. Also, items of the questionnaire and 4 open-ended questions were employed only to the experimental group at the end of the implementation. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze the collected data. The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS, and the qualitative data was analyzed by inductive content analysis.

The findings of the research unveiled that there was no statistically significant difference found to exist between the controlled and the experimental group of Iraqi EFL learners' writing abilities before taking the FCI program which means that both groups had similar abilities to write before taking program. However, there was a statistically significant difference after taking the FCI program. The difference was in favour of

experimental group which means that learners in the experimental group outperformed learners in controlled group.

Furthermore, regarding the results of the questionnaire and interviews, learners' beliefs were positive towards the FCI approach and accordingly learners were more willingly engaged, more involved, more motivated, more independent and more autonomous in the flipped classroom instruction when compared to the traditional delivery approach.

6.3. Conclusions

Throughout recent years, technology use generally has been at the core of education, especially for linguistic instruction. The analyses of this study's findings prove that FCI improves students' writing abilities more than does a traditional method of instruction. It is obvious that the flipped classroom provide a more student-centered atmosphere which is necessary for meeting the demands of the 21st century students. The outcomes of the study have verified that learners are more involved and active during FCI compared with lecture-based instruction. According to participants' views, FCI enables them to become more motivated and more autonomous in their language acquisition. FCI allocates class duration for activities by having students preview the lesson prior class and employs various instructional strategies rather than theoretical explanation. In this manner, students have the opportunity to preview content several times to comprehend key features. In FCI, students utilize a great quantity of in-class time for practicing what they have been instructed via instructional videos. This promotes active, independent and collaborative learning in the classroom. Similarly, the teachers feel more confident and direct students without being frustrated or worried about the time aspect, which is always an issue within traditional instruction. More in-class time is created in which the teacher can give individual feedback, correct mistakes and explain misconceptions. In fact, the policy behind FCI makes it clear that flipped learning is not just about recording video-lectures. It is more than that. Classroom duration can be employed more efficiently and profitably by dealing with each student individually.

The outcomes of the study indicate that implementing FCI in writing classes is an effective way of improving Iraqi EFL learners' writing skills. There is a basic requirement for future research to be implemented in extra stages so as to consider whether similar outcomes would reappear. More research should seek to examine the impact of using the FCI on the role of class feedback and students' motivation in writing skills. The findings of the questionnaire and interviews confirm that FCI is more engaging than traditional methods, and students are more in favour of FCI, as well. This study has proven a new and effective pedagogical instruction for motivating Iraqi EFL students and enabling their independence.

6.4. Implications

This study has several implications for the future of writing instruction. The study presents a creative method that is not yet being followed in university writing classrooms in Iraq. It encourages educators to employ learner-focused approaches in which students have more chances to participate equally in the content being presented and practiced. During the FCI treatment of this study, the learners experienced growth in their class participation, which is an additional benefit of this approach.

This study also urges a reconsideration of university funds and structure to enable such a teaching method at Iraqi universities. Similarly, it suggests a more prominent and directed use of technology among Iraqi university EFL students as well as students of other disciplines. There is a necessity for more conferences and opportunities for Iraqi EFL instructors to acquire knowledge regarding FCI and similar approaches. It also encourages educators to rethink methodological instruction in their language classrooms and incorporate educational technology in all classroom instruction for a better learning environment.

6.5. Recommendations for Further Study

The following recommendations have been provided based on the outcomes of the current study:

1. This study has introduced some interesting findings regarding the effect of FCI on developing writing skills. However, it was conducted only in one department in a university. Thus, future studies might involve additional departments, more universities, or more levels of education.
2. Since this study focused on sophomore university EFL learners in an Iraqi setting, future studies might consider different levels of students and a larger number of participants to address variations in writing acquisition.
3. Since the teacher's duty in FCI approach appears to be more a facilitator and a guider for students while doing activities inside classrooms, a further study should be done for the role of giving instant feedback by the teacher on learners' attitudes and achievements in the FCI program.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I. Writing

Write a paragraph about “the use of internet in education” including: a topic sentence, at least three supporting sentences and a concluding sentence (between 100-200 words).

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Appendix II. The questionnaire

Learner' views towards the Flipped Classroom Instruction

Dear Learners,

Please show your views towards the Flipped Classroom Instruction. Please read the statements below carefully and answer them as truthfully as possible by ticking the right box. Try to answer all the questions given. Please note that all answers are anonymous. 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

Please mark the information that applies to you.

- Gender

Male	Female

- Your first language

Kurdish	Arabic	Turkish	Persian	Other:

- How long have you been studying English?

1 year	: years

Rate your view to flipped instruction in an English Writing Class from 5→1	5	4	3	2	1
1. The flipped instruction allows me to prepare for my class in advance.					
2. Through the prepared videos, I have enough time to acquire the sentence structures.					
3. I feel more confident to ask for clarifications after watching the prepared videos.					

4. I feel more confident about my learning due to the flipped instruction.					
5. The flipped instruction made it easier for me to write better					
6. My writing strategies are better as I have more time to apply the learning in class.					
7. I feel I am more in charge of my learning through the flipped instruction.					
8. I feel that the flipped instruction has not helped me at all.					
9. I understand more when the teacher explains in class.					
10. I like to write in class to get instant feedback from my teacher.					

Appendix III. English Version of the Interviews

1. What do you think about the use of the flipped classroom instruction?
2. Did the Flipped Instruction improve your ability to write in English or did it cause no improvement? Explain.
3. How do you describe yourself as a participant in the FCI?
4. What are the drawbacks of the Flipped Instruction?

Appendix IV. Kurdish Version of the Interviews

1. بەرای ئێوە سوودەکانی فێرکاری ئۆنلاین (online) چین؟
2. ئایا فێرکاری ئۆنلاین(online) هۆکاربووە لەبەرەو پێش بردنی تواناکانت لە نووسینی زمانی ئینگلیزی یاخود نەبۆتە هۆکاری هیچ بەرەوپێش چوونێك؟ روونی بکەرەوە
3. وەکو قوتابیەکی بەژداربوو لە پۆلی فێرکاری ئۆنلاین(online) چۆن پێناسەی خۆت دەکەی؟
4. ئەوهۆکارانە چین کەوادەکەن فێرکاری ئۆنلاین(online) کەمتر پشتی پێ ببەسترێ؟

Appendix V. Paragraph Writing Rubric Evaluation

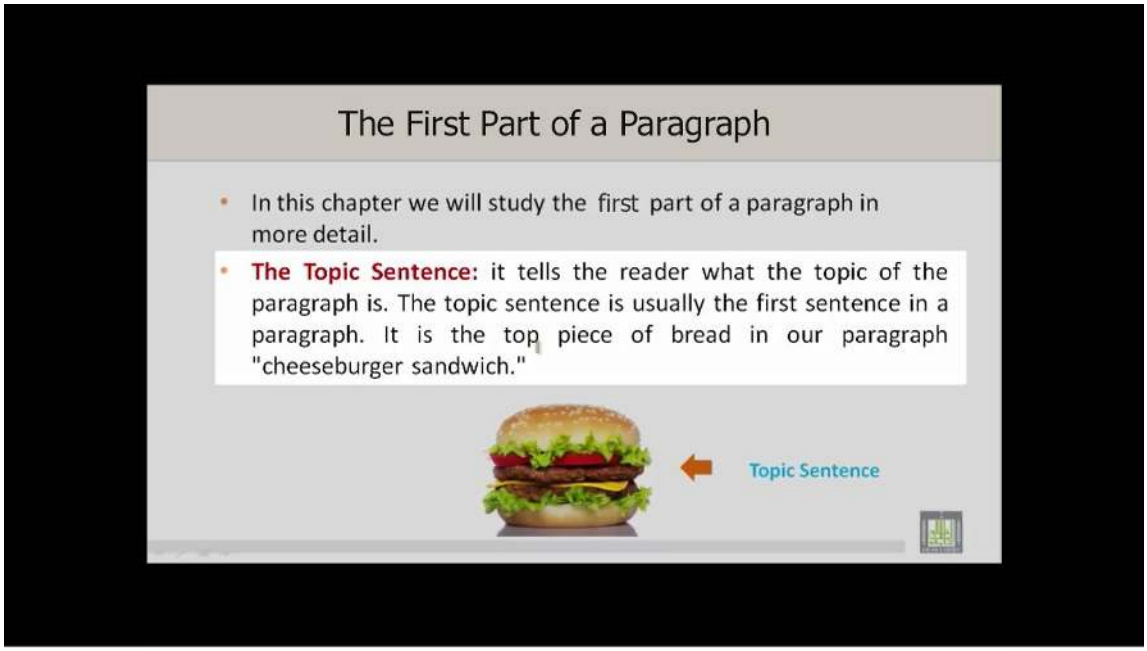
Point Value	2 points	1 points	0.5 points	0 points
Topic Sentence	Interesting, original topic sentence, reflecting thought and insight; focused on one interesting main idea.	Clearly stated topic sentence presents one main idea.	Acceptable topic sentence presents one idea.	Missing, invalid, or inappropriate topic sentence; main idea is missing.
Supporting Details	Interesting, concrete and descriptive examples and details with explanations that relate to the topic	Examples and details relate to the topic and some explanation is included.	Sufficient number of examples and details that relate to the topic.	Insufficient, vague, or undeveloped examples.
Organization and Transitions	Thoughtful, logical progression of supporting examples; Mature transitions between ideas.	Details are arranged in a logical progression; appropriate transitions.	Acceptable arrangement of examples; transitions may be weak.	No discernible pattern of organization; Unrelated details; no transitions.
Language use	Accurate use of grammar	Adequate use of grammar/some mistakes in sentences	Limited use of grammar, many errors in use	Poor use of grammar, reader can't understand
Mechanics	Consistent standard English usage, spelling, and punctuation. No errors.	Some errors, but none major, in usage, spelling, or punctuation. (1-2)	A few errors in usage, spelling, or punctuation (3-4)	Distracting errors in usage, spelling, or punctuation

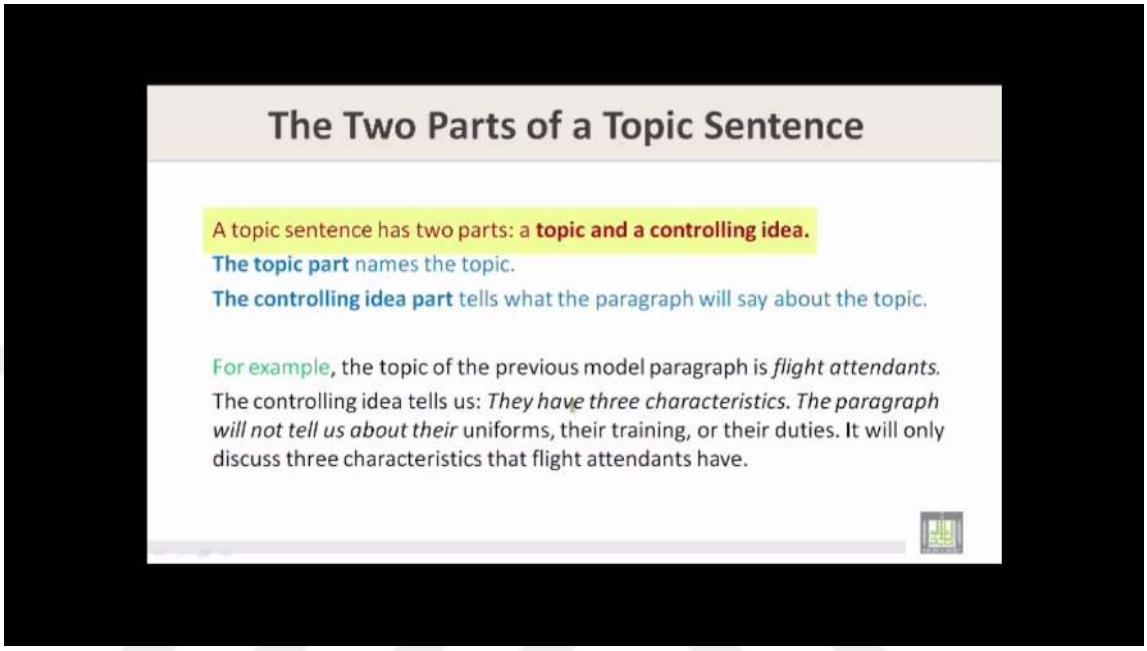
Appendix VI. Syllabus and a Sample Video

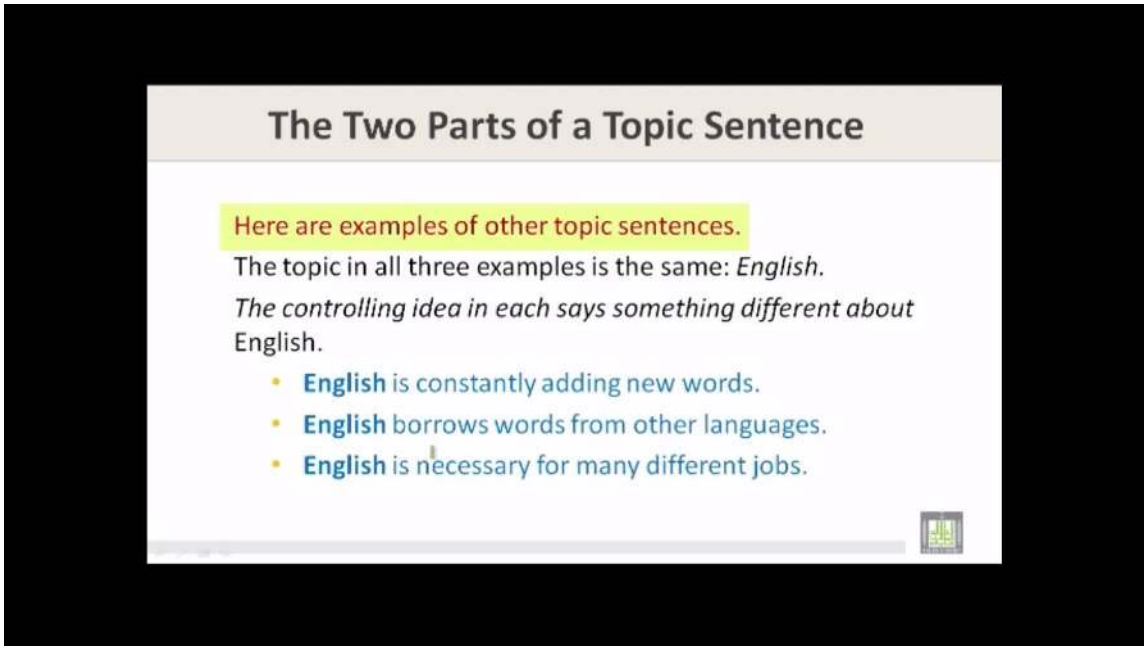
Syllabus	
Lesson 1	The topic sentence
Lesson 2	Activities related to the topic sentence
Lesson 3	Supporting sentences
Lesson 4	Facts vs opinions
Lesson 5	Activities related to facts and opinions
Lesson 6	Concluding sentence
Lesson 7	Activities related to topic, supporting and concluding sentences
Lesson 8	Unity and coherence

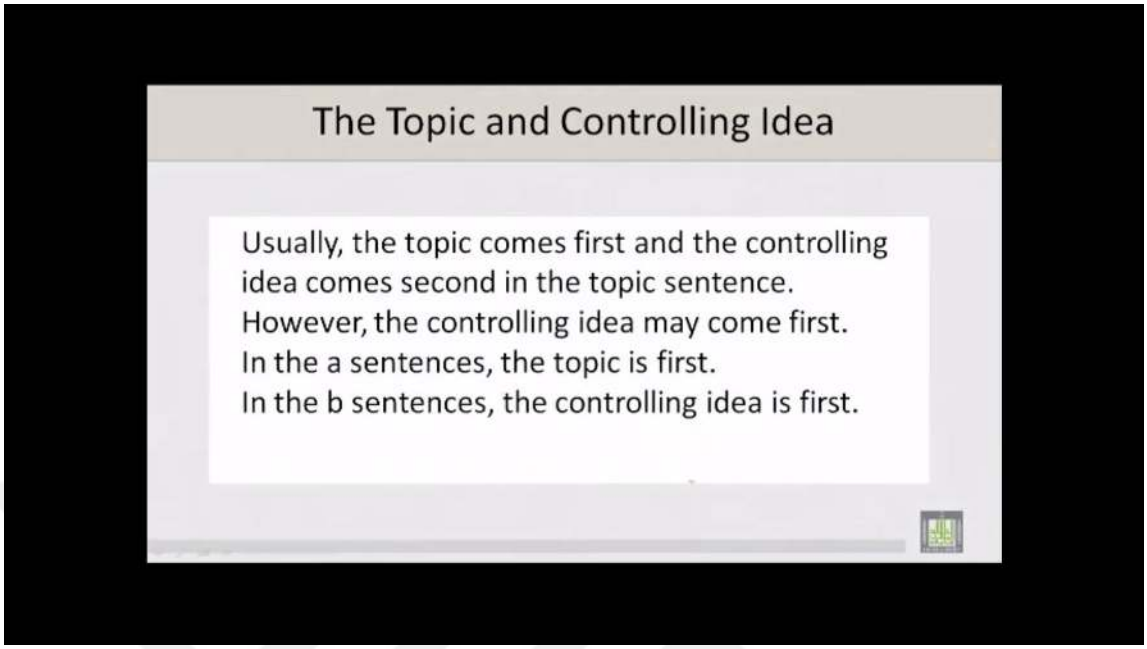
The following pictures are the sample extracts of the videos related to subject matter and activities shared :

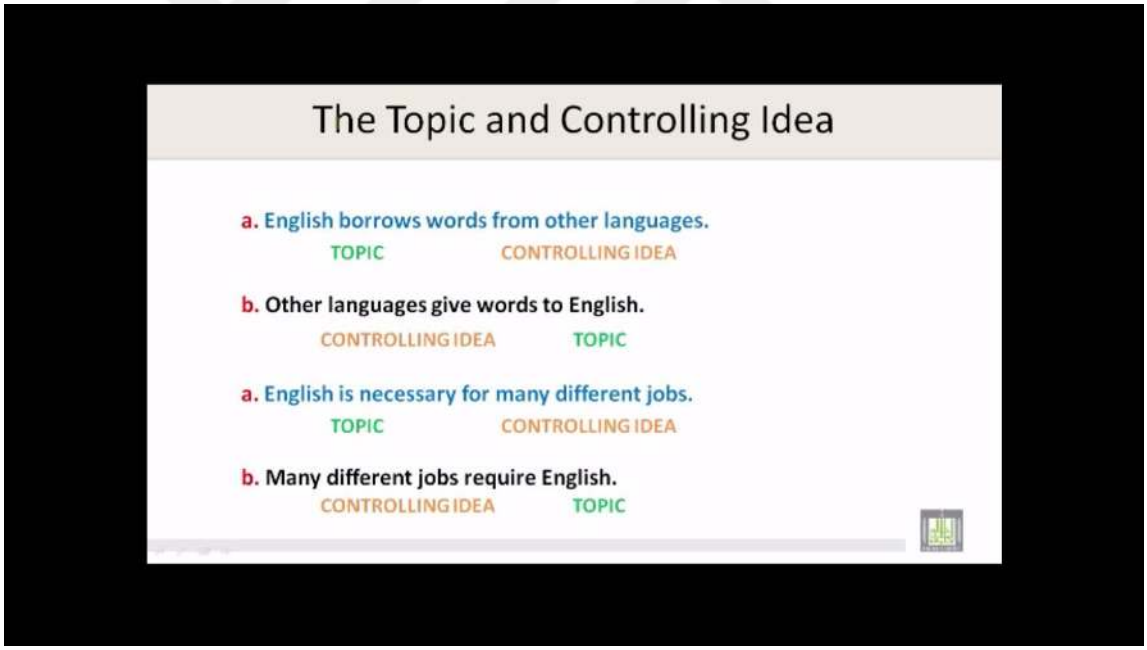
Lesson 1: The topic sentence




The Two Parts of a Topic Sentence
A topic sentence has two parts: a topic and a controlling idea.
The topic part names the topic.
The controlling idea part tells what the paragraph will say about the topic.
For example, the topic of the previous model paragraph is flight attendants.
The controlling idea tells us: They have three characteristics. The paragraph will not tell us about their uniforms, their training, or their duties. It will only discuss three characteristics that flight attendants have.


The Two Parts of a Topic Sentence
Here are examples of other topic sentences.
The topic in all three examples is the same: English.
The controlling idea in each says something different about English.
English is constantly adding new words.
English borrows words from other languages.
English is necessary for many different jobs.


The Topic and Controlling Idea
Usually, the topic comes first and the controlling idea comes second in the topic sentence.
However, the controlling idea may come first.
In the a sentences, the topic is first.
In the b sentences, the controlling idea is first.


The Topic and Controlling Idea
a. English borrows words from other languages.
TOPIC
CONTROLLING IDEA
b. Other languages give words to English.
CONTROLLING IDEA
TOPIC
a. English is necessary for many different jobs.
TOPIC
CONTROLLING IDEA
b. Many different jobs require English.
CONTROLLING IDEA
TOPIC

the upcoming video is about the mistakes that students usually do while trying to make a good topic sentence and how to solve them.

let's watch

Paragraph Structure

1. Four out of five teenagers in Canada have cell phones.
2. Driving is very stressful.
3. How I learned to be more patient.
4. In this paragraph, I would like to discuss the importance of food in Italian culture.

Paragraph Structure

1. Four out of five teenagers in Canada have cell phones. Too narrow
2. Driving is very stressful. Too broad
3. How I learned to be more patient. Incomplete Sentence
4. In this paragraph, I would like to discuss the importance of food in Italian culture. Don't announce your topic

Paragraph Structure:

1. Cell phones should be banned from classrooms for several reasons.
2. Driving on the highway in heavy traffic is stressful for many motorists.
3. Having a child taught me the importance of being parent.
4. Food is an essential part of Italian culture

CURRICULUM VITAE

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