

مجلة العلوم التربوية



# The Effect of Online Flipped Project-Based Learning on Developing English Major Student Teachers' Writing of Narrative Essays

# By

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#### Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate the effect of using online flipped project-based learning on developing fourth year English major student teachers' writing of narrative essays. The study was conducted on fourth year students at Qena Faculty of Education (N=35). The participants received treatment (online flipped project-based Learning) through which they watched online video lectures uploaded on Edpuzzle about narrative writing to develop and present writing projects. Two instruments were used to verify the effect of the treatment on the participants; the English Writing Test (EWT) and Narrative Writing scoring rubric. Study findings revealed a significant effect of online flipped project-based learning on the participants' writing of narrative essays. Therefore, it is recommended that EFL instructors take advantage of online flipped project-based learning in order to boost students' writing skills.

Key Words: Online Flipped Project-Based Learning, Writing, narrative Essays

# أثر التعلم المقلوب القائم على المشروعات عبر الإنترنت في تنمية كتابة المقالات السردية لدى الطلاب المعلمين تخصص اللغة الإنجليزية

#### المستخلص

هدفت الدراسة إلي التعرف علي أثر استخدام التعلم المقلوب القائم علي المشروعات عبر الإنترنت في تتمية كتابة المقالات السردية لدي الطلاب المعلمين تخصص اللغة الإنجليزية، وقد تكونت عينة الدراسة من (٣٥) طالبا وطالبة بالفرقة الرابعة تخصص اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية بقنا، حيث استخدمت الدراسة الحالية تصميم المجموعة الواحدة مع اختبار قبلي بعدي. تم تدريس الطلاب باستخدام التعلم المقلوب القائم علي المشروعات عبر الإنترنت، و ذلك من خلال مشاهداتهم لمقاطع الفيديو التعليمية التي تم رفعها علي Pdpuzzle عن الكتابة السردية ، ثم إنتاج الطلاب المشروعات الكتابة. لمعرفة أثر التعلم المقلوب القائم علي المشروعات عبر الإنترنت، و ذلك من خلال مشاهداتهم الأدوات التالية: اختبار الكتابة في اللغة الإنجليزية، مقياس متدرج لتقدير الكتابة السردية. وقد أظهرت الأدوات التالية: اختبار الكتابة في اللغة الإنجليزية، مقياس متدرج لتقدير الكتابة السردية. وقد أظهرت المقالات السردية لدي عينة الدراسة. وبناءَ علي المشروعات عبر الانترنت أثرًا ملحوظًا في تتمية كتابة المقالات السردية لدي عينة الدراسة. وبناءَ علي المشروعات عبر الانترنت أثرًا ملحوظًا في تمية كتابة المقالات السردية لدي عينة الدراسة. وبناءَ علي ذلك فقد أوصت الدراسة بضرورة استخدام معلمين اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية للتعلم المقلوب القائم علي المشروعات علي الطلاب، تم المتخدام المقالات السردية لدي عينة الدراسة. وبناءَ علي ذلك فقد أوصت الدراسة بضرورة استخدام معلمين المقالات السردية لدي عينة الدراسة. وبناءَ علي ذلك فقد أوصت الدراسة بضرورة استخدام معلمين المقالات السردية الذي علية المقلوب القائم علي المشروعات عبر الانترنت أثرًا ملحوظًا في تنمية كتابة

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعلم المقلوب القائم على المشروعات عبر الإنترنت ، الكتابة، المقالات السردية

## Introduction

Writing, as a productive skill, is indispensable for English language learners as it enables them to think logically, develop and share their thoughts and ideas with others regardless of time and place. As Bailey (2022) reports, writing is the suitable method for expressing your ideas and presenting your knowledge and ideas to others. Without writing, the learners' thoughts will stay invisible and locked in their minds

For EFL learners, writing is fundamental as it plays a significant role in teaching and learning English. It is one of the indicators that determines learners' success in English and reflects their language proficiency (Larasati, 2015). Students cannot succeed inside or outside their class until they are able to write well. Hence, EFL learners are required to master writing skills to effectively use the English language that they learn whether for academic or daily-life functions.

Furthermore, writing is like a channel between other skills of language; listening, speaking and reading. While learning these skills, students actually write. Elaborating this point, As Almarwani (2007) mentioned, in listening, students take notes of what they listen to and while reading, they write a summary of what they read. They take notes and write down expressions to be used while speaking. In brief, having good writing skills enables students to master the target language as well as the other skills of the language.

Writing is a multidimensional skill that includes a set of sub-skills that should be mastered. As Alahamadi (2014) reports, writing involves other complex sub-skills of planning and organization. Therefore, there are many sub-skills and aspects that should be emphasized while writing. Further, the writing skill involves many processes and stages. Discussing this matter, Karatikawati (2012) viewed writing as a challenging activity that requires comprehensive abilities to present ideas in a well-organized written form. Along the same line, Al-Samadani (2010) added that writing is a complex process; its complexity arises from the fact that it includes different stages; prewriting, writing, revising and editing. It requires more than mere knowledge of the language as it requires many mental processes and critical thinking as well (as cited in Alahamadi, 2014).

As a matter of fact, teaching writing is not less complex than the writing process itself. Alahamdi (2014) mentioned that there are many

approaches to writing: process, product, genre, error analysis and case-study approach. However, deciding on the suitable approach to adopt in teaching writing is not an easy task. Choosing which of these approaches to use is determined by different factors such as students' level, curriculum, text types and other factors (Hasan & Akhand, 2010).

In the EFL context, teaching writing has traditionally been dominated by the product approach which is mainly concerned with the final draft the students present focusing only on producing an error-free composition (Gabrielatos, 2002). In such approach, the process of writing is totally neglected. Besides, teachers use most of the class time to explain the material in a traditional way before coming to the writing task, so there is limited time for the writing practice itself and involving the students to participate actively in the teaching and learning activities. (Larasati, 2015; Afrilyasanti, Cahyono & Astuti, 2016).

More specifically, In Egypt, the educational system emphasizes writing only for taking tests which is not likely to make students interested in writing. Also, English majors complain about their essay writing courses because they are offered titles of writing topics about which they should write comfortably at home without being given any guidance or feedback (Ahmed, 2011). Briefly, the dominant instructional methodologies have not kept pace with the changing needs of students and the new technologies.

Hence, writing becomes one of the most difficult language skills to teach as well as to learn. As for EFL learners, they face writing difficulties that are related to the linguistic and rhetorical levels. The linguistic level means the syntax or grammatical range and vocabulary or lexical aspects employed in the written task. Syntax includes the sentence structures in addition to clause types, and vocabulary encompasses phrases and use of cohesive devices among others. As for the rhetorical level of writing, learners are faced with decisions they have to make about the purpose, content, unity and organization of their ideas into a coherent written text (Farah, 2014).

Fourth year students at Qena Faculty of Education have received EFL writing instruction for the last three years, however most of them still face difficulties while writing. University students are required to put their writing skill into effect through writing essays, research papers, lesson plans and other different academic functions and tasks. Besides, those students are about to graduate and it is urgently important to enhance their writing skills.

Therefore, it is the instructor's duty to adopt and adapt an appropriate way of teaching writing effectively .

Based on essay course specifications, fourth year students at Faculty of Education are expected to express their own ideas in a written form and comment on surrounding events, to write lengthy coherent essays on various topics, to write well-organized argumentative and expository essays, achieve unity and coherence in writing essays and manifest other writing skills .

For teaching writing to be successful and effective, teachers have to use innovative and suitable teaching methods different from the prevailing ones. They have to use methods that keep pace with the new technologies and attract learners' attention to focus on both the process of making the text and the final product of their writing. In this respect, Engin (2014) stated that :

Students are immersed in a multimodal environment both inside and outside the classroom. The challenge facing educators in higher education is how to leverage the students' interest and experience of technology in fulfilling the learning outcomes of a course. In a second language-learning context, this means incorporating technology to develop the learners' writing skills (p.12).

In English language teaching, approaches, methods and techniques play a vital role in helping students acquire and learn the skills of the target language. Constructivism is one of the theories that was implemented in teaching English. It is a theory of learning that views learners at the center of the learning process, as an active process (Thornbury, 2006; Jordan, Carlile & Stack, 2008). In this connection, Moursund (2016) demonstrated that it is based on the idea that individual learners construct their own knowledge building on their current knowledge. Additionally, it focuses on meaningmaking and the understanding of knowledge which is situated and constructed in social contexts.

As Tan and Chapman (2016) maintain, "project-based learning is based on the theory of social constructivism, a form of constructivism that emphasizes the collaborative nature of learning" (p. 39). In constructivistbased instruction, the teacher works with groups of learners facilitating project-based learning (PBL) which fosters students' interaction and collaboration in groups as they learn, construct and develop their own knowledge. Hence, PBL shifts learning from teacher-centered to studentcentered approach. Moursund (2016) added that the teacher works as a guide on the side or a mentor that provides resources and help to students. In English language learning, it is claimed by some researchers that PBL may help in developing writing skills. PBL allows English language learners to engage with their own learning; they can plan, revise and reflect on both learning process and product. To illustrate, Erben, Ban, and Castañeda (2009) argued that PBL can be further enhanced through allowing students to use a wide variety of online tools and to access authentic materials. Most importantly, Bilimleri (2018) indicated that PBL is an effective means of practical teaching. However, in the process of project-based teaching, there are also some problems, such as difficulties to control classroom teaching time.

Flipped learning is considered as an instructional approach that supports the tenets of constructivism by freeing class time for inquiry-based learning (Brandat, 1997, as cited in Alzaytuniya, 2016). In relation to this issue, Sams (2011) reported that flipped classroom approach follows a socio-constructivist framework rooted in the idea that all active learning should be during class time, and all passive work can be done at home. According to Flipped Learning Network (FLN) (2014), flipped learning is mainly based on the fact that information that was traditionally delivered directly to the entire classroom, via lecture, is delivered outside of the classroom, typically online, in digital or video format. Classroom time is then primarily spent engaged in active learning experiences.

It is worth mentioning that flipped learning enables students to study courses online, out of a real classroom, on their own. Hence, students have the chance to do more exercises and activities in class (Kara, 2016). To be more specific, Buitrago and Díaz (2018) indicated that "flipping the writing classroom allowed teachers to devote time for every step in the writing process (i.e., brainstorming, outlining, drafting, revising, and editing) and to guide students as they worked on every link in the chain" (p. 77).

More relevantly, flipped learning may be one of the pedagogical tools in English language classrooms, but is not a sole means for enhancing engagement of all students (Moran, 2015). As an illustration, integrating flipped learning into project-based learning may reduce the time of teachers' classroom instruction and increase the time of students' participation in project practice. Gorman (2018) viewed that PBL and flipped learning not only coexist, but also complement each other. As teachers combine the PBL and flipped learning experience, this erases the classroom walls allowing for an authentic and constant learning experience as students manipulate materials outside the teaching and learning sessions. In-class activities are then to be filled with working on projects (Abd El-Rahman, et al., 2017; Gorman, 2018). Béres and Kis (2018) mentioned that inverting the classroom and integrating project work brought positive changes in students' in-class behavior and activity.

From the above, it is obvious that learning writing is problematic for most EFL students. Further, online flipped project-based learning may be effective in teaching English writing. However, combining project-based learning and flipped learning has not received the researchers' due attention in Egypt so far. Accordingly, this study is an attempt to investigate the effect of online flipped project-based learning on developing writing competence of English major student teachers.

#### Statement of the problem

The present study investigated this problem : the majority of fourth year English major student teachers at Qena Faculty of Education have difficulties in writing, particularly narrative writing. They lacked essential writing skills. Based on this problem statement, the study attempted to answer the following question:

• What is the effect of online flipped project-based learning on developing the participants' writing of narrative essays?

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effect of using online flipped project-based learning on developing fourth year English major student teachers' writing of narrative essays.

#### Significance of the Study

The significance of the study can be described in the following points:

• Findings of the study might encourage instructors in universities as well as in schools to think seriously of incorporating online flipped project-based learning in EFL courses.

• The instruments that were constructed namely, English Writing Test and Narrative Writing Scoring Rubric might be useful for teachers, lecturers and researchers.

• The study might be useful for EFL university students as their writing skills may be enhanced.

• Hopefully, the flipped project-based learning program may offer a solution to overcome EFL writing difficulties.

• The combination of flipped learning with project-based learning could be an effective writing instructional model that may help increase the writing competence of EFL student teachers.

•To the researcher's knowledge, the scarcity of studies addressing the use of online flipped project-based learning in Egyptian EFL context enhanced the significance of the study.

### Hypothesis of the Study

1. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the participants in the pre and post-administrations of English writing test, concerning narrative writing, in favor of the postadministration.

## **Delimitations of the study**

The study was delimited to the following:

- 1. Fourth year students majoring in English enrolled at Qena Faculty of Education. They are about to graduate and are more likely to take their future career, teachers of English, seriously. As university is the last educational stage for most of them, it is the best time for them to develop their writing competence and promote their autonomy.
- 2. Higher level dimensions of writing (organization, unity, style), mechanics and accuracy.
- 3. Narrative essays.
- 4. Using Edpuzzle for uploading video lectures. Edpuzzle is an online platform that allows teachers to make videos of their own. They can also use video lectures created by other teachers, adjust these videos by embedding their own questions or audio during the video, and assign it to their students (Edpuzzle, 2018).

# Method

# **Participants**

Participants of the study were a group of fourth year students majoring in English enrolled at Qena Faculty of Education, South Valley University (n=35). The participants included males and females. All participants had studied English as a foreign language for fifteen years. As for writing instruction, they have been studying essay as a mandatory subject for three years through which they dealt with various genres of writing. Participants age ranged from 19 to 23 years.

### **Design of the Study**

The present study adopted the One-Group, pretest-posttest Design. In this design, the effect of the treatment is judged by the difference between the pretest and the posttest scores.

#### Instruments

The following instruments were developed by the researcher to examine the effect of online flipped project-based learning on developing the participants' writing of narrative essays: English Writing Test (EWT) and a Narrative Writing Scoring Rubric.

### **1. English Writing Test (EWT)**

The EWT was developed to assess the students' writing competence prior to and after administrating the online flipped project-based learning. It measures the students' competence of writing narrative essays. The English writing test (EWT) set for the participants was a criterion-referenced test in which a given score was interpreted relevant to preset criteria rather than to the performance of other test takers. The EWT was a one-part test which included writing one narrative essay on a randomly selected topic.

The EWT was in print form. It was accompanied by a cover letter including information about the purpose of the test and time allowed to complete the test, as well as clear and simple instructions about how to answer the test items. Instructions were written in English. They were brief, simple and clear from any possible ambiguities.

For scoring the EWT, a narrative scoring rubric, prepared by the researcher, was utilized. Students' writing of narrative essays was assessed separately on each of the five predetermined criteria: organization, unity, style, accuracy and mechanics. Writing competence on each criterion is judged along five levels of performance.

In terms of the rating procedure, two independent raters were engaged in correcting the subjects' writing tests or papers in an attempt to improve the scoring reliability, to minimize the subjectivity of the rating, to prevent the possibility of the researcher's bias and attain the highest possible degree of objectivity. Then, the two raters' scores were checked and compared to examine the rate of agreement between the raters. The similarities in the scoring were high. The final score consisted of the average score of the two raters. The EWT was piloted on a random sample of fourth year students majoring in English (n=20) other than those assigned to the experiment. The pilot study was conducted at the start of the first semester of the academic year 2020/2021 to: (1) examine the validity and reliability of the test; (2) measure the internal consistency of the test; (3) estimate the time allocated for completing the test. To establish the test reliability, the test-retest method was used. The test was administered to a piloting sample, and the same test was administered again to the same students after two weeks. The reliability of the test was 0.92. Intrinsic validity of the test was also obtained by using the following formula:

Intrinsic Validity =  $\sqrt{Reliablity Item}$ 

Intrinsic Validity of the test =  $\sqrt{0.92}$  = 0.959

This result indicated that the test was highly reliable and valid.

To verify the face and content validity of the EWT, it was submitted to a jury of TEFL experts. The jury members examined the instrument and expressed their opinions regarding clarity, adequacy, difficulty level of the test items, and its relevancy to the writing skills which are intended to be assessed. Suggestions and comments of the jury members were taken into consideration and implemented by the researcher while making the final version.

### 2. Narrative Writing Scoring Rubric

A narrative writing scoring rubric was developed by the researcher to assess students' writing of narrative essays. The scoring rubric was composed of four major components: criteria, indicators, levels of performance, and descriptors. Five criteria including (sub-writing domains); unity. organization, style, accuracy and mechanics, are listed in the left column in the rubric. For each criterion, the raters applying the rubric can determine to what degree the student has met the criterion, i.e., the level of competence. The rubric contains five levels of performance: advanced, proficient, acceptable, needs improvement, not applicable. As for indicators, which are placed in the second-to-left column in the rubrics, the scoring rubric of narrative writing comprises nineteen indicators. The indicators help better know the quality of performance. Descriptors are also supplied to further explain what is expected from students at each level of performance for each criterion.

The developed scoring rubrics provide a mechanism for assigning a score to each criterion. Students can get 0, 1, 2, 3, or 4 points for each indicator within a criterion. The total possible score for narrative writing is seventy six.

The scoring rubric was submitted to a jury of EFL professors and specialists for face and content validity. The jury members were asked to give their opinions concerning the appropriateness of performance levels, the clarity of each indicator, its relevance to the criterion and its consistency with other indicators. One of the jury members suggested adding a column at the end to write in the score, and then at the end we have a line for the total. It is helpful in keeping track of the grades for each criterion and adding them at the end. The jury members' suggestions and modifications were considered in the final version of the rubric.

The scoring rubric was piloted to make sure that it could be applied reliably by raters. Inter-rater reliability was used to establish the rubric reliability. It was measured by having the researcher and another rater independently score the same test papers of a piloting sample of students (n= 20) and then calculating a correlation between their scores. The correlation coefficient was computed using Pearson Correlation. Results are shown in Table 1.

Rater	Μ	SD	Spearman's Correlation
One	43.35	7.45	0.92**
Two	43.70	6.79	

Table 1The Correlation Between the Two Raters for Narrative Writing ScoringRubric

\*\* Correlation was significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

As shown in Table 1, the correlation between the two raters was .92. It was statistically significant at 0.01 level.

For internal consistency of the scoring rubric of the narrative writing, the correlation coefficient of each criterion (i.e., unity, organization, style, accuracy and mechanics) with the overall scoring rubric was calculated using Pearson Correlation. Table 2 presents the correlation coefficient of each criterion with the overall scoring rubric of the narrative writing.

#### Table 2

М	SD	Pearson Correlation			
7.52	1.39	0.79**			
15.72	2.50	0.95**			
8.77	1.32	0.67**			
4.15	1.38	0.80**			
7.30	1.79	0.77**			
43.47	6.88				
	M 7.52 15.72 8.77 4.15 7.30	M SD   7.52 1.39   15.72 2.50   8.77 1.32   4.15 1.38   7.30 1.79			

The Coefficient of Correlation Between the Five Criteria of the Narrative Writing Scoring Rubric with the Overall Rubric.

\*\* Correlation was significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Results indicated that the narrative writing scoring rubric was valid and reliable.

### **Procedures of the Study**

Prior to the experiment, the participants were given the English Writing Test as pre-administration. The experiment of the study was carried out at the beginning in the Second semester of the academic year 2020-2021. It lasted for a month (two-hour session per week). On this writing course, narrative essay writing was taught.

Throughout the sessions, the subjects were exposed to video lectures related to the target essay types uploaded on Edpuzzle pre-class. Worksheets, including interactive activities that measure writing competence were given to the participants during class time Also, the participants were given a list of narrative writing topics and projects to select a new topic and a new project to write about and work on . After class, the participants were engaged implementing the writing project they selected to work on .

During the implementation of online flipped project-based learning activities, the instructor's role was to provide help, support and feedback to students when they ask for it  $\diamond$ .

At the end of the experiment, the English Writing Test was administered to the participants as post-administration.

## **Results of the Study**

The quantitative data analysis was conducted to assess the effect of online flipped project-based learning on developing the participants' writing of narrative essays. Collected data were statistically treated through the SPSS (Version 25). Descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, together with inferential statistics were computed.

Paired samples t-test (2-tailed) was used to determine if there was any significant differences between the mean scores of the participants on the pre and post administration of the EWT.

For statistical analysis, the alpha level of significance of 0.05 level of confidence was set. To measure the effect size of online flipped project-based learning on the participants' writing of narrative essays, Cohen's 'd' was computed using "t" value for the differences between the means of scores.

## **1.** Results concerning the study hypothesis

H1 There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the participants in the pre and post-administrations of English writing test, concerning narrative writing, in favor of the postadministration.

Relevant data to this hypothesis are reported in Table 3.

Variable	Administration	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	Sig.	d	Effect Size
Writing of	Pre	35	26.34	3.89	52.25	34	0.000*	0.02	T
Narrative Essays	Post	35	52.04	5.16	53.35	34	0.000*	9.02	Large
*P~0.05									

Table 3 *t-value and Effect Size for the Pre and Post-administrations of the EWT* 

°P<0.05

Data reported in Table 3 showed that there is a significant difference between the participants' writing competence concerning narrative writing on the pre-and post-administrations, respectively (M=36.34, 52.04, SD=3.89, 5.16, df=34, t=53.35, p,.05). Thus, the study hypothesis was accepted.

To measure the effect size 'd' of using online flipped project-based learning (independent variable) on the participants' writing of narrative essays (dependent variable), Cohen's 'd' was computed using the following statistical formula (Willard, 2020)

$$d = \frac{t}{\sqrt{n}}$$

Thus, 'd' = 11.11

Based on 'd' value, the effect size 'd' was computed using the following statistical formula (Willard, 2020):

 $d = \frac{t}{\sqrt{n}}$ 

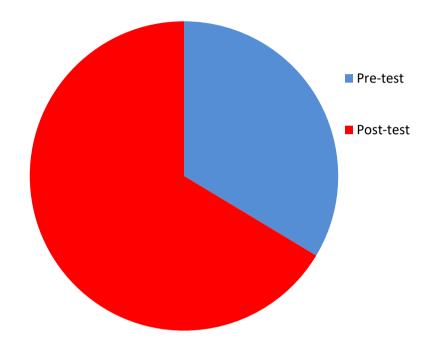
The effect size 'd' was 9.02. According to Willard (2020), the effect size identified whether it is large, medium, or small depending on the following:

'd' value =	.20 to .49	Small Effect
'd' value =	.50 to .79	Medium Effect
'd' value =	.80 and above	Large Effect

This finding was the answer for the study question : What is the effect of online flipped project-based learning on developing the participants' writing of narrative essays? Data represented in Table 3 indicated that online flipped project-based learning had a large effect size on narrative writing of the participants (d=9.02).

Figure 1 illustrates the results shown in table 3.

Figure 1. A comparison between Scores of the Pre and Post-administrations of the EWT



#### **Summary of the Results**

The results can be summarized as follows:

1. There were statistically significant differences between the pre and posttest of English writing test regarding narrative writing, favoring the post-test. The participants gained higher scores in the post-test than the pre-test in (t-values was 53.35). Thus, the study hypothesis was accepted. 2. Online flipped project-based learning had a large effect on the participants' writing of narrative essays (d= 9.02).

#### Conclusions

In light of the findings of the study, the following conclusions could be drawn:

1. Online flipped project-based learning had a large effect on developing the students' writing of narrative essays.

2. Online flipped project-based learning provided the students with a motivating student-centered learning environment which allowed learners to feel confident and responsible and hence enjoy writing.

3. Online flipped project-based learning activities (pre- exposure to the learning material on Edpuzzle, video lectures and collaborative writing projects) enabled the students to practice writing narrative essays meaningfully; therefore, their writing competence was developed.

#### Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the present study, the following recommendations were offered:

1. It is recommended that EFL instructors take advantage of online flipped project-based learning and its activities in English writing classes.

2. It is recommended that student teachers be provided with opportunities to implement online flipped project-based learning in EFL contexts.

3. Curriculum designers are recommended to prepare materials that can be perceived by the incorporation of flipped and project-based learning.

#### **Suggestions for Further Research**

1. Using online flipped project-based learning with EFL learners in various educational levels needs further research.

2. The present study needs to be replicated in different regions of Egypt, or perhaps with different age groups/levels.

3. More researches need to be conducted to determine the effect of online flipped project-based learning on other language skills and areas such as speaking, grammar, pronunciation, spelling, and vocabulary.

4. Further research is required to explore students' attitudes towards online flipped project-based learning.

5. The relationship between online flipped project-based learning and gender should be examined .

6. Further research is needed to investigate the challenging and obstacles of implementing online flipped project-based learning in EFL contexts in Egypt.

7. A comparative study can be undertaken to compare the effect of flipped project-based learning implemented in regular learning environment with online environment.

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