

EFFECTIVENESS OF HYBRID-FLIPPED CLASSROOM IN IMPROVING EFL LEARNERS' ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING SKILL

Ali Roohani^a and Hanieh Shafiee Rad^b

(^aroohani.ali@gmail.com; ^bhaniyeshafieerad@gmail.com)

Shahrekord University

Shahrekord, Rahbar Bolvar, Shahrekord University, Iran, 64165478

Abstract: This study investigated the effectiveness of the hybrid-flipped classroom model in improving English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) learners' argumentative writing skill. Also, it examined the students' perceptions on the effectiveness of the model as a means of learning argumentative writing skill. To these ends, a sample of 50 EFL learners from a language institute was selected after taking a language placement test, and the learners were assigned to control (conventional) and experimental (hybrid-flipped) groups. To collect the data, pretest and posttest argumentative essays as well as semi-structured interviews were used. ANCOVA on the writing scores in the pretest and posttest phase showed that using the hybrid-flipped instruction had a significant effect on the learners' argumentative writing performance. Moreover, thematic analysis on the qualitative interview data revealed several benefits of the hybrid-flipped method such as learner-teacher and learner-to-learner interaction, increased learners' responsibility, easy makeup for learners' absence, and teacher assistance. The findings suggest the effectiveness of hybrid-flipped method for teaching L2 writing.

Keywords: EFL learners, hybrid-flipped classroom, L2 learning, writing

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v33i2/349-366>

Writing is a central part of professional and social pursuits for many students. It allows students to express themselves, perform key assignments, develop essential critical thinking skills, and enhance their cognitive functioning (Fan & Chen, 2021). That being the case, argumentative writing is very important for students, particularly for second/foreign language (L2) students. It enables and requires them to explain their own ideas in academically suitable patterns and offer persuasive evidence to convince their readers with their viewpoints (Awada & Diab, 2021; Shi et al., 2019). An argumentative essay is a genre used to convince readers and drive them to perform an action as framed by writers (Reznitskaya et al., 2012). Mastering the argumentative essay is a key skill for writing success (Ghanbari & Salari, 2022). Unfortunately, many L2 learners in foreign language contexts often encounter obstacles in the use of complex syntactic structures and argumentation in composing argumentative essays (Xu & Ding, 2014). They may face challenges with argumentative writing because of the limited time in the class, the context of the study, and the negative impression about this kind of writing (Lam et al., 2017). Therefore, it is important to look for new and different techniques and methods that can improve argumentative writing (Johnson et al., 2014). This issue has been the subject of several studies

(e.g., Awada et al., 2020; Bikowski & Vithanage, 2016; De Smet et al., 2011; Pessoa et al., 2017). One method which has been proposed to help language learners to better deal with writing skill is flipped method (Ghufron & Nurdianingsih, 2019; Shafiee Rad et al., 2021; Su Ping et al., 2019).

Flipped learning/teaching is a new teaching method in which the activities traditionally done by students outside class are transferred into the classroom session, and, conversely, almost what is traditionally done in class is done outside and before class (Fathi & Rahimi, 2020; Låg & Grøm Sæle, 2019; Shafiee Rad et al., 2021). This kind of method provides a learning situation that brings active learning into the classroom (Almasseri & AlHojailan, 2019; Kim et al., 2014), where the teacher can assess students' understandings and refine points (Fraga & Harmon, 2014; Shafiee Rad et al., 2021). It puts great importance on problem-solving and analytical skills, and provides an environment which leverages learner-centered activities and put passive content in use outside the classroom (Tecedor & Perez, 2019).

There are a number of studies showing the positive views towards the flipped method for teaching writing (e.g., Ghufron & Nurdianingsih, 2019; Mirzaei et al., 2022; Shafiee Rad et al., 2021; Su Ping et al., 2019; Wu, et al., 2019; Yang, et al., 2018; Zou & Xie, 2018). For instance, Ghufron and Nurdianingsih (2019) investigated how the use of the flipped method along with Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) worked in teaching English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) writing in the Indonesian context. A total of five EFL writing teachers and 150 students from 5 universities in East Java had participated in the study. The results showed that the flipped classroom environment fostered better communication among the students and had an effect on the attitude and motivation of the students. Moreover, Zou and Xie (2018) offered a flipped learning model through technology-enhanced just-in-time teaching and peer instruction and examined the effectiveness of this model in developing English writing learning. Two groups of upper-intermediate EFL learners participated in the study which employed two different flipped learning modes, one with the newly proposed approach and the other with the standard flipped learning approach. The outcomes showed that the proposed model outperformed the conventional model in improving the development of the learners' writing skill and motivation. The results of Su Ping et al.'s (2019) investigation into a structured flipped writing program with EFL students in a foreign university branch in Malaysia also showed positive experiences of Malaysian EFL students with the flipped method. In the same line, Shafiee Rad et al. (2021), who investigated the effectiveness of two models of the flipped method (discussion-oriented and rule-reversal) on writing skill of a sample of Iranian EFL learners, confirmed that flipped method could improve EFL learners' writing skill more than the traditional teacher-fronted and face-to-face teaching.

Nonetheless, flipped learning per se is under some criticisms (Arnold-Garza, 2014; Bergmann & Sams, 2012). Students should be responsible to learn the offline material before class so that they can apply it efficiently through interactive activities. If students do not complete their offline work before class, in-class activities will likely be meaningless or less effective (Mehring, 2016). Therefore, some educators and researchers (e.g., Harrison et al., 2016, Talley & Scherer, 2013) have integrated flipped and hybrid learning. Hybrid/blended learning offers learning opportunities to students by mixing face-to-face mode of instruction with online medium of instruction and opportunities (Singh et al, 2021). As Talley and Scherer

(2013) state, the hybrid method is intended to create a link between the activities inside (offline learning) and outside the classroom (online learning). In the hybrid-flipped method, the online learning opportunities are provided before students attend the class to reduce lecture delivery by the teacher in the classroom. Online resources are not intended to be a replacement for in-person class time; rather, they are used to build up and develop the notions and content discussed in the class (Singh et al., 2021). A hybrid-flipped classroom can be characterized by changes in the routine of the traditional learning environment by shifting face-to-face lecture time and homework practice (Harrison et al., 2016). In a hybrid-flipped classroom model, the online resources, mostly in the form of video/audio files are used before class, and traditional-type lectures by the teacher in the front of the class is decreased in this method (Talley & Scherer, 2013). It is claimed that through the hybrid-flipped classroom model, in-and-out of class activities can provide opportunities for learners to have cooperation and exchanges (Harrison et al., 2016).

While the effect of the hybrid-flipped classroom on learning has been studied in some other fields, such as engineering (e.g., Harrison et al., 2016) and psychology (Talley & Scherer, 2013), the research on the hybrid-flipped classroom is quite scanty in field of L2 learning/teaching, and, to the best knowledge of the researchers of the present study, there has been little empirical research about the effectiveness of the hybrid-flipped method regarding the outcome of EFL learners' argumentative writing, particularly in the EFL context. As Harrison et al. (2016) claim, this method can work well with the courses which need a lot of problem-solving and inquiry-based skills. That said, this study mainly looked into the effectiveness of the hybrid-flipped method for achievements in EFL learners' argumentative writing, which is one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners who need to handle difficulties in L2 writing (Hirvela, 2017; Lee & Deakin, 2016). More specifically, it investigated the effect of utilizing the hybrid-flipped method on EFL learners' argumentative writing, compared with the traditional teacher-centered instructional method. It also explored how EFL learners assessed it as a means of teaching and learning writing. This study addressed the following questions:

1. Does the implementation of the hybrid-flipped method have any significant effect on the performance of EFL learners' argumentative writing?
2. How do the EFL learners perceive the hybrid-flipped classroom as an effective means of teaching/learning writing?

METHOD

Participants

The participants of the study included 50 female learners of English who were sampled from 75 EFL learners enrolling in a language institute in Iran. The participants were studying English for 6-7 years. They were native speakers of Persian. They were studying the *American Summit 2* textbook (Saslow & Ascher, 2012), which target upper-intermediate and advanced learners. They had registered for an intensive course in essay writing. They were selected based on their test scores on the Oxford Placement Test (OPT, Allen, 2004). Their OPT scores ranged from 150 to 169, which, according to Allen's (2004) guidelines, indicate that their OPT scores

were high, and they were proficient enough for the purpose of the study. It should be noted that argumentative writing is an important genre for students at high level of language proficiency. As Cheong et al. (2021) point out, it involves higher-order and critical thinking and requires learners to scrutinize how they should use L2 properly to justify their view and repudiate others. The participants were in two classes, with 25 learners in each class. The selection of the research site, which was a language institute for females, was based on convenience sampling. According to Mackey and Gass (2005), it is the selection of a pool of the individuals who happen to be accessible or available for research. It is very common and economical.

Instruments

Three instruments were used for data gathering: a placement test (OPT, 2004), two argumentative timed-essays, and semi-structured interviews. OPT was used to check the homogeneity of the participants in terms of the English proficiency level and place them in the essay writing classes. Two timed-essays were administered to both traditional (control) and hybrid-flipped (experimental) classes/groups as the pretest and posttest to assess the overall knowledge of the learners' argumentative writing. For the pretest, the participants were requested to write in 60-minute time a argumentative essay on the topic: "*Should animals be used in experiments/testing?*" For the posttest, they were requested to write on the topic: "*Should social media play a role in education?*" The number of words in each essay was about 600-1000 words. Special care was taken to make the topics of the essays as similar as possible in terms of the difficulty and length. To assess the writing performance of the participants in the pretest and posttest, an analytic scoring rubric developed by Hyland (2003) was used. The analytic scoring rubric included format and content (which received 40 points), organization and coherence (which received 20 points), and sentence construction and vocabulary (which received 40 points). The interrater and intra-rater indices for both the pretests and posttest essays were high (all above .94). In case of disagreements in scoring essays about the content and organization of the argumentative essays (e.g., whether the learner made good use of relevant information and properly developed ideas in the essay), a meeting session was held to resolve the issue.

In addition, a semi-structured interview was conducted with each of the 25 participants in the experimental group after taking the posttest essay to gain deeper knowledge of their unique experiences and gather feedback about their perceptions of the hybrid-flipped classroom. Each interview was approximately 20 minutes long. The interviews included four open-ended questions (see Appendix). In addition, when necessary, the questions were followed by more probing questions such as "Were the online sessions good or bad for you? Did you like or dislike it? Can you elaborate a little on that?"

Data Collection Procedure

The data were collected in several steps. First, OPT was administered to a sample of EFL learners (n=75) who indicated their willingness to register for an essay writing course in the language institute. Based on their scores on the OPT, 50 EFL learners were selected for the fall semester in 2018-2019. Second, they were assigned in the two classes. Those (n=25) students who attended the odd days were considered as the control (teacher-fronted traditional) group;

those students (n=25) who attended the even days were regarded as experimental (hybrid-flipped) group. To ensure the comparability of the two groups, an independent *t*-test was run on the OPT scores of the two groups. The results did not show any significant difference regarding the OPT scores between the two groups ($t=.131$, $p=.896$). Also, given the pretest-posttest design of the study, analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used as a statistical data analysis technique, which could factor out the possible effect of pre-existing differences in argumentative essay writing skill in the two groups prior to the treatment/instruction. The pretest was administered in the second week to both groups. They were invited to write an essay, as a pretest, in 60 minutes, on the topic “*Should animals be used in experiments/testing?*”.

The research was conducted in 10 weeks in 2018-2019 (see Table 1). The instructions were conducted for seven weeks, 90 minutes for each week. The teacher was the same in both groups. Also, care was taken to use similar content by relying on the coursebook of *Refining Composition Skills* written by Smalley et al. (2012).

Table 1. General Scheme of Teaching Argumentative Writing

Week	Focus	Session
1	Administering the OPT (2004)	1
2	Pretest Essay	1
3	Overview of the argumentative essay	1
4	Developing argumentative writing through evidence provided by personal experience	1
5	Developing argumentative writing through evidence provided by factual information gathered from research	1
6	Developing argumentative writing through evidence provided by statistics from current and reliable resources	1
7	Developing argumentative writing through evidence provided by hypothetical examples	1
8	Developing argumentative writing through evidence provided by testimony from authorities/experts	1
9	Developing argumentative writing through evidence provided by charts, graphs, or diagrams	1
10	Posttest essay and semi-structured interview	1

In the control group, the traditionally taught session met twice a week in even days for a total of one-and-a-half hours. The teacher utilized the traditional lecture format, delivering the instruction through the use of multiple sliding whiteboards and an LCD projector. The participants normally sat at their own seats and listened to their teacher in front of the class, taking notes in the class. They mostly received feedback, including corrective feedback, from their teacher in oral (e.g., feedback in the class) or written (feedback on their assignments) form. The teacher provided support and answer their questions, using examples on the whiteboard, and supplying additional information. At home, they did their homework in paper and pencil, such as writing essays by using different patterns of reasoning.

The teacher-fronted lecture sessions from the traditional classroom were filmed and adapted if necessary. For instance, some unnecessary parts of the video files, such as the sections in which students took short breaks in the class, were deleted. Then, the files were uploaded in the Edmodo application/network by one of the researchers for the purpose of using in the hybrid-flipped group. A screenshot of Edmodo is displayed in Figure 1. Through Edmodo, the teacher could assign quizzes, provide feedback, share learning content, manage a class calendar, and send notes and texts to the individual learners or the class.



Figure 1. A screenshot of Edmodo used in the experimental group

The teacher in the experimental group provided feedback through online interaction in Edmodo (see Figure 2). For instance, to help the students to reflect on their ideas, each student was asked to label specific message/text as a *claim*, *opposing the claim*, *evidence*, or *rebuttal*. Then, the teacher offered feedback. Figure 2 displays how the teacher through Edmodo interacted with the students in a learning group. The type of online feedback was through discussion participation, writing assignments, and quizzes. In the activity, the teacher asked a question. The group members put a comment, answered the question, and then received the feedback from the teacher (see Figure 2). At the end, the members could share the teacher's feedback with each other. The teacher also gave an online quiz to be sure that the students had watched the videos in a time set in advance. After scoring the quiz, the teacher sent the feedback via Edmodo.

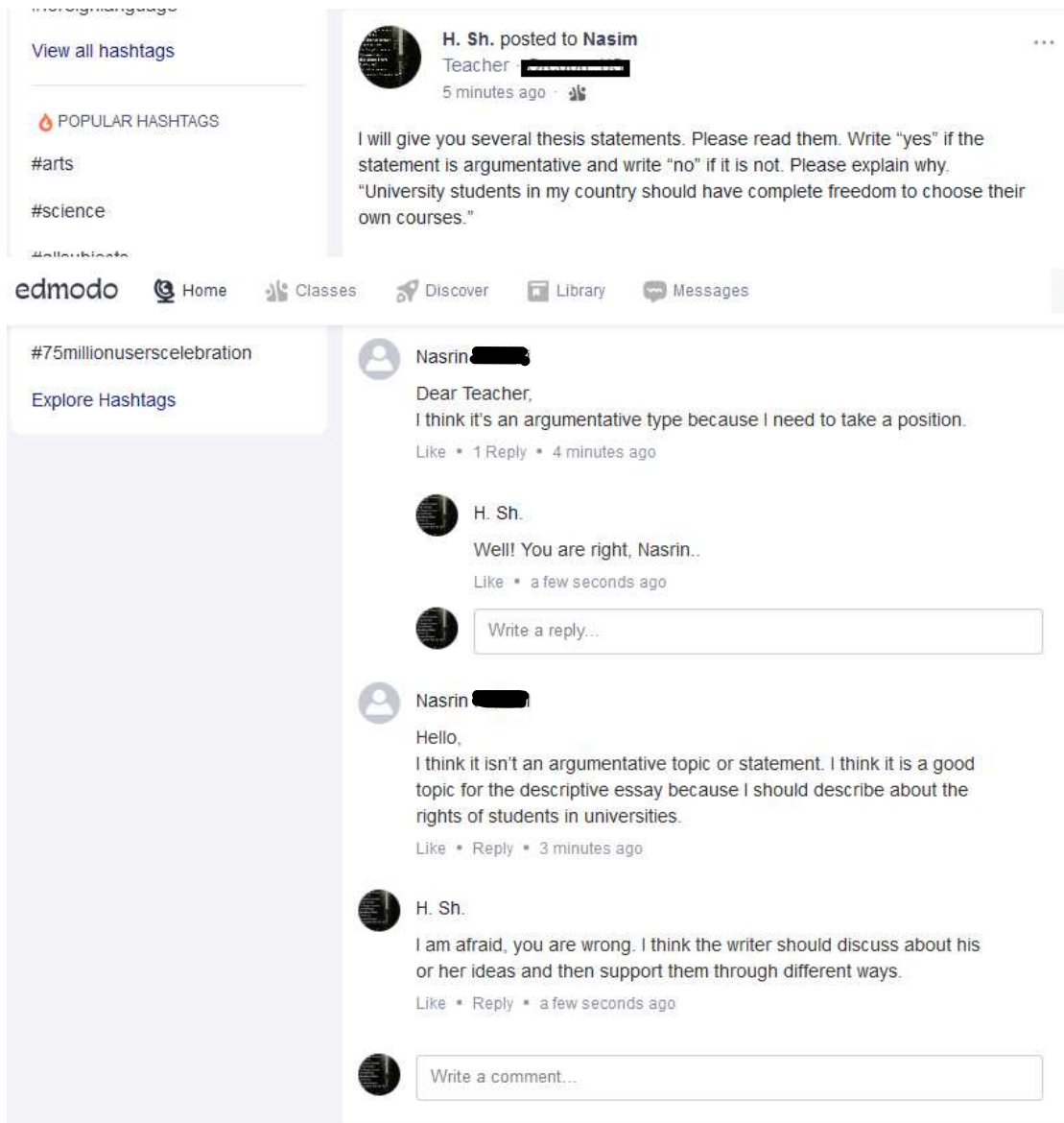


Figure 2. A screenshot of the feedback between the teacher and learner through Edmodo

Moreover, the hybrid-flipped group attended the class for face-to-face instruction every week for 90 minutes in recitation sessions. These sessions were designed to review the subjects covered throughout the online sessions. The learners were encouraged to attend the class to work on their problems after watching the uploaded videos and review the problems in the coursebook. In the recitation session, the learners were divided into small groups of two or three learners, for example, to work together on problems and issues, such as, how to develop a

deductive argument and persuade others about their opinion. Table 2 gives an overview of the procedures in both groups.

Table 2. The Procedure of the Two Groups of the Study

Group	Number of sessions	Material delivery	Teaching Method		
			Before class	In class	After class
Control Group	Two face-to-face sessions per week	Learning materials were in the print format and were delivered during in-class activities	None	1) 30-minute lecture of the teacher 2) 30-minute reading of examples in the coursebook and elaborating on them 3) 30-minute writing activities and checking them by the teacher	Writing an argumentative essay or part of an essay
Experimental Group	One online session and one face-to-face session per week	Out-of-class learning materials were made available before class in the electronic format via Edmodo, while the worksheets associated with in-class activities were provided in the written format	Watching videos, completing quizzes via Edmodo, and receiving feedback from the teacher through Edmodo	1) 30-minute problem-solving and asking-answering questions 2) 15-minute tutorial and/or strategy training 3) 30-minute writing activities and checking problems by the teacher 4) 15-minute interactive feedback session, in which the learners worked in pairs with the teacher assisting them	None

After the treatment, the posttest was administered to both the experimental and control groups. The learners were required to write a five-paragraph essay on the topic “*Should social media play a role in education?*” in about 600-1000 words. The essays were scored by two raters, following Hyland’s (2003) rubric. At the end, a semi-structured interview was conducted with each of the 25 participants in the hybrid-flipped classroom to see how they perceived the effectiveness of the hybrid-flipped method. The interviews were then recorded and transcribed.

The quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed using SPSS and NVivo software programs respectively.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The Effects of the Hybrid-Flipped Instruction on the EFL Learners' Argumentative Writing

Descriptive statistics and relevant statistical tests of significance were carried out to address the first research question. Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the writing scores in both the control and hybrid-flipped groups. As displayed in Table 3, the learners' writing mean in the experimental group increased largely from the pretest ($M=61.04$) to the posttest ($M=88.24$), whereas the learners' mean scores in the control group increased slightly from the pretest ($M=61.20$) to the posttest ($M=61.76$). Based on the descriptive results, the learners in the hybrid-flipped group performed better on the posttest.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Writing Scores in Both Groups

Variable	Groups	N	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Pretest	Control	25	61.20	4.95	-.045	.431
	Experimental	25	61.04	3.52	-.449	-.936
Posttest	Control	25	61.76	4.62	-.093	-1.267
	Experimental	25	88.24	7.76	-.021	-.746

The skewness and kurtosis values of the argumentative writing scores were well within a range of ± 1.5 showing the normality of variances. Also, the Shapiro-Wilk test demonstrated that the argumentative writing scores were normally distributed both in the pretest [$D(25)=.954$, $p=.305$ and $D(25)=.938$, $p=.136$] and in the posttest [$D(25)=.964$, $p=.500$ and $D(25)=.947$, $p=.209$] for the control and experimental groups, respectively. Moreover, the Levene's test for homogeneity of variances demonstrated no significant difference in the variances between the two groups ($F=.16$, $p=.693$). These measures supported the use of a parametric test for further data analysis.

A one-way between-groups analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to see whether the implementation of the hybrid-flipped instruction had any significant effect on the learners' writing performance, compared with the traditional instruction in the control group (see Table 4).

Table 4. Analysis of Covariance for the Treatment Effects on Posttest Scores

Source	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected model	13689.80	2	6844.90	194.71	.000	.89
Intercept	2474.92	1	2474.92	70.40	.000	.60
Pretest	4924.90	1	4924.90	140.09	.000	.74
Group	8840	1	8840	251.46	.000	.84

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Error	1652.21	47	35.15			
Total	296592	50				
Corrective total	15342	49				

The ANCOVA results revealed a statistically significant main effect for Group, that is, type of instruction, $F(1, 47)=251.46$, $p<.05$, which means that there were significant differences between the posttest writing mean scores of the two groups. A partial eta squared value of .84 represented quite a statistically large effect size, indicating that much of the variance in the writing posttest scores could be explained by the type of instruction.

The EFL Learners' Perceptions of Hybrid-Flipped Classroom

The second research question was intended to learn about the perceptions of EFL learners about the hybrid-flipped classroom as a means of learning writing. Data on this was collected through semi-structured interviews. Themes and subthemes were identified from the analysis of the interview data. The major themes and subthemes, together with their descriptions, are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Themes and Subthemes Generated from the Semi-structured Interviews

Themes	Description	Sub-Themes	Description
Increased learner-teacher and learner-to-learner interaction	This theme describes the ways the teacher helped the learners develop relationships through interaction, experience enjoyment in their learning, and experience independence through peer interaction.	Enhancement of required skills	This subtheme shows the commitment of the teacher towards her learners. Most learners understood the purpose and enhanced the skills for communication via writing.
		Interaction opportunities for enhancement in writing	This subtheme shows the learners' views about the advantages of the interaction between the teacher and the learners or between the classmates, which improved their learning of writing skills better and solved their writing problems.
Increased learners' responsibility for the content	This theme describes the learners' accountability in learning argumentative writing skills, which made them learn better through activities, such as, watching the videos before class and	Accountability in problem-solving	This subtheme shows the learners' satisfaction with their increased responsibility in problem solving.
		Self-evaluation	This subtheme shows how the learners evaluated

Themes	Description	Sub-Themes	Description
	preparing for problem-solving in recitation sessions.		themselves and how much they learned independently.
Easy makeup for learners' or teacher's absence	This theme describes the learners' agreement with the online sessions and the self-paced learning and lack of worry about their absence in the online session.	Available online videos	In this subtheme, the learners reported their positive views about the availability of video files in Edmodo.
		Lack of worry about absence	In this subtheme, the learners reported their lack of worry about being absent in the class.
Teacher assistance/guidance in tutoring time	This theme describes teacher assistance aimed at guiding the learners through Edmodo and during the recitation session or in tutoring time.	Guidance during online teaching	This subtheme shows how the teacher guided them through discussion whenever they had a problem with using Edmodo.
		Guidance in recitation session	This subtheme shows how the teacher guided the learners in a recitation session to resolve their problems.

The interview data analysis indicated that the learners described their evaluative experiences about the instruction in different ways, categorized into four themes: (1) Increased learner-teacher and learner-to-learner interaction, (2) Increased learners' responsibility for the content, (3) Easy makeup for learners' or teacher's absence, and (4) teacher assistance in tutoring time. In the hybrid-flipped classroom, the participants showed positive views towards their teacher, especially in giving them online feedback through discussion participation, answering their questions, and encouraging them in dealing with their writing problems with regard to patterns of reasoning or errors in reasoning (teacher guidance). As regards the theme of teacher guidance, the learners further described how their online interaction with the teacher through Edmodo helped them develop their understanding and build a pleasant relationship with their teacher and classmates. Additionally, the learners' engagements with their peers through online discussion in Edmodo (increased learner-teacher and learner-to-learner interaction) were reported in their data. Reportedly, the active engagement with the peers and teacher equipped them with assistance and encouragement to learn better and have a friendly relationship with their classmates and teacher. Moreover, there were many instances demonstrating the increased learners' accountability for the content of learning in and out of the classroom. Also, some learners showed their agreement with the hybrid-flipped method because they did not worry about missing the online session. They could return to their respective class sessions and watch

the uploaded videos on their own. They reported comfort with Edmodo because the videos were available to them at any time so as to watch.

Discussion

The findings from the study showed that the learners in the hybrid-flipped classroom had a better gain in argumentative writing than those in the traditional classroom. Justification can be established for this finding. One major reason is due to active learning. The learners in the hybrid-flipped classroom were actively involved in the process of writing in online and recitation sessions, discussing their ideas with the teacher and other learners. This is also supported by the qualitative data from the interview in which they expressed their active involvement in peer discussion and problem solving. In fact, they were engaged in the writing process inside and outside the class, rather than passively sitting through a lecture delivered by the teacher inside the classroom. They had an opportunity to be away from the traditional passive environment and be engaged in the classroom. They had more freedom to choose the mode in which they would learn about argumentative writing concerning time and the feedback from their teacher or peers, which could enhance their active learning and, consequently, result in better writing performance. The qualitative data also showed that most of them preferred watching their lessons through videos or using technology rather than reading about the writing from a coursebook. This point is in line with the results of Awada and Diab's (2021) study in which they reported the effectiveness of employing technology in developing L2 argumentative writing skills. Moreover, in support of the above justification, the results of Shafiee Rad et al.'s (2021) study confirm the effectiveness of implementing flipped models in enhancing active learning in L2 writing process. The learners in the hybrid-flipped classroom had a chance to be away from the traditional lecture-based context, restructure their time, and be more actively involved in the writing process. Mirzaei et al. (2022) have also reported that flexibility in the flipped method is a great factor in enhancing L2 learners' writing skills as it provides L2 learners with a chance to follow their learning process in any place they wish.

The other reason may be due to the high level of interaction in the hybrid-flipped classroom model, taking place through Edmodo in the study. This is also supported by the subsequent qualitative data. The learners in the hybrid-flipped classroom had to deal with the writing topics or problems in the tutoring time under the direction of the teacher and through the interaction with their classmates in two different learning environments. Compared with the learners in the traditional group, they used different pieces of evidence in their essays, utilized their reasoning more to learn about the topics assigned to them, had better understanding of argumentative writing by the end of their course, and, finally, tried more to solve their problems through interaction. The findings correlated with the expectations of Bloom's (1978) revised taxonomy. According to Bloom, knowledge is divided into different levels. The low levels include remembering and understanding processes, and the top levels include applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating processes. It seems that the hybrid-flipped group used more activities classified at the top levels of Bloom's taxonomy and involved the students in more higher-level cognitive learning required for argumentative writing. The type of in-class and out-of-class activities employed in the experimental group provided the learners with more opportunities to

develop their own knowledge. In support of this justification, Almasseri and AlHojailan (2019) demonstrated that the flipped classroom had a positive effect on the academic achievements of computer science students in Saudi Arabia at the higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy, namely, applying, analyzing, and evaluating, which resulted in higher cognitive learning.

Furthermore, the above finding on the effectiveness of the hybrid-flipped classroom model for argumentative writing is consistent with the results of prior research about the effectiveness of the flipped classroom for writing skills in different contexts. For instance, Ghufron and Nurdianingsih (2019) showed how flipped teaching integrated with CALL worked in teaching writing in the Indonesian context. Also, Wu et al. (2019) demonstrated how a flipped classroom combined with technology on virtual channels was effective for teaching writing skill to Iranian English learners. Moreover, Zou and Xie (2018) demonstrated the effectiveness a flipped learning model through technology-enhanced teaching in developing English writing learning. As Almasseri and AlHojailan (2019) discuss, the flipped method integrated with technology, as compared with face-to-face instruction, can provide various learning environments, meeting the diverse needs of L2 writers. Also, the results find support from the study by Shafiee Rad et al. (2021) about the effectiveness of other models of the flipped method in improving EFL learner's writing.

The results obtained from the interviews showed that the participants' attitudes were positive about the model and, in general, they evaluated the hybrid-flipped classroom positively, and encouraged the teacher to continue using the model in the future. One major theme for the hybrid-flipped classroom was teacher guidance, which was closely related to another theme (increased learner-teacher and learner-to-learner interaction). Bergmann and Sams (2012) also view the role of teacher as one of the most important factors in the flipped classroom models, which cannot be overlooked in creating positive attitudes in the classroom. As Kvashnina and Martynko (2013) assert, the traditional role of teacher as an authoritarian can change to a coordinator or facilitator in the flipped model classroom. The teacher can provide an atmosphere in the writing course in and out of the class where EFL learners collaborate with their peers and get involved in the writing process, causing a positive impact on their attitudes towards L2 writing skill. This point is emphasized by Zou and Xie (2018) who claim that, unlike the flipped classroom, students in the conventional classroom receive feedback from their teachers without trying to figure out the responses through negotiations and collaboration. They feel that the responses would be offered to them by their teachers in the class anyway. Such differences can lead to the opposite attitudes towards writing courses among the students.

In the present study, the hybrid-flipped group evaluated the experience with the model by referring to the supportive role of their teacher in doing learner-centered activities, especially those activities in the online environment. These participants could exercise self-paced learning regarding the writing skill at their own level of speed benefiting from the online guidance of the teacher. This approach to the writing process is a departure from the less effective traditional approach when the teacher acts as the highest authority in teacher-centered instruction, and writing practices mainly focus on the teacher's answers to written errors in essays with pens and pencils (Wu et al. 2019). However, care should be taken about implementing student-centered writing activities in the hybrid-flipped method. The pre-class and in-class problem-solving writing activities in the hybrid-flipped method should be kept short not to make EFL students

bored with this approach towards argumentative writing. As Su Ping et al. (2019) point out, watching long lecture videos before class is a great challenge as many EFL learners found it difficult to be focused. It is better to keep pre-class video watching short to create better attitudes towards argumentative writing.

The interactional strategies through Edmodo and the problem-solving actions were important in making a positive evaluation. The learners reported that it was less intimidating to think about their writing problems outside the classroom and they felt confident to solve them online through interaction in Edmodo. This issue highlights the role of another major theme, which was increased learners' responsibility. Even outside the classroom, these learners felt a need to look for their problems and hold themselves accountable for learning the argumentative writing. A sense of personal accountability helped get themselves back on track and eliminated redundant instructional guidance that might waste their time. They also reported the usefulness of online teaching which persuaded them not to worry about missing the learning content because of easy makeup for them through available online instructional videos. Taken together, the class time was used to involve the learners in useful activities that endorsed active learning. They were done under the support of the teacher, making them responsible in the writing process inside and outside the classroom through the use of technology. The above results can also find some support from the prior research such as Su Ping et al. (2019). Their qualitative data gathered from the interviews with a small sample of Malaysian EFL students after implementing a flipped writing program showed that they generally had positive experiences of the flipped writing experience. They had more before-class time preparation, increased engagement, interaction, immediate feedback, and motivation, and they demonstrated a greater level of self-confidence out of the class.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has investigated the effect of a hybrid-flipped classroom model on learners' argumentative writing and the learners' perceptions of the effectiveness of the proposed model as a learning tool. The results showed that the hybrid-flipped model was effective in teaching argumentative writing to EFL learners. The learners in the hybrid-flipped group learned more effectively to explain their own views in suitable vocabulary and sentence constructions, develop better content, and organized their thoughts in a more coherent way in their essays. Thus, their overall writing mean scores, which encompassed performance on format and content, organization and coherence, and sentence construction and vocabulary scales, increased significantly in the posttest. That is to say, the overall learning of the participants in argumentative writing improved more in the hybrid-flipped classroom than in the traditional (teacher-fronted) classroom. This model allowed the learners to interact with each other and with the teacher to a higher degree than the traditional classroom. They benefited from the tutorial guidance they received in an online environment. Also, the follow-up qualitative data revealed four themes of increased learner-teacher and learner-to-learner interaction, increased learners' responsibility for the content, easy makeup for learners'/teacher's absence, and teacher assistance in tutoring time, all indicating that the learners had positive views about this model.

The proposed model has the potential to improve the argumentative writing of L2 learners through enhancing learners' engagement and providing opportunities for more interactional, problem-solving, and active learning. It is thus recommended that teachers, syllabus designers, and other stakeholders in L2 education make use of the potential of hybrid-flipped method in L2 writing courses. As Nami (2020) points out, technology-enhanced language practice can help L2 learners move beyond monotonous teaching content in conventional L2 classrooms and have a better L2 progress.

Finally, the above findings should be considered in light of several limitations. First, the sample size in the current study was restricted to only one private English language institute, and different educational contexts were not included in the study due to the design and sampling type. Second, with the research site being all females, the participants were all female EFL learners. Due to the nature of the educational system in Iran, it is sometimes impossible to have both genders in a classroom. Third, the instructions were conducted for only seven weeks. Future research can benefit from data provided by both genders and the use of different online tools and other types of sampling, as well as longitudinal designs.

REFERENCES

- Allen, L. (2004). *The Oxford placement test*. Oxford University Press.
- Almasseri, M. & AlHojailan, M. I. (2019). How flipped learning based on the cognitive theory of multimedia learning affects students' academic achievements. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 35(6), 769-781. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12386>
- Arnold-Garza, S. (2014). The flipped classroom teaching model and its use for information literacy instruction. *Communications in Information Literacy*, 8(1), 7-22. <https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2014.8.1.161>
- Awada, G., Burston, J., & Ghannage, R. (2020). Effect of student team achievement division through WebQuest on EFL students' argumentative writing skills and their instructors' perceptions. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 33(3), 275-300. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2018.1558254>
- Awada, G. M., & Diab, N. M. (2021). Effect of online peer review versus face-to-face peer review on argumentative writing achievement of EFL learners. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2021.1912104>
- Bergmann, J. & Sams, A. (2012). *Flip your classroom: Reach every student in every class every day*. International Society for Technology in Education.
- Bikowski, D. & Vithanage, R. (2016). Effects of web-based collaborative writing on individual L2 writing development. *Language Learning & Technology*, 20(1), 79-99. <http://dx.doi.org/10125/44447>
- Bloom, B. S. (1978). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals*. Longman.
- Cheong, C.-M., Zhu, X., & Xu, W. (2021). Source-based argumentation as a form of sustainable academic skill: An exploratory study comparing secondary school students' L1 and L2 writing. *Sustainability*, 13, 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132212869>

- De Smet, M. J. R., Broekkamp, H., Brand-Gruwel, S., & Kirschner, P. A. (2011). Effects of electronic outlining on students' argumentative writing performance. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 27(6), 557-574. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2729.2011.00418.x>
- Fan, C-Y., Chen, G-D. (2021). PPTELL-3 a scaffolding tool to assist learners in argumentative writing. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 34(1-2), 159-183. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2019.1660685>
- Fathi, J., Rahimi, M. (2020). Examining the impact of flipped classroom on writing complexity, accuracy, and fluency: a case of EFL students. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 35(7), 1668-1706. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2020.1825097>
- Fraga, L. M. & Harmon, H. (2014). The flipped classroom model of learning in higher education: An investigation of preservice teachers' perspectives and achievement. *Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education*, 31(1), 18-27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21532974.2014.967420>
- Ghanbari, N., & Salari, M. (2022). Problematizing argumentative writing in an Iranian EFL undergraduate context. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.862400>
- Ghufron, M. A. & Nurdianingsih, F. (2019). Flipped teaching with CALL in EFL writing class: How does it work and affect learner autonomy? *European Journal of Educational Research*, 8(4), 983-997. <http://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.8.4.983>
- Harrison, D. J., Saito, L., Markee, N., & Herzog S. (2016). Assessing the effectiveness of a hybrid-flipped model of learning on fluid mechanics instruction: Overall course performance, homework, and far- and near-transfer of learning. *European Journal of Engineering Education*, 1(3), 122-135. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03043797.2016.1218826>
- Hirvela, A. (2017). Argumentation & second language writing: Are we missing the boat? *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 36, 69-74. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2017.05.002>
- Hyland, K. (2003). *Second language writing*. Cambridge University Press.
- Johnson, L., Adams Becker, S., Estrada, V., & Freeman, A. (2014). NMC horizon report: 2014 K-12 edition. The New Media Consortium.
- Kvashnina, O. S., & Martynko, E. A. (2013). Analyzing the potential of flipped classroom in ESL teaching. *iJet*, 11(3), 49-58. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v11i03.5309>
- Kim, S. H., Nam-Hun, P., & Kil-Hong, J. (2014). Effects of flipped classroom based on smart learning on self-directed and collaborative learning. *International Journal of Control & Automation*, 7(12), 69-80. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14257/ijca.2014.7.12.07>
- Låg, T. & Grøm Sæle, R. (2019). Does the flipped classroom improve student learning and satisfaction? A systematic review and meta-analysis. *American Educational Research Journal Open*, 5(3), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858419870489>
- Lam, Y. W., Hew, K. F., & Chiu, K. F. (2017). Improving argumentative writing: Effects of a blended learning approach and gamification. *Language Learning & Technology*, 22(1), 97-118. <https://dx.doi.org/10.125/44583>
- Lee, J. J. & Deakin, L. (2016). Interactions in L1 and SL undergraduate student writing: Interactional metadiscourse in successful and less-successful argumentative essays. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 33, 21-34. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2016.06.004>

- Mackey, A., & Gass, S. (2005). *Second language research: Methodology and design*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Mehring, J. (2016). Present research on the flipped classroom and potential tools for the EFL classroom. *Computers in the Schools*, 33(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07380569.2016.1139912>
- Mirzaei, A., Shafiee Rad, H., & Rahimi, E. (2022). Integrating ARCS motivational model and flipped teaching in L2 classrooms: A case of EFL expository writing. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 1-30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2022.2068614>
- Nami, F. (2020). Edmodo in semi-technical English courses: Towards a more practical strategy for language learning/practice. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 35(7), 1533-1556. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2020.1819340>
- Pessoa, S., Mitchella, D. T., & Millerb, T. R. (2017). Emergent arguments: A functional approach to analyzing students' challenges with the argument genre. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 38, 42-55. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2017.10.013>
- Reznitskaya, A., Glina, M., Carolan, B., Michaud, O., Rogers, J., & Sequeira, L. (2012). Examining transfer effects from dialogic discussions to new tasks and contexts. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 37(4), 288-306. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2012.02.003>
- Saslow, J. & Ascher, A. (2012). *Summit 1* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education.
- Shi, Y., Matos, F., & Kuhne, D. (2019). Dialog as a bridge to argumentative writing. *Journal of Writing Research*, 11(1), 107-129. <https://doi.org/10.17239/jowr-2019.11.01.04>
- Shafiee Rad, H., Roohani, A., & Rahimi Domakani, M. (2021). Flipping EFL learners' writing classroom through role-reversal and discussion-oriented models. *Language Learning & Technology*, 25(2), 158-177. <http://hdl.handle.net/10125/73438>
- Singh, J., Steele, K., & Singh, L. (2021). Combining the best of online and face-to-face learning: Hybrid and blended learning approach for COVID-19, post vaccine, & post-pandemic world. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, 50(2), 140-171. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00472395211047865>
- Smalley, R. L., Ruetten, M. K., & Kozyrev, J. R. (2012). *Refining composition skills: Academic writing and grammar* (6th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Talley, C. P., & Scherer, S. (2013). The enhanced flipped classroom: Increasing academic performance with student-recorded lectures and practice testing in a "flipped" STEM course. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 82(3), 339-347. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.7709/jnegroeducation.82.3.0339>
- Su Ping, R. L., Verezub, E., Adi Badiozaman, I. F. bt, & Chen, W. S. (2019). Tracing EFL students' flipped classroom journey in a writing class: Lessons from Malaysia. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 57(3), 305-316. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2019.1574597>
- Tecedor, M. & Perez, A. (2019). Perspectives on flipped L2 classes: Implications for learner training. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 34(4), 506-527. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2019.1626439>

- Wu, W. C. V., Yang, J. C., Chen Hsieh, J., & Yamamoto, T. (2019). Free from demotivation in EFL writing: the use of online flipped writing instruction. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 33(4), 353-387. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2019.1567556>
- Xu, C. & Ding, Y. (2014). An exploratory study of pauses in computer-assisted EFL writing. *Language Learning & Technology*, 18(3), 80-96. <http://dx.doi.org/10125/44385>
- Yang, J., Yin, C. X., & Wang, W. (2018). Flipping the classroom in teaching Chinese as a foreign language. *Language Learning & Technology*, 22(1), 16-26. <https://dx.doi.org/10125/44575>.
- Zou, D. & Xie, H. (2018). Flipping an English writing class with technology-enhanced just-in-time teaching and peer instruction. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 27(1), 1-16. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2018.1495654>

APPENDIX

Interview Questions

1. What do you think of your classroom method of teaching/learning?
2. What do you think about using online resources in teaching/learning writing skill?
3. How did your ability to use technology in the course impact your learning?
4. Is there anything else you want to share about your course? Explain.