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## **On the Development of a Tentative Model of a Flipped Classroom Instruction and Its Effect on Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners' General IELTS Writing\***

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### **Abstract**

Flipped learning is an instructional approach that underlines the efficient use of classroom time by shifting the conventional activities of learners and educators in and out of the class. In flipped learning, students' roles as passive listeners change to active participants in classroom activities. The present study was designed to build a model of flipped classroom instruction (FCI) for the general IELTS writing. Additionally, this research intended to examine if there is a meaningful difference between the students' general IELTS writing scores in the flipped class and those in the conventional class. An FCI model was carefully developed based on the thematic analysis of the previous flipped classroom studies about writing. Then it was operationally explained for a general IELTS writing class. The participants of the study consisted of 100 male and female Iranian EFL learners. Fifty learners were randomly selected to experience FCI and the other fifty learners received conventional classroom instruction. The findings revealed that the learners in the flipped classes, on average, acquired higher scores than the learners in conventional classes.

**Keywords:** Flipped Classroom Instruction, Flipped Classroom Model, General IELTS Writing.

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## Introduction

Flipped classroom instruction (FCI) is regarded as a learning approach that highlights the efficient use of class period by shifting the conventional activities of learners and educators in and out of the class. According to Muldrow (2013), FCI is an instructional approach in which educators switch direct learning out of the class space and move it to the personal space at home and utilize the class time to engage students in more dynamic and student-centered activities. It has been stated that, in practice, flipped classrooms do not look exactly alike (Egbert, Herman, & Lee, 2015; Hung, 2015; Muldrow, 2013). In other words, there are still no clear instructions to illustrate what a flipped classroom ought to look like (Egbert et al., 2015, p. 3), and as a result there can be as many realizations of the FCI as there are educators conducting it (Basal, 2015). Although FCI is a general classroom instruction that can be adapted to any educational course, for educators who are not essentially familiar with this classroom instruction, a ready-to-conduct procedure is greatly more favored (Law & Baer, 2017). Luo et al. (2017) state that the conduction of the FCI is still too hard for teachers due to the deficiency of practical models for particular courses. Concerning the aforementioned gaps about the flipped classroom studies, the current research intends to develop a practical model of a FCI for a writing class and implement it for the general IELTS writing class to analyze its efficacy and to compare the results with those obtained from a conventional IELTS writing classroom. In particular, the present research seeks to answer the following questions.

1. What are the components of an FCI model for Iranian learners' General IELTS writing course?
2. Are there any meaningful differences between the general IELTS writing scores of Iranian intermediate English learners in the flipped foreign language classrooms and in the conventional foreign language classrooms?

## Literature Review

In a typical flipped classroom, learners are greatly active in individualized and collaborative student-centered tasks, thus the

sustaining theories of the FCI are originated in core view of active learning (Hung, 2015). In addition, according to Ahmed (2016), FCI is in line with the interactional theory since in a flipped classroom, students interact with each other and teacher to attain a comprehension of a lesson. Additionally, concerning language teaching approaches, the FCI principles are consistent with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Ahmed, 2016), that is as well supported by Vygotsky's social constructivism since according to Richards and Rodgers' (2014) explanation of this theory, using FCI, learning occurs through scaffolding in a setting in which there is an communication among members (learners and educators), tools (books, videos, etc.) and planned tasks. In addition, based on Warschauer (2005), the educational videos and online activities utilized in the FCI are instances of Technology Assisted Language Learning (TALL).

Some of the earlier empirical researches pertinent to the current study are as follows. Farah (2014) compared writing scores of twelfth grade Emirati learners in a conventional and a flipped writing classroom during a fifteen-week course. Her findings showed that the learners who received FCI, performed significantly better than the learners who experienced the conventional classroom instruction. Leis, Tohei, and Cooke (2015) compared the impact of FCI and conventional classroom instruction on the English composition performance for 22 Japanese learners (11 learners in the flipped class and 11 learners in the conventional class). The findings revealed that the learners who were receiving the FCI generated a significantly greater number of vocabularies in their essays. Besides, the students who experienced the FCI made significantly higher improvements in terms of their writing proficiency. Afrilyasanti et al., (2016) investigated the efficacy of FCI on the writing proficiency of 62 EFL Indonesian learners at a secondary school. Their findings revealed that the FCI group significantly outperformed the control group that received conventional classroom instruction. Ahmed (2016) examined the impact of the FCI on the writing proficiency of 30 EFL Saudi Arabian learners in a flipped classroom and 30 ones in a conventional class. The flipped classroom members significantly outperformed the conventional classroom

members. Moreover, the students who received FCI held positive perceptions towards the FCI. Ekmekci (2017) compared the impact of FCI and conventional lecture-based classroom instruction based on the participants' writing performance. There were 23 learners in a flipped class and 20 learners in a conventional class. The outcomes indicated that the performance of the learners in the flipped class was significantly better than the learners in the conventional class. In addition, most of the participants in the flipped class had positive perceptions towards the FCI.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

The sample pool of the study consists of 150 male and female Iranian intermediate EFL learners aging from 18 to 32 participating in Parto, Abrar, and Kanun language institutes in Ahvaz, Iran. All of the learners had recently passed Touchstone 4 in one of the above language institutes. Thus, they were roughly at the intermediate level of general English proficiency since among Touchstone series, Touchstone 4 is labeled as the intermediate level of general English proficiency by definition of the book. The writing section of an Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was conducted to find homogeneous participants in terms of writing proficiency. From the total number, 100 learners whose scores fall one standard deviation less or more the mean were selected as the participants of this research. Then they were randomly placed into two groups, one as the experimental ( $n = 50$ ) and the other one as the control group ( $n = 50$ ).

Then members of each group were randomly divided into 5 classes. To improve the dependability and reliability of the data collection and data analysis procedure in this study, a research team was formed to cooperate in conducting these procedures. The research team included the researcher and two IELTS teachers. The researcher is a Ph.D. student majored in TEFL with 15-year experience of teaching in general English classes, 2-year experience of teaching in general IELTS classes in Parto, Abrar, and Kanun institutes in Ahvaz, and 3-year experience of teaching seventh, eighth, and ninth grades in the public schools of

Ahvaz. The first IELTS teacher is majored in TEFL with a master degree and 18-year experience of teaching in general English classes and 12-year experience of teaching in academic and general IELTS classes in Parto, Abrar, and Kanun institutes in Ahvaz. He had an average score of 8.5 in academic IELTS. The second IELTS teacher is also majored in TEFL with a master degree and 14-year experience of teaching in general English classes and 9-year experience of teaching in academic and general IELTS classes in Parto, Abrar, and Kanun institutes in Ahvaz. He also had an average score of 8.5 in academic IELTS. Both of the IELTS teachers had already been informed about the objectives and procedure of the study.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The first question of the present research attempted to find out the components of the FCI model for a general IELTS writing course. For this purpose, initially the FCI studies were gathered through Google Scholar. Among them, 25 studies were generally about the impact of the FCI on learners' writing. Then an inductive thematic analysis of the 25 flipped writing classroom (hereafter FWC) studies was administered to find the common themes in the procedure of the flipped classroom instruction in these studies. In this relation, we followed six-step framework of the thematic analysis offered by Braun and Clarke (2006). This is arguably the most influential approach since it provides a plain and practical framework for conducting thematic analyses (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). These steps include *becoming familiar with the data*, *generating initial codes*, *searching for themes*, *reviewing themes*, *defining themes*, *writing up*. The first step is *becoming familiar with the data*. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), it's essential to gain an adequate view of all the gathered data prior to analyzing single items. Thus, for this step, all of the FWC studies were scrutinized by the research team to get to know the data. The second step is *generating initial codes*. Coding refers to underlining parts of a text, typically phrases or sentences, and synthesizing them into brief labels or *codes* that signify their content (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In order to come up with initial codes, the research team went over the data and highlighted the sections of the texts that point to a particular component of the

flipped classroom administration. The third step is *searching for themes*. Themes are more general than codes. Researchers often merge some codes into a single theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). At this point, we looked over the initial codes we have already generated. Then we identified some patterns among them and finally developed some themes. The next step is *reviewing themes*. At this time, researchers need to ensure that their themes are appropriate and true manifestations of the data. They also need to remove any contradictions or overlap among the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Concerning these recommendations, the research team reviewed and compared their themes against the data to see whether they have missed anything and if the themes really present in the data, etc. Following that, a few changes were made to refine the themes. The fifth step is *defining themes*. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), in order to define themes, we need to elaborate on what is meant by each theme and develop a brief and simply comprehensible label for each one. Thus, for this step, the research team elaborated each theme and then they consulted to determine a concise and comprehensible label for each theme. The final step is *writing up*. Based on Braun and Clarke (2006), writing up a thematic analysis requires explaining the way we collected the data and the way we implemented the thematic analysis. Concerning these guidelines for the final step, first the procedure of the data collection and data analysis were reported in the method section of the study and the emergent themes were reported in the results section of the study. Then some examples from the data concerning the occurrence of each theme were presented and discussed. Following that, the themes were categorized and arranged into a model based on the logical order they occurred in the FWC studies. Finally, the operational implementation of each component for the general IELTS writing course was elaborated to provide answer for the first question of this study.

In this study, there were two independent variables called *flipped classroom instruction* and *conventional classroom instruction*. There was also a dependent variable called *general IELTS writing performance*. All of the learners in both groups were required to take a

general IELTS Cambridge writing test as a pretest to measure their writing performance. The teaching materials for both experimental and control group were based on the book *IELTS General Writing Task Masterclass*. This book helps IELTS candidates to get ready for the writing section of the general IELTS. The book contains 6 lessons. The materials of the lesson 1 and 2 are related to different types of letter writing that are typically involved in IELTS task 1 and the materials of the lesson 3 to 6 are about various types of essays that are commonly included in IELTS task 2. A period of 20-session instruction was assigned for both groups. The number of sessions was previously agreed on based on the requirement of the course and book by the IELTS teachers from the research team. Session 1 to 18, for both groups, lasted 90 minutes which is a typical classroom time and during this period, all of the 9 lessons of the book were taught by the teacher for both groups. Each lesson of the book was covered during three sessions, but in different ways for each group. In general, the procedure of the FCI is the reverse of that of a typical conventional classroom (Sharpley, et al., 2014). Concerning this, in the conventional classes, the teaching materials were presented in the class and the assignments were given to be done at home. On the other hand, in the flipped classrooms the teaching materials were presented to learners through the instructional videos to be worked on at home and the assignments were given to the learners in the classroom. The graphical model of the FCI in this study is presented and elaborated in the result and discussion section of this study. In the final session of the course, the learners in both groups were given a Cambridge test of IELTS writing. This test served as the posttest to gauge the participants' writing ability improvement. The final session for both groups was 60 minutes since it is the required time for administering writing section of the general IELTS.

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

As stated in the data collection procedure, to provide answer for the first question of this research, an inductive thematic analysis of the flipped writing classroom articles was conducted based on the six-step framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). It has been suggested that in thematic analysis, data collection and analysis procedures run parallel (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thus, the details provided in the previous section account for both data collection and analysis procedures for the first research question of this study. To provide an answer for the second question of the study, the two groups' performance in pretest and posttest were compared via two sets of independent t-tests using SPSS version 21.

## Results and Discussion

### Qualitative Results and Discussion

As previously stated, to answer the first research question, an inductive thematic analysis of the flipped writing classroom articles was conducted based on the six-step framework offered by Braun and Clarke (2006). As the result, the following themes were emerged: *determining objectives, preparing contents, orienting students, pre-class activities, in-class activities, formative evaluation, and summative evaluation*. The frequency and percentage of each theme are stated in the following table.

Table 1

*Common Themes in Flipped Writing Classroom Studies*

Emergent Themes	Frequency	Percentage
1. determining objectives	23	92 %
2. preparing contents	25	100 %
3. orienting students	20	80 %
4. pre-class activities	25	100 %
5. in-class activities	25	100 %
6. formative evaluation	22	88 %
7. summative evaluation	25	100 %



Most of the FWC studies (92 %) determined and specified the objectives before the administration of the FCI. Some quotes in this relation are stated below.

*The program objectives were determined and listed before the administration of the flipped classroom.*

*The learning objectives were facilitating students' understanding of the functional writing skills that cover writing business reports & proposals, writing business emails, writing agenda & minutes, ...*

The above statements imply that determining objectives is a prerequisite step before the application of the flipped classroom since it helps us to recognize what we want learners to learn and master and what results we desire to gain at the end of the program. Only by setting clear goals can we decide what is appropriate for the FCI and what is not (Liu, 2017). Holmes et al. (2015) asserts that generating and communicating the learning goals will assist us to organize our lessons and identify what we want our learners to achieve inside and outside the class.

Moreover, all of the FWC studies (100 %) prepared and provided the required content before the administration of the flipped writing class. Some statements in this regard are mentioned below.

*The author prepared ten digital videos on a variety of topics at the beginning of the semester.*

*By assigning the videos to be watched as homework, the teacher intends to situate the content of the writing lesson in the learners' world.*

The main reason for preparing content for students to study and watch at home before coming to classroom is due to the FCI view which offers a shift from a teacher-centered to learner-centered approach by providing content outside the classroom and concentrating on collaborative and meaning-making activities inside the classroom (Lambert, 2013).

Another common theme that was found in the FWC studies was *students orientation*. This procedure was implemented and reported in majority of the FWS studies (80 %). Some quotes concerning this theme are as follows.

*The experimental groups were familiarized with flipped techniques through a 15- minute orientation period before the administration of the flipped classroom.*

*The researcher explained the instructional technique that would be applied during the flipped classroom.*

The above statements indicate that an orientation session needs to be conducted prior to the administration of the FCI to inform learners about the objectives and procedure of the FCI course since most of students are not familiar with this type of instruction. As mentioned above, most of the FWC studies conducted a session or part of a session for this purpose (e.g. Ekmekci, 2017; Sohrabi & Mohammadi, 2017; Soltanpour & Valizadeh, 2018). However, some of the studies did not include the orientation session as part of their procedure (e.g. Abdulrahman, et al., 2017; Abedi, Namaziandost, & Akbari, 2019; Lou & Li, 2018). This can be considered as a gap in those studies. According to Rotellar et al. (2016), an orientation session needs to be conducted to provide students with adequate guidance so that they understand exactly what they need to know or be able to do before they come to class.

The next common theme was pre-class phase that was mentioned and applied in all of the FWC studies (100 %). Some statements in this regard are stated below.

*Before class, learners watch videos with their own pace and gain basic knowledge.*

*Before coming to class, learners watch recorded clips on online platforms or stored videos in their digital devices as an endeavor to explore knowledge.*

In pre-class phase learners obtain the basic knowledge through video lessons and pamphlets. This saves time for more interaction and engagement that promote learning with teacher guidance and assistance

inside the class (Bergmann & Sams, 2014). Besides, additional in-class period is generated in which the educator can provide individual feedback, correct errors and misunderstandings (Qader & Arslan, 2019).

Following the pre-class component, the next common theme was in-class phase. This phase was also stated and implemented in all of the FWC studies (100 %). Some statements in this relation are as follows.

*During class time learners engaged in discussions, problem solving activities, and group work*

*In the classroom, the students engaged in activities such as the analysis of the prepared text, text completion, text correction....,*

In the in-class phase, the teacher is supposed to use the saved time as a chance to have students engaged more profoundly in the procedure of learning the major concepts of the lesson and to increase their learning chances in the class (Ahmad, 2016). In this relation, many researchers recommend using classroom time to work on tasks that generate a learning context of group work and cooperation with peers (e.g. Kim, Khera and Getman, 2014; Liu, 2017; Sharples, et al., 2014). Collaboration and group activities offer different ways for learners to assist and support one another, which in turn can aid them to appreciate what they are learning and result in more profound comprehension (Sharples, et al., 2014). Kim, Khera and Getman (2014) assert that in a flipped classroom the core part of learning is engaging learners in the environment of cooperation and interactions among them.

The subsequent common theme was *formative evaluation* of the students' comprehension and progress that was explicitly or implicitly stated and implemented in most of the FWC studies (88 %). Some quotes concerning this theme are stated below.

*Teacher got immediate online formative feedback regarding the learner's performance*

*The teacher checked students' understanding through a number of comprehension questions.*

The above statements imply that formative evaluation is an important part of FCI and it can be implemented at different stages of the treatment to evaluate students' comprehension and progress. Rotellar and Cain (2016) stated that teachers can provide formative assessment opportunities for students to perceive what they know and do not know.

The final common theme was *summative evaluation* of students' achievement that was explicitly stated or implied and implemented in all of the FWC studies (100 %). Some statements in this regard are as follows.

*A summative assessment was used to evaluate the students' achievement.*

*The final writing exam was considered as the summative evaluation of students' achievement.*

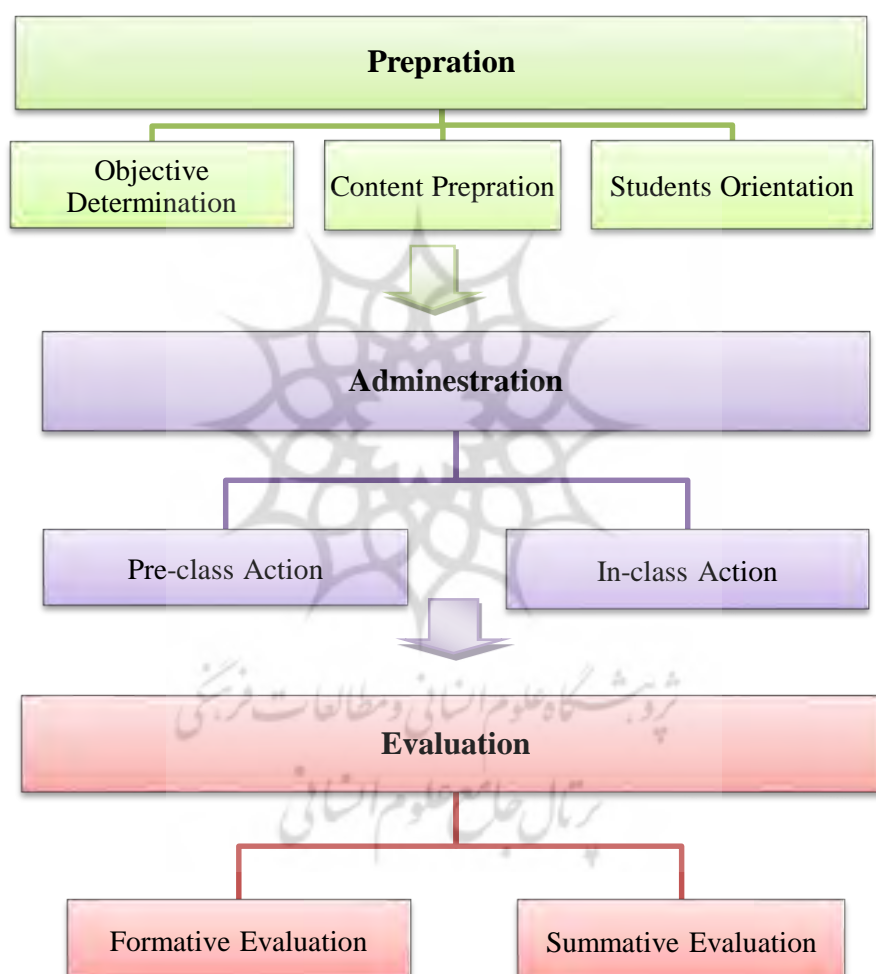
The above statements indicate that a summative assessment is essential for the evaluation of students' understanding and achievement in a flipped writing classroom. According to Rotellar, et al. (2016) summative assessments are required to determine and document achieved course competencies. Furthermore, Rotellar, et al. (2016) state that for a flipped classroom the summative assessment usually involve learning assessments and further application of skills or knowledge.

In order to come up with a synthesized model of the flipped writing classroom, the above-mentioned themes were categorized and arranged based on the logical order they occur during the FCI. The first three themes including *objective determination*, *content preparation*, and *student orientation* are all prerequisite phases that were initially applied in the FWC studies to *prepare* the conditions for the administration of the FCI. As a result, they were categorized as the sub-parts of a more general component named *preparation*. In other words, *objective determination*, *content preparation*, and *student orientation* were determined to be the sub-parts of *preparation* component in the model. The next two common themes including *pre-class activities* and *in-class activities* were parts of the implementation phase of the flipped

classroom in all of the FWC studies. Thus, they were determined to be the sub-components of the *implementation* component in the model. Finally, the last two themes including *formative evaluation* and *summative evaluation* were determined to be the sub-parts of the *evaluation* component in the model since they both share the common aspect of evaluation. Below, the graphical representation of the derived FCI model is presented and then its practical application for the general IELTS writing class is elaborated.

Figure 1

*Components of the Flipped Classroom Instruction (FCI) Model*



**Preparation.** As previously concluded and indicated above, the first component of the FCI model is preparation. This phase involves three parts named *objective determination*, *content preparation*, and *student orientation*. The practical application of the sub-parts of *preparation* component are elaborated and justified below.

**Objectives Determination.** Concerning flipped classroom objectives, Holmes et al.'s (2015) recommend that learning objectives for activities that students are supposed to do before and during class should be determined according to the requirements of a specific course. Since in this study the course was general IELTS writing, the objective of the pre-class activities was getting students familiar with the specific contents they need to learn about task 1 and task 2 of the general IELTS writing, through video lessons. Concerning in-class activities, the main objective was providing the opportunity of teacher-to-student and peer-to-peer communications where students can gain immediate feedback with their pre-acquired lessons, class exercises, and the writing tasks. The specific contents for the videos, class exercises and writing tasks were determined based on the book *IELTS General Writing Task Masterclass*, which was assigned as the course book for both control and experimental group in this study.

**Content Preparation.** Regarding the objectives of the study, a course book and some video lectures have been provided for the participants.

The course book that was assigned for the participants in the flipped classroom was *IELTS General Writing Task Masterclass*, which was also introduced for the conventional classroom since this research aims to compare the effect of two different approaches of teaching writing on the participants' writing outcomes, not the effect of different types of materials on the participants' writing performance. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, this book helps IELTS candidates to get ready for the writing section of the general IELTS and it is confirmed and recommended on the British Council website. The book contains 6 lessons. The materials of the lessons 1 and 2 are related to general

IELTS writing task 1 and lessons 3 to 6 include materials pertinent to general IELTS writing task 2.

The video lectures were made by the researcher based on the course objectives and contents of each lesson of the course book that was introduced above. For each lesson of the book, six short videos were made. Regarding Liu's (2017) recommendation, the videos were held between 5 to 10 minutes. In total, 36 videos were made. Out of this number, 12 videos were about general IELTS writing task 1 (based on the contents of the lesson 1 and 2 of the book) and 24 videos were about general IELTS writing task 2 (based on the materials of the lesson 3 to 6 of the book). In order to ensure the video lessons cover the general IELTS writing tasks 1 and 2 goals, the two IELTS teachers from the research team reviewed and commented on the videos several times. Following their comments, some modifications were made to improve them. Then the video lessons were uploaded onto the *Whats App* platform. The platform was also used for teacher-to-student and peer-to-peer communications.

***Students Orientation.*** To introduce the notion of the FCI to the learners and explain the goals and basic ideas, the educator held an introductory session during the first week of the course. Furthermore, students received some guidelines on how to utilize the educational videos and what they are supposed to do in the classroom. According to Bergman and Sams (2012), educators should identify the objectives of the FCI to learners in advance. They need to discuss benefits and challenges of the FCI directly so that learners can perceive the significance of this approach.

***Administration.*** As formerly concluded and shown in the model above, the second component of the FCI is administration. This component consists of two parts: pre-class action and in-class action. Below the practical application of the sub-components is elaborated.

***Pre-class Action.*** In this phase, students were asked to watch the recorded lectures which were designated for the next session to gain the basic material prior to coming class. They were also required to take notes on the videos so that they would be ready to discuss the videos'

contents and answer any questions regarding them during the class. Online videos offer great chances for learners to learn at their own individual speed, time, and level of understanding. Additionally, they assist learners with different learning styles (Danker, 2015; Farah, 2014; Kim et al., 2014). According to Bergman and Sams (2012), online videos allow learning to become personalized since learners can pause the videos, slow them down, speed them up, and watch them as many times as they wish.

***In-class Action.*** Following Rapoport's (2013) recommendation, the instructor used the first 15 minutes of the class time to respond to questions learners had about the content of the video lessons in each session. In this relation, some mini-lessons were provided. Mini-lessons were on the basis of individual learners' or group's questions. When several learners had a similar question about a specific issue, the educator concisely explained that issue. The rest period of the class was spent on the exercises and main writing tasks of the book with the teacher's observation and feedback. Furthermore, considering Liu's (2017) suggestion, students were allowed to decide to end a task individually or collaboratively based on the complexity of the task. In the meantime, the teacher was observing students attentively to offer timely support. In case there were similar difficulties, the teacher explained those problems in the classroom publically and when there were specific problems, the teacher provided individual guidance.

***Evaluation.*** The last component of the model is *evaluation*. This component consists of two parts: *formative evaluation* and *summative evaluation*. The practical application of this the sub-components are explained below.

***Formative Evaluation.*** Following Sainani's (2013) recommendation, students' comprehension and progress were evaluated through formative assessments. The formative assessments were frequently done by checking students' comprehension of recorded videos and performance on class activities and they were provided with immediate feedbacks. According to Sainani (2013), recurrent formative



assessments can offer appropriate feedback, persuade regular study habits, and avoid learners from getting cram for final tests.

**Summative Evaluation.** Based on Rotellar et al.'s (2016) suggestion, the summative evaluation was administered at the end of the course period in accordance with the course objectives. Rotellar, et al. (2016) state that summative assessments are significant not only to instructors, but for learners who may want general feedback on their comprehension of the lessons.

### Quantitative Results and Discussion

To answer the second question of this study, scores of the two groups in pretest and posttest were compared using descriptive statistics and two independent t-tests. The means and standard deviations for the pretest scores are given in Table 2.

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Performance in Pretest*

Group Statistics				
group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
experimental group	50	5.19	.435	.342
control group	50	5.25	.669	.394

According to Table 2, the mean score of the control group (5.25) was a little greater than the mean score of the experimental group (5.19) and the standard deviation of the two groups' scores was also a bit different. It can be concluded that the mean scores of the two groups were not very different before starting the treatment. To see if the difference between the two groups' mean scores was significant, an independent t-test was administered. The findings are given in Table 3.

Table 3

*Results of Independent T-Test for Pretest*

Independent T-Test	
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	T-test for Equality of Means

	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lo	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.678	.326	-1.16	76	.252	-.070	.052	-1.128	.238
Equal variances not assumed			-1.16	75.95	.252	-.070	.052	-1.139	.259

As indicated in Table 3, there was not a significant difference between the two groups' mean score (Sig = .252,  $p > 0.05$ ). This indicates that the participants in the experimental and control group were roughly at the same level of writing proficiency before receiving treatments.

Then the two groups' scores from the general IELTS writing posttest were statistically compared. The pertinent results are given in the following table.

Table 4  
*Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Performance in Posttest*

Group Statistics				
group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
experimental group	50	7.23	.706	.355
control group	50	6.01	.917	.221

According to Table 4, the mean score of the experimental group (28.800) was greater than that of the control group (23.265) and the standard deviation of the two groups' scores were not very different. To see if the difference between the two groups was significant, an

independent t-test was administered. The findings are shown in Table 5.

Table 5  
*Results of Independent T-Test for Posttest*

Independent T-Test		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means					
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.205	.658	6.48	78	.000	1.12	.211	1.146	3.923
Equal variances not assumed			6.48	76.8	.000	1.12	.211	1.146	3.923

Table 5 indicates a significant difference (sig=.000) between the mean scores of participants in the experimental and control group at the level of 0.05. This means learners in the experimental group performed better than the ones in the control group due to the treatment they experienced.

**Discussion of the Quantitative Results.** The second question of this study sought to investigate whether there is any meaningful difference between the general IELTS writing scores of Iranian intermediate English learners in the flipped foreign language classrooms and in the conventional foreign language classrooms. The outcomes of independent t-test for the posttest demonstrated a significant difference between participants' general IELTS writing performance in the experimental and control group. This finding supports the results from

Ekmekci (2017) who examined the effect of FCI on students' foreign language writing ability. The results revealed that there was a statistically meaningful difference between the learners' scores in experimental and control group concerning their writing performance. The findings of the study also indicated that the great majority of the students in the experimental group held positive perception toward FCI. Unlike the current study the level of participants' proficiency in Ekmekci's (2017) study was pre-intermediate. The outcomes of the current research are also supported by Mireille's (2014) study which investigated the effect of a FCI on the writing scores of the twelfth grade learners and identified their attitudes toward the FCI in an EFL writing context. The Findings showed learners in the experimental group performed significantly better than the learners in the control group. Moreover, learners' attitudes toward the FCI proved to be equally favorable. Unlike the current study the control group in Mireille's (2014) study received the teaching material in a learner-centered class. In the current study the control group received a conventional instruction.

### **Conclusion and Implications**

All in all, it can be concluded that the application of FCI is a proper instructional design for teaching English writing in general and general IELTS writing in particular. It is in accordance with modern views of learner-centered active learning (Hung, 2015) and results in to positive outcomes. It was also evident from the results and the procedure of FCI administration that learning through FCI encourages positive activity engagement and efficient interactions of instructor-to-student and peer-to-peer.

The model of the FCI, as well as its implementation procedure presented in this study, provides step-to-step guidelines for the teachers in teaching IELTS writing to their learners. On the whole, this study provides some insights for teachers in administrating FCI in their own EFL classes. The outcomes of this study can also be useful for the learners who have been through the dull and teacher-centered English lessons and want to acquire English in an up to date and active setting.

Learners can also follow the requirements of the FCI to improve their own personalized learning. They can even watch some videos related to their future lessons, which is one of the requirements of flipped learning, to be prepared for their non-flipped classrooms. Moreover, the language institutes can implement FCI for their language courses to give opportunities to students to learn the basic knowledge at their own speed at home and provide more chances for students' engagement and collaboration in the classroom. By applying the FCI as a modern means of writing training, they can improve learners' active learning and self-autonomy in this regard. Furthermore, researchers can employ the model of the FCI presented in this study in other studies related to IELTS, writing, and even other language skills. They can even administer the model with a few changes to analyze its effectiveness in other subjects and fields.



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