

## *The effects of flipped learning approach on FL Egyptian learners to reinforce study of English*

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### **Abstract**

**T**he current study has attempted to discover whether a flipped learning approach has positive effects on enhancing learning English. To achieve the purpose of the study, 158 learners participated from the English department in the faculty of Education who have taken the same English course over two sequential semesters. The participants were divided into two groups: an experimental group that used a flipped learning approach with 80 learners, while the control group of 78 learners used a communicative language teaching approach. The researcher collected the data in three ways: firstly from the results of the learners' performance in three main tasks; secondly, from the teacher's notes on the learners' performance during the study; and finally from the learners' responses to three surveys. The results revealed that only the mean score of the final test was statistically significant, and the scores of the participants in the experimental group were higher on average than the scores of the participants in the control group in their last three tasks. In spite of this result, both surveys and teacher's notes expressed another point of view, showing that the participants in a flipped learning approach classroom enjoyed learning English more and were keener on participating in the learning process than the control group.

**Key Words:** FL Egyptian learners; flipped learning approach; study of English

### **The effects of flipped learning approach on FL Egyptian learners to reinforce study of English**

Lee and Wallace (2018) claimed that the communicative language teaching approach has been one of the most widespread techniques that were utilized in teaching English as a foreign language in the last quarter of the twentieth century. According to Nunan (1991), the importance of a communicative language teaching approach came from the concentration on interaction and making it the means as well as the eventual

target of the study. In communicative language teaching, learners use "authentic texts" (those written in the target language for purposes other than language learning) (Kumaravadivelu, 1993). In addition, students learn in two ways: the continuous use of the language inside and outside the classroom, and interaction with colleagues and teacher (Li, 1998). In spite of this importance, some other studies (Bax, 2003; Humphries & Burns, 2015) have considered communicative language teaching unsuccessful in achieving its goals, particularly in many settings of EFL, because it did not take into consideration the varied contextual constraints in which language teaching takes place. Lee (2009) and Littlewood (1999) have added that EFL environments offer few chances for the learners to use English outside of the learning environment. Also, teachers mostly use the lecturing method to explain lessons even in communicative language teaching classrooms, which lead to much of class time being fruitless, as the learners are not actively involved in the learning process. Based on the previously mentioned reasons, Spino and Trego (2015) concluded that the content, outputs, and interaction given to the learners might be inadequate, especially given the time constraints of a language category. Therefore, Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, and Linnell (1996) suggested assisting the learners through original pre-class content material, so they can produce output easily. Krashen (1982) added that the learners might not be able to be involved positively in class activities if the content was not understandable.

Bergmann and Sams (2012) mentioned that there was a need for a new teaching approach to give the learners more time to practice English inside and outside the classroom. At the same time, this new approach should potentially overcome the problem of the constraints of EFL contexts; therefore, the importance of using a flipped learning approach has risen. Brinks Lockwood (2014) asserted that eliminating lectures is one of the features of the inverted learning process, but these lectures are mostly redelivered to learners via pre prepared content materials such as video recordings; however, technology is not always a feature of flipped materials. Milman (2012) clarified

that learners in the flipped learning environment are free to use different types of materials outside of class to discover the meaning of the text by themselves. The materials utilized by the learners may be some papers developed via their instructor, some readings from their textbook, or any other materials. After that, learners use their understanding of the meaning of the content to rely on when they merge their content knowledge by doing group work class activities where the teacher is a guide. Dallimore, Hertenstein, and Platt (2010) added that learners depend on their understanding to consolidate their content knowledge via thought-provoking questions that are considered as indicators of creating involvement and interaction as well as building students' knowledge.

Some of the benefits of flipped learning, as mentioned by Bergmann and Sams (2012), include that a flipped learning approach provides individualized learning. In addition, as long as the Internet is accessible, learners can study classroom materials anywhere and anytime, which means that this approach overrides place and time (physical constraints). Kong (2014) discovered another benefit to the flipped method when applying this new approach in his study, as it assisted the learners to increase their reading and writing skills as well as critical thinking. At the same time, Brinks Lockwood (2014) pointed out that the skills of application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation (higher-order thinking skills) could improve with a flipped approach, contrary to the skills of knowledge and comprehension specified by Anderson, Krathwohl, and Bloom (2001) as lower-order thinking skills.

In fact, many researchers have directed their attention recently to flipped learning methods; however, Chen, Wang, and Chen (2014) mentioned that experimental studies on EFL classrooms gave little proof of how this new approach enhanced learning. Butt (2014) and McDonald and Smith (2013) identified methodological limitations as a result of reviews of flipped learning in first language (L1) classrooms. In order to check learner perceptions of flipped learning approaches, some

researchers depended on surveys, while others did not utilize control groups and were limited to single-group designs. Furthermore, for helping learners to study outside the class, the reported L1 studies have used video lectures as the main content of the study.

Based on the previously mentioned studies, the current research used an action research approach (Burns, 1999, 2005; Johnson, 2005; Lee & Wallace, 2018) to investigate the effectiveness of using flipped learning methods with Egyptian learners at the faculty of Education in an EFL course. The data in this study have been collected through the teacher's observation notes on the learners' performance inside the classroom, learners' accomplishments in three main tasks, and three surveys. The present research as well created two sections; one of them used a flipped mode, while the other one was without a flipped mode. In the flipped section, the learners were given different types of pre-class content materials.

## **Review of Previous Research**

The researcher divided this part into two sections: section one discussed previous studies on flipped learning in L1 conditions, and section two discussed previous studies on flipped learning in FL contexts.

### **SECTION (A)**

#### **Previous studies on flipped learning in L1 condition**

The positive impact of the flipped learning approach has been recently recorded in many studies (Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2014; Missildine, Fountain, Summers, & Gosselin, 2013; Moravec, Williams, Aguilar-Roca, & O'Dowd, 2010) in the L1 context; one of these studies was Day and Foley's (2006) study in which they used 46 learners in two sections and one course to explore the learning results of the flipped learning approach in an introductory human-computer interaction course. One of the two groups used web lectures while the other used traditional lectures. The teacher's role was to assist learners to complete their work, and he assigned the lectures to

be viewed before each class. The findings revealed that the learners in the flipped section have a strong positive attitude toward the intervention of their teacher in class, as well as better average scores than their colleagues in the non-flipped group.

Alvarez (2012) tried to explain the importance of flipped learning and its positive effect on the learning via a true story that has happened in a secondary school in the United States. The learners in this school suffered from failure in most class subjects due to not understanding the content of the lecture, the class time was not enough, and the high rate of student absences. One of the teachers in this school suggested using a flipped learning approach, and the result was amazing as the grades of the learners rose significantly and failure rates decreased compared to the former academic year. Alvarez attributed this to using the flipped approach, which gave the teachers a chance to show their finest presentations and share resources with others, as well as minimizing or eliminating any obstacles appearing during learning.

On the other hand, some other researchers did not completely agree with the importance of the flipped learning approach to enhance learning for the students. One of those was Strayer (2012), who tried to prove the impact of the flipped model through dividing the learners into two groups, one with a traditional lecture method and the other with the flipped approach in two introductory statistics courses. Strayer did not compare the learners' results in the two groups; instead he used instructor's notes and learners' interviews to evaluate the learning environment in the two groups. Another method used by Strayer was the College and University Classroom Environment Inventory, which revealed that some learners in the flipped group were not satisfied with how they were directed in the learning tasks during the study.

Another study by Findlay-Thompson and Mombourquette (2014) illustrated that the flipped approach was not helpful for the learners specifically in learning. The findings clarified that the scores of the learners in their tasks in both groups, the

experimental (flipped approach) and the two control groups (traditional lecture), were equal. Moreover, the learners' points of view of the flipped learning model as they appeared in the interview data were conflicted. Some learners mentioned that this new approach gave them too much work to do outside the classroom, and that they prefer to receive directions from their teacher, not in a video format. At the same time, some other learners mentioned that there were some benefits to the flipped approach, as it gave them a chance to prepare their lessons before class, ask questions of the teacher and their fellow learners, raise their scores on tasks, and enjoy work during class time.

It was clear from the previously mentioned studies that the interest in flipped learning as a pedagogical tool is growing among many L1 teachers. In spite of this growing interest, the results are inconclusive because while some studies showed that this model could help learners in facilitating learning effort, study process, and performance, others revealed that the learners do not always have a positive attitude towards this model. In addition, the previous studies on L1 flipped approaches observed that instructor collaboration and commitment besides technical support appear to be critical in flipped lessons. Thence, more studies on flipped learning are needed to determine the impact of this approach, as suggested by Strayer (2012).

## **SECTION B**

### **Previous studies on flipped learning in the FL context**

Lee and Wallace (2018) mentioned that studies of flipped learning in FL contexts were very few (Brinks Lockwood, 2014; Basal, 2015; Bauer-Ramazani, Graney, Marshall, & Sabieh, 2016). Lee and Wallace (2018) considered two studies to be the most interesting ones; one of them was Brinks Lockwood's (2014), study and the other was Hung's (2015) study. In terms of Brinks Lockwood's (2014) study, it was personal experience in using flipped learning in her FL classroom, which encouraged her to

write a book about flipped learning and its strategies for FL classes. She realized that the readings from the textbook were better than video lectures for every lesson, so she embraced different types of classroom materials for the flipped content. These covered both publicly available videos and readings from the course textbook, and then she concentrated on higher-order thinking skills considered fundamental to learning, as suggested by Anderson et al. (2001). Brinks Lockwood noticed that her learners' responsibility for their own learning process was raised, and they became more independent learners.

Concerning Hung's (2015) study, the main goal was to discover the impacts of flipped learning on EFL college learners. The participants in this study were seventy-five freshmen majoring in English and were divided into three groups: one full-flipped, the second semi-flipped, and the last group was non-flipped. Each group received different instructions: the full flipped group obtained Web Quests, Ted-Ed for the semi-flipped group and the non-flipped group received traditional lessons. The findings indicated that the performance of the learners in both groups who received full and semi-flipped were better than the traditional group. Additionally, the learners in groups who received full-flipped and semi-flipped instruction were keen to put more effort into their lessons and showed better attitudes towards learning than the traditional group. These findings directed Hung to view the flipped approach as a promising pedagogy model that could be applied across contexts and disciplines.

In spite of the importance of the two previous studies in how to apply the flipped learning approach, questions persist as to whether the use of this methodology over a full semester will enhance EFL learners' academic language skills. At the same time, Lee and Wallace (2018) considered the study of Hung to have methodological concerns in two ways: firstly, the impacts of flipped learning among the three groups were compared after giving the learners three lessons in six weeks, which may not be enough time to provide an accurate evaluation of the utility of

the flipped learning model. Secondly, the materials used in teaching the course (e.g., movies) were to some extent less rigorous academic material, whereas the current study utilized various academic sources in teaching the course, exactly what Lee and Wallace (2018) had done in their study.

EFL learners have few chances to receive language input outside the classroom because they study English as one of their school subjects, not as a means of communication with people in society. Horwitz (2010) and Sternfeld (1997) have indicated that learners in many EFL classrooms are suffering from high levels of frustration and disquiet for two reasons. Firstly, in spite of the checking process based on different types of placement tests, learners' English ability varies; secondly, most teachers in Faculties of Education insist on performing their lectures in English only, which is an obstacle to learners' comprehension and complicates their understanding of the input in the target language.

Truitt (1995) added that EFL learners feel more worry when speaking English in front of other people, and some language teachers feel that the time spent teaching is not enough to give individualized feedback on learners' performance. The current study opted to carry out the flipped learning approach in an English education course in order to accommodate the dissimilarity in learners' levels, smooth the deficits of English-mediated lessons, and furnish more language input and feedback for learners. The researcher hoped that the learners would review the materials at their own speed before classroom time. In the same context, Brown, (2007) mentioned that instructors could provide learners more individualized feedback on their performance in classroom by transferring the lesson content outside class. Moreover, the teacher will not be just a lecturer, but he has the opportunity to act as a resource and a facilitator, and to reinforce the learners' participation that played an important role in applying the flipped learning model.

### **Research Questions**

To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher tried to pose some research questions that may help this study to be more accurate. These questions were formulated as follows:

1. If there are any effects of the flipped learning approach on Egyptian college learners' achievements in an EFL classroom, what are those effects?
2. How did Egyptian college learners perceive learning English in a flipped learning model?
3. If there are any effects of the flipped learning approach on learners' participation in the learning process, what are those effects?

## **Method**

The current study followed the previous studies (Johnson, 2005; Burns, 1999, 2005) in applying an action research model, which improved one's own practice via studying one's own classroom and learning about students, class activities, and teaching methods. Burns (2005) assumed some degree of subjectivity in action research because when instructor generates an intrusion in a class, he also systematically collects and analyzes data. This process entails a spiral cycle of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting; thus, it is considered less predictable than other research methods.

## **Participants**

The learners who participated in this study were 158 males and females. Their age ranged in age from early to late 20s, and all were Arabic speakers who had studied formal English for at least 9 years. The researcher found it impossible to choose the participants randomly because of the nature of course registration. The participants were divided into two groups as follows:

Group A: experimental group in which the learners were 62 male and 18 female; 76 freshmen and 4 seniors; 40 per semester, using the flipped learning approach.

Group B: control group with a non- flipped approach were 60 male and 18 female; 74 freshmen and 4 seniors; 38 from the autumn semester and 40 from the spring semester. The researcher told the learners in the flipped learning classrooms from the first week that they would be taking part in the

research, and all of the learners gave their approval to participate. The researcher appointed the flipped and non-flipped classes before starting the course in order to make sure of the validity of the sampling action. The learners from the English department have taken the same English course offered by the Faculty of Education over two sequential semesters, and all class activities were conducted completely in English. The number of the classes reached 20 classes, and the learners numbered 20 in each class. Most of the teachers preferred to teach one or two sections of the course in each semester. It was a compulsory for the learners to obtain scores between 350 and 499 on the placement test (Test of English Proficiency) to enroll in the course.

It was noticed in the first survey that most of the learners demonstrated their interest in mastering English, as it is important for their future careers; however, they did not feel confident in using English, especially speaking and writing. The first survey also revealed that at the time of the study none of the learners had learned English in an English-dominant country. The participants in both groups seemed to be quite alike in many respects such as the year of study, age, number of females and males, English learning experiences, and learners' English level.

### **Course Description**

The main target of the course design was to help learners to develop four English skills in general, with emphasis on improving their academic speaking and writing skills in particular. The learners came to the English classes in the current study either three times a week in the autumn semester or twice a week in the spring semester, and the total 45 hours of instruction were the same for both semesters. The current study followed Lee and Wallace (2018) in choosing Longman Academic Reading Series Level 3 to be the course textbook for both groups because it was described by Miller and Cohen (2014) as authentic academic written work. The teachers were asked to give two presentations and two writing assignments for the semester, with at least one of the assignments in each task taking

a formal academic style; the teachers were also required to use various chapters from the textbook.

The individual presentation and group presentation were different, as the individual presentation was scheduled at the beginning of the term and the learners in both groups were asked to write a 5-minute personal narrative about his or her family. On the other hand, the group presentation was scheduled during the last week of the term to ensure that the participants had learned academic discourse during the semester. In the group presentation, learners were asked to include academic items like making an argument and supporting it with outside sources. Before the group presentation, the teachers scheduled two writing assignments successively; the first one was an opinion paragraph where the participants were asked to include one direct quote. The second assignment was a compare-and-contrast paragraph where the learners had to integrate more outside sources with one direct quote from each. The teachers were obliged to give these two writing assignments because most learners had not experienced writing academic-style paragraphs in English before. The researcher anticipated that the sequence would assist the learners to conduct the group presentation and the two writing tasks successfully because these two tasks share many similar academic concepts, including referencing, structure, and language. The learners had to complete the main tasks, the two exams based on the textbook chapters, the two presentations, and the two paragraphs.

The bounded class time in the research poses a challenge for the teachers to cover various textbook chapters in addition to addressing basic academic writing and presentation skills. Generally, most of the teachers lecture on the structure of a paragraph and a presentation and then they revise the assignment descriptions in the classroom. The learners should finish these tasks outside the class themselves after the teacher's lecture and guidance. The time is not enough to give individualized feedback. The current study excluded the attendance grades because its impacts were not easy to calculate,

as well as excluding the learners' lab work because the teacher did not teach it. The following Table 1 provides the main assignments and their share of the final score.

**Table 1. Main English Course Tasks and Their Weight of the Final Score**

Assignments	Attendance	Lab work	Presentations	Writings	Exams
Weight	20	20	30	50	80

Note: Both attendance and lab work were excluded from the data analysis.

### **Flipping the Course**

In order to flip the English course, the researcher began to review the chapters of the textbook to select some of them to be used in the semester. The chosen chapters were four, and the class materials (e.g., worksheets, videos) were produced for the presentations and paragraph writing tasks. The researcher did not generate new videos; she recycled videos utilized before in the previous term. The software Camtasia was used to record the presentation videos on a laptop, and the college technical support team created the paragraph writing videos beforehand as a part of previous projects in the English writing manual. In general the duration of each video ranged from 15 to 25 minutes.

The recorded lectures were furnished to the non-flipped group only; otherwise, the same class materials were given to both groups. Depending on the pre-class input content, the learners in the flipped group were asked to watch the video lectures or readings, then complete the worksheets pre-class and in class; the teacher was a facilitator who directed the learners to do different types of group work. The teacher in the flipped class, for example, used 15 minutes to break the ice between him and the learners, then introducing the class work plan; after that, the teacher examined the guided worksheets and makes the questions about them clear; this step took between 20 to 25 minutes. In the last step, the teacher used the remaining time (45–50 minutes) for assigning new class materials and for applying the content to their assignment via teamwork.

The last 45–50 minutes of class time was devoted to the improvement of the learners' paragraphs in the class on paragraph writing. On the other hand, the learners in groups were making an outline, writing up their drafts, and working on brainstorming ideas, while the teacher's role was to give feedback on the learners' assignments. The structure was different in non-flipped writing classroom, as the teacher welcomed the learners and then used PowerPoint slides for 25–30 minutes to display the content of the video. To finish the worksheets, the learners worked in groups for 15-20 minutes. The class time was bounded; thus, the learners did not receive much feedback on their work either from their teacher or their classmates because they had to write their rough draft on their own outside class.

### **Data Collection and Procedures**

As mentioned before, various sources were used to collect data in the current study. Learners' achievements in the three main assignments were the first source of the data, followed by three surveys conducted by the teacher for 10-15 minutes each over the course of the term. The first survey was held at the beginning of the term to collect data on the learners' aims for the course and their history of learning English. The purpose of the second survey was to check the learners' comprehension of learning English in a flipped learning model after giving them the first three main assignments: individual presentation, first writing assignment, and midterm examination. Collecting the learners' final opinions about the flipped learning approach was the main intent of the third survey, which was conducted near the end of the term. The last two surveys were administered anonymously, and both had the same four questions in which learners expressed their feelings about learning English via a flipped learning approach and clarify their reasons; also, the total amount of time they spent studying each video, the number of times they viewed the video, and finally their suggestions about the new learning model.

Another source of data was the teacher's notes on both groups' performances during the study, including records of how

the learners reacted, how they behaved in the classroom, and what type and how many questions they posed. Finally, the result of the learners' performance in three main tasks (vocabulary, reading, and writing skills) was the last source. In spite of the learners being placed according to their results on the TEPS, in order to establish a baseline from which to calculate the impacts of the intervention, the learners were quizzed on their English ability based on the first unit of study, which reflected the two exams on a smaller scale to test the three skills. The results of the test showed that there was no real difference between the two groups in the learners' English ability. The mean score in the autumn semester for the flipped group was 3.22 and 3.48 in the spring semester out of 4 points each, while the learners in the non-flipped group earned an average score of 3.28 and 3.42 points consecutively.

### **Data Analysis**

Both quantitative and qualitative techniques were used for data analysis in the current study, as well as SPSS version 22 with a confidence level of 95% ( $p < .05$ ) to compare the learners' results in both groups. The current study also used a two-tailed independent t-test to verify the comparison of the means between the flipped and non-flipped groups. In order to verify equal variance across the samples, the current study followed Lee and Wallace's (2018) study in using Levene's (1960) test. The researcher transformed the individual participants' raw scores on assignments that did not have equal variances and were noted under the proceeding tables to averages out of 100% to give intra- and inter-individual comparisons. To be able to analyze the participants' surveys both quantitatively and qualitatively, the researcher manually calculated the number of minutes the learners took to study the videos, as well as the number of times participants viewed or reviewed the videos; also the researcher used her lens to describe the learners' perception of learning English in a flipped approach. The researcher firstly began to grade participants' accomplishments on the paragraph and presentation tasks. After that, the teachers

gave the video presentations and the copies of the written paragraphs to the researcher without identifying whether the learners were in the flipped or non-flipped groups, and then the researcher categorized and cross-checked them. In order to raise the inter-rater reliability of the study as it reached to 0.85 to 0.90, the researcher held a grade norming session for about one hour, randomly selected three participants each time, and then compared the scores of each group after independent grading.

## Results

The researcher divided this section into three parts as follows:

Part A: Learners' accomplishments in the flipped and non-flipped groups

Part B: Learners' responses to the flipped learning model

Part C: Teachers' observations on the learners' performance

### Part A

#### Learners' accomplishments in the flipped and non-flipped groups

In spite of the data that appeared in Table 2, which revealed that the learners' performance in the flipped group (120.62 out of 160 points) had higher final scores than the learners in the non-flipped group (114.38), but, these results were non-statistically significant; see Table 2.

*Table 2. Average Final Scores for Flipped and Non-Flipped Groups*

Groups	N	M(SD)	T	P
Flipped	80	120.62 (15.94)		
Non-flipped	78	114.38 (17.12)	3.358	.097

The findings of the main assignments such as two presentations, two writings and two exams were displayed in the following Tables 3, 4, and 5. The learners' average grades on the midterm exam did not show much difference between the non-flipped group (19.08 out of 30 points) and the flipped one (20 points). The matter was different in the final exam, as the results appeared to be statistically significant (See Table 3) because the mean score of the learners' performance in the flipped learning

classroom (38.88 out of 50 points) was better than the mean score of the non-flipped group (35.1 points).

**Table 3. Average Exam Points for Flipped and Non-Flipped Groups**

Tasks (Grades)	N	Midterm (30)			Final exam		
		M(SD)	T	P	M(SD)	t	p
Flipped group	80	20 (4.94)			38.88(7.62)		
Non-flipped group	78	19.08(4.68)	1.686	.402	35.1(7.78)	4.344	.033

**Table 4. Average Writing Task Points for Flipped and Non-Flipped Groups**

Tasks (Grades)	N	Paragraph 1 (20)			Paragraph 2 (30)		
		M(SD)	T	P	M(SD)	t	p
Flipped group	80	15.22 (1.56)			23.2 (3.42)		
Non-flipped group	78	15.32 (2.16)	-.548	.785	21.66 (3.98)	3.7	.068

Note: In the writing assignment (F, 8.326;  $p = .045$ ), Levene's (1960) test did not presume equal variance.

Table 4 presented an interesting outcome concerning the two writing tasks, as the mean grade of the non-flipped group (15.32 out of 20 points) in the first writing task was higher than that of the flipped group (15.22 points). In contrast, the second writing task offered the opposite outcome, as it was statistically insignificant ( $t = 3.7$ ,  $p = .068$ ) despite the flipped group having increased in the second writing task as the mean grade reached 23.2 out of 30 points, while the mean grade of the non-flipped group was 21.66 points. The learners in the flipped group did not obtain the same greater average mean grade than those in the non-flipped group in their presentations, as they had in the second writing task and their final exam.

**Table 5. Average Presentation Points for Flipped and Non-Flipped Groups**

Tasks (Grades)	N	Individual presentation (10)			Group presentation (20)		
		M(SD)	T	P	M(SD)	t	p
Flipped group	80	7.9(0.92)			15.44(1.38)		
Non-flipped group	78	7.86 (1.28)	0.346	.863	15.34 (1.8)	0.596	.766

Table 5 shows that the difference in both individual and group presentation between the flipped and non-flipped group did not have any statistical significance. In individual presentations, the mean grade of the flipped group was 7.9 out of 10 points, which was a little higher than the non-flipped group (7.86). Furthermore, the mean grade of the flipped group in the group presentation was 15.44 out of 20 points, whereas the mean grade of the non-flipped group was 15.34 points.

## Part B

### Learners' responses to the flipped learning model

As previously mentioned, there were three surveys over the semester, and the goal of the last two surveys was to focus on the learners' responses to the flipped learning method. Both the second and third survey asked the participants to express their feelings to the new approach in terms of whether they liked or disliked learning English via this model. The learners were asked to give reasons for their responses; Table 6 showed that 72 out of 80 felt that learning English through the flipped learning model was effective.

**Table 6. Learners' Responses to the Flipped Learning Method**

Surveys	N	Participants' responses	
		Like	Dislike
Second survey (Midterm)	80	72	8
Third survey (Final exam)	80	72	8

Table 6 indicated that most of the participants enjoyed learning English through applying the flipped learning approach, and they felt grateful for their teacher who flipped the class, but a few students (eight in each survey) were not satisfied with the new approach. Those learners mentioned different reasons for their dissatisfaction; four of them complained about having too much homework to do outside class time. Also, they thought watching videos at home without the teacher is fruitless because no one gave them feedback about their performance. One of the learners believed that the traditional lesson from the teacher is easier and more beneficial than the flipped approach. Another learner commented that in dealing with the presentation, he

needed higher-quality audio and visual features along with interactive elements.

The participants were asked how many times they viewed the videos for the paragraphs and presentations and how many minutes they took studying the educational materials, but their answers (watched each video once or twice) did not match the entire amount of time that the learners spent studying the content of the educational program (see Table 7). As exhibited in Table 7, 38 participants answered that they watched the video once in the individual presentation, meaning that 38 learners took 20 minutes to study the video. Thirty-four learners commented that they took more than 60 minutes, and only six learners said that they spent 20 minutes in studying the video in the individual presentation. The fact that many learners watched the material by saving a screenshot of the recorded videos led to the discrepancy between their answers and the total amount of time that the learners spent studying the content of the educational program (see Table 7).

**Table 7. The Frequency of Watching and the Minutes Used in Studying Each Video**

Task	N	Frequency of Watching					Minutes Used						
		0	1	2	3	4	0	20	30	40	50	60	70+
Paragraph 1	80	0	34	30	16	0	0	6	16	8	4	24	22
Paragraph 2	80	2	40	30	8	0	2	6	30	8	4	20	10
Individual presentation	80	0	38	32	4	6	0	6	28	8	4	26	8
Group presentation	80	0	36	30	8	6	0	4	30	8	4	12	22

It was observed from the previous surveys that the participants took more time when studying newer or more complicated assignments, such as the first paragraph writing task and the group presentation, whereas they took less time with simpler or recycled assignments, like the second writing task and individual presentation. The researcher found that 22 learners took 70 or more minutes studying the group presentation materials, while only eight participants spent more than 70 minutes studying the individual presentation content. It was clear that a similar studying model appeared in the paragraph writing tasks. Generally, ten learners took more than

70 minutes reviewing the compare-and-contrast educational content, while 22 learners took the same amount of time studying the opinion paragraph video.

## **Part C**

### **Teachers' observations of the learners' performance**

In comparing the flipped and non-flipped groups in terms of which group was more interested and involved in the learning process over the whole semester, the researcher found that the flipped learning group was more engaged in the learning process in many ways; firstly, the learners in the non-flipped group did not ask as many questions during the semester, whereas the learners in the flipped group provoked more questions in every class. These questions ranged from 11 to 16 questions per class, varying according to the learners' moods, different situations, and the content of the lesson. In studying any lesson content, the learners in the non-flipped group viewed the video in class first, and the teacher then asked them to work with their group members to answer the questions on the worksheet the researcher had prepared beforehand. It was found that the non-flipped group did not have enough time to discuss the lesson content deeply; this was clear after examining their answers on the worksheet. By contrast, the learners in the flipped learning group were asked to watch the video at home and fill out the worksheet. When checking their answers on the worksheet in class, it was obvious that the learners had group discussions in which they posed different types of implementation and assessment questions.

Another proof that the flipped group was more engaged in learning process is that the results of the final three assignments showed that the learners in the flipped group had higher grades. In addition, many learners in the flipped group tend to stay after class time to pose many questions about the day's lesson to gain more feedback and more information from the teacher, in contrast to the non-flipped class. The last piece of evidence is

that when the participants in the non-flipped group were asked to complete the worksheets on one of the readings, they just used the available information in the textbook without making any effort to search for outside sources, which rendered them unable to comprehend the lessons deeply. While the flipped group learners were different when dealing with the same task, they used outside sources such as the Internet to search for more information and were able to apply this information to their environment through class discussions. Therefore, it can be concluded that the learners in the flipped group were able to develop a deeper understanding of the content and had richer exploration of the materials than the non-flipped group.

## **Discussion**

The main target of the current study was to investigate the impacts of the flipped learning approach on the Egyptian college learners' accomplishments, their involvement in learning process during the course of one term, and their comprehension of the new learning method.

As previously mentioned, the findings indicated that only the mean score of the final exam was statistically significant, in spite of the fact that the flipped group was superior to the non-flipped in the three final assignments (presentations, writing tasks, and exams), as it attained higher average scores. The researcher noticed during the course how deeply, strongly, and widely the flipped method enhanced the learners to take part in the learning process over the semester; thus, these results were not surprising to the researcher. The participants in the flipped class were able to share actively in class and search for more information from outside sources, as well staying after class for more feedback, which did not happen with the learners in the non-flipped group. The behavior of the learners in the flipped learning class was different because they prepared for the lessons more meticulously and finished the worksheets before class. Therefore, the average scores in the three final assignments were higher in the flipped learning group because of their own preparation and personalized feedback from their

teacher, coupled with learners' active engagement in the learning process.

The current study agreed with other studies (Day & Foley, 2006; Alvarez, 2012; Hung, 2015; Bergmann & Sams, 2012) in which the learners tended to recognize the positive intervention of their teacher when they attain high grades in their assignments, in addition to the intended impacts of the flipped learning approach as noticed by the researcher. The flipped learning approach was helpful to the learners in many ways; it enhanced their understanding, performance, and confidence through a periodical procedure, as well as helping the learners to take control of their own learning. To sum up, it is true that the current study only indicates statistically significant results in the final test, but the flipped learning approach can be a promising teaching method to overcome many EFL contextual constraints previously mentioned in the current study.

It is true that the study of Hung (2015) reached its target after only 6 weeks as the results showed that both the full- and semi-flipped groups attained higher average grades than the non-flipped group, but the current study holds that the different learning environment plays an important role in learning; thus, the researcher proposes that the Egyptian college EFL learners need sufficient time to adjust to a new learning approach. Some previous studies (Littlewood, 1999; Lee, 2009) mentioned that many EFL learners may not be able to acclimate to being in an active and independent learning environment because they are used to listening to the lectures passively without playing any role. It was clear from the learners' exams and writing assignments that the learners in the flipped learning group were superior in achieving higher average mean scores in their second writing task and final exam grades more than in their first writing task and their midterm exam. In addition to the task scores, the teacher's notes showed that the participants in the flipped group were more reserved than those in the non-flipped class, particularly at the beginning of the fall term. However, the learners' behaviors in the two groups were reversed during the

term, and after time passed the learners in the flipped group were more involved in the learning process than the non-flipped class, which supports the researcher's idea that students learning a new teaching method need sufficient time to adjust.

Although the results of the current study established that in both presentations the flipped group attained better average mean scores than the non-flipped, the differences were statistically insignificant due to two reasons: firstly, the different nature of both presentations, as one of them was formal and academic, while the other was informal and narrative. Thus, the learners might have felt that they had to prepare two different assignments, in spite of the two presentation assignments sharing common items. The other reason is that the current study considered that mastering academic presentation skills is a challenge for Egyptian college learners, despite the researcher sequencing the final group presentation after the fulfillment of the two writing assignments because of their shared common elements.

Some previous studies (Truitt, 1995; Horwitz, 2010) stated that the presentation tasks are different from the exams and writing assignments (less disquiet-raising environment), as the learner stands in front of the class, their performance being recorded and evaluated, which means that the student is in the spotlight. Also, EFL students are prone to high levels of worry when asked to speak in public, which could indicate why the results of both presentations were statistically insignificant because of this type of disquiet-posing environment.

## **Conclusion**

It can be concluded from the current study that several components are needed if any teacher decides to flip the class. One of these elements is to give sufficient time for the instructors, as they have many tasks to do such as revising their curriculum, choosing the suitable criteria of evaluation, and selecting or creating and editing visual materials (e.g., video-recorded lectures) that will be used in the class, as well as, teaching the classes and observing learners' involvement in the

learning process and writing down notes after each class to give feedback. Another factor is that the teachers need to communicate with the university tech support team to enrich their recorded lectures through ensuring the quality of the video materials (e.g., resolution, sound) in addition to the format compatibility such as being viewable on multiple devices. A few participants mentioned in their comments that the online educational materials would be more beneficial if they included interactive elements, especially for the presentation videos recorded via the researcher's laptop. The last needed factor is to solve the problem of access to the Internet in two ways: either the teachers may apply Brinks Lockwood's (2014) suggestion, which relies on substituting online educational programs with printed and/or animated PowerPoint presentations, or setting up and/or reserving place in a computer lab where learners can study the educational programs. To sum up, securing adequate time, accessibility of online lessons, and quality of online educational programs are important elements needed for efficiently applying the flipped learning approach.

Dealing with learners differs according to their level of English; the learners in the current study had strong study skills, comparatively high English ability, and eagerness to study. Thus, all course content was video-recorded in English. If the students have low English proficiency, the teachers may consider scaffolding their lesson with different techniques such as utilizing the learners' first language according to their levels, but in phases. In the beginning of the term, teachers could provide more video lessons in the learners' first language; as the term progresses, the teachers could give more recorded videos in English combined with subtitles in the learners' first language, and then all video lectures should be produced in English toward the end of the semester. Using the first language with EFL learners with low-level proficiency can not only facilitate learning but also lessen worry and frustration, as recommended by Sternfeld (1997).

More studies on flipped learning in EFL classrooms are required to evaluate the impacts of this new model, as the

current study did not indicate statistical significance for either the presentation assignments or final exam. Additionally, the current study compared the outcomes of the flipped and non-flipped group approach performed in a general English classroom, whereas other studies may do the same, but in academic writing or presentation courses. The current study has suggested that teachers should give more chances to the learners to practice further writing assignments in a flipped approach, which may lead to achieving statistically significant grades. This conclusion was due to the outcomes of both groups in the first and the second writing tasks, as the non-flipped group was superior in the first writing task and gained higher average grades, while the flipped group earned higher average scores in the second writing assignment, which means that the flipped learning approach needs more practice. Moreover, the current study holds that the comparatively small sample size used in the study might account for the statistical insignificance of the data; thus, if future studies employ larger sample sizes, particularly in academic writing courses, the results might be more statistically significant.

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