

# **Exploring the Possibilities in Taiwan for Critical Literacy through Multiple Learning Sources**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study is to gain valuable insight into the practice of critical literacy in the EFL classroom through different types of learning input (e.g., picture books and comic-format fairy tales). The study is intended to explore Taiwanese university students' reactions to three theme-based activities from a critical perspective and to examine their attitudes toward various modes of communication used in the classroom. In addition, the study attempts to investigate students' perceptions of language learning and teaching after they had experienced different exercises during the entire learning process. Finally, an examination of the three activities is conducted in order to arrive at relevant theoretical principles and instructional implications.

The three activities were implemented during the 2009 fall semester at a private university in central Taiwan. The student participants were 8 male and 26 female students at high-mid English level in a General English class offered for non-English-major freshmen. They were all from different departments of the College of Social Sciences, such as Law, Sociology, and Economics. The methods used in the study were mainly qualitative, supported by a course evaluation questionnaire. Data sources consisted of the questionnaire and qualitative sources such as the researcher's journal entries, classroom observations and field notes, students' classroom artifacts and their assignments, students' reflection papers, and interviews. Grounded theory served as the primary tool to analyze qualitative data; the computer software package SPSS 13.0 for Windows was used to compute and analyze the data collected from the questionnaire to provide descriptive statistical results.

The present study has found that many students who participated in the study showed strong preference for the three theme-based activities and they agreed that the entire learning experience was meaningful, engaging, and reflective. Students agreed that in each of the three activities they were offered many opportunities to bring their ideas into the classroom, to evaluate texts from alternative perspectives, and to reconstruct new understandings of values or beliefs on specific issues (e.g., multiple perspectives or gender stereotypes). In addition, the study indicates that all three activities, based on notions of critical literacy, made most students change their perceptions of English learning and teaching. Students felt that teaching should not be implemented through a single method and that learning should be promoted through different types of input (e.g., discussions, poster-making exercises, reflective writing assignments, picture book readings).

Based on the study's findings, in order to facilitate the implementation of critical literacy, EFL educators need to bear in mind the following principles. First, the materials employed and issues discussed should be focused on students themselves, i.e., they need to take students' personal experiences as one part of classroom resources. Second, language learning should be seen not only as a development of language, but also as a process of socialization in which students become more conscious of who they are outside the classroom. Third, future critical literacy research should be encouraged in other English learning contexts, such as English Writing, English Reading, and English Literature. This study concludes that when a critical literacy-oriented classroom draws on multiple learning sources, students are helped to develop a different understanding of their identities and to respond critically to the world with their own thought.

Keywords: picture books, comic-format fairy tales, multiple learning sources,  
social practice, critical literacy

# 透過多元化學習教材探索台灣批判反省式語言學習之可行性

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## 中文摘要

本研究透過多元化學習教材（例如繪本與漫畫式之童話），探究台灣非外文（英語）系大一新生利用批判反省語言學習方式學習英語之可行性。主要研究目的是希望了解學生對研究者所設計的三個主題式英語學習活動，反應為何？此外，此研究亦探討學生在所有活動結束之後，對英語學習觀念或態度之改變。藉由同時檢視三個活動之分析結果，本研究亦希望發現重要之準則與啟發，以供英語教學人士參考與應用。

研究所設計之活動實施於 2009 年下學期，研究對象為中台灣某私立大學非外文系大一新生，共計男性學生 8 位、女性學生 26 位。參與之學生皆來自該校大一英文課程某中高級班，係由社會科學院不同科系組成，包含法律、社會、經濟等學系。本研究以質性研究為主，量性研究之問卷為輔。研究資料包含研究者日誌、教室觀察、學生之習作、學習心得、追蹤訪談等。本研究以紮根理論分析質性研究資料，並透過統計軟體 SPSS13.0 for Windows 整理問卷資料，提供描述性統計數據。

研究結果顯示，大多數學生對所討論之三個主題式教學活動，皆表示高度認同，因為學生認為各活動之主題與其生活相關，故可以引起學生之共鳴。整個教室之語言學習過程對學生而言，是有意義、有參與性及反思的可能性。此外，在整個語言學習過程中。學生變成主動之學習者，提供許多自己的想法，並帶進教室活動中，用不同的角度檢視學習文本，針對特定主題(例如性別刻板印象)，建構新的價值觀和觀念。研究成果亦顯示，這三個教學活動讓學生改變了其英語學習的觀念，學生開始認為教室語言學習課程不應該侷限於單一的教學方式，語言學習之提升也可以透過不同方式，例如透過討論、海報製作、反省式寫作練習和繪本閱讀等方式，而不是單一而機械式的使用教科書。

根據以上研究結果，為了增加批判反省式語言學習在英語為第二外語

之教學國家的可行性，英語教育者可參考以下準則。第一，教室裡所使用之教材及所討論之主題都應該與學習者相關，教師可多利用學生在課堂之外感興趣之事物，做為多元化教材來源之一，同時可以將學生之生活經驗作為討論之依據。第二，語言學習的重點不僅在於提升各語言能力，亦需被視為一種社會化過程，在整個學習過程中，透過多樣的主題，學生可以批判、思考學生在教室之外的各種角色。第三，批判反省式語言學習是一種觀念，值得各語言教學者將此理念融入其他英語領域相關的課程，例如「英語會話」、「英語閱讀」、「英語寫作」或甚至應用於各類文學課程。

本研究之結論顯示，利用多元化學習教材進行批判反省式語言學習活動，可以幫助學生在整個學習過程當中，自然地使用所要學習之語言，探究各項主題，透過個人觀點窺探課堂外的世界，幫助學生省思個人與社會的互動。

關鍵字：繪本、漫畫式童話、多元化學習教材、社會化活動、批判反省式語言學習

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

According to many critical scholars (Beck, 2005a; Clarke & Whitney, 2009; Glazier, 2007; Mendelman, 2008; Pescatore, 2007), language learning can be seen as a social practice, i.e., a way to help language learners increase their language ability and become more aware of their lives outside the classroom. In particular, students should be encouraged to make sense of a text from different viewpoints (Fisher, 2008; Nokes, 2008; Pescatore, 2007) and to relate the text to their own lives. Many empirical studies (Comber, 2001; Green, 2001; Lesley, 2004a; Spector & Jones, 2007) have shown that critical literacy instruction can motivate students not only to develop their four skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities), but also to help students become more aware of their different identities.

Over the past few decades, such a teaching philosophy has become appealing to many language researchers and educators in different countries, including Australia, Singapore, New Zealand, the U. S., the UK and South Africa (Fisher, 2008; Glazier, 2007; Green, 2001; Mayo, 2007; Newstreet, 2008). In addition to those countries that use English as the first or second language, more and more countries that use English as a foreign language (i.e., EFL countries) have noticed the importance of critical literacy and have started the implementation of such alternative instruction (Cheah, 2001; Falkenstein, 2003a; Luke, 2005c). Overall, a wide range of research studies has supported the possibility of incorporating critical literacy into the English learning classroom. Therefore, the researcher has a strong teaching belief in critical literacy and intends to implement such an unconventional teaching principle in Taiwan, an EFL country that should also pay attention to critical literacy.

However, some research studies imply that it can be a challenge to put critical literacy into practice in Asian countries, in particular the requirement of independent thinking during the learning process. As Stapleton (2002) indicates, Asian students in a critical literacy classroom could be offered more opportunities to develop their independent thinking ability and to have their voices heard. Similarly, Harklau's (1994) research states that the potential problems may be found from her Asian informants. There were five Asian-American immigrant students (one from Hong Kong and four from Taiwan) in her study. These Asian students entered senior high school in the U.S. and tended to be inactive in class because they believed in the importance of being quiet in the classroom. In addition, Liaw (2007)'s study indicates that many EFL teachers in Asia still use direct lecture in their classroom and their students lack opportunities to think critically.

EFL teachers encounter many students who have great difficulty responding to the assigned texts without any further explanation. Sometimes, students overuse irrelevant examples and/or unconvincing reasons to support their main points. As stated in an article (Chang, 2008) in the United Daily News, the government of Taiwan and its language educators should consider a new direction for English teaching in the twenty-first century in light of the recent decline in Taiwanese students' performance on iBT TOEFL (i.e., the Internet-Based Test of English as a Foreign Language); students can be trained to be able to respond to listening and reading components in the exam with material based on students' own perspectives and experiences. The new format of the exam has become a major challenge to students in Taiwan who are used more to standardized testing than to alternative assessment such as immediate oral responses to a recording (Chang, 2003; Huang, 2007).

Such alternative testing may ask students to read a short passage about a city,

compare the city with another city that students are familiar with, and finally point out the differences between the two cities in terms of lifestyle. A professor of English mentions in the news article that Taiwanese college students' English level is not as bad as many people in Taiwan think. But these students in Taiwan really need to study English through a method that can enable them to express their ideas both in writing and in speaking, especially ideas based on their lived experiences.

According to some Taiwanese educators (J. Lee, 2009; Z. Lee, 2009), the reason why many Taiwanese students cannot respond reflectively to the assigned texts is that their learning in the English classroom is not fully related to their lives. For example, when teachers focus on students' language development, especially through evidence-based assessment, students will tend to perceive language learning as the accumulation of the four discrete skills. As a result, students will become concerned more with their language fluency than with their ability to respond to different issues in society. Another example can be seen in the textbooks used in junior and senior high schools in Taiwan. These books stress the memorization of vocabulary and the understanding of difficult grammar; that is, articles collected in these textbooks are not written for students with the specific identity of a language learner in Taiwan. What is worse, this situation has been drop seen for the past two decades at levels ranging from elementary school to universities (Chang, 2006; Hsueh, 2007; L. Wang, 2006; Yang, 2003).

Consequently, Halvorsen (2005) advocates that ESL/EFL teachers find a solution to this problem by paying attention both to students' language development and to an understanding of students' real lives. Such instruction is the teaching approach that critical researchers and practitioners have been calling for (Lander, 2005; Stevens & Bean, 2007). With a belief in critical literacy, teachers should integrate social issues into their curriculum and then use literacy as a window to more

reflective discussions in the classroom (Heffernan & Lewison, 2005). Finally, students should become active learners during the process—improving their language ability while exploring various outside-school issues (Appleman, 2000; Jewett, 2004; Mayo, 2007).

Accordingly, the present study aims at exploring the implementation of critical literacy in Taiwan, particularly a case study that intends to encourage students to understand the world and to reconstruct their identities (Ajayi, 2009; Truman, 2003; Villafranca, 2002). Following Fehring and Green's (2001) assumption that critical literacy can give students the opportunity to read the word and the world, the activities discussed in the study were designed to help students unlearn, learn, and relearn a different way of learning English.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Critical literacy has become a research orientation commonly discussed among researchers and educators in Western society; its target participants include students from elementary schools, junior/senior high schools, and universities (Baker, 2007; Gabel, 2004; Hansen, 2009; Iyer, 2007; Lander, 2005; Mitchell, 2005; Ruggirello, 2004; Truman, 2003). However, little discussion concerning the theories and application of critical literacy in an EFL context. For instance, the 2005-2009 proceedings of the International Symposium of English Teaching, one of the most important conferences about English teaching and learning in Taiwan, contain less than five research papers and presentations directly related to critical literacy, not to mention the proceedings published prior to 2005.

Taiwan seems to be a site in which critical literacy has been omitted as a research orientation; not many Taiwanese researchers are committed to teaching English from a critical viewpoint. Little critical literacy research conducted in Taiwan

can be found. One exception is Falkenstein's (2003) dissertation *Critical Literacy in an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) Context*, an action research study in which she analyzes 37 university students in a composition course based on notions of critical literacy. A second critical literacy study conducted in Taiwan is Kuo's (2006) dissertation. It is also an action research study that examines an English Conversation class provided during the spring semester of 2005 and it attempts to investigate the extent to which the goals of a critical literacy approach were achieved in the class. The third example is a master's thesis written by a Taiwanese graduate student (Wang, 2008), investigating a reading curriculum offered in 2007 for 100 freshmen and exploring the influence of critical literacy on these participants' motivation.

In consideration of the scant amount of critical literacy research conducted in Taiwan, it is necessary to urge more researchers and educators to investigate the possibilities of implementing critical literacy in Taiwan. Accordingly, this study attempts to analyze how 34 college freshmen in Taiwan reacted to three activities provided in a General English course during the 2009 fall semester.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study investigates students' reactions to the three theme-based activities that drew on various forms of communication. The study is intended to examine the development of critical literacy in 34 first-year university students and to explore the reactions of these students to the activities designed from a critical literacy perspective as English learners in Taiwan. It is hoped that this research could provide valuable insight into the possibilities of critical literacy in Taiwan and offer a practical example of critical instruction based on different types of learning input.

## Research Questions

Accordingly, two research questions are addressed to guide the study:

1. How did the students respond to the activities designed from a critical literacy perspective?
2. As English learners in Taiwan, how did the students reflect on the three activities discussed?

## Definitions of Terms

The terms below are used frequently in this research, so a brief definition of each term offered to help the reader to understand the study.

### 1. Picture Books

As Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson (2005) state, *picture books* are illustrated books in which words and illustrations are combined to convey the meaning of a story. In a picture book, the role of illustrations in the book is as important as that of the text in contributing to the meaning. Text and illustration occur with equal frequency in picture books. This type of book appeared in the 1970s and such books can stimulate learner's thinking, talking, and writing. Specifically, picture books are a good source of reading material that encourages learners to explore the hidden meaning in the content and to provoke readers to think about issues from different perspectives.

### 2. Comic-Format Fairy Tales

This term refers to fairy tales in comic-book format. Specifically, two alternative fairy tales in comic-book format were implemented in the classroom. The first story is called "Snow White", an unconventional version of the traditional story of Snow White. The second story is called "Little Red Cap"—a twisted version of the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood". The book that includes these two fairy tales is called *The Big Book of Grimm* by Jonathan Vankin (1999). There are several fairy



tales from the Grimm collection in this book and those stories are illustrated by some of the best comics artists.

### 3. Multiliteracies

The term *multiliteracies* is seen as a teaching pedagogy in this research; it was defined in 1996 by a group of prominent researchers and scholars from different research fields known as the New London Group. From their perspective, the definition of multiliteracies involves a way of language learning that encourages students to make sense of various texts created by different media, such as visual images, graphics, Internet videos, body languages, and so on. In addition, the aim of multiliteracies is to facilitate literacy learning among language learners who come from different backgrounds or have various life experiences. Such a teaching approach has the potential to provide opportunities for students to learn texts in multiple forms and also to enhance the expansion of interpretation of what they learn.

### 4. Language Learning as a Social Practice

*Language learning* in the classroom is considered as a social practice in which students are exposed to various meaningful issues related to their lives, i.e., experiencing different social events that will change their attitudes toward or opinions about the world outside the classroom (Lewison, Leland, & Harste, 2008). Therefore, when students study a language, they should try not only to improve their language ability, but also to learn an ability that helps them reflect on the relationship between themselves and their society.

### 5. Critical Literacy

*Critical literacy* involves a teaching approach rather than a teaching method because critical literacy is best understood as an instructional philosophy related to a wide range of research disciplines and social movements. Critical literacy in this study is defined as an instructional orientation that positions students to “create space

for broader uses of literacy beyond what is typically presented in school setting” (Lesley, 2008b, p. 177). The aim of critical literacy in the classroom is to help students to perceive “how texts work to construct their worlds” and to use texts as “social tools” in reconstructing the world (Luke, 2000b, p. 453). Accordingly, critical literacy here motivates students to question texts and life as they know it and to rethink the meaning hidden either in the text or in the world outside the classroom. In other words, critical literacy can be seen as transformative language education that aims at encouraging students to become active and reflective during the entire learning process.

### **Significance of the Study**

The present study aims at investigating the effects of critical literacy on Taiwanese college freshmen who were exposed to different types of learning input and were motivated to react reflectively to insightful issues brought up in the classroom. All three activities were designed to explore the possibilities of critical literacy instruction in Taiwan. Since this study is mainly an interpretative case study of a General English class, it may well have some limitations with regard to generalization. However, its contributions to EFL education in Taiwan should not be underestimated, because this research is exploratory in nature. As a whole, the significance of the study is stated as follows.

First, it is hoped that findings of the study can help Taiwanese English teachers better understand the incorporation of critical literacy into the EFL classroom. This study explores the implementation of critical literacy in 34 college freshmen at a private university in central Taiwan. As mentioned previously, the purpose of the study is to arrive at insightful implications with regard to the theory and practice of critical literacy. These findings may draw the attention of those educators and

researchers interested in English teaching from a socio-cultural perspective. Since little research regarding the implementation of critical literacy in Taiwan has been conducted, this study can be seen as a form of pilot study for those educators in favor of critical literacy. It can offer English education designers an opportunity to reflect on such questions as “How do I adjust my teaching?”, “Why do I need to implement critical literacy in the twenty-first century?”, and “How do I act as a critical literacy practitioner in my own setting?”.

Second, the current study may serve as a useful source for Taiwanese university English teachers who would like to understand their students’ needs and interests in English learning. The activities discussed in the study were designed to elicit meaningful issues that can appeal to Taiwanese students, i.e., young adult students. Besides, the analysis of the students’ responses to the activities may simulate Taiwanese educators to shift their instructive focus from transmission pedagogy to transaction pedagogy, and finally to transformative pedagogy. In brief, the literacy practices investigated in this study will offer English teachers in Taiwan a critical space where they can reexamine and modify their own instruction in order to enhance students’ motivation for studying English by making students active learners and by using resources and topics related to students’ own lived experiences.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter provides an overview of theoretical frameworks and research studies relevant to critical literacy, multiliteracies, and picture books. Critical literacy will be discussed in the first section; it will involve the emergence of critical literacy, the features of critical literacy, and relevant studies about the implementation of critical literacy outside and in Taiwan. The second section is devoted to notions of multiliteracies; concerns include when this term was brought up, what it means, why schools need to put it into practice, and how language literacy educators can integrate notions of multiliteracies into their classroom. The third section of this chapter will contribute to a discussion of children's literature. This section will mainly deal with the benefits of using picture books and comic books as classroom materials and with the criteria for the selection of such books.

#### **Critical Literacy**

##### **The Emergence of Critical Literacy**

The term *critical literacy* did not appear until Ira Shor and Joe Kretovics introduced it in the late 1980s. Moreover, its relevant concepts were not specifically discussed until 1993 when Lankshear and McLaren's (1993) edited book *Critical Literacy: Politics, Praxis and the Postmodern* was published. As Stevens and Bean (2007) state, this book is a collection of academic papers from a diverse group of literacy educators and researchers across many different fields (e.g., ethnography, feminist theory, philosophy, and sociolinguistics), papers that discuss issues related to the theory and practice of critical literacy.

However, critical literacy was not explored as an educational movement until

the late 1990s. During that period, many language instructors began to apply a critical literacy approach in their classrooms; critical literacy became a research orientation more commonly discussed among critical researchers from countries such as Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the UK. Critical literacy within these countries had a positive effect on teachers who wished to reexamine the methods of language teaching and learning (Green, 2001; Shor & Pari, 1999). From a critical literacy perspective, classroom educators should not treat students as silent and passive receptors; on the contrary, students can be motivated to focus on their personal experiences, to connect their learning with outside-school lives, and to raise questions about their worlds (Appleman, 2000; Freire & Macedo, 1987).

### **Notions of Critical Literacy**

The definition of critical literacy has been debated and refined; critical researchers and instructors employ different theoretical frameworks and display different instructional philosophies in their studies/classrooms. Therefore, critical literacy has not been defined as a unitary approach with regard to either theory or practice (Green, 2001; Lankshear, et al., 1993; Morrow & Torres, 2002). For example, in describing critical literacy, Giroux (1987) focuses more on teaching methods than on teaching materials. He suggests that critical educators be sensitive to the impact of their way of teaching on students, e.g., how the transfer of knowledge occurs among teachers and students. Critical educators should be careful in their teaching; knowledge in the classroom can not be limited to teachers and textbooks. Dozier, Johnson, and Rogers (2006) elaborate on this statement and indicate that classroom knowledge can also come from students themselves, from their opinions, from discussions, and from their personal experiences as shown through their assignments. In brief, critical literacy from Giroux's viewpoint should be implemented as a

teaching approach encouraging students to express their perspectives and to integrate their life experiences into the learning process.

Freire and Macedo (1987) agree that “literacy cannot be viewed as simply the development of skills aimed at acquiring the dominant standard language” (p. 142). From their perspective, literacy not only involves language development but also a critical competence that enables students to analyze their experiences, cultures, and society. While readers are making sense of the texts, they not only absorb the knowledge in the texts, but also explore the meanings beyond the linguistic elements (Hanzl, 2001). Through identifying and analyzing their experiences and the people around them, students can become critical literates who know how to construct new meanings related to their lives and to reproduce their identities with different attitudes developed during the learning process (Kempe, 2001; Morrell, 2008).

In McDaniel’s (2006) opinion, critical literacy “can be simplified as questioning the status quo and transforming oneself and/or one’s world” (p. 5). Specifically, students are encouraged to raise various questions about their daily lives. Critical literacy is a way of teaching that motivates students to examine people’s different ways of life and the inequalities of power in society (Popkewitz & Fendler, 1999). McDaniel (2006) also indicates that questioning can force people to think broadly, deeply, and differently; therefore, sometimes honestly asking some questions is necessary. In order for a student to become a thoughtful individual and citizen in a new era, training in self-reflection should be an essential part of language education for each student. Hence, teachers who advocate critical literacy can help students to develop a habit of reflection to recognize possible ways for change (Richards & Lockhart, 1994).

Different theoretical perspectives underscore different aspects of critical literacy and its pedagogies, but their common features all involve a reflective

approach that sees literacy as a social practice in the classroom. Literacy for students involves not only mastery of the four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, but also comprehension of the meaning beyond the texts from a critical perspective (Lander, 2005; Spector & Jones, 2007; Stevens & Bean, 2007). In sum, it is imperative for critical educators to encourage students to read between the lines of the texts, to foster student's critical awareness of classroom literacy practices, and to develop self-reflective attitudes toward students' lives (Comber, 2001; Fisher, 2008; Heffernan & Lewison, 2005).

### **Critical Literacy Instruction**

With a belief in critical literacy, teachers help students not only to enhance their language development but also to understand their world from a critical viewpoint (Lesley, 2008b; Stevens, 2006). In order to achieve this goal, teachers need to be aware of the features of critical literacy in order to be able to implement critical literacy in their own teaching context. Three features of critical literacy are discussed as follows.

#### ***Literacy as a Social Practice***

Many researchers indicate that the guiding principle for critical literacy is that we should perceive literacy as a social practice (McLaughlin & DeVogd, 2004; Morrell, 2008; Stevens & Bean, 2007). Critical scholars have pointed out that language in critical literacy is not merely a means of communication; it is also a practice that encourages learners to examine their lives and understand their relationship with their social surroundings (Norton & Toohey, 2004). Language learning cannot be seen as a neutral activity, the function of which is mainly to help learners acquire the four discrete skills (Luke, 1998a). Critical literacy sees language

as a medium not only to express ideas but also to initiate interaction between specific cultures and social groups. As Gee (2001) stresses, students are motivated to understand how language is organized, to engage themselves in sociopolitical issues, and to connect language learning with the world outside the classroom. Literacy can empower students by helping them foster a critical awareness of themselves and their society (Shor, 1999).

Morgan (1997) elaborates on such socio-cultural aspects of critical literacy by stressing the role of discourse and human participation in literacy learning. She thinks the meanings of discourse in each text can be negotiated and changed in different socio-cultural contexts. Discourses, in Gee's (1996) words, are "forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes" (p. 127). Discourse influences language learners at a specific time and in a certain place. Thus literacy becomes an ongoing learning process that constantly has an impact on students through various discourses. Students are able to reshape their values or attitudes when they are challenged by various issues related to their lives and by different views on their ways of being in the world.

From a socio-cultural perspective, proponents of critical literacy believe that language learning enables students to reexamine hidden textual meanings, to explore the relationships among meaning, cultures, and society, and finally, to gain a deeper understanding of themselves (Knoester, 2009). In brief, critical literacy perceives literacy as a social practice and it assumes that students can develop a critical world-awareness and social consciousness through stimulating different discourses in students (Pennycook, 2006; Pescatore, 2007).



### ***Multiple Identities during the Learning Process***

In a classroom with a critical literacy perspective, the teacher can use texts to make students become aware of their own identities during the learning process (Gee, 2000b; Heffernan & Lewison, 2005). As Stevens and Bean (2007) say, “[w]e use texts and textual markers as key ways of constructing and communicating our identities, particularly in relation to others” (p. 25). The role of texts in critical literacy is not simply restricted to understanding the textual surface; instead, texts can be used as a tool to help language learners establish their identities in relation to other people while they interpret the hidden meanings of the texts.

Luke (2005) further explains that identities in critical literacy are fluid and based on contextual feedback and individual interpretation. Students gain their perspectives and ideas when they respond to different types of material or when they deconstruct the conditioned meanings around the texts. Once students engage in literacy as a social practice, they can reconsider how social issues impact their lives and construct new identities by transferring their previous identities to other situations (Gabel, 2004; Iyer, 2007).

For instance, Kempe (2001) indicates that primary school students in her study changed their viewpoints on gender awareness. At first these first-grade students thought that girls should stay home without working or boys should not be allowed to play with dolls. However, through different meaningful tasks, students learned to challenge the existing concepts of gender roles, to explore multiple perspectives related to relevant issues, and finally to construct their new identities in a particular cultural context. As Comber (2001) says, critical literacy aims to encourage students (1) to question opinions commonly held among people and hidden in the texts, and (2) to create new identities and habits through literacy practices such as discussing topics that influence students. Finally, a reconstruction of textual meanings brings forth a

new way of thinking and doing in real life.

As Jones and Clarke (2007) stresses, students can benefit from “a deconstruction of their actions toward others” (p. 76). In particular, textual reconstruction is not merely for creating new written texts and/or establishing new identities; it also encompasses new ways that students would act and new attitudes that they would develop toward different socio-cultural contexts (Fairclough, 1992). Take Gilbert’s (2001) study as an example. At the end of the 2000 fall semester, 29 first-grade elementary students discussed in his research not only arrived at a new understanding of what it means to be a boy or girl, but also developed an alternative attitude toward gender roles in different social situations.

In short, critical literacy sees language learning from a socio-cultural perspective, as a process in which identity formation can be achieved through various literacy activities. When students are engaged in interpreting texts, discussing meaningful topics, and experiencing interaction with others in the classroom, they are offered opportunities to reflect on themselves and to reconstruct their identities. Teachers can create a free, engaging learning environment where students are encouraged to explore meaningful issues, express their ideas, and become more aware of themselves with multiple identities (Canagarajah, 2004).

### ***Language Development as Active Being***

Critical literacy is an instructional approach that promotes students’ use of language to question their lives, to examine the relationship between language and society, and to consider actions that can be taken in society (Leland, Harste, & Huber, 2005). Students can take advantage of ample opportunities to express their ideas and show their values by incorporating their previous learning experiences or socio-cultural backgrounds into their learning.

When language learning is seen as a process in a specific context, research and instruction focus on the learner and his/her subjectivity as involved in the learning process. As Baynham (1995) indicates, such research tends to explore the ways in which language learning and students in the classroom “are implicated in discourse, ideologies and institutional practices” (p. 28) For instance, Norton-Meier’s (2005) classroom experience demonstrates how gender issues were raised by 28 kindergarten children in classroom discussions during a one-semester critical course. This study shows that students’ responses were culturally diverse according to their backgrounds and their own interests in everyday life even though they all explored the same topics during the entire learning process. Thus Norton-Meier (2005) suggests how powerful it can be to incorporate students’ everyday texts in a critical classroom in order to foster in students a critical awareness of what their social surroundings are (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004).

A critical-literacy-oriented classroom can invite students to play the essential role in discovering how their multiple identities are positioned and constructed within different social and cultural systems (Fehring & Green, 2001; Lewison, et al., 2002). Then students can become active literates through a critical response to different types of discourse (Molden, 2007). Shor (1999) sums up the function of critical literacy by saying that critical literacy can be used as a theoretical tool to help students develop a critical awareness of the relationship between students themselves and various social-cultural settings.

### **Models of the Critical Curriculum**

Many researchers and educators have proposed their own frameworks that attempt to explain notions of critical literacy. Examples include Luke and Freebody’s (1997) four resources model that sees reading as a social practice, Halliday’s (1978)

model from a social semiotic perspective, Janks's (2000) synthesis model that emphasizes four orientations (i.e., domination, access, diversity and design), and Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional discursive model (i.e., text, discursive practice, and social practice).

A three-ring instructional model developed by Lewison, Leland and Harste (2008) is an appropriate interpretative framework to explain notions of critical literacy. The model (Fig. 2.1) consists of three components (i.e., personal and cultural resources, critical social practices, and critical stance), three orientations that sufficiently explain the complexity of how critical literacy can be implemented in the classroom. It indicates that critical instruction cannot happen without the investigation of personal lives and cultural resources from classroom participants. In other words, critical literacy pays attention to the realities outside the classroom and makes literacy learning a social practice. Lewison et al.'s (2008) model starts from the resources that the teacher and students bring into the classroom, moves to critical social practices that occur in the classroom, and, finally, ends at the changes in the attitudes of classroom participants either in or outside the classroom.

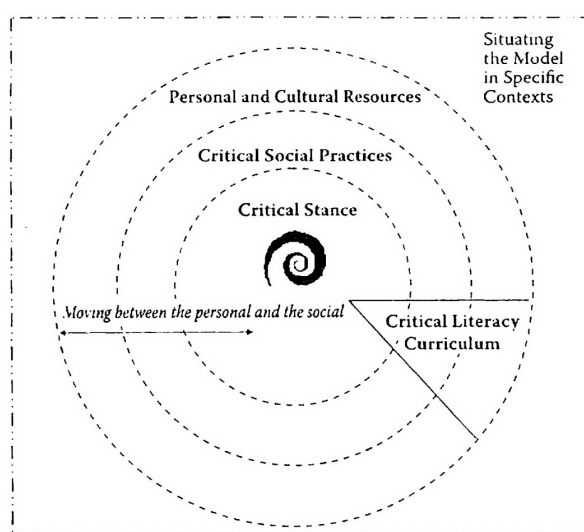


Fig. 2.1 An Instructional Model of Critical Literacy

The outside ring of the model represents personal and cultural resources in which learners bring their prior knowledge, experiences or various resources into the classroom to create the content of curriculum. These resources include personal experience, popular culture, media, textbooks, students' interests, social issue books, etc. In order to construct a critical literacy curriculum from students' personal resources, teachers can focus on students' personal experiences and/or cultural issues that can interest students the most.

Critical social practices, the second ring of this model, refer to opportunities for students (1) to reconsider the experiences and issues from the first ring through different lenses and (2) to examine how the social milieu can shape their views. As Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys (2002) say, critical social practices include: (1) disrupting the commonplace; (2) interrogating multiple viewpoints; (3) focusing on sociopolitical issues; and (4) taking action and promoting social justice. These four dimensions can be used to examine how a curriculum can be designed and implemented from a critical viewpoint.

After the instructor engages learners in the second phase, students can then prepare to move to the third stage of critical literacy, the critical stance phase. Critical stances mean various attitudes that encourage students to become critically literate: (1) conscious engagement; (2) trying on alternative ways of being; (3) responsibility to inquiry; and (4) reflexivity (Lewison et al., 2008). Creating new attitudes involves trying on new discourses, understanding that all knowledge is constructed from particular perspectives and reexamining students themselves or the concepts they are used to.

## **Research Studies Related to Critical Literacy**

As discussed above, critical literacy encourages students to participate actively in the learning process, to question everyday life situations, and to construct their own identities (Alvermann, Swafford, & Montero, 2004; Baker, 2007; Behrman, 2006; Fisher, 2008; Glazier, 2007; Kuo, 2009b). To gain a better understanding of critical literacy, the following two sections will cover some research studies related to critical literacy, i.e., research studies conducted outside and inside Taiwan.

### ***Research Studies Conducted outside Taiwan***

The first example is Tompson's (2000) study, the purpose of which was to explore the relationship between critical literacy and the selection of reading materials for 28 college students in Australia, primarily reading texts in English for academic purposes (EAP). The results of the study demonstrate that the selected reading texts with controversial themes (i.e., Australia's colonial society) led the students to a greater understanding of the history and culture of Australia. The study suggests that such reading materials can offer college students an opportunity to achieve a greater level of self-awareness during the learning process. Thus, in order to involve students in discussing social issues, the selection of meaningful classroom materials plays a significant part.

The second example is Damico's (2003) dissertation. Damico indicates that the participant students in his study, i.e., 28 fifth-grade students in a critical literacy classroom, were able to pose questions about and explore deeper meanings of many social issues brought up during a five-month research period. The study indicates that teachers should not underestimate the critical ability of younger learners; rather, teachers should trust students and encourage them to react to conflicting themes. In the conclusion, Damico stresses that teachers should view students' diverse

backgrounds as being useful for teaching critical literacy, especially when students are required to challenge social issues and to make their own meanings. Because of students' different backgrounds, teachers can use such rich resources as course materials to engage learners in understanding various cultures.

Another researcher, Lander (2005), indicates that language arts can be very useful in implementing critical literacy. There were 20 middle school students in a language classroom with different cultural backgrounds. In one of the tasks required in the classroom, students were invited to write a creative poem that would reflect students' interests or their family backgrounds. Lander found that students' poems were full of genuine cultural values. For instance, a little boy who came from a white family wrote a poem about hair weaves, a topic less seen among white students than among American-African students. In Lander's opinion, critical teachers can bring up issues related to students' cultural backgrounds, expand notions of classroom texts, and have students reflect on the reality. Then teachers can acquire in-depth understanding of how students construct their own identities.

The fourth example is Spector and Jones's (2007) study. This two-year empirical study is to examine how an instructor used a critical literacy approach in her three English language arts classes. Forty-six students in the first year and 45 students in the second year from these classes participated in the study and the curriculum was designed to lead these eight-grade students to a better understanding of Anne Frank's life and to an alternative version of Anne Frank and the Holocaust by reading Anne Frank's diary and writing their own version of the historical events. This study shows that critical literacy can be used as an effective tool in the classroom where students can read about multiple perspectives on the same topic and construct their own ideas about the world. This study concludes that critical literacy can promote students' independent thinking about social and cultural issues.

In her study, Lesley (2008b) investigated whether 25 secondary school students could connect their personal family experiences with relevant reading texts during the discussion time. Through a discourse analysis of transcripts from the group sessions, the study reveals that classroom discourse plays a key role in critical instruction because exploring students' discourse can help them develop critical reading and thinking. The study suggests that if educators implement critical literacy in the classroom, they can encourage students to play an active role in learning and to adopt a discourse resistant to the pre-existing perceptions in the required texts.

Student participants in the aforementioned research studies included elementary, secondary, and college students. It can be argued that instructors across different levels can benefit from critical literacy through different types of literacy practices. The researchers and educators mentioned above tried to incorporate critical literacy into different disciplines such as history and language arts. These studies indicate that critical literacy tends to offer students learning roles through a series of literacy activities and to reshape their preconditioned conceptions concerning specific social values. In short, these research studies related to the implementation of critical literacy suggest that teachers from different contexts can take a positive attitude toward critical literacy.

### ***Research Studies Conducted in Taiwan***

Little research on critical literacy has been conducted in the EFL context. The following examples are a few of the studies that can be found with topics directly related to critical literacy implementation in Taiwan. The first one is Falkenstein's (2003a) dissertation, which investigates critical literacy practices in a university composition course. In the course discussed, Falkenstein used an action research approach, collaborating with the course instructor, and employed pre-writing



strategies to develop critical literacy among 37 university English-majors. By analyzing students' writings, observing classroom interactions, and interviewing the course professor, Falkenstein indicates in her study that EFL college students have the potential to be critically literate in delivering matters of personal, local and global concern through the use of various sign systems. This study suggests that college educators can provide more time and opportunities for their students to write collaboratively, have more discussion, and negotiate textual meanings.

The second example is Chou's (2004) research project in which Chou used pictures as a medium to elicit social values and cultural perceptions from 43 college English-majors in a writing class. Through brainstorming, discussing, and writing, participants had ample opportunity to examine multiple perspectives about the world outside the classroom, especially perspectives from other people and other students' writing texts. Chou indicates that students in this research engaged in discussion and developed an ability of critical literacy. Chou concludes her study by claiming that teachers need to offer a post-writing section for students to examine different viewpoints, to share their own writing work, and to express their perceptions of social issues.

The third critical literacy research conducted in Taiwan is Kuo's (2006) dissertation, an action research study that investigates an English Conversation class taught to 26 non-English-majors. The purpose of the study is to examine the extent to which the goals of a critical literacy approach were achieved in the class. The six activities explored in the study were collaboratively designed by the course professor and Kuo from a critical perspective. These six activities were implemented through different types of learning input, including social-issue picture books, local news, hip-hop songs, pantomime, prose and an episode of an American situation comedy. This study analyzes multiple data sources such as students' team dialogues, students'

and instructor's reflections, and interviews with students. One of the findings of the study suggests that EFL students are capable to responding to classroom texts by integrating their lived experiences into the team dialogues. Kuo indicates that as a result language learning can help students not only to acquire the basic four skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing), but also to connect their personal experiences with their society and culture.

The last example is a master's thesis written by a Taiwanese graduate student (H. Wang, 2008). This research investigates a reading curriculum offered in 2007 for 100 freshmen and explores the influence of critical literacy on these participants' motivation. Findings suggest that critical literacy not only offered students critical thinking practices but also increased student's motivation to study English. For instance, students' intrinsic reading motivations were strengthened with the exposure to a critical literacy approach. The study points out that teachers' clear-cut guidance is crucial for critical literacy practices because specific instructions can help Taiwanese students, students not used to critical literacy, to respond reflectively to the classroom texts during the entire learning process; at the same time, students can be encouraged to bring their life experiences into classroom discussion.

To sum up, two of the studies mentioned above explore how critical literacy was incorporated into writing classes. The third study investigates an English conversation class reexamined through an instructional model of critical literacy. The fourth study, a graduate student's master's thesis, discusses a General English class that used critical literacy practices to improve learners' motivation. The results of these four studies reveal that EFL students are capable of taking a critical stance towards relevant issues brought up during the learning process. Compared with the research conducted outside Taiwan, fewer studies related to critical literacy have been conducted in Taiwan. As a consequence, it is imperative that more critical scholars be

devoted to the investigation of the theory and practice of critical literacy in the context of Taiwan.

## **Multiliteracies**

### **New Literacies in the Twenty-First Century**

Traditional literacy means the ability to read and write in order to communicate with people and to access information from different sources, especially from print texts, which have been commonly used in schools for decades. However, such functional literacy has its limitations because it is restricted to “formalized, monolingual, monocultural, and rule-governed forms of language” (New London Group, 2000b, p.9). Consequently, some language scholars (H. Chen, 2008; Gee, 2000b; Kist, 2005) suggest that students should be exposed to a learning environment with new and multiple literacies. Students will understand how to participate in the global community through different modes of expressions. As Short et al. (2004) indicate, traditional print textbooks are not the only classroom learning source. Teachers need to engage their students in a learning process full of various resources that can be encountered in students’ everyday lives. Accordingly, many researchers assert that it is necessary to offer a language classroom in which students will have many opportunities to interact with different print and/or nonprint texts such as computers, films, books, popular music, and Internet texts (Hansen, 2009; Nelson, 2008; Williams, 2008).

As Jones-Kavalier and Flannigan (2006) suggest, literacy in the twenty-first century should be defined in a broader sense. Students in the language classroom should not only understand the meaning of a text, but also learn the ability to think differently (Gee, 2000b). Many educators and researchers agree that literacy can be viewed as an ability to construct multiple meanings made available through various

textual forms (e.g., images, videos, and the Internet) (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; C. Luke, 2000; Williams, 2008). Accordingly, when new literacies are provided in the classroom, teachers can not only address different forms of multiliteracies, but also emphasize the development of a competence that will enable students to reflect on the meanings of various texts and the impacts of the learning process on students (Baker, 2007; Newfield & Stein, 2000). Ajayi (2009) stresses that the crucial role of new literacies cannot be underestimated and that relevant notions of multiliteracies should be recognized and implemented in the school.

A call for a new literacy teaching in modern times is echoed by Luke (1998a): “There are troubling reports from teachers that many of their students continue to struggle with literacy, and appeal to be having difficulty engaging with the cultures and texts of schooling” (p. 305). The teaching approach will influence students’ knowledge, discourse, and diverse cultural backgrounds. Luke (1998a) strongly suggests that literacies in the classroom should be negotiable and appropriate since these literacies will reshape students’ values and construct their new identities.

In order to respond to the research concerns mentioned above, an alternative literacy teaching is needed, i.e., a way of teaching that takes into account students’ diverse backgrounds and that helps students know more about their lives (Bean & Harper, 2008; Vasudevan, 2006).

### **Multiliteracies and the New London Group**

In 1994 a group of literacy scholars met in New London, New Hampshire, USA. They discussed how literacy should be taught in order to respond to the rapid changes in language education brought about by the impact of technology and globalization (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). Their concerns included how language connects with linguistic and cultural diversity and what pedagogies can be used in response to more

and more new technologies. Finally, these language researchers and educators, the so-called New London Group (1996a), published a paper entitled “A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures.” This paper emphasizes that all students could benefit from language learning that allows them to participate in their community. Literacy pedagogy is expected to play an important role in helping students understand how to engage in a society with diverse cultures. The New London Group (1996a) emphasized the following two changes in literacy development: (1) “the multiplicity of communications channels and media” and (2) “the increasing salience of cultural and linguistic diversity” (p. 63). These two changes attempt to broaden the vision of literacy pedagogies in the twenty-first century.

The first argument suggests that there is an increasing array of communications channels and multimodal, semiotic (meaning-making) systems. This idea indicates that multiliteracies should be extended beyond the understanding of print-based literacy (Mills, 2005). In other words, literacy learning and teaching can include audio (sound), visual (images), gestures (body languages), and spatial modes of communication. As Bean and Harper (2008) state, students need to explore meanings of different textual representations rather than to focus on the meaning of written forms only. Hence, students should not be restricted to instruction that constitutes one standard form of literacy learning. Accordingly, there is an increasing demand for multimedia (e.g., newspapers, computers, and television) and multimodal texts (i.e., texts constructed through more than one mode of meaning-making such as visual images and linguistic forms) (A. Luke, 1998; C. Luke, 2000; Sholle & Denski, 1995).

The second argument indicates that the scope of literacy pedagogy should be extended to “account for cultural and linguistic diversity” (Mills, 2005, p. 71). The impact of globalization on the lives of human beings cannot be ignored. Nowadays

many things change rapidly, such as the languages that people speak, the cultures that people develop, and the latest information that people receive. Specifically, the cultural and linguistic dimensions develop rapidly; these changes will influence the way of language learning in the future (Knobel & Lankshear, 2009; Warnick, 2002). As Millis (2005) says, “[w]hile society is becoming more globally connected, diversity within local contexts is increasing” (p. 71). It can be inferred that literacy practices in school settings should be diversely related to students, including their cultural backgrounds, learning experiences, and multiple identities (Stein, 2008).

Cope and Kalantzis (2000) mention that the concept of multiliteracies entails a multimodal pedagogy. Multimodal pedagogy regards literacy as a matter of design. Teachers can help learners become active participants or designers during the process of creating their own meanings. For example, after teachers expose students to a certain text, students can be encouraged to become active learners in making sense of the text through different modes of expression, especially modes of communication that students favor such as posters, emails, pictures, and video games (Kress, 2000a; Nakata, 2000; Stein, 2008). Or when students encounter a text (e.g., books, comics, and posters), the teacher can motivate students to construct new meanings of their own by employing students’ interests or life experiences as the main resources for textual interpretation. The process of acquiring knowledge and learning a language is meaningful and contextual as long as the resources used in the classroom are related to students (Howard, 2005; Kist, 2005). Thus, literacy educators can offer students various texts relevant to students’ lives, make them explore possible meanings, and help them become active meaning-makers or designers.

Secondly, multimodal pedagogy stresses that literacy can be learned through different forms of communication (Kalantzis & Cope, 2000). Students can obtain new knowledge through language or other types of expression such as gestures, body

movement, facial expression, and visual design. Teachers can help their students to acquire knowledge by making sense of different representations (e.g., reading a book or looking at a painting) and to reconstruct new meanings from these representations through students' own ways of interpretation such as role-playing, storytelling, photographing, sound-recording, and poster-making. This explains Stein's (2008) notion that classrooms can be a semiotic space in which students are involved in learner-centered activities through multimodal texts, i.e., personal and social sources that students choose to bring into the classroom.

As Stein's (2008) study reports, a teacher in South Africa asked each of her students to "*perform* any stories that they knew or had heard" (p. 100; emphasis mine). The study shows that students became more active during the learning process because they were allowed to express their meaning through different sign systems. For example, the teacher was surprised by one of her students, a 13-year-old girl who was usually quiet in class. The girl was totally involved in her oral presentation filled with narratives, body movements, facial expressions, vocal dramatics, etc. Through the girl's performance, her classmates realized how her grandmother told bedtime stories to children and how women in their family played the main role in storytelling. Finally, the study suggests that storytelling can help students not only to understand different cultures but also to create new meanings of these cultures with their own interpretations.

To sum up, teachers who advocate a multimodal pedagogy have students use different channels of communication to make sense of various print and nonprint texts and to reconstruct alternative textual meanings based on different semiotic resources in students' lives (Bearne & Wolstencroft, 2007).

## **Pedagogical Implications of Multiliteracies**

Concepts of multiliteracies offer students many opportunities to engage in the classroom with different cultures and to enhance students' literacy learning through various modes of representations (Ajayi, 2009). It is important for students to understand how to make sense of texts by different means because students are situated in a society full of multiple cultures. Since classroom learners have different backgrounds and life experiences, teachers can integrate the concept of multiliteracies into their curricula; they should promote literacy skills through different modes of communication and develop reader-based textual responses according to students' different cultural backgrounds (Luce-Kapler, 2007; Nelson, 2008). The following three pedagogical implications are based on notions of multiliteracies (Baker, 2007; Jones-Kavalier & Flannigan, 2006).

First, teachers may not view approved textbooks as the only medium for teaching and learning a language (Baker, 2007; Williams, 2008). In order to help students succeed in modern times, teachers can provide different texts in multiple forms such as songs, films, comics, posters, photographs, magazines, and picture books. For instance, Knobel and Lankshear (2009) indicate that the wiki webpage has great potential for prompting students to think deeply and such a mode of learning offers students a free and open-minded space to discuss different issues and ideas. Thus, traditional literacy pedagogy that focuses exclusively on written texts is not suitable for current classrooms (Kress, 2003b).

Second, educators should be careful in choosing the texts used in their classrooms. They should select texts with different themes because each student's cultural background and life experiences differ. Through discussing various themes, students can learn how to appreciate different cultures and broaden their viewpoints on the world. As Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) stress, the themes teachers choose in



the classroom need to be related not only to multiple cultures among students but also to learners' lived experiences. For example, Ajayi's (2009) study indicates that eighteen junior high school learners enjoyed discussing with their classmates their life experiences, including the purposes of using cell phones, the images in the advertisements they had seen, and the influence of the newspapers on their lives. Moreover, many of the students in this study were willing to share their ideas with the friends after class. Findings of this study suggest that a wide range of themes relevant to students' lives usually involves multiple literacies, i.e., literary practices through multimodal resources. It can be concluded that different themes from various modes of communication are not only effective in students' language development, but also meaningful to students' lives and engaging for their learning process (Newfield & Stein, 2000).

Third, teachers should create a curriculum that allows students to bring into the classroom different socio-cultural resources that students naturally employ in their lives (Bean & Harper, 2008; Hansen, 2009). Then teachers will have more opportunities to understand what their students really think of themselves in society. Take McGinnis's (2007) research as an example. Examining some inquiry-based projects and seeing them as a special type of literacy practice, McGinnis promoted students' interest in studying English and learning new things through different modes of literacy. McGinnis found that the entire learning process in the study helped her to understand different cultures among students and to cross the cultural boundaries among students. This study suggests that inquiry-based instruction based on notions of multiliteracies can help teachers understand what interests their students have. As Stein (2008) says, since students' social worlds are multilingual and multimodal, we can improve the traditionally monolingual curriculum by recognizing the multilingual and multimodal nature of language learning from the perspective of students' real

lives.

### **Picture Books**

Picture books are one of the formats of children's literature texts. Many research studies (Wolfenbarger & Sipe, 2007; Y. Yang, 2008; Yeh, 2004) have indicated that picture books are effective sources in a language classroom. According to Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson (2005), picture books can be divided into categories such as baby books, wordless books, concept books, picture storybooks, picture books for older readers, and graphic novels. In the following two sections, I will discuss the benefits and criteria of using pictures books in the classroom.

#### **The Benefits of Using Picture Books**

In the past decade, many educators and researchers have found that picture books have a great effect not only on improving students' language abilities but also on enhancing their critical reflection on social issues (Beck, 2005b; Behrman, 2006; Chang, 2006; Y. Huang, 2006; Morgan, 1997). Wolfenbarger and Sipe (2007) also point out that picture books are influential in the formation of the minds of readers. Therefore, the merits of using picture books in the classroom include promoting reading development, sharing literary heritage, appreciating diversity, stimulating creative abilities, and so on (Chiang, 2007; Culham, 2004; Mason, 1996).

First, increasing language development in a holistic way is a benefit that readers can obtain from reading picture books. Many researchers (Lin, 2003; Yeh, 2004) advocate that EFL teachers help students improve their language ability through picture books in which relevant vocabulary, a meaningful context, and engaging illustration are provided. In contrast, textbooks currently used in the EFL classroom tend to emphasize the memorization of specific vocabulary words and sentence patterns (Thai, 2007; Y. Yang, 2008). As Wang (2008) indicates, most of the settings

described in these textbooks are not directly related to students' personal experiences; vocabulary words and sentences are not authentic with regard to common usage in daily life.

However, when students read a picture book, they are likely to encounter words or phrases frequently used in everyday life; examples include the word 'mongrel' and 'scruffy' in the picture book *Voices in the Park*. However, if publishing companies plan to design textbooks for junior high students in Taiwan, they have to construct their books using a suggested vocabulary list of approximately 3000—5000 words, a list provided by the Ministry of Education. But many of the words on the list are not words commonly used in everyday life. Accordingly, Sheu (2006) says that EFL students should be exposed to more literature because literature-based classrooms can offer students language used in relevant contexts and because literature can engage students in studying English during the learning process.

Second, many researchers (Y. Huang, 2006; Huck, Kiefer, Hepler, & Hickman, 2004; Pantaleo, 2005) agree that reading picture books can help students develop cultural awareness because a language can not be taught separately from its culture. For instance, while reading a picture book, children can not only learn the intended language, but also absorb from the culture exhibited in the text (Hall, 1994). Similarly, as Langer (1994) claims, if teachers can use children's literature effectively in their classroom, students will be more willing to accept different values, to avoid misunderstandings and prejudices, and to cultivate positive attitudes toward various cultural groups.

Third, Norton (1999) and Baynham (1995) both suggest that most picture books designed for children and young adults are usually guided by a central theme and involve several relevant issues, all of which allow instructors to create many opportunities for students to have critical responses to the texts. In other words,

literature for children and young adults can be appropriate teaching material if teachers plan to stimulate students to raise meaningful issues for discussion and to help students reflect more on the texts and their lives.

With regard to the three benefits mentioned above, we find that readers play the main role in the production of the textual meaning. That is, the deeper meaning of a text is still left to the readers to reflect on by themselves. According to Russell (2009), picture books with a wide range of themes seem specifically designed to prompt meaningful discussion from their readers. Indeed, without discussion of relevant social issues, students may find it difficult to gain a better understanding of what the true meaning is beyond the picture books. Many researchers (Auerbach, 1999; Lewison, et al., 2008; M. Morgan & Shermis, 1989; Shor, 1999) assert that the notion of learning as a social practice confirms the idea that all literacy practices serve particular social functions, i.e., helping students not only to develop their language abilities but also to foster a better sense of themselves and their lives. To achieve this goal, Heffernan and Lewison (2005) suggest that critical discussion and reflection cannot be ignored in the classroom and that students should be educated to become active learners in such a learning environment.

Bishop and Hickman (1992) point out that picture books can help young adult readers in much the same way as presented above. Some research studies (Jenks, 1992; Rief, 1992) show that older readers can also benefit from reading stories that present meaningful topics related to their personal experiences and to their society. Having older readers (e.g., college freshmen discussed in the study) read these picture books can help them explore meaningful concepts and interrogate various perspectives on social issues (Elliott & Dupuis, 2002). Picture books will be one of the material sources in the classroom discussed because they can help instructors design a curriculum in which students can access texts with more meaningful contexts and

cultural values. More importantly, selected picture books can empower students with more opportunities to react critically to the texts provided in the classroom.

### **The Criteria for Choosing Picture Books**

The criteria for selecting picture books for older readers can be quite challenging. According to Benedict and Carlisle (1992), the quality of a good picture book is greatly dependent on “the text and the pictures and the ways the two work together” (p. 31). However, some picture books contain lavish color illustrations, but these do not correspond well with the textual content. In general, as Sheu (2006) observes, literacy and artistic quality are important criteria that apply to picture books for all ages. The standards for picture books particularly suited to older readers vary in four dimensions: (1) content, (2) length, (3) complexity, and (4) illustrations (Engelmann & Osborn, 1999; Poe, 2002; Tiedt, 2000).

First, the content of certain picture books makes them appropriate only for readers beyond the primary grades—even if the language of these books is not really difficult to understand. To use Anthony Browne’s (2001) *Voices in the Park* as an example, the story presented in the book is told from four different perspectives, i.e., four gorilla protagonists at a park at the same time. These four characters are from two families: a snobbish gorilla mother and her son, and an unemployed gorilla father and his daughter. This book is categorized as a picture book for older readers because it is more sophisticated, abstract, and complicated in themes (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson, 2005). Older readers such as the students discussed in the study may have a wide range of opinions on the issues presented in the book, whereas younger readers such as elementary school students may not be able to reflect on these issues by themselves. Accordingly, critical educators should be careful in selecting books appropriate for their students with regard to students’ language levels and the content

of the picture books selected.

Second, longer picture books which have a great deal of text are considered highly suitable for older readers. That is, the more words the picture book contains, the more complex the text will be. Such books need audiences that have the ability to sustain sufficient attention to finish the entire book. The picture book about a Chinese heroine, *Fa Mulan* (San Souci, 2000), is a typical example; each page of this work contains 70 to 150 words.

Third, some works that are complicated in content are not necessarily told in many words. For instance, *Princess Smartypants* by Babette Cole (1997) does not contain a complex text, but the meaning of the text is profoundly conveyed with carefully chosen words. The result is an engaging picture book that explores gender stereotypes in a humorous way. Therefore, it can be considered ideal course material because it can help teachers create many opportunities for students to reflect on their lives in relation to gender issues. Researchers (Fuhler, 2002; Marriott, 1991) indicate that such sophisticated picture books stimulate experienced readers to have more critical reflections and help them become accustomed to complex picture books.

It follows that length is not the only predictor for complicated picture books. What really matters here is how reading material can influence students' reflective abilities and provoke deeper thinking on social issues brought up in the classroom. Texts can be seen as appropriate material for critical instruction as long as they perform the following functions: (1) to allow students to express their opinions, (2) to encourage them to have an open mind, and (3) to connect the language they use with the real world outside the school.

Fourth, a picture book without suitable illustrations is hardly attractive to readers. In other words, illustrations play a crucial role in the reading process. Illustrations in picture books can offer students opportunities to arrive at insightful

meanings from texts and to develop esthetic sensibilities. As Newkirk (1992) suggests, being able to read pictures and images is increasingly important in our society and picture books can be an effective tool for cultivating this ability. Illustrations in a picture book need to be clear, bright, and bold. For instance, if the pictures or objects are illustrated abstractly, it may highlight the difficulties of comprehension among readers. More importantly, illustrations should be arranged appropriately in relation to the words because the position and relative size of objects presented in a picture book will affect readers' interpretation of it. Hence, teachers should be aware of how pictures work in promoting learners to read actively and pleasurably.

As one old adage goes, "One picture is worth a thousand words." This can be true for students because a picture may offer an aid to imagining the character or the scene and to gain meaning from the text. Further, color has the ability to evoke readers' emotional responses and to imagine the historical period in the story. Psychologists tell us that warm colors such as red and yellow are suggestive of warmth and happiness. In San Souci's book *Fa Mulan: The Story of a Woman Warrior*, red is the main color in the illustrations. While students appreciate this picture book, the book and its pictures may evoke their emotions and help students become more responsive to the story. In order to help readers understand the Chinese background and culture in the story, the painting technique throughout this book is expressive watercolor. Specifically, top and bottom borders as in a Chinese scroll are used. More importantly, the illustrations in the picture book are full of color so that the book can draw students' attention and motivate students to read the text.

In conclusion, the picture books selected as course material for critical literacy are based on the following criteria. First, the content of reading materials should be able to arouse students' interest and to relate to their lives. In order to foster critical literacy, educators should consider sophisticated social issues in the picture books.

Students can learn how to connect their reading experience with their lives outside the school. In addition, the level of vocabulary should match students' language ability, so students will not have difficulties comprehending the texts and discussing the issues.

Second, the researcher should take into account the length of the text while evaluating various picture books for young adults. The length of each text chosen for this study should be appropriate. For instance, if the text is lengthy and challenging, learners may lack motivation in reading the book to the end. On the other hand, if the length of a text selected is too short and the text is too easily understood, students may get bored with the story during the learning process.

Third, no matter whether a picture book is short or long, it still can be good reading material for critical educators if the book is appropriately complicated in its content. In other words, a sophisticated picture book can allow students for more reflections and connections with students' real lives.

Fourth, the illustrations of selected picture books should be attractive to students. As Russell (2009) says, the design of illustrations is crucial to the entire book because it will greatly contribute to the meaning of the text and pictures. The potential power of illustrations in picture books should not be underestimated.

In brief, the instructor discussed in the study evaluated picture books for classroom material based on notions of critical literacy, the benefits of using picture books, and the criteria for choosing picture books.

### **The Benefits of Using Comic Books**

In addition to three picture books, two unconventional fairy tales in comic-book format were employed in the classroom. The first story is called "Snow White", an alternative version of the traditional story of Snow White. The second story is called "Little Red Cap"—a twisted version of the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood". The



book that includes these two fairy tales is called *The Big Book of Grimm* by Jonathan Vankin (1999). There are over 50 fairy tales from the Grimm collection in this book and all the stories are illustrated by some of the best comics artists today. This book attempts to transform many classical fairy tales such as “Snow White” and “Sleeping Beauty” into alternative versions that contain twisted storylines. The reasons why I chose nontraditional fairy tales in comic-book format are as follows.

First, many researchers (Schwandt & Rubinstein-Avila, 2006; Schwarz, 2002) indicate that the impact of visuals in language learning is crucial because it provides students with additional language learning tools when written text is difficult to understand. For instance, in Falkerstein’s (2007b) research, one of the students in her study points out that “as language learning tools, graphic novels help students to understand phrases, idioms and dialogues and to believe that their minds are stimulated by reading graphic novels, especially because of the unpredictability of the texts” (p. 13). It is clear that students express appreciation for graphic support and this type of learning makes them feel more relaxed. As Versaci (2001) claims, visual stimulation indeed serves as an essential role in the language learning process since it can broaden students’ world-views. Visual effects can be achieved through exaggerated depiction of characters presented in comic books.

Second, comic books have the potential power to stimulate readers to think critically about current issues related to their real lives (Xu, Perkins, & Zunich, 2005). Comics have been used as instructional materials to provide values for clarification and to promote critical thinking. The themes in comics mostly focus on war, crime, politics, romance, and so on. Students can learn to examine whether or not these social issues are meaningful in reality and to clarify misleading concepts hidden in texts. Bitz (2004) stresses that comic books are alternative texts for readers to explore social contexts presented in/outside the texts. Teachers need to offer students ample

opportunities to discover their own worlds when they read or write about the comic books. The topics in comic books are closely related to children's or young adults' life experiences. Students can learn to reflect on those issues and to discover the meaningful dimensions of their world by reading comic books (McVicker, 2007; Ranker, 2007).

However, some researchers (Dorrell, 1987; Wellington, 1980) suggest that many comic books are full of gender roles that are unfairly represented. There are usually more male characters than female characters presented in many comic books; moreover, many of these female roles are described as traditional women staying at home waiting for their husband to come home (Brabant & Mooney, 1986). In addition, in many comic books men are superheroes whose duties are to rescue women and save the world. Comic books that contain gender stereotypes can not be used in the classroom if teachers use them only to increase students' language ability. According to some researchers (Parsons & Smith, 1993; Versaci, 2001), teachers still can use comics as learning material for students to generate critical responses to sexual images presented and to become aware of inappropriately portrayed gender roles. Students can have more opportunities to learn how to examine different issues from a critical viewpoint.

Third, according to Xu, Perkins, and Zunich (2005), the language used in comic books is mostly short and orally expressive. The language used in comic books needs to be concise and to the point. Since the speech or dialogue in each bubble is similar to the usage of verbal language in our lives, students can obtain a better understanding of how to interact with other people in a conversation. In Campbell's (1977) research, students were asked to read selected comic books and they increased their vocabulary and reading comprehension, a result that did not occur among those students who did not read comic books. In Guthrie's (1978) research, those learners who read comic

books performed better on a standardized reading exam than those who did not read comic books. The results of both research studies suggest that even if the language used in comic books is simple, readers can still enhance their vocabulary and reading comprehension.

Overall, comic books can be recommended for teachers to use as alternative reading material for language learning according to the three benefits discussed above. Students can be taught how to appreciate various illustrations, how to reflect on relevant social issues, and how to approach the messages conveyed in the comic books. It is not uncommon to find research on the benefits of using comic books in the language classroom in the ESL context (Bitz, 2004; Buffy, 2009; Hall & Lucal, 1999; Morrison, Bryan, & Chilcoat, 2002; Norton, 2003). However, few research studies have been conducted with regard to the application of comic books in English for language development and critical literacy in the EFL classroom (Falkenstein, 2007b; Ying, 2000). This is the reason why the instructor used two nontraditional fairy tales in comic-book format for his critical instruction.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Mixed-Methods Research Case Study**

This research is a case study that focuses on a class of 34 university freshmen and combines two different research frameworks, i.e., qualitative and quantitative approaches. As Merriam (2001b) indicates, a case study can provide “a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon” (p. 53). Further, participants in a case study can be assumed to be individuals who share their ideas and feeling in a certain situation (Merriam, 1998a). Finally, a single case study offers researchers a detailed understanding of one setting, a single subject, or one particular event.

Case studies are more able to illustrate the details of a situation, depict how time can change participants in the study, build explanations of participants’ responses to their learning, and present participants’ different opinions (Gomm, Hammersley, & Foster, 2000; Yin, 2003b). The case study method, therefore, is an appropriate design to describe students’ reactions to the learning process and to help the researcher obtain an in-depth description of the changes that occur in students (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Accordingly, the present study is intended to explore (1) students’ responses to the activities designed from a critical literacy perspective and (2) students’ comparison of their learning experiences in the classroom with the activities they encountered in senior high school.

Conducting a study based on mixed research methods can help researchers to gain mutually supplementary data and to increase the trustworthiness of multiple data sources (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). This study is triangulated through examining quantitative (i.e., a questionnaire) and qualitative (e.g., interviews and students’

reflection papers) data. Hopefully, related items in the questionnaire will help the researcher obtain initial findings that can confirm data from the quantitative sources. Qualitative sources aim to provide the researcher with a better understanding of different data by identifying patterns or categories. In general, the current study is mainly qualitative to elicit further opinions and responses from its participants, the instructor and his students.

### **Setting and Participants**

The activities discussed were provided at a private university in central Taiwan. This school emphasizes English learning for all the freshmen. English is the only language used in English classes. All non-English-major freshmen are required to take an English proficiency placement test as soon as they matriculate. Based on students' performance on the placement test, they are assigned to a class of no more than 35 students at the same level, including low, middle, high-mid, and high levels. Each class consists of students from the same college, such as Science, Engineering, Management, and Agriculture. English is the only language that should be used in class, but in reality teachers are still allowed to use some Mandarin depending on on-the-spot situations, especially for students at the low level.

Each week students must participate in four hours of regular class and one hour of language lab. According to the handbook of the program, the purpose of this course is to enhance students' English proficiency, i.e., to increase their listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities. Instructors are given much flexibility in selecting appropriate course materials and in designing a curriculum based on their teaching beliefs and philosophies as seen in the case of the instructor discussed in this study.

In brief, the present study involves a General English class for 34 first-year students at the high-mid level from the College of Social Science during the 2009 fall

semester. Students were the main participants in the study because they offered most of the data for analysis. The researcher co-designed the activities with the instructor outside the classroom and observed the classroom activities, e.g., the teacher's and students' involvement with the class and their reflections on the activities. In other words, the researcher was a participant observer in the classroom due to the double role she played--a participant in the course design and an observer in the classroom (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

### **Course Materials**

The materials in the classroom were used not only to improve students' English ability, but also to elicit their responses from a critical stance. The topics elicited from the materials were closely associated with students' lived experiences and their society. As Dozier, Johnston and Rogers (2006) indicate, in critical literacy classrooms students are encouraged to become actively engaged in various issues and to make their identities come into play with these issues. Accordingly, materials or topics the teacher selects should be meaningful to students so that they will have ample opportunities to react to relevant issues and raise important concerns (McDaniel, 2006; McLaughlin & DeVogd, 2004).

Course materials chosen for this class included print texts such as picture books and a comic book that twists traditional fairy tales into nontraditional ones. These materials were presented and shown to students in different ways and served as thought-provoking stimuli for students during the learning process. These materials are as follows:

- (1) *Voices in the Park* by Anthony Browne (2001)
- (2) *Fa Mulan* by Robert D. San Souci (2000)
- (3) *Princess Smartypants* by Babette Cole (1997)

- (4) *The Big Book of Grimm* by Jonathan Vankin (1999)

### **Data Collection**

The data collection process took place during the 2009 fall semester. Data sources were as follows: (1) the researcher's journal entries; (2) classroom observations and field notes; (3) students' artifacts and assignments; (4) students' final reflection papers; (5) a course evaluation questionnaire; and (6) reflective interviews with randomly chosen students.

- (1) Researcher's journal entries: The researcher kept a journal as a reflection on students' performances and in-class activities. This journal provided the researcher with detailed descriptions of students' attitudes towards instructions. Data from these personal reflections were helpful in evaluating and improving further teaching.
- (2) Classroom observation: Throughout the semester the researcher videotaped all classroom activities. While video-recording the classroom activities, the researcher recorded the observations regarding the students and their reactions to the designed curriculum including body language, gestures, facial expressions and interactions among students. These observations were useful resources in enabling the researcher to analyze and reflect on the teaching methods and materials. The researcher used videotaped observation to explore the relationship between teachers and students over the course of the semester. Group discussion was also an important data source; therefore, classroom observation was essential and necessary.
- (3) Students' assignments and artifacts: Students were required to submit their writing assignment three times during the semester. Students were also asked to make posters in groups and to write pair discussion sheets for each activity. Students'

assignments and artifacts were used as data measuring whether or not they became more active in the process of learning.

- (4) Students' final reflection papers: Students were asked to write their personal reflection papers in either English or Chinese at the end of the semester. The purpose of these papers was to receive the students' feedback on their feelings regarding the whole learning process, such as materials, teaching styles and activities.
- (5) A course evaluation questionnaire: Before the researcher conducted interviews with selected students at the end of the semester, a questionnaire was distributed to students. The questionnaire was designed by the researcher herself and the items in this questionnaire were developed based on three major categories including students' participation, students' acceptability of reading materials, and the extent of self-reflection. Specifically, this questionnaire contained items relating to the reading materials, assignments, classroom activities and the issues discussed. The questionnaire consisted of responses on a 4-point Likert scale with four different responses (4 representing 'strongly agree'; 3, 'agree'; 2, 'slightly disagree', and 1, 'strongly disagree'). Additionally, personal background information was also attached to this questionnaire so that the researcher was aware of students' prior English education and whether students' previous English teachers employed similar instruction or materials during the learning process.
- (6) Follow-up interviews: Ten students were selected for a follow-up interview. At least two students from different colleges were chosen for the interviews. Each interview took approximately 40 minutes during the last week of the semester. The conversation were recorded and used in further interpretations.



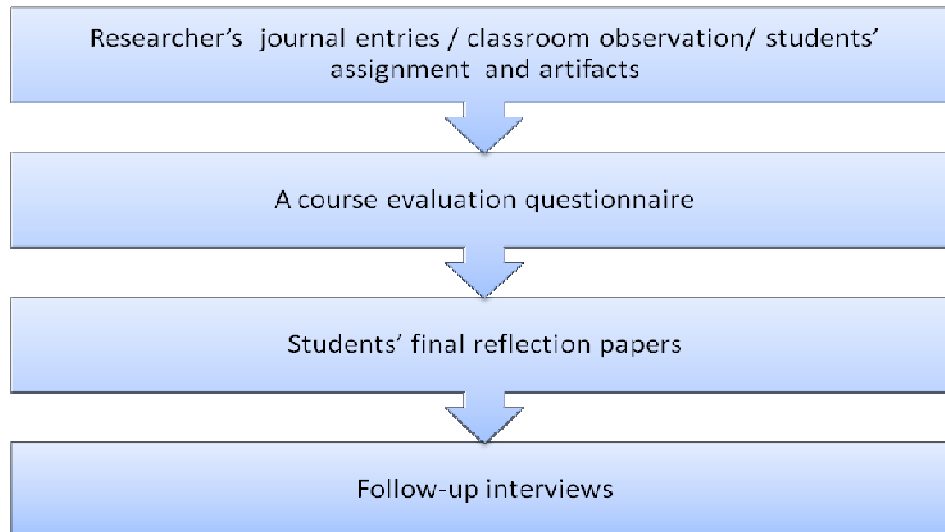


Fig. 3.1 Data Collection Procedures

### **Triangulation and Data Analysis**

As mentioned previously, this research incorporates qualitative and quantitative approaches into the research methodology. Studies (Keegan, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Seliger & Shohamy, 1989) have shown that using mixed research methods is more efficient in answering questions than either qualitative or quantitative approaches alone. As Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) state, “[t]riangulation techniques, involving the reconciliation of qualitative and quantitative data sources, provide the lynchpin for improving the quality of inferences” (p. 169). Specifically, triangulation methods refer to the use of multiple data sources that are used to determine unknown phenomena or situations within a study (Richards, 2003).

The triangulation method helps researchers convey the idea or establish the fact based on more than one source of information. As Flick (2002) observes, many sources of data are always better than a single source of data since multiple sources lead to a fuller understanding of the phenomena that researchers intend to investigate. Thus, the application of triangulation techniques will bring abundant and precise data into research studies (Merriam, 2003). Data collected in the study were divided into

two categories for further investigation and interpretation, i.e., quantitative and qualitative data.

### **Quantitative Data Sources**

The computer software package SPSS13.0 for Windows was used to compute quantitative data in order to provide descriptive statistics. These results were then analyzed not only to deduce students' attitudes about their learning throughout the entire process, but also to obtain a better understanding of students' opinions on classroom interactions and activities. According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989), the higher the coefficient, the more reliable the procedure. If we want the procedure of the questionnaire to be acceptable, its reliability should be at least more than .70. Thus, the reliability of the questionnaire in this study was calculated to assure the credibility of each item in the questionnaire.

As for the validity of the questionnaire, the items in the questionnaire were divided into three categories, including students' participation, their acceptability of reading materials, and the extent of self-reflection. The purpose of these items was to explore students' attitudes towards the three activities discussed. These items can help the researcher understand how students reacted to the entire learning process in the classroom. Finally, results from the questionnaire can help the researcher make sure the findings based on qualitative data are in the correct direction.

### **Qualitative Data Sources**

Grounded theory serves as the primary method in the study to analyze the qualitative data related to the three activities, including interviews, classroom observations, students' artifacts, etc. The term *grounded theory methodology* can be used to refer to any approach which develops theoretical ideas that begin with the

collection of data (Glaser, 2003; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1997). Its function is to generate theory from empirical data, to compare and contrast the relationships among categories and eventually to produce concepts. Many researchers (Morse, Stern, Corbin, Bowers, Clarke & Charmaz, 2009) agree that grounded theory allows the researcher to have an open mind because the results are often not expected during the process of data collection and analysis. This method is also well suited to encouraging researchers to interact constantly with their data while analyzing them.

Goulding (2002) explains that grounded theory differs from other methodologies because it not only makes informants' words and/or actions a data source, but also allows for a wider range of data, including directly related data, secondary data, participants' responses, and even the use of statistics—all of these types of data can provide more information to support the study (Charmaz, 2006; Dey, 1999). Therefore, the researcher collected numerous data from students, sought the similarities and differences in these data, and reached an overall conclusion.

### **Trustworthiness of Information**

As mentioned above, the researcher gathered various data, particularly qualitative data used to explain the phenomena in the classroom. Thus, the importance of trustworthiness should be emphasized in the study. According to Rossman and Rallis (2003), the trustworthiness of qualitative research is judged by two criteria: whether or not the study is “competently conducted” and whether or not it is “ethically conducted” (p. 63). In order to maintain the trustworthiness of data sources, especially the qualitative data in the study, the researcher applied the following strategies.

- (1) **Triangulation:** As discussed previously, the triangulation procedure used in this study involves the use of multiple data sources and multiple analysis methods,

especially in the third activity. Qualitative data were collected systematically rather than randomly. These data were transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted through different analytical methods. Above all, the purpose of such triangulation is to examine various data and reach a conclusion from more than one vantage point.

- (2) Member-check and peer-debriefing: According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), member-check and peer-debriefing are two of the most appropriate devices for assuring trustworthiness. The instructor played the main role in member-checking. He double-checked the first draft of this research study and shared his opinions with the researcher about relevant data sources. As for peer-debriefing, the questionnaire was reviewed by a Taiwanese professor whose main research expertise is research method analysis related to second language acquisition. As for the credibility of data interpretation, a Taiwanese professor skilled in qualitative inquiry reviewed the entire paper, especially the qualitative interpretations and findings.

### **The Three Activities in the Research**

The course discussed in this study was a required General English course designed for non-English-majors at a private university in central Taiwan. The goals of this course were to provide an atmosphere that would increase students' participation in a whole-English learning environment and to facilitate students' acquisition of new knowledge about the world as well as skills in English. Specifically, this course was intended to enhance students' general English proficiency and to enrich their personal background knowledge by using English fluently. There were three activities relating to different issues in this research: alternative reading, multiple perspectives, and gender stereotypes. These activities took place from the 3<sup>th</sup>

week through the 11<sup>th</sup> week of the 2009 fall semester. Each activity consisted of at least three sessions and each session lasted 50 minutes.

The first activity (Appendix A) was designed to help students develop critical literacy through an English learning process by using two nontraditional fairy tales in comic-book format in the classroom. In other words, students were required to make sense of two nonconventional classroom texts and to create their own team dialogue based on the storyline from any of the fairy tales that they have heard. Such language learning was to help students develop an alternative reading habit, a type of reading practice that is seldom encountered or is even considered unacceptable in the traditional classroom (Louie, 2001). According to Moon (1999), alternative reading has readers confront dominant cultural beliefs and challenge traditional views, so the activity focuses on how to make sense of traditional fairy tales from an alternative perspective. Therefore, the activity used different types of learning input such as students' prior knowledge of traditional fairy tales, a poster-based group task, two nontraditional fairy tales, and a team dialogue creation and performance. The first activity was implemented as a warm-up exercise, i.e., an initial exposure to critical literacy—a method of language development different from their previous learning experience in senior high school.

Once students had become more used to a learning environment in which they were asked to be active learners, the second and third activities were extended to two four-session activities. The second activity (Appendix B) was not only to help students explore multiple perspectives but also to integrate their language learning with their personal experiences. Further, the second activity was intended to have students experience various types of learning input such as a team poster exercise, a pair discussion, and a perspective journal assignment. Since the design of the second activity was more complex than that of the first activity, the researcher decided to

implement the second activity as a pilot study as discussed below.

Finally, the third activity (Appendix C) was a learning experience related to gender awareness. Gender stereotypes have been discussed heatedly in Taiwan over the past few years (Chen, 2002; Chen & Chang, 2005; Jian, 2006; C. Lee, 2008; Li, 2008), but relevant topics are rarely mentioned in the classroom where students study English. On the other hand, gender equality education has been frequently emphasized in Chinese language courses in elementary schools in Taiwan (Chu, 2008; Kao, 2003; Liu, 2008).

Accordingly, the third activity was intended to promote in students a sense of gender awareness and to engage them in reflecting more on the female protagonists presented in the picture books discussed. Ultimately, it was hoped that students will share with the researcher and the instructor their opinions about their learning experiences from these three activities at the end of the research project.

### **The Pilot Study**

The activity used in the pilot study was designed by the instructor and the researcher and was implemented in one of the instructor's General English courses during the 2009 spring semester. Based on the design of the second activity mentioned above, the activity was conducted on a trial basis to determine the potential of all the activities in this project. The pilot study was intended to help the researcher establish whether critical literacy activities would be appropriate and acceptable among university students. Concerns included whether or not (1) the vocabulary words in the texts were too challenging, (2) the discussion time was sufficient, and (3) the instruction was beyond students' understanding. On the basis of the results of the pilot study, the researcher made necessary adjustments related to the vocabulary level, instructional procedures, time allocation for each task, and so on. Finally, the pilot

study also helped the researcher ensure that the data analysis in the actual study would be based on reliable data.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE THREE ACTIVITIES**

As stated earlier, three activities were conducted for the present study. These activities are related to three different issues, i.e., alternative reading, multiple perspectives, and gender stereotypes. These activities took place from Week 3 through Week 11 of the 2009 fall semester. Each activity consisted of at least four sessions and each session lasted 50 minutes. What follows is the description of each activity.

#### **Description of the Nonconventional Fairy Tale Activity**

##### **First Session of the Activity**

The first activity was designed to help students develop alternative perspectives through a 4-session learning process by using two nontraditional fairy tales in comic-book format. Specifically, the two stories used in the activity were selected from Vankin Jonathan's (1999) comic book *The Big Book of Grimm*.

The first session was implemented on Tuesday afternoon in Week 3. The instructor began the first session by allocating 5 minutes to dividing the students into 6 groups of 5-6 members. Then the instructor gave each student a sheet of guidelines for creating a group comic poster and explained the guidelines as to how to retell any traditional fairy tale in the format of a comic strip. Specifically, the students in each group worked together to think of one fairy tale or a bedtime story that they remembered and then decided which character(s) in the story selected they might use in their comic poster. Additionally, students needed to present their group story through one strip consisting of four panels on their poster. The instructor also reminded students that each panel should have a drawing with some dialogue. There were four comic panels in two rows in the poster, i.e., two panels in each row in



which to tell a story through illustrations and dialogue (Appendix D).

The instructor spent about 10 minutes introducing the guidelines and displaying to students a sample poster made by the researcher. Students were reminded that they would have about 30 minutes to accomplish this task by the end of the first session. After all groups were finished with their poster, the instructor told students that the session was coming to an end, and that each group would be required to discuss its poster during the second session of the activity on Thursday.

### **Second and Third Sessions of the Activity**

The second and the third sessions of the activity were conducted on Thursday afternoon in Week 3. At the beginning of the second session of the activity, i.e., the first session of the class on Tuesday, each group's students told the class what they had done with their poster during their discussion on Tuesday and shared their ideas in English. In brief, all groups spent about 35 minutes finishing this task, i.e., showing their group's posters and explaining each comic panel.

Then the instructor had students sit in pairs and gave each student two worksheets with some exercises designed to help students understand selected vocabulary taken from the two unconventional fairy tales and enable them to comprehend the two comic-book-format fairy tales. Because of the time constraint, one student in each pair was asked to work on the worksheet for "Snow White" while the other worked on the worksheet for "Little Red Cap". Students were asked to finish their worksheets (Appendix E) in 10 minutes; they were allowed to use a dictionary in order to clarify the definition of each new vocabulary item. While students were working on this task, the instructor walked around the classroom and offered help for students in need.

The instructor then spent 5 minutes having students check their answers to the questions on the two worksheets one by one. The instructor explained either in

English or in Mandarin the meaning of some words if students did not understand these words. At the end of the session, the instructor gave each student a copy of each of these two comic-book stories.

At the beginning of the third session of the activity (i.e., the second session of the class on Thursday), the instructor allocated about 5 minutes to having students review the vocabulary on the two worksheets. Then the instructor asked students from each group to spend about 15 minutes reading the story he/she was assigned during the second session of the activity, i.e., either “Snow White” or “Little Red Cap”. After students finished this task, a discussion sheet with two sections (Appendix F) was distributed to each student. The instructor then asked students to compare the story they had just read with any traditional fairy tale and to write down the differences between the two stories in the box at the top of the discussion sheet.

Students needed to do the work on their own during this 15-minute task. Once each student had completed his/her work, the instructor told students in pairs to use another 15 minutes sharing their ideas about the story that they had just read and writing down their partner’s opinions in the box on the bottom of the discussion sheet while their partner was sharing his/her perspectives.

#### **Fourth Session of the Activity**

The fourth session was conducted on Friday afternoon in Week 3. At the beginning, the instructor spent about five minutes reminding students of what they had done during the first three sessions of the activity and having students re-examine their own discussion sheets. Afterwards, the instructor used about 15 minutes to have some students from different groups share, in English, their own ideas or the perspectives from their partner. After this sharing task, students were given a copy of the guidelines about how to create a pair dialogue (Appendix G). During the next 15 minutes, the instructor explained the directions for a writing assignment.

Specifically, students were asked to find a partner with whom to discuss which storyline they would like to adopt in their dialogue. Students could choose the storyline either from the two nonconventional fairy tales they had read in class or another fairy tale that they knew. Each pair dialogue should contain about 400-500 words that the students themselves had produced. Students were reminded to finish and submit their first draft some time during in Week 7. Then the instructor would return each group's work with comments in Week 11. Each pair of students needed to revise their draft based on the instructor's comments and to turn in their revised draft in Week 12. Finally, students were told that they would perform their pair dialogue in class in Week 13 and that their dialogue presentation should be between two and a half minutes and four minutes.

### **Description of the Multiple-Perspective Activity**

#### **First Session of the Activity**

The second activity was a 4-session learning process in which students were encouraged to make critical sense of Anthony Browne's (2001) picture book *Voices in the Park*. The purpose of the activity was to invite multiple perspectives into the classroom and to integrate students' language learning with their personal experience. The first session of the activity was conducted on Tuesday afternoon in Week 6. At first, the instructor allocated 5 minutes to divide the students into 4 groups of 7-8 and to ask each group to sit together. Then the instructor asked four student volunteers to put on a pair of glasses in different colors (i.e., red, green, yellow, and orange) and to hold up a sheet of white paper in front of their faces. The instructor asked these four students what color their paper was. They all responded with a different color as they saw the paper through the glasses they were wearing.

About fifteen minutes were spent on the following exercise. Each student was given a piece of paper to write down his/her ideas about what the four volunteer students had just done either with key words/ phrases (e.g., multiple perspectives) or with sentences (e.g., I think this activity is meaningful.). The instructor offered some suggested questions such as “Can you think of any situations similar to the one just demonstrated?”, “What is the purpose of this activity?”, and “What words/phrases would you use to describe a situation in which people see the same thing from different perspectives?”. While students were working on this, the instructor walked around the classroom and offered help for students in need. After each student finished his/her task, the instructor held a discussion for the entire class by having some students share the ideas that they had just written down.

After students had shared their perspectives on the glasses-wearing warm-up exercise, the instructor tried to help students understand the background to *Voices in the Park*. He gave a 10-minute introduction to the book, presenting its author, characters, illustrations and the four main characters. The instructor then assigned each group one of the four roles presented in the book and at the same time gave each student a copy of *Voices in the Park*. By cutting and pasting, the instructor had consolidated the written text, together with selected illustrations, onto fewer pages, so the copy was a shortened version. Then the instructor reminded students that they would have about 20 minutes to read the shortened version. Once the reading was finished, each student was given a discussion handout (Appendix H) with two sections and a list of common character traits (Appendix I), designed to help students identify their character’s traits.

### **Second and Third Sessions of the Activity**

The second and third sessions were implemented consecutively on Thursday afternoon in Week 6. At the beginning of the second session, each student first tried to

identify some personality traits of his/her assigned role from the list of common character traits distributed at the end of the first activity. Students also needed to write down the personality features that they had found in the first section of the discussion handout as shown in Appendix H. Then students were asked to work in pairs and to exchange the ideas that they had just written in the first section. Students needed to share their opinions in English while their partners listened to them and wrote notes into the second section of their discussion sheet. Students were not allowed to exchange their notes or to write down their partner's ideas directly from the sheet. During this time, the instructor walked around the class and made sure that all the students had no difficulty sharing their ideas. The purpose of this 25-minute task was to improve students' English listening/speaking abilities while students were motivated to generate reflective responses to a picture book highlighting the notion of multiple perspectives.

The instructor then gave each group a Character Web poster (Appendix J) and had each group's students identify the qualities of the character they had discussed. Students were reminded that they had about 25 minutes to complete this task. In order to guarantee that students would fully understand the purpose of this project, the instructor showed students how to complete the task step by step. For instance, students were asked to write down the name of their character (e.g., third little pig) in the middle of the poster. Then students needed to come up with four to five adjectives (e.g., brave) used to describe or represent the character's personality. Lastly, students should offer some examples or their experiences to support these traits (e.g., He is not afraid of the big wolf.) from the picture book and to write them down on the poster. If students had enough time, they could decorate and color their poster.

At the beginning of the third session of the activity, 25 minutes were allocated to having all the students in each group take turns sharing the poster. Then the

instructor spent some time explaining again what the ongoing task was and reminding students of what they had done the previous time. Afterwards, the instructor spent 15 minutes showing the picture book in Power Point format. Besides speaking English the instructor at times used Mandarin to indicate crucial ideas in the story. This would help students obtain a better understanding of the storyline.

To stimulate students to think more deeply about the issues presented in this study, students were given a handout (Appendix K) with two inferential questions: (1) “Why does the author present the story from four different perspectives?” and (2) “Is it important to recognize multiple perspectives regarding specific events in our lives? Why or why not?”. Students individually answered these questions and then formed pairs to discuss their answers. The discussion procedures followed the same format as the first two sessions, with students speaking in English and not being allowed to copy each other’s answers directly. The instructor had each student choose a partner sitting next to him/her. These pairs of students were asked to think about these questions, exchange ideas and write the ideas down on the discussion sheets.

#### **Fourth Session of the Activity**

The fourth session was conducted on Friday afternoon in Week 6. At the beginning, the instructor spent five more minutes reminding students of what they had done during the first three sessions of the activity. Students were required to finish the discussion sheets handed out by the instructor in the third session within 15 minutes. Then the instructor wrapped up the ideas from students by having a class discussion. This task was completed in about 15 minutes.

In the remaining time of this session, students were informed of their individual writing assignment, a Perspective Journal (Appendix L). First, the instructor introduced the main components of this assignment. The purpose of this journal was to encourage students to pay closer attention to things and people in their daily

environment. This was accomplished by analyzing and reflecting on personal experiences with regard to interactions that they had had with people, books they had read, movies they had seen, etc. Then the instructor explained how this writing assignment was different from simply describing an event. Students needed to answer the questions provided in the handout.

For example, they had to summarize a personal experience relating to multiple perspectives, describe the people involved, mention their perspectives, and figure out which voices had been silenced in this experience. Finally, students were required to write about what they had learned from analyzing different situations from a critical stance. Students were given two weeks to complete this assignment and had to submit it in Week 9.

### **Description of the Gender Awareness Activity**

#### **First Two Sessions of the Activity**

The third activity was designed to promote a sense of gender awareness in students during a 4-session learning process. Its first two sessions were conducted on Thursday afternoon in Week 11, i.e., two weeks after Week 9, the midterm week. Course materials included two gender-issue picture books, Robert D. San Souci's (2000) *Fa Mulan: The Story of a Woman Warrior* and Babette Cole's (1997) *Princess Smartypants*. Students were required to preview the picture book about Fa Mulan during the weekend between Week 10 and Week 11 and to complete four reading comprehension questions on a worksheet (Appendix M).

At the beginning of the first session, the instructor spent about 5 minutes dividing students into groups, i.e., 7 pairs consisting of one male and one female, 6 pairs of two males or two females, and a group of one male and two females. Then the

instructor gave each student a discussion sheet with a list of six occupations common in Taiwan (that is, nurse, bus driver, salesperson, soldier, housekeeper, and babysitter). Students were asked to decide which jobs were more appropriate for males and/or females and to write down their comments or reasons on a discussion sheet (Appendix N). The instructor told students that they would have about 20 minutes to complete this task. Once the independent work was finished, students were to share their ideas in English with their partner(s). During the discussion, each student had to write down, in the boxes of the bottom of the discussion sheet (Appendix N), the opinions of his/her partner(s) with key words and/or phrases or in full sentences. Students were reminded to complete this collaborative task in 25 minutes.

At the beginning of the second session, the instructor allocated 10 minutes to wrapping up the ideas from students in a class discussion by having three pairs of students shares their perspectives in front of the class. Then the instructor asked students to take out the handout distributed in Week 10, i.e., the handout with four reading comprehension questions relating to *Fa Mulan*. Each student was asked to exchange his/her responses to the four questions with a classmate sitting nearby. Students were informed that they needed to complete this task in 10 minutes.

In addition, the instructor told students that they did not need to take notes on their partner's responses to the questions. But students were advised to pay close attention to their discussion, because the instructor hoped to have them freely express their ideas in English to their partner. Since students had had considerable experience in meaningful discussions during the first and second activities as mentioned previously, students were better than before in responding to thought-provoking questions and in expressing their ideas during the present activity, the third activity implemented in the semester. Afterwards, the instructor spent another 10 minutes wrapping up the ideas from students in a discussion with the entire class.



Finally, during the remaining time of the second session (about 20 minutes), the instructor showed students the picture book *Princess Smartypants* in Power Point format. In a classroom with the lights dimmed, students read the story from Power Point slides on the screen while the instructor acted as a storyteller.

### **Two Follow-Up Sessions of the Activity**

The third session was conducted on Friday afternoon in Week 11. At first, the instructor briefly refreshed students' memory of the story of *Princess Smartypants*. Then the instructor gave each student a worksheet (Appendix O) with five open-ended questions related to *Princess Smartypants*. He spent about 5 minutes helping students to answer the following questions: (1) "What's the main idea of this story?", (2) "What's your opinion of the female protagonist Princess Smartypants?", (3) "What did you think the author was trying to tell us?", (4) "Which part of the story interested you the most?", and (5) "Do you have any friends or have you heard about people who are like Princess Smartypants?" In order to provoke students into thinking deeply about the issues presented in this story, each student was required to answer the questions mentioned above within 30 minutes. During the final 20 minutes of the session, students were asked to share the ideas that they had just written on the handout.

The fourth session was carried out on Thursday afternoon in Week 12. At the beginning, the instructor gave each student a worksheet (Appendix P) and students were asked to use the worksheet during the next 10 minutes to figure out at least three qualities for Princess Smartypants and to use several sentences to support their ideas. For example, some students considered the princess courageous, so they could say, "I think Princess Smartypants is brave because she knows how to say no to others".

After students finished this task, the instructor spent about 5 minutes dividing students into 5 groups. Students in the same group were asked to sit together and were

given a poster and some markers. Then the instructor asked each group's students to draw a blank chart on their poster and to find the similarities and differences between Mulan and Princess Smartypants. Students in each group needed to brainstorm these two female characters' features and to write down the features in the chart on their group poster (Appendix Q). To be more specific, students had to list at least three sentences on their group poster to describe both characters. For instance, one group wrote on its poster that "Mulan was independent because she could take care of everything". Similarly, another group indicated on its poster that Princess Smartypants was a clever female because she devised several plans to make all her suitors go away". Students were reminded that they had 15 minutes to accomplish this task.

After each group finished its poster, the instructor spent about 15 minutes facilitating a class discussion in which each group came to the front of the classroom and shared their opinions one by one. Before the last segment of the session, the instructor announced that each student needed to complete an individual writing assignment (Appendix R). First, students needed to collect an article or news item related to gender issues. Then students had to cut and paste the text on a piece of A4 paper and to write a 250-word reflection on the A 4 paper. Students were informed that they were to submit this personal reflective writing in Week 14.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS (I)**

This section provides the analysis of quantitative (i.e., the questionnaire) and qualitative data sources (e.g., students' reflection paper and interviews) in relation to students' responses to the entire learning experience from a critical literacy perspective. As mentioned previously in Chapter 3, all 34 students were required to fill out a questionnaire at the end of the semester and to return it to the researcher, but 2 copies were excluded from the study because of incomplete responses. Thirty-two questionnaire copies were considered valid for the quantitative data analysis. The qualitative data sources did not have such problems because students were required to submit all their work (e.g., reflective papers, writing assignments, and posters) in class. The researcher counted all the assignments collected and made sure that each student had returned his/her work.

According to the analysis of the quantitative source, the internal-consistency reliability coefficient of the questionnaire in this study is .88, which is greater than .70; therefore, this questionnaire is proven to be reliable. The mean of the questionnaire is 2.87, which is greater than the midpoint of the 4-points Likert scale (2.5); the standard deviation is .59. The mean for each item in the questionnaire is shown in Appendix V. The results of the questionnaire show that the mean for most items is greater than the mean of the Likert scale (2.5). That is, students' responses to most of the items were positive. In the data analysis that follows, the researcher will focus on some specific items in order to answer the first research question in the study because these items are more related to this question than the other items in the questionnaire are. Then a further analysis based on qualitative data will be presented in order to explain how students reacted to the three activities designed from a critical viewpoint.

### Quantitative Data Analysis of the Three Activities

With regard to the first research question, “How did the students respond to the activities designed from a critical literacy perspective?”, students’ responses to some items in the questionnaire suggest that this activity (1) motivated them to reflect on various types of learning input based on critical instruction, and (2) allowed them to be active learners during the entire activity, especially while students were working collaboratively. The analysis below is based on Tables 5.1 to 5.3.

As Table 5.1 indicates, 23 out of 32 students (71.9%) either agreed or strongly agreed that they were engaged in the entire process and that they actively participated in discussing various issues from the picture books. This suggests that most students liked to play an active role in discussion either with their partner or with the entire class. The theme-based discussion engaged students in an inquiry process that had students respond critically to various issues.

Table 5.1 Description of students’ responses to Item 8 “*I actively participated in the discussion with other classmates about various issues brought up from the picture books.*”

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Disagree	9	28.1.%
Agree	22	68.8%
Strongly Agree	1	3.1%

In Table 5.2, we can find that most students were willing to make sense of the picture books offered by the instructor during the learning process from multiple perspectives. Specifically, 26 out of 32 students (81.2 %) either agreed or totally agreed that the issues treated during the three activities such as multiple perspectives or gender stereotypes motivated students to involve themselves in a variety of tasks actively.

Table 5.2 Description of students' responses to Item 21 *"I tried to use different perspectives to interpret the issues in the picture books."*

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Disagree	6	18.8%
Agree	21	65.6%
Strongly Agree	5	15.6%

Table 5.3 demonstrates that 21 students (65.7%) either agreed or totally agreed that they began to pay more attention to similar TV news events in their daily life after reading the picture books. Over half of the students tried to reflect on what they had read in class and then to relate the issues discussed during the activity to their lives outside the classroom.

Table 5.3 Description of students' responses to Item 35 *"I tried to notice whether similar problems or events would be reported on TV news."*

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Disagree	11	34.4%
Agree	18	56.3%
Strongly Agree	3	9.4%

In summary, Tables 5.1-5.3 indicate that the three activities offered students many opportunities to experience interactive discussion, to consider different issues from multiple perspectives, and to become conscious of their daily lives with a more critical attitude. The different exercises during the three activities (e.g., poster-making, discussions, picture-book reading, and reflective assignments) made most students not only rethink the relationship between the texts and themselves, but also connect their learning with their lived experiences.

### **Qualitative Data Analysis of the First Activity**

In addition to the results based on quantitative data analysis, the following qualitative analysis indicates similar findings: most students considered this activity personal and alternative in learning English through reflective collaborative tasks. First, students reported that they enjoyed the poster-making task because it motivated them to bring their opinions into the classroom. The task was personal and relevant to students. For example, in order to generate different ideas about fairy tales, students were required to think of one fairy tale or a bedtime story that they had heard before and then to present it in their comic poster as a warm-up activity. Twenty-one students in their reflection paper indicated that they enjoyed this task because it encouraged students to express their opinions and to work together during the poster-making process. It was different from their previous learning experience, i.e., taking many standardized tests that had no room for students to think and exchange ideas.

We can see that this task was a personal and social practice from the example of Gary<sup>1</sup>. In his reflection paper, he said that he had encountered some problems while working with his group members, but he did not clearly indicate whether or not he liked the activity.<sup>2</sup> While being interviewed, he expressed his opinion that it was difficult for him to find time to meet with his group members because they were mostly from different departments. However, he pointed out that he had enjoyed the poster-making task very much. This activity gave him and his group members many opportunities to practice English through team work, and more importantly, to have a good time by sharing various perspectives about traditional fairy tales.

According to Lewison, Leland, and Harste (2008), the foundation of a critical

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<sup>1</sup> All student names in this research are pseudonyms for the sake of confidentiality.

<sup>2</sup> Students' reflective papers were written in Chinese and interviews with students were conducted in Chinese as well. All responses from those two sources are translated into idiomatic English.

literacy curriculum is to encourage students to bring into the classroom different sources (e.g., background experiences, prior knowledge, and personal interests). The task invited students to create a fairy tale based on students' memories of fairy tales, their negotiation of different ideas on fairy tales, and their collaborative performance of the comic poster. It started from the personal and moved to the social and the entire learning experience occurred within a critical-literacy classroom based on students' identities and backgrounds as learners of English and readers of fairy tales.

The researcher's journal entries suggest that students became a community of learners in the classroom because they shared a similar understanding of fairy tales and recalled their prior knowledge about those stories. For example, many female students recalled classical fairy tales such as "Snow White" and "Cinderella" in detail and made good use of these stories while coming up with their comic poster. This poster-making task was very successful at this stage because many students used their prior knowledge of fairy tales and their involvement in the task became part of the critical curriculum in the classroom.

One group consisting of women chose "The Ugly Ducking" as the storyline for their poster (Appendix S) and revised the plot through group-discussion. This group added the character of an angel to this story. The angel turns the Ugly Ducking into a beautiful swan at the end of the story and this plot totally differs from the original version of "The Ugly Ducking". As classroom observations indicate, students' posters were mostly based on their previous impressions of fairy tales in childhood. The task enabled students (1) not only to gather others' different understanding of fairy tales (2) but also to produce their own comics that combined some sentences with relevant illustrations through collaboration.

Critical scholars emphasize that teachers should create a learning environment that motivates students to have open-ended discussion (Damico, 2003; Fisher, 2008).

This poster-making exercise offered students a space to initiate different discourses with others. Another student, Sherry, shared a similar feeling on this task. While being interviewed, Sherry expressed the opinion that the biggest lesson that she had learned from this task was that everyone was able to use their imagination and express their ideas while discussing their own story. Some people's ideas were not only funny but also thought-provoking, and she enjoyed the repeated sound of laughter in class. The video tapes also show this pleasant atmosphere; students were engaged in the process of creating their poster. To sum up, critical literacy should help students become open-minded to different viewpoints during the learning process.

Critical instruction employs a wide range of discourses as a network of associations formed by social interactions among texts, students, teachers, and other resources (Gee, 2001). Accordingly, students were expected to bring into the classroom different perspectives on fairy tales. Although not every group revised or changed the plot/characters of the story it had selected, most students were able to recall their prior knowledge of or their memories of fairy tales. Students in these groups were engaged to pay more attention to the language they used and to become more aware of facts to which they had been accustomed. According to Lewison, Leland, and Harste (2008), this conscious engagement is the basic critical stance that students should maintain to generate more possibilities to change their way of thinking and doing. Accordingly, the instructor said during the interview that students had learned to be critically literate when they started to exchange and accept different perspectives either from texts or from other classroom participants.

For example, Cynthia and four other female students came up with a fairly unconventional fairy tale for their poster work. As Cynthia said during the interview, while they were discussing the direction of their fairy tale, they found that they all happened to like watching the same cartoons in their free time. Cynthia and her group



members used many popular cartoon characters to construct their narrative. The group displayed its originality by incorporating different cartoon characters into the comics on its poster (e.g., SpongeBob, Sakura Momoko<sup>3</sup>, Butter Lion<sup>4</sup>, Mickey Mouse, and Winnie the Pooh).

In this hodgepodge story, Sakura Momoko and her friends hear that Butter Lion plans to kill them, so they decide to ask SpongeBob for help. They stay in SpongeBob's house because it is strong enough to protect them. Afterwards, SpongeBob thinks that Butter Lion is going to attack the house through the chimney, so he boils a big pot of hot water underneath the chimney. Unfortunately, the character that comes down the chimney is not Butter Lion but Santa Claus. The ending of the story is presented with some black humor—Santa Claus dies.

As Cynthia said, her group members attempted to avoid presenting a traditional fairy tale that might sound boring to their classmates. They hoped to generate a storyline and to visualize it on their comic poster; they all attempted “to come up with a teamwork product that would be alternative and creative.” The recorded video tape shows that other students enjoyed the comic poster of the story. They burst out laughing many times while they were watching the poster presentation made by Cynthia and her group members. In sum, this activity provided students opportunities not only to strengthen students' collaborative ability but also to stimulate their originality and imagination.

As critical scholars emphasize, literacy becomes an ongoing learning process

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<sup>3</sup> Sakura Momoko (櫻桃小丸子) is the protagonist of the eponymous animated cartoon series created by the Japanese artist Miki Miura in 1965. In each episode of the TV cartoon program, Sakura Momoko always comes up with some funny and interesting ideas and sometimes makes a fool of herself by doing or saying something silly. This cartoon is also well-known in Taiwan.

<sup>4</sup> Butter Lion (奶油獅) is popular company logo owned by Lion Pencil Co., Ltd. (雄獅美術文具公司), a leading stationery and art material manufacturer in Taiwan. Established in 1956, the company originally provided the Taiwanese market with pencils. Now its sales have been expanded into the international market with a variety of products. Butter Lion is a character commonly seen on many fancy stationery items produced by the company such as markers and assorted art sets. Students in the study would be familiar with this logo since kindergarten.

when it influences students through different types of learning input at different times (Knoester, 2009; Pescatore, 2007). The discussion so far has suggested that when students are exposed to a prolonged learning process that constantly encourages them to re-examine existing attitudes, students will become more reflective about the relationship between social realities and themselves.

Second, students considered the activity alternative especially when they were asked to make sense of two unconventional fairy tales in comic format. This comic reading experience was different from their previous reading experiences in which students were mostly required to read textbooks. In their reflection paper, some students said that they had never had any experience of reading comic books in the classroom, let alone opportunities to express their ideas about the plot and characters of the comics. Either in their reflection paper or during the interview, 25 students maintained a positive attitude toward this activity as an alternative comic reading experience. As Joan recollected during the interview:

I saw this kind of comic book in English at the bookstore before, but I did not have enough money to purchase it at that time. I was happy to have a chance to appreciate a different style of illustrations in comic books. The comics we read in class were suitable for adults rather than for young children, I thought. Even though there were still some vocabulary words I couldn't recognize, I was still very interested in reading the stories in the comic book.

This alternative reading exercise made students re-examine their beliefs about traditional fairy tales because students became more aware of different values or perspectives as expressed in traditional and nontraditional fairy tales. According to Moon (1999), alternative reading can be used to encourage readers to challenge the dominant texts by investigating multiple perspectives presented in alternative reading texts. Students are allowed to question existing knowledge, traditional values, or even dominant cultural beliefs taken for granted in society. As noted in Chapter 4, students were requested to read two unconventional fairy tales in comic format (e.g., "Snow

White” and “Little Red Cap”) during class time, two alternative readings with twisted storylines. Thus, students had an opportunity to understand how fairy tales could be told from different perspectives when they were required to read such alternative reading materials.

According to students’ reflection papers, most of their previous learning experiences were based on transmission pedagogy, i.e., instruction that stressed memorization and direct lectures. In senior high school, students were rarely invited to discuss different issues and to experience multiple perspectives in the classroom. Consequently, students did not have opportunities to be able to make sense of texts and to discuss relevant topics from a critical viewpoint. In contrast, the present activity provided students with a learning space where students shared different opinions on two alternative fairy tales when they were required to find the similarities and differences between the traditional fairy tales and nonconventional ones.

According to Comber (2001), critical literacy needs to have students experience a textual analytical process and to see how stories can be told or interpreted in a different way. As seen in the reading exercise discussed, students were invited to read the alternative versions of two conventional fairy tales, and then they were asked to use their prior knowledge regarding fairy tales to figure out the similarities and differences between these stories. Finally, the pair discussion task helped students to better understand these stories and to become more able to distinguish the similarities and discrepancies between the old and new versions of fairy tales.

Students’ discussion sheets show that it was not difficult for most students to identify the similarities and differences between the old and new versions of these two fairy tales (i.e., “Snow White” and “Little Red Riding Hood”). For example, many students pointed out that while the Queen in the original version of “Snow White” sells an apple, the Queen in the new version of “Snow White” sells a comb. Many

students also indicated that Little Red Riding Hood in the new version “Little Red Cap” looks much more mature than her counterpart in the old version. One female student indicated that the stepmother of Snow White in the Grimm Brothers version is not punished at the end of the story.<sup>5</sup> However, the stepmother in the new version ends up wearing a pair of red hot iron shoes. The student further pointed out during the interview, “Although my partner did not like the nontraditional version of ‘Snow White’, actually I really enjoyed it and realized that we could read fairy tales from an alternative perspective.”

Many interviewed students said that this alternative reading exercise offered them an opportunity to explore different possibilities of reading traditional fairy tales. Most of them were aware that the two stories that they had heard in the classroom could be told from different angles. The results of the interview are confirmed by the points that many students indicated on their discussion sheet. As James indicated in his discussion sheet, he realized that an alternative reading had made him make sense of the texts from different perspectives and had made him change his attitude toward his life:

I never thought that Little Red Riding Hood could be so evil and her smiles could look so terrible. I mean the one in “Little Red Cap”. Although I did not like this new version, I still found something meaningful after I read the story. There is no such thing as a conventional plot and ending in every fairy tale. This reading experience made me understand how to be open-minded to things in our lives. I mean that we should see everything from a flexible stance.

Above all, students took a positive attitude toward this alternative reading because it challenged students’ established notions of “Snow White” and “Little Red Riding Hood” and gave them a chance to see these stories from a different perspective. For example, some female students during the class discussion said that although “Little Red Cap” had a happy ending, the story was very frightening and seemed more

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<sup>5</sup> Actually, in most Grimm’s tales, the villains are punished very harshly.

suitable for young adults. Many students either in their reflection paper or during the interview suggested that such alternative reading experiences offered them a comfortable zone to examine their notions of fairy-tale characters and relevant values from different versions of the two fairy tales. In addition, this reflective reading process encouraged them to make sense of the possibilities of varying interpretation in traditional fairy tales.

Third, most students indicated that the entire activity was thought-provoking because students were constantly asked to think deeply and to relate their personal experiences to the learning process. At the beginning, students in groups drew on their memories of fairy tales to complete their comic poster task. Then students' comprehension of two unconventional fairy tales made them re-evaluate fairy tales from an alternative perspective. Afterwards, students were asked to share the reflection of their learning experience by creating and performing a pair-dialogue.

Over 15 students believed that it was meaningful to create a team dialogue either by revising the two unconventional fairy tales that students had read in class or by revising any fairy tale that students had heard. Either in their reflection paper or during the interview, many students claimed that creating a pair-dialogue based on their understanding of traditional or nontraditional fairy tales was thought-provoking because this writing task had students make personal connections with fairy tales. Specifically, this pair dialogue offered students opportunities to rearrange the ideas that they had previously obtained during the activity and to add new meanings to fairy tales through the form of a dialogue. Finally, students' perceptions of traditional fairy tales were negotiated through various types of learning input.

An examination of students' team dialogues indicates that students from 10 out of 17 pairs redefined their values of conventional fairy tales and developed their own perspectives about these stories. For instance, one group reshaped the image of Snow

White into a brave and intelligent girl. One day, the Queen invites Snow White to have afternoon tea with her and the Queen plans to put poison powder in Snow White's cup while they chatted. However, Snow White notices this and then decides to exchange their cups secretly. Finally, Snow White saves herself from danger and lives happily ever after. In this story, Snow White becomes a smart girl and saves her own life.

Critical reflection on fairy tales can also be found in a parody of Cinderella, a twisted version of the story created by two female students. In their work, Cinderella is a lovely girl in the twenty-first century. Her life seems perfect except for an annoying condition that troubles her every day—she has serious athlete's foot. These two female students entertained the class with their creative dialogue performance and made their classmates burst into laughter especially when the prince, played by one of the female students, refused to marry Cinderella, played by the other female student, because he could not bear smelly feet.

As mentioned previously, not all the groups created a new version of a fairy tale with a new plot or new characters. It should be stressed that most students incorporated their experiences or imagination into their team dialogue. Many students came up with interesting ideas during the team-dialogue task and they tried to engage themselves in the entire activity. The two examples discussed above, i.e., the new versions of "Snow White" and "Cinderella", indicate that the new versions evoked responses in the students who made the versions themselves in their team dialogue, a writing that allowed students to reflect their values and their lives. More importantly, such a learning process became a social practice that enabled students to make connections with their lives during the learning process.

As Sheila pointed out in her reflection paper, exchanging new ideas with a partner and working together to write a new version of a fairy tale helped students

explore the possibilities of varying storylines, change their perceptions of fairy tales, and present their own visions of the world. Other students like Jimmy, Stanley, and Teresa all had similar feelings about this writing assignment. As Jimmy said during the interview, he felt happy (1) to discuss many interesting ideas with his partner based on the cartoons that they had seen on TV like Superman or Spiderman and (2) to gain many useful possibilities for their dialogue. This finding is confirmed by Item 35 *“I tried to notice whether the similar problems or events would be reported on TV news”* in the questionnaire. Qualitative and quantitative data both prove that most students used their prior knowledge about fairy tales, reconsidered the issues from the texts critically, and related what they had learned in the classroom to their lives.

Another student, Deanna, said in her reflection paper that the dialogue performances enabled her to understand further how her classmates revised traditional fairy tales and/or how they created an alternative fairy tale of their own. She was deeply impressed by one of the dialogue performances, an engaging reinvention of “Snow White”, because Snow White in the new version becomes a naughty girl and tends to make fun of her stepmother the queen. Deanna further said that this dialogue was original because she had never had such “an imaginative idea” of combining two well-known cartoon and movie characters. As Deanna stated during the interview, it would be extremely important to incorporate creativity, i.e., new ideas, into students’ assignments such as the dialogue performance.

Moreover, from the video tape and researcher’s field notes, students seemed more concentrated while appreciating other classmates’ performance. As Bertha said during the interview, “The whole class paid attention to the performances of different groups, especially the one about a fight between Superman and Spider Man. I’ll never forget this dialogue performance.” Actually, the video tape recorded this performance and showed that that performance held everyone’s attention and most of the students

kept laughing for a long while.

As critical educators advocate, critical literacy should involve instructional approaches empowering students with the ability to make critical sense of a text and to bring forth alternative opinions (Stevens & Bean, 2007; Xu, 2007). The examples noted above suggest that students gradually became more reflective during the entire activity because they not only reexamined the discourse in the two unconventional fairy tales but also reflected on the social and cultural realities in students' lives. To be more specific, students were offered an opportunity to come up with an interesting dialogue, practiced it inside and outside the classroom, and more importantly, reflected on their own values in the collaborative dialogue writing.

In summary, an examination of qualitative data analysis indicates that most students held a positive attitude toward this personal, alternative, and meaningful activity. Such an activity encouraged students to bring students' ideas about any fairy tales into the classroom, especially during the poster-making exercise. During the activity, students were offered a free space in which to learn how to evaluate nontraditional fairy tales from an alternative perspective. As critical theorists suggest, students should be engaged in critical education programs that make students able to view texts from a critical viewpoint (Ko, 2010; McLaughlin & DeVogd, 2004).

### **Qualitative Data Analysis of the Second Activity**

With regard to the concern about how students reacted to the critical instruction in the second activity, the results of the qualitative data analysis are similar to those of the quantitative data analysis as discussed previously. Most students adopted positive attitudes toward the activity that addressed the notion of multiple perspectives. They considered the activity meaningful, active, and reflective. First, the issue of multiple



perspectives examined during the activity was meaningful for students and relevant to their lives. In their final reflection paper, 25 out of 34 students strongly agreed that the issue of multiple perspectives was closely related to their personal experiences. Both in their reflection paper and during the interview, many students thought that the entire activity used a series of critical exercises to have them constantly re-examine the notion of multiple perspectives, a real-life issue outside the classroom. This finding corroborates one of the beliefs held by many critical educators--topics brought up in the classroom should make students rethink their personal experiences and apply their reflections to their own lives.

As Heidi said in her reflection paper, nowadays many people make friends only with people who are beneficial to them. It has become less common that people are truly willing to understand their friends or to care about their friends' feelings, not to mention the acceptance of different opinions from others. This activity gave her a great opportunity to understand her classmates' viewpoints while she was practicing English. Finally, she learned the importance of how to explore events from different angles: "It was rewarding that we students in this class could learn not to judge different situations by listening to one interpretation only."

According to Huang (2009), critical instruction should make students able to investigate the viewpoints presented in the texts and to challenge texts. As a whole, students in a critical-literacy classroom should be encouraged to seek out and compare different concepts during the entire learning process. Specifically, the activity was designed to help students to understand the notion of multiple perspectives and to examine their lives from different viewpoints. After students read the picture book *Voices in the Park* in Power Point format, they were required to consider two reading comprehension questions: (1) why the author presents the story from four different perspectives and (2) why it is important to recognize such issue regarding a specific

event in our lives. This reading comprehension worksheet offered students an opportunity not only to analyze the discourse in the texts, but also to reflect on why the notion of multiple perspectives is crucial in our lives. Such an exercise made students understand that what they learn should be a meaningful process, i.e., a process involved in social practices.

Through reading comprehension discussion sheets, 23 students pointed out that the author of *Voices in the Park* suggests that we should not judge events from a single perspective and that we should respect and tolerate different opinions. As Phoebe stated on her discussion sheet, there are no absolute right or wrong answers while people are evaluating an event. Specifically, people cannot draw a conclusion based on what they alone thought. Similarly, on her discussion sheet Monica noted that “the purpose of the author in the picture book is to tell us that everyone has their own feelings or viewpoints; thus, we cannot always want to ask others to do or have the same opinion as ours.” Monica continued to share her ideas on her reflection paper: “If people did not have different perspectives, our lives would be boring. Sometimes, different opinions will make our world more colorful.”

As a whole, students’ discussion sheets indicate that the activity was meaningful to them because the activity helped students to re-evaluate their relationships with the texts and to connect relevant issues with their lives. As Amanda said in her reflection paper, the instruction and materials of the activity made students become critical language learners who could read the word and read the world:

The picture book [*Voices in the Park*] was meaningful because its story inspired students to be critical thinkers and to reflect on themselves. This book taught students how to relate the issue of multiple perspectives to their lives. I think that the teacher emphasized not only the acquisition of a foreign language but also the development of the ability to be reflective.

An examination of students’ final reflection papers suggests that many students,

such as Jessica, Tim, Linda, and Serena, all shared a similar opinion, i.e., seeing the activity as a learning experience that made students more aware of the issue of multiple perspectives. These students agreed that the most important thing they had learned from the activity was the ability to think deeply, especially the ability to reflect on multiple perspectives from other people. Take Jessica as an example. She thought that the theme of *Voices in the Park* was thought-provoking. She had learned not only how to analyze the situation presented in the story from various angles but also how to appreciate others' differing ideas about the same event. This task pushed her to pay closer attention to viewpoints that she might have ignored. More importantly, in her reflection paper she said that now she was no longer a student used to linear thinking, i.e., one-way thinking in Chinese, because the activity enabled her to become more open in her thinking.

Either in the final reflection paper or in the questionnaire, many students said that the activity made them re-consider the opinions that they had had before the activity was conducted. For example, George provided an example in his reflection paper to show how important it was for him to become conscious of the notion of multiple perspectives. He said that this activity had made him become more critical of political election news. He realized that he could no longer believe anything from TV news programs, such as which candidate was better than others.

As he indicated in his reflection paper: "This activity made me begin to observe different interpretations and viewpoints from various sources such as newspapers, TV programs and even the specific comments made by local citizens on election candidates." George's opinion on this activity reconfirms the results of Item 35 "*I tried to notice whether similar problems or events would be reported on TV news*" in the questionnaire. That is, 21 out of 34 students agreed that they paid more attention to people or events around them after they had experienced a series of meaningful

learning input.

To sum up, data analysis based on students' discussion sheets, final reflection papers, and interviews demonstrates that this activity had students experience a meaningful learning process. What students discussed or learned highly related to the student themselves. As critical educators suggest, topics brought up in the classroom should make students rethink their personal experiences and apply their reflections to their own lives (Neilsen, 1989). Accordingly, students in this activity were invited to explore the issue of multiple perspectives that was meaningful for them. Students agreed that it would be extremely significant for them to identify the issue of multiple perspectives as they had experienced from the picture book and the activity.

Second, many students enjoyed the activity as a social practice because it allowed them to experience a lot of interaction and to express their ideas and values. Specifically, students saw the activity as a type of active learning in which students drew on personal experiences and interests in order to participate in different critical exercises. If we agree that critical literacy sees literacy as a social process, we should bear in mind that "collaboration and the opportunity to learn from and with others is important" (Lewison, Leland, & Harste 2008, p. 23). The following analysis will show that the entire activity had students experience critical instruction with an emphasis on collaboration and mutual learning.

Either in their reflection paper or during the interview, many students indicated that they enjoyed the task the most because the atmosphere of cooperation motivated them to bring their ideas into the classroom and to respond to their daily lives. In order to help students experience the notion of multiple perspectives, the task had each student select five adjectives to describe his/her assigned role and to present it in a group poster. As Peggy mentioned in her reflection paper:

I like this task the most because I could get many different ideas from others.

Although sometimes other people had ‘unique and diverse’ opinions about choosing certain vocabulary items for the Character Web poster, I tried to respect their ideas and to understand why they had such ideas. This task helped us learn how to actively solve problems through group discussion.

From Peggy’s perspective, it was enjoyable to draw a group poster, discuss it with others, and present it in front of the class. In retrospect, she found that this task was an alternative experience; she became an active learner because she had to figure out which adjectives would be appropriate for their group character in order to come up with a group poster. In brief, she enjoyed learning English through collaboration and reflection.

As discussed previously in Chapter Two, critical literacy has students question and evaluate different perspectives that they encounter in the classroom. Teachers should create a curriculum by having students employ personal experiences, question the everyday world, and finally, take responsibility for constructing knowledge in the classroom. Accordingly, the current activity made students play the major role in their own learning; students designed the poster, gathered useful resources both from their peers and from their dictionaries, and selected possible adjectives for their poster through discussion.

In her reflection paper, Serena indicated that the greatest sense of achievement that she had acquired was to complete a teamwork project. During the poster-making process, she needed not only to find specific vocabulary and sentences, but also to draw large pictures that could reflect the entire group’s idea. The poster based on teamwork included written texts and colorful pictures, both of which, according to Serena, made many classmates laugh out loud while Serena and her group members were sharing their poster.

The recorded video tapes show that most students participated actively in the poster-making exercise and, moreover, the interaction among the teacher and students

and students themselves seemed very spontaneous. Even though students sometimes exchanged their opinions in Mandarin while they were discussing which adjectives they would use for their poster, most students were engrossed in the activity and tried their best to contribute their ideas to discussion. For example, as the researcher's journal entries suggest, while students were working on their poster, some students from three different groups eagerly consulted their own electronic dictionaries in order to confirm the correct meaning of the adjectives that these students and their group members had agreed on. From a critical literacy perspective, students did not merely accept knowledge from either the teachers or the textbooks; on the contrary, students took active roles while seeking, exploring, and finally building the learning resources through teamwork (Chou, 2004; Spector & Jones, 2007).

The poster-making task offered students an opportunity to construct knowledge on their own. During the interview Tim showed a positive attitude toward the poster-making work with regard to the importance of collaboration and interaction for learning English. Tim explained that this poster-making task made his group use imagination to create something of their own and helped him form a closer relationship with other group members. The interaction among students inspired students not only to enhance their motivation to learn, but also to establish an intimate friendship with other classmates.

According to Short, Harste, and Burke (1996), collaborative inquiry-based tasks are a form of sociocultural learning that helps students seek multiple perspectives and develop new understanding on their own. Students in an inquiry-based classroom are no longer "passive recipients of trivial, vague or superficial information" (p.37) but active learners producing new knowledge through collaborative tasks. Accordingly, students in this activity were encouraged to pose their own questions, express their values on specific issues, and obtain new knowledge when they were asked to

complete their team poster. In brief, students felt comfortable with such a collaborative task and they also showed positive attitudes toward this type of active learning.

Third, the activity was a prolonged reflective process in which students were given many opportunities to explore the notion of multiple perspectives. In particular, students re-examined relevant lived experiences through different types of learning input such as discussion, poster-making, picture book reading, and reflective writing. Students became more critically sensitive to their surroundings. The wrap-up discussion gave students another chance to clarify the importance of multiple perspectives. Picture-book reading helped student disrupt common concepts that students used to take for granted in their daily lives. The poster-making exercise helped students learn how to respect and tolerate different opinions. More importantly, 18 out of 34 students in their reflection paper indicated that the writing assignment, i.e., the Perspective Journal, helped them produce more critical thought on their lives than any other exercise. Most students agreed that this writing task was reflective because students were invited to reconsider events or people around them from multiple perspectives.

However, some students expressed their discomfort with this type of reflective writing. For example, Linda said that she was not used to this writing task. Such writing assignment challenged her learning experiences as an English learner in Taiwan. She suggested that the instructor have students provide an example found in life and talk about it in class rather than have students analyze a certain event in written form. Linda was not alone with her view. Eileen stated during the interview: “I felt very frustrated when I tried to organize and present an event from more than one perspective. However, after I finished the assignment, I found that I still had been able to use my English ability to fulfill the whole task and that I had a lot of critical ideas

on this event.”

Most students took a more positive attitude toward writing their Perspective Journal; they considered it an effective stimulus for more critical thought. As Gary noted in his reflection paper, he found that he had been too unengaged in judging his daily life when he was working on his Perspective Journal. The writing assignment required observation and reflection, so he found the process difficult. However, he pointed out that such a writing task still enabled him (1) to understand how to modify his opinions based on other people’s viewpoints and (2) to learn how to become more open to his thinking.

Bertha shared a similar opinion on the writing assignment. During the interview she said:

Such a writing task was totally different from my previous learning experiences in junior and senior high school. Most English teachers I met before would give students a topic and then ask them to complete their writing according to some mechanical writing structures such as opening, body, and conclusion. At times, teachers had students insert some phrases in their writing like ‘according to’ and ‘not to mention’ and asked students to memorize such rules as formulas.

It can be seen that Bertha was not accustomed to a writing assignment that asked for personal perspectives to be expressed in a short essay. Bertha continued, “Even if the writing process was not successful for me, I still had a positive attitude toward this type of writing training because the activity was very thought-provoking and useful in using the notion of multiple perspectives in different situations.”

The discussion so far has suggested that most students considered the Perspectives Journal helpful in promoting more critical responses; they began to pay more attention to things or people around them. In Table 5.4, we can find that most of the students in this activity successfully made a close connection between what they had learned and their writing assignment. Most of the students chose themselves as an example and tried to analyze their personal experiences in their reflective journal.



Family and friendship were the issues that 12 out of 34 students were concerned about. The third issue that students discussed the most was TV news. For example, Evelyn tried to re-examine a car accident that had happened to her from different perspectives and to identify some passengers' voices that had not been heard. In her reflection paper, she agreed that analyzing the event from different angles did help her understand that the notion of multiple perspectives was very important.

Table 5.4: Categories of the Issues in Perspective Journal and Student Number

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Number of the Students</b>
Friendship	7
Family	6
News	4
Politics	4
Movies	3
World	3
Entertainment	2
Education	2
Others	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>

Either in students' reflection papers or during the interview, students expressed the opinion that this writing exercise provided them ample opportunities to share their ideas, explore unheard or silent voices in the event, adjust their perspectives, and eventually obtain meaningful knowledge. For example, as a female student said in her assignment, this task offered her a chance to think about an issue from different angles, i.e., whether watching TV was harmful for children in twenty-first century. She further said, "TV programs are a vast encyclopedia of knowledge which can stimulate the fertile imagination of the young child." Finally, she suggested not ignoring the advantages of TV programs and judging the event only from parents' or teachers'

viewpoints. It is necessary to consider all the possibilities of each event from different viewpoints.

Another student, Shelia, tried to use multiple perspectives to analyze the 911 terrorist attack. She explained that during the event the voice of the government of the United States was heard most of the time, but Muslims' viewpoints went unnoticed. She thought that most mass media were controlled by the Westerners and that people did not pay attention to why the terrorists behaved in such a cruel way. Thus, she suggested that we should listen to different opinions from both the government of the United States and Muslims before making any judgments. While being interviewed, Shelia further said that "I don't want to be a person who passively accepts all the information either on TV programs or in the newspaper. I hope I can be a citizen with multiple perspectives on social realities."

This finding that students started paying more attention to their lives outside the classroom from different viewpoints is consistent with the analysis of the quantitative data discussed above (e.g., the results of Item 21 "*I tried to use different perspectives to interpret the issues in the picture books.*" and Item 35 "*I tried to notice whether similar problems or events would be reported on TV news.*") This alternative writing experience helped students to think critically and, as in Sheila's example, to start questioning why the terrorists behaved in such cruel way and addressing the issue of how the government of American could do improve its relationship with Iraq.

In addition to sociopolitical issues, some students in their Perspective Journal explored events that had happened to them (e.g., an argument with friends or family members). As Sylvia noted in her assignment, somebody told her that her best friend had said something bad about her in public; as a consequence, she felt very angry and cut off their friendship. During the interview, Sylvia said that "if I could have done this writing task, I may not have judged the person by listening to opinions from only

one classmate.” Therefore, this task enabled her to understand how the notion of multiple perspectives was crucial for her.

In order to establish that students took a more critical stance toward their lives and became more aware of the issue of multiple perspectives, the summaries of 6 students’ writing journals are listed in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5: Summaries of Selected Students’ Perspective Journals

No.	Summary
01.	The female student indicated that one day one of her classmates told her that her best friend had said something bad about her. This female student felt so angry that she no longer wanted to be a friend of this used-to- be best friend. However, some weeks later, the female student found out that she had misunderstood her best friend. This event gave her a lesson that she should have not judged the event from one single perspective.
02.	The female student chose as her writing topic “whether or not watching TV is appropriate for young children.” She mentioned that although most parents and teachers do not allow their children to watch TV at home, it cannot be denied that there are many benefits that students can obtain from TV programs. She said that people seldom listen to children’s ideas and many parents even make many decisions without asking their children. She further explained that children can gather knowledge not only from textbooks or quizzes. In reality, some good TV programs may serve as a crucial role in stimulating children’s creativity and imagination. In brief, she suggested that people should take into consideration the benefits and weaknesses of everything while they are making a decision.
03.	A male student analyzed a news story about “whether or not Mainland China tourists should be allowed to travel directly to Taiwan.” From his perspective, although many people maintain a positive attitude toward this policy, there are still some problems. For example, tourists from Mainland China may leave a lot of trash at various tourist attractions. This student states that we should not see the advantages to this policy only from one viewpoint; on the contrary, our government should take a number of factors into consideration and think twice before making a

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decision on this policy.

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04. The female student discussed the terrorist attack [9/11] as an example. In her opinion, the American government's voice was heard, but Islamic viewpoints went unnoticed. Specifically, many mass media were controlled by the government of the United States. In other words, people did not pay attention to why the terrorists behaved in such a cruel way. From this student's perspective, people can just condemn the terrorists' behavior; on the contrary, we have to listen to Mohammedanism's voice and to understand the major problems in this event. Finally, we should try to come up with the best solution to reach a win-win conclusion. In her writing, she stated, "I hope I can be a person with multiple perspectives in the future."

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05. This female student discussed the scandal about the obscene pictures taken by Eason Chen, a well-known singer and movie star from Hong Kong. Eason Chen used to have a womanizer image because he kept dating different females. In 2008, he had his laptop fixed by someone else. Later the person who fixed Eason's laptop downloaded all the pictures that Eason had taken and forgot to delete from his laptop. It turned out that these pictures were taken by Eason while he was sleeping with many female celebrities. These females were either half-naked or naked in these pictures and, unfortunately, these pictures were spread on the Internet afterwards. Those who saw the pictures condemned Eason Chen. From this student's perspective, until now people still have not listened carefully to Eason's opinion about this event. Eason's viewpoint has not been considered by most people. The student pointed out that although it is impossible to notice or listen to everyone's idea, we can learn to accept different perspectives. She added that if she were a reporter, she would interview many people with different views. Therefore, she could report the news more objectively and correctly.

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06. The male student used the example of the policy of diverse entrance, a policy enacted by the Ministry of Education in 2010. He argued whether the policy is appropriate for Taiwanese senior high students. In his opinion, some people like this type of assessment because students can enter college based on their different abilities or potential, but some people still prefer traditional standardized exams. He thought that there would be no totally satisfactory policy for parents, students, or teachers. We can not judge the policy from a single perspective and we should respect different opinions.

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In conclusion, the entire activity provided students with many opportunities to re-examine what they had thought before and to explore multiple perspectives which would then challenge them to think more differently. Most students agreed that the activity was meaningful, active, and reflective. To be more specific, various exercises (e.g., reading picture books, making a team poster, discussing relevant topics, and writing an analytical assignment) allowed students to express their own values and investigate people or events in their lives from a critical stance. More importantly, when students were requested to discuss the notion of multiple perspectives, they were led to a deeper level of thinking and a better understanding of their lives.

### **Qualitative Data Analysis of the Third Activity**

In addition to the results based on quantitative data analysis, the following qualitative analysis shows similar findings; most students had a positive attitude toward the activity that attempted to have students constantly rethink the issue of gender stereotypes. Many data sources show that students considered the activity collaborative, meaningful, and reflective; the activity made students critically literate while students were engaged in task-based completion. Accordingly, the following discussion will be based on students' reactions to different tasks that students had experienced.

First, various data sources suggest that most students liked learning through different forms of discussion, i.e., from pair discussion to class discussion. Many students pointed out that it was helpful for students to have different thoughts by discussing in pairs which occupation males or females should have. As indicated in the description of the present activity in Chapter 4, at the beginning of the activity, students were assigned into 7 pairs of one male and one female, 6 pairs of two males or two females, and 1 group of one female and two males. Then each group was asked

to decide which jobs were more appropriate for males and/or females and to write down their comments on a discussion sheet. From a critical literacy perspective, such collaborative relationships in class should be seen as a social process, i.e., an active process in which the teacher gave students more opportunity to explore knowledge, make their own decisions, and become knowledge seekers (Lewison et al., 2002).

As Judy said in her reflection paper, the pair discussion was a type of critical learning because students were asked to exchange, compare, and appreciate different ideas, especially when these ideas were conflicting. For example, Judy's partner told her that males might be unable to be good nurses because they typically are not patient and not careful enough. Although Judy did not agree with this idea, she still felt happy to examine different perspectives with others because this exercise "offered students an open-ended discussion to elicit various opinions from student themselves, especially in small groups/pairs."

Another student, Derek, indicated during the interview that when he worked on this pair discussion task, he tried to listen to other people's ideas, while at the same time adjusting or correcting what he had thought previously in regard to certain occupations. After this exercise he began to reflect on why he did not think in the way that female students did. In his reflection paper Derek said that the activity provided him with many chances to re-examine his opinions. Likewise, in her reflection paper, Sylvia mentioned, "Even though the issue of gender education was not a new topic, we were happy to share our viewpoints about various occupations." From her perspective, each gender has different ideas about those jobs; therefore, people should learn how to treat various opinions with respect.

Because students had experienced two critical activities before the present activity was conducted, most students were fully accustomed to having reflective discussion with their partner and with the entire class. Students were able to express

their ideas during the task. For example, students' discussion sheets show that 20 out of 34 students thought that 4 out of 6 occupations (e.g., housekeeper, salesperson, nurse, and bus driver) were suitable for both males and females. In other words, most students stated that no matter what gender we would be, we could do our best to accomplish our job well. Students' responses to the occupations on the discussion sheets indicate that students began to actively re-evaluate their lives from different angles while experiencing different tasks that required collaboration and reflection, including having open-ended discussion, reading picture books, and completing a critical writing assignment.

Rachel said in her reflection paper that she had discussed the issue of gender stereotypes in her Chinese class in senior high school. However, she had never expected that one day she would have a chance to discuss similar issues in English. As Rachel indicated during the interview, the whole activity was very meaningful. She emphasized that nowadays people seldom have gender stereotypes as to which occupations should be directly referred to as for females or males. From a critical literacy perspective, students should be active participants during the learning process in which they question and examine power relations (Freire, 1970). In Rachel's example, students who actively engaged in collaborative pair-discussion became open-minded learners and examined the relations between language-use and social action from a critical stance.

With the regard to disrupting the commonplace (Lewison et al., 2002), the activity invited students to evaluate some traditional concepts of gender roles and to explore the possibilities of each occupation. The analysis either from students' discussion sheets or from students' reflection papers indicates that over half of the students actively engaged in this pair discussion and that they liked this type of discussion more than the one in the first two activities because such an exercise

allowed them to obtain different opinions from the other gender. In brief, what has been discussed has shown that the activity involved students in active learning, a process that stimulated students to consider the status quo of females and males and to construct their new understanding of gender stereotypes.

Second, students considered the activity reflective because students were invited to relate their classroom learning to their real lives through various tasks such as picture-book reading, critical-question posing, and group/pair discussions. As critical educators (Clarke & Whitney, 2009; Y. Huang, 2009; Ko, 2010) emphasize, students should be invited not only to comprehend the meaning of the words on the pages but also to examine the political or cultural practices underlying the texts.

Students were required not only to make sense of the picture books *Fa Mulan* and *Princess Smartypants*, but also to explore the beliefs or values expressed in the books. The main female characters in the picture books are not conventional women in a male-dominated society; both of them are resolute women who can bravely pursue what they want. The following analysis will show that students experienced critical instruction with a reflective learning during the present activity.

Either in their reflection paper or during the interview, many students pointed out that they enjoyed the task because they could rethink the notion of gender awareness, a real-life issue outside the classroom, and apply their reflections to their own lives. Maureen stated in her reflection paper that when she was told to read the story of the noble Mulan, she was surprised as to why the teacher asked them to read a story that she had already read a long time ago. After she read it carefully, she did not know how to explain what she had felt. However, she tried to explain that she felt happy because females' roles began to be noticed and emphasized in our society.

While being interviewed, Jacqueline said that Mulan was a good role model for all females because she not only encouraged people to pursue what they wanted, but



also made people examine the roles that females should play in the future. Jacqueline continued, “I can position myself in the story because I am a girl who does not like to obey traditional rules. I do not like to wear skirts or to have long hair.” She suggested that people should adjust their perceptions of females.

Students thought that in addition to *Fa Mulan*, the other picture book *Princess Smartypants* was also thought-provoking. For instance, some time after her interview, Carol said in private that she liked the story of *Princess Smartypants* very much because it was effective in making people re-examine females’ role in society and such books motivated people to listen to females’ voices. Carol indicated in her reflection that females’ role cannot be viewed only as a housekeeper whose job is to take care of her husband and children. All females have their rights to decide what they would like to do.

As shown in the above analysis, students played an active role not only in decoding the words, but also in generating critical responses to the texts. It should be pointed out that the recording video tapes show that the instructor did not focus on the grammar and the meanings of important vocabulary words in these two picture books. The instructor spent 15 minutes explaining some uncommon words such as “armor” and “saddle” before he asked students to have a discussion in groups. Students were invited to make connections between the texts and their lives. This part of the instruction reflects one of the principles of critical instruction, *focusing on the sociopolitical*, that is, to elicit from students lived experiences as a starting point for critical reflection on social issues (Lewison et al., 2002).

In order to encourage students to move toward more critical perspectives on the texts and to have students examine how they interacted with these texts, students were required to answer 5 to 6 open-ended comprehension questions on a worksheet (Appendix M) for their reading of the two picture books. There was no absolutely

right or wrong answer for each question. Questions included “What does the author want us to think?”, “Whose voices are missing or silent?”, and “What action might you take on the basis of what you have learned?”(McLaughlin & DeVogd, 2004). This exercise offered students an opportunity to show their multiple perspectives, to challenge the texts, and to reflect on what they have known about being critically aware (Green, 2001; Lander, 2005).

Eighteen students indicated similar answers on their reading comprehension questions worksheets, especially the last question “If Mulan lived in Taiwan in the twenty-first century, would she make the same decision, i.e., substituting for her father in the military service?” Most students said that Mulan could ask the legislators or government for help. In other words, Mulan could resort to the law so that she did not have to substitute for her father. Another 10 students pointed out on their worksheets that Mulan might make the same decision because she thought that nothing was more important than her family.

Some students explained on their worksheets that people should praise Mulan because she showed filial devotion to her parents by sacrificing herself. Young adolescents in our society should have such traditional filial piety and learn how to treat their parents well. As can be seen, most of the students tried to bring themselves to the texts and then to make meaning of the texts as they related to their lived experiences and culture. Literacy practices conducted in this activity encouraged students to consider the author’s motive, to examine the implications of values and beliefs and also to articulate or even change their own attitudes.

Students also had some critical thoughts on the other picture book *Princess Smartypants* when they were asked to accomplish 5 reading comprehension questions on the worksheet. Most of the students took themselves, family members or people around them as an example when they answered the question, “Have you known any

female friends who are like or not like Princess Smartypants?” As Julia stated on her worksheet, her sister was very cool because she did not want to get married. His sister told Julia that women could do anything very well by themselves; thus, it was unnecessary to have a boyfriend or a marriage.

Another student, Max, took his aunt as an example on his worksheet. He indicated that his aunt was a single woman of 40. She was like Princess Smartypants because she wanted to devote herself to studying without any marriage. Max further said during the interview that during the interview “My aunt always manages to refuse suitors. She just wants to take care of herself because she does not want to take responsibility for anyone or a family.” Even though Max did not agree with his aunt’s opinion, he still tried to accept different perspectives. The discussion so far has shown that most students were able not only to interpret the texts, but also to engage in critical discussion of topics.

In general, the reading instruction helped students raise their consciousness of their social situation and ask questions such as why certain groups of people have different perspectives on life. In other words, the different exercises in the activity were not aimed at decoding the texts, but at gaining deeper understanding of students and other people. Picture book reading, critical question-posing, and a whole class discussion all supported students in reading the texts with a critical attitude.

Finally, the entire activity was thought-provoking to most students because they were given plenty of opportunities to re-examine their personal lives. At the beginning, pair discussion helped students shared their perceptions of appropriate male/female occupations. Then students’ interpretations of two picture books made them critically analyze notions of gender stereotyping. Finally, students were given a take-home assignment; students had to reflect on their learning by analyzing a story related to gender stereotypes. More specifically, students had to find an article or a news piece

regarding gender issues and to provide personal responses to the selected text.

With regard to the tasked-based learning mentioned above, many students pointed out that the writing assignment gave them the best chance to relate their learning to their lives outside the classroom and to position themselves as a critical thinker on gender issues. Either in the reflection paper or during the interview, many students said that to reflect on an article or a news item based on students' current understanding of gender awareness was thought-provoking. This type of writing had students make personal connections with what they had discussed previously in the activity.

Take Joan's writing as an example. Her writing assignment described a mother in England who proposed a new campaign called "anti-pink" (i.e., stopping buying any pink toys for young girls) because girls may assume that the color pink refers to girls only. Girls may dream of being beautiful princesses who overemphasize outward appearances. Joan agreed with the mother and, in her writing assignment, she said that girls should not be restricted to having only pink dolls. She mentioned that she liked to play with toy cars with her cousins when she was a child. Finally, Joan suggested that "parents should make children realize that honestly being themselves is the best policy."

Joan's writing assignment characterizes the essential notion of critical literacy; learning is a social process in which Joan built a bridge between the writing and her personal experiences. Her writing assignment shows that language in use is a meaning-making process and makes a difference to our lives. After she analyzed the news, Joan made judgments and reflected on what to do next based on what students had learned in the activity. From a critical literacy perspective, the instructor helped students (1) not only develop the four language skills, (2) but also foster the ability to understand their own society. As Friere and Macedo (1987) suggest, students in the

activity were invited to *read the word and the world*. Students in a critical-oriented classroom would become the agents of their own mean-making and change their perception of gender awareness from the functional to transformative level (Rogers, 2004).

Additionally, students took a positive attitude toward this writing task because it encouraged inquiry-based learning and challenged students' concept of gender.

Through re-examining different news reports regarding gender awareness students became more reflective and active (1) in clarifying the ideas they had obtained and (2) in expressing their own perceptions of gender roles. Students' notions of male and female roles were constantly being negotiated during the entire learning process.

According to Lesley (2008b), critical literacy should be regarded as a way of language instruction from a sociocultural perspective. This activity provided numerous chances for students to respond critically to gender issues and to construct the new female roles through social practices. This writing task helped students re-create the image of females based on their discussion in the classroom and on their lived experiences.

Stephanie in her writing assignment indicated that in sorting out various news items, she was surprised that there were some examples regarding gender discrimination toward females in Japan. Specifically, some company owners did not want to hire female employees in their company. Thus, Stephanie suggested that the government of Taiwan should put more emphasis on gender equality and establish policies to protect females. The entire activity offered students a chance to re-examine the events or people around them and to think about how to evaluate those unfair practices from a critical perspective. In his reflection, Gary said that this type of writing experience was similar with what they usually did in the College of Social Science. Gary pointed out that even though everyone understood that we should respect different genders, most people seldom actually did so. Thus, the designed

exercises in this activity gave him one more chance to think about a deeper level of gender stereotypes.

In conclusion, what has been discussed suggests that the exercises in this gender awareness activity created many opportunities for students to explore specific issues related to students' lives (e.g., gender stereotypes) and to reshape students' prior notion of female roles. In particular, the activity had students re-examine different female roles presented both in the texts and through discussions. The individual writing task helped students not only to practice their English writing, but also to reconstruct their values or beliefs on gender awareness. The activity provided students both engagement and social interaction, i.e., classroom exercises in which the meaning of texts was constantly produced by students. Students discussed various types of female roles and wrote their own reflection on relevant articles/news.

## CHAPTER SIX

### DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS (II)

This chapter deals with the analysis of students' reflections on the three activities from the viewpoint of language learning. Students were asked to share their perceptions on English learning in their reflection paper. Students were encouraged to consider the similarities and differences between the present learning course and their experiences in senior high school. Most students made general comments on the three activities together, so this chapter is devoted to the analysis of the opinions on the three activities from students as English learners in Taiwan.

Although the three activities were designed for different purposes, similar exercises were included in all the activities. For instance, students were asked to make a group poster, hold pair and group discussions, and complete a writing assignment (i.e., a pair dialogue, a reflective journal, and a news clipping work project. Students were encouraged to study English from a critical literacy perspective through different modes of learning input, such as picture book reading, poster-making, and discussing meaningful topics.

With regard to the second research question, "As English learners in Taiwan, how did the students reflect on the three activities discussed?", students' responses to some items in the questionnaire indicate that most students agreed (1) that using picture books can motivate students to learn English and (2) that the issues discussed in the classroom need to be thought-provoking and relevant to students' life experiences. The following analysis of quantitative data is based on Tables 6.1 to 6.3.

Table 6.1 indicates that 23 out of 32 students (71.9%) had a positive attitude toward using picture books for learning English; 9 students did not agree with these 23 students. This suggests that most students would rather study English through

meaningful picture books than through textbooks only—an experience that students had had in junior and senior high school.

Table 6.1 Description of students’ responses to Item 11 “*After the entire activity I like learning English through picture books in English more than I did before.*”

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
Disagree	9	28.1%
Agree	19	59.4%
Strongly agree	4	12.5%

Table 6.2 shows that 27 students (84.4%) adopted a positive attitude toward classroom learning relevant to students’ lives. Specifically, 27 students either agreed or strongly agreed that they were willing to engage in the three activities that helped students connect their learning with their lives outside the classroom.

Table 6.2 Description of students’ responses to Item 26 “*The tasks designed during the entire activity motivated me to reconsider my personal experiences in everyday life.*”

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	1	3.1%
Disagree	4	12.5%
Agree	26	81.3%
Strongly agree	1	3.1%

As shown in Table 6.3, 28 students (87.5%) said that they liked to study English through different exercises including alternative reading, picture book reading, pair/group discussions, poster-making, and writing assignments. None of the students described the tasks in each activity as too boring to take part in. The results imply that the three activities based on notions of critical literacy motivated students to learn



English actively.

Table 6.3 Description of students' responses to Item 10 *"I enjoyed studying English through different exercises of all the activities in the classroom."*

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
Disagree	4	12.5%
Agree	15	46.9%
Strongly agree	13	40.6%

In brief, Tables 6.1-6.3 demonstrate that the tasks designed for this study made most students change their perceptions of English learning and teaching. For example, students considered picture books useful in motivating them to study English. Various exercises in the three activities not only encouraged students to be involved in their learning, but also invited them to investigate their personal experiences.

In addition to the analysis based on quantitative data, the following qualitative results indicate similar findings. Most students liked to study English in the class discussed, i.e., an engaging space where students could express their ideas and explore different issues. This environment was fairly different from the previous classes that students had encountered in junior and senior high school.

First of all, interviews with students and their reflection papers indicate that 28 students enjoyed the three activities because they offered alternative and stimulating course materials that they had not experienced before. For example, reading picture books made students realize that language instruction should not be limited to textbooks only. As Anna said in her reflection paper,

I never thought that picture books could serve as a useful tool to facilitate English learning . . . . I could easily remember vocabulary words through the illustrations presented in the books. When I encountered an unfamiliar word on a certain page, I tried to guess the meaning of the word by looking at the illustration on the same page. Moreover, each story conveys meaningful issues

that helped me to think deeply as well. This is a whole new learning experience. Critical educators (Y. Huang, 2009; Ko, 2010; Xu, 2007) suggest that in order to motivate students to explore thought-provoking issues, teachers can have students work with multiple texts. In Xu's (2007) words, these texts refer to media texts, popular culture texts, comic books, and children's literature such as picture books. As we can see from the three activities discussed, multiple texts such as picture books and comic books were used to engage students in the entire learning process in order to generate more critical thoughts. Many students agreed that picture books and comic stories used in the study were effective in drawing students' attention and helping students make sense of the stories through the texts and illustrations.

During the interview, Ella mentioned that illustrations played an essential role in helping her construct the meaning of the story. She said that before she came to the class, she had read the Chinese version of the picture book *Princess Smartypants*. She pointed out that while she was reading the English version, she thought more about the story than when she was reading the Chinese version. Although the vocabulary words in this picture book seemed very easy, once she connected the story to the illustrations, the story became more meaningful and full of imagination. At that moment, she could grasp the meanings that the author wanted to express.

Phoebe, during the interview, expressed a similar opinion about illustrations in the picture books. When she encountered new words in *Voices in the Park*, such as "scruffy" and "mongrel", she could always guess the meanings from the corresponding illustrations. Over 10 students, either in their reflection paper or during the interview, said that they had a similar learning experience. In short, many students considered illustrations effective in helping them make sense of the texts.

Other advantages of reading picture books have been mentioned by students in different data sources. Grace mentioned during her interview that she liked using such

materials more than regular textbooks. She was under the impression that most of the learning materials that she had read before in English classes were related to nature and science (e.g., the invention of a technological product or knowledge about a specific disease). She found that she could attentively read picture books line by line, but she could not read textbooks in a similar manner. She was willing to spend more time reading picture books and trying to figure out the content of the stories. At the end of the interview, Grace made a short comment on her role during the learning process: “This reading experience made me become an active learner who has become more motivated to study English after class. I hope that my English teachers in the future would also consider using different types of learning input in the classroom.”

As Leo remarked in his reflection paper, the textbooks that he read in the past could not grab his attention, but the picture books that the instructor used effectively made him become engrossed in the reading process. The teachers that he encountered in senior or junior high school overemphasized vocabulary memorization and grammar comprehension. From his perspective, essays and articles in the textbooks tended to convey too many didactic messages, but picture books enable readers to have vicarious experiences, identify with the characters, and finally, reflect on the meaning of the story in a more engaged way. Likewise, Leo offered his experience of reading picture books in class: “We [Students] were required to analyze and explore why the author of the picture book would like to present the story in such a fashion. I think that reading picture books with reflection and analysis can increase our motivation to learn English.”

In students’ reflection paper and during the interview, many students thought that picture books are effective reading materials. Students were encouraged to become active learners rather than passive learners. They were asked to explore possible hidden meanings in the texts, a type of learning totally different from

students' previous learning experiences in which students had no choice but to wait for the knowledge transmitted from teachers. Therefore, students found that teachers in the classroom should adopt not only regular textbooks but also alternative materials such as picture books.

It should be pointed out that many students said that picture books can be well used in the classroom not only for children but also for young adults. As Penny said in the interview, "At first I did not believe that picture books might become one of our course materials because I thought those books were too easy for me. After reading the picture books, I found that the meanings of the texts were not as easy as I had thought." Penny said that she did not know the message of *Voices in the Park* until she worked on the different tasks. She claimed, "I learned many things from picture books that have a simple story."

Another student, Sophia, shared a feeling similar to Penny's. As she said in her reflection paper, it was a good idea to use picture books in class because the issues presented in those books helped students think critically. From her viewpoint, although the story in *Voices in the Park* seemed simple, it still contained deep meanings and important issues for discussion. As Jimmy said in his reflection paper, the issues in *Voices in the Park* made him realize that it is important to examine a problem from different angles, respect other people's perspectives, and find out the best solution to the problem. In other words, many students liked using this kind of material because the issues in picture books were effective for students to have critical reflections and to increase their motivation.

*Princess Smartypants*, the other picture book used in the second activity, was also popular among students. Jessie in her reflection paper indicated that she liked the book very much. The princess in the story made her understand that females should have the right to fight for what they want. In their reflection paper, some female

students such as Betty and Sylvia expressed a similar idea about the female protagonist and the importance of gender equality. In short, what has been discussed suggests that many students offered favorable feedback on theme-based picture books as seen in the examples of *Voices in the Park* and *Princess Smartypants*.

Nevertheless, there were still some students not used to picture book reading. Some students in their reflection paper showed anxiety about using picture books for language learning. Laura admitted in her reflection paper that, compared with her previous experiences in senior high school, reading picture books was more effective in increasing students' motivation to learn English. However, she was apprehensive that the vocabulary in picture books would be insufficient; she would rather take standardized exams rather than fulfill alternative performances to evaluate her English development. Ironically, these students during the interview acknowledged that they enjoyed reading issue-based picture books. On the whole, most students still considered picture books (1) engaging for language learning and (2) effective in making students become active learners with motivation.

In addition to picture books, the comic books used in the classroom were also engaging for many students. For example, Jordan in his reflection paper stated that he liked comic books the best among the course materials used in the study. Reading the alternative versions of two traditional fairy tales in comic-format made him recall his enjoyable reading experiences during his childhood. After reading two fairy tales as comics and completing the follow-up tasks, Jordan found that he really enjoyed reading alternative classroom texts and the entire learning process. In their reflection paper, some students pointed out that they did not like the layout of the fairy tales because it was too realistic and more like American comics. Instead, they preferred the art style of Japanese Manga, which are more exaggerated and also are more popular in Taiwan. However, Jordan was still engaged in the fairy tales. During the

interview, Jordan said that this reading experience helped him regain his passion for learning English and he started looking for other similar reading materials for outside reading.

Similarly, Jacob stated that he was surprised that the instructor used two fairy tales in comic format to have students experience an alternative reading and increase their language ability. Jacob said that he was more active in the reading of two unconventional fairy tales than in his previous reading in senior high school. He was engrossed in the comic texts and tried his best to comprehend the stories. He learned how to construct knowledge by learning independently, for instance by looking up unfamiliar words in the dictionary at any time.

To sum up, the course materials discussed in the study made many students understand that language learning should not be limited to traditional textbooks only; many students agreed that course materials should be more diverse. From a critical literacy perspective, the way that teachers design and implement their instruction has a great impact on the way that students learn and think. English teachers should expand their notion of classroom material and explore more possibilities for students' motivation and reflection. The study suggests that engaging and relevant materials can enhance motivation and further critical thoughts.

The second positive comment made by many students was about collaborative learning. In the study, this type of learning was mostly conducted through pair/group work; students were required to complete a poster-making task and fulfill pair/group discussion in each activity. Many students agreed that collaborative learning such as pair/group work enhanced their motivation to learn English actively. For instance, Eric said in his reflection paper:

My senior high English teachers always asked us to do drills such as reading dialogues or writing exercises. I gradually lost my interest in English. In this

class, I was constantly made to figure out how to complete the poster with other others and how to communicate with classmates during discussion. The greatest benefit is that I regained my passion for English.

Eric's example indicates that group work is more engaging than individual work for learning English because collaborative learning can effectively stimulate students to learn how to cooperate with others and how to construct knowledge actively. Group work helps students to increase their motivation in learning English. Ultimately, collaborative tasks make learners become active in sharing ideas with others and in understanding different perspectives.

Sophia, during the interview, pointed out that teamwork captured her attention because she did not like taking tests as much as she had been required to do in senior high school. She expressed a favorable attitude toward poster making that allowed for imagination and she built a better relationship with her classmates through a lot of teamwork efforts. She thought that students could learn about different opinions from each group presenting its poster.

In addition to poster-making teamwork, many students indicated in their reflection paper that they were very much in favor of pair/group discussion. All the three activities invited students to work individually and then collaboratively through a series of discussions. This type of discussion gave them opportunities to exchange and modify their perspectives. As Eileen recalled in her reflection paper, theme-based discussion was an engaging way of learning because it was interactive and meaningful. Sheila confirmed this perspective in her reflection paper with her description of the discussion she experienced in class:

My classmates and I enthusiastically shared different opinions through our simple sentences and basic grammar. We liked these ideas because they were unique, so each of us learned to respect and to listen to perspectives different from our own. Open-ended discussion made me understand that students' performances should not be assessed only through traditional standardized tests.

According to Spiegel (2005), effective discussion should be open-ended, constructive, and collaborative. Students should have many opportunities to yield a deeper meaning through social interaction and to experience many literacy practices regardless of their language level. Such interaction will be led to a negotiation of different ideas and meanings, i.e., a form of socialization (Richard-Amato, 2003). From this perspective, using a language is an opportunity not only for communication but also for a better understanding of language speakers, other people, and social surroundings. As Gary said in his reflection paper, “there was much more interaction when we were having discussion in class than when we were in senior high school. The environment made me enthusiastically involved in many tasks. Most of all, this type of learning helped me understand myself better through the interaction with others.”

Many students shared similar experiences while being interviewed about their learning in the study. Amanda indicated that discussion with others encouraged her to be a diligent and active student in the learning process. She found that she had a sense of achievement when she came up with brand-new ideas through cooperation. One of the goals for critical literacy theorists is to educate students to be active learners (Beck, 2005b; Comber, 2001; Gee, 2001). To achieve this goal, teachers should offer students a comfortable discussion time in which students can work with others to learn how to actively interact with texts and critically respond to relevant issues.

In sum, the analysis of students’ reflection papers and interviews suggests that students changed their perceptions of language learning. Most students considered that learning from collaborative tasks (e.g., poster-making and pair/group discussion) is more useful in increasing students’ motivation than learning from traditional instruction. While conventional instruction tends to overemphasize individual work and rigid assessment (e.g., standardized exams), alternative learning such as



collaborative discussion makes students become more active learners and have their ideas explored, heard, and accepted through interaction.

Third, most students expressed the opinion that both materials and discussion issues should be related to real-life experiences. In particular, students thought that the present project was engaging, interactive, and meaningful when they were involved in various issues related to students' lives. For instance, Paul shared some favorable feedback about alternative reading conducted in the first activity. While being interviewed, Paul said that those traditional fairy tales had become a part of students' childhood memories. Many students agreed that they had a good time during the entire learning process, especially when they encountered the alternative reading of *Snow White* and *Little Red Cap*. Likewise, Serena during the interview said that she regarded the alternative reading as a brand-new and engaging learning experience because such activity helped her not only to recall her memories of fairy tales, but also to increase her imagination and motivation.

As some literacy educators (McVicker, 2007; Ranker, 2007) suggest, many topics in comic books are closely related to children's lived experiences, so students can learn to reflect on those issues and to discover the meaningful dimensions of their world. The stories chosen in this study successfully stimulated students' motivation to read; the instructor offered various opportunities for students to explore social contexts by examining the roles in the texts. Such learning experience made students learn how to make sense of the world through a different type of learning input rather than through a textbook in the classroom.

Many students in their reflection paper indicated that they had positive feelings for the discussion issues (e.g., multiple perspectives and gender stereotypes). Those issues had a great impact on students' learning motivation. Such comment from many students' reflection papers was confirmed by notions of critical literacy. As mentioned

previously in Chapter 2, it is important that each language teacher should take into consideration students' interests, personal backgrounds, and learning experiences while designing their classroom activities (Y. Huang, 2009; Xu, 2007).

As Cynthia said during the interview, because the issues she discussed were related to her personal background, she had more ideas to share with her classmates. She was engaged in expressing how she re-examined a car accident from multiple perspectives in her writing assignment. Likewise, Rachael stated in her reflection paper that the second activity made her start paying attention to the notion of multiple perspectives—as she emphasized—an important issue that she had not noticed before. She said that she enjoyed discussing issues relevant to her life and that she and her classmates were more willing to participate in different tasks during the learning process.

The issue of gender stereotypes also increased students' engagement and motivation with various tasks, i.e., picture book reading, discussion, poster-making, and a writing assignment. As Monica said in her reflection,

I liked this way of learning because it made me able to connect my learning to my life. The picture book *Princess Smartypants* helped us break the barriers of gender stereotypes. We should not restrict ourselves to a certain perspective on males or females. For example, males could serve as a good nurse as long as they are very patient with the people that they are looking after.

Another student, Melinda, claimed during the interview that what she learned was not only vocabulary or grammar but also the application of her learning to her life. To be more specific, the teacher created many opportunities in which students could describe their everyday situations with the words, phrases, sentences, and even ideas that students had learned in the classroom. As a result, she said that English should not be seen as an academic subject only, in Melinda's own words, "a mechanical training that focuses too much on students' performance on exam scores." From her

perspective, teachers should make students realize that to be good at English is not only about the accumulation of vocabulary or a high grade on an exam, but also about the ability to discuss with other people real-life issues such as discrimination, gender stereotypes, and family violence.

To sum up, 23 students either in their reflection paper or during the interview thought that the materials or topics used in the classroom should encourage students to express their ideas and connect students' learning with their real lives. Students will have a greater motivation to review what they have learned in class if they are engaged in different issues through diverse materials, especially issues highly related to their personal experiences (Comber, 2001; Vasquez, 2004). Students' responses to the three activities suggest that language learning should be involved not only with the mastery of the four skills, but also with critical reflections on meaningful issues (e.g., multiple perspectives and gender stereotypes) related to students' lives.

Finally, most students in their reflection paper pointed out that the writing assignments discussed in this study made them relate their learning to thought-provoking events in society. All the writing tasks required in each of the activities were different from students' previous writing assessments in junior or senior high school. For example, Taiwanese students are familiar with conventional writing tasks that focus on a specific topic such as "My Family" or "My Friend". As a consequence, students discussed in the study were not accustomed to the alternative writing assessments designed in the critical-literacy-based classroom, including writing a team dialogue, a reflective journal, and an analysis of news items based on personal experiences. However, Brown (2004) suggests that the assignments required in the second language classroom should engage students in performances that involve higher-order thinking and meaningful, creative responses. The objectives of the three writing tasks discussed in the study were to provide students with opportunities to

investigate the world around them through the analysis of specific social issues and through students' own observations.

Chou (2004) suggests that writing tasks in a critical-literacy- oriented classroom should be designed (1) to elicit students' background perceptions of social practices, and at the same time, (2) to modify their social understanding according to their existing knowledge about society. Such writing assignments should have students share their personal experiences, rethink relevant issues, and finally have more critical responses to their lives outside the classroom. Accordingly, students discussed in the study experienced three different writing assignments that all encouraged them to challenge their existing perceptions of social realities. For example, 21 students in their reflection paper pointed out that they liked these three writing tasks (i.e., team dialogue, the Perspective Journal, and the news clippings).

The discussion in Chapter 5 suggests that most students adopted a positive attitude toward the pair dialogue assignment in the first activity. Different data sources indicate that students were invited to use their imagination to reconstruct the meaning of a fairy tale from students' own perspective. The researcher's class observation suggests that when students in each pair were performing their dialogue as an in-class assessment, most students seemed to become the audience in a movie theater and were happy to watch their classmates delivering the performance of their dialogue. As the instructor thought, students were engaged in these dialogue performances because these dialogues were based on students' recollection and recreation of fairy tales. As we can see from the comment made by Tim in his reflection paper,

When we were performing our dialogue group by group, most classmates were like me laughing happily and enjoying the learning atmosphere at that moment. I like this type of writing experience very much because I could gain more new ideas by working with my partner and I could improve English by practicing the dialogue in class.

According to McCaslin (2006), drama and role-play are effective practices that can help students improve their language ability and learn to work cooperatively. Students are able to interpret their stories, deal with problems through interaction, write and read aloud their work, produce their performance, and more importantly, meaningfully experience “the language that they might not otherwise have (p. 230).” As students’ responses to their dialogue performance show, language educators should be encouraged to incorporate the component of drama into students’ writing tasks.

With regard to students’ reactions to the writing assignment in the second activity, 24 students in their reflection paper thought that the journal writing exercise was engaging and meaningful. This writing assignment motivated students to pay more attention to their lived experiences and to have students complete their writing based on students’ reflection on certain incidents in society. As O’Malley and Valdez (1996) indicate, journals play an effective role in a language program that emphasizes the importance of self-investigation during the thinking process. The journal writing assignment was designed to elicit students’ multiple perspectives on specific social events. This task made students understand the importance of the notion of multiple perspectives in our daily lives.

As Gloria recalled during the interview, because of this writing, she changed her perception of literacy learning and teaching. She explained that this task was reflective because students could re-examine their surrounding critically through the assignment. Another student, Tim, also shared feelings similar to Gloria’s. In his reflection paper, he expressed the opinion that “this writing made me become an independent thinker. I had never had such great learning experiences before.” These statements are consistent with the analysis of the quantitative data discussed above (e.g., the results of Item 26). That is, 27 out of 32 students agreed that they could think actively and also reconsider their personal experiences in everyday life during

this course.

The last writing assignment, i.e., the news clippings required in the third activity, engaged students in a learning process in which students played an active role. As many students said in their reflection paper or during the interview, when they were in senior high school, they were always required to write compositions on one topic such as “My Family” and “City Life versus Country Life”. However, the present writing assignment asked students to find an article or a news story in which students were interested and to reflect on their selected text. In this analytical writing, students themselves decided what should be discussed and what perspectives should be presented.

Many students maintained a favorable attitude toward the present writing assignment. As Audrey stated in her reflection paper, the news clippings task was meaningful because she had never experienced a writing exercise that asked students to express a critical thought on the news on the Internet or in the newspaper. During the interview, Ricky said that he liked such a writing experience because he had control over what he could do in the task. For example, he chose an article in the newspaper, a news story that he considered the most interesting one among a variety of similar news materials related to gender stereotypes. Ricky considered this writing task very helpful for his English improvement and very relevant to his life:

The reason why I preferred this type of writing exercise was that I was active in checking the usage of new vocabulary in the article while I was making sense of it. Moreover, I was even willing to discuss my assignment with my roommates at the dormitory because I thought that this writing was related to me and my friends as well.

The aforementioned analysis suggests that college writing teachers should not limit their instruction only to traditional methods that tend to have students work on topics such as “My Family,” “My Favorite Pet”, and “My School Life”. The three

writing assignments discussed so far can be valuable examples for those college teachers who plan to encourage students to incorporate their lives and reflections into their writing. Above all, these three writing assignments can be seen as a springboard for students to write what they have experienced from their lives and from a critical perspective. As Green (2001) says, literacy educators have to offer many opportunities for students not only to examine texts reflectively, but also to evaluate their world critically. Specifically, critical instruction should have students move from reading the world to re-writing the world. The three writing assignments have offered some examples in which students based their writing on their personal experiences and critical perspectives.

In conclusion, all the three activities made students change their perceptions of English learning. In their opinion, teaching should not be implemented only through a single method and learning should be promoted through different types of input. Students discussed in the study enjoyed the entire process when they compared it with their previous experiences in senior and junior high school. Students were encouraged to relate their learning to meaningful issues in society while they were experiencing different course materials, collaborative learning, and alternative writing tasks. Above all, students became active learners in a stimulating and meaningful environment.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSION

The discussion so far has suggested that students in the study gained an alternative, engaging, and meaningful learning experience that they had not encountered earlier in senior high school. As the analysis of qualitative data suggests, many students reported that different learning resources were effectively used in the classroom to increase students' motivation both in studying English and in thinking critically. This means that teachers should not limit their instruction to one single method or should not just use a textbook in their classroom. Instructors should be encouraged to draw on alternative instruction and to have students experience different learning resources. The study has shown that the tasks discussed made most students understand that English learning and teaching can be effective and engaging through learner-centered tasks based on different types of learning input.

Students enjoyed the activities discussed because the activities encompassed various types of communication such as (1) making a group poster, (2) discussing meaningful topics in pairs or in groups, (3) reading thought-provoking picture books or comic books, and (4) completing writing assignments based on personal experiences. The purpose of these tasks was to help students have a different perception of English learning and teaching. Based on the results of the questionnaire and the analysis of the qualitative data, this research found that students considered the entire learning meaningful, engaging, and reflective in improving students' four skills and cultivating different perspectives on their identities and lives.

Second, the study suggests that university students in Taiwan can not be taught the way that they were in senior high school. In Taiwan, senior high school English teachers tend to stress memorizing vocabulary and comprehending grammar with the



goal of helping students pass standardized exams with a high grade. Under these circumstances, students are seldom given opportunities to express their own opinions from different perspectives and to develop an ability to reflect on social issues. As the study has shown, when instructors offer students a learning space in which students can interact with various texts, students can learn how to explore social issues in different contexts. Such a learning assumption might provide students another chance to raise questions, to obtain new knowledge, or to reconstruct their identities through meaningful tasks that help students have a different worldview. Accordingly, the way teachers instruct in colleges should differ from the way students are accustomed to, especially in senior high school.

As shown in this study, many students said that pair and group discussion had helped them improve their speaking ability because they became more willing and more able to express their perspectives in English with their classmates. For example, Jimmy said that he did not have many opportunities to practice his English in senior high school. He spent most of his time preparing for many standardized exams, so he focused on memorization of grammar and vocabulary. As a consequence, he did not feel confident, especially in his speaking and listening skills, not to mention communicating with native speakers of English. He believed that he had improved his English through discussing interesting topics with his classmates many times during the entire semester. Finally, he thought that he could improve his English by practicing it gradually and he became more confident in his English fluency.

Many researchers have pointed out that EFL teachers play a crucial role in the classroom (Bean & Harper, 2008; Beck, 2005b; Huang, 2007). They distribute knowledge, exercise power over students, and implement instruction mostly through lecturing and guiding students through different drills. The present study indicates that teachers should modify their teaching beliefs, reconsidering what should be brought

into the classroom both by teachers and by students themselves. Teachers should try more alternative instruction for different students, especially for university students because they are no longer under the pressure of studying English solely for high grades. The study shows that higher motivation and critical reflection are possible when learning involves collaboration, engagement, and relevancy. The three activities discussed were all inquiry-based and students became the center of their learning.

The present study centers around university students' reactions to three theme-based activities based on notions of critical literacy, but its findings suggest that we should also pay attention to the larger context in view of how students compared their current learning and their previous classroom experiences. In brief, the educational system in Taiwan should be re-examined and adjusted in terms of English courses at different levels such as junior high school, senior high school, and university. In the past, many English teachers in Taiwan put great emphasis on training students to answer questions correctly on standardized exams. Most students became passive learners and acquired knowledge directly from their teachers and from the textbooks. In particular, students had no opportunities to share their opinions and to reflect on meaningful issues. In other words, students were not able to maintain a critical stance toward the texts that they were reading. As the study indicates, teachers can have their students experience different instruction and help them change their perception of English learning. Students should be reminded that comprehension is not only defined as understanding the literal meaning of a text, but also as developing the ability to draw on their own ideas and experiences during the learning process.

Ironically, when students are in junior high and senior high school, Chinese and Citizenship courses give students some opportunities to react critically to what they have read and even to have critical discussions on specific issues regarding lived

experiences. But English teachers in junior and senior high school tend to help students master their four language skills only and fail to offer a learning environment that encourages critical reflection.

In order to make Taiwanese students accustomed to alternative instruction and to have them *read the word and the world*, our English language education should be reconsidered and redirected in a new direction, i.e., integrating critical literacy into English learning. Finally, such a reflective learning environment involves a “humanistic curriculum” that is designed to help students “realize their potential as humans” (Crawford-Lange, 1981, 257-258).

### **Pedagogical Implications**

This study has found that many students held a positive attitude toward theme-based critical instruction using different types of learning input. In the three activities discussed, students were offered opportunities to bring forth different perspectives from a reflective viewpoint. Findings in the previous chapters have provided insight into how critical literacy could be effectively implemented in an EFL context. Accordingly, the following section focuses on some pedagogical implications of critical literacy.

The first implication is that materials employed and issues discussed in a language classroom should focus on students’ lives, i.e., starting with their personal or cultural resources. A critical curriculum can encourage students to bring into the classroom their real-life experiences or their background knowledge. The data analysis in the present study indicates that critical literacy cannot happen without resources from students themselves. This finding can be referred to Lewison, Leland and Harste’s (2008) three-ring model as discussed in Chapter 2. The content of a critical curriculum should be based on the resources that classroom participants bring

into the classroom, e.g., their prior knowledge, experiences, popular culture, students' interests, media or social issues. As the data suggest in Chapter 5, most students believed that this class was a comfortable learning environment in which students were encouraged to draw on various personal resources as class material. Table 7.1 offers the descriptions of the resources that students brought into the classroom.

Table 7.1 shows that each of the three activities encouraged students to bring their lived experiences into a critical-oriented classroom. For example, the first activity offered students an opportunity to come up with a pair dialogue based on their prior knowledge of fairy tales, and more importantly, to reflect on their values in their writing assignment. The selection of material plays a crucial role in engaging students in a critical literacy classroom. If the material is meaningful or related to students themselves, it is likely that students will generate more critical reflections during the entire process. In brief, various resources that students are allowed to draw on can be seen as the foundation of a critical curriculum, through which students have an opportunity to reexamine their lives.

Table 7.1: Resources from Students

Activity 1	comic poster / memories of fairy tales / comparison of the old and new versions of fairy tales / team-dialogues / a pair dialogue performance of students' work
Activity 2	concepts of multiple perspectives / ideas after reading <i>Voices in the Park</i> / a Character Web poster / group discussions / Perspective Journal writing assignment
Activity 3	existing perceptions of gender stereotypes / pair discussions / a whole-class discussion / opinions on two picture books / poster-making / the news clipping writing assignment

Moreover, students gain deep perspectives on specific issues when they are motivated to discuss different meaningful materials, i.e., learning input related to their lives. Such thought-provoking materials can help students draw on their experiences during the learning process—an essential springboard for critical reflection on various social issues. Take the current study as an example. While students were engaged in making sense of *Voices in the Park* during a prolonged learning process, they were invited to examine different issues such as multiple perspectives and to explore how these issues would be important to their lives. Teachers can select meaningful materials, integrate students' experiences and backgrounds into the curriculum, and help students raise reflective values. In short, the study suggests that a critical literacy curriculum should start from personal and cultural resources, and move to critical social practices and critical stances.

The second implication is that critical literacy involves a series of social practices in a language classroom. In other words, language learning can be seen as a prolonged learning process that gives students space to reconstruct their identities. As Gee (2001c) suggests, critical literacy represents a social practice that has students make sense of different print/nonprint texts and helps students to construct identity, knowledge, discourse, power and social relations. Specifically, teachers should view a classroom as a cultural community where students can interact with texts, the teacher, and students themselves through a series of meaningful tasks. Finally, students may be socialized into new identities and be able to respond critically to the world with their own thoughts.

According to Stevens and Bean (2007), a critically oriented classroom can help students to know more about themselves and to shape a different identity through textual reading and personal reflection. The texts that students encounter affect how

and what students believe and think. When students explore different issues in the texts, they are invited to re-examine relevant social and cultural dimensions conveyed in the texts. Students' learning becomes meaningful and reflective because different tasks lead them to respond reflectively to their personal experiences. Finally, students are encouraged to examine their worldview and become aware of their own identities.

The three activities discussed in the study all involved a series of exercises that had students reconsider specific themes related to students' lives. Students were provided with many opportunities to reflect on who they were in relation to the world outside the classroom. For example, the first activity asked students to reflect on traditional fairy tales and to create a pair dialogue of their own. It should be noted that the discussion in Chapter 5 indicates that some students experienced some difficulty in accomplishing this pair dialogue. Interviews and students' reflection papers showed that these students may not be used to such critically-oriented teaching because they were asked to do many grammar drills in senior high school and became passive learners. The study has also found that one of the effective ways to engage students in critical learning is to base their instruction on one or two of the components in the second ring of the model by Lewison, Leland, and Harste (2008), i.e., critical social practices.

Teachers can elicit students' lived experiences as a starting point for critical reflection on relevant social issues. The activities discussed in the study had students explore specific social issues through a series of meaningful tasks such as poster-making, group discussions, textual reading, and reflective writing assignments. Students learned how to interact with different texts from a critical perspective. For example, the third activity offered students a chance to reexamine gender stereotypes while they were conducting various meaningful exercises such as collaborative learning. Most students began to evaluate and further to adjust their attitudes towards

social and cultural issues as gender issues.

When students become more familiar with social practices in critical literacy, teachers can move on to the next phase, i.e., taking action to promote social justice. Students can be encouraged to reconstruct their identities based on what they have experienced during the entire learning experience. Findings so far have suggested that most students raised their awareness of language use in a specific context and began to reconsider the relations between themselves and social realities. This can be easily found in students' third writing assignment--the news clipping. Many students not only expressed their own values through a critical stance, but also reexamined social events from a sociocultural perspective.

It can also be inferred that language learning can be seen as a form of social transformation in which students have possibilities to develop new ways of being in the world. The way to achieve this goal is to provide a set of thought-provoking texts, texts that can contribute to the formation of students' identities. In brief, a prolonged textual learning can have an effect on students' knowledge, attitudes, actions, and positions in the world.

The third implication is that teachers should constantly rethink their role in the classroom. As Johnston (1999) indicates, images that are frequently used to describe teachers include managers, guides, architects, facilitators, and so forth. These metaphors can help educators see how we think about students, ourselves as teachers, and how we teach. A metaphor can effectively illuminate teachers' concepts of their teaching (VanDeWeghe, 2003). Teachers that embrace critical literacy can be discussed from figurative language perspective.

In response to how he positioned himself as a critical instructor, the instructor, during an interview, said that he treated his teaching as a great feast with many dishes that feed students with reflective ability. As he pointed out, "Each exercise during a

critical activity can be seen as a dish prepared by the teacher that would attract students to enjoy food and to be willing to be cooks.” A classroom based on notions of critical literacy can be compared to a feast with many dishes; teachers design different activities that focus on meaningful issues and that can make students active learners. In other words, students not just sit in the classroom and listen to the lectures; on the contrary, they play a crucial role in deciding what or how they can learn in the classroom. Then students are empowered with the right to construct who they are in this social world.

A teacher plays a key role in the critical classroom and his/her role can be modified in order to create a learning environment in which students are allowed to act on their interpretations of what they have learned. It is not easy for a teacher to experience a change from transmission teaching to transactional teaching, especially for those who have been accustomed to the traditional education systems in Taiwan. For instance, EFL teachers first may encounter frustration when they are attempting to elicit students’ responses from group/class discussion and to ask students to pose critical questions. To overcome this difficulty, teachers could incorporate inquiry-based instruction into their classroom activities.

The inquiry-based curriculum refers to a learner-centered learning process in which students can raise questions and solve the problems actively through group work. The final goal is to help students obtain new understanding of themselves and the world in which they are living. The questions or social events that students explore or discuss are based on students’ interests and needs. Under such conditions students have opportunities to communicate with their teachers and peers in class. As shown in this study, students were invited to experience a series of different meaningful inputs including posing critical questions, pair discussion, collaborative learning, and so on.



This educational stance is related to the spirit of critical literacy. As many critical advocates suggest, a teacher's role in the twenty-first century should be reconsidered and modified; teachers may not dominate their classes and control the major part of the learning process (Falkenstein, 2003a; Y. Huang, 2009; Ko, 2010). It is not easy to implement critical literacy teaching in the EFL context (e.g., Taiwan), so the instructor's teaching beliefs are very significant in having an effect on what students' role can be in the classroom.

### **Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research**

As students' responses discussed above have shown, the three activities were successfully implemented with regard to the possibilities of critical literacy in the EFL classroom. In particular, the study suggests that picture books and comic books are effective materials in helping students improve their language abilities while developing a critical awareness of who they are in relation to society. However, some limitations of the present research should be pointed out for the improvement of future instruction and research.

First, the allocated time for whole-class discussion was insufficient for critical reflection. In each of the three activities, students either in pairs or in groups discussed a specific topic and shared their ideas for 10 to 15 minutes. Many students in their reflection paper suggested that if their instructor could have allocated more time for discussion; students would have more time for reflection, to acquire more new knowledge, and to generate more critical perspectives. In order to solve this problem, instructors should pay more attention to time management on different exercises in the activity, especially for the whole-class discussion, when implementing critical literacy-based teaching.

Second, for some students the reading materials such as the comic books

chosen in this study seemed not very appropriate, especially the layouts. Eight students, either in their reflection papers or in the interview, indicated that the layout of comic book reading was the major factor hindering their comprehension. Four out of eight students pointed out that they were not willing to read similar reading materials in comic format in the subsequent learning activities because they were already acquainted with Japanese comics, in which the layout is different from Western comics. Based on the students' responses, future critical educators need to take into consideration students' interest and culture background when employing many texts related to Western culture or events in Western society.

Third, this study was conducted in a General English class. Numerous ESL scholars in different educational systems including junior/senior high school or university point out that critical literacy could be successfully integrated into different courses such as reading, writing, speaking, language arts, and children's literature (Chou, 2004; Damica, 2003; Shin & Crokes, 2005; Xu, 2007). In order to respond to the research concerns mentioned above, alternative instruction is needed, i.e., a way of teaching that takes into account students' diverse backgrounds. Therefore, future critical literacy research in other English learning contexts should be encouraged, such in English Writing, English Reading, and English Literature.

Fourth, the supplementary introduction in Mandarin to the questionnaire (e.g., “批判反省語言學習之間卷調查”) may influence students' responses to the items. In other words, students might circle a specific item to a question because they might consider their choice satisfactory to the researcher or because they already knew the purpose of the questionnaire. Under such circumstances, the value of the questionnaire might be reduced because students might choose the answer to meet the researcher's expectation. In order to avoid such a Hawthorne effect, future researchers should pay more attention to the format of their questionnaire and design a

questionnaire without supplementary words, phrases, and sentences that might mislead students to offer invalid item responses.

Finally, critical literacy-oriented teaching in the study was implemented for only one semester, i.e., four months. The results of the current study have shown that some students adopted a critical stance to reading and posed a variety of critical questions after experiencing a series of exercises such as discussing reflective topics, making a poster, working on a worksheet, and so on. In order to have a deeper understanding of how students develop critical reflections over time, a longitudinal study should be conducted so that EFL students can have more opportunities to be exposed to such critical literacy-based instruction for a longer period of time.

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### **Selected Books**

- Babette, C. (1997). *Princess Smartypants*. New York: The Putnam & Grosset Group.
- Browne, A. (2001). *Voices in the Park*. New York: DK Publishing.
- San Souci, R. D. (2000). *Fa Mulan: The Story of a Woman Warrior*. Illustrated by Jean and Mou-Sien Tseng. New York: Hyperion Books for Children.
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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### Lesson Plan for the Nonconventional Fairy Tale Activity

##### Brief Description

This activity is designed to help students develop critical literacy through an English learning process by using two nontraditional fairy tales in comic-book format in the classroom. The activity will be conducted in four sessions in two weeks during the 2009 fall semester and the students will be a class of 34 first-year university students from College of Social Science at a private church-related university. Students' English level is high-mid according to their performances on the placement taken at the beginning of the semester.

##### Objectives

To develop students' English proficiency, increase their collaborative ability, stimulate creative ability, and integrate students' language learning with their personal experiences outside the classroom.

##### Materials

1. 34 copies of two comic book stories<sup>1</sup>
2. Posters and markers
3. 34 copies of the worksheet for the stories used in the classroom
4. A sheet of guidelines for creating a group comic poster
5. An A4-sized reflection paper with two boxes
6. A copy of the guidelines about how to create a team dialogue

##### Procedures

###### Session 1 (50 minutes)

1. Allocate 5 minutes to divide students into 6 groups of 5-6 members and ask them to sit together for further discussion.
2. Spend about 10 minutes providing each student a sheet of guidelines for creating a group comic poster and explaining these guideline as to how to retell any of the traditional fairy tales through the format of a comic strip.
3. Remind students that they will have about 30 minutes to accomplish this task before the session is finished.

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<sup>1</sup> The first story is called "Snow White", an alternative version of the traditional story of Snow White. The second story is called "Little Red Cap"—a twisted version of the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood".

### **Session 2 (50 minutes)**

1. Have each of the groups share its poster with classmates during the first 35 minutes of the first session.
2. Have students sit in pairs and give each student a worksheet for the two stories that will be used.
3. Have one student in each pair work on "Snow White" while the other works on "Little Red Cap" on the worksheet.
4. Remind students that they should finish this work in 10 minutes and that they are allowed to use a dictionary.
5. Spend 5 minutes having students check their answers on the worksheet for the two stories
6. Give each student a copy of the two comic book stories, i.e. "Snow White" and "Little Red Cap", and ask them to preview these two stories.

### **Session 3 (50 minutes)**

1. Have students review the vocabulary on the worksheet for about 5 minutes.
2. Ask students from each group to spend about 15 minutes finishing the story he/she was assigned during Session 2.
3. Have each student spend about 15 minutes comparing the story he/she just finished with any traditional fairy tale(s) and writing the differences in the box on the top of the reflection paper.
4. Spend another 15 minutes having students share their ideas on the story they have just read with their partner and write down these ideas in the box at the bottom of the reflection paper.

### **Session 4 (50 minutes)**

1. Spend 5 minutes reminding students what they had done during the first three sessions of the activity and having students reexamine their own discussion sheets.
2. Use 15 minutes to have some students from different groups share, in English, their own ideas from their partners.
3. Give each student a copy of the guidelines about how to create a team dialogue and explain the guidelines.
4. Remind students that they should finish and submit their first draft sometime in Week 7 and that the teacher will return their draft with comments sometime in Week 11.
5. Ask students to revise their draft based on the teacher's suggestions and remind them that they should turn in their second draft in Week 12.
6. Tell students that there will be an in-class dialogue performance sometime in Week 13.

## Appendix B

### Lesson Plan for the Multiple-Perspective Activity

#### Brief Description

This activity employs different types of learning input to help students develop critical literacy through an extended English learning process. The activity will be conducted in four sessions within two weeks during the 2009 fall semester and students will be a class of about 34 university freshmen at the high-mid level from the College of Social Sciences at a private church-related university in central Taiwan.

#### Objectives

To develop students' English proficiency, increase their collaborative ability, invite multiple perspectives, and integrate students' language learning with their personal experiences outside the classroom.

#### Materials

1. Power Point of the picture book *Voices in the Park*
2. <sup>1</sup>
3. 34 condensed copies of *Voices in the Park*
4. 4 pairs of sunglasses with different colored lenses
5. Sheets of white paper
6. Posters and markers
7. Pair-discussion sheets
8. 34 handouts of the Perspective Journal

#### Procedures

##### Session 1 (50 minutes)

1. Allocate 5 minutes to divide the students into 4 groups of 8-9 members and to ask each group to sit together.
2. Ask 4 student volunteers to put on a pair of the glasses and hold up a sheet of paper in front of their faces and then ask these students what color the paper is.

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<sup>1</sup> *Voices in the Park* was written and illustrated by Anthony Browne (2001), an internationally- recognized author and illustrator of children's books. He has published over thirty books, including *Piggybook*, *Through the Magic Mirror*, *Willy's Pictures*, etc. Gorillas are usually the main characters presented in his works, as is the case with the well-known *Voices in the Park*. The story is told from the perspectives of four different characters. Its Chinese translation is titled “當乃平遇上乃萍。”

3. Spend 15 minutes having the whole class discuss the experiences these 4 students have encountered.<sup>1</sup>
4. Give a brief 10-minute introduction to *Voices in the Park* which presents its author, characters, and illustrations.
5. Give the students a shortened version of the story which is assigned by the teacher. Remind students that they will have 20 minutes to read the shortened version.

### **Session 2 (50 minutes)**

1. Spend 25 minutes having each group of students read and discuss the book together through a designed exercise.
2. Give each group a Character Web poster and have students of each group identify the qualities of the character they have discussed. Tell students that this task needs to be completed in about 25 minutes.

### **Session 3 (50 minutes)**

1. Allow 25 minutes to have students of each group share their opinions one by one.
2. Spend 15 minutes showing the picture book in Power Point format.
3. Give each student a discussion sheet with the two questions below.
  - a) Why does the author present the story from four different perspectives?
  - b) Is it important to recognize multiple perspectives regarding a specific event in our lives? Why or why not?

### **Session 4 (50 minutes)**

1. Spend 5 minutes reminding students of what they had done during the first three sessions of the activity.
2. Remind students that they will have 15 minutes to finish this discussion sheet.
3. Have each student choose a partner sitting next to him/her, think about these questions, exchange ideas and write the ideas down on the discussion sheets. Tell students that this task needs to be completed in about 15 minutes.
3. Give 10 minutes to wrap up the ideas from students by having a class discussion.
4. Spend 5 minutes explaining the task Perspective Journal to students.
  - a) Introduce each component of this journal.
  - b) Explain how writing such journal is different from simply writing a descriptive of an event.
  - c) Ask students to submit this writing assignment within two weeks.

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<sup>1</sup> Discussion questions include “Can you think of any situations similar to the one just demonstrated?”, “What is the purpose of this activity?”, or “What words/phrases would you use to describe a situation in which people see the same thing from different perspectives?”.

## Appendix C

### Lesson Plan for the “Frailty, Thy Name Should Not Be Woman” Activity

#### Brief Description

This activity is designed to promote in students a sense of gender awareness through an extended English learning process. The activity will be conducted in four sessions within two weeks during the 2009 fall semester and the students will be a class of 34 university freshmen at the high-mid level from the College of Social Science at a private church-related university in central Taiwan.

#### Objectives

To respond individually to the text through reflection of the text, identify the features or personalities of each character in the text, increase the collaborative ability in the process of learning, and integrate students’ language learning with their personal experiences outside the classroom.

#### Materials

1. Power Point of the picture book *Princess Smartypants*<sup>1</sup>
2. 34 condensed copies of *Fa Mulan*<sup>2</sup>
3. Posters and markers
4. Pair-discussion sheets
5. 34 Handouts of Four Reading Comprehension Questions

#### Procedures

##### Session 1 (50 minutes)

1. Spend 5 minutes dividing the students into several pairs that consist of one male and one female student. Ask the students to sit together for further discussion.

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<sup>1</sup> *Princess Smartypants* was written by Babette Cole (1997). Cole is an award-winning English author and illustrator who has published many popular books for children. His publications include *Prince Cinders*, *Princess Smartypants*, *Promise and the monster*, *Long Live Princess Smartypants*, *Supermoo*, etc. The well-known one is "*Princess Smartypants*" that it sold a million copies. This is a book that refreshes the reader’s viewpoints about the traditional princess over the past years.

<sup>2</sup> *Fa Mulan* was written by Robert D. San Souci (1998). This story is retold from the popular Chinese legend. This particular retelling dates back to the earliest versions of *The Song of Mulan*. In addition to San Souci’s carefully interpretation of the ancient story, the illustrations of watercolor paintings is another feature in this book.

2. Offer each student a discussion sheet that is a list of six occupations<sup>3</sup> commonly seen in Taiwan and ask them to decide which jobs are more appropriate for males and/or females. Remind the students that they will have 20 minutes to finish this task.
3. Have students share their opinions with their discussion partner and ask each of the students write down their partner's perspectives on the student's own discussion sheet, i.e. the box on the bottom of the discussion sheet. Tell students that this task needs to be completed in about 25 minutes.

### **Session 2 (50 minutes)**

1. Allocate 10 minutes to wrap up the ideas from students by having a whole class discussion.
2. Ask each of the students to take out a handout with four reading comprehension questions, to have each student choose a partner sitting next to him/her and to exchange ideas. Tell students that this task needs to be completed in about 10 minutes.
3. Give 10 minutes to wrap up the ideas from students by having a class discussion.
4. Spend 20 minutes showing the picture book in Power Point format.

### **Session 3 (50 minutes)**

1. Spend 5 minutes having the students answer the questions about *Princess Smartypants*. The suggested questions are as follows:
  - a) What's the main idea of this story?
  - b) What's your opinion about the female protagonist Princess Smartypants?
  - c) What do you think the author tries to tell us?
  - d) Which part of the story interests you the most? Why?
  - e) Have you known or heard about any female friends in your life who are like and/or not like Princess Smartypants?
2. Ask students to finish the questions mentioned above within 25 minutes.
3. Have students share the ideas that they had just written on the handout during the final 20 minutes.

### **Session 4 (50 minutes)**

1. Give each student a worksheet to identify the qualities of Princess Smartypants. Tell the students that this task needs to be completed in about 10 minutes.
2. Spend 5 minutes dividing the students into 5 groups and giving each group a poster and markers.

3. Ask each group to draw the charts and to compare the characteristics of two characters they have read. Remind students that they will have 20 minutes to finish this task.
4. Give 15 minutes to have students of each group share their opinions one by one.
5. Explaining the writing assignment that students need to collect one article or news related to gender issues. Ask the students to cut and paste the article on a piece of A4 paper and to attach personal reflections on it. Tell each student to submit this assignment in the following week.

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<sup>3</sup> These six occupations include a nurse, a bus driver, a salesperson, a soldier, a housekeeper and a babysitter.

# Appendix D


## A Comic Poster





## Appendix E

### Vocabulary for *Little Red Cap*

<b>flee</b>	<b>skip off</b>	<b>gasp</b>	<b>shear</b>	<b>gobble up</b>
<b>plunge</b>	<b>slippery</b>	<b>velvet</b>	<b>tempt</b>	<b>serve sb's right</b>
<b>suspect</b>	<b>pounce</b>	<b>stray</b>	<b>savor</b>	

#### Write words for the definitions

<b>1.</b>	<b>(adj)</b>	The people who you cannot trust
<b>2.</b>	<b>(v)</b>	to leave secretly or suddenly
<b>3.</b>	<b>(n)</b>	a type of cloth made from silk or cotton
<b>4.</b>	<b>(n)</b>	a tool to cut through sth and make it break
<b>5.</b>	<b>(v)</b>	to move suddenly forwards in order to attack or catch sb/sth
<b>6.</b>	<b>(v)</b>	to take a quick deep breath with your mouth open, especially because you are surprised or in pain
<b>7.</b>	<b>(v)</b>	to move away from the place where you should be, without intending to
<b>8.</b>	<b>(v)</b>	to have an idea that sth is probably true or likely to happen, especially sth bad, but without having definite proof
<b>9.</b>	<b>(v)</b>	to leave a person or place very quickly, especially because you are afraid of possible danger
<b>10.</b>	<b>(v)</b>	to eat sth very fast, in a way that people consider rude or greedy
<b>11.</b>	<b>(v)</b>	to move or make sb/sth move suddenly forwards and/or downwards
<b>12.</b>	<b>(v)</b>	to attract/ make sb want to do or have sth, even if they know it is wrong
<b>13.</b>	<b>(v)</b>	to enjoy the full taste or flavour of sth, especially by eating or drinking it slowly
<b>14.</b>	<b>(v)</b>	used to say that sth that has happened to sb is their own fault and they deserve it

## Vocabulary for *Snow White*



### Choose the correct word from the box below.

1. (     ) to have such a strong emotional effect on sb that it is difficult for them to resist or know how to react
2. (     ) a box in which a dead body is buried
3. (     ) the organs inside the body of a person or an animal, especially their intestines
4. (     ) a title of respect used when speaking about or to a king or queen
5. (     ) a person who goes from place to place in order to sell something
6. (     ) containing a lot of juice and tasting good
7. (     ) excellent; very good
8. (     ) a small house, especially in the country
9. (     ) to order sb to come to you
10. (     ) a deep narrow valley, especially in Scotland or Ireland
11. (     ) the fact of seeing that sth might happen in the future and perhaps doing sth about it now
12. (     ) (*literary* or *old use*) beautiful
13. (     ) an organized journey with a particular purpose
14. (     ) someone you don't like or respect

a. overwhelmed	d. majesty	g. splendid	j. glen	m. expedition
b. coffin	e. peddler	h. cottage	k. anticipation	n. misbegotten
c. entrails	f. succulent	i. summon	l. fair	

## Appendix F

### A Discussion Sheet

Class A/B

Class No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



After reading the story, you should compare the story you just finished with any traditional fairytale(s) and write the differences or the ideas you have in the box on the top of this reflection paper.

**Reflections:**

Please share the ideas on the story you have just read with your partner and write down your partners' ideas in the box below.

**My Partner is** \_\_\_\_\_ **. He/She thinks that . . .**

## Appendix G

### Guidelines for Pair Dialogue

1. You should find a partner to discuss which story you both would like to use in your pair dialogue.
2. You could choose the storyline either from the two nonconventional fairy tales you have read in class or another fairy tale that you know.
3. Your pair dialogue should contain about **400-500 words that are original with you.**
4. Each pair-group should submit its first draft in **Week 7** and the teacher will return each group's draft with comments in Week 11.
5. You should revise the draft based on the teacher's comments and turn in your revised draft in **Week 12.**
6. You will be required to present your dialogue in class in **Week 13** and this performance should take **two and a half to four minutes.**

## Appendix H

### *Voice 1*



**Describe the qualities and characteristics of each role, list the adjectives which describe this character in your group and give examples as possible as you can.**

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**My Partner**

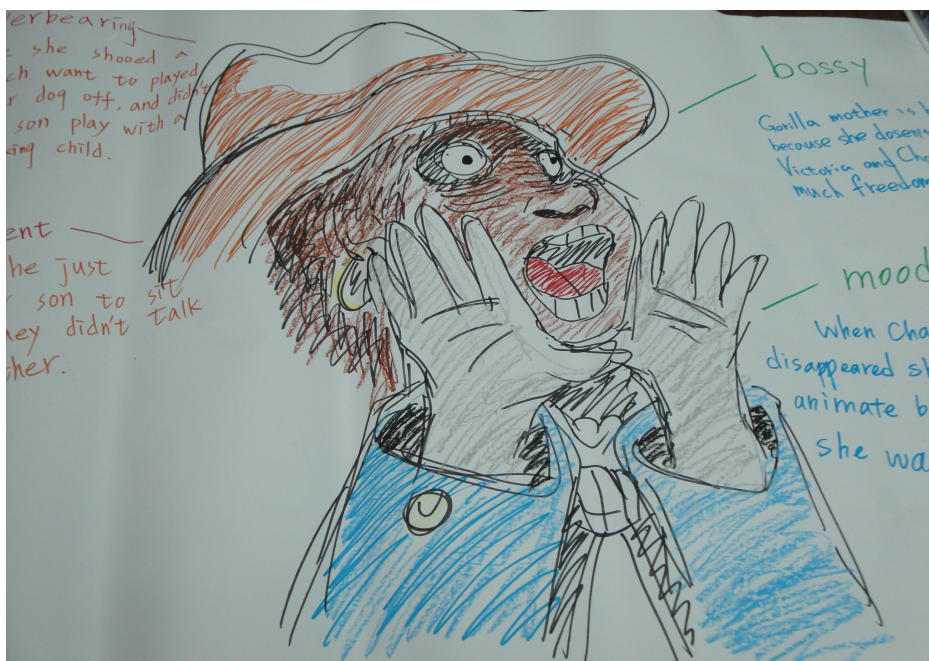
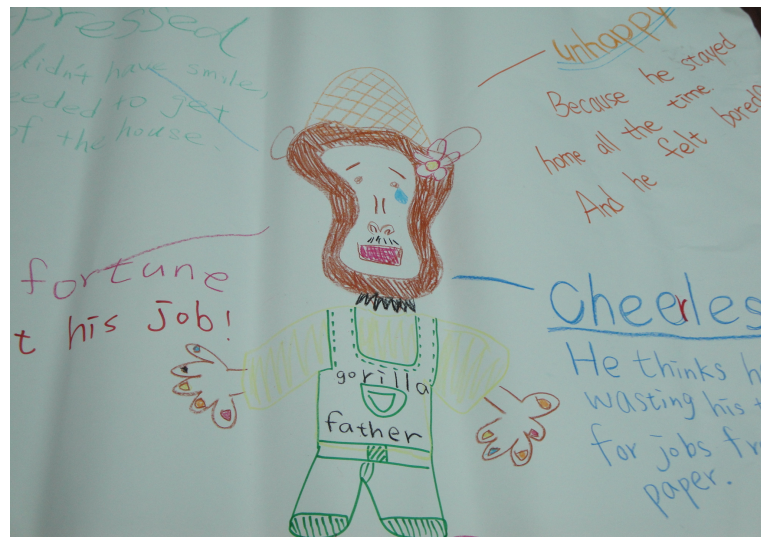
## Appendix I

### Common Character Traits

active/lively 活潑的	depressed 沮喪的	kindhearted	outgoing	serious 嚴肅的
amiable	dumb 愚蠢的	lazy 懶惰的	offensive 冒犯人的	silly 傻氣、愚笨的
awesome	easygoing 隨和的	lovable 可愛的	overbearing 傲慢專橫的	shy 害羞的
bossy 跋扈的	energetic	likable 討人心的	optimistic	selfish 自私的
cheerful 令人愉悅的	friendly 友善的	moody	poor 貧窮的	snobbish 勢利眼的
cheerless 憂鬱的	furious 極度憤怒的	merciless 無情的	positive 積極的	sad 難過的
childish	generous 慷慨的	mean 壞心眼的	proud 驕傲的	thankful 感激的
childlike 天真孩子氣的	humble 謙卑的	meddlesome 愛管閒事的	pessimistic	thoughtful
conceited 自負的	innocent 天真的	misfortune 不幸的	reliable 可靠的	trustworthy
considerate 體貼的	indifferent 冷漠的	nasty 齷齪的	responsible 有責任心的	vicious 惡毒的
cruel	joyful 令人愉悅的	nosy	rich 有錢的	unhappy 不開心的

## Appendix J

### A Character Web Poster



## Appendix K

Class A / B

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

My partner's name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Q1: Why does the author present the story from four different perspectives?**

My ideas

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My partners' ideas

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**Q2: Is it important to recognize multiple perspectives regarding a specific event in our lives?**

**Why or why not?**

My ideas

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My partners' ideas

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## Appendix L



### A Perspective Journal

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

In this journal, you are encouraged to pay attention to experiences that has happened to you. These experiences can be found the books you have read, the interaction you have had with other people, movies you have watched and so on. These questions can help you organize your thinking.

**1. Summarize the experience**

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**2. Describe the people involved in the experience. Share each of their perspectives.**

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**3. Which perspectives were heard and which were unheard?**

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**4. What does this make you think? What does this make you want to do?**

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## Appendix M

### The Story of Fa Mulan Reading Comprehension Questions



1. After you have read the story, please describe the protagonist Mulan with at least 5 sentences, e.g. “I think Mulan was a brave girl because she . . . .” or “Mulan was very special because she . . .”.
2. If you were Mulan, what would you do for your father? Why? 
3. If you were the author, which part of the story would you like to revise? How would you change the story into your version?
4. If Mulan lived in Taiwan in the twenty-first century, would she make the same decision, i.e. substituting her father for the military service? Please share your opinions with at least 5 sentences?

## Appendix N

**Class: A/ B**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please put a check mark in the appropriate box and provide your comments or reasons on each occupation.**

<b>Occupations</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Comments / Reasons</b>
nurse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
bus driver	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
salesperson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
soldier	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
housekeeper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
babysitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**My partner's name is** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Occupations</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Comments / Reasons</b>
nurse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
bus driver	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
salesperson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
soldier	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
housekeeper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
babysitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Appendix O

Class A/ B

Class No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. **What's the main idea of this story?**



2. **What's your opinion about the female protagonist Princess Smarty pants?**

3. **What do you think the author tries to tell us?**

4. **Which part of the story interests you the most? Why?**

5. **Have you known or heard about any female friends in your life who are like and/or not like Princess Smarty pants?**



## Appendix P

Class A/ B

Class No. : \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please identify at least three qualities of Princess Smartypants and use few sentences to explain why. For example: She is brave because she knows how to say no to others.**

Class A/ B

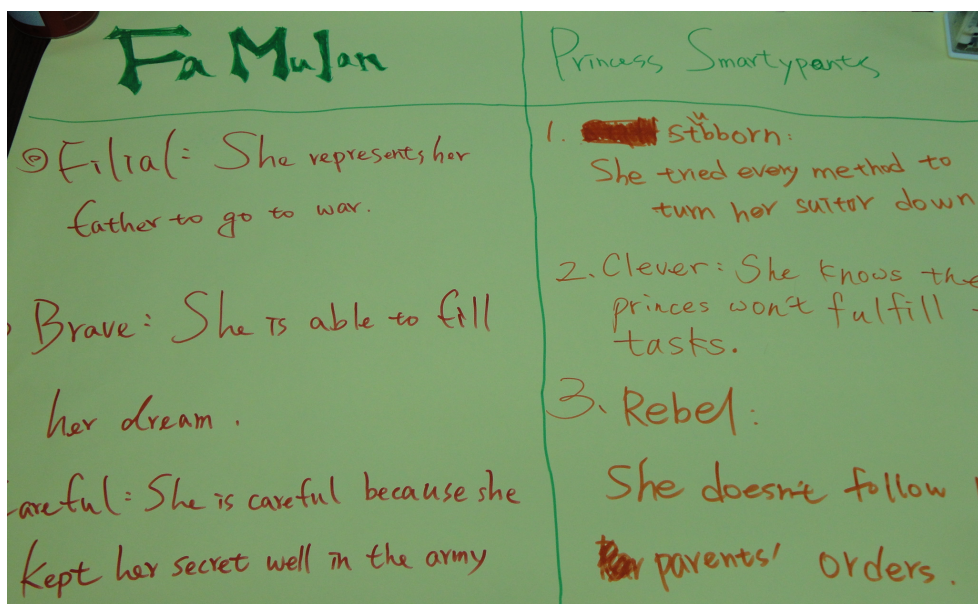
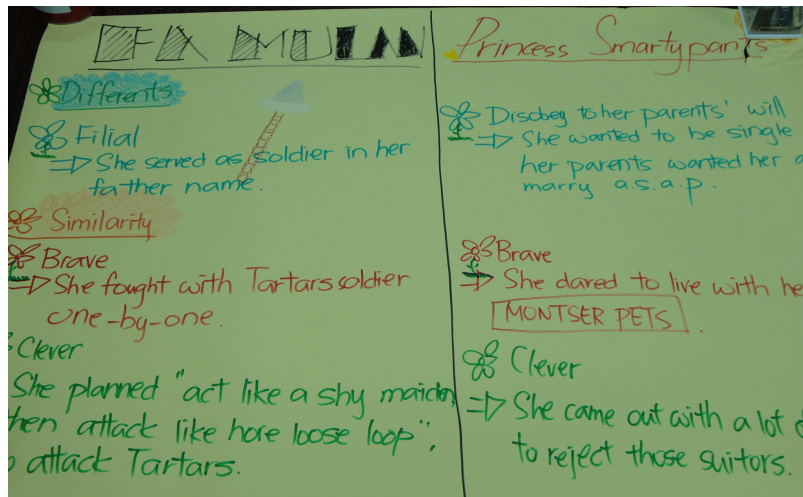
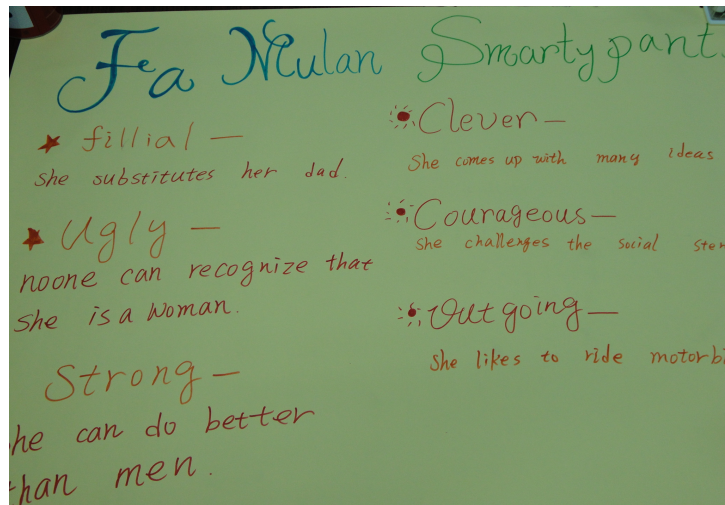
Class No. : \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please identify at least three qualities of Princess Smartypants and use few sentences to explain why. For example: She is brave because she knows how to say no to others.**

## Appendix Q

### A Group Poster



## Appendix R

### A Writing Assignment for the Third Activity

(自由時報 家庭親子) (性別教育) 男孩愛車 女孩愛公主?  
文/River

晴好的週末，與朋友相約進市立美術館看皮克斯動畫 20 年展，當影片播放到《汽車總動員》，大家便和名叫「閃電麥昆」的紅色跑車主角一起在州際公路上穿越荒漠、叢林和大都會。

此時黑暗中傳來小女孩稚嫩的聲音說：「那是給男生看的。」展場裡會心的笑聲漫漾開來，這會心來自俗成的認知，就像粉紅色和芭比娃娃之於女孩，藍色和變形金剛之於男孩；動畫故事裡的公主故事宜讓女孩觀看，這部賽車的故事「當然」屬於男孩。

想起剛滿兩歲的小外甥已能識得多種汽車 logo，每當他以短小的指頭指著汽車雜誌上的相片一一指認，一家人總是歡笑連連稱讚他聰明；如果小外甥抱在懷裡的是時裝雜誌，熟記的是時尚的品牌呢？家中長輩恐怕要憂心了。

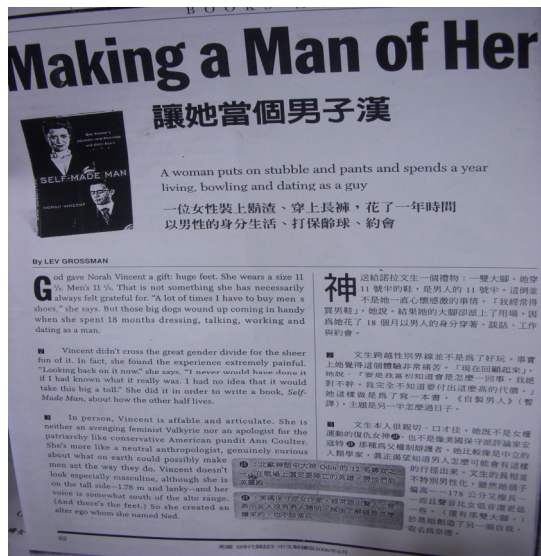
性別教育推動有年，「爸爸早起看書報、媽媽早起勤打掃」的課文也已刪改多時，孩子仍以男女二元的性別觀粗糙地分類，父母和教師可能得再放寬心，不必死守這道疆界，雖然男女有別，但也不必事事非此即彼，以免讓二元對立的刻板印象限制孩子的想像與發展空間。

如果一個小男孩立志當白衣天使，小女孩夢想成為騎上打檔機車穿梭巷弄的綠衣天使又有何不可？孩子未必真能穿上白衣或綠衣，在那之前，何不讓孩子有更大的空間盡情想像各種可能？

My reflections:

I agree with the author's <sup>ideas</sup> thought. Who says that girls should like Barbie dolls and boys should like toy cars and robots? Everyone has his or her interests, and I think that <sup>such concept</sup> it is not good for everyone to limit someone to do something <sup>what</sup> they are interested in. Girls can like what boys like, and boys can like what girls like, too. Females can do most of what males do, and ~~males can do~~ and males can do most of what females can do, too. So boys don't have to follow the old-fashioned expectation of their parents, and girls don't have to obey the rule that our ancestor had established, either.

## Appendix R (continued)



My reflections:  
 M [Giving a try to enjoy the patriarchy!] The female, who live between 1920's and 1960's were always have a traditional thinking, and they even believe that had more the male have a powers to overruled them. But now, who? the twenty-one century, is coming, women can cross the gender divide to act like a man. For example, be the manager on the work, earning money for her own family, and they can be a 「Queen」 to control their own life.

Learning something from the experience by Norah Vincent, Women should know there still exist some restricted by sexual in the back of male's halo, as same as female's. If you can attempt to understand what the differences between male and female, you will find out that both of them are frailness. For example, when people face a failed female will be confess that, but male will put on his armor to protect his self-respect. And the armor is 10 sizes too big as Vincent said. According to that article, the male and the female's reaction are so different for their purposes just because the social expectation influence them too much. For instance, such as female should stay at home to be a good wife, and male should be a successful businessman.

Finally, if people can walk into each other's shoes, whatever male or female. I think they will be peaceful in their relationship. But the most important thing is that people should start to learn how to disregard the prejudice from this community. Listen to your own perspective and be yourself, you will feel more confidence and happier than present!

It's good to see your viewpoint, but next time try to express your ideas clearly!!



# Appendix S

## A Poster for *The Ugly Duckling*



## Appendix T

### The Questionnaire on Attitudes towards Critical Literacy Instruction in Multiple Learning Resources (English Version)

Dear all,

Thank you for your participation in this study. The purpose of the study is to investigate Freshmen's learning attitudes toward critical literacy instruction including the course materials and activities. It is hoped that the findings of the study can contribute to English teaching in Taiwan's university. Please provide your precious experiences and viewpoints by filling out the questionnaire.

This study is only for academic use. There is no right or wrong answer to the questionnaire items. Additionally, the results of the survey will definitely not affect your English grades at school and all the information provided will remain strictly confidential. Therefore, please answer the questionnaire items honestly after carefully reading each of the item statements. Please do not discuss your answers with your classmates while you are responding to the questionnaires. To ensure the questionnaires are usable, please be sure to respond to all the items.

Again, thanks for your participation and cooperation.

#### The Personal Background Information

**Instruction:** Please fill in or mark the response on the following items which best describe the information concerning you. All the questionnaire items can be responded with only one answer.

1. Gender:  Male  Female
2. Major: \_\_\_\_\_
3. When did you start to learn English?  
 before Primary School  Primary School  Junior high school
4. How long have you been studying English outside the school?  
 None  less than 1 year  1-2 years  more than 2 years
5. Do you read any English books including magazines, novels, picture books or poetry...etc) in your free time?  
 Yes (continue to answer the following questions )  No (jump to item 6)

### Appendix T (continued)

If yes, how often do you read that books?

less than 1 hour  1- 2 hours  more than 2 hours

6. Did you have any English experience through picture books?

Yes  (continue to answer the following questions)

No  (This is the end of the questions)

When was the first time you came to the reading experience of picture books in English?

before Primary School  Primary School  Junior high school  Senior high school  university

7. When you first time read the English picture books, how did you feel such as boring, fun, great or surprised...etc? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Did your teachers use English picture books as the teaching material in elementary school? Yes  No

If yes, could you please describe what you felt at that moment?

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix T (continued)

### Guideline for answering:

Please circle the number which best describes your thoughts from the four numerical items. The meaning that each numerical item stands for is as follows:

**1-strongly disagree    2-disagree    3-agree    4-strongly agree**

### For instance:

If you think the statement of a certain questionnaire item is true of me, then please circle 3 from the four numerical item listed after the item description. It applies to the rest of questionnaire items shown below.

### Please answer:

1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= agree, 4=strongly agree

- |    |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I could concentrate on the English picture books offered in the classroom.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. | I actively participated in the follow-up exercises after students finished reading the picture book.                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. | I looked forward to the follow-up activity after reading picture books.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. | I was immersed in each picture book when it was narrated by the teacher.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. | During the after-reading discussion, I was willing to share my opinions with my classmates.                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. | I was engaged in each reading activity in class.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. | The activities in the classroom can make me think about a discussion with the classmates.                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. | I actively participated in the discussion with other classmates about various issues brought up from the picture books. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. | I like the follow-up activities after reading picture books.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

### Appendix T (continued)

- |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 10. I enjoyed studying English through different exercises of all the activities in the classroom.                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. After the entire activity I like learning English through picture books in English more than I did before.         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. I like the English picture books used in the class.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. I consider it very interesting to discuss various issues presented in the picture books.                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. I think the picture books used in the class are very interesting.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. I like to learn English through reading English picture books.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. I will pay attention to the illustrations in the picture books while reading them.                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. I think the stories in the picture books are engaging.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. I hope in the future that the teacher will implement similar reading activities using picture books.               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. I tried to catch what the purpose of the picture book is.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20. I would try to understand the messages the author wants to convey from his/her perspective.                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 21. I tried to use different perspectives to interpret the issues in the picture books.                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 22. I tried to think what kind of personality the character is in picture books.                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 23. I tried to think why the content of story differs from what I thought before.                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 24. I learned to think about what I would do if I were the main character in the picture books.                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 25. I pay attention to the issues of the picture books.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 26. The tasks designed during the entire activity motivated me to reconsider my personal experiences in everyday life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

**Appendix T (continued)**

- |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 27. I tried to think whether we have the same experiences or similar problems in our society.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 28. I tried to think whether I have the similar personal experiences in my daily life.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 29. I tried to think what if the same situations also happened to me.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 30. I tried to think whether the similar plots in my daily life.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 31. After the activity was completed, I would pay attention to whether people around me have similar experiences like those of the characters in the book. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 32. I tried to link the plots of picture books to my personal experiences in daily life.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 33. I learned to link the issues in picture books to the events which occur in the society.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 34. I will pay more attention on people, things or events in their daily life.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 35. I tried to notice whether the similar problems or events would be reported on TV news.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 36. I learned to tell what the both side of each fact are, not accept what the people say.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

**Comment and Feedback**

If you find any questionnaire items, whose descriptions are not clear and hard to understand, then please put the number of that questionnaire item into the blank space below. Your comment and feedback will be cherished and taken as the reference for future modification. Again thank you for your help.

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## Appendix U

### The Questionnaire on Attitudes towards Critical Literacy Instruction in Multiple Learning Resources (Chinese Version)

#### 透過多元化學習教材探索台灣批判反省式語言學習之可行性

親愛的同學：

非常感謝您參與此研究的問卷調查，此研究的目的是在於調查大一學生使用繪本學習英語之批判識讀法，以作為將來改善台灣英語教學的方向。請填寫下列二個問卷，並且可以提供您個人寶貴的經驗和建議。

此研究僅供學術研究參考並非考試測驗，不用任何其他用途，因此答案選項並無對錯之分，而問卷調查結果對您的英文成績將不會有任何影響。同時，問卷中填寫的所有資料將會加以保密，故請您在詳細讀完問卷每一題的敘述後，依照您上課的實際情形，誠實地作答。在作答的過程中，切勿與他人討論彼此作答的內容，並請務必回答下列二問卷中所有的問題，感謝您的協助。

東海大學外國語文學系碩士班英語教學組

研究生：蔡秀君

#### 問卷一：個人基本背景資料

說明：請填寫或勾選與您個人基本資料符合的敘述，每題皆為單選題，謝謝。

1. 性別： 男  女
2. 系別：\_\_\_\_\_
3. 從甚麼時候開始學英文？  
 國小以前  國小  國中
4. 除了學校的英文課之外，你在校外學英文學了多久了？  
 未曾  一年以下  1 以上~2 年  2 年以上
5. 平常有任何閱讀英文書籍(例如:雜誌、小說、繪本、詩)的習慣嗎？  
 沒有(如果沒有，請您跳第六題)  有(如果有，請繼續作答)  
平均每個禮拜花多久閱讀一次英文書籍？  
 少於一個小時  1~2 個小時  2 個小時以上
6. 您有閱讀英文兒童繪本的經驗嗎？  
 沒有(如果沒有，作答結束)  有(如果有，請繼續作答)  
您是甚麼時候第一次閱讀英文兒童繪本？  
 小學以前  小學  國中  高中  大學
7. 當您第一次閱讀英文兒童繪本時，您有甚麼感想？例如:無聊、有趣、驚喜、好玩等。請您用一句話來描述。  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. 您有任何英文老師曾經使用過繪本當作課堂的教材呢？  
 沒有  有  
如果有的話，請您簡述當時您對繪本的感覺是甚麼？  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 問卷二：批判反省式語言學習之問卷調查

### 說明：

以下 36 項問題，乃是針對課程活動進行中或結束後，所設計的問卷。

每題皆有四個程度等級選項，分別是

1-非常不符合，2-不符合，3-符合，4-非常符合。

請在閱讀完各題的敘述之後，請您圈選出最適合您的選項，如果有任何疑問，請舉手問授課老師，謝謝您的協助。

例如：您覺得某一題的敘述**非常符合**您上課時實際情況，就請您在該題的四個數字選項中，圈選數字**4**，其他選項依此類推。

	非常 不 符合	不 符 合	符 合	非 常 符 合
1. 我會專心閱讀課堂上所提供之英文繪本。	1	2	3	4
2. 我積極參與繪本閱讀之後，老師所設計之相關課堂活動。	1	2	3	4
3. 我期待每一次繪本閱讀後的課堂活動。	1	2	3	4
4. 當老師在描述繪本的故事情節時，我會樂在其中。	1	2	3	4
5. 在閱讀繪本之後的討論活動中，我會踴躍分享自己的想法。	1	2	3	4
6. 我參與課堂上的活動。	1	2	3	4
7. 我覺得課堂上的活動會讓我想跟其他同學進行討論。	1	2	3	4
8. 我主動參與在課堂上和同學一起討論繪本裡面各類不同的主題。	1	2	3	4
9. 我喜歡閱讀英文繪本後的討論活動。	1	2	3	4
10. 我喜歡透過課堂上不同的活動來學英文。	1	2	3	4
11. 此活動結束後，我更喜歡閱讀英文故事繪本。	1	2	3	4
12. 我喜歡課堂上英文選用的故事書繪本。	1	2	3	4
13. 我覺得討論繪本裡的主題非常有趣。	1	2	3	4
14. 我覺得課堂上選用的繪本都相當有趣。	1	2	3	4
15. 我喜歡透過閱讀英文繪本來學習英文。	1	2	3	4
16. 閱讀英文繪本時，我會去注意繪本裡的插圖。	1	2	3	4
17. 我覺得英文繪本裡面的故事情節很吸引我。	1	2	3	4
18. 我希望以後老師還會在課堂上提供類似的繪本閱讀活動。	1	2	3	4
19. 我會試著去了解繪本所要傳達的訊息。	1	2	3	4
20. 我會試著用作者的角度去體會他/她想要表達的意思。	1	2	3	4
21. 我會試著用不同角度來詮釋繪本中故事所要表達的意思。	1	2	3	4
22. 我會去思考故事內容的主角是個怎麼樣的人。	1	2	3	4
23. 我會去思考故事內容為何跟我原本想的不太一樣。	1	2	3	4
24. 我會去思考如果我是故事裡的主角，我會怎麼去解決問題。	1	2	3	4



	非常 不符 合	不 符 合	符 合	非 常 符 合
25. 我會去注意故事當中所要探討的主題。	1	2	3	4
26. 課堂上的學習活動可以激發我開始思考個人之生活體驗。	1	2	3	4
27. 我會試著去思考我們的社會和故事書裡的主題是否有類似的情形。	1	2	3	4
28. 我會開始思考自己是否在日常生活中有跟故事中一樣的情形。	1	2	3	4
29. 我會去思考故事內容可能有一天也會發生在我身上。	1	2	3	4
30. 我會去思考周遭有沒有跟故事內容相似的情節。	1	2	3	4
31. 我會去注意周遭有沒有人跟故事中的人物有類似的經驗。	1	2	3	4
32. 我會將故事中的情節跟現實生活中自己的經驗結合。	1	2	3	4
33. 我會學著將故事主題和社會相關的新聞事件聯想在一起。	1	2	3	4
34. 我會開始注意周遭的人、事、物。	1	2	3	4
35. 我會開始注意社會新聞中有沒有報導過類似的問題。	1	2	3	4
36. 我會開始主動思考每件事的對與錯，而不是一昧接收外來的資訊。透過繪本的閱讀，我開始學習用不同的角度來審視周遭的人、事、物。	1	2	3	4

### 意見回饋

問卷中有沒有哪一題“題意”不清楚或是題目讓您無法明確的了解？如果有，請在下列空白處把題號寫下來，以便於我們日後的改進，感謝您的幫忙。

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## Appendix V

### Frequencies of Response (in %), Means (M), and Standard Deviations (SD) to the Questionnaire

No.	Item Description	1 <sup>a</sup>	2	3	4	M	SD
1	I could concentrate on the English picture books offered in the classroom.	0 <sup>b</sup>	6	78	16	3.09	.466
2	I actively participated in the follow-up exercises after students finished reading the picture book.	0	13	82	6	2.94	.435
3	I looked forward to the follow-up activity after reading picture books.	6	47	34	13	2.53	.803
4	I was immersed in each picture book when it was narrated by the teacher.	0	10	75	16	3.06	.504
5	During the after-reading discussion, I was willing to share my opinions with my classmates.	6	28	63	3	2.63	.660
6	I was engaged in each reading activity in class.	0	3	72	25	3.22	.491
7	The activities in the classroom can make me think about a discussion with the classmates.	0	31	59	9	2.78	.608
8	I actively participated in the discussion with other classmates about various issues brought up from the picture books.	0	28	69	3	2.75	.508
9	I like the follow-up activities after reading picture books.	3	31	63	3	2.69	.644
10	I enjoyed studying English through different exercises of all the activities in the classroom.	0	13	47	41	3.28	.683
11	After the entire activity I like learning English through picture books in English more than I did before.	0	28	59	13	2.84	.628
12	I like the English picture books used in the class.	3	9	69	19	3.03	.647
13	I consider it very interesting to discuss various issues presented in the picture books.	0	28	53	19	2.91	.689

<b>No.</b>	<b>Item Description</b>	<b>1<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
14	I think the picture books used in the class are very interesting.	3	22	63	13	2.84	.677
15	I like to learn English through reading English picture books.	0	19	59	22	3.03	.647
16	I will pay attention to the illustrations in the picture books while reading them.	0	9	38	53	3.44	.669
17	I think the stories in the picture books are engaging.	3	16	72	9	2.87	.609
18.	I hope in the future that the teacher will implement similar reading activities using picture books.	0	13	69	19	3.06	.564
19.	I tried to catch what the purpose of the picture book is.	0	9	69	22	3.12	.554
20.	I would try to understand the messages the author wants to convey from his/her perspective.	0	16	72	13	2.97	.538
21.	I tried to use different perspectives to interpret the issues in picture books.	0	19	66	16	2.97	.595
22.	I tried to think what kind of personality the character is in picture books.	0	9	78	13	3.03	.474
23.	I tried to think why the content of story differs from what I thought before.	3	22	66	9	2.81	.644
24.	I learned to think about what I would do if I were the main character in the picture books.	3	28	59	9	2.75	.672
25.	I pay attention to the issues of the picture books.	0	16	81	3	2.88	.421
26.	The tasks designed during the entire activity motivated me to reconsider my personal experiences in everyday life.	3	13	81	3	2.84	.515
27.	I tried to think whether we have the same experiences or similar problems in our society.	3	19	72	6	2.81	.592
28.	I tried to think whether I have the similar personal experiences in my daily life.	3	25	63	6	2.69	.693
29.	I tried to think what if the same situations also happened to me.	6	47	44	3	2.44	.669

No.	Item Description	1 <sup>a</sup>	2	3	4	M	SD
30.	I tried to think whether the similar plots in my daily life.	3	34	63	0	2.59	.560
31.	After the activity was completed, I would pay attention to whether people around me have similar experiences like those of the characters in the book.	0	34	63	3	2.69	.535
32.	I tried to link the plots of picture books to my personal experiences in daily life.	6	34	59	0	2.53	.621
33.	I learned to link the issues in picture books to the events which occur in the society.	3	31	56	9	2.72	.683
34.	I highlight the sensitivity of people or events which occur in my daily life.	3	28	66	3	2.69	.592
35.	I tried to notice whether the similar problems or events would be reported on TV news.	0	34	56	9	2.75	.622
36.	I learned to tell what the both side of each fact are, not accept what the people say.	0	9	75	16	3.06	.504
<b>Grand Mean</b>						2.87	
<b>Grand Standard Deviation</b>							.59

Note: Internal-consistency reliability coefficient  $\alpha = .88$

a 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly agree

b The percentage has been rounded to the nearest whole number.

## Appendix W

### Interview Protocol

#### 訪談問題

1. 透過英文繪本學習英文，有提升您學習的動機嗎?有或沒有，請指少說出三個理由，並利用繪本舉例。
2. 你認為「公園裡的聲音」、「花木蘭」、「頑皮公主不出嫁」這三本繪本裡的單字適合學習英文? 會太簡單或太難嗎?請舉例說明。
3. 你對老師用漫畫教英文有任何意見嗎?請至少說出三點你的評論。
4. 三個活動中，你最喜歡哪一個活動或是哪一個活動對你最有意義?為什麼?
5. 你對三個活動寫作作業（改劇本、多元觀點、剪報心得)有甚麼想法?和以前高中寫作有甚麼差別?你喜歡哪一種?請至少說出三個原因。
6. 每個活動中都有畫海報、先兩人討論再全班討論、或寫一些學習單，有沒有哪一部分你覺得最好玩有趣?請舉例說明。
7. 每個活動中都有畫海報、先兩人討論再全班討論、或寫一些學習單，有沒有哪一部分你覺得最有意義?請舉例說明。
8. 三個活動中都有討論，整個討論的過程中，你有學到東西嗎?(聽說讀寫或思考跟你生活有關的議題)
9. 整個英文繪本教學的過程老師並沒有實施傳統的紙筆測驗（單字或是閱讀測驗），請問你覺得你英文有進步嗎? 或是你有學到其他東西嗎?最大的收穫是甚麼? 請舉例說明。
10. 如果回到國高中學習英文的傳統教學(使用教科書、考試、背單字等)，你覺得你會有較高的動機學習英文嗎? 請說明原因。
11. 請你回想以前高中學習英文的經驗，跟這學期課堂上做的活動比較起來，最大的差異在哪裡? 哪一種學習方式比較可以提升你學習英文的動機?
12. 經過這次繪本教學(討論活動、perspective journal 等活動)有沒有改變你對學英文的學習方式?
13. 你覺得整個教學中有沒有哪個部分要改進? 請舉例說明。