

# Google Classroom in Teaching Writing Composition for College Students

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## Abstract

Technology plays a vital role in all walks of life, one of these is Education. Google Classroom is one of the educational tools that are free of cost and recently has gained popularity within a short period in many countries, including Iraq. The primary purpose of this study is to explore the Google Classroom use in EFL learners' composition writing. The sample of the study is EFL Second-year College students from the College of Science for Women /Computer Science Department, which consisted of (35) students who have implemented Google Classroom for at least one semester in their classroom. The students were asked to finish two uncompleted paragraphs that have the only main idea and write a suitable conclusion to each one. The results showed that Google Classroom is not an entirely effective application in developing student's achievements in composition writing, but it is useful.

**Keywords:** Educational technology, Computer technology, Google Classroom, writing skill, paragraph writing

## الصف الإلكتروني في تدريس مادة الإنشاء لطلاب الجامعة

م.م. هند سالم كشكول - جامعة بغداد - كلية العلوم للبنات - قسم علوم الحاسوب

### المستخلص:

للتكنولوجيا دور مهم في كل مجالات الحياة من ضمنها التعليم . الصف الإلكتروني هو احد الوسائل التعليمية المجانية التي اشتهرت مؤخرا في مدة قصيرة من الزمن من ضمنها العراق . الهدف الرئيسي من هذه الدراسة هو بيان مدى تأثير الصف الإلكتروني في تطوير مهارات الكتابة لمتعلمي اللغة الانكليزية كلغة ثانوية . عينة الدراسة شملت طلاب المرحلة الثانية من كلية العلوم للبنات \ قسم علوم الحاسوب والتي شملت ٣٥ طالبة طبقت نظام الصف الإلكتروني على الاقل مدة فصل دراسي واحد . قامت الطالبات بأكمال موضوعين انشائيين يحتويان على مقدمة حيث طلب منهن تكملة المواضيع وكتابة خاتمة مناسبة لكل منهما . بعد تطبيق العمليات الاحصائية ، اظهرت النتائج ان للصف الإلكتروني اثر ليس بالكبير في تحسين اداء الطالبات في كتابة الانشاء .

الكلمات المفتاحية : التكنولوجيا التربوية ، تكنولوجيا الحاسوب ، الصف الإلكتروني، مهارة الكتابة ،

كتابة الإنشاء

## 1. Introduction

Teachers and parents understand the importance of computers in language learning, they like to use computers to develop their children's abilities, and knowledge, so many studies have found that the use of computer technology can improve learners' performance and motivate them towards learning and encouraging them to use English in real-life communication. Blake (2000:120)

Google Classroom is an online application related to e-learning invented in 2014 and has been used by many teachers all over the world. This tool is considered influential in teaching that can help EFL learners in learning writing skills.

Most students face great difficulty when learning English, especially when English is not their language. There are many ways to teach English either inside or outside the classroom. With the development of the internet in the past twenty years, Google Classroom (henceforth GC) has been used widely in the field of English language teaching and learning. In Iraq, it is used for the last two years; GC can be used as a means of communication among students and teachers outside the classroom.

Kasula (2015:11) mentioned in his study which he investigated the effectiveness of using GC in teaching, that GC can effectively allow teachers to view the classroom activities, objectives, and assignments in an orderly way that can get students' attention and interest in the academic language. GC is also considered as an easy way which makes students use documents online and quickly display information. He also urged teachers to use this tool and employ it in teaching, especially when teaching writing. Teachers are considered the source of motivation, resources, and feedback providers. They can motivate their students to be creative writers, encouraging them to write and assist them when they need help. Harmer (2014:369)

### 1.1. Problem and its significance

EFL learners face many problems when writing the language. These problems can be seen in stylistics, word-use, and sentence formation in addition to the difficulties

when using grammar and vocabulary. Because writing is considered as a means of communication through which one can convey a specific message to the reader and can express his/ her needs and desires, most EFL learners face great difficulty when writing paragraphs or compositions. Writing is one of the four skills that need attention from both the instructor and the students. They have to know the mechanics of writing, the style, and the choice of both the language and vocabulary. GC is the tool that helps saving time and effort for the instructor as well as the students. Students and instructors can communicate easily and mutually when they write the assignment. So this study aims to show the effect of using GC in teaching writing composition.

The importance of using Google Classroom is not only an effective way of developing EFL learner's writing abilities but also in writing grammatically correct sentences as well as spelling. Students to promote their insight into the foreign language. Furthermore, this study is of value to both university instructors and students to promote their insight into the foreign language writing system.

#### 1.2. The aim of the Study

The study aims at exploring GC use in teaching English language writing by finding out:

1. The differences between the students' achievement in writing composition by using pencil & paper test and the GC test.
2. The differences between the scale four components.

#### 1.3. Limits of the study

The study is limited to second year College students from the College of Science for Women /Computer Science Department, for the academic year 2018–2019.

#### The procedures of the study

Google classroom is a recent application that is beneficial for teachers and students. Teachers can do their work without papers, and the application can work by using a computer or Smartphone. Universities in Iraq follow the instructions of the Ministry of

Higher Education and Scientific research. All universities in Iraq apply this instruction and the instructors use the application of GC in their teaching.

As the researcher is one of the instructors who attend a course in using GC in teaching, she follows the steps in teaching writing to her students whose major is not English. Their field of study is computer science. Hence, they are good at using the computer and GC, but they lack the strategy of writing composition. Two lectures of writing mechanism are given to the students who are about parts of a paragraph, how to write a paragraph, and kinds of paragraphs are given to the students who are exposed to a test in which they were asked to complete two paragraphs which have a beginning and the students have to complete the body and the conclusion of the paragraph; this test is done on papers in their real classroom. At the same time, the second group answered the same paragraphs in their GC application.

The researcher implemented the following procedures in conducting the study during the first semester of the academic year 2019–2020:

1. Reviewing the related steps of using the GC application
2. Designing the writing test.
3. Applying the test by assigning the two uncompleted passages through GC and asking students to complete them.
4. Establishing the validity and reliability of the test.
5. Analyzing the gained data statistically to reach the conclusions and
6. Suggesting pedagogical implications and recommendations.

## **2. Theoretical background**

This section is divided into two major parts, the first of which concentrates on Technology and Education taking into consideration the use of GC and its advantages. The second part concentrates on reviewing the previous studies that are done in this field.

## 2.1. Technology and Education

Technology is considered as a tool that can support robust education and learning. Teachers must continue developing their teaching methods by using of technology in his / her teaching. Technology can also be considered a medium to create a change in the classroom as it is stated by O'shea and Self(1983:59) that Educational Technology regards computer as a means of equipment that has a significant contribution to assist teaching and learning effectively and can implement the general educational objectives. Brown (2007:196) mentioned that Technology could play a significant role in the language teaching classroom. Technology can facilitate learning complexity and considered useful for language learning. Collins (1992:24) stated that Technology could provide a useful tool to develop education. When teachers use Technology, the students' learning outcomes can be increased and developed in a way that the teacher can noticeably able to conclude. Wallace (2014:233) stated that Social networking could make students' performance effective, help teachers and students to work together, motivate students towards learning, and can help to raise the standard of education.

## 2.2. Google Classroom

GC is an application that is developed by Google for academic purposes and has a major impact on teaching. GC is straightforward to use, as it is helpful to both students and teachers to be engaged in the lesson and the assignment. This application is effortless to use and can save more time and effort. Janzen (2017: 335) points out that GC can simplify the instructions, assignment as well the entire course learning, all can be done through the mutual interaction between teachers and their students.

### 2.2.1. Advantages of Google Classroom

Google develops Google classroom for specific purposes that assist academic teaching. It is so simple to use and help teachers and students to keep on the lesson. This process can save money, time, and space; by using Google classroom, teachers spend more time with their students. Google Classroom has a specific

feature that can add more than one teacher and can create an open discussion. S. Iftakhar (2016: 12-13).

Pappas (2017:341) mentions the following as significant advantages of GC:

1. Easy to use and openable from all devices

To use this application, it does not need to be an expert; it is effortless and effortless to use. Everyone who has a Google account can access this application from any technological device like a computer, tablet, or Smartphone; it needs an internet connection so you can use it anytime and anywhere. It is not restricted to the classroom environment. The students can write the assignment in their free time.

2. Has an Effective sharing

GC is a tool that can be used to share information and documents with a limitless number of individuals when a teacher creates an assignment by GC, the students can immediately access this assignment. The significant interest of teachers is to make sure that s/he has become certain that the students received the assignment. So there is no more need for her/ his presence to share information.

3. Paperless

There is no need for papers and no need to worry about printing out and losing the students' assignments anymore and this can save time and effort.

4. Facilitate and speed the assignment

GC makes the process of learning easy, fast, and efficient. There is no need to meet the teacher and hand the assignment. All that students have to do is to upload the given folder and send it again so the teacher can notice who has submitted the assignment and who does not.

5. Has effective feedback

GC provides the teachers with the opportunity to give their students feedback like new comments, notes, and remarks, which are considered very useful to make students interact.

6. Has a great commenting system

GC can open online discussions, comments, and interaction among students or between teachers and students.

#### 7. Speeds up the assignment process

GC affects making learning the language accessible, fast, and efficient. The students can do the assignment easily with no need to meet the teacher or listen to her/ his instructions.

### 2.2.2.Steps of Google Classroom Implementation

#### Step 1: Installation of the Application

A session is made for teachers in Ibn Sina Centre at the University of Baghdad to teach instructors how to make this application useful in their teaching. So the application can be installed by using computers or via play store in the smart phones.

#### **Step 2: Creating a Class**

After installing the application, class creation the second step. A click makes this creation on the (+) sign, then "creative class "is chosen. All class information like class name, section, room, and the subject are included, and when everything is finished, the instructor click "create."

#### **Step 3: Adding the students**

This process can be done either by sending an email to the students inviting them to join the class or by giving them the code of the class, and they can access the class. Students need to install the application to join the class. The application can be installed easily. Students can also join the class quickly.

#### **Step 4: Send the assignment**

When ensuring that all students joined the class, the teacher sends the assignment that she chooses to the students. All selected students are tested selected material, which is uncompleted storied, and they are asked to continue writing in their style. The steps are illustrated in the following figure:



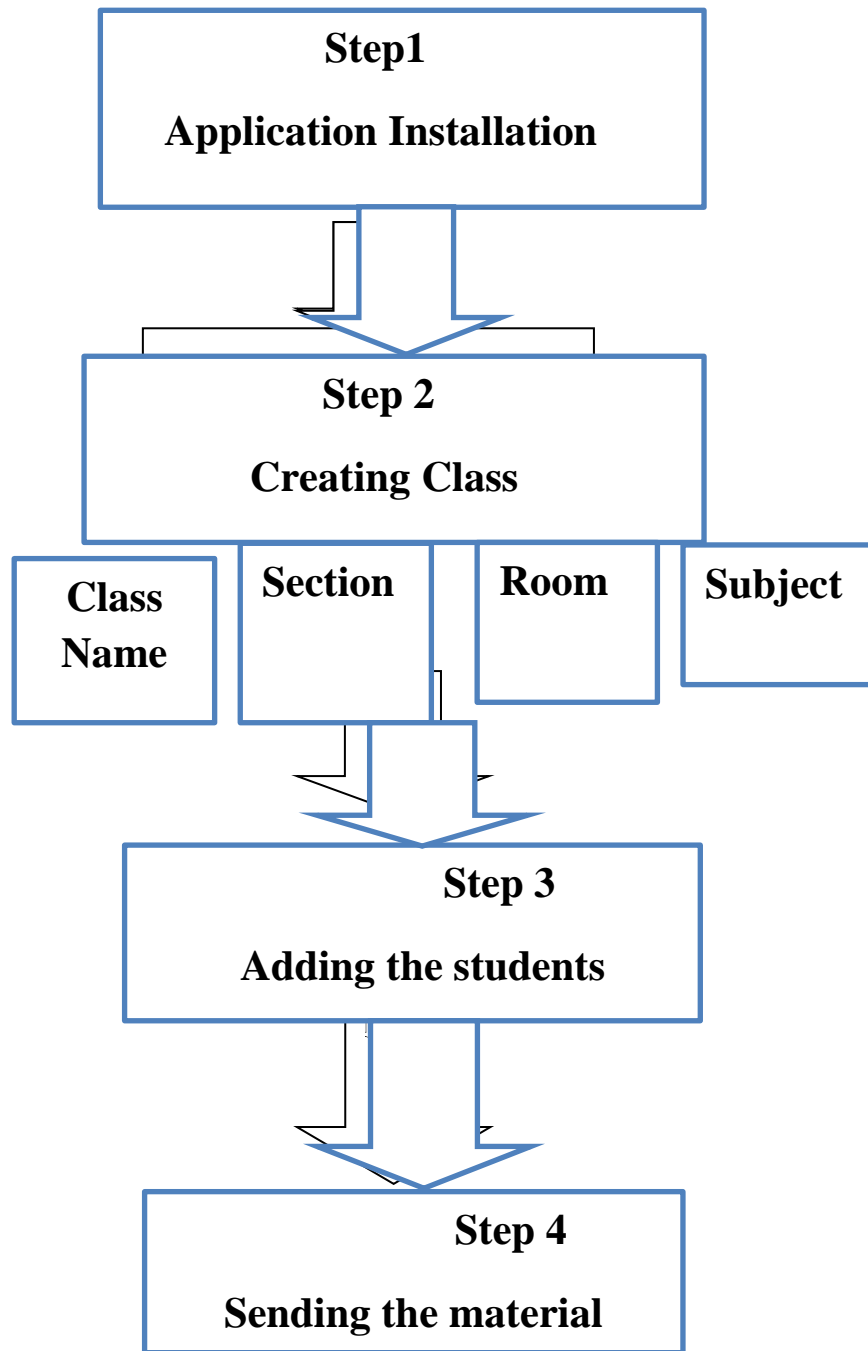


Figure (1) the steps of Google classroom implementation

### 2.3. Types of writing classroom performance

Brown (2007:399) states the following a significant types of classroom writing performance.

#### 1. Imitative, or writing down

In this type of writing, students will write down English letters, words, or sentences in order to learn how to write. Some types of dictation can be fallen under this type which can involve the following steps:

a- The teacher reads the paragraph once or twice regularly.

b- The teacher reads the phrases of the paragraph, each phrase followed by a pause.

c- During the pause, students will read what they heard.

d- The teachers will read the whole paragraph so students will check their writing.

e- Scoring scheme can be utilized; always punctuation and spelling errors will not be taken into consideration.

#### 1. Intensive, or controlled writing

This type of writing does not allow much activity from the part of the writer. It appears as an intensive written grammar exercise.

1. Self-writing. This type of writing means that the students will write by themselves what they heard from their teachers after taking notes, where students take notes during a lecture to recall later.

2. Display writing. The display is a technique used for all language learners' students; short answers exercises, essay examinations, and research reports can form the main elements of the display. Writing techniques are considered one of the academic skills that students should master.

3. Real writing. Teaching writing aims to enable students to convey a certain message to the reader and to achieve real communication. Both display and real writing have a combination of subcategories; the categories are:

a. Academic. This type of writing allows students to convey information to each other and to exchange useful information by writing words, writing component topics

like problem-solving task and other relevant topics which need exchanging information and conveying messages can generally consider the main aim of this type.

- b. Vocational/ technical. Different tasks that require real writing can take place in classes with students who study English through which real letters can be written, and some directions from the part of the teacher can be given, and original forms can be filled out.
- c. Personal. In this type of writing, personal messages, postcards, letters, diaries, notes, and other information writing skills that requires exchanging information can take place.

Real writing is a subcategory of academic purposes which the researcher chose in this paper when students are asked to continue the uncompleted stories to measure their competitive ability in writing and to see whether they can write correct and meaningful sentences with correct style, organization, grammar, and spelling.

#### 2.4. Previous Studies

Many studies were carried out by different researchers that illustrated the use of GC in their teaching from these studies:

Afrianto Daud(2019) stated in his study how teachers of English use GC in teaching and how GC can promote their teaching quality when teaching Indonesian college students. The study concerned teaching English writing to students and what both students and their teachers do during the lesson and how teachers manage to use this application in their teaching. The study also discussed some reasons that made GC an excellent way to make teaching writing lessons more effective.

Kevin Armando etal. (2019) Used GC in their study as a platform that aids students in learning writing outside the classroom away from the environment of the classroom when students have the freedom to write and share their teachers with their writing. They explained the benefits of GC when used as a motivator to make the assignment easy to manage and can be done at any moment to students; extra practices were given to students to make writing easy for them, the results of the

study showed that all students enjoyed practicing writing in GC since it made them active and independent learners.

Cherry & Sheeja (2019), illustrate that the use of GC as an informal and face-to-face method in the teaching/ learning process provides the undergraduate students with a blended learning experience. This experience revealed that learners need to use GC effectively.

However, the students using this application is limited to the outside classroom hours, neither teachers nor students have the experience of using GC. Despite the difficulties they face, but the study achieved excellent results for the use of learners to GC in their learning, the study does not report any findings of students' experience.

## 2. Methods

This study is a descriptive one since there is no specific treatment only investigating the students' writing composition through pencil & paper test and their achievement through GC test.

### 3.1. The population and sample of the study

The population of this research paper is ( 35) ESP undergraduate students at computer science department/University of Baghdad/College of science for women of the academic year of 2019–2020. Most of the participants are in, the

Sample is selected randomly

### 2.2. The tool

A diagnostic test has been designed to see the difference between students' performance in writing composition inside the classroom and on the GC application; the test is asking students to complete two uncompleted paragraphs taken from a website [www. englishforeveryone.org](http://www.englishforeveryone.org) . The reason for choosing this website is that they are easy to be completed by the students since they are non-departmental college students. The test is divided into two parts, the first part the two paragraphs were given to the students, and they were asked to finish them by paper and pencil inside the classroom while the second part of the test implemented when students

were asked to finish the same paragraphs who has sent to them by GC, and they finished them while they are outside the classroom, see appendix (1).

### 3.3 The Scoring Scheme

A rubric for scoring the test has been used by the researcher to diagnose the students weak and strength points in writing, the rubric divided the scoring according to four main parts (the grammatical structures – vocabulary selection– spelling and coherence) the total mark of the test is (20) marks, (5) marks for each item the marks varied according to achievements of each student. The rubric is presented in appendix (2).

### 3.4 The test validity

According to Hughes (2003:33), for the test to be valid, it measures what it is supposed to measure. The tests have been given to jury members to check their face validity. The specialized in English language teaching has agreed that the test is suitable to submit to the students. Their names are shown in table (1).

**Table (1): The names of Jury members**

N	Scientific Rank	Name	College
	Professor, Ph.D. In ELT	ShathaKahdim Al Saadi	College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad.
	Asst.Prof, Ph.D. in linguistics	Rana Al Bahrani	College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad.
	Asst.Prof ,Ph.D in ELT	Shaimaa Mehdi Saleh	College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad.
	Asst.Prof, Ph.D. in linguistics	Neriman Jabbar Rasheed	College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad.
	Instructor, Ph.D. in ELT	Hannan DheiaaAkef	College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad.
	Instructor, Ph.D. in ELT	Sawsan Saud	College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad.
	Asst.Prof, M.A in ELT	Maysaa Rasheed	College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad.

Asst.Prof, M.A in ELT	Nermeen Mahmood Mohammed	College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad.
Instructor, M.A In linguistics	Hannan Abbas Hussein	College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad.
Instructor, M.A In Literature	Raghad Fahmi Aajami	College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad.

### 3.5. Test Reliability

Reliability is the degree of accuracy with which a test or a set of scores measures whatever it is measuring (Verma & Beard, 1981:86). On the definition basis, reliability is used to enrich the instrument of research with consistency and accuracy. The split-half formula measures the reliability of the two tests. The value of the coefficient correlation factor for the pencil & paper test is (0.92) and the GC tests' is (0.88).

### 3.6. The Difficulty and Discrimination Factors

The difficulty and discrimination factors for both tests, paper & pencil, and GC are shown in table (2).

**Table(2): The difficulty and discrimination factors**

	Pencil and paper test		Google classroom test	
	Difficulty	Discrimination	Difficulty	Discrimination
Grammar	58.65	50.71	60.35	53.29
Spelling	46.21	39.59	66.53	55.94
Organization	54.65	46.71	66.82353	66.26471
Coherence	50.647	42.71	55.35294	53.47059

## 3. Test Results

### 4.1. The results of the two aims

The results of comparing the two tests are shown in table (3) as follows: The means of the pencil and paper test and Google classroom test are (11.08, 12.26), respectively; the standard deviation of the two tests are (2.56, 3.29) respectively with the degree of freedom (34) and level of significance ( 0.05). Since the computed t-test value (1.632) is lower than the tabulated t-test value (1.69), the results show that no significant differences between the students' performance in writing test without the using of the Google classroom and with the using of it.

**Table(3) Paired sample T-test to find out the differences between the two tests.**

	N	Df	Mean	Std. Deviation	Computed T-value	Tabulated T-value	Sign. 0.05
Pencil and paper test	35	34	11.08	2.56	1.632	1.69	Not significant
Google classroom test	35		12.26	3.29			

The ANOVA test measures the second aim as in table (4). Since the computed f-value of the Google classroom test (0.534) is lower than the tabulated value (3.136), this shows that there is no significant difference among the four components of the writing scale. Moreover, the computed F value of the pencil and paper test (0.220) is lower than the tabulated value (3.136), this indicates that there are no significant differences among the four components of the writing scale.

**Table (4) ANOVA test**

Tests		df	Mean Square	Computed F	Tabulated F	Sig. (0.05)
Google classroo	Between Groups	3	0.521	0.534	3.136	Not sig.

m	Within Groups	13 6	0.977		
Pencil and paper	Between Groups	3	0.152	0.220	Not sig.
	Within groups	13 6	0.693		

The Scheffe test usually is not used if the ANOVA shows no differences, However, The Scheffe test is used in this descriptive study to notes the direction of differences in the diagnostic test results, and the Scheffe comparisons are beneficial for directing the future studies. In results confirm that there are no significant differences among all the components of the writing scale of the two tests, see table (5) and (6)

**Table(5)**

**: Scheffe (Google classroom test)**

Components	N	Scheffe value
Grammar	35	2.9143
Spelling	35	3.0286
Organization	35	3.1143
Coherence	35	3.2000

**Table(6)**

**: Scheffe (pencil & paper test)**

Components	N	ScScheffe
Spelling	35	2.7143
Coherence	35	2.7143
Grammar	35	2.8286
Organization	35	2.8286



Sig.		.954
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The Scheffe results confirm that there are no significant differences among all the components of the writing scale of the two tests.

#### 4.2. Discussions

The results show that there are no significant differences between the performance of the students in writing tests, whether by using pencil and paper tests or by using the Google classroom test. However, these results very predictably since the process of using the Google classroom is newly started; this means that the students are not capable of using the technology skillfully. At the same time, if the computed and tabulated values (1.632, 1.69) of the t-test precisely compared, the comparison will display very little difference between them in favor of the GC. This result indicates that continuous training on the use of Google classroom may develop the students' performance in writing tests. The use of technology can help the students to check the grammar and spelling, which are essential components in the writing scale.

#### 4.3. Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion above, it is concluded that the GC application can give numerous advantages for teachers and students who use it. It provides features that help the teachers to manage the class efficiently and effectively. GC is straightforward to use, paperless, and flexible. The research found that teaching EFL students could be engaging when lecturers can be integrated with teaching strategy and technology. The students enjoyed the class, which led to their improvement in their writing skills. GC is an effective way of teaching writing. It can help teachers to make the writing more effective. The use of GC can motivate students to be good writers and to look forward to being independent learners, the development of independency when learning makes students work with their thoughts and write with their own words. Though there is little difference in the

results between the achievements of the students who are given stories and asked to complete them without using GC and those who have received the stories by GC. GC shows mild affection.

#### 4.4. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the results, the researcher offers the following **recommendations:**

1. The researcher recommends instructors in colleges to use GC in their teaching to improve students' academic achievements.
2. Implementing GC with secondary school EFL students.
3. Finally, based on the fact that a small group of students was successful using GC for learning, the third recommendation would be to include a large sample of students. If the same study is conducted on other classes at other levels and other language skills and aspects, the results would become more valid and widely applicable.

#### 4.5. Suggestions

The researcher suggests the following to be used with Google Classroom implementation:

1. Using Google classroom in teaching reading and listening skills.
2. Implementing Google classroom in teaching writing for both male and female College students to measure gender factor.
3. Applying Google Classroom for teaching other activities and skills such as puzzles and problem solving.

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